

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

DATE: **14Th MAY 2014**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF PLANNING**

SUBJECT: **FULL APPLICATION: ERECTION OF A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING INCULDING PRIMARY SCHOOL, SECONDARY SCHOOL AND SPORTS HALL FACILITY, ASSOCIATED SITE RE-DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING NEW PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PLAYING SURFACES AND DEMOLITION WORKS TO EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING AT "HOLYWELL HIGH SCHOOL", STRAND WALK, HOLYWELL, FLINTSHIRE**

APPLICATION NUMBER: **051719**

APPLICANT: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

SITE: **HOLYWELL HIGH SCHOOL SITE, STRAND WALK, HOLYWELL, FLINTSHIRE**

APPLICATION VALID DATE: **13TH FEBRUARY 2014**

LOCAL MEMBERS: **COUNCILLOR P. J. CURTIS**

TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL: **HOLYWELL TOWN COUNCIL**

REASON FOR COMMITTEE: **SITE AREA EXCEEDS THAT FOR WHICH DELEGATED POWERS TO DETERMINE EXIST**

SITE VISIT: **YES**

1.00 SUMMARY

- 1.01 This full application present proposals for the provisions of a school facility to provide educational facilities for both primary and secondary age children upon the site of the former Holywell High School site.

1.02 The proposals look to provide the educational facilities currently provided at 3 sites across Holywell (Ysgol Y Fron, Ysgol Perth-y-Terfyn and Ysgol Uwchradd Treffynnon [Holywell High School]), upon a single site.

1.03 The proposals include the demolition of the existing school building upon the site and the re-development of the site to provide ancillary recreation, sports, access and parking facilities. Also proposed are improvements to pedestrian access along Pen-y-Maes Road.

2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-

2.01 Conditions

1. 5 year time limit for commencement.
2. In accordance with approved plans.
3. Samples of materials and finish colours to be submitted and agreed. Including materials for external surfaces.
4. Submission and agreement of surface water attenuation scheme prior to commencement.
5. Full foul and surface water drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed.
6. Notwithstanding submitted details full external lighting scheme to be submitted and agreed prior to the first use of the premises hereby approved
7. BREEAM design stage conformity certificate to be submitted before commencement of development.
8. BREEAM final conformity certificate to be submitted prior to first use of the premises.
9. No works within 10 metres of the centreline of the intermediate pressure gas pipeline without prior consultation and agreement.
10. Tree and hedgerow protection measures to be submitted and agreed and erected prior to development commencing.
11. Phasing and timing of development plan to be submitted and agreed. To include period during which sports fields unavailable for use.
12. Final details of boundary treatments to be submitted and agreed prior to installation.
13. Final planting proposals and timings to be submitted and agreed.
14. Implementation of planting proposals.
15. No surface water to connect into the public system.
16. No works to trees without an ecologist present.
17. Scheme for finish specification of sports fields.
18. Ecological mitigation works and eradication to be undertaken as per reports.
19. Scheme for the provision of new accesses and footpaths to be submitted and agreed.

20. The siting, layout and design of the means of site accesses to be submitted and agreed.
21. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in both directions in 30mph or 2.4m x 22m for 20mph restricted areas. No obstruction to visibility in excess of 0.6m.
22. Visibility splays to be made available and kept free from all obstructions for the duration of site construction works.
23. Facilities shall be provided and retained within the site for the safe setting down and picking up of primary school pupils, parking and turning, loading and unloading of vehicles, all in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved.
24. The gradient of the access from the edge of the existing carriageway and for a minimum distance of 10m shall be 1 in 24 and a maximum of 1 in 15 thereafter.
25. Scheme to prevent the run-off of surface water from any part of the site onto the highway to be submitted and agreed.
26. All proposed access gates shall be designed to open inwards.
27. A detailed traffic management scheme to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement.
28. A Final Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved prior to the first use of the school buildings.
29. No development shall take place, including site clearance works, until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted and agreed.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS

3.01 Local Member:

Councillor P. J. Curtis

Advises Committee that he is a governor of Ysgol Uwchradd Treffynnon (Holywell High School).

