

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE APPEALS PANEL

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR

COMMUNITIES

3rd May 2013

Objection to proposed introduction of Traffic Calming Scheme associated with the new Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen Scheme, Heol Yr Ysgol, Ynysawdre, Tondu.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the panel of the current situation in respect of the proposals at Heol Yr Ysgol, Tondu for a traffic calming scheme associated with the new Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen and to seek a resolution in respect of an objection that has been received in respect of these proposals.

2.0 Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities.

- 2.1 The issue of introducing traffic management and traffic regulation orders as road safety measures cross-cuts a number of aims in the Corporate Improvement Plan. This includes 'Children Today/Adults Tomorrow', where our aim *"is for all our children and young people to live healthy and safe lives"* and A Diverse and Sustainable Economy where our aim is *"to make our towns and valleys accessible and safe for all"*. Road safety also forms part of the aims of the Community Strategy to have safer communities where crime levels decline and fear of crime is tackled so that all local people feel safe and secure.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The public notice, in respect of the closure of Ynysawdre and Ogmoredale Comprehensive Schools and the establishment of a new school to serve their traditional catchment areas, was published in the Western Mail on 13th May 2009. The notice was displayed on BCBC's website, at the schools affected by the proposal, and at feeder schools and buildings frequented by the community throughout the Ogmoredale and Garw Valleys and the Valleys Gateway area. This distribution is in line with BCBC's usual handling of public notices and follows the Welsh Government's guidance in dealing with the statutory process.

- 3.2 There were three objections to the proposal which were forwarded to the the Welsh Assembly Government, together with the Council's observations on the objections . Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills gave her approval to the proposal on 27th November 2009.
- 3.3 The new school, subsequently named Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen, was initially established on a split site basis utilising the existing buildings at Ynysawdre (Tondu) and Ogmored (Bryncethin) until the construction of the new school building was completed on the Tondu site (previously Ynysawdre). This building is now nearing the end of construction (phase 1) and is programmed to be handed over to the authority on 19th July 2013. Completion of the playing fields and external areas (phase 2) will be completed by the end of March 2014.
- 3.4 As part of the proposals to site the new **Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen** at Heol Yr Ysgol, Tondu, planning consent was granted in 2011 which was subject to a number of planning conditions.
- 3.5 The planning condition that is related to this objection is **Condition 12 of the planning consent notice, which states;**
- Within 3 months of any consent a comprehensive scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority **for traffic calming restricting 85% tile traffic speeds to 20 mph on Heol yr Ysgol, between its junction with Bryn Road to the North and its junction with Heol y Fferm to the South. The agreed scheme shall incorporate relocated bus stop facilities, carriageway widening and footway realignment, closure of existing bus park access, pedestrian crossing facilities and vertical displacements, plateaux and include full engineering details including longitudinal and cross sections, construction details, lighting, surface water drainage, carriageway markings, signing, traffic calming features and shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any works commence. Such scheme shall be implemented as agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development being brought into beneficial use.***
- Reason; In the interests of highway safety.
(Policy SC1 - Bridgend Unitary Development Plan)*
- 3.6 The reason for this condition is to protect the interests of children travelling to school both by bus and car and especially as pedestrians as they are considered to be vulnerable group. Every effort must be made to ensure the safety of children travelling to and from the school and to protect them from potential harm.
- 3.7 The planning application submitted ? by the Corporate Director Children has outlined that the new development is not just a school but

is also a Community Leisure facility which will bring much needed additional Community Leisure provision/ facilities to the local area.

- 3.8 The new school, which will accommodate 1570 pupils, including SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision, will as mentioned above incorporate extensive community facilities for use both within and outside of school hours. These facilities will be served by an on-site car park.
- 3.9 A travel assessment was undertaken in 2010 at the existing school. When comparing the quality and level of accessibility of sustainable modes of travel between the existing school and the new site, a baseline travel pattern of journeys to the new school site was predicted as follows:

Main Mode	Travel Pattern	
	Existing	Proposed
Walk	23%	19%
School Bus	64%	69%
Lift with parents / drive	10%	9%
Cycle	1%	1%
Public Transport	1%	1%
Shared lift with others	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%

(Based on existing population of 839 pupils)

