

Application Number: 23/0315/LA

Date Received: 10.05.2023

Applicant: CCBC

Description and Location of Development: Erect a two storey extension, single storey link to form a new main entrance to the school, additional parking, outdoor play spaces and associated works - Trinity Fields School And Resource Centre Caerphilly Road Ystrad Mynach Hengoed CF82 7XW

APPLICATION TYPE: Local Authority Application

SITE AND DEVELOPMENT

Location: The school site is located to the rear of Ty Graddfa on the western side of Caerphilly Road, Ystrad Mynach.

Site description: The existing school is a single storey modern school building set within extensive grounds including a large car park and playing areas etc. The building is finished in facing brickwork with a tiled roof.

To the north of the existing school site lies Holy Trinity Church, its grounds and Church Hall. A residential estate is located to the west of the site with the nearest residential properties of Trinity Close adjoining the site. Penallta Rugby Club and Caerphilly County Borough Council's Ty Graddfa offices are located immediately to the south-east. The sports playing pitches known as Trinity Pitch 1 (T1) and Trinity Pitch 2 (T2) lie to the south and south-west of the site running into an area of park land designated as (LE1.19 Ystrad Mynach Park). The park however is not within the curtilage of the application site.

The area on which the extension is to be constructed is currently used for parking and drop off purposes and is largely made up of a mixture of brick pavers, tarmac and managed grass areas.

Development: The application seeks full planning consent to erect a two storey extension, single storey link to form a new main entrance to the school, additional parking, outdoor play spaces and associated works.

The extension will provide additional classrooms with specialist intervention areas, including a new soft playroom available for community use outside of school hours, outdoor play spaces together with a relocated memorial garden and school allotment area.

The planning application and related plans are supported with the following documents:
- Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report;

- Design and Access Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Bat Survey;
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment;
- Arboricultural Report;
- Tree Survey;
- Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Baseline Noise Survey;
- Ground Investigation Report;
- Transport Statement;
- Travel Plan;
- Technical Design Note;
- Energy Statement;
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy;
- Drainage and SUDs Strategy;
- Materials Schedule;
- Cycle Storage Details; and
- 3D Visualisations.

Dimensions: The two storey extension has a maximum footprint measuring 55.3 metres wide by 19.0 metres long with a maximum height measuring 13.55 metres above ground level.

The single storey link measures 13.2 metres wide by 8.75 metres long with an overall height measuring 4.2 metres above ground level.

The Gross External Area (GEA) combined measures a total of 2,2387 square metres.

Materials: The external finishes comprise of mixed pattern brickwork, basalt zinc mineral board rainscreen cladding, red, green and yellow mineral board rainscreen reveals, grey aluminium curtain wall frame glazing, louvres and doors, grey glazed spandrel panels, grey colour coated steel rainwater goods, grey pressed aluminium copings, acrylic roof canopies and green and blue roofs.

The hard landscaping comprises of porous resin bound gravel and porous rubber crumb play areas.

Ancillary development, e.g. parking: The following additional works are proposed:-

Increase the total car parking provision for the school to 105 car parking spaces, this is an increase on the existing of 78 spaces and will be achieved by locating a new car parking area of 15 spaces to the east of the school and immediately north of Ty Graddfa, as well as a 36 car parking area between the T1 sports pitch and park to the south of the site comprised of a no dig construction, and two additional spaces on the access road leading to the school gates. The additional provision includes 8 accessible parking bays located near the main entrance to the school and 4 electric vehicle

charging bays located in the school car park to the east. In addition, there are also 3 motorcycle bays proposed.

- A 10 bay cycle shelter will be provided to the north of the main entrance;
- A new one-way covered drop-off area will also be provided; and
- The inclusion of photovoltaic panel arrays on the two storey extension.

PLANNING HISTORY 2010 TO PRESENT 11/0723/LA - Install P V panels to roof of school - Granted - 26.10.2011.

16/0187/LA - Erect two small scale extensions to the existing school building to provide essential additional storage and resources spaces - Granted - 30.08.2016.

16/0564/LA - Erect a single-storey pitched roof extension providing two additional classrooms, toilets, resource areas and circulation constructed in two phases - Granted - 30.08.2016.

17/0111/COND - Discharge conditions 5 (bat roost provision) and 6 (breeding bird provision) of planning consent 16/0564/LA (Erect a single-storey pitched roof extension providing two additional classrooms, toilets, resource areas and circulation constructed in two phases) - Decided - 05.04.2017.

17/0059/NMA - Seek approval of a non-material amendment to planning consent 16/0564/LA (Erect a single-storey pitched roof extension providing two additional classrooms, toilets, resource areas and circulation constructed in two phases) to amend the proposed layout to reduce the size - Granted - 15.02.2017.

POLICY

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to November 2021 - Adopted 2010.

Site Allocation: The site is located within the settlement boundary of Ystrad Mynach.

Policies: SP2 (Development Strategy - Development in the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC)), SP4 (Settlement Strategy), Policy SP5 (Settlement Boundaries), Policy SP6 (Place Making), SP10 (Conservation of Natural Heritage), SP18 (Protection of Strategic Leisure Network), SP21 (Parking Standards), SP22 (Community, Leisure and Education Facilities), CW1 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Social Inclusion), CW2 (Amenity), CW3 (Design Considerations - Highways), CW4 (Natural Heritage Protection), CW5 (Protection of the Water Environment), CW6 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection), CW7 (Protection of Open Space), CW8 (Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities), CW15 (General Locational Constraints) and LE1 (Protection of Formal Open Spaces).

