



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

25 FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 20/1403/08 (KL)
APPLICANT: Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
DEVELOPMENT: Demolition of caretakers house, construction of teaching and sports facilities.
LOCATION: YSGOL GYFUN RHYDYWAUN, MANGOED, PENYWAUN, HIRWAUN, ABERDARE, CF44 9ES
DATE REGISTERED: 16/12/2020
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Penywaun

RECOMMENDATION: Approve, subject to conditions

REASONS: The proposal would provide a modern new building within the grounds of the existing school which forms part of the RCTCBC 21st Century Schools programme. It would enable an increase in the number of pupils at the school whilst also providing a much-needed community facility within the area.

The existing school site is situated within the settlement boundary and within an established residential area where development is generally considered to be acceptable. The scale and design of the proposal is appropriate to the context of the existing school campus and it is not considered that it would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area or upon the amenity and privacy of surrounding residential properties. Whilst the development would lead to an increase in pupil numbers, it is not considered that this would give rise to any significant increase in the level of noise and disturbance experienced by surrounding residents.

Furthermore, the existing access to the school would be retained with additional parking being provided within the site and the Council's Highways and Transportation section consider this to be an improvement to the current situation in that the development would address the existing shortfall in the car parking requirement for the existing school whilst also providing off-street car parking in accordance with the SPG.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

- The application has been submitted by, or on behalf of the Council or involving land owned by the Council, where the Council's interest is of more than a minor nature.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a new teaching and sports facility at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun. The project forms part of the RCTCBC 21st Century Schools programme and seeks to extend provision to enable an increase in pupils from the current capacity of 1,031 to 1,230 (including 200 sixth form students). The total number of staff would also be increased from 108 to 120. The proposal includes an element of community facilities that would also be available outside normal school hours.

The proposed new building would be site to the north of the existing school entrance and adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site where the existing caretaker's house and a number of car parking spaces are currently located. The building would have a broadly rectangular shaped footprint with the main teaching facilities being set out at the northern end and the sports and community facilities (including a new sports hall) at the southern end. The main public entrance would be located centrally on the west facing elevation addressing the main school building with a secondary (school) entrance being located towards the northern end. A new fence would be erected between the main public entrance and the school entrance to enable the building to offer community access whilst ensuring pupil segregation. Details submitted with the application indicate that the community facilities would be in operation between the hours of 07:00 – 21:00 Monday to Friday.

The building would measure 63 metres in width by a maximum of 44 metres in depth (total floor area is 3353m² over two floors) with the most southern end forming a larger box element with a sloping roof sitting behind a parapet. This section would measure 10.9 metres in height and would incorporate photovoltaic panels on the invisible part of the roof. The remainder of the building would incorporate a mono-pitch roof that would slope away from the box element and measure between 9.2 metres and 7.7 metres in height. External materials would predominantly consist of facing brickwork however, there would be areas of metal composite cladding at the rear with low profile seamed metal wall cladding being utilised around the southern, flat roofed (sports hall) section. Windows, doors, curtain walls and louvres would be aluminium. It is also noted that photovoltaic panels would be incorporated into the roof of the southern 'box' (sports hall) element.

The proposal also includes the provision of a new parking area containing 45 additional spaces at the southern boundary of the site. This would result in the loss of 3 existing outdoor tennis courts. The parking area would be accessed via the existing

bus parking area to the east. The plans also indicates the provision of 5 Electrical Vehicle spaces as well as 4 visitor spaces and numerous accessible parking spaces. A cycle storage area for 24 cycles would also be provided between the new building and existing parking area to the north.

The existing access to the school would be retained however, the road, pupil walkway and drop off area would be reconfigured to accommodate the new building.

