

# Plasyfelin Primary School

Planning Appraisal

December 2024

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Issue date	03/12/24
Status	PAC
Revision	1
Author	IW
Checked by	LH
Reference	2371

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## 1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to set out the planning case for the redevelopment of Plasyfelin Primary School, which is located on Caenant Road / Lewis Road, directly north of Caerphilly town centre.

The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 - Site and Development Description
- Section 3 - Planning Context (including policy and site planning history)
- Section 4 - Pre-Application Planning Advice
- Section 5 - Planning Assessment
- Section 6 - Conclusion

## 2. Brief Site and Development Description

The site is accessed from Caenant Road / Lewis Road and Emlyn Drive, which are residential streets with on-street parking. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north, west and south. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini Y Gwyndy Campus is located east of the site.

The existing school buildings are single-storey and a mixture of architectural styles. The buildings are located in the west of the site. A series of mature trees frame the existing buildings and the existing parking is centrally located on the site. The playing field and hard-standing play provision are located in the east of the site. The site is bound to the north and east by a woodland boundary. The river Nant yr Aber is located to the east of the site adjacent to the woodland boundary.

This proposed development consists of a two-form entry primary school that will replace the majority of the existing school facilities. The development will need to be built while the existing school operates; so the development will be phased and have the use of temporary modular units. The new building will retain existing green spaces and access points. The building will be supported by new hard play spaces, enhanced parking areas and internal movement circulation, drainage infrastructure, and landscape. The development will retain the site's existing mature boundaries and nearly all of the trees.

Figure 1: Aerial View of the site





Figure 2: Street View of the site from Caenant Road



Figure 3: Street View of the site from Lewis Drive



### 3. Planning Context

#### 3.1 National Planning Policy

The key national planning policy documents that provides material context to the proposed development are:

- Planning Policy Wales (Ed. 12)
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

These policy documents place a presumption on sustainable development and identify placemaking as the statutory process to achieve such development. **Planning Policy Wales** identifies a series of placemaking themes that developments are expected to meet. It also establishes a requirement for all new developments to deliver biodiversity net gain.

Figure 4: PPW Placemaking objectives



**The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act** places a requirement on statutory bodies to safeguard the wellbeing of future generations against those of current generations when

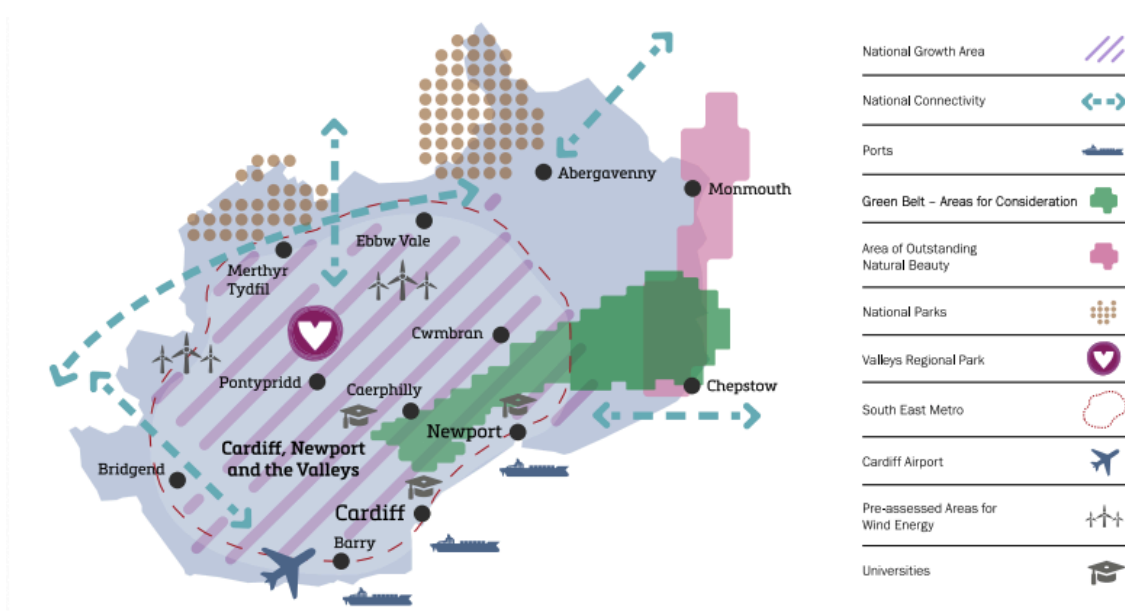
public decisions are being made; meaning development proposals must be demonstrated to meet the needs of current generations, whilst safeguarding the needs of future generations. Sustainable development is the means to achieve this as defined in Planning Policy Wales.

