## Application Ref: NP/14/0185

**Application Type** 

Full

Grid Ref:

SN12280095

**Applicant** 

Mr M Morgan, Pembrokeshire County Council Ms M Jones, Pembrokeshire County Council

Agent Proposal

Demolition of existing infant school and erection of new

English medium community school

**Site Location** 

Tenby Junior Community School, Heywood Lane,

Tenby, Pembrokeshire, SA70 8BZ

**Case Officer** 

Vicki Hirst

#### **Summary**

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new community school on the existing playing field to the east of the junior school in Heywood Lane, Tenby. The existing infants school on land to the south side of Heywood Lane would be demolished and reinstated as a grassed playing field as part of the scheme. The application also includes a Multi User Games Area (MUGA) to the rear of the existing junior school.

The application raises issues relating to the principle of the development, the provision of Open Space, siting, design and layout implications and the impact on the special qualities of the National Park, privacy and amenity considerations, highways and access matters, trees and landscaping, ecological aspects, contaminated land, archaeology and ground water, drainage and servicing matters.

It is considered that the demolition of the existing infant's school and the proposed new school is acceptable and will provide an important new addition to school provision in the area. The proposals will retain sufficient open space provision in the area and whilst of contemporary design the design approach is considered to be appropriate for the design of a large, community building. This approach respects the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties and addresses past problems with parking and access to the school, whilst also making provision for other travel modes. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.

#### Consultee Response

Tenby Civic Society: Concern

**Tenby Town Council**: Supporting - members welcome the modern purpose built school for Tenby but have reservations regarding the internal design, possible future capacity and traffic management issues.

Tree and Landscape Officer: Reply - Requires further report

Natural Resources Wales: No objection - subject to a condition requiring a

Construction Environment Management Plan

PCC - Ecologist: No objection - subject to a lighting condition

**PCC - Head of Public Protection**: No objection - subject to conditions relating to contamination, hours of working, noise levels, control of dust, and prohibition of burning

**Dyfed Archaeological Trust**: No objection - subject to a condition requiring a written scheme of investigation to be submitted

Access Office: No objection - subject to the Public Right of Way not being obstructed and remaining available for use at all times.

PCC - Transportation & Environment: Conditional Consent

Natural Resources Wales: Conditional Consent PCNPA - Park Direction: Approve - in principle.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water: No Response Received - at time of writing this report

# **Public Response**

Tenby Civic Society – Concerns at loss of amenity for residential properties in Serpentine Road, removal of an allocated area of open space from the local plan, cramped site around the building, and lack of a convincing case that traffic congestion and nuisance will not be worsened by a 50% increase in school and staff populations. However welcome the lowish roof lines, coherent vehicular access and provision at the front of the site, internal building layout and the record or road safety round the site. Main detailed points raised are:

- Impact of noise, outlook, light, access to open space and traffic
- The replacement open space will add to the bulk of open space around the secondary school adding little value to uses or residences in the area
- Playground space is divided up by the "H" design and will make surveillance and supervision difficult
- Elevations could have more colour which is important for younger children
- The exits to playgrounds would be less intrusive to residences if there were less doors
- The traffic analysis's conclusions that the 50% increase of pupils and staff will result in no significant extra load on roads and pavements appears hopeful. No account has been taken of poor pavements, carriageway width, and capacity reduction by junctions. The count does not take account of all travel modes and was not reflective of seasons
- The parking standards do not take account of the 21<sup>st</sup> century use of the car
- The accident statistics are remarkable safety measures are clearly helping
- Traffic and pedestrian management policies will need review if this is granted

Sustrans – Raises issues regarding how an appropriate balance between travel modes will be achieved. Active travel modes (walking and cycling) need to be placed over and above the needs of vehicles particularly in an area where there is a high concentration of children accessing a destination on foot or bike. It is considered that the proposals swing the balance too far towards vehicle users creating conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles.

Sustrans raises several points and offers solutions to each:

- 1. Pupils on foot and bike will need to cross the new access points putting them at risk solution would be not to provide the access points as a traditional junction layout and give priority to pedestrians.
- 2. The geometry of the vehicular access does not encourage vehicles to slow down solution would be to minimize the turning radius on the junction.
- 3. The pedestrian footpath does not follow the desire line to the school entrance meaning that parents and children will cross the dropping off layby as this is the shortest route. The footpath runs through the car park creating conflict solution would be to widen the footpath in the centre to provide a more dominant pedestrian access with a raising of the height to highlight the crossing point to vehicles.
- 4. There is insufficient cycle parking provision to future growth
- 5. The access route from the north is welcomed this should be 2.5metres 3 metres wide and Sustrans queries if this will be lit.
- 6. If cyclists use the vehicular entrance they will be in direct conflict with vehicles solution is to widen the paths for shared use around the car park.

