



**PLANNING APPLICATION SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**CEFNI HENGOED LEISURE CENTRE, CALDICOT ROAD, BONYMAEN, SWANSEA. SA1 7HW.**

**PROVISION OF SPORTS BARN & REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING PUBLIC GYM AND OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

**APRIL 2020**

**OUR REF: 19/806**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **a) Background**

The application site is located within the grounds of the Cefn Hengoed Community School, which is located on Caldicot Road in Bonymaen.

The school forms part of a larger complex, which it shares with the existing Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre. The site is located within and with close connection to the local residential communities of Bonymaen, Winch Wen and Cefn Hengoed.

Freedom Leisure, in conjunction with the City and County of Swansea have applied to the Welsh Government for funding under the Community Learning Centres and Community Hubs Capital Grant Programme to benefit facilities at Cefn Hengoed Community School and Leisure Centre. The grant will enable significant capital investment to facilitate the community use of the school site and the project presents an ideal opportunity to develop the sports and community facilities to benefit the local community and the school, with the potential to bring together a range of services and facilities. These include a new indoor 3G pitch, fitness suite/studio, cafe and flexible spaces. These will all be available to the school, leisure centre users and the wider community.

The Council, in partnership with the school, Freedom Leisure, the Football Foundation, Swansea City Community Trust and other partners are working closely to secure match funding for this exciting multi-million pound scheme.

Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre is managed by Freedom Leisure in partnership with Swansea Council as part of its suite of leisure centres in the Swansea area, with leisure facilities that comprise a multipurpose sports hall which it shares with the school of some 669 m<sup>2</sup> and gym of some 111 m<sup>2</sup>.

The existing multipurpose sports hall is used for activities such as; 5 a-side Football, Badminton, Cricket, Netball, Basketball, Roller Hockey, Tag Rugby, Roller Parties, Gymnastics and Bouncy Castles. There are also a number of fitness classes available through the hall, together with sports classes, room hire and bar area.

The current operational hours for Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre are:

- Monday to Friday – 3pm to 9pm; and
- Weekends – 10am to 3pm.

Freedom Leisure employ some 15 staff at Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre, some operate from their other leisure facilities across Swansea, with around 3 to 5 staff based on site at any one time.

The attached photographs at Appendix A show the site from both an aerial and ground level perspective.

### **b) The proposals**

The proposals seek to develop the sports and community facilities at the site to benefit the school population and local community, with the potential to bring together a range of services and facilities. The project objectives are:

- To improve access and increase participation in sport in Swansea East by November 2021;
- To improve access to and participation in other community facilities and activities such as the library, parenting groups etc by November 2021; and
- To improve the existing sporting and physical education facilities at Cefn Hengoed School to support the curriculum and health and well-being aims by November 2020.

The proposals include the following key elements:

- A new indoor pitch which would measure some 11m in height, 61m in length and 41m in width and would occupy an area of approximately 2,397m<sup>2</sup>;
- Minor extensions are proposed to the existing leisure centre buildings together with an internal reconfiguration to allow for the provision of improved gym and changing facilities, a community room, reception and café area (combined total 543 m<sup>2</sup>);
- Repurposed existing fitness studio to enable beneficial use by the school;
- Resurfacing and fencing of the existing old tennis courts to the side; and
- Interconnecting pedestrian routes between the school and leisure areas and existing external connections surrounding the site.

The total gross floor area of the proposed Development will be approximately 2,939m<sup>2</sup>.

An existing car park will be refurbished as part of the proposals with a new access off Cefn Hengoed Road to accommodate some 65 designated spaces, including four dedicated disabled spaces, four motorbike spaces, cycle parking areas and the potential for up to six electric vehicle charging enabled spaces. This car park will serve the new barn and leisure facilities only.

The access will be gated via an electric gate out of hours but will remain open during hours of operation. The general arrangement of the car park and access is illustrated within the package of drawings submitted in support of the planning application.

The proposals include the provision of a new three metre wide continuous footway along the southern extent of Cefn Hengoed Road/Cefn Road and provision of a raised zebra crossing facility which adjoins the existing footway network.

The accessibility improvements will provide users of the school and leisure facilities as well as the local community with a continuous footway network. It is important to note their implementation will be subject to a Section 278 agreement with Swansea Council.

The purpose of the project is to enhance the existing physical education facilities and subsequently not adversely impact the school's provision for the delivery of the curriculum.

It is anticipated that Cefn Hengoed School will require usage of the following leisure facilities:

- Sports Hall (one class);
- Resurfaced and re-fenced MUGA on old courts to the side (one class). To be completed before the main works commence in order to mitigate loss of physical education spaces;
- New 3G indoor barn (one class);
- Gym with new repurposed equipment (half class); and
- Possible time tabled class use for older physical education classes of new gym (half class).

The leisure centre opening hours will also be increased to:

- Monday to Friday: 6:30am to 10:30pm
- Saturday: 7:00am to 09:00pm
- Sunday: 8:00am to 09:00pm

### **c) Surrounding land uses**

The proposed site is situated within the grounds of the Cefn Hengoed Community School, which is located off Caldicot Road with a vehicular and pedestrian access directly off it. Caldicot Road connects to Mansel Road lower down and provides a local distributor to other areas of Bonynmaen and Swansea area.

A further vehicular access (gated) and pedestrian access is available off Cefn Hengoed Road into the main school grounds, that links up the two sides of the existing school and leisure centre site. Cefn Hengoed Road links on to Cefn Road, which itself links down onto Mansel Road, some 0.6km to the south of Caldicot Road.

As indicated above, the school is part of a larger complex of buildings, including the Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre, formerly operated by the council but more latterly operated in conjunction with Freedom Leisure in a manner that is replicated across a range of existing leisure facilities within the Swansea City and County area.

The established residential communities of Bonymaen, Winch Wen and Cefn Hengoed surround the site, situated in East Swansea, some 4.6 km north east of Swansea City Centre.

To the north-east of the site lies Bonymaen Rugby Club and its associated playing fields both flood lit and non-flood lit, Cwm Glas Primary School lies to the north and residential areas of Bonymaen to the west and south.

Currently pedestrians are able to access the leisure facilities from Caldicot Road (main school entrance), and can also access the school grounds from Cefn Hengoed Road. A separate public footpath also connects Cefn Hengoed Road to Chirk Gardens leading to Caldicot Road, providing an off-site connection between the front and rear of Cefn Hengoed School.

The residential streets approaching the main entrance of the site from Caldicot Road have footways on both sides of the carriageway, with the provision of informal pedestrian crossings and drop kerbs/tactile paving.

A recommended bicycle friendly road is located some 115 metres north of the site which connects Cefn Hengoed Road to Colwyn Avenue, whilst National Cycle Network Route 43 is located 1.4km north-west of the site which connects to the Celtic Trail.

With regard to public transport, The Cefn Hengoed School Bus Stops are closest to the site situated on Caernarvon Way (approximately 160m from the site), comprising a flagged pole, timetable information and raised kerbing. Marked bus stops are located on Caldicot Road and an unmarked bus stop is situated on Cefn Road in close proximity to the junction with Cefn Hengoed Road (approximately 100m from the site). The services provided at these stops consist of the 31, 32, 33 and 592 with service 45 serving the Cefn Road Bus Stop providing connections into the city centre and Morriston areas.

