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Ref: ST/GH/L0001  
PP Ref: PP-07567370  
Date: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Sir / Madam

**On behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council****Construction of a replacement secondary school building at the site of the existing Whitmore High School and the demolition of the existing secondary school building upon completion**

**Planning Portal Ref: PP-07567370**

Further to our pre-application discussions, on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, please find enclosed a full application for new build secondary school at the site of the existing Whitmore High School, Port Road West, Barry.

**Background to the Application Proposals**

The establishment of mixed-sex secondary school provision in Barry has been debated since public consultation was undertaken in 2013 to determine the extent of local support for co-education. In March 2014, the Council's Cabinet considered a report addressing the projected shortfall in the number of Welsh medium Secondary School places by September 2020 and requested work to be carried out to ensure there would be future accommodation. Despite an initially separate approach to co-education and Welsh medium expansion, it became evident a coordinated approach was necessary and resulted in the creation of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

21st Century Schools is a unique collaboration between Welsh Government; the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); Local Authorities; colleges and diocesan authorities. The programme was launched in March 2010 to address the projected shortfall in the number of English and Welsh medium Secondary School places by September 2020.

Band A of the programme for the transformation and enhancement of a number of schools was approved by Welsh Government in December 2012 and will conclude in 2019. Following this, a comprehensive community engagement strategy was devised and implemented for Band B, the second wave of investment to address investment objectives for:

- growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
- reductions of surplus capacity and inefficiency in the system;
- expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
- improved condition of educational assets; and
- making assets available for community use where demand exists.

In August 2018, the Welsh Government approved the outline case for the Band B project 'Transforming English and Welsh Medium Education in Barry.' This Schools Investment and Reorganisation Programme will involve re-organisation of Secondary Schools in Barry to create the 'Barry Secondary Learning Community' (BSLC) involving:

- i. Full refurbishment and extension of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg; and
- ii. Building of the new Whitmore High School.

In addition, on 7th January 2019, the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet agreed to deliver an enhanced 21st Century Schools Programme following confirmation of increased funding from Welsh Government. This is to fund the new school planned for Pencoedtre High School, instead of the proposed refurbishment and extensions.

Amalgamation of Secondary School education in the new BSLC, allows a shared vision and leadership whilst minimising the number of transitions between schools; maximise the benefits of continuous transition; and offer greater potential to improve levels of achievement for all pupils.

The programme demonstrates the Council's approach to sustainable development, contributing to The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to address social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. Education is a key contributor to improving these with high standards of modern learning environments, supporting pupils to achieve their best potential. The programme takes a long-term view of need, considering projected growth and Welsh Language Strategy. Furthermore, creation of two new mixed-sex schools to replace aging single-sex schools shows a collaborative and inclusive approach aligning well with the Well-being Act's key objectives.

The programme is also reflective of commitments in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), ensuring demand for Welsh medium education is met in the long-term to contribute towards the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. Furthermore, the Council have committed to part of the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 with a vision of achieving 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' which is reflective of the Well-being of Future Generation's Act. Outcome 3 'An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale' offers objectives contributing to the 21st Century Schools programme; specifically, by raising achievement.

## **The Need for the Application Proposals**

The current building occupying the site is generally not of a standard for 21st century teaching and learning. The buildings on site are currently in a poor condition. The proposal seeks to address this through significant financial investment by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in partnership with the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Investment programme.

Whitmore High School is the site of an existing school, which the proposal seeks to replace with a new 1,100 place school. The number of students attending both Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School has declined over a number of years and both schools have a high and continuing level of surplus capacity which places a drain on resources. Local authorities are required to manage school places and are expected to have no more than 10% surplus capacity overall. Schools with a surplus capacity of more than 25% are categorised by Welsh Government as having 'significant' surplus places which should be reduced as a matter of priority. The former Barry Comprehensive School fell under this category.

The proposal would reduce the number of places at Whitmore High School to 1,100 which is in line with the Vale of Glamorgan's projected pupil numbers. The new school in the form of Whitmore High will ensure that there is a sustainable balance between the supply and demand for school place, including in the long term. In this respect, the proposed development is in line with Policy MG6 – Provision of Education Facilities insofar that the provision of the new school will meet the demand for school places during the plan period.