Sustrans considers that there are a number of opportunities to amend the layout to improve accessibility, safety and attractiveness for those walking and cycling to the school.

2 other letters received, the main points raised are:

- Question the need for a further school to replace the existing excellent facilities.
- Surplus funding should be used for projects of greater priority
- Cramped nature of the development with no room for expansion
- Noise issues

### Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website - http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 02 - Tenby Local Service and Tourism Centre

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 09 - Light Pollution

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 12 - Welsh Language

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 16 - Open Space and Green Wedge

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 48 - Community Facilities and Infrastructure Requirements

LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW6 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW6 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

PPW6 Chapter 08 - Transport

PPW6 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation

PPW6 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services

PPW6 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

SPG05 - Sustainable Design

SPG13 - Parking

SPG22 - Recreational and Leisure Activities

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 10 - Tree Preservation Orders

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 16 - Sport, Recreation and Open Space

TAN 18 - Transport

TAN 20 - The Welsh Language – Unitary Development Plans and Planning Control

### TAN 22 - Planning for Sustainable Buildings

### Officer's Appraisal

This is a major application, and raises the following issues:

- The Principle of the Development
- Provision of Open Space
- Siting, Design and Layout and Impact on the Special Qualities of the National Park
- Privacy and Amenity
- Highways and Access
- Trees and Landscaping
- Ecological Aspects
- Contamination
- Archaeology
- Ground Water, Drainage and Services

#### The Principle of the Development

Policy 2 of the LDP is the strategy policy for Tenby Local Service and Tourism Centre and criterion 2 of the policy sets a priority for protecting and enhancing the town's facilities and town shopping centre which serve the needs of the local area. Policy 7 is the strategy policy for development in the countryside and will only permit development where, amongst other things, the enhancement of community facilities is proposed. Furthermore, policy 48 relates to community facilities and infrastructure requirements and states that the provision and protection of such facilities will be achieved by, amongst other things, with new and extended facilities being permitted where they are well located to meet the community's needs and they are convenient to public transport, shops and other services where this is required to serve the needs of the user.

In this case, the proposed new school is situated outside the settlement limits for Tenby but on land already used in association with the existing school facilities in the area. The provision of a new school falls within the definition of a community facility and is therefore permitted by the countryside strategy policy for the enhancement of community facilities. On the basis of this support can be given in principle for this development.

#### Provision of Open Space

Policy 16 refers to the reference in the Proposals Map for the LDP to existing Open Space and Green Wedges. The supporting text to this policy refers to the national policy set out in Planning Policy Wales in relation to formal, informal, open space, playing fields, and green wedges. In determining whether there is a need for additional open space provision or whether there is an excess of playing field provision the Authority will refer to the Open Space Assessment Background Paper.

The proposed school is to be situated on an area designated as Open Space in the LDP and where national policy states that all playing fields should be protected unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available *or* there is an excess of such provision in the area. The Open Space Assessment Background Paper (November 2009) identifies a surplus of 1.4ha for playing pitches and a 3.04ha surplus for children's space in the Tenby area. As such, whilst the proposed school would result in the loss of 0.395 ha of designated open space (approximately 1.02ha of new development site minus 0.625 ha of new open space provision at the demolished school site) a surplus of pitch and children's space would remain. It is also acknowledged that at a new Multi Use Games Area is proposed within the grounds of the proposed Welsh medium school thus improving facilities for a wider range of sports for the school.

Whilst it is intended to keep an area of the existing playing field to the north of the new school, it is acknowledged that the proposal could potentially result in the loss of two full size rugby/football pitches as not enough space is available within the remaining land of the new English medium school or within the open space provision on the demolished school for a full size pitch. Notwithstanding this, the proposal complies with policy in respect of there remaining an excess of provision overall. Any issues relating to the type of provision are for the Education Department in respect of the demands of each school in the area and are not material planning considerations for this application.