In addition to a comprehensive set of plans, the application is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Pre-application Consultation Report (November 2020)
- Environmental Noise Assessment (24th July 2020)
- Initial Landscape Appraisal (November 2020)
- Drainage Strategy: Technical Note (26th November 2020)
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment (November 2020)
- Flood Consequences Assessment (November 2020)
- Project Environmental Plan
- Safe Routes to School Assessment (16th October 2020)
- Travel Plan (11th December 2020)
- Transport Statement (11th December 2020)
- Acoustic Design (26th November 2020)
- Tree Schedule (27th July 2020)
- Site Investigation Report (October 2020)
- Ecological Assessment (November 2020)
- Arboricultural Assessment (November 2020)

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site relates to an existing Welsh-medium secondary school known as Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun which is located within a predominantly residential area of Penywaun, Aberdare. Access to the site is currently obtained off Lawrence Avenue to the east (to be retained). Site levels change throughout the site with a general fall from south to north.

The current building is a large two storey structure which is located towards the north-western part of the site. Car and bus parking areas are located to the north, east and south of the building whilst a number of hard-surface games courts and a 3G sports pitch/tennis courts are located to the south. The area upon which the proposed building would be constructed is currently occupied by two demountable classroom units, a vacant caretaker's house and a car parking area (all to be removed/demolished).

The site is situated on the western edge of a predominantly residential area. An area of dense woodland to the north and east of the site forms a buffer between the school and the nearest residential dwellings to the east whilst Public Rights of Way lie beyond the northern and western boundaries of the site (AUN/1/1 and AUN/4/1 respectively). Further residential properties lie beyond another area of woodland to the southern boundary. The area of woodland to the north of the site is a designated Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC No. 15).

PLANNING HISTORY

19/1312	Non-material amendment to existing planning permission 19/0213/08 - alter design of demountable classroom unit.	Granted 26/05/2020
19/0213	Install 2 no. double demountable classrooms	Granted 16/04/2019
18/0825	Floodlighting for proposed artificial turf pitch	Granted 10/01/19
04/1438	Construct 3.5m high ball-catch fencing to protect existing playing fields	Granted 12/11/04
01/4059	Variation of cond. 1 of consent no. C00/4247 to continue the use of 3 mobile classrooms for a further 12 months	Granted 22/03/01
00/4247	New mobile classroom unit to house 3 classrooms	Granted 28/07/00
00/4173	Variation of cond. 2 on planning consent C99/4366 to revise the location of bus parking and dropping off area	Granted 05/12/00
99/4366	Phase II development, 2 no. two storey extensions to school, together with provision of additional sports facilities and upgraded car and bus parking area	Granted 08/02/00
99/4321	Siting of mobile classroom unit	Granted 08/09/99
99/4236	Siting of mobile classroom unit, new roadway and car park	Granted 24/06/99

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means of direct neighbour notification letters to 51 neighbouring properties (dated 17th December 2020) as well as through the erection of a number of site notices in the vicinity of the site (dated 23rd December 2020). A press notice was also placed in the local newspaper.

One letter has been received from a local resident which raises a number of queries/concerns. These are summarised as follows:

- Access to the school and whether there would be any changes
- Impact on the sports playing fields – i.e. noise, use of flood lights
- Impact upon neighbouring properties in terms of disturbances/devaluing of properties.

CONSULTATION

The following consultation responses have been received and will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this report:

Coal Authority – No objection

Countryside, Ecology, Landscape – No objection, subject to conditions

Flood Risk Management – No objection or condition recommended.

Highways and Transportation – No objection, subject to conditions

Public Health and Protection – No objection, subject to conditions

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service – No objection, comments provided

Welsh Water – No objection, subject to conditions

Any further consultation responses will be reported at the meeting.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site is located inside the defined settlement boundary. As indicated previously in this report, the site lies adjacent to two Public Right of Ways and adjacent to a Site of Important Nature Conservation. As such, the following policies are considered to be relevant to the proposal:

Core Policies

Policy CS1: Emphasis on building strong, sustainable communities.

Area Wide Policies

Policy AW 2: promotes development in sustainable locations which includes sites that are within the defined settlement boundary that would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses, that have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options and have good access to key services and facilities.

