



3-16 Voluntary-Aided Catholic School Consultation Analysis Report



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
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MERTHYR TUDFUL

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Introduction

Report background and consultation analysis objectives

Background

Since 2018, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) has undertaken a series of public and stakeholder consultations in respect of a proposed new 3-16 Voluntary-aided Catholic school:

- First public consultation: In **September/October 2018**, MTCBC carried out a statutory school reorganisation¹ consultation about the potential to create a single all-through 3-16 school and close the following schools:
 - St Aloysius RC Primary
 - Federation of St Illtyd's & St Mary's RC Primary
 - Bishop Hedley Catholic High School (BHHS)
- Second public consultation: In November 2018, the Cabinet approved that further consultation be undertaken regarding the school merger and proposed sites for the new build. Through consultation with the Engineering, Planning, Highways and Road Safety Departments, a long list of sites was considered and two potential sites for the school were identified: 'Buttercup Fields / The Greenie' (Galon Uchaf Park) and the current BHHS site. These were taken back to public consultation between **29 April and 30 June 2019**, following which Cabinet approved the merger of the schools subject to further investigative and consultation work on the two potential sites.
- Feasibility study and third public consultation: A feasibility study of the two potential sites identified two viable options for the layout and design of the school, both of which utilised the land of Galon Uchaf Park. The current BHHS site was deemed sub-optimal for a 3-16 through school due to the overall size, and was considered significantly more costly and complex to develop, as such this site was not taken forward. Both options proposed in the third consultation situated the school building at the south end of Galon Uchaf Park (Buttercup Fields) with sports pitches to the north and some parking remaining at the current BHHS site. Differences between the two options can be summarised as follows:
 - Option A: All sports pitches located within the Galon Uchaf Park

¹ In relation to the proposed new 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic School, it should be noted that:

- The proposals are in line with the 21st Century Schools Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) and agreement with the Archdiocese of Cardiff and local Catholic school Headteachers/Chairs of Governors.
- The Welsh Government approved a new £28.5 million 3-16 school as part of the Band B SOP, which was funded 85% by Welsh Government grant and 15% match-funded by the local authority.
- The Archdiocese of Cardiff is transferring three of the current four school sites to the local authority as their contribution to the scheme.

- Option B: Larger grass sports pitch area on the south end of Galon Uchaf Park. Additional sports pitches for primary pupils located on the existing BHHS site.

These options were taken to public and stakeholder consultation between **9 November 2020 and 30 November 2020**. Cabinet subsequently approved the build on Galon Uchaf Park subject to addressing concerns raised in the consultation.

Current consultation

Following further investigative and scoping works, a fourth public consultation (the second exclusively regarding the site of the new school) was carried out in two phases between **23rd April- 7th May** and **15th July- 20th September 2021**. The consultation sought feedback on two options for the site layout, each of which incorporated feedback from previous rounds of consultation regarding traffic management, road safety, drop off / parking and sports facilities. The consultation pack, including proposed layouts of the two options, can be found in Appendix 1.

The two options taken to consultation were:

- **Option 1:** A further development of the Buttercup Fields / Greenie site proposed in previous rounds of consultation. The school building is located on the south end of the site, which is known as 'Buttercup Fields', with existing community playing fields remaining to the north end (the current 'Greenie playing fields').
- **Option 2:** A reconfiguration of the above site, with the school building located on the Greenie playing fields at the north end, with the community playing fields and playground relocated to the south end (the existing community Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) remains at the north of the site).

In response to previous consultation feedback, both proposed options have all parking and drop off facilities on the same side of the road as the school building and include a shared school-community 3G pitch.

Consultation analysis objectives

The overall objective of the consultation was to provide residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to give feedback on the plans and inform Council decisions about the siting and configuration of the new school. In addition, the consultation aimed to aid the Council in addressing specific concerns raised in previous rounds of consultation by gathering more extensive feedback from the community.

Report objectives

Following the consultation survey, Define was contracted as an independent research company to:

- Conduct a rigorous analysis of responses to the fourth public consultation
- Provide a report outlining findings to aid the Council's decisions regarding the siting and configuration of the new school and inform public and stakeholders about the outcome of the consultation.

Consultation and consultation analysis methodology

Consultation method

MTCBC went live with the fourth public consultation between 23rd April and 7th May 2021. Due to the strength of feeling expressed within consultation feedback and to ensure that all stakeholders and residents were provided the opportunity to participate, the consultation period was later extended. The second phase of the consultation was opened initially from 15th July to 6th of September and further extended to the 20th of September 2021 to ensure parents of school children and all residents in the local area had sufficient opportunity to respond.

Consultation activity included:

- A consultation pack, including details of the proposed plans, and a consultation survey which was made available online via the Council webpage and was further promoted through the Council's social media.
- Four consultation meetings held over Microsoft Teams between April 29th and May 5th, 2021.
- During the April-May phase of the consultation:
 - 144 hard copies of the consultation pack were delivered to residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed school and to all school governors
 - 40 hard copies and display plans from the consultation pack were made available across the four local Catholic parish churches.
- As part of the July-September phase of the consultation:
 - A letter was sent to all 4,730 residential properties in the local areas directly affected by the proposal, including Penydarren, Galon Uchaf and Gurnos
 - 50 hard copies and display packs were distributed to the four local Catholic parish churches
 - A further 156 letters were later sent to specific streets in the Gurnos following a request by Ward Councillors, as some residents had noted they hadn't received the original letter.

Consultation meetings

As noted above, four consultation meetings were conducted to offer groups affected by the proposals an opportunity to express their views, ask questions and raise concerns in relation to the revised options prior to the consultation survey. Meetings were conducted with three stakeholder groups, including: headteachers and governors; members of Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League; and residents of the surrounding areas. A fourth meeting was held which was open to members of the public.

In addition to attendees from the above stakeholder groups and public, consultation meetings were attended by representatives from MTCBC, and contractors involved in the design and construction of the site, including Wilmot Dixon, Atkins, Aecom and Cambria Consulting. Additionally, the Headteachers and Governors meeting was attended by a representative of the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

Consultation meetings were analysed thematically and are summarised in a separate section within the detailed findings.

Consultation survey

The consultation survey included the following seven questions:

1. Are you (please select one only that best describes you):
 - a. a resident
 - b. local community stakeholder
 - c. school pupil
 - d. parent of pupil
 - e. teacher / member of staff
 - f. member of a local parish
 - g. other (please specify)
2. What is your view of Option 1?
3. What is your view of Option 2?
4. Please rank the options out of 5 (1= unfavourable, 3 = satisfactory, 5 = favourable)
 - a. Option 1
 - b. Option 2
5. What is your preferred Option?
 - a. Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)
 - b. Option 2 (Greenie)
 - c. Option 3: None of the above. If you have an alternative suggestion, please let us know below.
6. Are there any general comments you wish to make?
7. How would you like to be kept informed on the development of the new school?
 - a. Email
 - b. Letter
 - c. Facebook / Twitter
 - d. Other (please specify)²

Of the above questions, Question 2, 3 and 6 were entirely open (meaning that respondents were asked to provide written answers), Question 4 was entirely closed (meaning that there was a limited range of responses, in this instance from 1-5 and no option to provide open text) and Questions 1, 5 and 7 were primarily closed with an option for some open text for respondents who selected 'Other' / 'neither option'.

² Question 7 was asked in the April-May phase of the survey only.

The categories for respondents to select from at Question 1 were open to the respondent's own interpretation. As such, those categorised as Local Community Stakeholders in the analysis and reporting are those who identified as such within the survey, and the same is true for all other categories. Moreover, although respondents were asked to select the category that best describes them, it is likely that many respondents sit within multiple categories, given the extent to which these communities overlap (for example, some residents are likely to send their children to local schools, some parents of children at Catholic schools are likely to attend local Catholic churches and so on). As such, whilst this overlap in respondent categories is not explicitly captured in the analysis, the report should be read with this in mind, and respondent groupings should not be interpreted as mutually exclusive.

There were some differences in the formatting of the earlier (April-May) and later (July-September) phases of the consultation. Firstly, in the earlier consultation it was possible for respondents to select more than one respondent category at Question 1, although they were asked to select only one³. Secondly, Question 4a and 4b above were identified as Question 4 and 5 in the earlier consultation (and, as such, Questions 5, 6 and 7 in the later stage correspond to Questions 6, 7 and 8 in the earlier stage). For consistency, the question numbering of the later phase of the consultation is used throughout the report as the large majority of responses were received during this phase.

Finally, in the later round of the consultation, Question 5 '*What is your preferred option?*' provided an option for respondents to select 'neither' and an open text space for additional site suggestions. This option was not provided in the respective question (Question 6) in the earlier phase of the consultation. Therefore, it should be noted that analysis of open text responses to Question 5 is drawn from those who responded to the later phase of the consultation only. Furthermore, although the survey did not provide an explicit 'neither' option at Question 5 in the April-May phase of the consultation, respondents who did not select either option as their preference in this phase have been counted as selecting neither.

During analysis, the Excel spreadsheet from the April-May phase of the survey was adjusted to reflect that of the July-September phase to enable the spreadsheets to be collated and to facilitate combined analysis. This involved changing question numbers and adjusting the formatting of columns to be identical to that of the later consultation. In order to capture responses of those who selected more than one respondent category at Question 1, an additional 'dual-code' category was added.

Consultation survey analysis

Overview

Analysis of the survey data included the following key steps and approaches:

- Responses to the closed questions were counted and considered as totals
- Additional quantitative analysis was undertaken on the responses to the closed questions, assessing the breakdown of specific responses by survey sub-group

³ Five respondents dual-coded at this question (see 'Breakdown of survey respondents by category' p.17).

- Thematic analysis was undertaken on the open questions, where: all comments were assessed to identify specific detail and examples; each comment was coded to categorise it into relevant themes; and each comment was considered in the context of the overall consultation response and by survey sub-group.

The reported findings incorporate each of the above.

Further detail on the specific analysis approach for each question type is given below.

Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis on the closed questions was conducted using Excel. For the purpose of this analysis, the respondent categories identified within the survey at Question 1 were organised into the following two groups:

- Local community (including residents and local community representatives)
- School community (parents of pupils, teachers / members of staff, school pupils and parish members)

Those who selected Other were allocated into either of the above two groups depending on what they specified as their relationship to the project. For example, respondents who said they grew up in the area were categorised in Local Community and those who said they were grandparents were categorised in School Community. Whilst this categorisation is imperfect (given that some respondents may fall in both categories) it was deemed the most appropriate for the purposes of analysis.

The two categories were created to help identify how and whether perspectives differed between those with a direct connection to the existing schools and the proposed new 3-16 through school and those who live in the surrounding areas and may be impacted by the plans as residents, but do not necessarily have a connection to the schools. Nonetheless, in order to ensure that individual category responses can be seen and to ensure full transparency, responses were additionally analysed by individual respondent category.

