

PLANNING STATEMENT

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles

June 26



Summary

Proposal

Proposed demolition of existing rear building, sections of walls, car port and other structures and development of new teaching block, revised vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, air source heat pump, air handling unit, sprinkler tank, pump house, cycle store, bin store, retaining walls, boundary treatments and associated works

Location

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles, St Johns Terrace, Neath Abbey, SA10 7ND

Date

June 26

Project Reference

PS/GJ/GM/26.105

Client

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Product of

Asbri Planning Limited
Unit 9 Oak Tree Court
Mulberry Drive
Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff CF23 8RS

Prepared by

Georgia McColm | Graduate Planner

Approved by

Geraint Jones | Principal Planner

Report Revision No.

3

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for the sole and exclusive use of client whom it was commissioned and has been prepared in response to their particular requirements and brief. This report may not be relied upon by any other party.

The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this report and the provisions of the said Act are expressly excluded from this report. This report may not be used for any purpose other than that for which it was commissioned. This report may not be reproduced and/or made public by print, photocopy, microfilm or any other means without the prior written permission of Asbri Planning Ltd. The conclusions resulting from this study and contained in this report are not necessarily indicative of future conditions or operating practices at or adjacent to the Site. Much of the information presented in this report is based on information provided by others. That information has neither been checked nor verified by Asbri Planning Ltd.

Content

Section 1	
Introduction	4
Section 2	
Site Description and Context	7
Section 3	
The Proposed Development	10
Section 4	
Community Engagement	12
Section 5	
Planning Policy Context	13
Section 6	
Appraisal	23
Section 7	
Conclusion	30

Introduction

- 1.1 Asbri Planning is appointed as planning agent to Environmental Directorate, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to prepare this Planning Statement to accompany a full application for the proposed demolition of existing rear building, sections of walls, car port and other structures and development of new teaching block, revised vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, air source heat pump, air handling unit, sprinkler tank, pump house, cycle store, bin store, retaining walls, boundary treatments and associated works at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Treges, St Johns Terrace .
- 1.2 The Planning Statement acts as a supporting document to the accompanying planning application and should be read in conjunction with all other elements of the application. The following drawings are submitted to accompany the application:

Drawing name and reference	Prepared by
Site Location Plan (YGGT-ASL-00-00-DR-A-00001 - P1)	Austin Smith Lord
Existing Ground Floor Plan (YGGT-ASL-00-00-DR-A-00010 - P1)	Austin Smith Lord
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (YGGT-ASL-00-00-DR-A-00100 - P4)	Austin Smith Lord
Proposed Sections – General Arrangement (YGGT-ASL-00-00-DR-A-00130 - P2)	Austin Smith Lord
Existing Elevations (YGGT-ASL-00-ZZ-DR-A-00121 - P1)	Austin Smith Lord
Proposed Roof Plan (YGGT-ASL-ZZ-01-DR-A-00101 - P3)	Austin Smith Lord
Proposed Elevations – General Arrangement (YGGT-ASL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00120 – P3)	Austin Smith Lord
Existing and Proposed Elevations to Main School Building (YGGT-ASL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00121-P1)	Austin Smith Lord
Proposed Site Plan – New School Block (YGGT-ASL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00902 - P4)	Austin Smith Lord
Sprinkler and Hydrant Tank Fencing Detail (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00503-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
Refuse Store Fencing Detail (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00501-P02)	Austin Smith Lord
Cycle Shelter Detail (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00502-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
General Arrangement (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00901-P04)	Austin Smith Lord
Hard Landscape (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00902-P02)	Austin Smith Lord
Soft Landscape (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00903-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
Boundary Treatment (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-D-L-00904-P02)	Austin Smith Lord
Existing Drainage Condition - CCTV Survey (CAM CC2970 XX XX DR C 0030 – P01)	Cambria
Vehicle Tracking Option 3 (CC2970 CAM XX XX DR C 0112-P01)	Cambria
Proposed Drainage Layout (CC2970 CAM XX XX DR C 0500 – P01)	Cambria

Proposed MEP Services Combined External Layout (YGGT-CSG-XX-00-DR-ME-70001 P01)	Consilium
Proposed Electrical Services External Lighting Lux Levels (YGGT-CSG-XX-XX-DR-E-63011-P01)	Consilium
Topographical Survey (KW4968-01)	Azimuth Land Surveys Limited
Underground Survey (KW4968-02)	Azimuth Land Surveys Limited

1.3 In addition, the following supporting documents are also submitted:

Document (reference where appropriate)	Prepared by
Planning Application Form	Asbri Planning
Planning Statement	Asbri Planning
Design Statement (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-RP-A-0003-P03)	Austin Smith Lord
Green Infrastructure Statement (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-T-L-00103-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
Long Term Management Plan (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-T-L-00102-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
Outline Specification (YGGT-ASL-XX-XX-T-L-00104-P01)	Austin Smith Lord
Bat Report	NPT Wildlife
Site Assessment Survey	Ecological Services Ltd
Aboricultural Report	ArbTS
Drainage Strategy Technical Note (CC2970-CAM-ZZ-XX-TN-C-0001-P01)	Cambria
Flood Consequence Assessment	Cambria
MEP Strategy Report (YGGT-CSG-XX-XX-RP-ME-70001-02)	Consilium
Environmental Noise Survey (7857/ENS1_Rev1)	Hunter Acoustics
Noise Impact Assessment (7857/NIA1)	Hunter Acoustics
Site Investigation Report (14560/AG/26/SI)	Integral Geotechnique
Desk Study Report (14560/LP/26/DS)	Integral Geotechnique
Transport Statement (1953-ACS-ZZ-XX-RP-T-001-A)	acstro
Travel Plan (1953-ACS-ZZ-XX-RP-T-002-B)	acstro
Written Scheme of Investigation	Archaeology Wales Limited
Level 2 Building Survey	Archaeology Wales Limited
Construction and Environmental Management Plan	Knox & Wells

1.4 In terms of the demolition, the following drawings and documents are submitted specifically to this element of the application:

Drawing/Document name (reference where appropriate)	Prepared by
Demolition Site Plan (YGGT-ASL-00-00-DR-A-15100 - P3)	Austin Smith Lord
Post Demolition Contingency Plan	Austin Smith Lord/Knox & Wells
Demolition Environmental Management Plan (DEMP)	J2R Demolition
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles Appendix 1 (Site Restoration for DEMP)	Knox & Wells
Asbestos Demolition Survey Report	MSS
Arboricultural Report - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles – Demolition	ArbTS

1.19 This Planning Statement presents the planning case for the proposed development having regard to the site and its surroundings, the planning history, and policy context. It considers the key policy issues and planning merits of the proposed development. The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2: provides a description of the site and its surroundings, including a review of the site's planning history;
- Section 3: summarises the development proposals.
- Section 4: provides an overview of the community engagement undertaken in regard to the emerging scheme.
- Section 5: outlines the relevant planning policy context, at both the national and local level.
- Section 6: addresses the key planning considerations associated with the development proposal.
- Section 7: provides a conclusion regarding the overall acceptability of the application.