Figure 5: Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals



**Future Wales: The National Plan 2040** established a series of key development policies to guide development; it also established growth areas across Wales. Caerphilly and the development site is located in the south-east region which is a National Growth Area.

Figure 6: Future Wales, South- East region





In addition to the above overarching development policy documents a series of Technical Advice Notes provide design guidance to development proposals. Those relevant to the development include:

- TAN 10: Trees Preservation Orders
- TAN 12: Design
- TAN 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion
- TAN 16: Sport, recreation and open space
- TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language
- TAN 21: Waste

Figure 7: Development Advice Map (the site is partly in Zone C1)

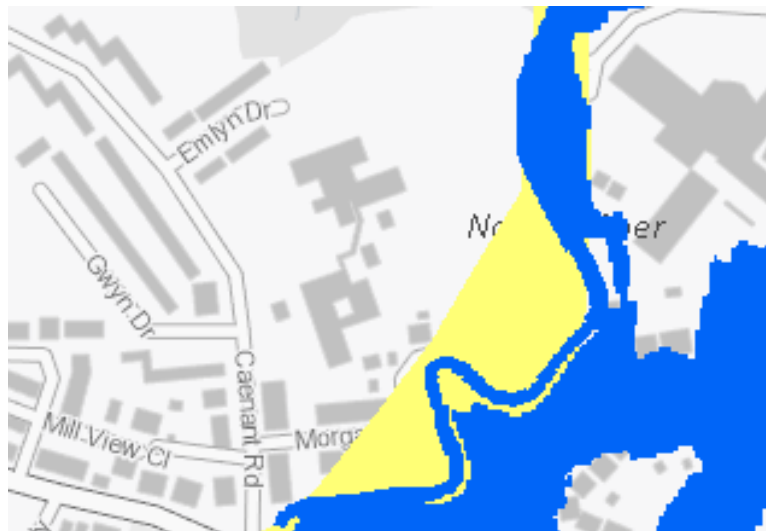
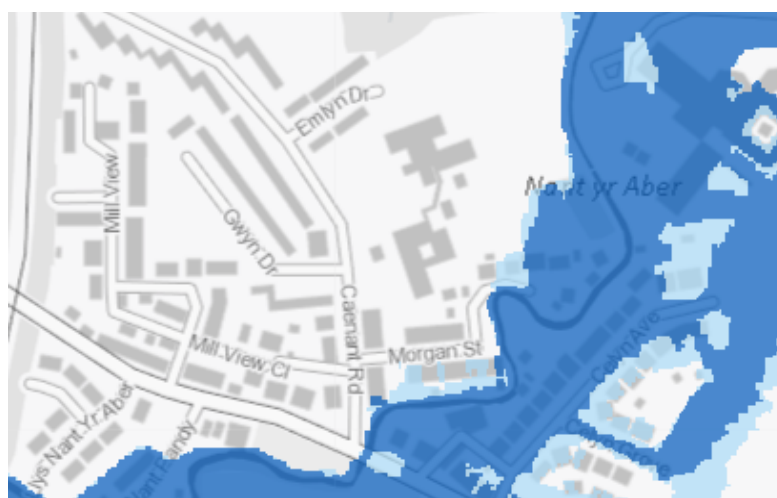


