

Cassidy+ Ashton

C+A

Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning



Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, Denbigh

Community & Linguistics Impact Assessment

CASSIDY + ASHTON | 10 Hunters Walk, Canal Street, Chester, CH1 4EB



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Community and Linguistics Impact Assessment has been prepared by Cassidy + Ashton on behalf of Denbighshire County Council ('the applicant') in support of a full planning application for:

Erection of a new Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn Special Educational Needs (SEN) School for ages 3-19, including formation of Multi Use Games Areas (2no.), external plant / services area, new 118 space car parking area (including 14 electric charging bays), minibuss parking (4no.), cycle parking (60no.), designated drop off area, new vehicular access off Ystrad Road, extension / improvements to existing active travel route, community café, landscaping works and all other associated works. Land south of Denbigh Leisure Centre, Ystrad Road, Denbigh

1.2 A Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment has been requested by the Local Planning Authority as part of the validation process for the planning application and in order to comply with Local Development Plan **Policy RD5**.

1.3 **Policy RD5** – The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities:

In determining all planning applications, the needs and interests of the Welsh language will be taken into account. Development could be refused if its size, scale or location would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community. To be able to make an informed decision on applications that may have an effect on the future of the Welsh language within communities, applicants will normally be expected to submit a:

- i) Community Linguistic Statement to accompany a planning application for smaller developments within villages, hamlets or the open countryside comprising proposals of the following kind: 5 residential units or more, commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 1000m² or more, development likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities, infrastructure projects with long term community impacts;
- ii) More detailed assessment in the form of a "Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment" to accompany a planning application in all settlements where developments are on a larger scale comprising proposals of the following kind: 20 residential units or more, commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 3000m² or more, large scale infrastructure projects with long term community impacts.

1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with all other planning documents submitted with the application.

1.5 This Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Proposed Development; describes the proposed development;
- Section 3: Planning Policy Context; Identification of the relevant local and national planning policies;
- Section 4: Welsh Language Profile; Demonstrates the current usage of the Welsh language within the development site area.
- Section 5: Methodology; Poses a series of questions to demonstrate the level of impact from the application on the use of the Welsh language.
- Section 6: Conclusion; Summarises the contents of this Statement.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1 The description of the proposed development is as follows:

Erection of a new Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn Special Educational Needs (SEN) School for ages 3-19, including formation of Multi Use Games Areas (2no.), external plant / services area, new 118 space car parking area (including 14 electric charging bays), minibus parking (4no.), cycle parking (60no.), designated drop off area, new vehicular access off Ystrad Road, extension / improvements to existing active travel route, community café, landscaping works and all other associated works. Land south of Denbigh Leisure Centre, Ystrad Road, Denbigh

2.2 The development is to be delivered by Wates Construction. Full details are provided in the separately submitted DAS.

2.3 The opportunity for investment in Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn has arisen following its selection as a priority project in Denbighshire Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) for Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly known as 21st Century Schools), an investment programme jointly funded by Welsh Government and Local Authorities.

2.4 The SOP included the following text:

Review of site location for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn provides provision for children with Autism. The service is currently utilised by children across the wider North Wales area. The school is based on a number of sites in the town. The primary provision is co-located as above whilst the secondary provision is co-located with Denbigh High School.

2.5 Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is a school which has been based in Denbigh since its initial establishment, first at Plas Brondyffryn Hall and then at its current sites across the town of Denbigh. The aim of the project is to establish a new, purpose-built, 3-19 Special Education Needs School in the town of Denbigh in Denbighshire. This project is being developed by Denbighshire County Council. The new 3-19 School is proposed to replace existing school buildings which are currently split across three separate locations in the town.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

3.1 The adopted development plan for Denbigh currently comprises the adopted Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan (2013). An emerging Local Development Plan is currently under preparation. The plan was proposed to be submitted to the Welsh Government in late 2020, with examination anticipated in 2021, however the current covid-19 crisis is impacting timescales and decision making. The estimated delays are at least 2-years on the original programme.

3.2 Relevant material planning considerations include Planning Policy Wales (2021), the Technical Advice Notes (TAN) and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Planning Policy

3.3 **Policy RD5** “The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities” is contained within the adopted Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan (2013). The policy requires a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment to be prepared for developments of 20 residential units or more and commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 3000m² or more.