The closest railway stations to the site are located at Llansamlet, some 2.3km to the north and Swansea Central Railway Station, located some 3.3km to the south.

The site is clearly located within an established urban area and within the context of a residential conurbation, which includes facilities such as schools, convenience stores, leisure centres, sports clubs and public facilities. The site is also located in area with a high residential catchment and both the school and leisure centre, serve the existing immediate residential area as well as attracting visitors from further afield.

The principle of a leisure centre development has been established by existing land use and continued allocation in the recently adopted City & County of Swansea Local Development Plan within the context of the local development boundary.

#### **d) Existing buildings and landscape**

The existing buildings located at the application site consist of the Cefn Hengoed Community School buildings together with the Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre buildings, which form the whole complex at the site.

The leisure centre facilities currently comprise a multipurpose sports hall which it shares with the school of some 669 m<sup>2</sup> and gym of some 111 m<sup>2</sup>. There is an existing external floodlit tarmac 'MUGA' area comprising of some four tennis courts width, together with an existing separate set of three unlit tarmac tennis courts located some 70 metres west of the existing MUGA. As part of the proposals, the sports barn will generally be located on the area of the current MUGA and the area containing the three existing tennis courts, are to be refurbished and resurfaced to form an improved surface MUGA with renewed sports mesh fencing and the addition of flood lights.

It is intended to refurbish areas of the existing leisure centre building and construct a single storey extension to the existing building to create an improved reception and circulation area.

The site is located at the top of Caldicot Road and forms the end of the road with turning areas and internal circulation roads within the school and leisure centre complex.

The visual approach to the site is lined with existing and established dense residential development, with spine roads giving vehicular and pedestrian access to the school and leisure centre site, as well as adjoining residential streets.

The site is elevated above the surrounding developed landscape to the north and north-west of the site, creating a built form as the backdrop to the adjoining residential areas. The new sports barn will be located to the south-east of the existing building complex and as such, will be largely screened from medium and long-range views of the site from the Lower Swansea Valley area, arcing in a north to south direction on the north-western side of the site.

The natural land topography continues to gradually rise beyond the site to the south-east up to Cefn Hengoed Road and rural fields beyond. Bonymaen Rugby Club grounds, pitches and clubhouse are located behind the site to the east/south-east with a one and a half/two-storey building, which due to the local topography, is visible over the top of the existing school buildings when viewed from long-range.

The rugby club also has two full size flood lit pitches, which it is understood are used almost every evening for winter training for senior teams down through the large junior section of the club.

The proposed sports barn will be constructed to the general east of the existing school and leisure centre building on the site of the existing MUGA. The existing three court tennis courts MUGA area will also be refurbished with an improved surface finish to the benefit of the school use primarily during school opening hours and for the benefit of the leisure centre outside of the school hours.

#### **e) Public Consultation Exercise Data and Information**

A number of local consultation and public engagement sessions have taken place at the school and sports centre, examining the thoughts, ideas, preferences and opportunities of local residents, service users and school pupils.

A partner meeting session took place on 15th July 2019, where a mixture of school pupils from years 7, 8 and 9 (some 15 girls and 15 boys), were asked their views and preferences on a new 'Sports Hub' to include the new barn and improvements to the sports centre facilities.

Some of the responses in relation to the current facilities and opportunities at the centre included:

- activities are boring,
- can't be bothered to take part,
- cost,
- don't enjoy PE,
- no facilities,
- because it costs £40 to play basketball,
- limited courts and they are too expensive,
- equipment is bad,
- don't know about opportunities,

It appears from this initial discussion and feedback that a lack of facilities and/or equipment was a significant barrier for the younger generation in attending the sports centre and facilities, together with costs and lack of exciting activities or opportunities.

Some of the opportunities and facilities that were mentioned as being attractive to the pupils included:

Basketball, football with friends, access to football during, school time, rugby games involving parents or other adults as a recreational activity after school, gym after school, during school, before school and over the school holidays. Swimming pool, free swimming to do lengths, tumbling classes, trampolining, Olympic trampolining, Slides in the swimming pool. Cycling track around the school. Internal Wifi, Cefn Hengoed bikes to hire, a dance studio, a room where people can dance for fun if they don't like traditional sports. To play more rugby. A variety of clubs, eg, athletics, swimming, Yoga, Zumba and dance, Dodgeball, Volleyball.

In terms of the requirements for the new Sports Hub, the pupils indicated:

- provide more opportunities for a variety of sports,
- play more basketball after school,
- play more football in the winter,
- make me more active,
- be more space,
- good for PE lessons,
- meet with my friends,

- easier for me to exercise as its close to my home,
- keep people off their phones,
- allow us to do athletics instead of travelling elsewhere for it,
- a place to hang out with my friends,
- Inspire more people to exercise,
- allow other schools to attend our school to compete in activities,
- more facilities in bad weather
- help me keep fit
- get me off my phone (popular),
- better facilities,
- available in all weather
- public can access

It is clear from the comments above that the pupils see the opportunity to provide a facility that not only provides greater sports and involvement choice, but also a genuine 'hub' to meet friends, socialise and create a sense of community.

The new Sports Hub also appears to be able to give the pupils and ultimately the school, a sense of identity and something the pupils and locale can be proud of, particularly when other teams or clubs are visiting the venue.

## **2.0 Policy Context**

This section sets out the relevant Policy approach to the proposals and addresses the contextual Policies that formulate the approach to development in this locality. Material considerations will include current circumstances, current LDP Policies, Policies in an emerging Development Plan, and planning Policies of the Welsh Government and the UK Government where applicable. All applications should be considered in relation to up-to date Local Plan Policies.

### **a) National Planning Policy**

Government guidance is to be found in Planning Policy Wales (PPW), first issued in March 2002 and currently at Edition 10, (December 2018), together with the accompanying Technical Advice Notes (TAN's).

Paragraph 3.1.2 of PPW requires that regard is to be had to the Development Plan and the determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Similarly, Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that, in determining a planning application, the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

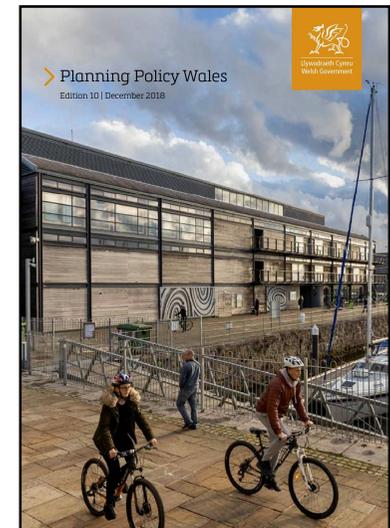
Sustainable development is the key theme running through PPW and Chapter 4 details the main principles and objectives for delivering sustainable development, with paragraph 4.1 of PPW promoting sustainable development through good design and sets out objectives of good design as being related to Access, Character, Community Safety, Environmental Sustainability and Movement.