To ensure that the open space provision is provided within a reasonable time frame of the opening of the new school and the demolition of the existing infant's school, it will be necessary to impose a condition on any planning permission to secure this.

Siting, Design and Layout and Impact on the Special Qualities of the National Park

As set out above, the proposed school is of a substantial size and is of modern, contemporary design. It is primarily a single storey structure, designed with two wings of complimentary pent roofs facing each other, and a central flat roof supporting a solar panel array. A further two storey element with a pent roof will be situated on the eastern side of the site and will house plant and services. A new dedicated car park and drop off area will be provided to the front of the new school.

The surrounding development is an eclectic mix, comprising a relatively modern school and housing estate to the west and a mix of housing types in Serpentine Road and Heywood Lane to the east and south. To the north is a modern housing development set at a lower level than the proposed school. It is considered that whilst this building is large and will alter the character of the area, its modern approach is acceptable in this instance and complimentary to the surrounding development. Its relative heights and distances from

surrounding properties will also minimize its impact to both those properties and to the wider character of the area.

It has also been designed to BREEAM excellent standards contributing significantly to sustainable building standards.

As such it is considered that the proposal is of an acceptable siting, design, and layout and will not cause adverse harm to the special qualities of the area. Issues relating to highway safety and access are discussed further below.

In addition, the demolition of the existing infant's **sc**hool will enable a new open space area to be provided which will offer an alternative amenity area to that existing and subject to appropriate boundary treatments will compliment the character of the area.

#### Privacy and Amenity

The new school will be situated to the west of the rear gardens of existing properties fronting Serpentine Road, but at a lower level than their respective gardens. Whilst the school will have a number of classrooms situated to the rear of these gardens the main playground area is situated within the central area between the eastern and western wings of the new school building. It is inevitable that there will be increased activity and noise during break times but in view of the distance between the dwellings in Serpentine Road (some 25 metres to the rear elevations) and the lower level of the school, combined with a new fence and segregated by a public footpath it is considered that this impact will be acceptable. Furthermore, it is noted that the existing playing field will generate a certain amount of noise and activity when in use and as such it is not considered that the proposal will cause adverse harm in this respect. No objection has been received from the Pollution Control section of Pembrokeshire County Council.

Furthermore, the height of the school has been kept low to preserve any possible shadowing or overbearing effect, and this, taken together with the lower level of the proposed school and the distance to the properties to the east will not, in your officers view, cause a significant loss of amenity.

The proposed MUGA pitch is to be situated to the east of existing properties on an area currently used as playground. There is no intent to provide lighting for this facility and whilst it may be used by after school clubs it will not be available for use by the community. The applicant advises that it will not be used after 6pm (when daylight allows). In this context, it is not considered that the use of the MUGA will have any adverse impact over and above that arising from the playground, subject to appropriate controls relating to hours of use, and controlling any future lighting.

With regard to the proposals to demolish the existing infant's school and replace it with a playing field, it is not considered that the use of this area as a playing field will result in any impacts over and above that arising from the

existing school. However, control of lighting will be essential to ensure that any impacts to adjoining properties is minimized and a condition to this effect is recommended.

It is therefore considered that the proposal when built will not result in any adverse harm to adjoining residential properties that would be sufficient to object to the application.

However, it is also relevant that the proposal will inevitable cause a level of disruption and disturbance during the construction phase and as such it will be necessary to ensure that conditions are imposed to ensure that any impact is kept to a minimum. The Pollution Control Officer has suggested conditions in respect of hours of working, noise emissions, dust control, and control of burning are imposed on any permission and Natural Resources Wales has also requested that a condition be imposed requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan be agreed prior to commencement. It is your officer's view that these are essential to control the impacts arising from the construction phase.

## Highways and Access

As members will know the access and parking arrangements for the existing schools in Heywood Lane have caused congestion problems over the years and the current proposals seek to address this through the provision of a new dedicated parking and drop off area to the front of the new school. The arrangement comprises two accesses/egresses onto Heywood Lane with defined parking areas for staff and visitors.