(The Chairman has requested a site visit in view of the significance of the development to Flintshire and so that Members can fully appreciate the characteristics of the site prior to determining the application)

Adjoining Ward Members:

Councillor Mrs. R. Dolphin

No response at time of writing.

Councillor J. Johnson

No response at time of writing.

Holywell Town Council

The general principle of the proposals is welcomed and supported.

Raises concerns in relation to the anticipated flow of traffic upon the area and town in general. Queries the adequacy and acceptability of the proposed traffic management measures and parking/pedestrian

arrangements at the site.

Raises the issue of the use of the school fields by community sports teams during the course of development. Has requested the Head of Lifelong Learning to liaise with these groups to make alternative arrangements.

Head of Assets and Transportation

No objections subject to the imposition of conditions as specified within this appraisal.

Public Rights of Way

Public footpaths 6 and 44 abut the site to the north but are unaffected by the proposals. These paths must be kept free from interference during the course of construction.

Head of Public Protection

No adverse comments.

Community Services - Emergency Planning

No objections

Public Open Spaces Manager

Proposals represent an opportunity to improve the standard of recreation provision in the area. Requests that the detailed specifications of sports and recreation provisions are requested to be agreed via a condition before they are provided.

Notes that the existing provision of facilities will not be available for use for a period during construction works and requests agreement of the time frame for the period over which they will be unavailable and when the replacement facilities can be expected to become available for use by the community.

Sport Wales

No objection subject to sports facilities being suitable for purpose and arrangements being made with local community sports groups for alternative venues during the period over which the existing pitches will be unavailable.

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

No adverse comments. Foul water is agreed to discharge to the existing public sewer. Surface water is not permitted to discharge to the sewer. DCWW advises that surface water should be discharged to the adjacent watercourse.

Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru

No adverse comments. Advises that a condition should be imposed requiring the submission, agreement and provision of a surface water regulation system.

In relation to protected species, NRW note that the ecological assessments accompanying the application have indicated mitigation measures where required in relation to bats and birds. Requests that external lighting is the subject of a condition to ensure no adverse impacts upon bat flight paths.

Notes no Great Crested Newt activity on site and notes that large fish populations in nearby pools make them unsuitable as GCN habitat.

Considers that the favourable conservation status of protected species on site and in the vicinity will not be compromised as a consequence of the proposals and suggested mitigation measures within the ecological assessments

Coal Authority

No adverse comments. Standard advice applies.

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT)

Notes the presence of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Wat's Dyke, along the north western boundary of the school site. Offers advice in relation to Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent but considers that as there is no significant development along the western fringes of the school site, there is no requirement for an archaeological investigation.

CADW

Notes the proximity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Wat's Dyke, to the site. Advises that Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent is required for the replacement fence line to north west end of the development site.

Requests that a condition is imposed requiring the agreement of any external lighting is agreed in consultation with CADW.

Subject to the above, CADW does not consider the proposals will adversely affect the Setting of Wat's Dyke.

Wales & West Utilities

Advises that an intermediate/high pressure gas main crosses the site. Advises that no excavation works are to be permitted above or within 10 metres of this pipeline without prior consultation with Wales & West Utilities.

SP Energy Networks

Notes the existence of apparatus in the vicinity and requests that the developers' attention is drawn to this fact.

4.00 PUBLICITY

4.01 The application has been publicised by way of a press notice, site notices and neighbour notification letters.

3No. responses received at time of writing. 2No. letters are supportive but raise the following issues;

- Where will local junior football sides will play during the course of development?
- Will the site will be publically accessible for dog walking and general access?