For Question 4, Excel functions were used to tally the different rankings for each Option amongst all respondents, the local community and school community, and for each of the individual respondent categories. Tables and bar charts were then produced for both options to show the percentage of all respondents who ranked them as less than satisfactory (1-2) and at least satisfactory (3-5), and again for the two respondent groups and for each of the individual respondent categories. Tables are also provided to show the breakdown of responses for each specific ranking (1-5).

For Question 5, tables and bar charts were created to tally the number of respondents selecting either Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), 2 (Greenie) or 3 (neither), for all respondents, local community and school community, and for each of the respondent categories.

Thematic analysis

Responses to open questions (Question 2, 3 and 6) were analysed thematically to understand the range and nature of issues raised within consultation feedback. All comments given in response to these questions were coded, to allow the identification of similar types of comments in responses (themes) and grouping of these responses

for consideration⁴. Once identified, all individual themes within the consultation feedback (such as *expressions of concern about air pollution or road safety*) were organised into overarching themes (for example, ‘health and safety’) to enable reporting of findings in a coherent way and to help facilitate the Council in actioning changes to the proposal.

The specific codes used for analysis included:

- A list of existing themes and sub-themes (coding framework) developed from previous consultation reports to ensure issues raised in earlier consultations were explored within the data. This is known as deductive coding.
- New themes that were identified during the final consultation phase only, as some respondents to the survey provided feedback on issues that had not been raised in earlier consultations. These additional codes were added to the coding framework during analysis to capture these new themes. This is known as inductive coding.

The initial coding framework and updated coding framework (following a full review of all the data) can be found in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Codes were organised under four types of responses (*praise / perceived advantages; concerns; suggestions; and requests*) and themes (e.g., environmental impact, health and safety). Later stages of the analysis involved understanding how and whether feedback differed by respondent category and for the two options, the nature of the feedback in relation to each theme and how themes relate to each other.

Two full rounds of coding⁵ were conducted on Excel, which was felt to be the most suitable format to enable MTCBC to later access and use the data.

⁴ Responses often contain more than one theme and are therefore coded multiple times so that their content can be reviewed when analysing each of the relevant themes.

⁵ The second round is a repeat exercise for quality control purposes and to ensure accuracy

Executive Summary

- This report summarises findings from a public consultation regarding the siting of a new 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic School which was conducted in two phases between 23rd April-7th May and 15th July-20th September 2021. Overall, the consultation comprised of four consultation meetings and an online survey which received 783 responses.
- Following two earlier public consultations, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) Cabinet approved the merger of four schools and the creation of a single 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic School in September 2019, subject to further consultation around the siting of the school.
- A feasibility study conducted between July and October 2020 identified two viable options for the school which were taken to consultation in November 2020. Site designs were then adjusted to incorporate feedback and two reconfigured site options were taken to the most recent consultation. Both of the proposed options utilise the land of Galon Uchaf Park, with Option 1 situating the school at the south end (known as Buttercup Fields) and Option 2 placing it at the north end of the site (known as The Greenie).
- Four consultation meetings were held with groups affected by the plans including headteachers and school governors; residents; members of Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League; and the public. Key concerns arising from discussions included the need to provide sufficient parking and manage traffic surrounding the site; questions around drainage and ground stability; the management of noise and light pollution; security concerns and questions around community access of facilities.
- Of those who responded to the consultation survey, 481 (61.4%) identified as residents, 100 (12.8%) as parents of pupils at existing schools, 58 (7.4%) as teachers or members of school staff, 49 (6.3%) as members of local parishes, 25 (3.2%) as community stakeholders, and 13 (1.7%) as school pupils. A further 51 (6.5%) respondents identified as 'Other', all of whom described themselves as part of the wider local or school community in some way. In addition, five respondents (0.6%) selected more than one respondent category and one respondent (0.1%) selected no respondent category.
- To aid understanding of how and whether perspectives on the plans differ between those with a direct interest in the proposed school and the wider community, respondents were grouped into either the 'school community' (231 respondents including pupils, parents, staff members and local parish members) or the 'local community' (546 respondents including residents and community stakeholders). Responses to closed questions were analysed by both individual respondent category and the wider respondent community.
- Findings from the survey indicate that neither of the two options were acceptable to most respondents, with 65.8% (499) of all respondents overall selecting 'neither' as their preference. In all, 34.2% (267) of all respondents selected one of the two

options. Amongst these, Option 2 (Greenie) was preferred to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), with 21.7% (170) of all respondents selecting the former as their preference and 12.4% (97) of all respondents selecting the latter. Favour for the plans overall was higher amongst the school community, with 57.6% (132) of these respondents selecting either Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) or 2 (Greenie) compared to 24.2% (132) of local community respondents.⁶

- In the later stage of the consultation, those who selected neither were asked to provide alternative site suggestions. In all, 306 respondents made alternative suggestions for the siting of the school, with 48.6% of these (152) suggesting that the school be built on the current BHHS site and 33.2% (104) suggesting the land off Goat Mill Road. A further 5.1% (16) suggested the use of brownfield land, 4.5% (14) suggested Cefn Playing Fields or elsewhere in Cefn and a range of other sites were each suggested by five respondents or less.
- Thematic analysis of comments given by respondents within the survey indicated significant concern about the loss of green space associated with the proposal from respondents across categories, with 302 respondents voicing concern about siting the school on community green space. These concerns were expressed in relation to both options, with respondents explaining that the school building and playing fields would take up a large portion of what is known locally as ‘the Greenie’ in either option. Specific reasons given in relation to this concern included the value of green space for the health and wellbeing of the community, its utility for physical activity and for children to play, and its importance as natural habitat for local wildlife.
- Concerns around traffic management, road safety and air pollution were also raised frequently by respondents in all individual respondent categories except school pupils. The specific concerns are that a new 3-16 school will significantly increase the traffic burden on the surrounding roads, with consequences for air quality and the safety of road crossings. Overall, concerns around traffic were raised by 87 respondents across the three open questions of the survey and were viewed as relevant to both options.
- In addition, concerns about impacts on residents due to noise and light pollution, security, privacy, obstructed views and building works disruption were raised by 65 respondents overall, including those who identified as residents, parents, school staff and local parish members. Concerns around the proximity of the school building to local dwellings was raised more often in response to Option 1 (29 respondents, versus 10 respondents in relation to Option 2) due to the positioning of the school building close to properties on Billingham Crescent. In contrast, there were slightly more concerns around security in relation to Option 2, with some residents expressing concern about the relocation of community pitches behind houses on Billingham Crescent in this option. Concerns around noise pollution, light pollution and obstructed views were raised in almost equal proportions in response to both options.

⁶ Six respondents could not be put in either the school community or local community as they either selected one respondent category in each community (e.g. resident and local parish member) or because they selected ‘Other’ and indicated in the text response that they belonged to more than one category (e.g. ‘resident and parent of pupils’). Amongst these respondents, three selected Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) and three selected neither.

- Thematic analysis indicated that school staff and parents shared concerns around the provision of parking and drop off spaces, issues which were raised less frequently in the survey by other respondent groups. Amongst some parents and school staff, the layout of Option 2 (Greenie) was seen to offer better parking facilities as both the car park and drop off were located closer to the school building than in Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). A few also noted that Option 2 (Greenie) appears to offer better pedestrian access. A few school staff commented that this option would also offer better natural light and surveillance of the school grounds due to the elevation of the school building.⁷
- Separately to the consultation, a petition was submitted to the Council on the 24th of September 2021 which cited concerns around the loss of community green space should the plans for the school's development go ahead. The Petitioners argued that 'the Greenie/Buttercup Fields' is a vital part of the local community and requested that the council preserve the land for community use. In addition, petitioners requested that hard copies of the consultation be sent to residents throughout the Gurnos and Penydarren wards and that further consultation include an option outside of The Greenie and Buttercup Fields, such as the existing BHHS site. Although the petition was received four days following the consultation's official closure, the Council decided to review the petition as part of the consultation to ensure petitioners' views were recognised.

⁷ As clarified on p.29 within analysis of responses to open questions, 'a few' and 'a small number' refer to five respondents or less, 'some' refers to six to fifteen and 'many' refers to more than fifteen respondents.

Findings in Detail

Findings from consultation meetings

Four consultation meetings were held for groups affected by the proposals: headteachers and governors; Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League; residents; and members of the public.

Meetings were attended by representatives from MTCBC, and contractors involved in the design and construction of the site, including Wilmot Dixon, Atkins, Aecom and Cambria Consulting. A representative of the Archdiocese of Cardiff also attended the Headteachers and Governors meeting. Full lists of meeting attendees can be found in Appendix 4.

Each meeting began with a presentation by one of the senior architects on the project which clarified the background to the proposals, including outcomes of the feasibility study and earlier site consultation and the revision of site options to incorporate feedback from those. The two revised site options and their relative advantages and disadvantages were explained before the discussion was opened out to questions and comments from attendees.

Key themes that arose from discussion at each meeting, including concerns, comments, suggestions and requests, are detailed below.

Each meeting is reported separately below. However, the key themes and issues arising from across the four meetings can be summarised as:

- Access to the site, particularly around parking spaces, drop off facilities and traffic management in the surrounding roads
- The topography of the site, including questions around drainage, knotweed management and reports on gases, landfill and mining
- Impacts on residents, particularly around floodlights and noise pollution associated with out of hours pitch use and the management of anti-social behaviour
- The budget and timelines for the two proposed options, which was raised by headteachers and governors in particular
- Facilities, such as the availability of separate community changing rooms, booking and access for Gurnos FC and the maintenance of the 3G pitch, raised by Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League members

The nature of issues and requests raised by the attendees at each session in relation to these themes are detailed below.

Consultation meeting with headteachers and governors

A consultation meeting was held on 29th April 2021 with Headteachers and Governors of the four existing schools that are to be merged as part of the proposed 3-16 school. There were 16 attendees from the schools in addition to representatives of the project.

Issues raised by participants and discussed within the meeting included:

- *Access*

Questions around access to the site were a significant theme. Attendees asked whether the site design has incorporated sufficient parking and drop off spaces, taking account of the wide catchment area and the large number of pupils that the school will cater to. In addition, due to the wet climate, it was noted that parents in the area are most likely to drive their children to school.

Project representatives explained that they would be working with the Highways Department to ensure a balance between providing sufficient parking and drop off spaces and encouraging more sustainable routes to school. The number of pupils and staff will be taken into account. Additionally, responses to a separate survey of parents regarding transport to school would provide further information that would be used to understand requirements. Various traffic management measures are also being considered, including a one-way drop off road in which pupils alight on the left. It was explained by the project representatives that there are anticipated to be approximately 120 parking spaces, however there may be fewer depending on the outcomes of the Travel Management Plan (TMP). In response, it was noted by one attendee that parents would need to be educated about proper usage of drop off facilities to prevent congestion.

Other concerns relating to access included questions over space for buses, in response to which it was explained that the current designs included provision for seven buses. There were also questions regarding ambulance access to sports pitches, in response to which project representatives explained that ambulance access has been included in the current plans and will be retained in the final design.