Figure 8: Flood Map for Planning (the site is partly in Zone 3)

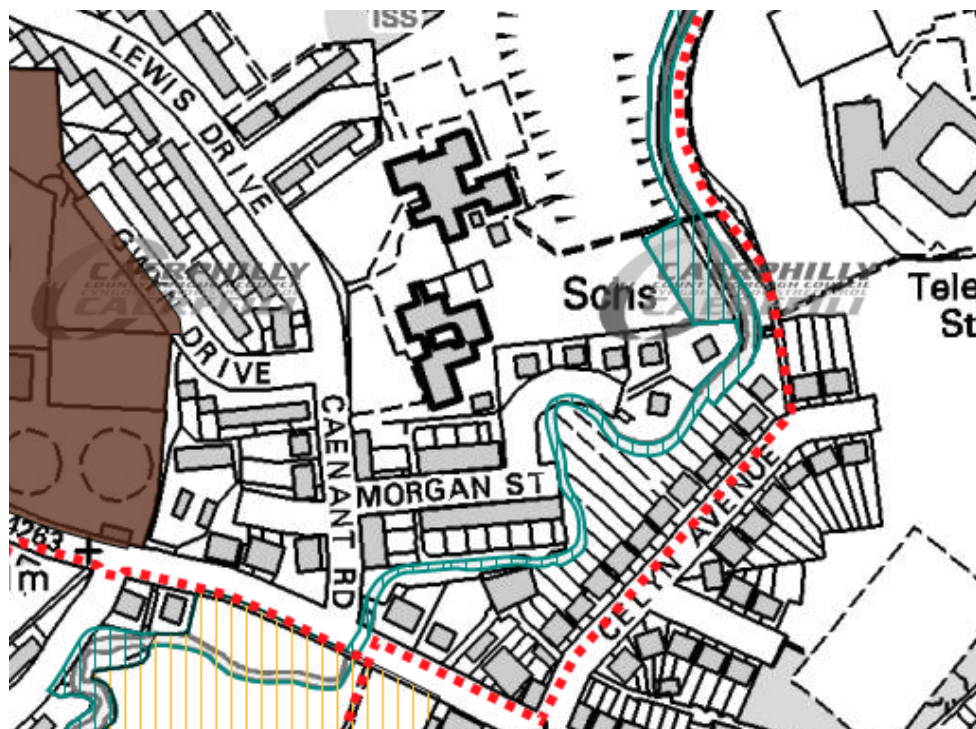


### 3.2 Local Planning Policy

The Local Development Plan is used to guide and control development providing the foundation for consistent and rational decision making. In doing so, it provides a measure of certainty about what kind of development would, and would not, be permitted in particular locations during the Plan period. The relevant plan for this site is the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021. A replacement Development Plan is in the early stages of preparation.

In the adopted Local Development Plan the development site falls within the settlement boundary and is white land. The findings of the LDP maps can be seen below. The CCBC Proposals Map, shows no designations or allocations on site. The brown area allocation to the west of the site is for housing development (HG 1.66). There is also a designation of a SINC on the Nant yr Aber River running east of the site.

Figure 9: Local Development Plan Proposals Map



In the Constraints Map to the Local Development Plan, the site is shown to fall within a Development Referral Area as well as being a Sandstone and Secondary Coal Resource Area.

The Map also shows the flood zone C1 designation, which falls on the southwestern edge of the site.