Similarly, paragraph 4.2.2 states that:

*"The planning system provides for a presumption In favour of sustainable development to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are balanced and Integrated, at the same time, by the decision-taker when:*

- *Preparing a Development Plan; and*
- *In taking decisions on individual planning applications. "*

In this regard, Paragraph 4.1 of PPW defines sustainable development as:



*'Enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities, achieving a better quality of life for our own generation in ways which:*

- *Promote social justice and equality of opportunity, and,*
- *enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits – using only our fair share of the earth's resources and sustaining our cultural legacy.*

*Sustainable development is the process by which we reach the goal of sustainability.'*

Paragraph 4.4.3 sets out a number of Key Policy Objectives, stating that planning policies and proposals should, inter alia:

Promote resource-efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns; Locate development so as to minimise the demand for travel; Support the need to tackle the causes of climate change; Play an appropriate role to facilitate sustainable building standards; Contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment; Ensure that all local communities have sufficient good quality housing, including affordable housing, for their needs; Promote access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open and green space; Foster improvements to transport facilities and services; Foster social inclusion; and Promote quality, lasting, environmentally-sound and flexible employment opportunities.

Paragraph 4.6.1 recognises the strengths of urban communities, stating that the priorities for urban areas are to, amongst others, "*foster sustainable change, in particular making it possible to live with less noise, congestion and traffic pollution, and improving the quality of life*", Para. 4.9.1 of PPW is supportive of these proposals as it states that:

*'Previously developed (or Brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to Greenfield sites', this includes sites; 'in and around existing settlements where there is vacant or underused land or commercial properties...'*

Previously developed land (Brownfield) is defined in PPW as: *'land... which is or was occupied by a permanent structure... and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage of the development is included.'*

Further, paragraph 4.11.1 seeks to promote good design, stating that design goes beyond aesthetics and includes the social, environmental and economic aspects of development and its relationship to its surroundings, while Section 4.12 seeks to ensure that the causes of climate change are tackled through the provision of sustainable buildings and Practice Guidance – Planning For Sustainable Buildings.

Chapter 5 of PPW details the principle objectives for the conservation and improvement of the natural heritage, which are to:

Promote the conservation of landscape and biodiversity, in particular, the conservation of native wildlife and habitats; Ensure that action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for the natural environment; Ensure that statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed; Safeguard protected species; and Promote the functions and benefits of soils, and in particular their function as a carbon store.

Paragraph 5.1.4 continues this theme by stating that:

*"It Is Important that biodiversity and landscape considerations are taken into account at an early stage In both Development Plan preparation and development management. The consequences of climate change on the natural heritage and measures to conserve the landscape and biodiversity should be a central part of this."*

Chapter 6 of PPW seeks to conserve the historical environment, with paragraph 6.1.2 stating that;

*"Local Planning Authorities have an important role in securing the conservation of the historic environment while ensuring that it accommodates and remains responsive to present day needs."*

The Welsh Government's objectives for conserving the historical environment are to, amongst others:

Preserve or enhance the historic environment, recognising its contribution to economic vitality and culture; Protect archaeological remains; Ensure that the character of historic buildings is safeguarded from alterations, extensions or demolition that would compromise a building's special architectural and historic Interest; and Ensure that Conservation Areas are protected or enhanced.

Chapter 8 of PPW addresses transport and, as with the majority of transport planning policy over recent years, seeks to tackle climate change by promoting sustainable modes of transport and seeking to minimise the need to travel, especially by private car. The policy guidance also proposes locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling and by locating development near other related uses to encourage multi-purpose trips and reduce the length of journeys.

Chapter 8.1.3 of PPW indicates that: *'The Welsh Government supports a transport hierarchy in relation to new development that establishes priorities in such a way that, wherever possible, they are accessible in the first instance by walking and cycling, then by public transport and then finally by private motor vehicles. Careful consideration needs to be given to the allocation of new sites which are likely to generate significant levels of movement in Local Development Plans to ensure that access provisions which promote walking and cycling, as well as by public transport are included from the outset. Similarly, the Welsh Government expects that Design and Access Statements give consideration to accessing developments by modes other than private motor vehicles.'*

Chapter 8.1.4 states:

Land use planning can help to achieve the Welsh Government's objectives for transport through:

- reducing the need to travel, especially by private car, by locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling;
- locating development near other related uses to encourage multi-purpose trips and reduce the length of journeys;
- improving accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- ensuring that transport is accessible to all, taking into account the needs of disabled and other less mobile people;
- promoting walking and cycling;
- supporting the provision of high quality public transport;
- supporting traffic management measures;
- promoting sustainable transport options for freight and commerce;
- supporting sustainable travel options in rural areas;
- supporting necessary infrastructure improvements; and
- ensuring that, as far as possible, transport infrastructure does not contribute to land take, urban sprawl or neighbourhood severance.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs) should be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities and should be read along with PPW. They provide more detailed planning policy guidance on technical disciplines that are broadly covered within PPW.

Technical Advice Note - *TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)*; sets out how the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

Technical Advice Note - *TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)*; sets out guidance on how the planning system can support sustainable rural communities and provides advice on: sustainable rural communities, sustainable rural economies, rural affordable housing, rural enterprise dwellings, one planet developments, sustainable rural services and sustainable agriculture.

Technical Advice Note - *TAN 12: Design (2014)*; provides more detail on the design aspects set out in PPW as well as providing detail on five key aspects of good design that should be integrated into proposed developments. TAN 12 now also incorporates key aspects of TAN 22.

The key aspects of TAN 12 are:

- Access Objective: Ensuring ease of access for all.
- Character Objectives: Sustaining or enhancing local character; Promoting legible development; Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space; Promoting quality, choice and variety; and Promoting innovative design.
- Community Safety Objectives: Ensuring attractive, safe public space; and Security through natural surveillance.
- Environmental Sustainability Objectives: Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources; Enhancing biodiversity; and Designing for change.
- Movement Objective: Promoting sustainable means of travel.

Technical Advice Note - *TAN 18: Transport (2007)*; continues the theme established in PPW of minimising the need to travel, especially by the private car, and to seek to encourage the increased use of sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling. These Initiatives will help to reduce road traffic growth, which is causing increased local air pollution, green house gas emission contributing to climate change and global warming and, In some areas, congestion, which can affect economic competitiveness.

Technical Advice Note - *TAN22: Sustainable Buildings (2010)*; recognises that the planning system can play an important role in improving the sustainability of new developments and that it has a role in encouraging and facilitating homes and buildings that meet higher sustainable standards, and continues what PPW advocates in terms of national minimum sustainable building standards.

Manual For Streets 2007, paragraph 8.3.6 indicates that; *'Provision below demand can work successfully when adequate on-street parking controls are present and where it is possible for residents to reach day-to-day destinations such as jobs, schools and shops without the use of a car. This will normally be in town and city centres where there will be good public transport and places that can be accessed easily on foot and by cycle. For residents who choose not to have a car, living in such an area may be an attractive proposition.'*

## **b) Development Plan Policy**

The Development Plan for the area comprises the City and County of Swansea Local Development Plan 2010-2025 (LDP), formally adopted on 28th February 2019

As has been indicated above, Paragraph 3.1.2 of PPW requires that regard is to be had to the adopted Development Plan and the determination of any planning application shall be made in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Similarly, Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that, in determining a planning application, the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

In accordance with PPW and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the relevant Policies contained within the Swansea Local Development Plan, under which the planning should be considered and determined may include the following Policies:

### **ER 1: Climate Change**

To mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts and ensure resilience, development proposals should take into account:

- i. Reducing carbon emissions;



- ii. Protecting and increasing carbon sinks;
- iii. Adapting to the implications of climate change at both a strategic and detailed design level;
- iv. Promoting energy and resource efficiency and increasing the supply of renewable and low carbon energy;
- v. Avoiding unnecessary flood risk by assessing the implications of development proposals within areas susceptible to flooding and preventing development that unacceptably increases risk; and
- vi. Maintaining ecological resilience.