- 3.10 As indicated in the results of the travel survey (above) the vast majority of pupils will travel by school bus. In order to maintain the popularity of this form of transport and thereby reduce travel by car approximately 14-16 school bus service routes have been identified and will be put in place. Based on this information, those travelling by car will actually reduce once the school is operating from its new location.
- 3.11 Dedicated bus lay-bys sufficient for these buses will be located within the school's car park close to the main entrance. These will provide a safe 'pick-up and drop off' point for pupils within the school's boundary. The vehicular access to the proposed relocation site will be situated off the new school access road. A swept path analysis has been conducted to ensure ample road space is allocated to facilitate the manoeuvres of buses and service vehicles.
- 3.12 Dedicated parking and bus turning facilities will also be provided 'on-site'. Consequently, all parking and a significant number of traffic movements (e.g. buses and cars turning) will be confined to the school site itself.
- 3.13 The planning application for the new school and community facilities was subsequently approved by the Development Control Committee on the Committee Meeting of 10th March 2011.

4.0 Current situation

- 4.1 To comply with planning condition 12 of the above-mentioned consent, namely that consent a comprehensive scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority **for traffic calming restricting 85% tile traffic speeds to 20 mph on Heol yr Ysgol**, between its junction with Bryn Road to the North and its junction with Heol y Fferm to the South, a number of options were considered.
- 4.2 Experience has shown that the most effective way of achieving such low speeds on any road is either to design a road with sufficient bends and short straights to make higher speeds impossible or to introduce raised traffic calming. This is reinforced by the fact that the police will not support 20mph speed limits unless there is physical calming of this nature in place. Given that the new school is being introduced adjacent to the existing straight road that forms Heol Yr Ysgol, the first option of significantly changing road alignments was clearly not possible.
- 4.3 Having discounted alignment changes, other types of calming measures such as priority narrowings were considered. However, such narrowings have been used on busy link roads within residential areas and have had to be subsequently removed due to congestion issues.
- 4.4 Officers of the Traffic Management Section therefore concluded that the only feasible affordable option that was within budget to achieve the low speed required by Planning Condition 12 was to design a scheme which consisted of raised traffic calming with a mixture of plateaux, cushions central refuges and hatch markings which together with the additional 20 mph entry zone signs would cause the majority of vehicles to adhere to the proposed speed limit.
- 4.5 It is however recognised that whatever traffic calming measures are introduced there will always be a minority of inconsiderate motorists who will do their utmost not to comply to with the traffic calming and ignore the speed limit putting themselves and others at risk whilst doing so.
- 4.6 Guidance states that the spacing of traffic calming measures in 20mph zones should ensure that the zone is self-enforcing and it is essential that any scheme developed is designed to achieve that goal.
- 4.7 The scheme subsequently designed was mindful of the existing commercial bus route serving Heol Yr Ysgol and the likely number of school buses accessing the school entrance in future. It also took into account the number of houses and the other community facilities such as the shops and leisure centre which would be accessed from the traffic calmed area. For this reason, in formulating the design, officers were at pains to introduce measures which would have the least impact

on vehicles complying with the 20mph speed limit within the zone. For that reason it is proposed that bus-friendly speed cushions and a shallow-humped zebra crossing plateaus will be introduced as the raised features.

- 4.8 Having taken all of the above-mentioned factors into consideration, and with particular emphasis on the need to meet the requirements of Planning Condition 12 for “*traffic calming restricting 85% tile traffic speeds to 20 mph on Heol Yr Ysgol*”, Officers of the Traffic Management Section developed in conjunction with the scheme contractors the scheme that is attached as **APPENDIX A).(Drawing no 543C)**