1No. letter makes objection on the following grounds;

- Adverse impacts upon existing residential amenity arising from noise and disturbance
- Increased traffic with increased risks to highway and pedestrian safety
- Increased potential for anti-social behaviour

5.00 SITE HISTORY

5.01 **3/HO/723/77**

Extension

Permitted 14.2.1978

3/HO/101/79

Extensions

Permitted 21.6.1979

3/HO/438/81

Extension for 6th form unit

Permitted 1.9.1981

156/91

Extensions, additional car parking and play areas

Permitted 18.6.1991

697/93

Erection of a satellite dish

Permitted 11.2.1994

97/866

Temporary siting of a double mobile classroom

Permitted 15.10.1997

99/310

Renewal for siting of a double mobile classroom

Permitted 6.5.1999

04/21/37877

Temporary siting of a double mobile classroom
Permitted 13.8.2004

05/40721

New electricity sub-station and switch room
Permitted 14.2.2006

6.00 PLANNING POLICIES

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

- Policy STR1 - New Development
- Policy STR8 - Built Environment
- Policy STR10 - Resources
- Policy STR11 - Sport, Leisure & Recreation
- Policy GEN1 - General Requirements for Development
- Policy GEN3 - Development outside Settlement Boundaries
- Policy D1 - Design Quality, Location & Layout
- Policy D2 - Design
- Policy D3 - Landscaping
- Policy D4 - Outdoor Lighting
- Policy D5 - Crime Prevention
- Policy TWH1 - Development Affecting Trees & Woodland
- Policy TWH2 - Protection of Hedgerows
- Policy WB5 - Undesignated Wildlife Habitats
- Policy WB6 - Enhancement of Nature Conservation Interests
- Policy HE6 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments & other Nationally Important Archaeological Sites.

- Policy AC1 - Facilities for the Disabled
- Policy AC2 - Pedestrian Provision & Public Rights of Way
- Policy AC13 - Access and Traffic Impact
- Policy AC18 - Parking Provision and New Development
- Policy SR1 - Sports, Recreation and Cultural Facilities
- Policy SR4 - Protecting Recreational Open Space
- Policy CF1 - Retention of Existing Facilities
- Policy CF2 - Development of New Facilities
- Policy CF5(b) - New Community Centres
- Policy EWP2 - Energy Efficiency in New Development
- Policy EWP3 - Renewable Energy in New Development

7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.01 Introduction

The application concerns itself with the provision of educational facilities within Holywell which are currently located at 3 different sites. Holywell High school presently occupies the site to which this application relates and in that regard, the location of the school as a result of these proposals is unaltered.

7.02 Ysgol Perth-y-Terfyn (infants) is presently located upon premises

along Halkyn Steet and sits on an adjacent plot to Ysgol Y Fron (juniors). Both of these premises are severely restricted in terms of the space available for outdoor education, play and sports and no scope exists for the expansion of either school at these sites without unacceptably compromising that situation further.

7.03 The current numbers of pupils (and the capacities) at each school are;

- Ysgol Perth-y-Terfyn - 98 full time pupils (110)*
- Ysgol y Fron - 143 full time pupils (194)*
- Holywell High School - 474 full time pupils (1074)*

* These figures are correct at January 2014

7.04 The proposed scheme, as detailed further below, seeks to re-locate the infant and junior schools to the proposed building upon the Holywell High School site.

7.05 The Site and Surroundings

The site comprises some 13 hectares of land is presently occupied by Holywell High School buildings, with the remainder of the site used for the recreation and sports facilities at the school.

7.06 The site occupies a north facing slope which slopes markedly in this direction with the southernmost boundary of the site being some 40m higher than the northernmost. This slope is gradual across the north - south axis of the site and is reflective of the general landform in the locality.

7.07 The existing school building is laid out in a finger block plan form at the approximate midpoint of the site slope. The building is arranged to provide 2 storey accommodation but is terraced down the slope in three level such that the facilities appear arranged in 3 long linear 2 storey blocks with interconnecting corridors linking the adjacent block. Land to the north and south of the school building is used a sports pitches and hard surfaces recreation/sports areas or vehicle parking and turning facilities.