Policy AW 4: details the types of planning obligations that may be sought in order to make the proposal acceptable in land use planning terms and that Community Infrastructure Levy contributions might apply.

Policy AW 5: sets out criteria for appropriate amenity and accessibility on new development sites.

Policy AW 6: encourages proposals which are of a high standard of design, and are appropriate in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, etc.

Policy AW7: sets out criteria in respect of preserving and enhancing the building environment, including development proposals that would affect public rights of way.

Policy AW8: seeks to preserve and enhance the natural environment, including protected and priority species.

Policy AW10: sets out criteria for environmental protection and public health.

Northern Strategy Area

NSA12: identified criteria for assessment of development proposals within and adjacent to settlement boundaries.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design and Placemaking

Nature Conservation

Access Circulation and Parking

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of national planning policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where national planning policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's (WG) current position on planning policy. The document incorporates the objectives of the

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out the WG's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of planning applications.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

Other relevant national policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;
PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;
Manual for Streets

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main Issues:

Principle of the proposed development

The proposal seeks to construct a new building to facilitate additional teaching and community facilities at an existing secondary school that is located within the defined settlement boundary of Penywaun. The site is situated within an established built-up area that is predominantly residential in character and which has good access to a number of key local services and facilities as well as access to a range of sustainable modes of transport. The site is also conducive to travel on foot and bicycle. The site is therefore considered to be situated within a sustainable location, which is the key objective of Policy AW2 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Further requirements of Policy AW2 seek to ensure that proposed developments would not conflict with existing uses in the area and given the existing educational use of the site and the residential character of the surrounding area, the proposed educational and community uses, the proposal is generally considered to be acceptable in this regard. It is also noted that the site is not located within Zone C2 floodplain.

As such, the proposal is considered to comply with the criteria set out in Policy AW2 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and the principle of constructing an additional educational/community building at this existing educational site is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to an assessment of the criteria set out in the subsequent sections below.

Character and appearance of the site the immediate area

The proposal includes the construction of a new two-storey building that would provide additional teaching facilities at the northern end and sports and community facilities at the southern end. The building would be situated to the north of the existing school entrance and adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. It would be set further back from the existing caretaker's dwelling (to be demolished) and therefore further down into the slope which would result in the building being of a lower height than the existing building on site. The site is also well screened by dense woodland to the north, east and south which would reduce the overall visual impact of the building when viewed from the Public Right of Way (AUN/3/3) to the north and from existing residential properties to the east and south.

Whilst the building may be visible from longer ranging viewpoints and from the Public Right of Way to the west (AUN/4/1), it is considered that it would be viewed in context with the existing school building and grounds. Furthermore, the proposed siting of the building is considered to be appropriate and its scale would ensure that it would sit comfortably within the site. The building would be orientated to face a westerly direction to address the main school building with segregated accesses for the school and community. This would ensure that the building relates well to the existing school building whilst also enabling the building to be used by the community outside of normal school hours.

The building is considered to be of a more modern design to that of the existing school building however, it would be constructed using materials that would reference existing materials on site to ensure that it would be in-keeping with the context of the site and to ensure that it would not appear overly prominent when viewed from the surrounding area. Furthermore, the proposal includes a detailed soft landscaping scheme which would help to visually soften the development and ensure that it integrates well within the site and surrounding area.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact it would have upon the character and appearance of the site and the immediate surrounding area and the application would therefore comply with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Impact upon Brecon Beacons National Park

The application site is located just under 500m from the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park which is designated for its landscape quality. An Initial Landscape Appraisal (ILA) has been submitted to support the application which considers the potential impact of the proposal on the Brecon Beacons National Park. The report indicates that parts of the site are partially visible in long views from the north, in particular the relocated car park area and the roofscape of the existing school building. However, it also notes that much of the site is screened by woodland/tree cover and that the site is seen as part of a wider urban area along the lower river valley. The report considers that the proposed development would infill a small space within this settlement belt and subsequently concludes that the development would result in a negligible change to the surroundings of the National Park.

