



Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn - SCfL - New Build: Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 1242

Brief description: The proposal to locate, construct and operate a new school building on Ystrad Road Denbigh which will accommodate pupils of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn which is a school for pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

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Responsible Service: Education and Children's Services

Localities affected by the proposal: Denbigh,

Who will be affected by the proposal? Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn its staff, pupils and parents, nearby residents including Ystrad road, Ruthin Road and Clwyd Avenue, Residents of the town of Denbigh. Denbigh High School, its staff, pupils and parents, Denbighshire Leisure Limited.

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? Yes

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

3 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 31 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

The process for developing the project has involved considering the long term impact of the investment from its inception. This has included its size and strategic location. The site selection process has considered the impact of the loss of playing field to multiple stakeholders within the wider community. Ensuring sufficiency of suitable alternative facilities within the overall proposal will ensure that loss of open space will be mitigated whilst ensuring sufficient specialist school places.

Prevention

A new building with increased capacity is required to meet current and future demand. Currently there is waiting list for the school and this has an impact on how pupils are allocated on each site and which pupils can't access the provision. This impacts staff, pupils and mainstream education provision. The aim is for the the new building to be Net Carbon Zero and specific funding from Welsh Government will be sought to deliver this element of the project.

Integration

Existing partnership working with Denbigh High School will continue and this will enable stability for both staff and pupils and opportunities to share resources. Increasing the capacity of the school is required as demand has and is forecasted to increase for places. The alternative is that local pupils will have to travel out of county to access places which would result in a longer journey for pupils or

stay in unsuitable schools that cannot cater for their needs.

Collaboration

The proposal has been developed with the involvement of several teams and organisations. The views of both schools and their governors, Denbighshire Leisure Limited, Denbigh Members Area Group, DCC departments and the responses to the Pre Planning Consultation have all influenced the proposal. Further engagement opportunities will be planned and implemented as the project is developed with the intention to engage with more organisations within Denbigh.

Involvement

Engagement with the school will continue and additional appropriate opportunities for engagement will emerge during the project. Carers and pupils will be consulted prior to the move into the new building and in regard to what they would like to see in the new school. Denbigh residents and especially nearby residents, the Town Council and local sport clubs will have opportunities to engage with the project during the planning process. We will also look to broaden involvement in the WIA.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Neutral
A more equal Denbighshire	Neutral
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Negative
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Neutral

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Neutral

Main conclusions

The new school would offer brand new, purpose built facilities for learners with special educational needs. This investment is intended to improve their experience of education and result in better outcomes for them, together with improved and expanded opportunities to gain work experience and other skills. For example, through the potential on site cafe. Whilst this is undoubtedly positive from a equal Denbighshire point of view, we have some conversations and research to do to ensure that any current user groups of the playing field (and those who possess protected characteristics), will not be disadvantaged.

The proposal is likely to result in a disproportionately negative impact for Denbigh, as a result of the loss of the playing field, the disruption during the construction phase and the noise/view/traffic associated with the newly sited school once it's up and running.

However, it is felt strongly that the location of any new Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn should be in the town of Denbigh to ensure that the school can continue to serve pupils from across Denbighshire i.e. a Denbigh location allows access for pupils from the North and South of the County. Locating a new school any further north would prevent pupils from the South accessing the school due to unreasonable journey times. Given the special provision at the school it needs to serve the whole County. Denbigh fulfils this requirement. Furthermore, it is key that the new Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn remains close to the High School in Denbigh as the long established links between the 2 schools enables some learners to access mainstream provision including examinations.

It is proposed to improve the remaining Denbigh High School playing field as part of the project which will mitigate the loss of one field by providing a betterment. The remaining field will also still be of a sufficient size to serve Denbigh High.

The visual impact of constructing a building on the field cannot be mitigated in full but landscaping options will be considered to minimise the impact. We would also ensure sufficient onsite traffic management facilities, staggering arrivals and departures to and from the site and links and improvements to the adjoining active travel route are delivered as part of the project. Potential use of the parking on site to reduce instances where vehicles are parked on Ystrad Road, causing issues for residents, is also being considered.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The overall impact is positive due to the significant benefits this investment will deliver for Economic development, creation of quality skills and jobs in the long term, infrastructure and a low carbon society. The Community Benefits from the project have the potential to have a wide reaching significant impact on the local economy.