7.08 The site boundaries are formed by a variety of forms of metal fencing with certain areas having mature and established associated hedgerows interspersed with mature trees. These are located primarily along the north and north eastern boundary, abutting the Coed Pen-y-Maes and properties along Nant-y-Coed. Another strong belt of trees marks the northern and eastern boundaries of properties abutting the site which are located upon Strand walk and Strand Lane.

7.09 The site is currently accessed from a variety of points upon its boundary, enabling both vehicular and pedestrian access to and from the site. Vehicular access is currently derived from 3 points along the western boundary adjacent to Strand Walk. Pedestrian access

presently exists in 2 points. One lies adjacent to a vehicular access off Strand Walk and the other is derived through the north eastern boundary from Nant-y-Coed.

7.10 The site is located in an area of the town which is characterised mainly by existing large scale housing areas, namely the areas at the Strand and Pen-y-Maes. The town centre and main commercial centre of Holywell lies approximately some 600 metres to the south west of the site.

7.11 The Proposal

This application, submitted by the Council as Local Education Authority proposes the following;

- The demolition of the existing Holywell High School premises;
- The construction of a new school on the site of existing areas of recreation space to provide replacement infant, junior and secondary school facilities;
- The creation of a new vehicular access from Pen-y-Mae Road;
- The creation of new pedestrian access points from Strand Park, Pen-y-Maes Road and Strand Walk;
- The creation of replacement sports, play and recreation areas across the site; and
- The creation of improved pedestrian routes along Pen-y-Maes Road.

7.12 The new school premises is intended to provide a combined through school with capacity for 315 pupils of primary school age and capacity for 600 pupils of secondary school age.

7.13 The Principle of Development

The majority of the site is located outside of the settlement boundary of Holywell as defined in the Unitary Development Plan. However, a smaller triangular piece of land to the north, abutting the existing residential development at Maes-yr-Odyn, which once formed the tennis courts to the former Grammar School in this location, is located within the defined settlement boundary. This land is allocated under Policy CF59(b) of the plan (New Community Centres).

7.14 Policy GEN3 address the issue of development outside of settlement boundaries. It identifies those types of development which are considered to be acceptable in such locations. Criterion (g) applies in this case as the site constitutes an existing educational premises in the open countryside and the proposals relate to the type of development which reflects this current use.

7.15 The area of land covered by Policy CF5(b) is proposed to be used to provide pedestrian access and both vehicular drop off and parking facilities in association with the school and community uses of the proposed building and premises. Whilst this is not a Community

Centre per se, it is, I consider, reflective of the overall aspiration of this policy in aiding in the provision of community facilities in the locality.

7.16 Accordingly, I consider that the principle of the development of this site in the manner proposed is acceptable as a matter of principle.

7.17 Design and Appearance

The design brief for this site required a single building to provide a facility for the housing of 3 schools. This building would have to meet the needs of both primary and secondary age users and enable the delivery of the curriculum whilst at the same time ensuring that the primary and secondary schools are segregated and separate in operation.

7.18 The design evolved to represent the segregation through the identities of the schools within the building such that primary level school is housed within a single storey structure, with the secondary school in a three storey structure, whilst all being part of one building. This approach allowed the levels change on the site to be incorporated at the site of the new school and utilised to reduce the massing and impact of the three storey element in both the landscape and upon the neighbouring single storey element. This is cleverly achieved within the building where the secondary school meets the central service/admin hub of the building and is such that when the building is viewed externally, the differences in scale of the proposed elements of the building flow into each other through the 2 storey hub building and down slope in such a fashion that a marked levels difference is not readily apparent to the eye. The service/admin hub also acts as the 'buffer' between the 2 schools with pupils unable to move from one to the other.