Consultation and invitation to object to the proposals

- 4.9 The relevant legislation in respect of the proposed traffic scheme is the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, The Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 , the Highways Act 1980 and the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999. In accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation letters and a plan showing the proposals in Appendix A were sent to the statutory consultees in July 2012. At the same time, letters and plans were sent to a wide range of additional persons/organisations, including all frontage properties on Heol Yr Ysgol and affected properties in side streets within the extent of the proposed traffic scheme. (Appendix B)
- 4.10 During the consultation period only two written responses were received . These were from the Police giving their support to the proposals (Appendix C) and from Sustrans (Appendix D) who wanted the 20 MPH zone extended further along Heol Yr Ysgol to the river bridge. Sustrans were advised that unfortunately the extension requested was outside the remit of the current scheme.
- 4.11 As a consequence, Delegated Powers to proceed to public notice were obtained on the 20th August 2012 In accordance with the various legislative requirements. Public notice of the proposals was subsequently published in the local press and Notices were erected on site on numerous street lighting columns within the extents of the proposals on 5th December 2012 inviting objections in writing to the proposals by the 30th December 2012. By way of clarification 3 notices were advertised in respect of the scheme, the first in respect of the proposed 20mph speed limit, a second in respect of the introduction of speed cushions, a road hump plateaux, a toucan pedestrian crossing and a pelican pedestrian crossing and the third in respect of the proposal to introduce measures to prohibit the waiting loading and unloading of vehicles.
- 4.12 By the closing date 1 formal written objection to the proposal had been received. A complete copy of this objection letter is attached as **APPENDIX E**. Following the receipt of the information provided in the

letter of objection, it was realised that the measurements stated in the three public notices referred to above were incorrect. Officers of the Traffic Management Section visited the objector and explained the rationale behind the scheme. The Officers thanked the Objector for his written response and advised him that public notice would be reissued with the correct measurements stated in the notice and that hopefully the objector would no longer feel the need to object to the proposals. One suggestion made by the objector during that visit, for a box junction at the junction of Heol Yr Ysgol and Bryn Road has now been included in the scheme. Unfortunately the objector indicated that he would probably still object due to a dislike of speed cushions. Public notice was reissued with the amended measurements on the 24th January 2013 inviting objections by the 20th February 2013 (**Appendix F**) and again only one objection was received from the original objector. This objection was not as extensive as the original objection and now only related to the traffic calming cushions. A full copy of this letter is attached at **Appendix G**.

- 4.13 As stated in the letter of objection from the objector, *'I have no objection to the proposed speed limit or the two 'bus friendly plateaux but I object to the installation of any speed cushions on the following grounds'*.
- 4.14 As can be seen from Appendix G, the points made by the objector are his own personal views of the effect of certain traffic calming measures and given the lack of other objections being received whether from emergency services, bus companies, disabled groups or others it would appear that these views are not widely supported in respect of an important area such as this outside a school.

Conclusions

- 4.15 To summarise, therefore, although Officers fully appreciate that the objector has a right to object to the proposals and to express his views in respect of the proposed speed cushions and that his concerns are an important consideration for the Panel, officers are satisfied that a scheme of raised traffic calming, including cushions on Heol- r-Ysgol to meet the planning condition requirements that 85% of traffic should travel at 20 mph, is an appropriate scheme to deal with future anticipated traffic flow in this area.
- 4.16 The panel is asked to consider that in respect of the objector's comments on the limited effectiveness of speed cushions that no matter what traffic calming scheme is constructed there will always be an inconsiderate minority who will fail to comply with the measures provided.
- 4.17 In relation to the comments made in the objectors letter that despite the proposed measures vehicles can still exceed the 20 MPH limit because of the distance between measures his alternative suggestion to replace

the cushions with road markings and signs are not considered a feasible replacement at this location due to the likely increase in traffic speeds.

- 4.18 With regard to the objectors comments in relation to the visibility at the school access road, swept path analysis of movements in and out of the junction indicate it is fit for purpose and meets planning condition 13. As is the case at any junction the visibility will be affected by any persons using an adjacent footway.
- 4.19 The Panel is also asked to take into consideration when coming to a conclusion the fact that the police support the scheme and no objections have been received from any person residing in the vicinity, from the other emergency services or the bus companies.
- 4.20 Officers are satisfied that the raised traffic calming scheme originally proposed (i.e. **Appendix A**) is the only practical scheme within budget that will achieve the planning condition imperative of *“restricting 85% tile traffic speeds to 20 mph on Heol Yr Ysgol”*

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

- 5.1 This report has no effect upon the Policy Framework or the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no negative equality implications.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 The costs of the proposed scheme will be fully funded by the developers of the new school.

8.0 Recommendations

The Members of the Panel are therefore recommended:-

- a) to reject the objection received to the proposed raised traffic calming scheme on Heol Yr Ysgol and authorise the implementation of the calming scheme detailed in Appendix A as advertised in the Western Mail on the 24th January 2013.

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28th March 2013

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