3.4 Denbighshire County Council have also published and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance document ‘Planning and the Welsh Language (2014)’. The purpose of the SPG is to provide further advice and guidance on how the Welsh language is to be considered in new development proposals submitted via the planning system. It supplements the adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan Policy RD5.

3.5 The SPG also sets out the requirements of the Community and Linguistics Impact Assessment and poses a series of questions which need to be addressed as part of the assessment.

3.6 These questions are assessed in full in Section 5 of this report as well as the proposed mitigation measures included in the development.

4.0 Welsh Language Profile

4.1 In order to assess the impact that the development may have on the use of the Welsh language, it is important to understand the existing use of the language within the town. The development site is located in the Denbigh Lower ward of Denbighshire, Wales.

4.2 The data included in this section of the report has been collected from the 2001 and 2011 Census Data from the Office of National Statistics and is included within Tables 1 and 2.

Denbighshire

4.3 The 2011 census data identifies that Denbighshire has a population of 90,527 people, of this population, 3.6% (3,251) can speak Welsh.

4.4 In 2011, 64.6% of the Denbighshire population had no Welsh language skills.

Denbigh Lower

4.5 The 2011 census identifies that Denbigh Lower has a population of 4,561 people, of this population 5.5% (253) can speak Welsh. This is above the average figures for both Denbighshire and Wales as a whole. The figure for no Welsh language skills was 43.4%, this being considerably less than the average figures for both Denbighshire and Wales as a whole.

(2011 Census Data)

Welsh Language Skills	Denbigh Lower		Denbighshire		Wales	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All categories	4,561	100	90,527	100	2,955,841	100
Understands spoken Welsh only	645	14.1	7,662	8.5	157,792	5.3
Speaks but does not read or write Welsh	253	5.5	3,251	3.6	80,429	2.7
Speaks and reads but does not write Welsh	135	2.95	1,964	2.2	45,524	1.5
Speaks, reads and writes Welsh	1,403	30.8	16,842	18.6	430,717	14.6
Other combination of skills	146	3.2	2,368	2.6	73,392	2.5
No Welsh language skills	1,979	43.4	58,440	64.6	2,167,987	73.3

5.0 Methodology

5.1 This Section of the statement responds to the questions included in the Planning and the Welsh Language SPG.

5.2 Ultimately the development will result in a net balance of population within Denbigh, being that the new school represents a relocation of three existing schools in the town. The new school will have additional capacity above current combined pupil numbers. It is not expected, however, that the increase in population, which will be transitory, will have any negative affect on the balance of Welsh speakers or lead to a decline in the use of the language. In fact, the position will be a positive one in that more people will be introduced to the use of the Welsh Language.

5.3 Although Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is an English medium school, they are committed to promoting the Welsh language as an integrated part of school life. The majority of pupils come from homes where English is the first language; however, as a school within Wales, the school will promote an ethos where Welsh culture and heritage is supported and celebrated. This will assist in reinforcing the use of the Welsh language.

5.4 The school currently is split over 3 sites. this at times can impact delivery. Having all staff and pupils on one site will also ensure the school can meet the growing demand for places.

- The pupils need to be in one building that is purpose built for their needs and provide 21st Century facilities.
- There shall be more flexible space and better play provision provided through the project.
- The project will create the opportunity to develop excellent facilities which will improve the educational experience of children.
- The project will also explore Post 16 delivery and what facilities these could bring to the pupils and the wider community e.g. a café.
- The project will create a number of community benefits.

Population Characteristics

5.5 Is the development likely to lead to a population increase / decrease that might: Affect the balance of Welsh speakers (positive or negative way); or Lead to an absolute or proportional decline in the number of Welsh speakers?

Positive impact upon the balance of Welsh speakers – refer 5.2 – 5.4

5.6 Is the development likely to lead to increased in-migration?

Minor increased in-migration, but predominantly transitory - refer 5.2 - 5.4

5.7 Is the development likely to lead to increased out-migration?

No – retains a net balance of population - refer 5.2 - 5.4

5.8 Is the development likely to lead to a changing age structure of the community?

No – the existing age structure of the community would be retained. The proposal will sustain a social balance, making the development sustainable in social and cultural terms.

Quality of Life

5.9 Is the development likely to have an impact on the health of local people?

The development is likely to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local people within Denbigh. There will be improved access to all weather sports facilities, a community café and improved wider sports facilities.