7.19 The building has a very contemporary design and serves to provide some 9148m² of floor space into a very tight footprint. This is achieved in part by the creation of same size floor plates for most classrooms within the building which minimises wasted space and also reduces build costs. Although a very modern design solution, the exterior of the building does have somewhat of an Art Deco influence.

7.20 External materials are selected to be representative of the wider locality and have a robust simplicity to them which serve to have a minimalistic appearance from a distance but has greater warmth, depth and texture when viewed closer. The simple palette comprises stacked slate, ivory coloured render and grey window and door surrounds. These are supplemented by a range of coloured panels which serve to break the mass of the elevations on the three storey block.

7.21 I consider the design to be the most appropriate response to the site topography. Locating the building in its proposed position serves the dual purpose of cleverly using the topography as part of the internal

function space of the building but also allows the massing of the building to not appear overstated in the landscape or overbearing in relation to existing nearby properties.

7.23 Environmental Performance

The building is designed to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' requirements for a 25% reduction in carbon emission and represents best practice in terms of the creation of a sustainably performing building.

7.24 The building employs a mixture of passive design measures which result in enhanced U-values, enhanced air tightness of the building, management of solar gain and carefully designed shading (brise soleil). These serve to manage the ambient conditions within the building and therefore reduce the demand from the building for power to cool, light or heat the building.

7.25 All communal and teaching spaces are naturally ventilated via a mix of single sided and cross flow ventilation. This serves to ensure that such areas are more comfortable in warmer climatic conditions. One of the largest demands for energy in educational establishments arises from IT emitted heat and the need for these systems to be cooled to maintain performance. The building has been designed in such a way as the majority of IT equipment is located within designated areas within the building and on the north facing elevation, thereby minimising additional heat from solar gain. Contained the energy demand from IT in this fashion makes the natural ventilation solution for the other teaching spaces much more viable and results in a net benefit in energy use and therefore carbon emission. Other energy demand management measures include heat recovery within the building and the use of low energy demand equipment, lighting.

7.26 The energy demand that does arise is proposed to be delivered from renewable energy sources. These include the provision of a roof mounted 6kW wind turbine and roof mounted photo voltaic arrays to generate 73MWH per annum. This system anticipates production capable of being fed back into the national grid in the event of surplus supply.

7.27 These measures combined serve to produce an anticipated carbon output of 14.9kgCO₂/m². This is well in excess of the Target Emission Rate of 19.96kgCO₂/m² and exceeds the 25% reduction required by BREEAM Excellent.

7.28 Sport and Recreation

The proposed scheme also seeks to re-develop the sports and recreation provision at the site. At present sports pitches are located to the north and south of the site and includes an all-weather pitch. Obviously, during the summer months, these pitches are overlain by markings to facilitate athletics and field athletics. Hard surfaced tennis courts are located adjacent to the existing staff car park. The existing

grassed pitches, especially those to the north are poorly drained and, in times of particularly inclement weather, can be rendered unplayable.

- 7.29 The proposals will create a grassed sports pitch for primary age pupils to the south of the site and hard surfaced areas are provided for netball and hockey. The secondary sports provisions are made to the north of the site and consist of two grassed pitches and the provision of a full size all weather pitch. In addition, this is proposed to be surrounded by a grassed running track. Tennis courts areas are located directly adjacent to the north facing elevation of the secondary school element of the building.
- 7.30 Both school are proposed to be provided with indoor sports halls. In the case of the primary school, this space doubles up as an assembly hall and dining room. The secondary sports hall is proposed to be used solely as a sports hall and is proposed to be laid out to facilitate the widest range of indoor sports and recreation feasible in this space. This facility, in addition to the external sports pitches is to be made available outside of school hours for use by community sports groups (see below).
- 7.31 The sports proposals have been the subject of consultation response from both the Council's Leisure Services department and Sport Wales. Whilst both are concerned that the development process will see the pitches unavailable for use for a period of time, both recognise that the proposals represent an opportunity to improve the standard of provision at the site. Both have requested that a scheme for replacement provision to be secured during the period of on site unavailability should be a conditional requirement of the proposals.
- 7.32 Community Use of Facilities
The building and surrounding spaces have been designed to enable use by community groups outside of the school day. In terms of sports, this is in recognisance of the fact that the existing sports facilities are widely used by a number of local sports teams for matches and practice areas. This has historically been undertaken in agreement with the school and it is proposed that this situation will continue, albeit upon a more formal basis.
- 7.33 In addition, the secondary school sports hall is proposed to be made available for out of hours use by the community. The layout of this part of the building has been designed to allow for a reception space at the most northerly entrance to the site. This will enable use of the facility to be strictly controlled and monitored.
- 7.34 During use by community groups, access will be derived via the vehicular access from Strand Walk and its adjacent pedestrian access point only.