Further actions required

There will be some disruption as a result of the project as more vehicles will use Ystrad Road both during the construction period and once the building is complete. In terms of the short term disruption during construction there will be a clear communication plan to ensure local residents are kept informed of progress and likely disruption throughout. In order to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic following completion of the building this will be mitigated by ensuring sufficient onsite traffic management facilities, staggering arrivals and departures to and from the site and ensuring links and improvements to the adjoining active travel route are delivered as part of the project. There is also potential to use the parking on site to reduce instances where vehicles are parked on Ystrad Road, causing issues for residents.

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

It is proposed that the building will be net Carbon zero delivering on DCC's climate change commitment.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

The strategic location of the site will ensure continuity for pupils and will limit the length of home to school journeys.

Sufficient car parking will be provided on site and arrivals and departures will be managed by the school.

The project will deliver part of the Denbigh Active Travel route in partnership with the Highways department.

Congestion which takes place on existing site will be significantly reduced by the creation of a suitable car park.

Economic development

Significant financial investment in the town of Denbigh with the project valued at over £25m.

Mandatory Community Benefits targets will be placed on the project including spend within 30 miles of the site and within Wales providing opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises to work with the main contractor.

Quality skills for the long term

Mandatory Community Benefits for the project will include the creation and/or continuation of employment and training opportunities during the construction phase including apprentices.

The new facilities will enable more opportunities for developing a wider range of skills for pupils.

Quality jobs for the long term

Retention of 100 jobs in the town of Denbigh with the potential for job creation as pupil numbers increase.

Childcare

Use of the building to provide specialist holiday club childcare provision catering for to the needs of the pupils is being considered. This would potentially offer continuity for pupils and their families during school holidays.

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Construction work will generate carbon emissions

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

More vehicles will use Ystrad Road both during the construction period and once the building is complete.

The existing active travel route will be severed by the creation of a new entrance.

Utilising the site for more than school provision for example a holiday club or community activities will result in some impact from traffic for residents during the school holiday.

Economic development

Potential loss of an income stream from the hiring of the field for activities.

Some local companies may not benefit from the project if they are not subcontracted by the main contractor for the build and this may be viewed as a negative.

Quality skills for the long term

No known impacts

Quality jobs for the long term

No known impacts

Childcare

Private childcare providers may consider the development of a holiday club as competition.

However, any proposed holiday club provision on site would be specialist and targeted to existing Plas Brondyffryn pupils with special education needs and as such there would be minimal direct competition with existing providers.

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The potential of this project to reduce waste and increase recycling and reducing energy

consumption provides an overall positive impact. In addition the project has the potential to improve bio diversity on the site both in the natural and build environment.

Further actions required

Although based on current knowledge the biodiversity of the current site is thought to be low, the biodiversity of the field will be subject to a full assessment as part of the planning process.

Appropriate mitigation will be adopted following receipt of the recommendations in collaboration with Denbighshire's Ecology and Carbon Reduction teams.

In addition an assessment will take place to determine the impact of the loss of agricultural grade land within Denbighshire.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Developing the site allows an opportunity to introduce more biodiversity as part of landscaping proposals.

Biodiversity in the built environment

Developing the site enables the introduction of features such as nesting boxes which will provide an opportunity for improving bio diversity in the built environment.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

During the construction stage there will be a target placed on the contractor to ensure waste from the site is recycled.

Once completed all the school including kitchen waste will be separated to ensure that the maximum amount of waste is recycled from the site.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

The project will result in moving education provision into a building with a lower per m2 energy use which includes high quality insulation.

The site will have electric vehicle charging points installed to enable fleet vehicles to be charged.

The site will generate its own energy with features such as photovoltaic panels installed.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

As the intention is to develop a NCZ building there may be opportunities to showcase renewable energy sources such as photovoltaic panels etc and increase people's awareness of the environmental benefits of these technologies.