- *Stability and suitability of site*

A concern related to the topography of the site was also raised within the meeting. Attendees questioned how groundwater on the site would be managed, to which project representatives responded that there would be further investigations into drainage strategies, but that the water would be managed at source.

Attendees noted that the proposed site is an old tip and concerns were expressed about the stability of the ground itself. Project representatives explained that there have been desk top exercises to explore the general condition of each area (plateau) of the site. The centre of the site has been deemed unsuitable for building and, as such, the building is located on either the south or north end of the site in the two proposed options, with only sports pitches and playing fields proposed in the central section.

- *Facilities*

Headteachers and governors asked questions about the arrangements for the sports pitches. Attendees noted that if pitches move to the south end of the site, as in Option 2, floodlights will contribute to light pollution and disturb residents of Billingham Crescent. It was suggested that the current indoor 3G pitch at the existing BHHS site could be retained to mitigate this issue. Project representatives of the proposals noted that this option could be considered but would depend on budget constraints.

One attendee noted that their current school has a gymnasium and asked whether it would be possible for this to be moved to the new school. Project representatives said that this could be considered but would depend on sufficient space and budget.

- *Budget and timeline*

Attendees asked whether there were notable differences in the timelines and budgets of either of the options. It was explained that both options were achievable but that each involve significant investment. Differences between timelines and budgets of the two options were not specified.

Consultation meeting with Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League

Four members of Gurnos FC and one member of Merthyr Football League attended the meeting in addition to project representatives which took place on the 30th of April 2021.

Issues raised by participants and discussed within the meeting included:

- *Booking and payment*

A central issue of concern at the football league consultation meeting related to the management of and access to pitches. Attendees asked who will manage bookings for use of the pitches and how this will be balanced alongside school events. In addition, attendees expressed concern about maintaining Gurnos FC's access to the pitch and ensuring that the school does not withdraw or significantly limit access and that prices must be affordable, with some noting that issues had arisen with accessing pitches at Abercanaid and Pen-Y-Dre schools. Finally, it was noted that other football clubs may want to use the pitches but that Gurnos FC's capacity to use the pitches for training and matches must be protected.

In response, project representatives explained that the 3G pitch would be available to be booked outside of school hours and that an agreement will be in place to safeguard a certain volume of bookings for use by Gurnos FC. Project representatives also noted that an agreement could also be looked at that would safeguard fair pricing for use of the pitches.

- *Facilities*

The second set of issues raised at the football league meeting related to facilities, particularly around changing rooms, pitch maintenance and parking. In relation to changing rooms, it was noted that Option 2 does not currently have separate changing room provisions and that this would be important when the pitch is in use for training or matches to ensure that players were not reliant on the school caretaker. In response to these concerns, Project representatives explained that options could be looked at for relocating the changing rooms in the site design.

Attendees also noted that in Option 2 the parking is located far from the community pitch. Project representatives explained that a pedestrian route from the car park to the pitches is being looked at and that the possibility of a community car park located on the current BHHS site could also be considered.

Finally, attendees noted that sports pitches would be out of use for a period during construction of the site and asked whether any alternative provisions had been arranged. Project representatives noted that Dan Bufton, Sports Development Manager at MTCBC is currently working with Pen-Y-Dre High School to support community access to school facilities and that further discussions are ongoing regarding the possibility of securing access to the pitch currently shared by Gwaunfarren Primary and Bishop Hedley High School.

Consultation meeting with residents

The consultation meeting with residents was held on the 4th of May 2021. Five residents attended the meeting in addition to the representatives of the project.

Issues raised by participants and discussed within the meeting included:

- *Security*

A central issue of concern amongst residents at the meeting related to security and the management of anti-social behaviour at the site. Attendees asked how motorbikes would be kept out of the site, who would manage access outside of school hours and who residents could contact should they have complaints or concerns. Project representatives explained that site would be gated, and the boundary would be secured with a fence, and that people wanting to use the facilities would need to book through the school. It was explained that specific details of out of hours management have not yet been determined but these will be agreed with security in mind. Attendees were told that a telephone number would be provided for emergency out of hours contact.

- *Impact on residents*

Concerns regarding light pollution from floodlights and the impact of this on those living in the immediate vicinity of the school were also discussed. Attendees expressed concern that the sports pitches would be in use outside of school hours, seven days a week from 9am until 10pm. In response to these concerns, project representatives noted that only the 3G pitch would be fitted with floodlights and this will only be in use when booked. It was further explained that the pitches and floodlight arrangements would be designed to minimise the impact on local residents.

- *Stability and suitability*

Various questions were asked about the investigations that have been conducted into the stability and suitability of the site. One attendee asked whether landfill gasses had been explored, to which a representative explained that a detailed desk top study had been undertaken involving historical mapping and gas monitoring, and that this study would inform the design of the school.

Concerns around Japanese Knotweed that is currently at the bottom of the site were raised a couple of times during the meeting, with attendees questioning how this would be treated. It was explained that different options for treating the knotweed would be explored, including options to dig up, treat or manage it.

A number of attendees expressed concerns about drainage of the site and the potential for flooding of the houses in the immediate vicinity. Project representatives noted that there are specific protocols in place to ensure houses are protected from flooding, and that the site plans would need to be approved by the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB).

Finally, one attendee asked whether the ground level would need to be lowered in parts of the site to which a representative explained that this was being looked into as part of the work going forward.

- *Traffic management*

Residents also raised a number of questions and concerns relating to traffic management surrounding the site. It was noted that Galon Uchaf Road is already very busy and that the school would result in a significantly increased traffic burden due to

the number of staff and pupils travelling to the site. Attendees asked whether the Traffic Study Plan would take into account this additional traffic and whether there would be adequate parking for staff and visitors to avoid people parking in the surrounding residential area.

In response, project representatives explained that a Transport Management Plan would be developed with the help of existing schools to mitigate traffic congestion, and that this would include a one-way drop off system, traffic calming measures and space for seven buses.

An attendee also asked whether double yellow lines would be placed on the surrounding roads, to which project representatives explained that this would be considered as part of the TMP but could not be confirmed at this stage.

A further concern was raised by one attendee who noted that Galon Uchaf Road is an ambulance route and that traffic-calming measures may therefore not be possible. Representatives of the project explained that the design of the site would need to be approved as part of the statutory planning process and pass road safety guidance.

Consultation meeting with the public

A public consultation meeting was held on 5th May 2021. The meeting was attended by six members of the public and five elected Councillors: Cllr L Davies (Independent, Gurnos), Cllr D Isaac (Labour, Penydarren), Cllr K Gibbs (Labour, Penydarren), Cllr J Davies (Independent, Gurnos) and Cllr B Smith (Labour, Gurnos) in addition to the project representatives.

Issues raised by participants and discussed within the meeting included:

- *Access and traffic management*

As in other meetings, key questions asked at the public meeting related to parking provision, traffic management and ensuring safe road access to the school. Attendees questioned whether sufficient parking spaces would be provided for the size of the school, to which project representatives explained that the number of parking spaces would be determined on the basis of the TMP and a parental transport survey that is being undertaken. It was also noted that roads would be kept narrow to prevent parents parking around drop off areas and that a one-way system would be in place with pupils being asked to alight onto the footpath.

These attendees raised that Galon Uchaf Road is an ambulance route, with attendees questioning whether traffic-calming measures would therefore be feasible. Representatives of the project explained that this would be factored into the eventual TMP and that any measures would need to be approved.

Further comment was made with regards to the blind entrance to the site on Galon Uchaf Road, with one attendee suggesting that this be replaced with a roundabout to facilitate safer access. Attendees requested to see copies of the Travel Assessment Reports and representatives agreed that these would be in the public domain once completed.

- *Suitability and stability of site*

In line with other meetings, a number of issues were raised regarding the topology of the site and implications for the design and development of the school. One attendee asked whether a mining report had been conducted as part of the planning so far, to which

project representatives explained that this had not been completed at this stage but would be part of the ongoing design work. Project representatives explained that there would be a number of investigations into potential issues at the site, including bore holes to look at clay quality, gas monitoring and scans to identify changes in ground consistency.

Concerns surrounding drainage at the site were also raised at the meeting, in response to which project representatives explained that a SAB application would be undertaken and that this can be made public.

In addition, the issue of knotweed at the lower end of the site was raised, with attendees noting that digging up the knotweed could have negative implications for wildlife. Representatives clarified that a knotweed specialist and ecologist would both be on site to ensure both proper treatment and protection of wildlife.

Attendees asked whether a feasibility study of the site had been conducted and it was explained in response that a feasibility study had been conducted and that this report was publicly available.

- *Impact on residents*

Attendees asked whether impact studies had been conducted in relation to potential noise and light pollution from the site. Project representatives clarified that an acoustic engineer had been employed as part of the design team, that scoping work would be conducted to explore how to mitigate disturbances to residents from the school and that classrooms would be sound-proofed. Reports on site plans to mitigate noise and light pollution will be made public once these have been completed.

Representatives of the project also explained to attendees that there would be no compulsory purchase orders on houses surrounding the site.

- *Security*

Attendees of the public meeting also asked questions about how anti-social behaviour around the site would be prevented or managed. In particular, attendees noted that anti-social behaviour is currently an issue in the area and could also become a problem in the space between parking and sports pitches in the proposed plans. Project representatives noted that the site would be gated and surrounded by secure fencing which will be managed both during and out of school hours.

Findings from the Consultation Survey

BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY

The consultation survey received a total of 783 responses, including 81⁸ from the April-May phase and 702 from the July-September phase. Table 1 outlines the total number of responses by respondent category from both phases of the survey.

⁸ 84 responses were received in total. However, three respondents did not answer any questions and so have not been counted. Not all respondents answered all questions, therefore the number of responses to each question vary slightly.

At Question 1, respondents were asked to select one category that best described them in terms of their relationship to the proposed new school. However, as noted earlier, in the April-May phase of the survey it was possible to select more than one category and, as such, five respondents dual-coded at Question 1. To avoid counting these respondents twice, additional rows have been added to the overall breakdown in Table 1 below to indicate their dual categories and how they have been included.

Table 1. Total survey responses by respondent category (from April-May and July-September)

Total survey responses	
Residents	481
Local community stakeholder	25
School pupil	13
Parent of pupil	100
Teacher/member of staff	58
Member of local parish	49
Other	51
Uncoded	1
Dual coded	5
Total	783

*Dual code includes three resident and parish members, one parent and school staff and one parent and parish member

As noted earlier, for the purposes of the quantitative analysis, respondents were also organised into two broad community groups: local community (including residents and local community stakeholders) and school community (including pupils, parents, members of school staff and members of local parishes). Table 2 below summarises the totals of survey respondents by these communities.

Table 2. Total responses by community group

Total responses by respondent group	
Local community	546
School community	231
Dual-coded / uncoded*	6
Total	783

*Made up of the five respondents who dual-coded and the one respondent who gave no response at Question 1.