Representations received have raised issues with the parking and traffic problems and queried the likely increase in these problems arising from the new school and increased pupil numbers. A representation from Sustrans however also gueries the need to provide an appropriate balance between travel modes and provision for each. Sustrans is of the view that the current application swings the balance too far in favour of vehicle users. Issues resulting from the layout relating to conflict between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists are also raised. The applicant has responded to the representation stating that the scheme was designed by experienced highway engineers who consider all modes of transport and it is considered that the level of vehicle movements to the site merits a dedicated access. alteration of radii as suggested by Sustrans will cause difficulties for larger bus/coach vehicles which would in turn encroach onto the footways to make the turn. It is considered that the alterations suggested are unnecessary and the proposals for a dedicated area for vehicles coupled with the 20mph zone in the vicinity will address the issues experienced in the past and cater for the new school effectively.

Whilst it is agreed with Sustrans that an appropriate balance needs to be struck between different types of travel modes, it also needs to be recognized that the proposed new school will serve a wide catchment area, some of which falls outside normal school and public bus route areas. The lack of

public transport in the wider area will inevitably result in a high use of the private car. Furthermore, the school buses are currently unable to leave the highway for drop off/pick up resulting in congestion and conflict on the public highway which is narrow and of restricted visibility. The Highways Officer supports the proposals subject to conditions, and your officers are of the opinion that the application does provide both options for access by foot or cycle but also addresses some of the historic problems associated with the schools in this area. As such, on this occasion it is agreed that a new dedicated car park and dropping off area is justified and support is given to this proposal on highway and access grounds.

The site is also bordered to the east by a public footpath and the Authority's Rights of Way Officer has no objection subject to conditions relating to the keeping the path free from obstruction and that the width by a minimum of 2 metres. He also seeks clarification on the surface to be used as there is an opportunity for improvement to cater for all users throughout the year.

### Trees and Landscaping

The site is bordered by a number of mature trees, several of which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (in particular the group to the front and to the west of the infant's school). These trees are identified for retention on the submitted plans, but the Authority's Tree and Landscaping Officer has requested further information in respect of the overall impact of the development on the existing mature trees and those identified for removal. At the time of writing this report further information was awaited, but it is inevitable that there will be the loss of some tree growth particularly to the front of the new parking area. It is not considered that the loss of these trees will be detrimental subject to an appropriate re-planting and landscaping scheme, but a further update on this matter will be given at the meeting.

### Ecological Aspects

An ecological appraisal and bat survey accompanied the application and which found no evidence of protected species, specifically bats, no identified any areas of high biodiversity value with little potential for protected species. As such, the Authority's Ecological Advisor has raised no objection to the application subject to a condition to control external lighting and subject to compliance with the survey report recommendations.

#### Contaminated Land

Pembrokeshire County Council's Pollution Control Officer has highlighted that records show previous use of the land at Serpentine Gardens as a petrol station with four tanks being removed at the time but two remaining in situ and filled with concrete. Whilst it is not envisaged that these pose a significant risk children are a highly vulnerable receptor to contamination and therefore any potential contamination threat needs to be identified and mitigated against. As such it is recommended that a condition be imposed in relation to the

requirement to submit a report on any potential contamination if found during construction.

## Archaeology

Dyfed Archaeological Trust has drawn attention to the proximity of several historical and archaeological sites and the potential for archaeological material in the site. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed on any permission to secure a programme of work in this respect.

Ground water, Drainage and Services

The site lies on a Principal Aquifer and as such Natural Resources Wales originally requested further information in respect of groundwater management. The applicant provided further information in this respect and Natural Resources Wales are now satisfied that the risks to groundwater can be adequately managed subject to a condition requiring a Construction Environment Management Plan.

No other objections have been received from the statutory consultees and it is considered that the site can be properly and appropriately serviced.

#### **Conclusions**

In conclusion it is considered that the demolition of the existing infant's school and the proposed new school is acceptable and will provide an important new addition to school provision in the area. The proposals will retain sufficient open space provision in the area and whilst of contemporary design the design approach is considered to be appropriate for the design of a large, community building. This approach respects the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties and addresses past problems with parking and access to the school, whilst also making provision for other travel modes. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.

### Recommendation

That the application be approved subject to conditions including matters relating to:

- 1. Standard time for implementation
- 2. Compliance with the approved plans and ecological survey
- 3. Method statement for the construction phase including details on hours of working, noise, dust suppression, and controlling burning and to include a Construction Environmental Management Plan
- 4. Timing for the provision of the open space on the infant's school site
- 5. Landscaping and boundary details to be agreed
- 6. Hours of use for the Multi User Games Area
- 7. Control of lighting
- 8. Contamination
- 9. Highways
- 10. Archaeology
- 11. Footpath





















