

**Proposed new primary school and associated works****Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Aberthin Road, Cowbridge****Pre Application Consultation**

This is a detailed and comprehensive draft planning application which appears to cover all of the relevant planning aspects related to the building of a new primary school on the proposed site.

However, the key issues here are the facts that earlier consultations demonstrated that local residents are against the building of a primary school on this site and alternative sites have not been properly examined.

The draft planning application is supported by detailed consultants' reports covering trees, flooding, drainage, transport and travel, noise, ground conditions and ecology.

If the Vale of Glamorgan Council is able to produce reports of this nature to support their planning application why were they not able to do reports in similar detail to support the choice of site over and above other possible sites such as Y Bont Faen school, the Darren Farm / Clare Garden Village Taylor Wimpey site, the Cowbridge livestock market site et cetera.

If these other possible sites were examined in detail then the reports should have been made available as part of the initial consultation. If they were not examined in detail then this work should be done prior to approval being given to proceed with the building of a school on the Cowbridge Comprehensive School site contrary to residents' wishes.

In fact if the proposed site has been chosen without proper consideration of alternative sites then the necessary due diligence for a decision of this magnitude involving a large amount of public money has not been done and it is frankly surprising that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has been able to reach a decision to proceed with a planning application for this site without that due diligence.

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council therefore object to the submission of this planning application on the grounds that the choice and suitability of the proposed site has not been adequately demonstrated and the majority of local residents are against it.

With regard to the details of the draft planning application Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council make the following comments.

In the draft planning application the site is said to be vacant but is said to be being used as a "School sports field associated with the existing Comprehensive School".

The site cannot be both vacant and being used as a sports field. It is understood that in the event of a sports field being built upon there is a requirement that an alternative, equivalent sports field be provided.

The conclusions of the transport assessment are:

*"8.2.1 To summarise, in light of the assessment work and analysis within the TA, it is considered that the development would not have a material detrimental impact in relation to transport.*

*8.2.2 It is not considered that the development will have a material impact upon the operation of the local highway network, nor an unacceptable impact on highway safety and is therefore fully in accordance with the NPPF.*

*8.2.3 Consequently, it is considered that there are no significant highways and transportation matters that should preclude the Local Planning Authority from approving this planning application. "*

These conclusions seem somewhat complacent given that there are currently problems at drop-off and pickup times and these will only be exacerbated with the addition of 258 pupils and 22 staff. Also there are plans to develop the old school buildings on Aberthin Road which will create extra traffic.

To accommodate the additional load a number of changes to parking arrangements are proposed but as highlighted in section 5.4 Parking Safety there are currently problems which need to be addressed. It seems that efforts to solve these problems have not so far been successful and it is not clear why they should be successful in the future.

*“5.4 Parking safety*

*5.4.1 During the site visit it was noted that the school has concerns over conflict between parents cars and school children at pick-up/drop-off times and this is why the school currently restricts vehicle movements after 08:15 and before 14:15 using a member of staff and gates; coaches are allowed access after 08:15 but parents are discouraged away at the gate. Site safety in this area is a priority as all areas of the school are open to children during the school day for free play and the large car parks are also used as a fire assembly point.*

*5.4.2 The restrictions result in the following:*

*- Parents parking on Aberthin Road and/or turning within the junction mouth;*

*- Coaches parked along Aberthin Road prior to 14:15 when the gates open for picking up children.*

*5.4.3 The VoG Highways Department have raised concerns with these events and it is therefore proposed that the site will not restrict entry to vehicles prior to lessons starting at 08:30 resolve this issue.*

*5.4.4 Further discussions should be had with coach companies to agree stricter schedules to avoid any parking along Aberthin Road. It is noted that there is a lay-by located south of the A48 bridge which could be utilised in the event that coaches arrive prior to 14:15.*

*5.4.5 Site safety will continue to be monitored and further measures such as communication and signage can be proposed to manage vehicles as they enter and exit the site.”*

The Transport Assessment says that *“the school benefits from a dedicated 'safe' walk route from Cowbridge Town Car Park”* but points out that *“This route is not lit and therefore would be less attractive during the winter months when daylight is diminished during the school commuting periods.”* This path does need to be lit and this has been requested previously by the Town Council.

The proposed creation of Sixth form parking is welcome.

The Travel Plan makes no mention of electric vehicles and there appears to be no provision for electric vehicle charging points for the staff.

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

5th July 2021