Respondents who had selected 'Other' and provided a text response were re-categorised into one of the two groups, depending on which was most appropriate based on their response. For example, '*concerned citizen*' was categorised under local community and '*I am an ex-pupil*', '*Retired teacher from BHHS*', '*A parent and grandparent of pupils affected*' were categorised under school community.

Respondents who either dual coded at Question 1 (see Table 1 above) or mentioned more than one category to explain 'Other' are categorised as 'dual-coded' to ensure that their views are included but counted once in line with other respondents. However, any comments given by dual-coded respondents have been considered in relation to the qualitative analysis of each individual category mentioned (e.g., as resident and as parent).

One respondent also selected 'Other' at Question 1 but did not specify their relationship to the project. This respondent has also been categorised under dual-coded / uncoded above.⁹

Within the overall set of survey responses, 60 IP addresses were found to be linked to multiple survey responses. The majority of these IP addresses were associated with two to three responses, suggesting that these may be members of the same household or work colleagues. There were 10 instances in which there were more than five responses from the same IP address, however, these responses appeared sufficiently different to indicate that they were from people using the same computer rather than the same person providing multiple responses¹⁰. Notably, however, it is not possible to determine with certainty that these responses were from different people and there may have been occasions in which the same person responded to the survey more than once. Two instances were identified in which identical wording was used across the open questions from responses from the same IP address. In each of these instances, only one response has been counted to avoid skewing the data¹¹.

OPTION PREFERENCES

Findings reviewed in this section relate to Questions 4 and 5 in the survey which aimed to capture respondents' preferences in terms of the two options.

Questions 4a and 4b asked respondents to rank Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) and Option 2 (Greenie) from 1 to 5 (where 1 = unsatisfactory, 3 = satisfactory and 5 = favourable). Question 5 then asked respondents to select their preferred option from a drop-down list including Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), Option 2 (Greenie) and Option 3 (neither). Those who selected Option 3 had the choice of providing additional text to state any alternative site suggestions.

Respondents' preferences, as indicated by answers to Question 4 and 5, are reviewed below, broken down by both respondent category and overarching community group. Alternative suggestions provided by respondents who selected neither option in Question 5 are discussed at the end of the section.

Preferred option by respondent group and category

The overall preference across respondents was for neither option, with 65.8% (515) of respondents selecting Option 3 (neither) at Question 5, as shown in Figure 1a.

⁹ Responses from this respondent are explored under 'Other' respondents within analysis of respondent categories

¹⁰ Factors taken into account when determining whether responses were duplicates include: the degree of difference and level of detail in responses to each of the answer (including differences in opinions expressed and option preferences) and the time at which each response began (i.e. whether they were conducted in immediate succession).

¹¹ Other instances of multiple entries in which the wording was different were not considered as duplicates, as such responses may be from multiple people within the same household, school or workplace and, indeed, it is to be expected that some members of the same household may complete the survey together. For example, in the April-May phase of the survey, six responses were received from the same IP address in which all respondents selected 'teacher / member of staff' as their respondent category, suggesting that these respondents may be colleagues.

Remaining respondents split between the two options, with 21.7% (170) of respondents selecting Option 2 (Greenie) versus 12.4% (97) who selected Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) as their preference.

Opposition to both options was strongest amongst the local community, 75.8% (414) of whom selected neither, 15% (82) selected Option 2 (Greenie) and 9.2% (50) selected Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) as their preference.

Amongst the school community, , favour for the plans overall was somewhat higher with 57.6% (132) selecting either Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) or 2 (Greenie) (see Figure 1b). Of these, Option 2 (Greenie) was again the preference with 38.1% (88) of school community respondents selecting this option, 19% (44) selecting Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) and 42.4% (98) selecting neither option. One member of school staff also selected both options as their preference in the April-May phase of the consultation, accounting for 0.1% of all respondents and 0.4% of the school community¹².

Figure 1a provides an overview of preferences by respondent category, drawn from responses to Question 5.

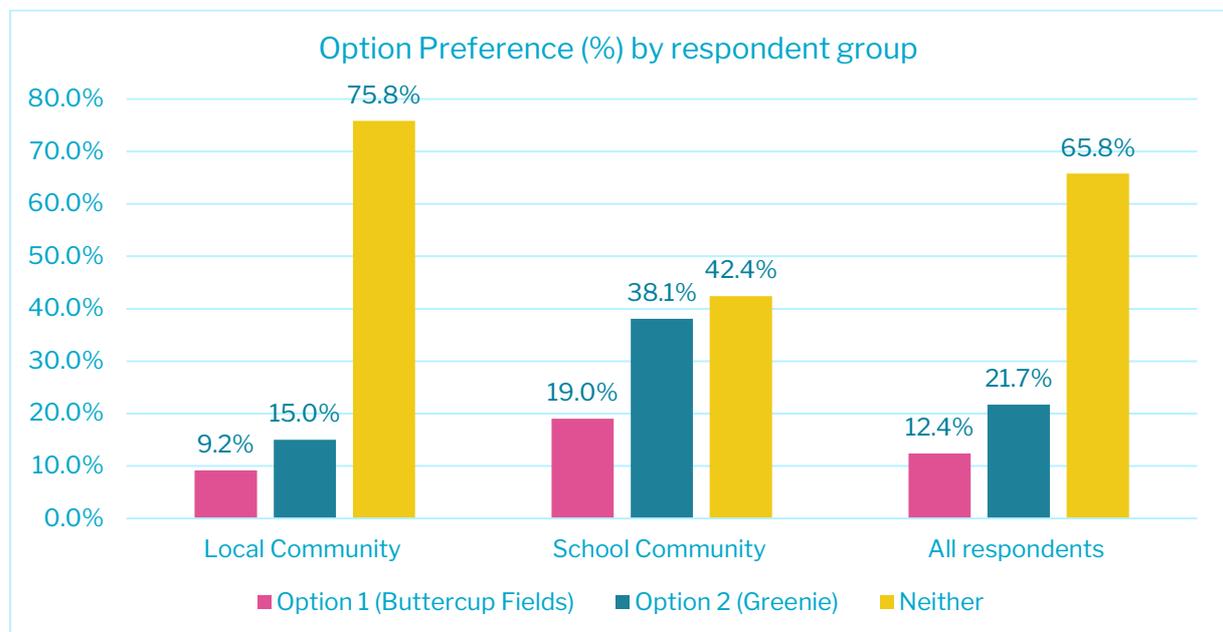


Figure 1a. Bar chart of option preferences by respondent group¹³ [Base: 783].

The percentage of respondents selecting either Option 1 or 2, therefore indicating approval of the build on the site in one of the two proposed configurations, versus those selecting neither option is illustrated in Figure 1b.

¹² As 'either option' was only selected as a preference by one respondent, this response is not represented in figures though it has been accounted for in the analysis and all calculations reflect this.

¹³ As only one respondent selected either option this is too small to be represented in the above chart. However, this accounts for 0.4% of the school community and 0.1% of all respondents.

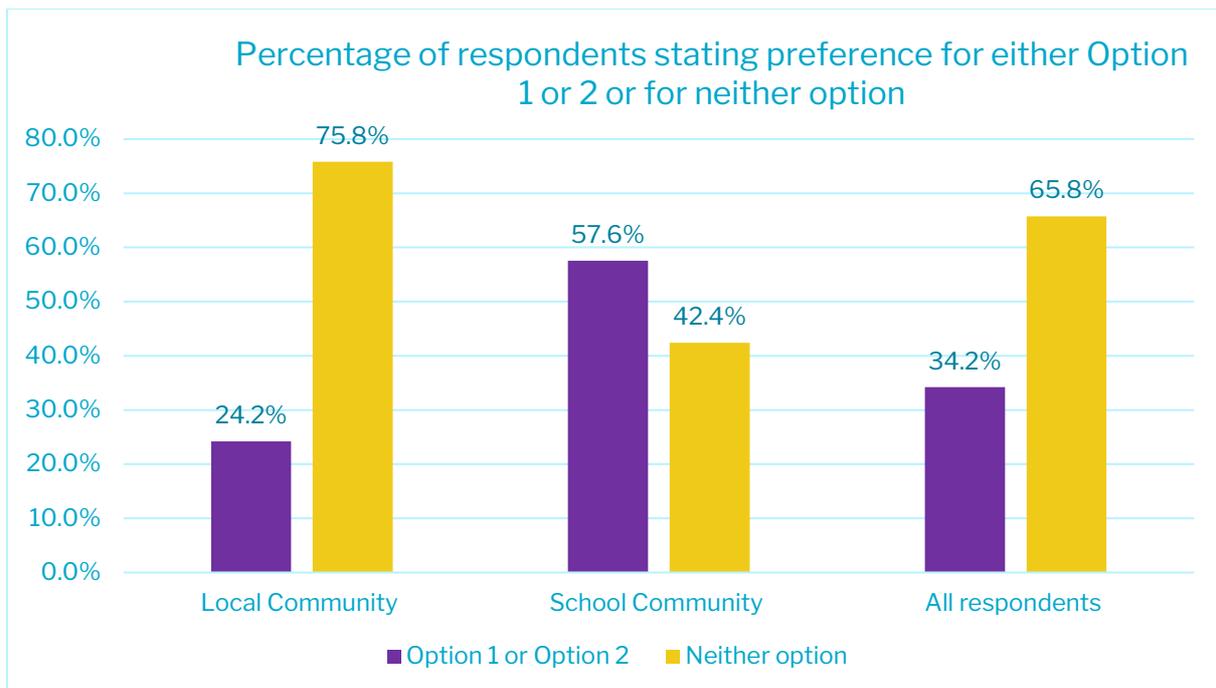


Figure 2b. Bar chart of preference for Option 1 / 2 versus neither option by respondent group. [Base: 783]

Figure 2a provides a further breakdown of responses to Question 5 by respondent category for residents, parents, school staff, parish members and those who selected Other at Question 1. Responses from local community stakeholders and pupils, as well as those who dual-coded are shown separately in a table (Table 3) below, as these categories each have only a small number of responses.

As shown in Figure 2a, Option 3 (neither) was the strongest preference amongst residents, parish members, and Other respondents with 76.3% (367) of residents, 67.3% (33) of local parish members and 74.5% (38) of Other respondents selecting neither option. Amongst parents and school staff, Option 2 (Greenie) was the strongest preference, being selected by 39% (39) of parents and 51.7% (30) of members of school staff. Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) was the least preferable option amongst all of these respondent categories.