Natural Resources Wales have commented on the proposal in this regard. They predominantly agree with the contents of the ILA and that the proposal is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the landscape character of the National Park. However, they considered that the use of pale coloured materials would increase the visibility of the development and have therefore recommended the imposition of a planning condition in order to control the final finish colours to ensure that there would be no significant adverse impact upon the natural beauty and Special Qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Brecon Beacons National Park have been consulted on the proposal however, no response had been received at the time of writing this report. Any subsequent comments received will be reported at the meeting.

Residential amenity and privacy

The proposed building would be constructed adjacent to the eastern boundary of the school site which is in some proximity to an established residential area. The nearest properties to the proposed building are located between 50 and 70 metres away to the east and approximately 75 metres to the south-east and given this distance and the area of dense woodland between the site and those properties, it is unlikely that the development would give rise to any overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impact that would be detrimental to the amenity and privacy currently enjoyed by those properties.

The properties to the south of the site (properties at the end of Gamlyn Terrace and Cymric Close and in Fernleigh Place and Hirwaun Road) are situated at a higher level and may have some views of the development. However, it is not considered that these properties would experience any adverse loss of amenity and/or privacy in this regard. The proposed parking area towards to the southern end of the site would be situated a sufficient distance away from properties to the south (approximately 45m) and at a lower level. It would also be situated adjacent to an existing bus parking area and, as such, it is not considered that this would give rise to any loss of amenity.

It is noted that the proposal would result in additional pupils being educated at the site and in part of the site being used for community purposes outside of normal school hours. However, given that residents would already be accustomed to some degree of noise and disturbance as a result of the day-to-day operation of the school and any associated after school activities, it is not considered that the level of noise and disturbance would be significantly increased to an adverse or unacceptable level. Furthermore, the Council's Public Health and Protection division have not raised any objection in this regard.

In light of the above, it is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact upon the amenity and privacy of surrounding residential properties and the application is therefore considered to comply with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Access and highway safety

The proposal has been assessed by the Council's Highways and Transportation section in order to determine the potential impact of the proposal upon highway safety in the vicinity of the site. The response received indicates that no objection is raised in relation to the proposal however, a number of conditions are recommended. The comments received are summarised as follows:

The school currently has 1,060 pupils that are drawn from a large catchment area that extends from Abercynon to the south to Penderyn to the north. The school also accepts pupils from the neighbouring Merthyr Tydfil and Neath Port Talbot authority areas.

Free home to school transport is provided for pupils who live within the school's catchment area and who live two miles or more from the school. It is indicated that in the 2019/2020 academic year, prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic, a total of 1,038 pupils travelled to the school by bus which represents some 95% of all pupils (school roll was 1,090 in that year). A total of 20 school buses run at the start and end of each day.

Access

The application site is located off Lawrence Avenue in the residential area of Penywaun. Pedestrian access is via Lawrence Avenue which provides good quality footways on both sides of the street. These link with the wider pedestrian network that exists in Penywaun. The area also benefits from regular traffic calming measures that restrict traffic speed as well as good quality street lighting and segregated pedestrian footways available throughout.

School Access

The school is accessed from Lawrence Avenue which connects with Hirwaun Road (A4059) via Arfryn. The junction between Arfryn and Hirwaun Road is signal controlled.

Lawrence Avenue and Arfryn have good quality highway access to the school and are suitable for bus movements. The carriageways are generally 6m wide with parking bays provided adjacent to ensure that the entire width of the carriageway is largely free of obstruction to traffic.

Existing Trip Generation

For the 2019/20 academic year, a total of 1,038 pupils travelled to the school by bus. This number is a combination of pupils eligible for free school transport and those who purchased spare seats on school buses. The number represents some 95% of all pupils (school roll was 1,090 in that year). It follows that 5% of pupil trips would be made by walking, cycling or by car. For the purpose of our assessment it has been assumed that 2.5% travel by car and 2.5% by a combination of walking and cycling.