Site Description and Context

The Site

- 2.1 The application site is located within the grounds of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles on St Johns Terrace, Neath Abbey and measures circa 0.72ha. The site contains the school and associated curtilage. The developable area relates to the north of the main school building which is currently occupied by a 1940s classroom block and hardstanding used for parking and the adjacent field to the east as displayed in Figure 1 below. The classroom is not up to contemporary standards and is therefore required to be replaced. There are two existing access points to the school site, one of which is solely pedestrian and the other also vehicular. Both of these are achieved from St Johns Terrace. There is an access gate located in the southwestern corner and the primary point of access serving pedestrians and vehicles is located along the western boundary.
- 2.2 The north of the site is bordered by an embankment which separates the site from a railway line. This embankment is of a higher topography and characterised by vegetation.
- 2.3 The site has recently been subject to two applications which are in conjunction with the full planning application. The first is for a prior notification of demolition (P2026/0236) for the rear school block, boundary walls and bike/car shelter which was submitted on Tuesday the 14th of April 2026. The second is in relation to a Certificate of Lawful Use (P2026/0251) for a garden room to the south of the eastern field. The site is located in a primarily residential area with the frontage of five terraced dwellings separated by the road on the west of the site. The eastern boundary of the site is secured by fencing from the adjoining cemetery associated with St John the Baptist Church.
- 2.4 The A4320 St Johns Terrace offers access to the site from the south and west and links both Neath Abbey and Skewen, acting as a high street for both areas. As a result, the application site is within a 10-minute walk of both and subsequently well serviced by a range of facilities.

Spatial Environmental Constraints

Flood Risk

- 2.5 The Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Flood Map for Planning reveals that a section of the northern part of the site is situated within Flood Zone 2 and 3 for Surface Water and Small Watercourses. This area of flooding is likely associated to a shallow point of the site receiving run off from the adjacent railway embankment.



Figure 1: NRW Flood Map for Planning Extract

Public Rights of Way

- 2.6 Following a review of Neath Port Talbot's public rights of way map, there are no public rights of way contained within or adjacent to the site.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 2.7 The Cadw Designated Historic Assets online mapping system indicates that the site boundary does not contain any Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments. The closest designated asset is 'Church of St John the Baptist' (Ref: 82344) which is a Grade II Listed Building approximately 130m to the east.
- 2.8 Neath Port Talbot's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) lists the Mynachlog Nedd Junior School as a Building of Local Importance. The building is described as a small 19th century junior school comprising 'two wings and unusual small square bell tower'.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 2.9 According to the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) Constraints map, the site does not contain any statutory or non-statutory ecologically designated sites. This includes Local Nature Reserve, National Nature Reserve, RAMSAR, SINC, SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ancient Woodland.

Coal Mining Legacy

- 2.10 The Mining Remediation Authority map viewer indicates that the site is located within the South Wales Coal Mining Reporting Area. Despite this, the site is not situated within the Development High Risk Area. In summary, it appears unlikely that the development of the site will be constrained by Coal Mining Legacy.

Planning History

- 2.11 A review of the Neath Port Talbot Council's planning search identified the following historic planning application associated with the subject site.
- 2.12 The site has recently been subject to two applications which are in conjunction with the full planning permission. The first is for a prior notification of demolition (P2026/0236) for the rear school block, boundary walls and bike/car shelter which was submitted on Tuesday the 14th of April 2026 and subsequently approved on Monday the 11th of May 2026. The second is for a Certificate of Lawful Use (P2026/0251) for a standalone garden room building which was submitted on the 20th of April 2026.

Application Ref	Proposals/Location	Date determined	Decision
P2026/0251	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate (proposed) for the construction of 1 no. single storey detached classroom	Awaiting decision	-
P2026/0236	Prior notification for proposed demolition of school block, boundary walls and bike/car shelter at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregelles (Additional information received 16.04.26)	11/05/2026	Prior Notification Approval Not Required
P2022/0928	New play canopy Ysgol Gynrad Gymraeg Tregelles St Johns Terrace Neath Abbey Neath Neath Port Talbot SA10 7ND	25/01/2023	Approved

The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The re-development of the site is necessary to facilitate the growth of the Welsh medium primary school. The existing teaching 1940s block on site is of poor condition and not fit for supporting the school's future full capacity. Other elements to be demolished to facilitate the development include the existing metal car park adjacent to the site access, a section of wall along St John's Terrace and a section of wall along the east of the site between the school and the redevelopment also includes reconfigured parking arrangements and landscaping measures; each element is discussed in turn below.

New Teaching Block

- 3.2 The new teaching block will be one storey in height and situated to the north east of the main school building. The design is complementary to the 'Mynachlog Nedd Junior School', which is defined by the LDP as a Building of Local Importance, by adopting a similar brick type and pitched roof element. The building will provide 5 additional classrooms along with group rooms, wc's, plant room, server room, hygiene room, store room, a hall and a new staff room.
- 3.3 Alongside the development of the new building, external class play areas with canopies will be created. Despite this being on the grass area, this is not currently useable due to water retention issues on site. It is anticipated that the development's drainage strategy will incorporate measures to help alleviate these issues.