Figure 10: Local Development Plan Constraints Map



Within the Development Plan, the following written policies are relevant to the determination of a future planning application for the development:

- SP4: Settlement Strategy
- SP6: Placemaking
- SP9: Waste Management
- SP21: Parking Standards
- SP22: Community, Leisure and Education Facilities
- CW1: Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion
- CW2: Amenity
- CW6: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection
- CW7: Protection of Open Space
- CW8: Protection of Community and Leisure facilities

Supporting the Local Development Plan are a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents. Those relevant to the proposed development are listed below:

- LDP4 Trees and Development
- LDP5 Car Parking Standards
- LDP8 Protection of Open Space

### 3.3 Planning History

Generally, the history of planning applications for the development site is amendments to the school by adding additional facilities. The following are key planning records for the site:

- 16/0745/LA- Erect a single storey extension to junior block (Granted. 12.10.16)
- 15/0787/LA- Erect a modular building for Flying Start Provision (Granted. 23.12.15)
- 15/0288/LA- Erect a single-storey breakout room (Granted. 16.07.15)
- P/99/0518- Erect a single mobile classroom unit (Granted. 26.08.99)

## 4. Pre Application Advice

Informal pre- application discussions were undertaken during the design concept stage of the project. The below summarises the key advice provided, which has shaped the planning application.

### Transport:

- It was discussed that there will be an increase in student numbers overall which will be fully assessed in a Transport Assessment.
- It was agreed that appropriate parking would need to be provided within the scheme, in line with local guidance.
- Active Travel was recognised as being important by the Planning Authority and it was requested by the officers that an Active Travel Plan needs to be in place as part of the operation of the school. It was also requested that a Framework Travel Plan be included in the planning submission.
- It was discussed that the Transport Assessment should account for pick-up and drop-off arrangements on the local highway network.

### Flooding:

- The Planning Authority flagged that an updated TAN 15 may be in place when the planning application is submitted. It was advised that the flood maps should be monitored during the progression of the planning application.
- It was recognised by the Planning Authority that the current flood map shows a limited flood risk extent on the site. Further in the current version of the Flood Maps for Planning there was limited flood risk shown.
- It was stated that a Flood Consequence Assessment will need to be submitted with the planning application to show the impacts on the operation of the school in a flood event.

### Building heights:

- The planning officers did not object to the principle of two storeys for the new buildings on site, as it was a logical design response to the context of the site and the need to reduce the impact on the site's green infrastructure.

- The officers also mentioned that the location of the school at the front of the site represents good placemaking and is a good response to reducing the overall impacts on green infrastructure.
- The issue of the proximity of neighbouring properties to the two-storey sections of the new school building was discussed, it was noted that this was especially prominent as the properties on Morgan Street don't have long gardens. Taking into account level differences, it was agreed the planning application should demonstrate no overlooking and that the school would not appear overbearing from residential properties. The Authority suggested sections be provided to look at the height and massing relationship between the new school building and residential properties.
- The step on the western elevation of the building was supported as a means of addressing height differences between the school building and residential properties, but it was noted that the design of the step would require careful consideration and the planning application should demonstrate a thoughtful approach.
- It was also requested that greater prominence be given to the architectural detailing of the western elevation of the new school building as it is one of the key elevations to Lewis Drive and residential properties.

**Materials:**

- At the time of the meeting, materiality was to be decided, but the Authority supported the principles of sustainable materials, and suggested that references be made to local materials in the wider built form.

**Ecology:**

- The location of the school building was deemed to be logical and strong on green infrastructure grounds by the Planning Authority, reflecting an option that allowed the retention of the key landscape and biodiversity resources on the site.
- Specific focus was given to the importance of vegetation along the northern and western boundaries, while the southern boundary vegetation was also deemed important on biodiversity grounds but also screening and providing a buffer between the school and residential properties. The principle of protection and enhancement was discussed.
- The planning officers enquired whether green roofs could be implemented into the scheme (subject to costs).



- It was noted that the future planning application will need to demonstrate a strong ecological and green infrastructure response to align with the stepwise approach of Planning Policy Wales and that landscape, ecology, and the arboriculture strategy should be coordinated.