- 7.35 The existing children's play area which bounds Strand Walk is unaffected by the proposals and will remain available for community use as a separate securely fenced off area from the school site.
- 7.36 A space is allocated within the central admin hub to serve as a community room for after school hours school clubs.
- 7.37 Landscaping and outdoor spaces
In addition to the formal sports and recreation provision on the site, the remaining external spaces within the site are arranged as either landscaped spaces or spaces for outdoor education and play by school children.
- 7.38 The proposals take account of the sloping nature of the site to create 2 outdoor amphitheatre areas. A small one for the primary school overlooks the netball courts and can serve as either an outdoor auditorium for performance or display but can also act as an informal viewing area for matches taking place on the courts.
- 7.39 The larger is located opposite the northern elevation of the secondary school with a canvass tarpaulin structure proposed to provide shelter over the performance space. Again, informal viewing is facilitated by grass 'seats' formed by tiers within the land from the elevated pints to the north.
- 7.40 Hard surfaced areas adjacent to the primary school are proposed to be arranged to provide opportunities for soft play and outdoor education spaces including allotment space for the children. In addition, an area adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site is proposed to be laid out as a tree planting area. This space will be used to provide the 'Forest School' lessons which primary school pupils undertake. This space will be used to, in part, provide a location for the bird and bat boxes indicated to be required via the ecological assessment of the site.
- 7.41 The majority of the secondary school external space is not formally laid out. Hard surfaces exist and large areas of grassland adjacent to the sports pitches are proposed. In a similar vein to the amphitheatres, the significant break of slope to the north of the school, between it and the proposed all weather sports pitch, is tiered to create a terrace for spectators of sports being undertaken on the pitch but can also serve as an informal congregation space.
- 7.42 This break of slope requires a variety of solutions for access to the sports areas. This is achieved by 2 staircases, a ramped access to the east and via a disability access external lift from the school level to the pitch level.
- 7.43 Amenity Impacts
I am mindful that the site is bounded to the south, east and west by

existing areas of residential development. At the time of writing this report only one objection letter has been received raising concerns in respect of the potential impact upon the amenity of nearby residents. It should be noted that there is no fundamental change of use involved between the site as it currently exists and the proposals. It is a school site and will remain a school site.