Reconfigured access, circulation and increased parking

- 3.4 The development will provide designated parking for staff members with the creation of 20 spaces including provision for 2 disabled spaces. This will be a significant improvement from the current parking situation in which none of the spaces are clearly marked and there is only space for around 12 vehicles. Additionally, the parking area will be reconfigured allowing vehicles to turn and move around the spaces. A vehicle tracking drawing is submitted within the submission package which includes the track extents of a larger fire appliance vehicle. Given it will be primarily smaller vehicles like cars using the site, this indicates there are no issues anticipated for vehicle emergence and egression onto site.

- 3.5 The supporting Transport Statement uses TRICS data that compares the previous English medium school use to the predicted capacity of the Welsh medium school. The data demonstrates that development will result in a reduction of peak-hour person trips and vehicle movements compared to what is pre-existing.

Open space and Landscaping

- 3.6 The development will retain as much as the existing grassed area as possible, with a large proportion of the development being cited on the footprint of the school block which is set to be demolished. A large section of the grassland to the south and east will be retained along with the vegetation associated with the railway embankment to the north.
- 3.7 The development will include the loss of a small area of the semi-improved grassland north of the eastern field. Despite this area contributing to local biodiversity, it is of low ecological value and faces issues regarding regular management and disturbance, meaning impact is considered to be minimal. Along with this, a singular low-value tree will be removed.
- 3.8 The landscape strategy includes the planting of four trees to offset the loss of the one tree on site and the introduction of rain gardens between the new school building and car park, providing both a sustainable drainage function and ecological benefits. New areas of species-rich wildflower grassland will be provided to the north and east of the new building replacing low-diversity grassland. The roof of the new building will be equipped with a biodiverse green roof providing additional habitat and assisting in regulating surface water. Additional enhancements include the potential integration of bird and bat boxes within the new building fabric. Suitable locations will be confirmed via future discussions with the project ecologist.

Ancillary Structures

- 3.9 A number of ancillary structures are required to be constructed to facilitate the operation of the school block and adhere to contemporary standards. The structures include
- Cycle Store
 - Sprinkler Tanks, Hydrant Tank and Pump House Enclosure
 - Refuse Store
- 3.10 The cycle store will be positioned on the paved area adjacent to the main school entrance whilst the refuse store and enclosure will be located in the car park area. It is considered that the proposed location of the refuse store is suitable as it is in the same location as where the bin storage currently takes place. Furthermore, it is required to be over 10m away from the outside of the school in accordance with paragraph 4.5.8 of Building Bulletin 100 relating to the Design for Fire Safety in Schools. The refuse store also needs to be within the car park to allow for easy collection by refuse operatives. The store will be screened from residents of St John's Terrace by the retained boundary wall.

Community Engagement

Engagement Event

- 4.1 An Engagement Event was held on-site at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregelles on Wednesday the 18th of March 2026 between the hours of 16:00-18:00. This was an opportunity for local residents, community consultees and parents associated with the school to speak to members of the design team and engage with boards displaying the proposals. The event was advertised via letters which were sent to over 90no. addresses. The following community consultees were also invited:
- Dyffryn Local Members
 - Coedffranc Central Local Members
 - Coedffranc North Local Members
 - Dyffryn Community Council
 - Coedffranc Town Council
- 4.2 Parents, governors and teaches were also notified through school correspondence.
- 4.3 Attendees were encouraged to fill out feedback forms in which their comments were able to be recorded. The event was well attended with approximately 25-30 people turning up and 9 consultation forms completed.
- 4.4 All of the feedback forms received were in favour of the proposed development. The general consensus was that the new classroom would be a positive and much needed improvement for the school. A high percentage of the responses recognise that the school is set to grow in the coming years and the development will support this expansion.

Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 5.1 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (which came into force on 1st April 2016) requires *“public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle”*.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 plays a significant role in shaping the planning system in Wales, embedding sustainable development principles into planning policy and decisions. The Act reinforces the planning system’s shift towards a holistic, sustainable approach, emphasising that planning in Wales must consider not just present needs but also the well-being of future generations.
- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with **the Development Plan** unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The Development Plan comprises the following:
- National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February, 2021);
 - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (January 2016)
- 5.5 In addition to the Development Plan, the Planning Application has been informed by **Policy** and **Guidance** set out in the following:
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February, 2024), informed by The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and supplemented by Technical Advice Notes;
 - Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Development Plan

- 5.6 The development plan comprises Future Wales and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (January 2016).

National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

- 5.7 The National Development Framework: Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 was published on 24th February 2021. ‘Future Wales’ sets out the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy; achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience; developing strong ecosystems; and improving the health and well-being of our communities. As stated above, the National Development Framework has Development Plan status.
- 5.8 Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 Outcomes. As set out on Pages 54-56 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years’ time, as follows:

A Wales where people live:

- 1 ...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
- 2 ...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
- 3 ...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth

- 4 ...in places with a thriving Welsh Language
- 5 ...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
- 6 ...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
- 7 ...in places where travel is sustainable
- 8 ...in places with world-class digital infrastructure
- 9 ...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
- 10 ...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
- 11 ...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient

Placemaking

5.9 Placemaking forms a key concept upon which many national planning policies are based. It is set out at Page 65 of Future Wales that *“Placemaking is at the heart of the planning system in Wales and this policy establishes a strategic placemaking approach and principles to support planning authorities to shape urban growth and regeneration”*.

5.10 Policy 2 of Future Wales is of key relevance in terms of placemaking, which states the following:

“The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- *creating a rich mix of uses;*
- *providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- *building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- *increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities; establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;*
- *promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and*
- *integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority’s Green Infrastructure Assessment.”*

5.11 Further detail on the Welsh Government’s strategic placemaking priorities is set out at Page 66 of Future Wales. Key placemaking principles are summarised below:

Mix of uses

To create activity throughout the day and enable people to walk and cycle, rather than being reliant on travelling by car, places should have a rich mix of residential, commercial and community uses within close proximity to each other. Urban growth and regeneration should integrate different uses within neighbourhoods.

Variety of housing

To ensure places are socially mixed and cater for varied lifestyles, they should have a mix of housing types and tenures and space that allows for home-working. Urban growth and regeneration should cater for families, couples and single people of different ages, as well as providing a mix of affordable and private housing.

Walkable scale

To enable active and healthy lives, people should be able to easily walk to local facilities and public transport. Urban growth and regeneration should be focused within inner city areas and around town centres, as well

as around mixed use local centres and public transport. Co-working hubs offering an alternative to home-working are an important feature of the economy, and these should be located in town and local centres.