Based on the existing school population of 1,060 pupils it is estimated therefore that pupil movements will result in some 27 car arrivals (54 car movements) during each drop-off and pick-up period. There are currently 108 members of staff. It is considered that the 108 staff members will generate some 80 vehicle arrivals at the start of the day and 80 vehicle departures at the end of the school day.

In total therefore it is estimated that the existing school generates 174 peak hour vehicle movements:-

- 20 school bus arrivals
- 20 school bus departures
- 27 car arrivals (parent drop-off)
- 27 car departures (parent drop-off)
- 80 car arrivals in morning / departures in afternoon (staff)
- 174 Vehicle Movements Total

Proposed Trip Generation

The development will increase the school's capacity from 1,060 pupils to 1,230 pupils. Staff numbers will increase by some 12 to 120.

Based on 95% of pupils travelling by bus and 2.5% by car, it is estimated that the proposed increase in the school's population (additional 170 pupils) will result in an additional 162 bus passengers and would estimate that this will generate an additional 3 or 4 bus arrivals each morning and afternoon. An additional 4 pupils will travel to and from school by car.

There will be an additional 12 members of staff and, based on 2011 Census data figures, it is expected that some 74% (9) of these will drive to work.

In total therefore it is estimated that the increase in traffic generation as a result of the proposed development will be of the order of 32 peak hour vehicle movements comprising of:

- 4 school bus arrivals
- 4 school bus departures
- 4 car arrivals (parent drop-off)
- 4 car departures (parent drop-off)
- 9 car arrivals in morning / departures in afternoon (staff)
- 25 Vehicle Movements Total

Taking the above into consideration the impact on the existing highway network is negligible compared to the existing and therefore the proposed is acceptable.

Parking (Existing)

The site currently has 19 bus parking spaces as well as 64 car parking spaces within the school grounds. This is a shortfall of 19 spaces when compared to the parking requirements set out in the Council's SPG: Access, Circulation and Parking (2011).

In addition to the 64 car parking spaces, there are 20 short-stay drop-off/pick up parking bays positioned within the site on either side of the school's access road. These are kept clear for the use of parents/cares at the start and end of the day.

Parking (Proposed)

The plans indicate that 49 new parking areas will be created to replace the 23 spaces being lost to the construction of the new building. This will make up for the existing 19 space shortfall and provide additional spaces to cater for the growth of the school. A total of 106 parking spaces, including 7 accessible spaces, will be available at the school following the completion of the development.

The Council's SPG: Access, Circulation and Parking indicates that the 61 classrooms (existing and proposed) requires up-to a maximum of 105 off-street car parking spaces with 106 provided, which is considered to be acceptable.

Planning Policy Wales also require 10% of new non-residential car parking spaces to be electric vehicle (EV) charging points. The plans indicate that 5 EV charging spaces would be provided which equates to 10% if the 49 spaces proposed.

It is also noted that a service bay will be provided adjacent to the new school building for a commercial vehicle as well as provision for 2 motorcycle spaces and 24 new cycle stands, which is acceptable.

There is slight concern that there can potentially be 24 buses on site with only 19 bus parking bays. However, taking into account there is space within the circulatory area to accommodate the occasional bus if all spaces are occupied on balance the proposed is acceptable.

In light of the fact that the proposed off-street car parking addresses the existing shortfall and provides off-street car parking in compliance with the council's SPG: Access, Circulation and Parking, which is a betterment to the existing situation, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Travel Plan

The application is accompanied by a Travel Plan which seeks to encourage the school community – pupils, parents and staff- where possible to travel to school using sustainable modes of transport. The target of the Travel Plan is to reduce the number of car driver trips by one-fifth over the course of five years. The Travel Plan is considered to be acceptable and shall remain operation through the duration of the school's operation.