- 7.44 I am satisfied that the solution to addressing the levels change across the site is such that neither the building nor the arrangement of external spaces will have any adverse impacts as a consequence of overbearing impacts. The management of the topography is such that the massing of the building sits lower in the landscape and this assists in ensuring that the impacts of the building is lessened.
- 7.45 Concerns have been raised that the proposals will give rise to significant increases in traffic which will, in turn, adversely affect amenity. It is clear following perusal of the transport assessment that there will be an increase in traffic, but this is not so significant as would give rise to concern or be deemed unacceptable. The scheme has been designed to distribute the load of traffic and pedestrians across the area via the creation of new vehicular and pedestrian access points. In addition, a study of the existing travel patterns and addresses of existing pupils indicates that, especially in relation to the primary school pupils, the majority of them are drawn from the residential areas which abut the site. In addition, both schools have a higher than average incidence of pupils walking to school and given that the school will be closer as a result of the development, there is no reason to believe that the level of walking to school will not be higher.
- 7.46 Accordingly I do not consider that the proposals are such that would give rise to unacceptable impacts upon amenity.
- 7.47 Highways Matters
The site currently served via vehicular access points off Strand Walk. The northernmost access serves to access the school bus drop off and collection point. The most southerly access serves the staff and visitor car parking area, with access at their mid point acting as a service access. Pedestrian access to the site is served via these access points from the westerly approaches to the site. Pedestrian access from the east is derived via a footpath access from the residential area at and adjoining Nant-y-Coed.
- 7.48 The proposed scheme seeks to utilize the existing southerly vehicular access off Strand walk to access the proposed parking and turning area for the school buses serving the site. This proposal has been the subject of careful consideration and enables use of the access as both an access and egress route for buses, with a waiting area located just inside the site at a point allowing simultaneous passage of buses of the access road and avoiding the need to have buses waiting on

Strand Walk. The other existing vehicular accesses are retained as access for maintenance vehicles to the proposed sports only.

- 7.49 A new vehicular access is proposed to be created at the site boundary with Pen-y-Maes Road. This access will serve the staff and visitor car parking areas which will be barrier controlled. It also allows access to the proposed drop off facility for primary school pupils.
- 7.50 Further points of dedicated pedestrian access are proposed to be created off Strand Walk, Pen-y-Maes Road and from a drop off point along Strand Park. This will enable the segregation of walking traffic from vehicular traffic and reduce the risks to one from the other. Members will note that in conjunction with the vehicular access created from Pen-y-Maes Road, footways are provided along the western edge of the road, abutting the site. These extend to the junction with Abbots walk to the north and the boundary of the site with the adjacent Maes-yr-Odyn development to the south. An existing footpath route runs around the eastern and northern edge of this development. It is proposed that this scheme will enable a link to be created between the new footways and this existing, albeit poor path. I propose to condition a scheme for the improvement of the links and the surface of this existing footway to be agreed and implemented prior to the first use of the new school.
- 7.51 The planning application is supported by a Planning Statement incorporating a Transport Assessment; this Transport Assessment is further supported by substantial Appendices. The Head of Assets and Transportation considers that these documents provide a reasonable review of existing transportation issues and assessment of the future requirements. The application includes a Travel Plan Framework, with the intention of developing and implementing a Final Travel Plan following occupation of the school. This is would be best developed at an early stage and should be implemented with the school opening. I propose that this requirement should be conditioned.
- 7.52 A drop-off facility with 22 spaces has been proposed for the primary school. Whilst this is less than the current demand for parking at the existing infant and junior school, the new location of the school, with closer proximity to the residential areas from which the preponderance of pupils are derived, together with the implementation of a travel plan, will contribute to a reduction in this demand. On that basis and with an opportunity to slightly increase the area of the proposed drop off facility, I propose to add a condition requiring the final details to be submitted and agreed before the commencement of those works.
- 7.53 Traffic management measures will be required on access roads leading to the school site and a condition will be necessary requiring submission and further approval of detail. The requirement for a 20 mph traffic management zone on Pen-y-Maes Road has been identified within the application. In addition to this, each entrance will

require highway “school” warning signs and zig zag road markings will be required at the proposed vehicular entrances and the senior school drop-off. These matters can be addressed through appropriately worded conditions

7.54 In view of all of the above, the Head of Assets and Transportation does not raise objection to the proposals, subject to these conditions.

7.55 Drainage

The site is presently drained by surface water discharging to a Welsh water surface water sewer which in turn discharges into an adjacent watercourse and flows to the north towards its eventual outfall into the River Dee. Foul water is drained via an existing combined sewer in Strand Walk.