Supplementary Planning Guidance: LDP 6 (Building Better Places to Live), LDP 4 (Trees and Development), LDP 5 (Car Parking Standards), LDP 8 (Protection of Open Space) and Ystrad Mynach Masterplan (2019).

NATIONAL POLICY Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021), Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (2021), Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009), Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (October 1997), Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016), Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009) and Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Did the application have to be screened for an EIA? No.

Was an EIA required? Not applicable.

COAL MINING LEGACY

Is the site within an area where there are mining legacy issues? The site is located within a low risk coal mining legacy area, informative advice will however be provided and should any issues arise this will be dealt with through the Building Regulations approval process.

CONSULTATION

Natural Resources Wales - Awaiting further comments regarding the revised Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) submitted in response to previous comments relating to suggested conditions to be imposed to any consent.

Should further comments be received in the interim, these will be reported to Members verbally during Planning Committee.

Transportation Engineering Manager - CCBC - The Transport Statement prepared by Hydrock sets out the highway/ transport element of the proposed scheme. On review the Highway Authority consider that the methodology and its conclusions are acceptable. The increase in vehicle movements will not have a significant impact on the local highway network, and the proposed parking provision as shown is in accordance with LDP5 - Parking Standards and is therefore acceptable, as is the proposed layout as shown on the Site Plan 90060 - P03. No objection is raised subject to conditions.

Environmental Health Manager - No objection subject to conditions imposed to any consent relating to controlling noise and dust suppression.

Senior Engineer (Drainage) - Advises that the proposed development requires Sustainable Drainage Approval.

Dwr Cymru - No objection however informative advice is provided.

Waste Strategy And Operations Manager - No objection, informative advice is also provided.

Social Services (Mental Health / Adult Services) - No comments received.

Strategic & Development Plans - In principle no objection subject to seeking the views of the relevant consultees in relation to Policies CW3, CW4 and CW6.

Heritage Officer - Peter Thomas - The proposed development is located approximately 200m south-east of the Church of Holy Trinity (Grade II) and 200m north-west the War Memorial (Grade II) and 250m northwest of the Old Fire Station (Grade II).

The Church is wholly screened from the proposed development by the existing school. As a result there will be no impact on the setting of this listed building arising from it.

Both the War Memorial and Old Fire Station have been relocated from their original locations meaning their setting makes a much more limited contribution to the significance of each building.

Given the above, I am of the view that the proposed extension will have no impact on the setting of the listed buildings identified above.

Placemaking Officer - Douglas McGlyn - No objection.

Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees) - No comments received.

Landscape Architect - CCBC - In principle there is no objection subject to conditions, however some concerns are raised in respect of tree loss. Informative advice is also provided to be conveyed to the applicant.

Chief Fire Officer - No objection but provides informative advice to be conveyed to the applicant.

Western Power Distribution - No comments received.

Estates Manager - No objection.

ADVERTISEMENT

Extent of advertisement: The application was advertised in the press, by way of site notices and twelve neighbouring occupiers were notified by letter.

Response: Thirteen letters of representation in support of the development have been received.

One objection letter has been received from Gelligaer Community Council. The application was also called in by a ward member for Ystrad Mynach.

Summary of observations: A summary of the representations received are as follows:

Comments received in support of the development:

1. Trinity Fields is an award winning education establishment who needs all the support from the community as possible.
2. The extension and surrounding developments will enhance the experiences and opportunities for the pupils.
3. This school has changed the lives of both the pupils and their families and provides continuous support.
4. Development of the school and the additional funding requirements is much needed.
5. Ideally a new school is required but an extension will suffice in the meantime.
6. The proposal is an important first step in addressing the ever-increasing demand for places at the school and its expansion is urgently needed.
7. The plans display a good balance between the need to create extra teaching space and resource areas with the visual and environmental effects of development.
8. The extension proposal is critical to the school maintaining its excellent categorisation, as evidenced in the 2019 ESTYN school inspection and continuing to be an inclusive school.
9. The school is recognised by parents/carers, CCBC and the EAS as being one of the top performing special schools in Wales.
10. The extension proposal would provide improved accommodation and technologies for the most vulnerable learners and staff.

Comments received from Gelligaer Community Council objecting to the proposed development:

11. The loss of a green space will threaten the well-being and health of local people.
12. The development could affect the Green Flag status on the park.
13. Parking between two rugby pitches will raise issues of safety.
14. The development will potentially increase the risk of flooding.
15. Loss of biodiversity.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT

What is the likely effect of the determination of this application on the need for the Local Planning Authority to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area?

There are no specific crime and disorder implications material to the determination of this application.

EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

Does the development affect any protected wildlife species? The Preliminary Ecological Assessment and bat survey submitted confirms that bat activity surveys were undertaken during the summer months of June 2021. Direct evidence of bat use was identified; a single Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed emerging from the same place during both emergence surveys. A maximum of 1 bat was observed using the building as a day roost during the emergence surveys. The emergence surveys did not identify a maternity roost and the buildings did not offer significant potential for hibernating bats.