Safe Routes in Communities

The safety of children is of paramount importance and the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (2008 Measure) requires local authorities to assess the suitability of travel for learners between home and places of education and training.

Pupils living within the 2 mile catchment area are expected to be able to walk from home to school.

This assessment considers the availability and quality of pedestrian routes to the school within this 2 mile catchment area.

There are segregated footways with street lighting throughout the areas contained within the school's 2 mile catchment. No routes have been identified where there is no segregated footway or footpath available.

There is a traffic free active travel route that runs to the rear of the school that links with Hirwaun and Trecynon. There is concern that this route has no street lighting provision during winter months. However, taking into account there are other routes available on balance is acceptable.

In light of the comments received from the Council's Highways and Transportation section, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact it would have upon highway safety in the vicinity of the site and the application would therefore comply with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Other Issues:

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation.

Drainage

The proposal has been assessed by the Council's Flood Risk Management team in order to determine the potential impact of the proposal upon surface water drainage. The comments received do not raise any objection to the proposal, nor is any condition recommended. The comments received are summarised as follows:

A high surface water flood risk has been identified adjacent to the existing school building on its eastern side as well as at the watercourse lying along the eastern side of the development. A medium and low surface water flood risk has been identified to the southern boundary as well as areas leading to the school.

The application does not provide any information on how surface water flood risk will be managed at the site, although it is suggested that a Sustainable Drainage System will be utilised.

The proposed construction works would be greater than 100m² and the applicant will therefore be required, under Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to submit an application for Sustainable Drainage Approval prior to works commencing on site. The application will also be required to comply with Part H of the building regulations which sets out the design requirements associated to the use of infiltration drainage.

The surface water flood risk at the site would therefore be satisfactorily managed by both the building regulations and Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Welsh Water have also been consulted on the proposal and no objection is raised however, the response received indicates that the proposed development is crossed by a trunk watermain. It is advised that no structure would be permitted within a minimum distance of 3.5m from the centre line of the pipe however, having checked the map provided by Welsh Water, the proposed building would be sited approximately 60 metres to the south of the pipeline.

As such, it is considered that the proposal could be made acceptable in terms of the impact it would have upon local amenity in terms of flooding and the application is therefore considered to comply with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Ecology

Bats

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Assessment (November 2020) which indicates that a common pipistrelle night roost was found in one of the buildings to be demolished. In addition, three trees with potential bat roosting features will be affected by the proposal.

The Council's Ecologist and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have assessed the contents of the Ecological Assessment and agree with the recommendations set out in Section 4.5 of the report. It is recommended that the Ecological Assessment submitted with the application is included within a condition that identifies the approved plans and documents on the decision notice.

It is also advised that a European Protected Species (EPS) licence is required for the development. NRW do not consider that the development is likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range, provided that the measures stipulated in section 4.5 (Bats) of the survey are adhered to.

A further condition is recommended by the Council's Ecologist to ensure the precautionary and mitigation measures relating to birds, reptiles and Hazel dormice set out in Section 4 of the Ecological Assessment.

Trees

The application is accompanied by a Tree Retention and Removal Plan, an Arboricultural Report (November 2020) and a Tree Schedule which indicate that the majority of trees on and adjacent to the site would be retained. One larch tree would be removed to facilitate the construction of the new building. The details also include tree protection plans and measures to which the Council's Ecologist raises no objection, providing that a condition is imposed to ensure the implementation of the tree protection measures indicated in the details submitted.

Landscaping

The Council's Ecologist is satisfied with the details of the landscaping scheme submitted.

In light of the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon features of importance to nature conservation and the application would therefore comply with Policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Public Health

The Council's Public Health and Protection section have assessed the application and have not raised any objection to the proposal however, as the site is located in close proximity to a number of residential properties, a number of conditions have been recommended. The majority of the conditions recommended relate to issues that are better dealt with by separate environmental health legislation (hours of construction, noise, dust and waste) and it is not considered necessary to duplicate them through the imposition of planning conditions.