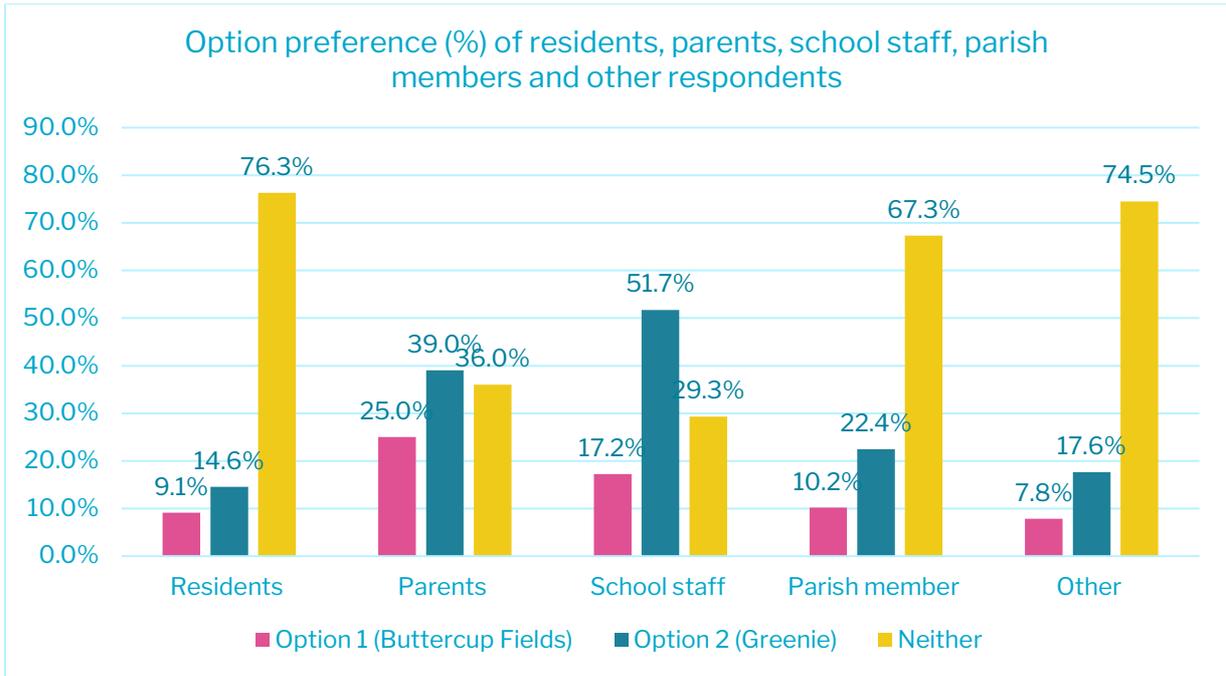


Figure 2a. Bar chart of option preferences by respondent category (residents, parents, school staff, parish members and Other respondents)¹⁴. [Base: 739]

Figure 2b illustrates the percentage of residents, school staff, parish members and Other respondents who selected either Option 1 or 2 versus those who selected neither Option. Amongst parents and school staff, the overall preference was for the site to be built on one of the two options, with 64% (64) of parents and 70.7% (40) of school staff selecting one of the two options. In contrast, amongst residents, parish members and Other respondents there was a strong preference for neither option (figures cited above).

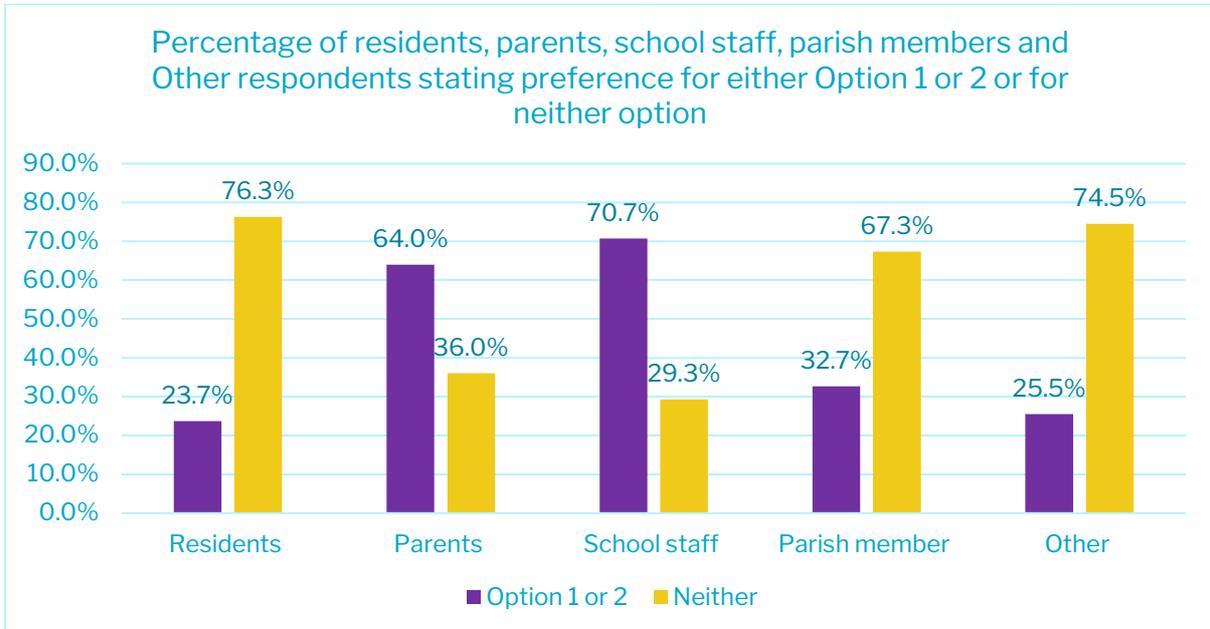


Figure 2b. Bar chart of preference for Option 1 / 2 versus neither option by respondent category (residents, parents, school staff, parish members and Other respondents) [Base: 739]

¹⁴ As noted above, one member of school staff selected both options, accounting for 1.7% of school staff.

As only 13 respondents identified as pupils and 25 as local community stakeholders, their results have not been illustrated in Figure 2 above. Moreover, as noted earlier, those categorised as local community stakeholders are those who identified as such within the survey and no specific definition was provided. As such, this group of respondents arguably do not represent a distinct segment of the community and most likely overlap with other categories in various ways. Similarly, the six dual-coded / uncoded respondents do not reflect a distinct population as this category includes the three respondents who selected resident and parish member, one who selected school staff and parent and another who selected parent and parish member as well as the one respondent who selected Other without further specifying. With these caveats in mind, responses from these groups are reported in Table 3 below.

Amongst community stakeholders, the strongest preference was for Option 3 (neither), selected by 68% (17). 53.9% of school pupils selected either Option 1 or 2, with 38.5% selecting Option 2 (Greenie) and 15.4% selecting Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). However, 46.2% of school pupils selected neither option as their preference.

Of the five respondents who dual coded and the one respondent who did not specify a respondent category at Option 1, three respondents each selected Option 3 (neither) and Option 1 (Buttercup Fields).

Table 3. Option preferences of community stakeholders, school pupils and dual-coded.

Q5 Option Preference: Respondent Category Breakdown			
	Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)	Option 2 (Greenie)	Neither
Community Stakeholder	12.0%	20.0%	68.0%
Pupil	15.4%	38.5%	46.2%
Dual code	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%

Following the extension of the latter phase of the consultation survey, the Council received a Freedom of Information Request to outline the differences between responses received prior to and following the extension.

There was a slight shift against the proposals amongst those who responded to the consultation after the extension, with 71.4% (451) of all respondents between 15th July and September 6th selecting neither option, rising to 80% (56) of those who responded between the 7th and 20th of September. A detailed overview of option preferences (responses to closed Question 5) before and after the extension can be found in Appendix 5.

Alternative site suggestions

Respondents who selected neither (Option 3) at Question 5 were given the opportunity to make alternative site suggestions. In total, 515 (65.8%) respondents selected neither option at Question 5. A total of 397 respondents provided an answer to the open portion of the question, with 306 providing one or more alternative site suggestions and the remaining 91 using the space for general comment or to express general objection (e.g., 'none').

Amongst respondents who provided alternative suggestions for the site, 49.7% (152) suggested the existing BHHS site, 33.2% (104) suggested the land off Goat Mill Road, 5.1% (16) suggested using Brownfield land and 4.5% (14) suggested Cefn Playing Fields or elsewhere in Cefn. A range of other alternative sites were each suggested by five respondents or less.

Table 4 below lists all alternative site suggestions along with the number of respondents who suggested them.

Table 4. Alternative site suggestions by number of suggestions.

Alternative site suggestions		
	No	%
Existing BHHS site	152	48.6%
Goat Mill Road	104	33.2%
Brownfield land (unspecified)	16	5.1%
Cefn playing fields	14	4.5%
Hoover factory	5	1.6%
Cefn (unspecified)	4	1.3%
Ivor works / Ivor tip (Rocky Road)	3	1.0%
Dragon Park	2	0.6%
Dowlais	2	0.6%
The Brynna	2	0.6%
Ground adjacent to BHHS Upper School	1	0.3%
Heolgerrig	1	0.3%
Hillcrest	1	0.3%
“Old tip”	1	0.3%
Civic centre	1	0.3%
“The park”	1	0.3%
Swansea Road	1	0.3%
Stephen and George’s site	1	0.3%
Old bus station	1	0.3%
Total alternative suggestions	313	100.0%

In addition, as noted above, 13 respondents suggested using brownfield land but did not specify a site in particular. Finally, 89 respondents said that the school should be built elsewhere but did not specify a location. ‘Elsewhere’ was sometimes qualified with comments such as ‘anywhere not where the community relies on so much’ and ‘please do not build on any green space...’.

Option rankings by respondent group and category

At Question 4a and 4b respondents were asked to select a ranking of 1-5 for Options 1 (Buttercup Fields) and 2 (Greenie) respectively. Table 5 details the overall rankings for each of the options amongst all respondents.

The majority of respondents across categories ranked both options as unfavourable, with 68.7% of all respondents claiming that Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) was unfavourable and 68.2% claiming that Option 2 (Greenie) was unfavourable.

Table 5. Question 4 responses, all respondents.

Total responses Q4					
	Unfavourable		Satisfactory		Favourable
	1	2	3	4	5
Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)	68.7%	4.7%	10.8%	4.2%	11.6%
Option 2 (Greenie)	68.2%	2.7%	5.1%	4.1%	19.9%

To help the Council determine whether either option would be acceptable to the community and to further understand how perspectives on the options differ across respondent groups, responses to Question 4 were further split in terms of those who ranked each option as ‘less than satisfactory’ (1-2) or ‘at least satisfactory’ (3-5). Notably, this latter category includes the upper three rankings whilst the former includes only the lower two and as such the split is not equivalent. Nonetheless, this analysis is helpful for indicating the extent to which either option would be considered acceptable by different segments of the community.

The percentage of all respondents who indicated that each option would be less than satisfactory (1-2) or at least satisfactory (3-5) is illustrated in Figure 3. Notably, 73.4% (572) of respondents found Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) less than satisfactory and 70.9% (552) found Option 2 (Greenie) less than satisfactory, with only 26.6% (207) and 29.1% (227) respectively finding them at least satisfactory.