Flood risk management

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

The project will be constructed on an existing school field.

Creating the entrance will result in the loss of a section of hedgerow.

Constructing a school on the Ystrad road site will reduce the amount of high quality agricultural land available in Denbighshire.

Biodiversity in the built environment

No known impacts

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

No known impacts

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

No known impacts

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

No known impacts

Flood risk management

No known impacts

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

There is a positive impact from this project due to improved learning environment, dining facilities, leisure facilities. However the impact of the building both in the construction phase and once complete will have a negative impact on some stakeholders and these impacts cannot be mitigated in full. Therefore based on current information the overall impact is viewed as neutral. As further engagement and research takes place, we will revisit this impact assessment to reassess our conclusions.

Further actions required

The two existing playing fields used by Denbigh High School are of similar specification and condition. It is proposed to improve the remaining Denbigh High School playing field as part of the project which will mitigate the loss of one field by providing a betterment. The visual impact of constructing a building on the field cannot be mitigated in full however landscaping options exist to minimise the impact. Current landscaping options propose introducing soft landscaping adjacent to nearby properties on Clwyd Avenue and adjacent to a section of the Active travel route.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Improved facilities and learning environment will improve staff, pupil and parent morale. A building design which is based around the needs of the pupils should also support improved learning outcomes.

The collation of all 3 sites onto a single site would also reduce the number of transition/change points for pupils which can often be tricky to manage, i.e. pupils will become familiar with the entire school layout/environment which should support a smooth transition as they progress through the school years.

Co-location of the school on the same site as Denbigh High and Denbigh Leisure centre and the proposed creation of a cafe, will provide increasing opportunities for pupils to gain new experiences and become part of the wider community.

Access to good quality, healthy food

The school will have a dedicated dining area for all pupils which is designed according to the needs of their pupils. Currently pupils share dining facilities with pupils of Denbigh High School and Ysgol Frongoch.

People's emotional and mental well-being

An improvement in facilities including break out spaces will support schools to deliver emotional and mental well-being support to pupils. Improved external areas for play. Better flow within the school layout will relieve the current cramped quarters feeling

Access to healthcare

No known impacts

Participation in leisure opportunities

Improved access to outdoor areas from each classroom as well as improved external areas overall with more space and play equipment.

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

The visual impact, noise and disruption to nearby residents of building the school on the Ystrad Road site.

The loss of open space in Denbigh where there is an existing deficit.

Access to good quality, healthy food

No known impacts

People's emotional and mental well-being

The visual impact, noise and disruption of the construction of the building on nearby residents and users of the active travel route.

Access to healthcare

No known impacts

Participation in leisure opportunities

The loss of one playing field to Denbigh High School, Denbighshire Leisure Limited and local sports clubs / teams.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

This project will deliver improved facilities which can support the delivery of education to more children regardless of their home location or socio-economic background. However as there are areas that are unknown currently the overall impact is considered neutral. This will be revisited once we have gathered more evidence.

Further actions required

Further work is required to assess the impact on people with protected characteristics and officers from Education will work in collaboration with officers from other departments and relevant partners to undertake this work.

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

The project would involve the development of a school specifically designed to meet the needs of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn pupils who all have a diagnosis of autism along with other complex disabilities. The wellbeing of these pupils would improve significantly through the provision of suitable

classroom facilities, breakout spaces, sensory rooms and increased access to outdoor space. The new building would also include accessible, gender neutral, toileting and changing facilities and accessibility on the site overall would be improved.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

Improved facilities and environment will benefit the carers of pupils.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Better facilities could be available to pupils, staff and for the wider community in an accessible location providing an equitable offer regardless of income, health or employment status.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

More children can access the school which will enable them to access an appropriate learning environment based on their needs. This will have a positive impact on areas of high deprivation including areas of rural deprivation.