## **The Application Site**

The site is situated in Barry, within the VoG. It lies to the south of the A4226 and west of the A4050, around 2km to the north of Barry Town Centre. Cardiff and Cowbridge lie approximately 16km and 21km to the northeast and west respectively. Residential areas are located to the east, south and west. Barry Hospital and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg (YGBM), a Welsh Medium Primary and Secondary school site, are located immediately to the south of the site.

The site is occupied by the existing Whitmore High School (formerly known as Barry Comprehensive School, an all-boys school) and associated playing fields and sports pitches. Whitmore High School is now a co-educational school. Pencoedtre High School is located to the northeast of Whitmore High School and a planning application is currently being prepared for a new school at this site.

The immediate area comprises a mix of residential, retail and healthcare uses. The principle of locating a school at this site has been established given that the proposal is to build a new school on the current site. There is an existing bus stop located in the immediate vicinity of the site. As such, the site is ideally located to provide secondary education within a convenient and highly sustainable location in the town.

## **The Application Proposals**

The application seeks to replace the existing building through the construction of a new build school. The existing school was constructed in 1966 and is beyond economical repair and will be demolished after the new school is completed.

The proposed development will cater for mixed sex pupils between the ages of 11 – 18. The proposal will cater for 1,100 places, of which 200 are sixth form. The proposal supports the Vale of Glamorgan Council's commitment to establishing mixed sex education in Barry as well as establishing modern, high quality learning environments that meet the school's aspirations.

The application proposal will form of:

- A part two-storey part three secondary school building;
- Facilities for the sixth form pupils; and
- An all-weather pitch and games court that will be considered for community use.

The Gross External Area of the application proposals is 13,203 sq.m.

A separate planning application for the creation of a new caretaker's house is submitted concurrently with this application. The proposed house will be designed to be in-keeping with the appearance of the school by utilising the same materials in its construction. Its location adjoining the access to the school also provides additional security.

## **The Application Submission**

The application comprises the following technical documents and a separate schedule of architectural plans is listed as a separate document:

- Application forms duly completed and signed;
- Certificate A and Agricultural Holding Certificate duly completed and signed;
- Planning Statement prepared by DPP Planning;
- Pre-application Consultation Report prepared by DPP Planning;
- Design and Access Statement prepared by Atkins (ref: 26W006-ATK-X-XX-RP-A-X-2000);
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and BREEAM Ecology prepared by AECOM;
- Transport Statement prepared by AECOM;
- Energy Statement incorporating BREEAM prepared by Atkins;
- Acoustic Report prepared by Atkins;
- Flood Consequences Assessment prepared by AECOM;
- Drainage Strategy prepared by Atkins; and
- Tree Report prepared by Arboricultural Technician Services.

Payment of the requisite planning application fee of £40,385 will follow under separate cover.

## **Assessment of the Proposals**

The application is accompanied by a suite of technical reports which conclude that the application proposal is consistent with the key aims of national planning guidance, which seek sustainable economic development and growth as a key element in achieving a more prosperous Wales.

The site is also located in a highly sustainable location close to residential properties. There are a number of bus stops located within 150m of the site along Port Road West which provide access to local services. The proposal also falls within the settlement boundary of Barry and constitutes the redevelopment of previously developed land and will deliver

significant social and educational benefits. As such, the site fully accords with the objective of delivering sustainable development contained within PPW Edition 10 and the LDP.

The supporting documentation to this application demonstrates that all other material considerations, including drainage, flooding, the impact on trees and ecology, has been properly considered during the design development and any necessary mitigation has been incorporated into the proposed scheme.

In addition, the planning application is accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation Report which sets out the comments received on the application during the statutory consultation process.

## Summary

In summary, the proposal represents a significant investment by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in partnership with the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Investment programme. The current school building is generally not of a standard for 21st century teaching and learning. The proposal supports the Vale of Glamorgan Council's commitment to establishing mixed sex education in Barry as well as establishing modern, high quality learning environments that meet the school's aspirations.

The proposal is consistent with national and local planning policy and will result in significant, social, economic and environmental benefits. As a result, the planning balance is clearly in favour of the proposed development and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted accordingly.

I trust the enclosed information is sufficient to allow the prompt registration of the application. However, should you have any queries or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Hooper  
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