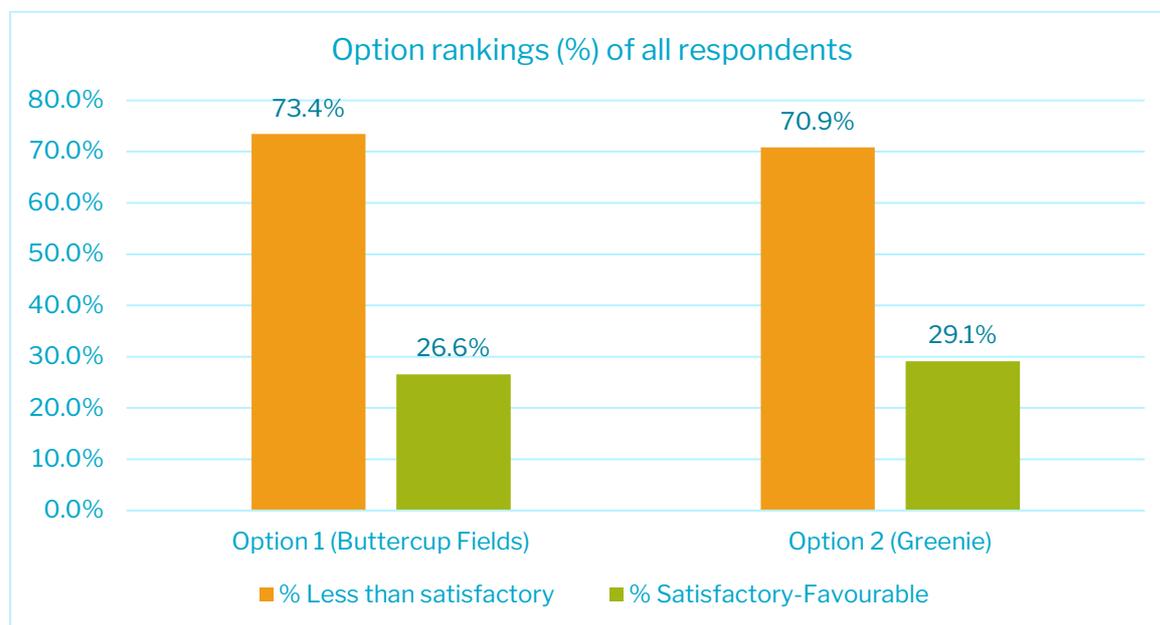


Figure 3. Percentage of all respondents ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 779]¹⁵

Acceptance for the plans was higher amongst the school community (parents, teachers, school pupils and parish members) than amongst the local community (residents, local community stakeholders). As can be seen in Figure 4, 51.3% (118) of the school

¹⁵ A few respondents did not provide an answer to Question 4 and therefore the base is slightly lower than overall number of respondents to the survey.

community found Option 2 (Greenie) at least satisfactory and 41.7% (96) claimed that Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) was at least satisfactory.

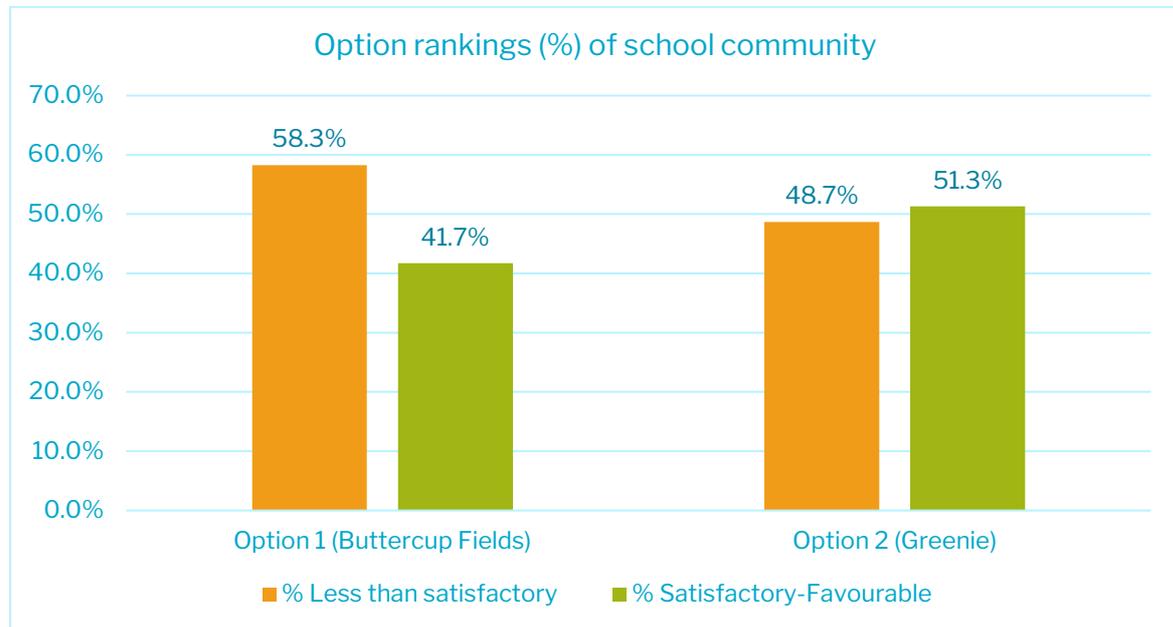


Figure 4. Percentage of school community respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base: 230]

In contrast, as shown in Figure 5, amongst the local community, both options were found less than satisfactory by just over 80% of respondents (435 respondents at Option 1 and 436 respondents at Option 2). Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) and Option 2 (Greenie) were found at least satisfactory by 19.9% (108) and 19.7% (107) of respondents in the local community respectively.

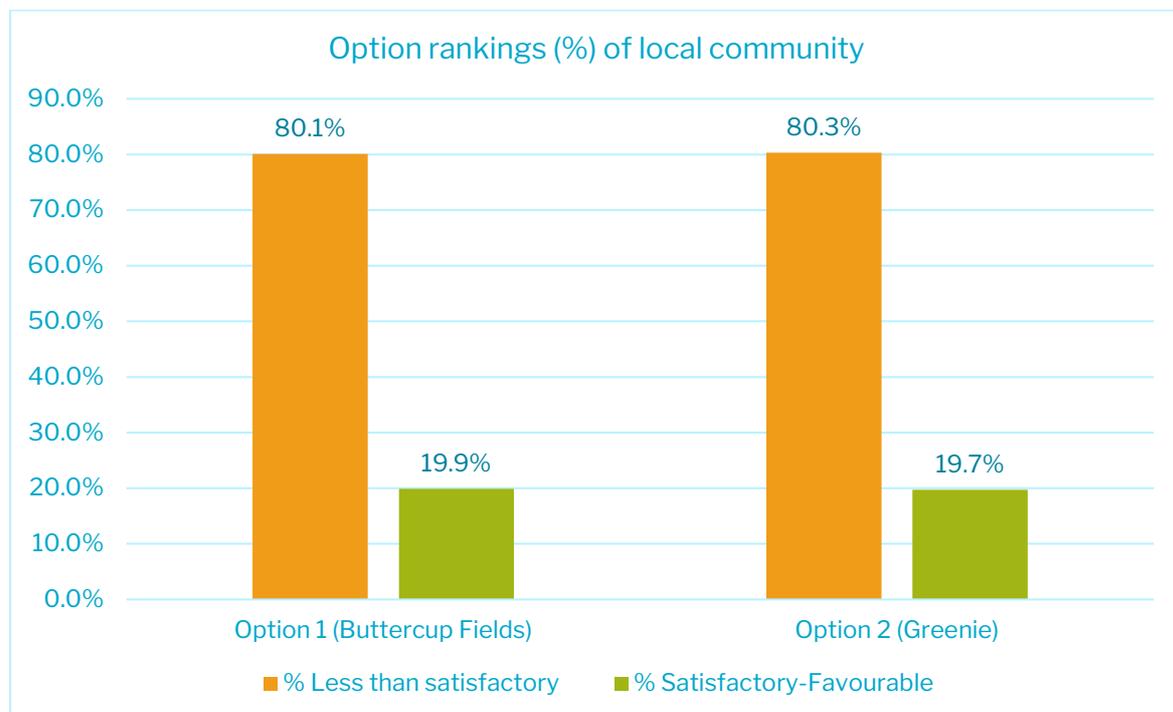


Figure 5. Percentage of local community respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base: 543]

Analysis by individual respondent category

When broken down further by specific respondent category, approval of either option appears highest amongst parents and teachers and is lower amongst all other groups. As can be seen in Figure 6, 55.6% (55) of parents found Option 2 (Greenie) at least satisfactory and 50.5% (50) found Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) at least satisfactory.

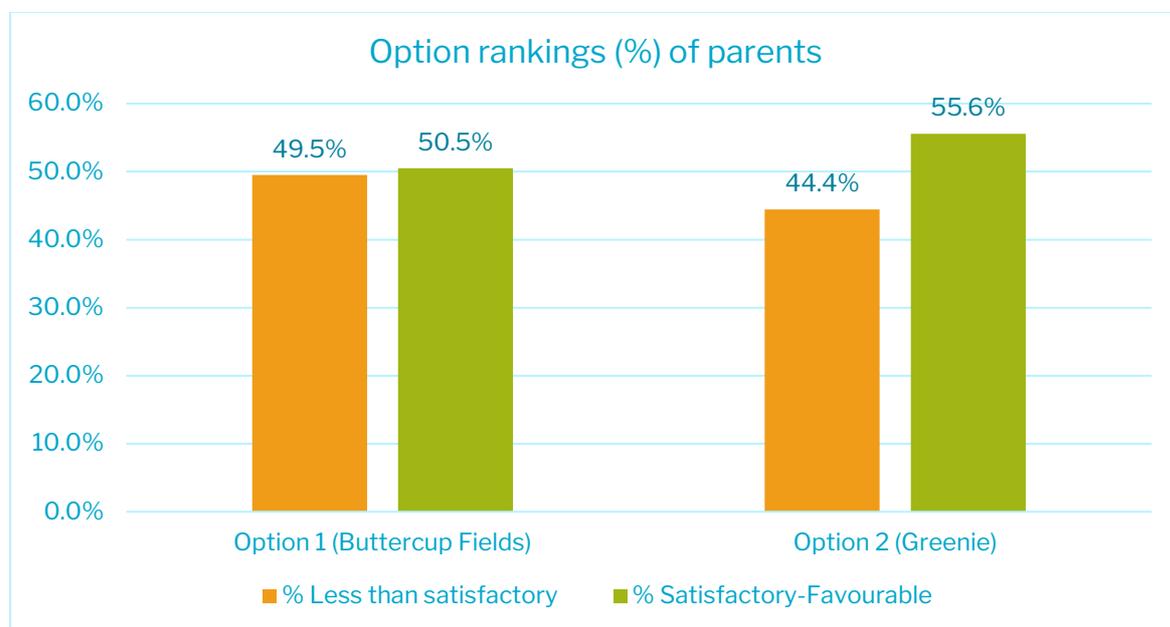


Figure 6. Percentage of parents of school pupils ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory – favourable' (3-5). [Base: 99]

School staff indicated a strong preference for Option 2 (Greenie), with 65.5% (38) ranking this at least satisfactory in contrast with just 39.7% (23) claiming that Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) was at least satisfactory, as shown in Figure 7.