Whilst the school building is now a confirmed bat roost it should also be noted that the proposed extension does not impact on the identified bat roost location or interfere with the roof space of the existing school. However careful consideration has been given to the use of lighting within the site. Consequently, in that there are no planned works to the roof space of the existing school, the Local Planning Authority does not deem it necessary to apply the three tests as part of the considerations in the determination for this application. This will be a matter for the applicant to address as part of any future planned phased developments on the site. Informative advice to this effect will also be conveyed to the applicant.

Policy 9 of Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 states that action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment. As scheme for biodiversity enhancement has been included as part of the proposed development.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Is this development Community Infrastructure Levy liable? Yes the development is CIL liable as the proposal intends to create more than 100 square metres of additional floor space. However, the proposed uses are charged at £0 per square metre for new development, as such no CIL will be collected.

ANALYSIS

Policies: Full planning permission is sought to erect a two storey extension, single storey link to form a new main entrance to the school, additional parking, outdoor play

spaces and associated works to an existing Additional Learning Needs School part of the wider Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, which is a major long-term capital investment programme jointly funded by the Welsh Government and the Local Authority.

The proposed development is for the extension of facilities at Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre which includes additional parking provision as part of the council's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. The school caters for pupils from the ages of 3-19 with a wide range of educational needs and requirements and the extension to the existing school would provide additional facilities to accommodate the growing demand for school places for an additional 80 pupils.

The extension of the school is proposed on land immediately south of the existing school building. The proposal also contains additional car parking provision on two areas of land, one east of the existing school building and the other to the south of the adjacent playing pitch identified as T1 which is designated Education land with the identified deed package associated with Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre and Ty Graddfa.

The main considerations in the determination of this application are:

- The principle of development on the site;
- The impact upon trees and landscaping;
- The impact upon ecology;
- The protection of open space;
- The protection of community and leisure facilities;
- The visual impact of the development in terms of place making, design and layout;
- The impact upon residential amenity; and
- The impact upon the highway network.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE

The application site is an existing school and resource centre located in the Northern Connections Corridor. Policy SP5 (Settlement Boundaries) is the key policy mechanism for achieving resource efficient settlements within the Local Development Plan (LDP). The delineation of the settlement boundary defines the area within which development would normally be allowed, taking into account material planning considerations. Importantly it promotes the full and effective use of urban land and concentrates development within existing settlements. The application site falls within the defined settlement boundary of Ystrad Mynach and in policy terms further development of the site would be consistent with Policy SP5 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - Adopted 2010 in that it promotes the full and effective use of urban land and serves to concentrate new development within the existing settlement.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

Criterion D of Policy SP2 (Development in the Northern Connections Corridor) seeks to protect the natural heritage from inappropriate development. In tandem with criterion D of Policy SP2, Policy SP10 (Conservation of Natural Heritage) is of relevance and indicates that the Council will protect, conserve, enhance and manage this asset in the consideration of all development proposals.

In tandem with the above Policy CW6 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection) requires proposals to ensure that effective measures are taken to ensure the protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows where they make a positive contribution to the natural and built environment. More specifically, the policy requires reasonable efforts to retain trees, woodlands and hedgerows as part of development proposals; arboricultural surveys to provide adequate mitigation and compensation for any that are removed; and adequate protection measures for root systems of any that are retained. Whilst there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on site, there are however a series of mature trees present along the western, northern, and southern boundary of the site. Details of these are shown on the tree constraints plan, within the accompanying Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey. The proposed layout has been designed to minimise the loss of existing trees and hedgerows within the site however the site does contain a range of young to early mature trees and hedgerows within the school grounds which present a number of arboricultural constraints and therefore a number of trees within the school site would be lost to facilitate the extension and associated works, however most of the trees identified for removal are low quality Category 'C', it should also be noted that three smaller moderate-quality Category 'B' trees would also require removal. The identified trees and hedgerows have been fully detailed in the Arboricultural Survey Report, however it is anticipated that these losses can be mitigated by replacement planting that will be of a similar maturity within 20 years. Furthermore, given the early age of some of the tree specimens, it is hopeful that some of the trees can be removed safely without compromising their existing root systems and re-planted elsewhere within the site to supplement and enhance the proposed landscaping scheme.

It should also be noted that the additional parking spaces to be provided at the entrance area adjacent to the nearest playing sports pitch (T1) to the south of the school is currently used for the siting of unauthorised storage containers underneath the existing tree canopies, this area would be subject to a no-dig construction to safeguard the root protection areas of the existing trees. Additional off-site tree planting works within this area is also proposed.

The Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey has been undertaken by an experienced arborist and present an unbiased third-party opinion offering professional advice on the value of the trees on or adjacent to this site. The conclusions of the Arboricultural Report confirm that subject to adhering to the suggested tree protection recommendations, the proposed development can be constructed without any significant long-term adverse impact on the retained trees or the visual amenity of the area. Overall, there is no net loss in the total number of trees and therefore, subject to

ensuring that the tree reports and associated landscaping plans are listed as part of the approved plans and documents condition, the proposed development complies with Policy CW6.