**Drainage:**

- The Planning Authority queried the difference between current and proposed hardstanding and accepted it seemed almost 'like for like'
- The Authority noted the requirement for SAB to deliver 30% betterment and advised that drainage solution needs to be part of the site green infrastructure approach and not to be hard attenuated solutions, with engineered features.

**Fencing:**

- The Authority queried whether the 2.4m height fencing should to be weldmesh as it could appear imposing on Lewis Drive. It was also suggested whether the fence should be set back, though it was recognised this would be problematic on maintenance grounds.
- Security requirements were referenced alongside insurance requirements, but it was discussed that the colour of the fencing and the use of landscape to assimilate/reduce the visual appearance could be considered.

**Ground Conditions**

- It was noted that a Coal Mining Risk Assessment should be considered as the site is within a mapped high risk area.

## 5. Planning Assessment

Based on the planning policy context, the informal advice from the Planning Authority and the nature of the development site character, the following are the key planning considerations for the development.

Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
Ecology	The dense woodland area north and east of the site has the potential to be used by priority and protected species. One of the existing buildings also has bats present.	Ecological surveys have been completed to understand the ecological baseline character of the site. This includes targeted bat surveys which confirmed the presence of bats on site and in one of the school buildings and otter surveys. The surveys identify that ecological effects can be managed subject to following the legislative licensing process and providing mitigation and enhancement. The design as proposed will protect key landscape resources, including the vegetated site boundaries, and valuable trees. The design also includes additional landscape planting to diversify the internal site habitat. Concerning lighting levels, the existing dark corridors on the site are to be maintained through the new lighting design. A Green Infrastructure Statement shall be included in the planning to demonstrate how through the above design choices and approaches, biodiversity net gain can be delivered and the development can meet the requirements of national policy.

Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
Floodrisk	<p>Most of the site is located in Flood Zone A on the Development Advice Maps for Wales, but the southwestern corner is located in Flood Zone B (an area known to have flooded in the past). In the Flood Maps for Planning the majority of the site is located in Zone 1 but the southwestern corner is designated as Zone 2 and 3, which is woodland edge.</p>	<p>While the modelling underpinning the Flood Maps for Planning is subject to change, development is to be avoided in the mapped Flood Zone 3 area of the site. As required in policy, a Flood Consequences Assessment is to be included in the planning application to demonstrate the development will not be subject to flooding and will not have adverse off-site effects. The development would thus meet the requirements of TAN 15 and the flood maps.</p>
Streetscene and visual impact	<p>The site is part of a residential street and the new development will be highly visible to residents and neighbours. It should therefore have a strong aesthetic quality.</p>	<p>The development as proposed is of high architectural quality, consisting of modern materials that will create a high-quality building that adds to the local street scene. The materials used are appropriate to the local area and contribute to the building's excellent sustainability credentials. The perimeter fence line will also be coloured and located to blend to the street scene as discussed with the Planning Authority. Landscape planting is to be used to assimilate the building into the wider existing site landscape. On these grounds it is considered the development has high placemaking credentials and meets national and local development plan placemaking policy guidance.</p>

Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
Mature trees	There are several existing mature trees located on the site of good value.	A tree survey has been prepared to support the development and has been used to protect the site trees and minimise tree loss. Minor tree loss is required, but this is restricted to a Category C tree. The landscape design included new tree planting which ensures the minimum 3:1 replacement planting requirement is exceeded by the development. The development can therefore have a positive impact on the site's tree provision. This design approach shall ensure the development meets the requirements of national and local planning policy.
Continuity of education services	The new school will need to be constructed while education provision continues on the site. Careful phasing of construction works, including demolition and the provision of interim accommodation, will be required. Safe construction methods bespoke to the site will also need to be explained.	It is proposed to phase the development so that the existing school can operate while the new school is built. This will be delivered through a phased demolition strategy and the use of temporary modular buildings. Safe operating conditions for the existing school to stay open will be provided by the use of a CEMP and CTMP during the construction processes. It is thus considered that the development will not impact local amenity as required by the local development plan policy.

Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
Coal workings	The site is part of a Development Referral Area and is identified as a Secondary Coal Resource.	A Phase 1 Desktop Report has been prepared to support the planning application and this identifies there is a low risk of coal works on the site. It is not considered that the development would have adverse effects on coal resources or prior workings, as required by the local development plan.
Residential amenity	Several properties back onto the site; the amenity of these residents needs to be safeguarded during the construction and operation of the development.	<p>The development design will not be overbearing to adjacent residential properties, being of a scale appropriate to the local area. The new development has been designed to include appropriate offset from residential boundaries and internal spaces would not overlook adjacent properties.</p> <p>A lighting design and assessment have been undertaken to ensure that there will be no unacceptable light spill from the site to adjacent properties. The MUGA location, for example, is in the centre of the site to prevent light spill.</p> <p>All ventilation and kitchen plants will be subject to noise mitigation to ensure that noise and odour levels at adjacent residential properties remain within best-practice standards.</p> <p>Finally, the undertaking of the construction following a CEMP and CTMP</p>

Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
		<p>shall ensure construction of the new school buildings and infrastructure does not impact residents.</p> <p>By following the above design approach and practice, it is considered that the development would not have an undue impact on local residential amenity and would meet the development plan policy.</p>
<p>Access</p>	<p>The current access is a residential street with on-street parking, which appears constrained. Construction vehicles will require careful management to access the site.</p> <p>The increase of pupil and staff numbers associated with the new school will also need to be assessed and appropriate active travel measures promoted.</p>	<p>A CEMP and CTMP will be prepared to explain how construction vehicles will safely access and leave the site. This will account for the operation of the existing school.</p> <p>A Transport Statement has been prepared to support the planning application and this accounts for the proposed uplift in pupil and staff numbers. The Statement identifies that the local highway can safely support a greater number of pupils and teachers.</p> <p>The promotion of sustainable travel to the site will be key to the success of Plasyfelin’s future operation and the Transport Statement includes sustainable travel principles that will be enshrined in future Travel Plan for the site. This will ensure opportunities for pupils and staff to travel by active means, public</p>



Consideration	Detail	Mitigating action
		<p>transport, and shared vehicles will be maximised.</p> <p>The approaches shall ensure the development can operate and be built without an unacceptable impact on the local highway network and meet local development plan policy relating to sustainable travel.</p>
Parking	<p>The school requires an appropriate number of car park spaces to operate effectively. However, the space provision needs to be in line with local maximum parking standards - one commercial vehicle space; one space per member of teaching staff; one space per three non-teaching staff; one space per thirty pupils visitor spaces; and bus parking as required.) A minimum 5% of bays to be for blue badge holders and a minimum 10% to be electric vehicle charging bays.</p>	<p>The proposed design includes an appropriate number of parking spaces to ensure the school can operate effectively. This number is suitable to the local parking standards. The Transport Statement sets out the parking case for the development.</p>
Open Space and Play Provision	<p>The development must provide external play space to meet sector guidelines.</p>	<p>Appropriate external space and play facilities are included in the development that meets school design standards.</p>

## 6. Conclusion

The principle of developing a two-form entry school on the site of the existing Plasyfelin Primary School is considered sound as the site is already an operational school site that is inside the settlement boundary. A high-quality design is proposed for the redevelopment that will ensure the future school is of high architectural quality, has interactive green spaces and play facilities, and provides an outstanding learning environment. With careful phasing and construction, the new school and infrastructure can be built while the existing school stays in operation. With appropriate management, the new development will be able to operate without undue impact on the safe operation of the local highway network and the amenity of residents. **On these grounds, the proposed development represents sustainable development and placemaking in practice. It is therefore considered the development meets the relevant planning context and is suitable for the grant of permission.**