#### ER8: Habitats and Species

Development proposals that would have a significant adverse effect on the resilience of protected habitats and species will only be permitted where:

- i. The need for development outweighs the nature conservation importance of the site;
- ii. The developer demonstrates that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development which avoids nature conservation impacts; and
- iii. Any unavoidable harm is minimised by effective mitigation to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area. Where this is not feasible, compensation measures designed to conserve, enhance, manage and, where appropriate, restore

#### ER9: Ecological Networks and Features of Importance for Biodiversity

Development proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance ecological networks and features of importance for biodiversity. Particular importance will be given to maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of ecological networks which enable the dispersal and functioning of protected and priority species.

Development proposals that could result in an adverse effect on the connectivity of ecological networks and features of importance for biodiversity will only be permitted where:

- i. The need for the development outweighs the nature conservation value of the site;
- ii. It can be demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development;
- iii. A functional connected element of the natural resource is retained as part of the design of the development; and
- iv. Compensatory provision will be made of comparable or greater ecological value to that lost as a result of the development.

### ER11: Trees, Hedgerows and Development

Development that would adversely affect trees, woodlands and hedgerows of public amenity, natural/cultural heritage value, or that provide important ecosystem services will not normally be permitted. Ancient Woodland, Ancient Woodland Sites, Ancient and Veteran trees merit specific protection and development that would result in specified outcomes will not normally be permitted that would result in:

- i. Fragmentation or loss of Ancient Woodland;
- ii. The loss of an Ancient or Veteran Tree;
- iii. Ground damage, loss of understorey or ground disturbance to an area of Ancient Woodland or Ancient or Veteran Tree's root protection area;
- iv. A reduction in the area of other semi-natural habitats adjoining Ancient Woodland;
- v. Significant alteration to the land use adjoining the Ancient Woodland;
- vi. An increase in the likely exposure of Ancient Woodland, Ancient or Veteran Tree to air, water or light pollution from the surrounding area;
- vii. Alteration of the hydrology in a way that might impact on Ancient Woodland, Ancient or Veteran Trees;
- viii. Destruction of important connecting habitats relating to Ancient Woodland;
- ix. Destruction of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS); and/or
- x. Development in close proximity

Where necessary, planning applications for development proposals on sites containing, or adjacent to, trees will be required to provide: a tree survey; an arboricultural impact assessment; an arboricultural method statement; and/or a tree protection plan. Where trees are to be replaced a scheme for tree replacement must be agreed prior to the commencement of development, including details of planting and aftercare.

### EU2: Renewable and Low Carbon Technology in New Development

Development will be required to maximise the contribution of renewable or low carbon energy technology to meet the energy demands of the proposal, particularly for Significant Energy Consuming Developments.

Residential developments on sites where there is capacity for 100 homes or more, and non-residential developments with a total floorspace of 1000 sq.m. or more, will be required to submit a comprehensive Energy Assessment to determine the feasibility of incorporating low carbon or renewable energy installations into the scheme and/or connect to renewable or low carbon energy technology and district heating networks.

### EU4: Public Utilities and New Development

Development will be permitted where the utility infrastructure is adequate to meet the needs of the development.

Development that requires new or improved utility infrastructure which does not form part of the utility provider's improvement programme will be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the developer will make an appropriate contribution to secure the provision of the infrastructure.

#### PS1: Sustainable Places

In order to deliver sustainable places and strategically manage the spatial growth of the County, the delivery of new homes, jobs, infrastructure and community facilities must comply with the Plan's sustainable settlement strategy that requires:

- i. Development to be directed to the most sustainable locations within the defined settlement boundaries of the urban area and Key Villages;
- ii. New homes and jobs to be delivered in a manner consistent with growth forecasts and the Plan's Sustainable Housing and Employment Strategies;
- iii. The safeguarding and protection of the character and openness of Green Wedges; and
- iv. Inappropriate development in the countryside to be resisted.

#### PS2: Placemaking and Place Management

Development should enhance the quality of places and spaces, and respond positively to aspects of local context and character that contribute towards a sense of place.

The design, layout and orientation of proposed buildings, and the spaces between them, should provide for an attractive, legible, healthy, accessible and safe environment. All proposals should ensure that no significant adverse impacts would be caused to people's amenity.

Depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal, development should also:

- i. Have regard to important elements of local heritage, culture, landscape, townscape, views and vistas;
- ii. Ensure neighbourhoods benefit from an appropriate diversity of land uses, community facilities and mix of densities that in combination are capable of sustaining vibrancy;
- iii. Create or enhance opportunities for Active Travel and greater use of public transport;
- iv. Integrate effectively with the County's network of multifunctional open spaces and enhance the County's Green Infrastructure network;
- v. Enhance public realm quality, incorporating public art where appropriate;
- vi. Provide for a hierarchy of interconnected streets and spaces;
- vii. Ensure active frontages onto streets and spaces to provide natural surveillance and character;
- viii. Provide an accessible environment for all;
- ix. Provide appropriate parking and circulation areas for cars, cycles, motor bikes and service vehicles;
- x. Deliver new, and/or enhance existing, connections to essential social infrastructure and community facilities;

- xi. Maximise opportunities for sustainable construction, resource efficiency and contributions towards increased renewable or low carbon energy generation;
- xii. Avoid the loss of land and/or premises that should be retained for its existing use or as an area of open space;
- xiii. Avoid unacceptable juxtaposition and/or conflict between residential and non-residential uses;
- xiv. Ensure no significant adverse impact on natural heritage and built heritage assets;
- xv. Ensure resilience is not undermined and does not result in significant risk to human health, well-being or quality of life;
- xvi. Ensure that commercial proposals, including change of use proposals:
  - a. incorporate active frontages and shopfront designs that make a positive contribution to the streetscene,
  - b. provide appropriate enclosure,
  - c. relate well to the character of the host building,
  - d. do not compromise the ability to deliver priority regeneration schemes. and
- xvii. Have regard to the implications for infrastructure and services.

#### T1: Transport Measures and Infrastructure

Development must be supported by appropriate transport measures and infrastructure, and depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal will be required to:

- i. Within SDAs and relevant H1 sites, prioritise the delivery of the key transport measures and schemes identified in the Transport Measures Priority Schedule, which must be delivered in an efficient and timely manner in accordance with development phases;
- ii. Be designed to provide safe and efficient access to the transport network, which includes the Active Travel, public transport and street networks;
- iii. Safeguard, enhance and expand the Active Travel network, particularly by means of improving connectivity;
- iv. Reduce reliance on car use by maximising the potential of movement to/from the development by public transport, including ensuring developments within the urban area are located a walkable distance to a public transport access point on a route with a high frequency service;
- v. Ensure all new transport measures are designed as integral elements of a scheme by means of a Placemaking approach;
- vi. Deliver the new transport infrastructure and improvement measures that are required to mitigate the impact of the development; and
- vii. Ensure developments are served by appropriate parking provision and circulation areas, including adequate road widths to allow access for service vehicles.