In terms of landscaping, the existing site predominantly comprises of hard surfacing with limited areas of soft landscaping. The proposal would result in the loss of a small area of highway verge to the east of the existing building and an additional area of land to the south of the existing rugby pitch to accommodate additional car parking and a new pedestrian footpath. A detailed landscaping scheme has been submitted and has been carefully considered in order to create an attractive and welcoming environment that will enhance the overall aesthetic appeal of the proposed school extension. The proposed landscaping will aim to provide a welcoming and inviting outdoor space for students, staff, and visitors alike, promoting a sense of community and well-being. The existing native and semi-native perimeter planting is to be enhanced and protected to help aid visual amenity and to improve biodiversity.

Much of the new landscaping around the extension will be to provide appropriate learning and play space for the pupils and to cater for their more complex needs, which in turn will maximise their learning experience. In the hard landscape areas this will be a blend of surface treatments including tarmac (to accommodate occasional service vehicles), resin bound gravel and wet pour safety flooring. Much of the new landscaping around the extension will be to provide appropriate learning and play space for the pupils.

Together with providing a learning resource the soft landscape areas will also provide an appropriate environment that supports the enhancement of ecology and promotes well-being. The primary areas of landscaping include a memorial garden, allotments and forest school. The planting scheme is native to the locality and includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcover's that will promote biodiversity and attract pollinators. It is therefore considered that a suitable approach has been taken to landscaping and biodiversity with retention of trees where possible as well as enhancement of the biodiversity opportunities within the site. No objection is raised by this Council's Landscape Officer but informative advice is provided regarding some planting choices. The details submitted are however considered acceptable in planning terms and should the applicant wish to review any planting changes, there are appropriate mechanisms that can be utilised to change the planting scheme, if required.

ECOLOGY

Alongside Policies SP2, SP10 and CW6, Policy CW4 (Natural Heritage Protection) states that development proposals must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the ecological importance of local designations, or, where the need for the development outweighs the ecological importance of the site, the harm must be minimised by mitigation measures and offset as far as practicable by compensation measures. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations

however SINC Coedcae Mawr, NH 3.83 is immediately adjacent to the south-western boundary of the school site.

An Ecological Impact Assessment Report and Bat Survey Report have been submitted to accompany the application and based on the surveys undertaken in 2021 and in years prior to that the report confirms that a low number of bat calls were recorded and a bat was observed using the south-western gable. Whilst the building is confirmed as a bat roost, the proposed development would not affect the roof space of the existing school. Therefore having regard to the location of the building, the presence of a bat roost within the existing school building, being in a semi-rural environment with excellent ecological connectivity to suitable feeding areas, together with its proximity to Coedcae Mawr SINC, makes the location of the building suitable for bat use. The recommendations contained within the reports confirm that a detailed external lighting plan will be required to minimise any external light disturbance to the bats using the building and the surrounding area along with protecting the hedgerow to the rear of the site from light spill.

There is a need to provide additional external amenity and security lighting within the development site, the external lighting scheme submitted considers the key ecological impacts and the associated proposed mitigation strategy addresses observations of bats commuting over the school and the confirmed bat roost to the south-west of the existing building by directing luminaires downwards and controlled via passive infrared (PIR) sensors.

Additional measures to enhance biodiversity and habitat potential include the incorporation of bird and boxes within the rainscreen cladding of the proposed extension together with providing species rich planting to encourage wildlife and pollinators in addition to the SUDs features.

The application is also accompanied by a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) undertaken by a Tier 1 contractor and included within the CEMP is a detailed Environmental Risk Assessment which identifies all individual health, safety and environmental considerations and their significance along with appropriate mitigation for any activities during the construction phase of the development.

The Council's Ecologist has raised no objection to the proposed development and it is therefore considered that the proposed development would comply with the requirements of Policies SP10 and CW4.

PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE

Policy CW7 (Protection of Open Space) identifies the circumstances where development on open space would be permitted. The Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on the Protection of Open Space to clarify what is protected under Policy CW7 (informal open space) and what is protected under

Policy CW8 (formal open space). The small area of land proposed for additional car parking to the east of the existing school building is highway verge and would be included under the classification of CW7.

Policy CW7 states that developments on areas of open space within settlements will only be permitted where:

- A) The amount of open space remaining in the neighbourhood would still be adequate to serve local needs; and
- B) The site has no significant value as a recreational resource or an area of visual amenity.

The methodology in the SPG is based upon the Fields in Trust (FIT) Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play. The FIT standard indicates that there should be 0.55 Hectares of informal playing space per 1000 population, which, when applied to a geographical area, broadly equates to 3 Hectares of informal open space within a 0.5 km radius of a site.

Where the radius encompasses areas of land that are not within the settlement boundary, the threshold needs to be recalculated so the amount of open space required is proportionate to the land that is within the settlement boundary. On a pro rata basis this would equate to a requirement of approximately 2.3 Hectares as only 77.4% of the buffer area lies within the settlement boundary.

An assessment has been undertaken of open space within a 0.5 km radius. The assessment indicated that development of the site would result in 3.1 Hectares of usable informal open space remaining in the area and this far exceeds the required 2.3 Hectares. This is therefore acceptable in terms of criterion A of Policy CW7.

However, the proposal would also need to adhere to criterion B of Policy CW7. This area is classified as highway verge and has no significant value as a recreational resource. However, the area does have some visual amenity as the current landscape provides a natural barrier between the school and traffic on the A472. The proposed car parking provision on this area of land is likely to erode the screen currently provided by the landscape. However, this can be addressed through the proposed landscaping scheme that provides low level screening of the parking areas.