Density

To support the economic and social success of our towns and cities, including sustaining public transport and facilities, urban growth and regeneration should increase the population density of our towns and cities. New developments in urban areas should aim to have a density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare (net), with higher densities in more central and accessible locations. It may be necessary to take social distancing requirements into consideration when designing public and communal spaces.

Street network

To provide a framework for different uses and types of housing to be integrated within neighbourhoods, urban growth and regeneration should be based on a network of streets that enable social distancing if necessary. The street network should be permeable, with streets primarily connecting at both ends with other streets and providing links into, out of, and through places. The street network should have a hierarchy, with streets that have different characters and functions.

Plot-based development

To create varied and interesting places, which can be developed and change over time, and provide opportunities for people to design and build their own homes and workspaces, as well as open up the housing market to small and local builders, urban growth and regeneration should provide opportunities for the development of small plots. A plot-based approach to development should be promoted, including the subdivision of larger sites to be built in small plots or as a group of plots.

Green infrastructure

To enable urban areas to play their part in supporting ecosystem resilience, the use of innovative nature-based solutions should form part of strategies for urban growth and regeneration. Through Green Infrastructure Assessments, specific opportunities should be identified to ensure that green infrastructure is fully integrated.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 5.12 It is identified at Page 76 that the strategic focus of Future Wales on urban growth requires “an increased emphasis on biodiversity enhancement (net benefit) in order to ensure that growth is sustainable” (page 76).

- 5.13 In addition to this, the associated importance of green infrastructure is highlighted:

“As the population of Wales becomes increasingly urban, the opportunity to optimise well-being benefits from green infrastructure will be greatest in and around these areas. Innovative use of nature-based solutions and integrating green infrastructure in and around urban areas can help restore natural features and processes into cities and landscapes. Providing locally accessible, high quality green spaces and corridors helps to maintain and enhance the strategic functioning of our natural resources and ecological networks and address physical and mental well-being” (page 78).

- 5.14 Policy 9 of Future Wales is of key relevance in regard to green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement, which states the following:

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

- identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and
- identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.

Local Level

5.15 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan was adopted in January 2016 and comprises part of the prevailing development plan for the area.

5.16 The following policies are considered to be of most relevance to the proposed development:

Policy reference	Relating to
<i>Overarching Policies</i>	
SP1	Climate Change
SP2	Health
SP3	Sustainable Communities
SC1	Settlement Limits
SC2	Protection of Existing Community Facilities
SP4	Infrastructure
<i>Area Based Policies</i>	
SP5	Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area
<i>Communities and Housing</i>	
SP10	Open Spaces
OS1	Open Space Provision
OS2	Protection of Existing Open Space
<i>Environment and Resources</i>	
SP15	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
EN6	Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
EN7	Important Natural Features
SP16	Environmental Protection
EN8	Pollution and Land Stability
SP18	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
RE2	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development
SP19	Waste Management

W3	Waste Management in New Development
<i>Transport and Access</i>	
SP20	Transport Network
TR2	Design and Access of New Development
<i>Culture and Heritage</i>	
SP21	Built Environment and Historic Heritage
BE1	Design
BE2	Buildings of Local Important

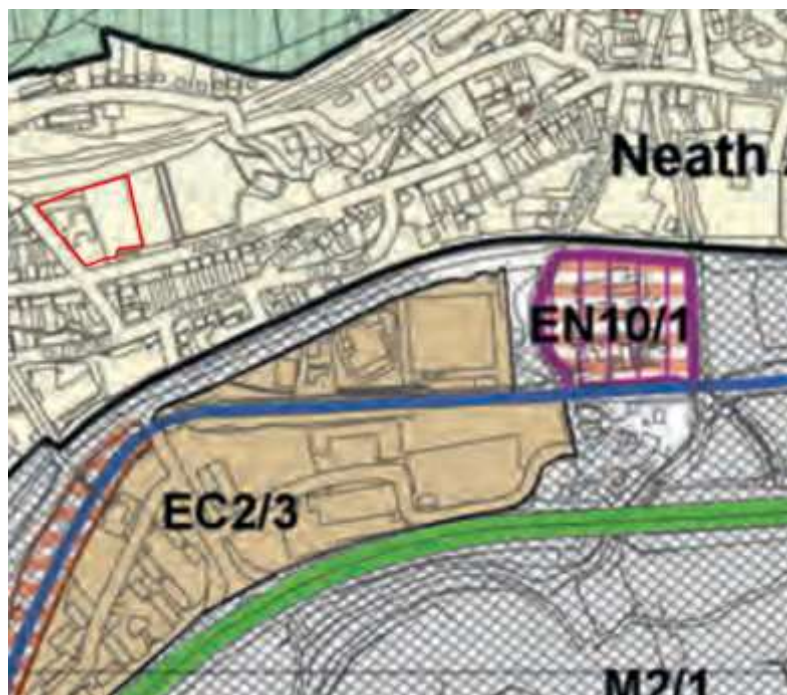


Figure 2: Extract from Adopted LDP Proposals Map (2011-2026)

- 5.17 Figure 2 above outlines the application site's positioning within the settlement limit. The site is not subject to any other allocations or designation according to this online map.

National Policy and Guidance

Planning Policy Wales Edition 12

- 5.18 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 was published in February 2024. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 5.19 Sustainable Development is defined at Page 7 of PPW as follows: *"the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals"*.

- 5.20 Paragraph 1.18 sets out that *“Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated”*.

Placemaking

- 5.21 In accordance with the National Development Framework, placemaking is also at the heart of PPW – Paragraph 2.1 for example states that *“Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking in both plan making and development management decisions in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities”*.

- 5.22 It is summarised succinctly at Paragraph 2.3 that *“The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all”*.

- 5.23 Placemaking is defined at Page 14 of PPW as follows:

“Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense. Placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings”.

- 5.24 A set of ‘national sustainable placemaking outcomes’ are outlined on page 17 PPW, which it advises should be used to inform the assessment of development proposals. The national outcomes are defined as follows:

- *Growing our economy in a sustainable manner*
- *Making Best Use of Resources*
- *Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments*
- *Creating & sustaining communities*
- *Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact*

- 5.25 It is highlighted at Paragraph 2.20 that *“Not every development or policy proposal will be able to demonstrate they can meet all of these outcomes, neither can it necessarily be proved at the application or policy stage that an attribute of a proposal will necessarily lead to a specific outcome. However, this does not mean that they should not be considered in the development management process to see if a proposal can be improved or enhanced to promote wider well-being”*.