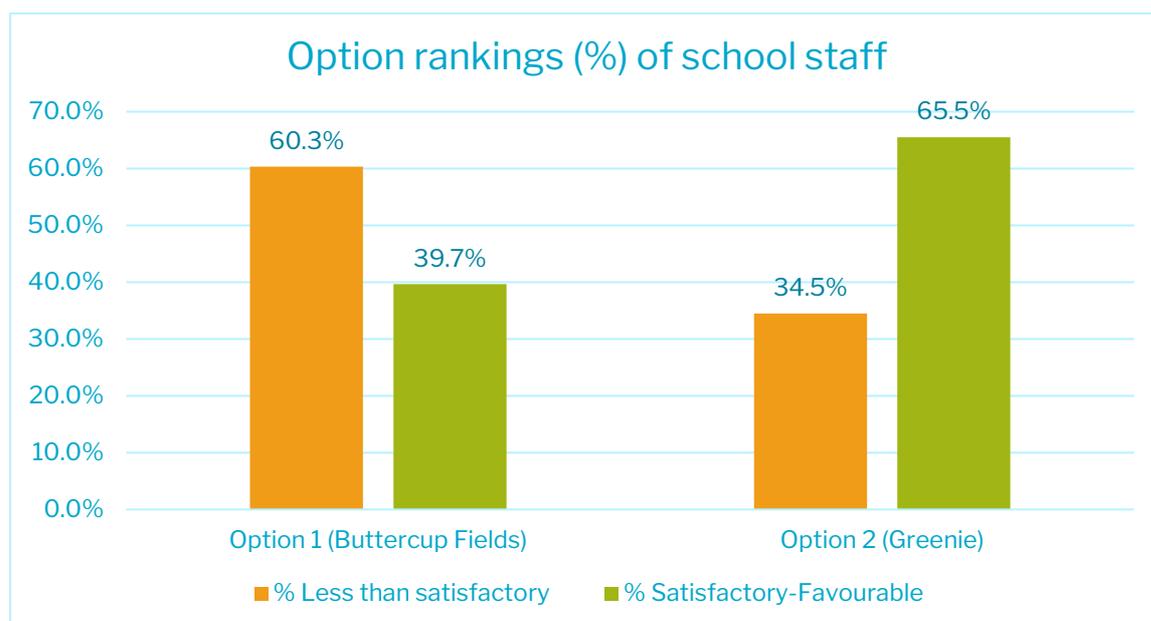


Figure 7. Percentage of teachers / members of school staff ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory – favourable' (3-5). [Base: 58]

By contrast, as shown in Figure 8, residents were markedly less favourable to both options, with 80.6% (386) ranking Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) less than satisfactory and 80.8% (387) of residents ranking Option 2 (Greenie) less than satisfactory.



Figure 8. Percentage of residents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base: 479]

The distribution of responses from local parish members and 'Other' respondents was similar to that of residents, as shown in Figures 9 and 10. Amongst local parish members, 71.4% (35) ranked Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) as less than satisfactory and 69.4% (34) ranked Option 2 (Greenie) as less than satisfactory. Both options were found to be less than satisfactory by 74.5% (38) of Other respondents.

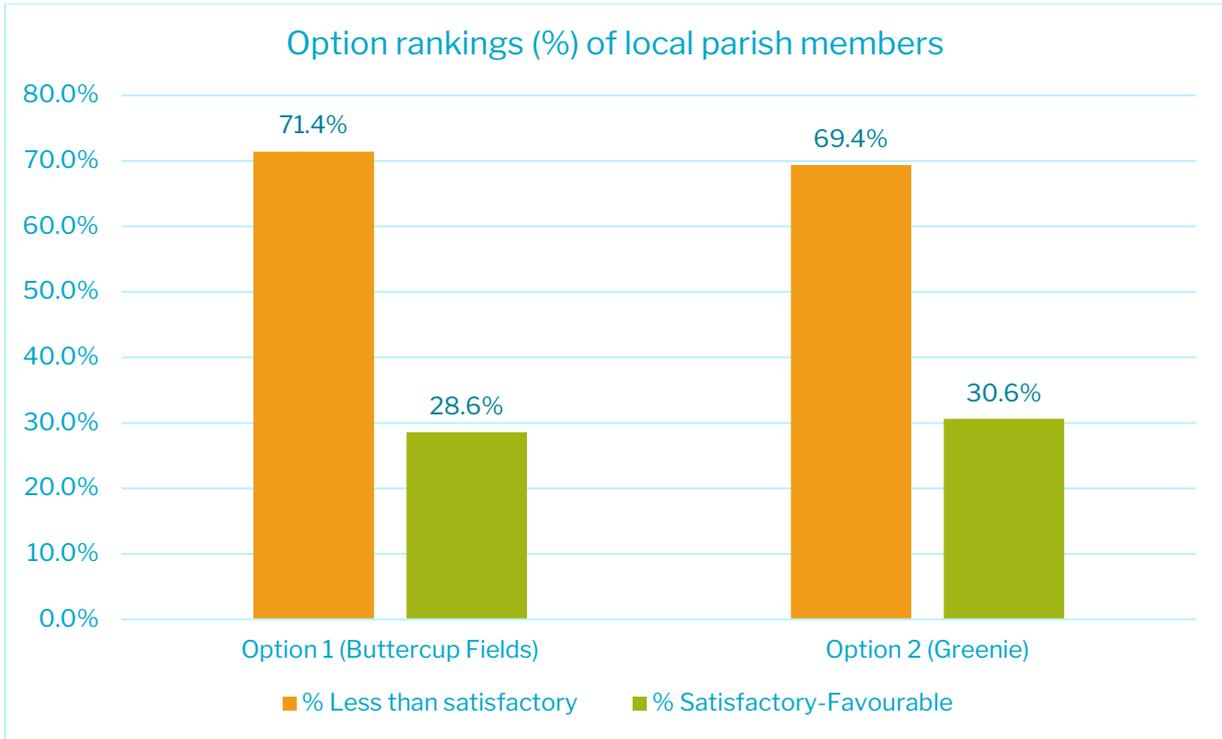


Figure 9. Percentage of local parish members ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base: 49]

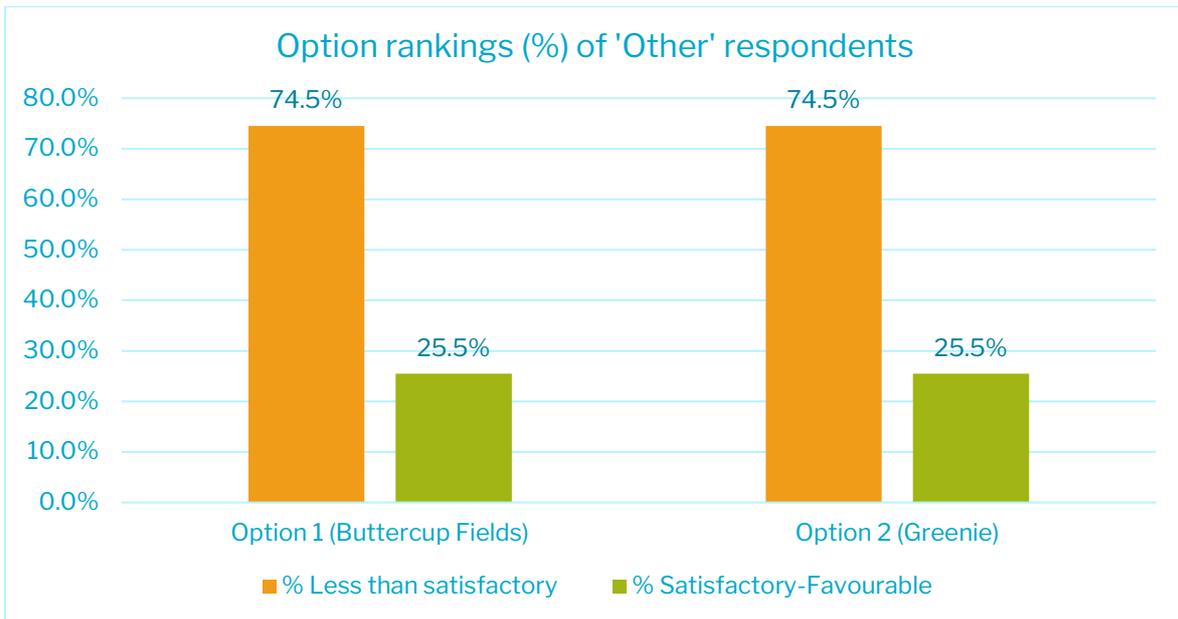


Figure 10. Percentage of Other respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base: 51]

Responses of school pupils and community stakeholders are reported in Figures 11 and 12 below. As there were only five dual-coded respondents, these responses are reported in full in Table 5.

Rankings amongst school pupils and local community stakeholders are broadly similar to those of respondents in other categories in that the large majority of these respondents found both options less than satisfactory. However, amongst school pupils, Option 2

(Greenie) was slightly more satisfactory, with 38.5% (5) ranking this Option as opposed to just 15.4% (2) who found Option 1 at least satisfactory.

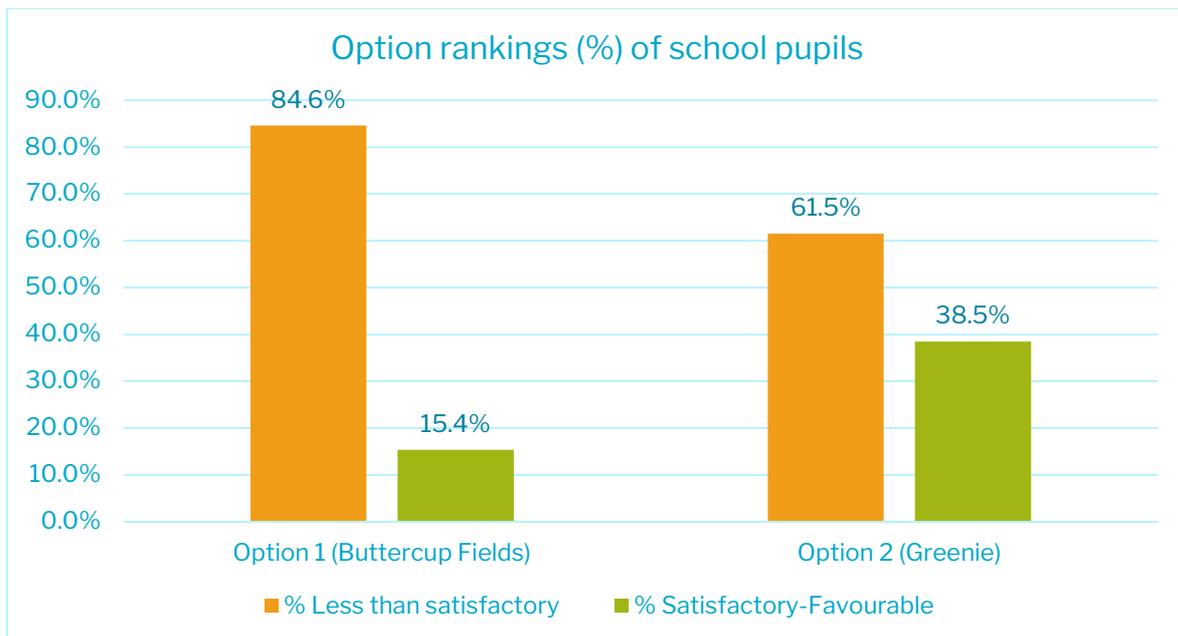


Figure 11. Percentage of school pupils ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base: 13 – caution low base]

Amongst community stakeholders, Option 2 (Greenie) was ranked slightly lower, with 75% (18) finding this option less than satisfactory and 25% (6) finding it at least satisfactory. Rankings for Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) amongst this group were similar, with 70.8% (17) finding this option less than satisfactory and 29.2% (7) finding it at least satisfactory.