In addition, the proposal also includes additional parking provision on an area of land south of the existing playing pitch (T1). Outdoor sports facilities including playing pitches are protected under Policy CW8 (Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities).

PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY AND LEISURE FACILITIES

Policy CW8 states that proposals that would result in the loss of a community and/or leisure facility will not be permitted except where:

A) A comparable replacement facility can be provided by the developer either on or off site, and within easy and convenient access on foot or by bicycle, or

B) It can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements.

The existing playing pitch (T1) and its immediate surroundings are considered as community/leisure land but it is important to note that this land does not form part of the curtilage associated with the wider Ystrad Mynach Park and it should be emphasised that the proposed development would not result in the loss of any of the playing pitch. However, a small area of land would be used for car parking to serve the proposed development during peak times. Presently this area is used for the siting of storage containers, which appear to be unauthorised and the removal of the containers from this location would also be advantageous in visual amenity terms. Consequently, the proposed off-site parking area is not considered to be contrary to Policy CW8 in that the additional car parking provision would not restrict access to the playing pitch by members of the public. The submitted details do not propose the construction of off-site fencing to enclose the site and in that all of the land is within the ownership of the Local Authority identified as Education Land, the collective aim is for all users to enjoy safe and convenient access to both the playing facilities and the wider park.

PLACE MAKING, DESIGN AND LAYOUT

In line with national planning policy, Policy SP6 (Place Making) requires development proposals to contribute to the creation of sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features. Policy SP6 requires new development to incorporate resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation and where appropriate through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). In that the proposed development exceeds more than 100 square metres of floor space the development will require SUDs approval. The accompanying drainage strategy and landscaping scheme indicates that the proposed drainage design maximises the use of multiple above ground including both green and blue roofs, soft SuDS features which will create habitats that are self-sustaining and resilient to climate change and link with the local natural and semi-natural species and habitats within the wider area together with retaining any existing landscaping, where possible. Those technical details will require consideration from the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB), an independent approval process outside of planning legislation.

The planning system has to play a role in making the development resilient to tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system, improving air quality and the sustainable management of natural resources along with shaping the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors which determine health and which promote or impact on well-being in line with the Healthier Wales goal as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In that regard the proposed development has been designed to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental

Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'Excellent' rating for energy efficiency with an overall BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' together with achieving an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'A'. A detailed Energy Statement accompanies the application with the building designed as a sustainable development utilising low energy and passive means of heating, cooling and ventilation with highly efficient LED lighting and automated controls to reduce energy consumption. The building is also to be constructed from responsibly sourced materials and includes the incorporation of solar photo voltaic roof panels and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

From a place making perspective the overall character of the school site will remain, however rather than seek to replicate the architectural forms of the existing single storey school, the new designs promote a building which is simple and contemporary, and is considered to positively contrast with the current context, and reflect a modern learning community.

In terms of the scale and massing the main extension will be 2 storey's in height and taller than the existing school building to enable sufficient space to accommodate the requirements for the school and to also maintain a limited footprint in order to allow external space around the extension for appropriate external play areas and landscaping. Whilst the extension will be taller in height, the simple flat roof design reduces the overall scale and massing and the overall composition of the two forms will be closely related.

With regards to its siting the two storey extension is located immediately to the south and parallel with the existing school and adjacent to the existing school entrance. The existing school entrance is to be re-designed and re-configured with the addition of a single storey flat roof extension to act as a transitional linking structure between the existing school and the two storey extension and will serve as a main entrance to both and the external finishes will match those of the two storey extension.

In terms of design rather than seek to replicate the architectural forms of the existing single storey school, the design of the building would introduce a positive composition of elevations that would reflect the purpose and proposed use of the site. The submitted materials schedule reflect that the development has been designed to meet the needs of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and the external finishes include a combination of traditional and modern materials and provides a combination of striking, colourful and playful composition that is considered to be entirely appropriate in its context for a school of the type.

To accommodate suitable access and facilities to serve the proposed school, the existing vehicle drop-off area will be repositioned to the east on the axis of the new entrance and single storey linked extension. A new one-way system will lead past the main entrance to a covered walkway to link the vehicle drop-off area directly to the new main entrance associated with the school.

The existing car park area will be slightly re-configured to accommodate the relocated vehicle drop-off area and whilst existing car parking spaces would be lost as part of this re-configuration, replacement and additional car parking provision would be provided.

Cyclists will utilise the new path to the school and a new pedestrian access into the school site has been proposed off Caerphilly Road to allow for convenient access primarily for use by the school when planning walking trips to Ystrad Mynach town centre. Whilst there would be a degree of alteration to the character of the highway verge as a result of improving pedestrian, cycling and car parking provision it is considered that the landscaping submitted, once planted and established, would suitably mitigate any significant concerns with regard to the associated works.

Overall, whilst the proposed building would undoubtedly introduce a visible and contemporary designed building within the site, it is considered to be of an appropriate size, siting and design for its setting and proposed function. Furthermore, in that the extension has been sited internally away from the school's perimeter boundaries, the set back distances in excess of 50 metres away from the A472 (Caerphilly Road) and the rear gardens of Trinity Close does provide assistance in mitigating the increased massing of the building to an extent whereby the proposed extension would not appear visually intrusive or incongruous. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in design terms in accordance with Policy SP6.