- 5.26 The implications of COVID are highlighted in Paragraph 2.22, stating for example that *“We must ensure that a post-Covid world has people’s well-being at its heart. Planning Policy Wales leads the way in this respect and contains the principles and policies needed for us to recover from this situation in a positive manner. In July 2020 the Welsh Government published Building Better Places⁹ which pinpoints the most relevant policy priorities and actions to aid in the recovery”*.

- 5.27 Paragraph 2.23 confirms that *“Building Better Places recognises the pivotal role that planners play in shaping our society for the future. They must plan for our priorities around placemaking, decarbonisation and well-being. Building Better Places starts to identify action to achieve this and upon which we must build; future reviews of Planning Policy Wales will enable us to further integrate this work. Everyone has a part to play to ensure that the communities of tomorrow benefit from the foresight of today”*.

Good Design

- 5.28 The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted at Paragraph 3.3 of PPW where it is stated that *"Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area"*.
- 5.29 Good design must enable development proposals to address the issues of inclusivity and accessibility for all, and it is highlighted at Paragraph 3.6 that *"This includes making provision to meet the needs of people with sensory, memory, learning and mobility impairments, older people and people with young children...Good design can also encourage people to meet and interact with each other, helping to address issues surrounding loneliness. Good design must also involve the provision of measures that help to reduce the inequality of access to essential services, education and employment experienced by people without access to a car. Design measures and features should enable easy access to services by walking, cycling and public transport"*.
- 5.30 In addition, it is highlighted that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals - Paragraph 3.7 states for example that *"Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution"*.
- 5.31 The importance of good design in term of ensuring high environmental quality is set out at Paragraph 3.8:
"Landscape and green infrastructure considerations are an integral part of the design process. Integrating green infrastructure is not limited to focusing on landscape and ecology, rather, consideration should be given to all features of the natural environment and how these function together to contribute toward the quality of places".
- 5.32 Paragraph 3.12 outlines that good design is also about avoiding the creation of car-based developments by minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys. It is stated that *"Achieving these objectives requires the selection of sites which can be made easily accessible by sustainable modes as well as incorporating appropriate, safe and sustainable links (including active travel networks) within and between developments using legal agreements where appropriate"*.

Previously Developed Land

- 5.33 Paragraph 3.55 outlines how previously developed (brownfield) land is favourable for development, it specifically states *"Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land (see definition overleaf) should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome"*.

Welsh Language

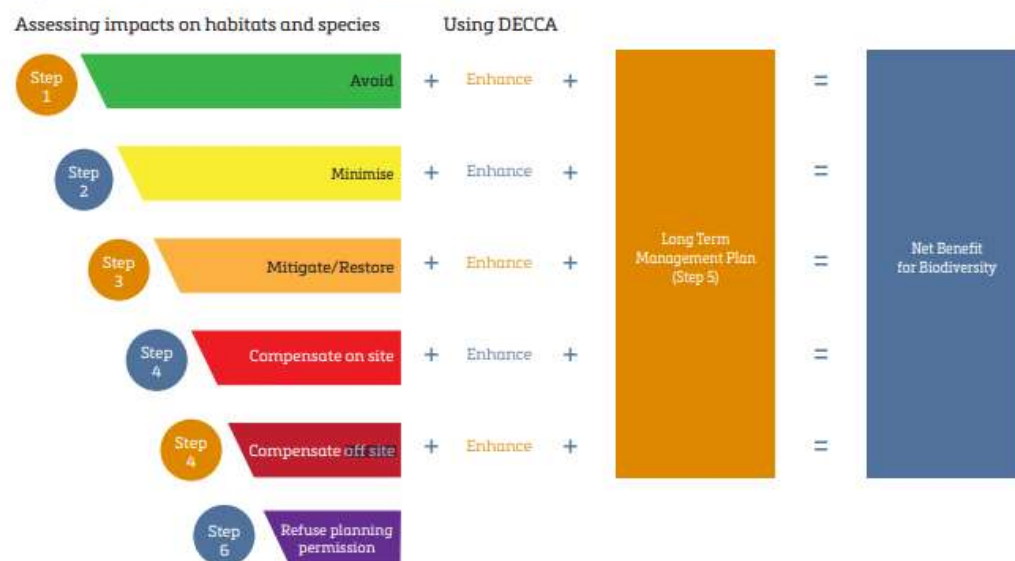
- 5.34 It is set out in PPW that the Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being will depend upon a wide range of factors, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities and places. Paragraph 3.29 states that *"If required, language impact assessments may be carried out in respect of large*

developments not allocated in a development plan which are proposed in areas of particular sensitivity or importance for the language”.

Green Infrastructure

- 5.35 The importance of green infrastructure is highlighted throughout PPW. It is summarised at Paragraph 6.2.11 that *“The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes”*.
- 5.36 Paragraph 6.2.12 confirms that *“A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied”*.
- 5.37 The Step-Wise Approach is depicted at figure 12 and discussed at paragraph 6.4.15 which confirms that the first priority for planning authorities is to avoid damage, if that is not possible then there is a requirement to minimise, mitigate, compensate on site, and then only as a last resort off-site compensation for unavoidable damage must be provided.

Figure 12: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach



Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 5.38 The importance of considering SuDs as an integral part of the development process is highlighted at Paragraph 6.6.18 of PPW where it is stated that *“The provision of SuDS must be considered at the earliest possible stage when formulating proposals for new development”*. It is advised at Paragraph 6.6.19 that *“Design for multiple benefits and green infrastructure should be secured wherever possible and as part of Green Infrastructure Assessments suitable approaches towards the provision of SuDS should be identified”*.

