

OBJECTION REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ABERTYSSWG/PONTLOTTYN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Under section 49 of the School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, proposers must publish a summary of the statutory obligations and the proposer's responses to those objections.

Total number of objections received:	ONE
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Objection:	LA response
The 'safe routes to school' will be used by both Primary and Comprehensive school children and will be a potential danger to the smaller children.	As part of the consultation process there were representations made to provide an extended safe route/land acquisition closer to the proposed entrance to the primary school site. This is being progressed and will minimise the walking distance to the site from the car drop off/parking area and hence improve the safety for the pupils and parents alike. Primary aged children would be expected to be supervised by parents/guardians on most occasions.
The footpath alongside the main road at Warns Terrace has extensive parking on the path which will cause parents with pushchairs and small children to walk out into the road, especially when the parking for the school is to be roadside. This certainly needs further investigation.	The Traffic Management team are not aware of such complaints or any evidence of a problem. Any obstruction of the footway by parked vehicles should be reported to the police who have the powers to take action.
During winter months, the 'safe access route' at Westville is often impassable due to weather conditions, snow/ice, floodwater.	<p>A Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonable, that safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Obviously, this is not an absolute, given the qualification of 'reasonably practicable'. The Act also imposes a duty on Authorities to remove any obstruction of a highway resulting from an accumulation of snow, but again it has to be reasonably practicable. Given the scale of the resources that would be required, (labour, plant, materials and finance) it would not be practicable to clear all highways hence the prioritised salting routes.</p> <p>The flooding would be virtually the same as above, we do all we can but there are only limited resources which have to be prioritised.</p>

Objection:	LA response
<p>No thought appears to have been given to children who choose to stay in school for after school activities, school clubs or choir, getting home during winter months, when it is practically dark when the children leave at normal time. It would certainly deter parents from allowing children from being involved in extra curricular activities which is special to many children.</p>	<p>The safe route(s) would be lit to current CIBSE standards for external pedestrian lighting.</p> <p>As discussed in the consultation the expectation of the new school would be an enhanced programme of extra curricula activity. To share this commitment, there will be more staff and a greater spectrum of expertise on offer. There will be more pupils in each year group to enter e.g. competitions.</p> <p>In the winter months the challenge will be similar to the current situation where children already have to walk home at dusk. This would clearly require more support. It would be a matter for the school to work with parents and community to identify the best organisation, i.e. move groups to lunchtime, arrange transport, arrange lift sharing, walking bus, enlist the support of 6th formers, etc.</p>
<p>Abertysswg Primary School has been penalised in the past by ESTYN during inspections for poor attendance. The increased distance is certainly going to affect attendance during periods of inclement weather, and will most certainly be an irreconcilable problem.</p>	<p>Abertysswg Primary School's attendance has improved by 2.62 percentage points (12/13 – 13/14). To our knowledge this is not because parents have moved nearer the school but because the school has implemented a range of strategies effectively to underline the importance of attendance and its impact on children's learning and sense of well being. This achievement demonstrates that achieving a high level of attendance in a school is much more about the schools ability to direct a mind set than geographical location. This view is further confirmed by other examples in deprived areas where challenging geography would not equate to poor attendance. Examples of this are Trinant, Graig Y Rhacca and Panside Primary schools.</p>
<p>The consultation document, item 5.3, mentions 'flood alleviation' work. This matter has never been mentioned before and if the proposed site is on a flood plain then surely the decision must be questionable.</p>	<p>The proposed site of the new school is on the current Rhymney Comprehensive playing fields. These are above any flood risk level for the River Rhymney. The reference to 'Flood Alleviation work' in the document is in connection to the area between the site and the river boundary. This is the proposed position for relocated playing fields. A detailed Flood Consequences Assessment, for the whole development will be prepared and submitted as part of the Planning Application for the scheme.</p>
<p>We, as the Governing Body, along with the majority of residents of Abertysswg, feel that the school's importance to the village has been totally ignored and is being used as a sacrificial lamb to enable Pontlottyn to have a new school. They may need one, we at Abertysswg don't. If consideration was given for Fochriw to be excluded, why not the same opportunity afforded to the families at Abertysswg.</p>	<p>The consultation document outlined compelling evidence for a new school and identified deficiencies with both the existing school buildings in Pontlottyn and Abertysswg. This was clearly evidenced in pages 2 and 3 of the consultation document. As part of the informal consultation process Fochriw, Abertysswg and Pontlottyn were each given the opportunity to establish stakeholder groups to discuss the proposal. In the case of Fochriw they opted for a survey of all residents. Whilst in Abertysswg, a meeting was requested, this was facilitated and only 4 were in attendance and no such request was made to seek the views of all residents. Opportunities existed to attend the community/public meeting and/or drop-in sessions but generally they were poorly attended and no such issues were raised at these.</p>