AMENITY

Policy CW2 (Amenity) states that development proposals should have no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land; should not result in the over-development of the site; and the proposed use is compatible with surrounding land-uses. Having regard to the existing use of the site as a school and given the distances away from the nearest residential properties, the proposed development is considered to be compatible with the surrounding land uses and would not result in any significant harm in terms of visual amenity of the surrounding area or residential amenity. Furthermore, the proposed development can accommodate the relevant levels of car parking and operational space along with providing soft landscaping areas within the site and as such is not considered to represent over-development and therefore accords with Policy CW2.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Policy CW1 (Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion) requires development proposals that have the potential to generate a significant number of trips (either as an origin or a destination) to be designed to ensure that car borne trips are kept to a minimum. It is therefore important to ensure that provision is made within the development to actively encourage walking and cycling and that appropriate infrastructure is included in the layout to facilitate short trips on foot. In that regard, whilst most pupils would travel by car or bus to the school, for staff, the site is in a sustainable location close to bus stops and within easy reach of Ystrad Mynach railway

station. Pedestrian and cycle route highway improvements are proposed and this accords with the aim of increasing the use of more sustainable transport modes.

It is acknowledged that the proposed development will generate new trips to and from the site, particularly as the school catchment is the whole of the county borough. However, in terms of sustainable transport, if the proposed development were not to take place the additional pupils with additional learning needs would be required to go to schools outside of the authority and this would result in significantly longer trips for the pupils, than those to Trinity Fields. As such, the proposal accords with Welsh Government's sustainable transport aim of reducing the length of car borne journeys. Furthermore, whilst there are also a very small number of pupils who travel from outside the county borough, whose journey lengths are likely to increase, but this does not outweigh the benefit of the proposed development in sustainable transport terms.

It is therefore considered that the range of accessible and sustainable travel choices to and from the development site does reduce the need for some staff and community users to travel to/from the site by private motor vehicles.

Policy CW3 (Design Considerations - Highways) requires development proposals to have regard for the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network. The submitted Transport Statement confirms that the existing school vehicular access will remain as existing, but the internal arrangements will be amended to provide access to a new one-way drop off and collection area to accommodate minibus movements to avoid potential conflict and congestion issues that could arise in the wider area. In terms of parking, the proposed school extension will result in the loss of 26 car parking spaces. However, a new car parking area of 15 spaces is proposed immediately to the east of the School and to the north of Penallta Rugby Club. Furthermore, in line with SPG LDP 5 Car Parking Standards, an additional 36 parking spaces are proposed in between the sports pitch and park to the south of the school with two additional spaces on the access road leading to the school gates. This will provide a total car parking provision for the school of 105 spaces, a 27 space increase on the existing provision.

It should also be noted that all pupils commute to and from the school by minibus, taxi or by car during both morning and afternoon peak hours. Drop off and pick up is organised by the school to minimise delays and conflict in that it can take between 35-50 minutes for all children to be dropped off and collected. The number of vehicle trips associated with the pupil collections is not considered to have an adverse impact on the local highway network. Furthermore, whilst there would be a need to increase staffing levels at the school, the Transport Statement anticipates a total increase of 38 vehicle movements associated with staff travel and those staff trips will be likely to occur during separate time periods to the pupil pick-up and drop-offs. Moreover, not all staff are present on site at the same time. Collectively, the anticipated number of trips to and from the site is considered to have minimal impact on the surrounding highway network.

The application is also accompanied by a Staff Travel Plan with its intended purpose to encourage and influence long-term changes in sustainable travel behaviours with a view

to improving the health of all users to the site and to encourage greater take up of walking and cycling to the site for locally employed staff as well as contributing to the wider issue and commitment to reduce vehicle emissions.

The Council's Transportation Engineering Manager has reviewed the supporting information in full and no objection has been raised subject to a number of highway related conditions. The application is therefore considered to be acceptable in highway safety terms and compliant with Policies CW1 and CW3.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the site is previously developed land within the defined settlement boundary of Ystrad Mynach on existing Education land. The proposed development complies with both local and national planning policies and will deliver additional necessary space to accommodate the growing number of pupils requiring additional learning needs, without significantly impacting upon the operations of the existing school. Having regard to the above observations, subject to conditions the proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms.

Comments from Consultees: The Environmental Health Manager has requested the imposition of conditions to any consent to control noise and dust suppression during the construction phase of the development, however detailed information to this effect and the operational practices of the appointed Tier 1 Contractor should planning permission be granted is contained with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Comments from public: The comments raised in support of the application in points 1-10 are noted and reinforce the need for the extension to the school.

In terms of the objection comments received by Gelligaer Council each will be addressed in turn:-

11. *The loss of a green space will threaten the well-being and health of local people.* All of the land associated with the application site is within the ownership of the Local Authority (Education) and not within the curtilage of the park. At present, the land in question is occupied by two unsightly unauthorised storage containers located between the playing pitch to the north and the fence demarcating the boundary of the park to the south. The playing pitch will still be accessible in the same manner as it is at present, as will the pedestrian access to the wider park. On that basis there is no reason to indicate that the proposed development will threaten the well-being and health of the local people. Furthermore, it is reasonable to consider the health and well-being of the vulnerable pupils attending the school and their additional learning needs can be strengthened and enhanced should members decide to approve the development.