Technical Advice Notes

- 5.39 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANS) are of relevance to the proposed development:
- 5.40 TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009): provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It seeks to demonstrate how local planning authorities, developers and key stakeholders in conservation can work together to deliver more sustainable development that does not result in losses from the natural heritage but instead takes every opportunity to enhance it.
- 5.41 TAN 11 Noise (1997): provides advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development. It outlines some of the main considerations which local planning authorities should take into account in drawing up development plan policies and when determining planning applications for development which will either generate noise or be exposed to existing noise sources.
- 5.42 TAN 12 Design (2016): provides advice on design considerations and states that development should aim to:
- *Create places with the needs of people in mind, which are distinctive and respect local character*
 - *Promote layouts and design features which encourage community safety and accessibility*
 - *Focus on the quality of the places and living environments for pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles*
 - *Avoid inflexible planning standards and encourage layouts which manage vehicle speeds through the geometry of the road and building*
 - *Promote environmental sustainability features, such as energy efficiency, in new housing and make clear specific commitments to carbon reductions and/or sustainable building standards*
 - *Secures the most efficient use of land including appropriate densities*
 - *Consider and balance potential conflicts between these criteria*
- 5.43 TAN 15 'Development, flooding and coastal erosion (2004), last updated in March 2026, provides a framework for dealing with the consequence of flood risk in Wales. It outlines how development which is located wholly or partially within Surface Water and Small Watercourses Flood Zone 2 and 3 will require a Flood Consequences Assessment.
- 5.44 TAN 18 Transport (2007) confirms that integration of land use planning and development of transport infrastructure has a key role to play in addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development. Paragraph 2.4 indicates that by influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help to reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.
- 5.45 TAN 20 'Planning and the Welsh Language' (October 2017) provides guidance on how the Welsh language may be given appropriate consideration in the planning system and on compliance with the requirements of planning and other relevant legislation.
- 5.46 TAN 24 The Historic Environment, (2017) provides guidance on how the historic environment should be considered within development, the following in particular:
- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled monuments
 - Archaeological remains
 - Listed buildings
 - Conservation areas

- Historic parks and gardens
- Historic landscapes
- Historic assets of special local interest

Local Planning Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.47 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is of most relevance to the proposed development:

- *Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)*
- *Renewable & Low Carbon Energy (July 2017)*
- *Parking Standards (October 2016)*
- *Design (July 2017)*
- *The Historic Environment (April 2019)*
- *Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance (April 2019)*

5.48 It is key to note that the main school building, 'Mynachlog Nedd Junior School', is included as a 'Building of Local Importance' within the Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance (April 2019) SPG.

Appraisal

Overview

- 6.1 As stated above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the Planning Statement aims to identify the main issues of relevance to the determination of the Planning Application, and assess the scheme against the Development Plan.
- 6.2 The key material planning considerations are as follows:
- The Principle of Development
 - Historic Environment
 - Highways and Parking
 - Design and Appearance
 - Green Infrastructure, Landscaping and Biodiversity
 - Loss of Section of Existing Pitch

The Principle of Development

- 6.3 As shown in the LDP Proposals Map extract in Figure 2, the site lies within the defined settlement boundary. According to Policy SC1 'Settlement Limits', development within these settlements will be acceptable given they are proportionate in scale and form. The application site is not allocated or designated for a specific land use within the plan and is centred upon a site in which a pre-existing educational building will be demolished. This makes this part of the developable area brownfield land and within a site with the same pre-existing use. As outlined in paragraph 3.55, Planning Policy Wales has a preference for previously developed land or 'brownfield' land to be utilised in order to promote sustainability principles.
- 6.4 Policy SP3 'Sustainable Communities' identifies that the delivery of sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities will be promoted by defining locations for development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy established in Table 3.1 within the LDP. The application site lies within Neath Abbey which is identified as a Large Local Centre and within the third echelon of the settlement hierarchy. It also lies in close proximity to Skewen which is a District Centre and within the second echelon of the settlement hierarchy. It is therefore considered that the proposed redevelopment to accommodate a new teaching block is suitable in respect of the settlement hierarchy in accordance with Policy SP3.
- 6.5 Policy SP4 'Infrastructure' outlines how where required adequate provision for new infrastructure will need to be made whilst ensuring that there are no detrimental effects on the area and community. Due to the school requiring additional space to meet its full capacity, the new school building is considered to support policy SP4 in being new infrastructure which is required for the community. The existing standalone building north of the school is too outdated to serve the needs of the school meaning the proposed development will result in the enhancement of a much-needed education facility.
- 6.6 In light of the above, it is considered that the principle of development is firmly established in accordance with national and local policies including paragraph 3.55 of PPW and Policies SC1 'Settlement Limits', SP3 'Sustainable Communities' and SP4 'Infrastructure' of the adopted Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan.

Historic Environment

- 6.7 The main school building is identified within the local authority's Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance SPG. In terms of the Local Development Plan, policy SP21 'Built Environment and Historic Heritage' outlines what measures will be used to enhance and conserve historic heritage:

'1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals;'

- 6.8 The design of the proposed building has been carefully curated to ensure that it is sympathetic and reflective of the historic main school building. Measures like the inclusion of a pitched roof and the brick type have been selected to echo the form and character of the building, meeting the requirements of criterion 1.

'2. Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development;'

- 6.9 The site is not located adjacent to an arterial gateway. Criterion 2 is therefore not relevant to the proposed development.

'3. Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance;'

- 6.10 The development will not directly impact the features of the main school building and the materials have been selected to echo the character. The new block will be situated behind the historic element of the building meaning most prominent feature, the square bell tower, will not be visually impacted from the front. The proposal is therefore in accordance with criterion 3 of Policy SP21.

- 6.11 A Level 2 Building Survey has been undertaken to record the historical and architectural character of the building to be demolished in perpetuity and an archaeological Watching Brief will be followed during construction, ensuring that no damage will be had to the historic and archaeological elements of the site, in line with criterion 3.

'4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:

- (a) Landscapes of Historic Interest;*
- (b) Historic Parks and Gardens;*
- (c) Conservation Areas;*
- (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and*
- (e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage.'*

- 6.12 The site is not subject to any formal designations so criterion 4 is not considered to be relevant in this instance.

- 6.13 The impact proposed development on the Historic Environment is therefore considered to be acceptable in accordance with the relevant provisions of Policy SP21 'Built Environment and Historic Heritage'.