Development that would have an unacceptable impact on the safe and efficient operation of the transport network will not be permitted.

#### T2: Active Travel

Development must take opportunities to enhance walking and cycling access by incorporating within the site, and/or making financial contributions towards the delivery off-site of, the following measures as appropriate:

- i. Permeable, legible, direct, convenient, attractive and safe walking and cycling routes that connect the proposed development to: surrounding settlements; public transport nodes; community facilities; commercial and employment areas; tourism facilities; and leisure opportunities;
- ii. Improvements, connections, and/or extensions to: existing PROWs (particularly bridleways); the Wales Coastal Path; the Cycle Swansea Bay routes; National Cycle Network Routes 4 and 43; Safe Routes to School; shared use paths; and routes forming part of the Green Infrastructure network;
- iii. The delivery of infrastructure designed in accordance with standards of good practice; and
- iv. Facilities that encourage the uptake of walking and cycling, including but not limited to: appropriate signage; secure and convenient cycle parking; and changing and shower facilities.

Developments must not have a significant adverse impact on PROWs or existing routes identified by the Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013's) Swansea Integrated Network Map and should be designed to help deliver the Council's Active Travel Plan.

#### T5: Design Principles for Transport Measures and Infrastructure

All proposals must ensure that the design of development, together with any supporting transport measures and infrastructure:

- i. Maximises the accessibility of the site via public transport and Active Travel;
- ii. Provides suitable facilities and a safe, attractive environment for pedestrians, cyclists and other nonmotorised modes of transport;
- iii. Allows for the safe, efficient and effective movement of vehicles, inclusive of service vehicles;
- iv. Minimises vehicle speeds where appropriate;
- v. Considers the place and movement of any transport infrastructure in-line with Streets Hierarchy and User Hierarchy concepts to ensure appropriately designed transport infrastructure;
- vi. Does not encourage extraneous traffic unless there is a specific strategic need for an access route through the area;
- vii. Does not give rise to any significant adverse effect on the natural heritage, and the historic and cultural environment is preserved or enhanced;
- viii. Maintains the character of rural lanes and public paths;
- ix. Complies with the principles of Access For All;
- x. Accords with standards of good practice, including the Active Travel Act Design Standards; and
- xi. Considers, and responds to, the findings of any relevant Travel Plan and/or Transport Assessment.

#### T6: Parking

Proposals must be served by appropriate parking provision, in accordance with maximum parking standards, and consider the requirements for cycles, cars, motorcycles and service vehicles. In those instances where sufficient parking cannot be provided on site, or is judged not to be appropriate, the developer will be required to provide a financial contribution towards alternative transport measures where appropriate.

The provision of secure cycle parking and associated facilities will be sought in all major development schemes, inclusive of residential, business and retail in addition to any proposed transport interchanges.

Proposals on existing car parks that would reduce parking provision will not be permitted where the loss of the parking facility would:

- i. Compromise highway safety;
- ii. Adversely affect accessibility and/or the free flow of traffic; or
- iii. Significantly reduce parking provision for residents, businesses or visitors in the absence of any appropriate alternative parking opportunities.

### RC2: Retail and Leisure Development

Retail and leisure proposals must in the first instance assess the suitability of sites and premises within the following Centres of the retail hierarchy, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development:

- i. Swansea Central Area Retail Centre
- ii. District Centres
- iii. Local Centres

In accordance with National Planning Policy, where proposals demonstrate there are no suitable available sites or premises within the above Centres, then edge of centre sites can be considered in preference to out of centre locations. Within the Swansea Central Area, Complementary Areas will be considered edge of centre locations.

Appropriate assessments of need and retail impact must be submitted by the developer in support of proposals at edge of centre and out of centre sites.

Where evidence clearly demonstrates that no sites within centres or at edge of centre locations can be made available for the proposed development, out of centre sites will be considered. In such circumstances, developers should consider available sites and premises within defined Retail Park boundaries, which are the preferred location for out of centre retail developments.

Retail and leisure proposals will only be permitted at out of centre locations outside Retail Parks in exceptional circumstances, and where a specific need is identified, for:

- a. Small scale development intended only to serve an identified local need (in accordance with Policy RC 6 Local Centres);
- b. Development that is part of a planned new Centre or is a specific facility proposed to serve a substantial new residential neighbourhood within a Strategic Development Area (in accordance with Policy RC 8 Commercial Development Within Strategic Development Areas);

c. Development that requires a particular type of unit, either with an extensive floor area and/or a bespoke designed premises, that is not normally available within Centres or Retail Parks, in order to accommodate the proposed range of goods to be sold.

#### RP1: Safeguarding Public Health and Natural Resources

Development will not be permitted that would result in significant risk to: life; human health and wellbeing; property; controlled waters; or the natural and historic environment, particularly in respect of:

- i. Air, noise or light pollution;
- ii. Flood risk;
- iii. The quality or quantity of water resources;
- iv. Land contamination;
- v. Land instability or subsidence;
- vi. Sustainable development of mineral resources; and
- vii. Sustainable waste management.

Development will not be permitted if judged to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European Designated Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

#### RP2: Noise Pollution

Where development could lead to exposure to a source of noise pollution it must be demonstrated that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented, and incorporated into the design of the development to minimise the effects on existing and future occupants.

Noise sensitive developments will not be permitted unless effective and appropriate mitigation is carried out to prevent exposure to existing noise generating uses. Development will not be permitted if it would cause, or result in, a significant increase in levels of environmental noise in an identified Noise Action Planning Priority Area, or would have unacceptable impacts on an identified Quiet Area or the characteristics of tranquillity that led to the designation of a Quiet Area.

#### RP3: Air and Light Pollution

Where development could lead to exposure to a source of air or light pollution it must be demonstrated that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented, and incorporated into the design of the development to minimise the effects on existing and future occupants.

#### RP4: Water Pollution and the Protection of Water Resources

Development that compromises the quality of the water environment, or does not comply with good water resource management, will not be permitted. Development proposals must make efficient use of water resources and, where appropriate, contribute towards improvements to water quality. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) must be implemented wherever they would be effective and practicable. Water courses will be safeguarded through green corridors/riparian buffers. Development proposals that would have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity, fisheries, public access or water related recreation use of water resources, will not be permitted.

#### RP5: Avoidance of Flood Risk

In order to avoid the risk of flooding, development will not be permitted:

- i. In areas at risk of fluvial, pluvial, coastal and reservoir flooding, unless it can be demonstrated that the development can be justified in-line with national guidance and is supported by a technical assessment that verifies that the new development is designed to alleviate the threat and consequences of flooding;
- ii. In areas at risk of flooding from local sources, unless the Council is satisfied with the proposed drainage strategy;
- iii. Where it would lead to an increase in the risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere from fluvial, pluvial, coastal or increased water run-off from the site;
- iv. Where it would have a detrimental effect on the integrity of existing fluvial, pluvial or coastal flood defences;
- v. Where it would impede access to existing and future tidal and fluvial defences for maintenance and emergency purposes; or
- vi. Where the proposal does not incorporate environmentally sympathetic flood risk mitigation measures, such as SuDS, unless it can be demonstrated that such measures are not feasible.