12. The development could affect the Green Flag status on the park.

As stated above in point 11 all of the land associated with the application site is within the ownership of the Local Authority and is Education land. The land is not within the curtilage of the park and the relevant documentation has been submitted to evidence this. There is no reason to indicate that the provision of additional parking spaces to be made available for use to the wider community outside of school hours will compromise the management strategy, biodiversity and accessibility of the park. Additional parking sensitively designed and located can only enhance the existing community/leisure provision.

13. Parking between two rugby pitches will raise issues of safety.

There is currently a fence along the boundary and the park to the south and there is a protection barrier in place between the area of car parking and the rugby pitch to the north to prevent cars from entering the field. The parking area has been designed to ensure cars can safely enter, manoeuvre, and exit the proposed car park. The details have been reviewed by the Council's Transportation Engineering Manager and no objection is raised.

14. The development will potentially increase the risk of flooding.

The parking area to the south of the rugby pitch will be no dig construction and will be fully permeable. The existing ground is not impacted in terms of infiltration potential and the existing hydraulic regime will not be impacted or affected. Furthermore the development is subject to Sustainable Drainage Approval.

15. Loss of biodiversity.

The application submission is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report (PEA) and a Bat Survey produced by Ecological Services Ltd. The PEA confirms that no direct impacts to the identified bat roost location on the southern elevation of the school will be experienced by these proposals. To avoid any indirect impacts, the PEA provides several recommendations including careful consideration to lighting type and location, replacement tree planting, and installation of bird and bat boxes. These recommendations have been included in the submission details. With these mitigation measures in place, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. Furthermore, there is no reason to indicate that the additional parking areas adjacent to the playing pitch to the south of the school site will result in the loss of biodiversity in that the area is currently occupied by storage containers and the grassed areas are cut and maintained on a regular basis.

Other material considerations: None.

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, has been considered in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In reaching the recommendation below, the ways of working set out at section 5 of that Act have been taken into account, and it is considered that the recommendation is consistent with the sustainable development principle as required by section 8 of that Act.

Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 was published on 24 February 2021 and forms part of the statutory development plan for the county borough. In addition to this Planning Policy Wales (PPW) has been amended to take account of Future Wales and PPW Edition 11 has also been published on 24th February 2021. In reaching the conclusion below full account has been taken of both Future Wales and PPW Edition 11 and where they are particularly pertinent to the consideration of the proposals they have been considered as part of the officer's report. It is considered that the recommendation(s) in respect of the proposals is (are) in conformity with both Future Wales and PPW Edition 11.

RECOMMENDATION that Permission be GRANTED

This permission is subject to the following condition(s)

- 01) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 02) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
 - Dwg No. 90050 Revision P03 Site Location Plan received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 90060 Revision P05 Proposed Site Plan received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 01060 Revision P02 Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Proposed received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 01061 Revision P02 Proposed First Floor Plan - Proposed received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 01063 Revision P02 Proposed Overall Roof Plan - Proposed received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 02051 Revision P03 North East and South East Elevations received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No. 02052 Revision P03 South West and North West Elevations received on 13.06.2023;
 - Dwg No: 61110-DWG-001-P2-S3 Landscape GA Plan received on 12.05.2023;
 - Dwg No: 61110-DWG-002-P2-S3 Carpark Boundary Hedge Planting Plan received on 12.05.2023;
 - Dwg No: 61110-DWG-003-P2-S3 Indicative Offsite Planting Planting Plan received on 12.05.2023;
 - Dwg No: 61110-DWG-004-P2-S3 Forest Garden Planting Plan received on 12.05.2023;
 - Dwg No: 61110-DWG-005-P2-S3 Memorial Garden Planting Plan received on 12.05.2023;
 - Dwg No. 5239-HYD-V1-XX-DR-C-04000 Revision P01 Proposed Drainage and SUDs Strategy Sheet 1 received on 05.05.2023;

Dwg No. 5239-HYD-V1-XX-DR-C-04001 Revision P01 Proposed Drainage and SUDs Strategy Sheet 2 received on 05.05.2023;
Dwg No. 5239-HYD-V1-XX-DR-C-04002 Revision P01 Proposed Drainage and SUDs Strategy Sheet 3 received on 05.05.2023;
Dwg No. 5239-HYD-V1-XX-DR-E-92000 Revision P01 External Lighting Layout Sheet 1 received on 05.05.2023;
Dwg No. 5239-HYD-V1-XX-DR-E-92001 Revision P01 External Lighting Layout Sheet 2 received on 05.05.2023;
DWG No. 27991-HYD-XX-XX-DR-TP-0101 Revision P01 Mini Bus Swept Path Analysis received on 12.06.2023;
DWG No. 27991-HYD-XX-XX-DR-TP-0102 Revision P01 Refuse Vehicle Swept Path Analysis received on 12.06.2023;
DWG No. 27991-HYD-XX-XX-DR-TP-0103 Revision P01 Fire Tender Swept Path Analysis received on 12.06.2023;
Report 27991-HYD-XX-XX-RP-TP-6001 Travel Plan received on 12.06.2023;
Report 5239-HYD-V1-XX-TN-E-00001 Technical Design Note for External Lighting Strategy received on 05.05.2023;
Report 0469 RIO XX XX RP A 06005 Materials Schedule received on 19.05.2023;
Report A110489-6-1 Ground Investigation Report received on 05.05.2023;
Report T01652 CEMP (Construction Environmental Management Plan) received on 28.06.2023;
Report TFS-HYD-XX-XX-RP-Y-1001 Baseline Noise Survey received on 05.05.2023;
Bat Survey prepared by Ecological Service Ltd received on 05.05.2023;
Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Ecological Service Ltd received on 05.05.2023;
Arboricultural Report prepared by ArbTS - Arboricultural Technician Services Ltd received on 26.05.2023; and
Cycle Storage Details received on 29.06.2023.
REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 03) All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. 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 the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
REASON: To ensure that the works are carried out as approved in the interests of the visual amenity of the area in accordance with policies CW2 and SP6 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.