Coal Risk

The site has been identified as falling within the defined Development High Risk Area in respect of historical coal mining and a Coal Mining Risk Assessment has therefore been submitted to support the application. The report has been assessed by the Coal Authority who confirm that part of the site lies in an area of likely historic unrecorded coal mine workings at shallow depth. The Coal Authority consider that the report has been informed by an appropriate range of sources of information, including the findings from previous investigations. The report concludes that the risks from past coal mining activity in this area is low and no further investigations or remedial works are therefore proposed. The Coal Authority have not raised any objection or recommended any conditions.

Issues raised by resident

The issues raised by the local resident are addressed as follows:

- **Access to the school and whether there would be any changes** – The existing access to the school via Lawrence Avenue would be retained, although some improvement works would be carried out to provide a new pedestrian crossing and minor improvements to the bed in the road.
- **Impact on the sports playing fields – i.e. noise, use of flood lights** – The sports playing fields would be retained at the southern end of the site, although it is noted that 3 outdoor games courts would be lost as a result of the additional parking provision. There are no details provided within the application to suggest that the sports fields would be used or managed any differently to the current situation and although it is clear that the school's pupil capacity would be increased, it is not considered that this would significantly increase the use of sports playing fields or result in any unacceptable levels of additional noise or result in and additional use of flood lights.
- **Impact upon neighbouring properties in terms of disturbances/devaluing of properties** – This has primarily been discussed in a previous section of this

report (*Residential Amenity & Privacy*) which concluded that the impact upon neighbouring properties is unlikely to be significant. Whilst it is noted that the development will inevitably result in some degree of noise and disturbance during the construction phase, this will be for a temporary period only and therefore cannot be used as a reason to refuse planning permission. Whilst the proposal would result in additional pupils being educated at the site, It is not considered that the overall use of the site for educational and community uses will result in significant levels of noise and disturbance that would harm the amenity of surrounding residential properties. Furthermore, the impact of the proposal upon the value of surrounding residential properties is not a material planning consideration.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is liable for a charge under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) however, the CIL rate for this type of development as set out in the Charging Schedule is £nil and therefore no CIL is payable.

Conclusion

The proposed development would provide a modern addition to the existing school, providing much-needed additional teaching space as well as an opportunity to provide community facilities for local residents. It is considered that the proposals can be accommodated at the site without leading to overdevelopment and the building would be of a scale, form and design that would be appropriate to its setting and it is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area. It is also considered that the development would have a negligible impact upon the nearby Brecon Beacons National Park.

The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring residential properties in terms of loss of privacy or amenity and no adverse comments have been received from local residents in this regard. Additionally, the impact on highway safety in the vicinity of the site has been assessed by the Council's Highways and Transportation section and is considered to be acceptable, subject to conditions.

Whilst bats have been found on site, NRW and the Council's Ecologist consider the recommendations and mitigation measures contained within the submitted Ecological Assessment to be reasonable and acceptable and these can be secured via suitable planning conditions.

Having taken into account all of the issues identified above, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the relevant policies of the Rhondda Cynon Taf

Local Development Plan and is therefore acceptable. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent:

- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-0001 Rev. PL_PL05: Site Location Plan (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-88002 Rev. PL_PL05: Proposed Site Strategy Overview (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL—XX-ZZ-DR-A-2001 Rev. PL_PL07: Proposed Elevations (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-ZZ-DR-A-10XX-0101 Rev. PL_PL05: Proposed Floor Plans (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-01-DR-A-XXXX-0102 Rev. PL_PL05: Roof Plan (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM XX XX GA C 0202 Rev. P03: Proposed Site Levels and Contours Plan (Sheet 1 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM XX XX GA C 0203 Rev. PO3: Proposed Site Levels and Contours Plan (Sheet 2 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM ZZ 00 SK C 0115 Rev. PO2: Swept Path Analysis (MEWP & Commercial Space Tracking) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM ZZ 00 SK C 0114 Rev. PO4: Swept Path Analysis (Access to North West Parking Area) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM ZZ 00 SK C 0113 Rev. P04: Swept Path Analysis (Refuse Vehicle) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM ZZ 00 SK C 0112 Rev. P06: Swept Path Analysis (Panel Van) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM ZZ 00 SK C 0111 Rev P05: Swept Path Analysis (Fire Tender) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM XX XX GA C 0204 Rev. P03: External Works Plan (Sheet 1 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. CC2141 CAM XX XX GA C 0205 Rev. P03: External Works Plan (Sheet 2 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)