7.56 The proposals essentially intend to replicate the existing situation, albeit that surface water is intended to outfall directly into the watercourse at a rate attenuated to be at least equivalent to the current discharge rate but ideally, represent a 50% betterment. This can be achieved by the installation of subterranean attenuation tanks within the site. Foul flows will continue to be discharged into the combined sewer.

7.57 Both proposals have been the subject of discussions with both Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales, who have advised an acceptance in principle to this drainage strategy. It is proposed that the exact details of the drainage regime are the subject of a condition. I propose to condition accordingly.

7.58 Historic Environment

The north western boundary of the site presently abuts a well preserved section of Wat’s Dyke which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The scheme proposes to respect the monument and its immediate setting by drawing back the site boundary some 10 metres from the position of the Dyke in order that any works which will be required in erecting the proposed boundary fencing in this location will not involve damage or degradation of the monument.

7.59 The proposals have been the subject of consultation with both CADW and CPAT. Both of whom see no risk to the integrity of the monument or its setting as a consequence of the proposals. This aspect of the scheme requires Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent in addition to planning permission and Members are advised that such an application is presently before CADW for their consideration.

7.60 The area of land adjacent to the Dyke but proposed now to be outside of the school site will be maintained by the Council as part of the existing grounds maintenance undertaken along the dyke where it abuts the footpath.

7.61 Impact on the Natural Environment

The site is not within any statutorily protected sites and there are no such sites within 1km of the site. 2 locally designated Wildlife Sites are in close proximity to the north west and north east respectively, of the site. These are the Greenfield valley Wood and Pools and Coed Pen-y-Maes.

7.62 Both an ecological desk study and Phase 1 Habitat Survey have been undertaken of the site. The site is predominantly school buildings, hard surfaced areas and amenity grassland which is of little ecological value. Mature broad leaved trees and hedges within and upon the boundaries of the site are considered to have ecological value and these are to be retained and protected during the course of development.

7.63 A bat survey revealed little opportunity within the site for roosting sites for bats. The only suitable sites were considered to be those mature trees which are to be retained. In these circumstances, no further bat surveys are required. Should any of those trees require work or removal, an ecologist will need to be present to oversee the work and ensure there is no compromise to any bats which may be found. I shall condition accordingly.

7.64 No evidence of amphibians (Great Crested Newts), reptiles or badger setts within the site were found. It is noted that whilst pools are located some 200 metres from the site, these have high levels of fish populations and are therefore unsuitable habitat for Great Crested Newts.

7.65 The report recommends mitigation measures to improve the ecological value of the site as a whole, including the provisions of bird nest boxes and bat roost boxes. The report also identifies an infestation of Japanese Knotweed within the site and a scheme has been submitted to eradicate this invasive species. I shall condition that the recommendations of the survey report are undertaken in full in accordance with a time frame to be submitted and agreed.

7.66 Other Matters

Queries have been raised in relation to access to the site by pedestrians wishing to walk from the Pen-y-Maes area to the Strand and on into Holywell town centre. Similarly, the use of the school fields for people to walk their dogs upon has also been raised.

7.67 The site is a school. Unfettered and unmonitored access throughout the school day is not permitted and will not be encouraged or facilitated, especially where public footpaths and footways adjacent to carriageways exist for all routes from this area. In addition, adequate existing facilities for walking and dog walking exists via the public footpaths into Coed Pen-y-Maes. Furthermore, dog walking on the site is not an appropriate use for school recreation areas and brings other

associated risks to health.

7.68 Accordingly, neither of these requests will be accommodated through these proposals.

8.00 CONCLUSION

8.01 I consider the proposal to acceptable as matter of planning policy principle. I am satisfied that the proposed development takes account of the applicable planning policies and represents the correct balance between the various issue which relate to this site. I am satisfied that with the application of appropriate conditions, the scheme is acceptable in all other respects.

8.02 In considering this planning application the Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

Contact Officer: David Glyn Jones
Telephone: (01352) 703281
Email: david.glyn.jones@flintshire.gov.uk