- 04) The extension hereby approved shall not be occupied until the areas indicated for the parking of vehicles have been laid out in accordance with the submitted plans. Those areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.
REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy CW3 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 05) The proposed access points into the development site shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans and shall be available for use prior to beneficial occupation of the development hereby approved.
REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy CW3 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 06) The Staff Travel Plan as submitted shall be implemented in accordance with the timescales contained therein with regards to reducing the reliance of staff on commuting trips by car.
REASON: To encourage sustainable travel modes by staff to and from the site in accordance with policy CW3 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 07) The four identified electric vehicle charging bays to be provided within the site shall be operational with active provision prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, and shall be maintained in perpetuity thereafter free of obstruction for the parking of motor vehicles only.
REASON: To ensure that adequate mitigation is provided in respect of air quality together with promoting sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policy CW1 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 08) The development hereby approved shall make provision for gigabit capable broadband infrastructure to serve the approved development. The necessary infrastructure required shall be installed prior to beneficial occupation of the development.
REASON: To provide the necessary infrastructure to serve the development in accordance with Policy 13 of Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.
- 09) If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The remediation strategy shall be carried out as approved.
REASON: To ensure the risks associated with previously unsuspected contamination at the site are dealt with through a remediation strategy, to minimise the risk to both future users of the land and neighbouring land, and to

ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks.

- 10) No development or phase of development, including site clearance, shall commence until a site-wide Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: A site-wide CEMP should be submitted to ensure necessary management measures are agreed prior to commencement of development or phase of development and implemented for the protection of the environment during construction.

Advisory Note(s)

The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority.

Mature trees are potential bat roosts. All bat species and their roosts are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and its amendment 2012, which transposes the EC Habitats Directive 1992 into UK legislation, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If bats are discovered, then all works should stop immediately and the Countryside Council for Wales should be contacted for advice on any special precautions, and whether a licence is required, before continuing.

Please also be advised that works should not take place that will disturb nesting birds from March to July inclusive. All British birds (while nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs), their nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by law under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. If birds are nesting on/in or within the vicinity of the proposed development, work should be undertaken outside the breeding season for birds to ensure their protection, i.e. works should only be undertaken between August and February. Further advice on the above can be sought from the local authority ecologists (01495 235253) or Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (029 20 772400).

Please refer to Public Access to view the full comments of the consultees that are brought to the applicant's attention.

Warning: The applicant is advised that any future planned works to the roof space of the existing school building will require a European protected species (EPS) Licence.

It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb EPS or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places. If found guilty of any offences, you could be sent to prison for up to 6 months and/or receive an unlimited fine.

To undertake the works within the law, you can obtain further information on the need for a licence from Natural Resources Wales on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/conservation-biodiversity-and-wildlife/european-protected-species/?lang=en>

Notification of initiation of development and display of notice:

You must comply with your duties in section 71ZB (notification of initiation of development and display of notice: Wales) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The duties include:

Notice of initiation of development:

Before beginning any development to which this planning permission relates, notice must be given to the local planning authority in the form set out in Schedule 5A to the town and Country Planning (development Management procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 or in a form substantially to the like effect. The form sets out the details which must be given to the local planning authority to comply with this duty.

Display of Notice:

The person carrying out the development to which this planning permission relates must display at or near the place where the development is being carried out, at all times when it is being carried out, a notice of this planning permission in the form set out in Schedule 5B to the Town and country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 or in a form substantially to the like effect. The form sets out the details the person carrying out development must display to comply with this duty.

The person carrying out the development must ensure the notice is:

- (a) Firmly affixed and displayed in a prominent place at or near the place where the development is being carried out;
- (b) Legible and easily visible to the public without having to enter the site; and
- (c) Printed on durable material. The person carrying out development should take reasonable steps to protect the notice (against it being removed, obscured or defaced) and, if need be, replace it.

WARNING:

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

Please note from the 7th January 2019, Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 commenced in Wales requiring all new developments of more than one house or where the construction area is of 100m² or more to implement sustainable drainage to manage on-site surface water. Surface water drainage systems must be designed and built in accordance with mandatory standards for sustainable drainage published by Welsh Ministers.

The Sustainable Drainage Approval process is a technical approval independent of the need to obtain planning permission, and as such you are advised to contact the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body. Their details are provided below:

Phone: 01443 866511

Email: drainage@caerphilly.gov.uk

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/sab