#### RP6: Land Contamination

Development proposals on land where there is a risk from actual or potential contamination or landfill gas will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures can be taken to satisfactorily overcome any significant risk to life, human health, property, controlled waters, or the natural and historic environment.

#### RP7: Land Instability

Development which would create, affect or might be affected by unstable or potentially unstable land will not be permitted where there would be a significant direct risk to life, human health, property, buildings and structures, or the natural heritage on the site or in its vicinity.

Development will only be permitted on unstable or potentially unstable land where:

- It can be satisfactorily demonstrated that proposals to make the land capable of supporting the development are adequate; and
- The necessary mitigation measures will be in place before development commences or are an integral part of the construction works.

Within the defined Slip Area of Graig Trewyddfa, development will not be permitted.

#### RP10: Sustainable Waste Management For New Development

Development will be required to incorporate, as appropriate, adequate and effective provision for the storage, recycling and other sustainable management of waste, and allow for appropriate access arrangements for recycling and refuse collection vehicles and personnel.

#### SI2: Providing and Safeguarding Community Facilities and Locally Important Uses

New community facilities must be accessible by Active Travel and public transport, and be conveniently located in relation to other facilities and services wherever possible.

Development that would adversely affect the operation, or lead to the loss, of a community facility of local value will not be permitted unless:

- i. An alternative facility of at least equal quality and scale to meet community needs will be provided; or
- ii. It can be demonstrated that the existing provision is surplus to the needs of the community and there is sufficient provision of a similar relatively accessible and convenient facility to serve the community nearby; or
- iii. Evidence is provided that the existing use is no longer viable; and
- iv. Evidence is provided of appropriate marketing undertaken to secure an occupier for the established use.

#### SI8: Community Safety

Development must be designed to promote safe and secure communities and minimise the opportunity for crime.

In particular development shall:

- i. Create places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security;
- ii. Provide adequate natural surveillance (overlooking) of adjacent streets and spaces;
- iii. Be designed to make crime difficult to commit by increasing the risk of detection;
- iv. Create a sense of ownership by providing a clear definition between public and private spaces;
- v. Promote activity that is appropriate to the area, providing convenient access and movement routes;
- vi. Provide, where necessary, well-designed security features that integrate sympathetically with the surrounding streetscene, buildings and open spaces;

- vii. Create places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future; and
- viii. Avoid the creation of gated communities.

In addition to the LDP Policies noted above, the councils adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPG's) are also relevant to the consideration of this application.

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### **3.0 Response to Pre-App Consultation Comments**

#### **Principle of Development**

The provision of any new leisure facility will need to be considered against LDP Policy RC2 which requires new leisure and retail developments, in the first instance, to be located within the most sequentially preferable location. The main focus of the Policy is to protect the retail hierarchy and to ensure a city centre first approach to retail and leisure proposals.

The proposed development of a multi-use sports barn is not a typical leisure use that would typically be located within a retail centre and as such, LDP Policy SI2 is considered to be more relevant to the proposals.

LDP policy SI2 states that new community facilities must be accessible by Active Travel and public transport, and be conveniently located in relation to other facilities and services wherever possible. The amplification states that new development should relate to the local community in terms of scale and character and ensure the amenities enjoyed by adjoining occupiers are not affected. It goes on to state that proposals which provide new or enhanced multi-use community facilities, such as the co-location of facilities within other public buildings such as schools or healthcare centres will be particularly encouraged.

It is clear from the proposals that the sports barn and improvements to the existing leisure centre and sports pitches would be co-located within the school and existing leisure centre facilities and will create a sports hub to the significant benefit of the local area and visitors from farther afield.

The proposed development is the result of an informed process by numerous discussions and public consultations between the Architects, Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre, stakeholders, the local community and representatives of Swansea Council. However, the proposed design is also primarily a response to the application site and its context, the need to accommodate the facilities required by Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre and the wider community.

Active Travel concerns have been addressed as part of the new access, car park and pedestrian access arrangements to the east of the site, which will provide new vehicular and pedestrian access into the site from the surrounding highway and public transport network.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 required Swansea Council to develop an Integrated Network Map (INM) which was approved by Welsh Government in February 2018. The INM shows the routes which the Council intends to deliver over the next 15 years.

In this respect, two schemes are proposed locally that will provide links to the site; (SWA-AS0050 - Winch Wen / Trallwyn) – Shared use route along Cefn Hengoed Road connecting Bonymaen and Carmel Rd to the back entrance of school, and, (SWA-MT0021 - Trallwyn / Winch Wen) – Proposed shared use path connecting Trallwn and Winch Wen.

The provision of a new shared path, including cycle path from the adjoining highway to the pedestrian footpath links throughout the site will provide suitable alternative options for Active Travel including walking, links to nearby public transport stops and cycling routes.

A recommended bicycle friendly road is located some 115 metres north of the site which connects Cefn Hengoed Road to Colwyn Avenue, whilst National Cycle Network Route 43 is located 1.4km north-west of the site which connects to the Celtic Trail.

A Transport Assessment has been prepared that demonstrates the site can be accessed in a suitable manner by a variety of travel modes. The site is considered to be sustainably located and it has been demonstrated the proposed development can be accessed by a choice of travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport.

A green travel plan has also been prepared to support the application and will detail all of the sustainable options available to patrons of the Leisure facilities.

The site is clearly located within an established urban area and within the context of a residential conurbation, which includes facilities such as schools, convenience stores, leisure centres, sports clubs and public facilities. The site is also located in area with a high residential catchment and both the school and leisure centre, serve the existing immediate residential area as well as attracting visitors from further afield.

The area in which Cefn Hengoed Community School is located, is one of the five chosen pilot areas for the Council's Services in the Community Project. This aims to establish a new model of community service provision, integrating a number of existing services within a community hub environment, and establish a sustainable way of meeting local need and priorities longer term. The proposals seeks to meet and enhance those provisions for the benefit of the local community and county area as a whole.

The area of the Swansea East electoral ward is the most densely populated ward within the County area and as such, has a ready made catchment for participation and use of the proposed and enhanced facilities. The current leisure facilities are very poorly attended, which was noted from the various public consultation exercises undertaken and it is hoped that the proposals will seek to address the imbalance of use of the existing facilities with enhanced proposals.

It is understood that Sport Wales were consulted on the basis that the proposed development would affect an existing sporting facility. It is further understood that Sport Wales offered no objection to the principle of development, but questioned the replacement of the existing games courts with the covered artificial pitches.

In respect of this, the proposals now include for the rehabilitation and upgrading of existing tarmac surfaced tennis courts to the south-west of the existing facilities with an all weather surface, new boundary fencing and floodlighting to provide an all weather, all year round outdoor playing surface, suitable for a variety of sports uses.

### **Character and Appearance**

The proposed sports barn would measure some 11m in height, 61m in length and 41m in width and would occupy an area of some 2500sqm on the site of an existing multi-purpose games court, separated from the main buildings. External court provision will be replaced elsewhere on the site in a currently disused tarmac area to be refurbished with a new all weather surface as has been noted above.

