

Appendix 3: Letter of objection from the primary schools with officer responses/comments

Dear Mr Campbell

We would like to outline our huge concerns as to the proposed plans for our school field at Ystrad Mynach Primary School. We as a Governing Body would like to object for the following reasons. The school field is used predominantly by three schools and clubs from the area. The three schools are Ystrad Mynach Primary School, Ysgol Bro -alta and Ysgol Penallta. The schools have over 1100 children between them and they use the school field throughout the year for events including sports day, sporting festivals and curriculum based use.

The school field bar a few days has been used every day for curriculum and extra- curricular provision.

Officer comment: a schedule of the schools' activities for use of the recreational space i.e. specific activities, dates/frequency and pupil numbers and map of the sports day carousel were requested at the meeting on 21 April 2015 (and subsequently confirmed by email on 23 April 2015). The information has since been received.

If the school field was used for an access road under the current plans this would cause the following problems.

1. The pupils would not be able to have a full size football and rugby pitch as we do now and regularly have used for matches.

Officers response: The designer has shown (from topographical surveys and plans) that a football or rugby pitch to appropriate WFA & WRU standards respectively can be provided in the land alongside the proposed access road.

2. The noise pollution would be on three sides as opposed to one side of the field which is presently so.

Officer response: WG's designer does not consider the scheme will generate any significant pollution but this issue would be properly considered as part of the planning application process.

3. The foliage and trees would not house wildlife for field study owing to noise pollution and light pollution.

Officer response: WG's designer does not consider the scheme will generate any significant noise or light pollution but this issue would be properly considered as part of the planning application process. WG are willing to consider mitigation/accommodation works to preserve such field study activities.

4. Pupils would not have access to quiet areas for forest schools, pose and reflection activity.

Officer response: WG's designer considers that such quiet areas can be maintained/re-provided and WG are willing to consider mitigation/accommodation works to preserve and possibly enhance such quiet areas. The schools' views on what mitigation/ improvements to the area they would like to see that would be of benefit were requested at the meeting on 21 April 2015 (and subsequently confirmed by email on 23 April 2015). The information has since been received.

5. The 7ft or 8 ft fence which will no doubt be put up around the field will again disrupt the nature of the school field and take away the 'forest school elements of the curriculum.

Officer response: no such fence is proposed. The details of any boundary treatment (including landscaping) would be discussed with the schools alongside any opportunity for accommodation and enhancement works.

6. It reduces the capacity for housing sports day events where we use the whole of the school field for carousel activities and an audience to watch. Currently we may have over 700 people attend our sports day. This will greatly affect what we need to do. This is also the same for the Welsh schools.

Officer response: WG's designer has shown that the usable grassed area would not be reduced and WG are willing to consider accommodation and enhancement works to improve the availability and efficient use of space.

7. Our school is already landlocked and we have limited capacity for play. We do not have any current green field site. By reducing the school field you are cutting the square metre per child of open field for them to play on. In a time of obesity levels being at a premium you are taking away the wide open field that the children have.

Officer response: WG's designer has shown that the usable grassed area would not be reduced and WG are willing to consider accommodation and enhancement works to improve the availability and efficient use of space.

8. There is also a fight going on this week in the British Courts over the link of road pollution to close proximity of schools and the limiting affect that these toxins have on pupils. We already have huge congestion issues and traffic here at Ystrad and this will further add to the issue.

Officer response: comments noted. WG's designer does not consider the scheme will generate any significant pollution but this issue would be properly considered as part of the

planning application process. Environmental Health services have confirmed that there are no current concerns over air quality in this area.

9. The school day starts at 8-00am for Breakfast club and finishes at 4-15am for after school clubs. We have over 17 after school clubs a week. This will be peak time for the traffic to come and leave the park and ride adding further congestion and health and safety issues with children leaving and approaching the school site. It will also attract more people into Ystrad and again when parents bring their children into school this will actively affect the journey and wellbeing of children who may and will be dropped off further afield so as to avoid the well documented Ystrad Mynach Traffic.

Officer response: the main use of the facility would be commuters travelling to Caerphilly and Cardiff who would generally be expected to travel before 8 am and arrive back after 5pm. Therefore there would be no significant overlap with the school start and finish times. The rail service offers a fifteen minute frequency so passenger arrivals and departures would be spread out. WG's designer has undertaken some preliminary traffic generation analysis that estimates that traffic generated by the rail P&R proposal would be less than 10% of the existing traffic flows on the A472 in this area. This assumes the worst case that all journeys to the P&R would be additional to the existing levels of traffic. In reality many journeys would be taken off the network and transfer to rail. In addition it would help to remove over spill parking in the surrounding residential streets.

10. The school field is also used by the Beaver groups and Scouts who again use it for outdoor life skills, wildlife watch etc. This will be eroded by the placement of this road.

Officer response: comments noted and further details were requested at the meeting on 21 April 2015 (and subsequently confirmed by email on 23 April 2015). The information has since been received. For the reasons given above no adverse impact is anticipated for these groups.

11. The school field has actively been used by both schools for the best part of 40 years. Progress does not mean we have to go with the flow because it doesn't mean that progress is always good!! The well-being of our children and further generations is being compromised.

Officer response: comments noted. The report states the wider development plan and sustainable travel issues that also need to be considered.

Governing Body of Ystrad Mynach Primary School