Highways and Parking

- 6.14 The reconfigured parking area associated with the development is envisaged to alleviate some of the parking issues associated with the school site, including excessive parking along St Johns Terrace. The new parking arrangement will create 20 designated staff parking spaces with the inclusion of 2 disabled spaces. According to the supporting Parking Standards SPG, the site is considered to fall into Zone 3 which is classed as 'Urban', where one space per 5 pupils is recommended. Despite there being a shortfall of 22

spaces with what is proposed, this is significantly less than the current 38 space shortfall on site. The proposed development will therefore result in a betterment in respect of parking provision. The supporting Transport Statement prepared by acstro conducted trip generation analysis using TRICS data and found that the proposed development will result in a reduction of peak-hour person trips and vehicle trips in comparison to the pre-existing use as an English medium school.

- 6.15 The reconfiguration of the parking area will allow vehicles to turn and move around the spaces efficiently, with the supporting vehicle tracking details displaying a larger fire appliance vehicle.
- 6.16 In terms of access to the site by foot, the school site is already well connected to the pedestrian network to the south and this access will remain useable.
- 6.17 Policy TR2 'Design and Access of New Development' outlines the criteria which needs to be met for access and transport in relation to new developments:
- 6.18 *1. The development does not compromise the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway network and does not have an adverse impact on highway safety or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation;*
- 6.19 *2. Appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities are provided and the access arrangements for the site allow for the safe manoeuvring of any service vehicles associated with the planned use;*
- 6.20 The development will provide a reconfigured car park and access with 20 designated spaces for staff parking. From a safety perspective, this represents a betterment from the current arrangement where there are no marked spaces. The increase in 8 spaces will also contribute towards reducing traffic levels and off-site parking along St Johns Terrace and other surrounding streets. It is considered that both criterion 1 and 2 can therefore be met.
- 6.21 *3. The development is accessible by a range of travel means, including public transport and safe cycle and pedestrian routes;*
- 6.22 The proposed development site is accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport. The pedestrian access along the southwest boundary will be retained as part of the proposals... Additionally, there is a bus stop located adjacent to the school on the A4230 (White Gates bus stop) where there are three separate regular services serving the stop. It is therefore considered that criterion 3 can be met.
- 6.23 *4. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans are provided for developments that are likely to create significant traffic generation.*
- 6.24 The application is accompanied by both a Transport Statement and Travel Plan relative to the scale of the development. The Transport Statement concludes that the development is considered to be in a sustainable and accessible location with no adverse impact on the local highway network and highway safety.
- 6.25 Policy SP 20 'Transport Network' in the Local Development Plan sets out 9 sets of criteria for ensuring that the transport network is developed in a 'safe, sufficient and sustainable manner'. The proposals are measured against each of the criteria in turn below:
- 6.26 Both Criterion 1 and 2 are not of relevance to the proposal

'3. Supporting enhancements to the walking and cycling network'

- 6.27 The southern pedestrian access to site will be maintained and the pedestrian access to the car park will be improved through segregation from the vehicular access.
- 6.28 Criterion 4 is associated with Park and Share schemes and therefore not relevant to the proposal. Criterion 5 relates to the identification of a road hierarchy and is also therefore not relevant to the proposal.

'6. Restricting development which would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety;'

- 6.29 The development will create a parking arrangement which includes designated marked spaces along with space for vehicles to turn and manoeuvre around the site. This is considered to be a significant improvement for safety in comparison to what is pre-existing on site.

'7. Requiring development proposals to be designed to provide safe and efficient access and promote sustainable transport;'

- 6.30 As outlined previously, the access to the car park is set to be segregated for vehicles and pedestrians. The current pedestrian pick up/drop off point to the south west of the site is set to remain operational. These two safe access points for pedestrians align with the requirements in criterion 7 as they allow safe and efficient access, ultimately encouraging users to travel by sustainable modes.

'8. Requiring appropriate parking provision;'

- 6.31 Despite the parking provision falling 22 spaces short of the recommendations in the Council's Parking Standards SPG, the accompanying Transport Statement outlines how this is a significant betterment to what is pre-existing on the site where the current shortfall is 38. This will still lead to less demand for on-street parking spaces nearby when the school reaches full capacity.
- 6.32 Criterion 9 is not of relevance given it is related to the movement of freight.
- 6.33 The impact of the development in relation to Highways and Parking is therefore considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies TR2 'Design and Access of New Development' and SP 20 'Transport Network' of the adopted LDP.

Design and Appearance

- 6.34 The siting, form and height of the new building has been carefully selected to reflect the Local Importance status of the main school building. Policy BE1 Design sets out criteria that all development proposals must meet to demonstrate high quality design. The criteria, and how the scheme will meet it, is discussed in turn below:

'1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;'

- 6.35 As discussed in the accompanying Design Statement, it has been ensured that the design of the new building is sympathetic and related to the main school building. Throughout the development of the design, the hall roof pitch was lowered to ensure it will be lower than the bell tower of the main building. Additionally, the inclusion of a pitched roof has been incorporated to reflect the character of the retained old block. In terms of the materials, the brick type has been selected to echo the existing stone of the

main building and dark grey cladding is introduced to draw upon the slate roof in a modern way. The design therefore satisfies criterion 1.

'2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges'

- 6.36 As outlined above, the form and material of the building have been designed and carefully selected to reflect the character of the Local Listed Building whilst introducing a contemporary element. Criterion 2 is therefore considered to be met.

'3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;'

- 6.37 As discussed previously, the brick type has been selected to echo the existing stone of the main building and dark grey cladding is introduced to draw upon the slate roof in a modern way. The application is supported by hard landscaping and soft landscaping schemes. The soft landscaping will introduce tree and shrub planting to screen areas of the site and the western boundary will be screened by a wall like it is currently, satisfying criterion 3.

'4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community'

- 6.38 The incorporation of a designated parking area that will allow vehicles to move safely and turn within the site will improve the safety of the neighbouring highway, in line with criterion 4.

'5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;'

- 6.39 A large section of the grassland to the south and east will be retained along with the vegetation associated with the railway embankment to the north. The development will include the loss of a small area of the semi-improved grassland north of the eastern field. This area is of low ecological value and faces issues regarding regular surface water retention rendering the area unusable for significant periods of the year. Whereas the development proposes to alleviate some of the surface water constraints creating a more useable space for pupils to enjoy more frequently. Compliance is therefore thought to be had with criterion 5.

