

# **Proposed Dowlais Flying Start, Dowlais**

## **Access Statement**

**September 2021**

**Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council • Community Services**

Floor 1 • Municipal Offices • Civic Centre • Ebbw Vale • NP23 6XB



## **Introduction**

This Access Statement is written in support of the accompanying application for the proposed Dowlais Flying Start, for and on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC).

The application site is not a major project and therefore does not require a Design and Access Statement. The purpose of this Access Statement is to explain how the proposal addresses the objectives of good design and considers how the development will be accessible to all users of age, disability, gender through the concept of inclusive design.

Inclusive design places individuals at the centre of the design process whilst acknowledging their diversity and differences. It addresses and offers choice in the design solution to provide buildings and environments, which are flexible, convenient, enjoyable and safe to use by everyone. As this is a planning application for works to existing buildings the opportunities to encompass these objectives will be limited by the parameters of the buildings.

## **Site Location**

The application site is comprised a singles storey timber like clad structure set within the grounds of Dowlais Primary School, Dowlais, and within the north playfields. Accessed off High Street, southeast of the School. A new pedestrian gate will be formed alongside the drive with a new pedestrian access to lead children accompanied by parents to the nursery in the North West, levelled pavements and drop kerbs will be formed along the existing grassed route. Parents will not be allowed to drive into the existing school yard, this remains solely accessible to staff and deliveries. Parking for parents will remain along Gwernllwyn Road, to avoid confusion and delays on High Street. It is envisaged that most parents will walk to the nursery from the nearby residential area.

## **Background**

A 'Flying Start is the Welsh Government's targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in disadvantaged areas. In order to meet the government's targets the building has the capacity to accommodate 28 children within this age group. The facility will provide assist to disadvantaged families, by providing Health Visiting services, access to parenting programmes and support, and assistance for children learn to talk and communicate, with the assistance of speech, language and communication development.

With limited land owned by Merthyr Tydfil CBC within the Dowlais community in which to develop, the primary school provides an opportunity for the siting of the Flying Start, in which its location will allow the children to familiarising themselves with the Primary school in such to de-stress their attendance in later years.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Section 2 of the planning Policy Wales 'Planning for Sustainability' states that the Welsh Assembly 'will promote sustainable development and that the 'planning system has a fundamental role in delivering sustainable development in Wales'.

Wherever possible, building materials will be obtained from local sources. Structural and joinery timber will be obtained from a certified sustainable source such as FSC and/or PEFC.

## **Community Safety**

The proposal will have no effect on the community safety.

## **Access**

A new paved levelled access will be provided to access the building from the High Street.

## **Impact on Ecology**

A reptile mitigation strategy and survey to consider the presence of protected species was undertaken during the summer of 2021, by Celtic Ecology and Conservation Ltd and is submitted in support of this application.

There is little evidence to suggest the evidence of reptiles, all measures within the report will be adhered to.

The building has been positioned to avoid the root protection zone (RPZ) of trees numbered T1 and T7. All existing trees will be retained during the development and protected from damage with the assistance of a qualified arborist. The new route will be built in a permeable wearing course built on a perforated geoweb to protect the root zone, with all new service route to be diverted around to avoid the RPZ.

## **Landscaping**

The proposed landscaping involves the alterations of a new footpath from the new entrance on High Street, to protect and guide accompanied children to the nursery providing a welcoming approach to the building.

The landscaping enhancements albeit shown on the site modifications drawings is limited in detail as it is currently being developed in association with Merthyr Engineering section and will form part of the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) application and thus be consolidated with that scheme.

## **Summary**

The ambition of the proposal is to create a high quality, environmentally responsible modernised learning scheme that is contextually appropriate and inspiring.

The proposal will be finished with a cementitious timber mimicking cladding, timber frame building, with photovoltaic panels on the roof and double glazing windows and doors, in dark grey aluminium, the roof is finished in a reinforced bitumen membrane roof coverings.

The design aims to communicate a contemporary, modern approach to the nearby primary a school and predominantly residential typology, the cladding and timber frame is a response to fire safety and energy saving in order to reduce carbon emissions.

The scheme has been detailed with a modern approach in mind. The proposal develops an existing site to deliver an efficient scheme.

The development aims to have a positive impact on the local community and general character of the area.

---