The primary element of the sports barn building will contain a single large area of covered sports pitches. A single storey element joining the main volume will contain an entrance lobby with toilet provision and a store for sports equipment.

The scale of the new sports barn is necessitated by the specifications of the pitches within. It sits separate from the existing buildings to be read not as an extension but as a distinct addition on the site as a whole. The height and footprint are kept to a minimum within the limits of sporting facility requirements. The curvature of the building diminishes the apparent volume and situates the building within the hills of the surrounding landscape.

The façade materials for both the new extensions and the recladding of the existing gymnasium building are chosen in response to the materials of the existing school building. The existing blue and grey colouring will be replicated in the insulated panel cladding of the new and upgraded elements. The angled projection of the new reception entrance will address customer approach from the parking and pedestrian access, presenting a welcoming façade. The single storey entrance element to the sports barn provides a legibility of entrance and arrival and brings a human scale to the building.

The planned extension to the existing leisure centre building will be single story and provide a new entrance and covered stairs and platform lift to reach the main Gym and Studio level. This will form the access to a welcome hub for all members and a café for community and member use. The reception will lead into a new gym area and studio.

A further small extension will contain a ramp for inclusive access to the existing changing facilities at a higher level. Existing changing facilities are being refitted and upgraded as part of the project to a suitable standard for the new gym.

Externally, a new access and resurfaced car park will be provided on the eastern side of the existing school building with a new access directly off Cefn Hengoed Road and be at a lower level to it. This will ensure that in general visual terms from Cefn Hengoed Road, the car park area will be screened from general view when passing along Cefn Hengoed Road. Landscaping surrounding the sports barn building and car park areas is intended to blend the building and car park into its site context and further soften the impact upon approach.

A Landscaping assessment and design has been prepared to support the application, which shows that the proposals will benefit from a high standard of landscape planting, spread throughout the site. Existing landscape features on the site's margins would be retained and managed, and, where possible, also enhanced with new planting.

New trees and shrubs would be planted within and around the car parking areas to provide a leafy, green character and soften the appearance as much as possible. This planting would be integral to the character of the public realm within the site, being laid out in a formal manner, which would complement the character of the surrounding buildings.

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed sports barn would be sited some 75m from the nearest residential properties on the adjoining Cefn Road and some 150m from the residential properties on Caldicot Road. Existing properties to the general west of the site will be screened by the existing built form of the school and leisure centre buildings.

It is understood from the Pre-App response that this separation distance is considered to be satisfactory by Swansea Council to ensure the proposal would not result in any significant impacts upon the living conditions of the occupiers of these properties.

As has been indicated above, the general floor level of the new sports barn and adjoining car parking surface will be at a much lower level than the existing highway level along Cefn Hengoed Road and therefore reduce any visual impact that the development may otherwise bring for adjoining residents.

### **Access, Parking and Highway Safety**

LDP Policy T5, amongst other things, requires that new developments provide suitable facilities and a safe, attractive environment for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised modes of transport. New developments must therefore allow for the safe, efficient and effective movement of vehicles, inclusive of service vehicles.

Proposals must respond to the findings of any relevant Travel Plan and/or Transport Assessment. Policy T6 requires that adequate parking provision must be provided in accordance with adopted standards.

The applicants have commissioned a Transport Statement, which is attached as part of the PAC and planning application documents, which summarises and concludes that:

- The site is considered to be sustainably located and it has been demonstrated that the proposed development can be accessed by a choice of travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport.

- The development proposals include a new indoor pitch, and fitness suite / studio, cafe and flexible spaces, with mixed usage by Cefn Hengoed School, Leisure Centre and the local community.
- A new shared access is proposed on Cefn Hengoed Road, solely serving the proposed development.
- A resurfaced existing car park will accommodate some 65 designated spaces, inclusive of four disabled parking spaces, motorcycle/cycle spaces and up to six electric charging point spaces. The car park will serve the leisure facilities only and is located adjacent to a new shared site access off Cefn Hengoed Road. The access will be gated and will only remain open during hours of operation. The existing car park of circa 50 marked bays will no longer service the leisure centre and will be reinstated to serve Cefn Hengoed School. In addition, the proposed development will provide 18 cycle stands giving a capacity of up to 36 cycle parking spaces.
- Internally a network of pedestrian and cycle routes are proposed to connect the leisure centre and indoor sports pitch with Cefn Hengoed School and local highway, through a series of new footpaths which offer direct and safe access to visitors, staff and school pupils.
- The proposals also include off-site improvements to the pedestrian provision along Cefn Hengoed Road, including a three-metre footpath and a new crossing point on Cefn Road. The accessibility improvements will provide users of the school and leisure facilities as well as the local community with a continuous footway network and safe crossing opportunity.
- The trip generation calculations for the proposed development has identified that 204 two-way trips are expected per day, with nine trips generated in the AM peak hour and 24 trips generated in the PM peak hour. Given the hours of operation of the existing facilities on site it is considered that any additional traffic which may be generated would have a low impact and not be expected to adversely affect the local highway network. The impact of any additional traffic would also be negligible during the school peak period. A 'first principles' calculation using assumed operational parameters (once the development is open) may be needed to accurately forecast vehicle trips to and from the proposed Development.
- The Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development will generate no significant residual transport related impacts on the local highway network and surrounding area, supported by the implementation of integral design mitigation to facilitate and enhance existing transport related movements. It is therefore considered that the development proposals as described in this report are sustainable in terms of transport at this location.

With regard to other matters raised by the councils highways officer, the proposed car parking space size has been increased to 2.6m x 4.8m and blue badge parking provision has been allocated at 6% of the total number of spaces. The number of cycle stands shown has been increased in accordance with adopted standards.

Access to the sports barn and associated car park has been designed by the applicants highway engineers to meet the requirements of the local highway network including the addition of a linking 3m footway on Cefn Hengoed Road to link up with existing pedestrian footway network on Cefn Road and further to the south west, on Mansel Road.

In this regard, 'Active Travel' opportunities have been taken to enhance walking and cycling access to the site and adjoining school site by new internal footpaths, external footpath and cycle path links providing legible, direct, convenient, attractive and safe walking and cycling routes that connect the proposed development to surrounding settlements, public transport nodes, community facilities, commercial and employment areas tourism facilities and leisure opportunities.

Facilities will be provided that encourage the uptake of walking and cycling in the locality, including secure and convenient cycle parking and changing and shower facilities within the sports centre.

The works to facilitate access to the site will be undertaken under a Section 278 Agreement with the Highway Authority, which will include a construction traffic management plan.

The proposed access and car park layout has been supported by swept path analysis that shows that a coach can enter turn and leave in a forward gear.

### **Land Stability**

It is understood from the councils Pre-Application response that The Coal Authority were consulted as part of that process and confirmed that part of the application site is located within a development high risk area for former coal mine workings.

However, The Coal Authority has also confirmed that the area where the development is proposed is outside of the defined high risk area. On this basis the Coal Authority have confirmed that any planning application would not need to be supported by a coal mining risk assessment. The proposal would not therefore conflict with LDP Policy RP7.