'6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well-lit environments and areas of public movement);'

- 6.40 The proposals include outdoor play areas for the children which makes use of a section of the grassland that is currently not useable. The scheme is designed to meet Secured by Design principles. Safety is at the forefront of the design with gated entrances and CCTV systems being proposed across the new development. There are also windows on all of the building's elevations, creating natural surveillance of the site. Criterion 6 is therefore considered to be met.

'7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;'

6.41 The reconfigured parking layout also includes a segregated access point for pedestrians. Additionally, the existing main pedestrian entrance point to the south west of the site is set to be maintained, ensuring linkages with the surrounding community and maintaining and promoting an integrated network for pedestrians in line with criterion 7.

6.42 *8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:*

6.43 *(a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;*

6.44 Criterion 8a is not considered to be relevant to the educational use of the proposed development.

6.45 *(b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;*

6.46 The development will not preclude the reasonable use of adjacent land in line with criterion 8b.

(c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;

6.47 The development is predominantly situated on the footprint of the pre-existing rear classroom block which is subject to demolition, making it mostly brownfield land. Criterion 8c is therefore met.

(d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.

6.48 The accompanying MEP Strategy Report prepared by Consilium identifies that a photovoltaic system will be located on the roof, predominantly facing south in accordance with criterion 8d.

'9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution;'

6.49 The application is accompanied by a comprehensive drainage strategy that manages surface water via sustainable drainage systems. Criterion 9 is therefore met.

'10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.'

6.50 The access into the site is step-free meaning it is inclusive for all. Two designated disabled parking bays are also proposed within the reconfigured car parking area, allowing access directly to the entrance of both the main building and the new teaching block, satisfying the requirements of criterion 10.

6.51 The design and appearance of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy BE1 'Design' of the adopted LDP.

Green Infrastructure, Landscaping and Biodiversity

6.52 Policy EN7 'Important Natural Features' is of relevance to the proposal in regard to green infrastructure. The two sets of criteria in the policy are worded as follows:

1. Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or

2. The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed.

- 6.53 The proposed development will result in the loss of a singular tree and a small area of the semi-improved grassland north of the eastern field. It is key to note that the grassed area is of low ecological value and the tree was identified as 'low value' within the accompanying tree survey. A large proportion of the grassed area is set to be retained due to a large area of the new buildings' footprint being cited on the footprint of the school block which is set to be demolished.
- 6.54 The proposal is supported by a comprehensive landscaping strategy which includes a number of mitigation and compensation measures. The loss of the singular low-value tree on site is set to be mitigated by the planting of four trees, which goes beyond the required 3 to 1 ratio. Other measures include the introduction of rain gardens and species-rich wildflower grassland. Considering these measures, it is thought that the landscaping strategy on site will meet both criterion 1 and 2 of Policy EN7.
- 6.55 Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 requires development to follow a step-wise approach where impact cannot be fully avoided on any ecological features. The supporting Green Infrastructure Statement demonstrates how the development has considered this approach and will provide on-site mitigation and minimise any impacts.
- 6.56 The Green Infrastructure, Landscaping and Biodiversity implications of the development are therefore considered to be acceptable in compliance with Policy EN7 'Important Natural Features'.

Loss of Section of Existing Pitch

- 6.57 Whilst the existing pitch is not designated as formal open space within the adopted LDP or accessible to the public, it is acknowledged that the proposed development will result in a loss of the northern portion amounting to approximately 1,230m². Approximately 2,050m² will be retained or 63%. It should be emphasised that the pitch is currently not useable for the vast majority of the school year as it retains surface water to such an extent that it is water logged rendering it unsuitable for the children to use. It therefore offers little to no amenity or play value to the children.
- 6.58 The proposed development seeks to alleviate the surface water issue by installing a series of land drains that will assist in taking water away from the surface of the retained pitch. The accompanying Drainage Technical Note states that *the area and the proposed temporary garden classroom will be attenuated to appropriate greenfield rates and a separate connection made to the same surface water system as the main works. The design achieves a maximum discharge rate of 1.4l/s in the Q100+40% climate change storm event. The surface water drainage system has been sized to cater for the 1 in 100 year storm event with a +40% allowance for climate change.*
- 6.59 It is therefore considered that whilst the quantity of overall area will be lost, the quality of the retained area will be drastically improved by making it useable for children to enjoy. The accompanying Landscape Scheme also illustrates that improvements will be made in respect of visual amenity and biodiversity value through the proposed planting of ornamental shrubs between the school building and grassland. Further enhancements includes wildflower seeding on banks of the northeast corner of the site and benches for children to sit when outside.
- 6.60 Therefore, whilst the pitch is not designated as an area of open space or accessible to the public, the proposed development will result in a betterment from the existing situation by improving its useability and visual and biodiversity values. The proposed development will therefore not contravene with Policy OS 2 (Protection of Existing Open Space) of the adopted LDP.

Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council in relation to the proposed full planning application for the proposed demolition of existing rear building, sections of walls, car port and other structures and development of new teaching block, revised vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, air source heat pump, air handling unit, sprinkler tank, pump house, cycle store, bin store, retaining walls, boundary treatments and associated works at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles, St Johns Terrace.
- 7.2 The proposals are considered to be compliant with both national policy and the policies in the local development plan. The principle of development is well established given the sites location with the defined settlement boundary and it being an extension to a pre-existing educational facility. The site is predominantly made up of brownfield land, making it more favourable for development in terms of national policy.
- 7.3 The site is highly accessible by sustainable modes and the redevelopment will enhance the vehicular safety on site by providing a reconfigured parking arrangement. The main school building, 'Mynachlog Nedd Junior School' is subject to the status of a 'Building of Local Importance' as per Neath Port Talbot's SPG. The design of the building has been carefully considered to echo the character of the locally listed building with the inclusion of a pitched roof and similar brickwork.
- 7.4 Despite the small loss of biodiversity on site, the application is supported by a comprehensive landscaping strategy which compensates for the losses whilst providing enhancements for both ecology and drainage.
- 7.5 The proposals therefore comply with the relevant national and development plan planning policies and supplementary planning guidance. It is for these reasons that it is respectfully requested that Neath Port Talbot Council grant planning permission for the proposed development.