- The pupils need to be in one building that is purpose built for their needs and provide 21st Century facilities.
- There shall be more flexible space and better play provision provided through the project.
- The project will create the opportunity to develop excellent facilities which will improve the educational experience of children.
- The project will also explore Post 16 delivery and what facilities these could bring to the pupils and the wider community e.g. a café.
- The project will create a number of community benefits.

5.10 Is the development likely to have an impact on the amenity of the local area?

Refer above.

5.11 Is the development likely to lead to the threat of increased crime or violence in the community?

No - the development is likely to lead to a decreased threat of crime or violence in the community. The development itself will bring additional activity and vitality to the area during the day and evenings, potentially increasing the security of the development and surrounding areas. Passive surveillance will also be created.

Economic Factors

5.12 Is the development likely to have a detrimental impact on local businesses?

No - the development will not have a detrimental impact on local businesses. The development will increase footfall in the town centre which will benefit the existing businesses.

5.13 Is the development likely to have a detrimental impact on local jobs?

No - the development will not have a detrimental impact on local jobs and will create employment opportunities through the construction phase of the development as well as through the increased capacity of the new school.

5.14 Is the development likely to lead to greater economic diversity?

The development is unlikely to generate a significant increase in economic diversity as it is seeking to stabilise the existing education provision in Denbigh and secure its future.

5.15 Is the development likely to have an impact on local wage / salary levels?

The development is not likely to have a negative impact on the local wage levels in Denbigh.

5.16 Is the development likely to have an impact on the average cost of housing?

It is considered that there would be no direct consequence expected on the average cost of housing.

Infrastructure Supply

5.17 Is the development likely to have an impact on local schools?

The school currently is split over 3 sites. this at times can impact delivery. Having all staff and pupils on one site will also ensure the school can meet the growing demand for places.

5.18 Is the development likely to have an impact on health care provision?

The development is unlikely to have an impact on health care provision.

5.19 Is the development likely to have an impact on the provision of local services, such as shops / post offices / banks / pubs?

The development is unlikely to have an impact on the provision of local services. Over time, the provision of services should increase through ongoing investment into the area.

Social and Cultural Aspects

5.20 Will the development potentially lead to social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the Welsh speaking community?

The development will not lead to social tensions, conflict or divisions within the Welsh speaking community. Refer 5.3.

5.21 Will the development potentially lead to changes in local Welsh traditions/culture?

The development is unlikely to lead to any significant changes in local Welsh traditions or culture. Refer 5.3.

Prior to the application being submitted to the Council, public consultation is to undertaken for a period of 28 days. This will give residents, interested parties and local stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the proposed plans as well as raise any concerns in regard to the Welsh culture and local traditions that will then be considered by the applicant ahead of any formal planning submission.

5.22 Will the development be likely to have a potential impact on local voluntary / activity / youth groups?

The development is likely to create opportunities for local voluntary, activity and youth groups through the provision of a multi-purpose Events space that can be used by the community, as well as other facilities such as the community cafe.

Mitigation Measures

5.23 This Community & Linguistic Statement demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in negative impacts upon the linguistic and social character and the locality, and indeed it offers an opportunity to strengthen the identity of the community and the Welsh language.

5.24 Whilst this is the case, and in order to further safeguard the Welsh Language the applicant will promote the use of the Welsh language as part of the proposed development through activities and events appropriately, e.g. bilingual signage.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This Statement has identified that in preparing the proposed development, due consideration has been given to any effects of the proposal on the Welsh language.

6.2 We consider that the proposal provides an opportunity to promote the use of the Welsh language as well as introduce a range of social and economic benefits to the area.

6.3 Ultimately the development will result in a net balance of population within Denbigh, being that the new school represents a relocation of three existing schools in the town. The new school will have additional capacity above current combined pupil numbers. It is not expected, however, that the increase in population, which will be transitory, will have any negative affect on the balance of Welsh speakers or lead to a decline in the use of the language. In fact, the position will be a positive one in that more people will be introduced to the use of the Welsh Language.

6.4 Although Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is an English medium school, they are committed to promoting the Welsh language as an integrated part of school life. The majority of pupils come from homes where English is the first language; however, as a school within Wales, the school will promote an ethos where Welsh culture and heritage is supported and celebrated. This will assist in reinforcing the use of the Welsh language.

6.5 Overall, we do not consider there to be any negative impacts resulting from the development.

6.6 We believe that this statement and the accompanying planning documents have demonstrated that the application is compliant with local and national planning policy and that every effort will be made to ensure the promotion of the Welsh language and its retention within Denbigh.