In addition, the applicants have commissioned a Geo-Environmental and Geotechnical Assessment, which is attached as part of the PAC and planning application documents, which summarises and concludes that:

#### *Required Further Actions:*

- *The coal mining subsidence risk will need to be mitigated by a programme of drilling and grouting;*
- *Sampling of the shallow soils in areas of soft landscaping if Made Ground materials are to remain (Section 7.1.2);*
- *If not already done, an Asbestos survey of existing building (Section 7.1.1);*

- *Programme a watching brief when MUGA is removed to look for other Made Ground, areas of slag or other material not encountered in this investigation (Section 7.1*
- *Continue gas monitoring visits (Section 7.3);*
- *If soakaways are required, further soakaway testing will be required to provide suitable information for design; consideration of development on existing slopes (Section 8.7).*

With regard to the required asbestos survey as noted above, given the location of the building and nature of the surroundings, it would be impossible to carry out a fully intrusive or destructive asbestos survey while the school or leisure centre is open and operating. It is therefore proposed to complete a full asbestos survey (including intrusive testing) by the Design & Build contractor (via a specialist asbestos contractor), once the D&B contract has been awarded for the works. This will form a contract clause within the D&B contract to ensure that proper and controlled assessment and reporting of any potential asbestos is completed safely.

### **Drainage**

LDP Policy RP4 requires that SuDS must be implemented wherever they would be effective and practicable. Development will only be allowed where provision is made for the necessary waste water infrastructure to protect water quality, in accordance with Policy EU 4.

The application is accompanied and supported by a SuDS assessment and drainage design by specialist drainage engineers.

The design of the SuDS systems has been borne out of discussions with the councils drainage engineer, Dan McAulay and will provide the following key features within design:

- Roof drainage from covered games pitch discharges to swale along Eastern side of car park. Method of collecting roof drainage to swale to be determined during detailed design;
- Wetland retention pond with outgoing flow control restricting continuation flow to Greenfield run-off rate for the 100 year event (3 l/s);
- The point of discharge is a new chamber built on to the existing line immediately downstream of the existing flow control chamber.
- The drainage design assumes the attenuated discharge from the new development can be connected to the existing pipe network immediately downstream of the existing flow control chamber; the feasibility of this solution remains to be confirmed.
- The drainage design assumes that it will be acceptable to attenuate discharge from the new development to Greenfield run-off rates; this remains to be confirmed in consultation with DCWW and the local SAB authority. The imposition of lower allowable discharge rates by the sewerage undertaker or during the SAB approval process would require additional provision for surface water storage.

- The wetland retention pond will need to be lined to prevent water seepage destabilising the embankment slopes around the filled area.

The drainage designs and solutions will form the basis of a detailed application to the councils SuDS Approving Body (SAB) as required by recent legislation, which directs that these systems must be approved by the local authority acting in its SuDS Approving Body (SAB) role before construction work begins. The SAB will have a duty to adopt compliant systems so long as it is built and functions in accordance with the approved proposals, including any SAB conditions of approval.

## **Ecology**

As part of the councils Pre-Application response, the Council's planning ecologist noted that there were bat and hedgehog records within 100 metres of the proposed site. Therefore, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment would be required to be undertaken and submitted with any planning application, together with a lighting strategy designed to minimise ecological impacts.

The applicants have commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA), which is attached as part of the PAC and planning application documents, which summarises and concludes that:

- Much of the survey site is of very limited ecological value, comprising of species-poor amenity grassland, hard-surfaces and buildings but the few ornamental trees, a spinney, small areas of native scrub and areas of rank, unmanaged vegetation do have some value.
- No signs of the presence of European Protected Species (eg bats) or of nationally protected species (eg Badger, reptiles) or section 7 Species of Principal Importance<sup>1</sup> (eg Hedgehog and several bird species) were observed during the survey and the site offers only limited habitat suitable to support these species. Bearing in mind that the buildings within the site still need to be surveyed for their potential to harbour roosting bats, it is anticipated that no species in these categories will be significantly impacted by the proposed development
- Several Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are present within the survey site, most notably the large stands of Japanese Knotweed located in the vicinity of the southern access road. These have been mapped in red on figure 1. Site personnel must be mindful of the presence of knotweed and construction works must be planned to ensure that knotweed stands are not disturbed in a way that would cause the spread or export of propagules from the site and site operations must comply with approved containment practices.
- Recommendations are made at section 5 of this report that are intended to minimise any potential disturbance to habitats or species of significance. These cover inter alia specific recommendations covering habitat retentions, enhancements and creation, individual species and species groups, containment of polluted run-off, construction of habitat piles, timing and implementation of works, ecological monitoring and future site maintenance.

- Bearing in mind that the buildings within the site still need to be surveyed for their potential to harbour roosting bats, the impact of the proposed development on this generally low value habitat will have a very minor impact upon the wildlife value both within the site and of the local area. For these reasons, together with the absence of any supported fauna of significance, the findings of the survey and the assessment indicate that the ecology of the site does not pose a significant constraint to the proposed improvement works at the school.
- Given the existing low biodiversity value of the site, the scope for mitigation and ecological enhancement is considerable and the recommendations made at paragraph 5.2, together with other recommendations made in section 5, would substantially increase habitat and species diversity and habitat connectivity as well as improving the general environment within the site, both in visual terms and in providing shelter and an enriched parkland setting for school staff, students and visitors.

A lighting design/strategy document has also been produced to ensure that there is no light overspill which may affect protected species, and, to a greater degree, ensure that there is little to no light spill or pollution from the development proposals.

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## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the proposed development would provide much needed improvement in the existing sports related facilities at the site and a sports barn to serve the local area and beyond. Moreover, the barn would be co-located with the Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive School/leisure centre complex and is generally supported under general LDP Policies and specifically LDP Policy SI2.

The site is clearly located within an established urban area and within the context of a residential conurbation, which includes facilities such as schools, convenience stores, leisure centres, sports clubs and public facilities and public transport connections. The site is also located in area with a high residential catchment and both the school and leisure centre, serve the existing immediate residential area as well as attracting visitors from further afield.

The principle of a leisure centre development has been established by existing land use and continued allocation in the recently adopted City & County of Swansea Local Development Plan within the context of the local development boundary.

Following a number of local consultation and public engagement sessions, it was apparent that a lack of facilities and/or equipment was a significant barrier for the younger generation in attending the sports centre and facilities, together with costs and lack of exciting activities or opportunities.

The proposals the subject of this application seek to improve and develop the sports and community facilities at the site to benefit the school population and local community, with the potential to bring together a range of services and facilities including; a new sports barn and indoor pitch, minor extensions and improvements to the existing leisure centre buildings, internal reconfiguration and improved gym and changing facilities, a community room, fitness studio, reception and café area, new MUGA on old courts, and, interconnecting pedestrian routes between the school and leisure areas.

This will provide benefit to the local community, sports clubs and associations, and, greater participation in sporting/community activities of all types to the overall benefit in terms of health and well-being.

**4.0 Appendices**

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4.1 Appendix A – Site Photographs

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Aerial image looking in a general southerly direction



Aerial image looking in a general northerly direction



Aerial image looking in a general westerly direction



Aerial image looking in a general easterly direction



General area of the proposed sports barn with main Cefn Hengoed School building and leisure centre beyond