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

No known impacts

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

No known impacts

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

No known impacts

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

Denbigh ranks highly in some WIMD categories and as such it is likely that some of the negatives of

this project may impact upon areas affected by socio-economic. However, a plan for mitigating these impacts is being developed as a result of the impact assessment.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Overall this project will have a negative impact. There are positives from this proposal however the beneficiaries are based in the whole of Denbighshire. The negative impact on Cohesive Communities in comparison disproportionately impact residents in Denbigh.

Further actions required

The main negative is the impact of project on residents in Denbigh with regards to the attractiveness of the area, cohesive communities and safe communities. There will be an opportunity through the planning process to determine to what extent the proposal will have a negative impact and also enable proposals for mitigation to be presented and adopted. Mitigation will include investing in better facilities on the remaining playing field and also reviewing the option of making some of the onsite parking available to DLL and community sports clubs outside of school hours.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

The project will be designed in line with secure by design principles. The planned improvements to the active travel route could also provide safe route for cyclists and pedestrians.

Community participation and resilience

Improving facilities could potentially provide opportunities for greater community participation through use of facilities such as a hall space (although this would need to be agreed by the school).

The attractiveness of the area

The project provides an opportunity to create a building in keeping with the surrounding area.

Connected communities

This proposal will improve service delivery for pupils and their families resident in Denbighshire that currently cannot access the provision.

Rural resilience

As Denbigh is considered a rural town, this project will provide an opportunity for creating additional facilities which could accommodate service delivery bringing that delivery closer to rural residents. Additionally, the significant investment in the town will bring along associated community benefits.

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

Developing the site and introducing more landscaping such as trees and hedgerows will make the active travel route less visible which may discourage lone users from using it. Options for mitigating this will be considered during the detailed design stage.

Community participation and resilience

The proposal will reduce the amount of open space available to be used in the area. Sports clubs will be impacted by the work.

The attractiveness of the area

There will be disruption during the construction phase and constructing a building on a field is likely to be viewed as a negative impact by some nearby residents, residents of the town of Denbigh and Elected members.

Connected communities

The proposal will continue to have users travelling up to 45 mins to access the provision from areas in the south of Denbighshire however no pupils will have to travel further than they do currently.

Rural resilience

Existing pupils in rural areas in the south of Denbighshire will not see a change in service delivery.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

Increasing the space available and improving the facilities for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn will enable the school to have more flexibility in how they support pupils through the medium of Welsh. This will have a positive impact on how Welsh medium pupils with Additional Learning Needs are supported. However as the negative impacts are not known the overall impact is currently neutral.

Further actions required

Further work will be required working with partners including Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych to determine the overall impact and identify ways to contribute to a vibrant Welsh language and culture.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

This project will increase the capacity of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn. Special Schools do not have a language designation and the language of delivery for every pupil is determined by a statement. Welsh medium pupils attend the school and the increase in capacity and improvement in facilities will enable more space to support pupils through the medium of Welsh.

Promoting the Welsh language

All correspondence and signage will be bilingual

Culture and heritage

Improved facilities for the school will allow them to embrace Welsh culture and heritage through

hosting activities and events

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

No known impacts

Promoting the Welsh language

No known impacts

Culture and heritage

No known impacts

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

There will be a positive impact due to the potential to utilise local supply chains, deliver a building which will contribute towards reducing climate change and designing the building in a way to support broader service provision. However there are elements that haven't been confirmed such as the future use of vacated buildings which indicate currently a neutral impact.

Further actions required

Further work will take place to consider the impact on human rights and broader service provision.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Project will be procured through North Wales Construction Framework.

A core community benefit will be the use of local supply chains.

Human rights

The proposal will support the right to an education. We will follow procurement rules and good practice.

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

There is scope currently to include facilities at the school that could support service provision and this would be explored further as the detailed design is developed.

Reducing climate change

The proposal is for a Carbon Net Zero and sustainable building that will replace buildings with a higher carbon footprint.

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Companies that are not part of the framework may view the project negatively.

Human rights

No known impacts

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

No known impacts

Reducing climate change

There will be a negative impact during construction due to the carbon footprint of construction works. The buildings vacated by the school could have a negative impact on the Council's carbon footprint.