- Drawing No. YGR-TBA-VX-XX-DR-E-630-001 Rev. P01: External Lighting Lux Layout (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09161 Rev. PL_PL07: Hard Landscape Plan (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09181 Rev. PL_PL07: Fencing and Security Plan (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09403 Rev. PL_PL07: Bin Store (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09402 Rev. PL_PL07: Cycle Store Detail (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-ZZZZ-09141 Rev. PL_PL07: Soft Landscape and Ecology Plan (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09405 Rev. PL_PL07: Soil Profiles (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09101 Rev. PL_PL07: Tree Retention and Removal Plan (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09001 Rev. PL_PL07: Landscape General Arrangement (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09404 Rev. PL_PL07: Typical Tree Pit in Soft Landscape (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09301 Rev. PL_PL05: Site Sections (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-STL-XX-XX-DR-L-09401 Rev. PL_PL07: Sprinkler Tank Detail (rec. 11 February 2021)
- Drawing No. YGR-TBA-ZZ-00-DR-M-001 Rev. PO2: Mechanical Services Ground Floor Cooling Layout (Sheet 1 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Drawing No. YGR-TBA-ZZ-00-DR-M-550-002 Rev. PO2: Mechanical Services Ground Floor Cooling Layout (Sheet 2 of 2) (rec. 14 December 2020)
- Document Ref. T01615: Project Environmental Plan – Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun by Willmot Dixon, Rev A, dated 24 November 2020
- Document Ref. CC2141-CAM-ZZ-XX-RP-C-0004 (S3): Travel Plan
- Document Ref. 12723/GNS/20/SI: Site Investigation Report
- Document Ref. YGR-MAL-XX-XX-RP-Y-9001 S1 P01 – Acoustic Design Report
- Document Ref. YGR-MAC-ZZ-XX-RP-Y-XX-1000 – Environmental Noise Assessment

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. Prior to commencement of development, details of the colour finish(es) of the external walls and roof for the proposed school building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development

shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and be maintained as such for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To conserve and enhance the character and special qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

4. Before the New School Block is brought into use the means of access, together with the parking and turning facilities, shall be laid out in accordance with the submitted plans approved by the Local Planning Authority. The off-street parking for cars and service vehicles shall remain thereafter for the parking of vehicles.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure vehicles are parked off the highway, in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for;
 - a) the means of access into the site for all construction traffic,
 - b) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
 - c) the management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
 - d) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
 - e) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
 - f) wheel cleansing facilities,
 - g) the sheeting of lorries leaving the site.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic, in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in Section 4 of the *'Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Lawrence Avenue, Penywaun, Rhondda Cynon Taf* Ecological Assessment by First Ecology, dated November 2020, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of ecology and to afford protection to animal species in accordance with Policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the developer shall submit to the Local Authority details of all retaining walls to be built as part of the development, including drawings and structural calculations. The submitted details shall be accompanied by a certificate from an appropriately accredited independent consulting engineer confirming that the proposed retaining wall(s) are acceptable from a structural perspective. The approved retaining wall(s) shall be built in accordance with the agreed details. Following construction of the retaining wall(s), additional certification from an independent suitably accredited engineer confirming that the works have been constructed in accordance with the agreed details and that they are physically fit for their intended purpose shall be supplied to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and public safety, in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.