Figure 12. Percentage of local community stakeholders ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base: 24 – caution low base]

Amongst the five dual-coded respondents there was a slight preference for Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), with two claiming that this was satisfactory (including one resident/parish member and one parent/member of school staff) and a further two

ranking this option as favourable (both residents/parish members). In contrast, Option 2 (Greenie) was ranked as '1 (unfavourable)' by three (including two residents/parish members and one parent/parish member) and as '4' by two respondents (one resident/parish member and one parent/member of school staff).

The one respondent who provided no response at Question 1 has also been included in the table below, and this respondent selected '5 – favourable' for both options)

Table 6. Option rankings of five dual-coded and one uncoded respondents.

	Unfavourable 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Favourable 5
Option 1	1	0	2	0	3
Option 2	3	0	0	2	1

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SURVEY COMMENTS

Introduction

This section provides an overview of views expressed in response to open questions in the survey. The first two open questions (Questions 2 and 3) requested feedback on Options 1 and 2 respectively, with the final open question (Question 6) providing the opportunity for respondents to offer any additional comments.

The section is broken down into two parts. The first part provides an overview of key themes within responses from each respondent category arising from responses to Questions 2, 3 and/or 6 and describes the issues of central concern to the different groups represented in the survey. This analysis is broken down by individual respondent categories (e.g., resident, school pupil) rather than by the broader respondent groups to provide the most detailed level of feedback available.

Frequencies of codes (i.e., the number of times a particular issue was mentioned) are provided where it is helpful to show that an issue was raised very often or, in contrast, by only a small number of respondents within a respondent category. An over-reliance on frequencies, however, is avoided as this can be misleading. As the analysis relates to open questions, the frequency of a code reflects how often issues were *spontaneously raised* by respondents which may indicate which issues were salient for different types of respondent, but does not provide a complete picture of their perspectives. Where frequencies are not provided, some key terms offer indication of how commonly issues were raised: 'a few' and 'a small number' refer to five respondents or less, 'some' refers to six to fifteen and 'many' refers to more than fifteen.

The second part provides further detail on the themes in terms of how they cut across respondent categories and is intended to offer a fuller understanding of the nature of issues raised in terms of any reasoning or qualification provided. As such, anonymised quotes from responses to open questions are included in this section to illustrate how issues were expressed in respondents' own words and how different themes interlinked. This part is further broken down in terms of the four types of responses identified: concerns; praise / perceived advantages; suggestions; and requests of the Council.

A final section 'wider issues and comment' reviews additional themes that arose in response to Question 6 only and that related to the wider context of the proposals and the consultation itself.

Overview of key themes raised by each respondent category

Responses to the open questions do not indicate a clear preference for either option that was consistent across respondent categories. Parents and members of school staff tended to be somewhat more positive about Option 2 (Greenie) overall, though some parents and school staff reflected on the relative advantages of each option rather than stating a clear preference.

The most common reasons stated for preferring Option 2 (Greenie) were the layout of the parking and drop off facilities (which are located closer to the school building in this Option), with a few also noting the higher elevation of the school building which was seen to enhance natural light and offer better surveillance of school grounds. In contrast, however, responses suggest that Option 2 (Greenie) was less acceptable to some residents, community stakeholders and local parish members, with some expressing concern about the relocation of the community sports pitches to the south end of the site in this option.

An overview of the key themes within feedback from each respondent category is given below. Frequencies that are provided refer to the number of respondents who commented on a given issue within their feedback to *either* of the three open questions unless otherwise noted. Where feedback related to one of the specific options or where there were notable differences in responses across questions, this is clarified, and separate frequencies are provided. A summary of the frequency of each code (the number of times each issue was raised) in relation to Question 2, 3 and 6 is provided in Appendix 6.

Residents

In total, 481 residents responded to the survey, making up 61.4% of the sample, with a further three respondents selecting both resident and local parish member at Question 1 (0.4%).

The vast majority of residents' concerns related to both options and were raised in relatively equal proportion in response to Question 2 and 3, with some residents using the opportunity of Question 6 to further reiterate their concerns. Where feedback relates to one of the options specifically this is noted below.

The most common themes within residents' open feedback on the options related to concerns around environmental impact and impacts on residents. These issues were interrelated, as environmental effects were largely considered in terms of their implications for those living in the surrounding area.

The most widely cited concern amongst residents related to the loss of open green space associated with the plans, which was raised by 231 residents across the three open questions. A range of objections were stated to building on the site, including its value and utility to residents for activity and promoting wellbeing, its significance to their memories of the area and its importance as a natural resource for the local environment and wildlife.

Considerations around mental health and wellbeing were a significant concern for residents, with 25 residents remarking on potential consequences of the plans for the mental health and wellbeing of the local population across the three questions. These concerns were generally linked back to the reduction of open space for community use for walks, activity and for children to play.

The second most common concern related to traffic congestion on the roads surrounding the site, with related issues of air pollution and road safety also being widely noted. Concerns around traffic were raised by 37 residents and air pollution by 14 residents across Questions 1 and 2. Road safety also appeared to be a significant concern in relation to both options, being raised by 21 residents across the three questions.

Another significant concern for residents was the proximity of the site to local dwellings which was raised by sixteen residents at Question 2 and a further eight residents at Question 3. This was a particular concern in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), where the school building is placed close to the properties on Billingham Crescent, however some residents also expressed concern about the placing of sports pitches at the lower end of the site in Option 2 (Greenie) in terms of the potential noise during sports events.

Each of the following concerns were raised by 10 residents or less across the three questions:

- Impacts on residents:
 - Noise and light pollution
 - Obstructed views of properties overlooking the site
 - Security risks to properties backing onto the site
 - Building work disruption
 - Impacts on property values
- Environmental concerns
 - Impact on local wildlife
 - Concerns that the ground is too soft / boggy to build on (with Option 1, Buttercup Fields) or for locating the school playing fields (in Option 2, Greenie)
 - Feeling that the site is too large / takes up too much space in the local environment
 - Concerns around drainage and knotweed
- Wider implications
 - Concerns regarding the cost of the development
 - Opposition to faith schools or increased funding for faith schools
 - View that BHHS is currently under-occupied therefore does not warrant increased funding

Concerns around drainage and knotweed were raised by a few residents in response to Questions 2 and 6 and by one resident in response to Question 3, suggesting the issue was considered a greater problem with Option 1 but may still be perceived as an issue with Option 2 by some residents.

Some residents also provided positive feedback about the plans in general and/or specifically in relation to either option. It was noted by a few that the proposals would result in improved facilities for the community either in terms of the school itself or via shared sports pitches.

In relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), eight residents felt that it was positive that existing playing fields could remain in place and a couple also felt that the school building in these plans would be less imposing on the local environment due to lower elevation of this part of the site.

In response to Option 2, a few other residents noted that the layout of the parking in this option was more convenient for accessing the school and/or sports pitches. Finally, a few residents commented that placing the school building on the north end of the site would benefit the community by disrupting anti-social behaviour that currently occurs there.

Parents of pupils

The second largest group of responses came from parents of school pupils, with 100 respondents selecting parent (12.8% of the sample) one respondent selecting parent and teacher / member of school staff (0.1%) and one parent and member of local parish (0.1%).

Relative to residents, parents' responses were more mixed in terms of general favour or opposition to the plans and more parents provided specific feedback on the two options.

Key concerns amongst parents related to traffic, parking and road safety, which were raised by ten, nine and nine parents respectively. These concerns largely related to the perceived safety of access to the school both by road and for pedestrians. In particular, concerns were expressed in relation to both options about an area of Galon Uchaf Road that was commonly referred to as 'Dangerous Hill'. A few parents claimed that the layout of Option 2 (Greenie) was preferable in terms of road safety as it placed the school building further from the most hazardous part of the road. Some also noted that the parking layout was more convenient in this option as it was located closer to the school building.

Eight parents expressed concerns about the proximity of the school to local dwellings, and this was noted in equal proportion in relation to the two options.

In total, 22 parents expressed concern about the loss of green space that would be associated with the new school across the three open questions. This concern was most significant in relation to Option 2 (Greenie) due to the relocation of the existing playing fields and was noted by twenty parents at Question 3. Where the loss of green space was raised, parents were particularly likely to cite potential impacts on children's mental health or their need for open space to play. A few parents also noted that the area was important for local wildlife.

Other concerns raised in feedback by a few parents each included:

- Impacts on residents:
 - Noise and light pollution
 - Building works disruption
- Environmental concerns
 - Impact on wildlife
- Accessibility
 - Distance to travel to the new school (versus child's current school)
 - Lack of designated space for bus drop off

Perceived benefits of the plans amongst parents included the potential to improve facilities for pupils and the community (noted by nine parents in total) and the appropriateness of the site due to its relatively central location and/or size for the new school (noted by eleven parents).

A few parents noted that Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) had the benefit of keeping the existing community playing fields in place and two parents preferred the placement of the school building closer to the Penydarren area / further from the Galon Uchaf and Gurnos area.

Frustration was also expressed by a small number of parents who felt that the development of the new school was being held up by residents who are resisting the plans.

In contrast, a few parents stated opposition to a 3-16 through school altogether. These comments were generally left without further clarification (e.g., 'no super school'), though one parent claimed that the plans would damage children's wellbeing.

Teachers / members of school staff

A total of 58 teachers / members of staff responded to the consultation survey, making up 7.4% of the sample as well as one respondent who identified as a teacher/member of staff and a parent (0.1%).

As with parents, responses from members of school staff were more mixed overall in terms of praise or concern about the plans, and these respondents tended to provide some specific commentary on the two options.

A few school staff expressed general concerns about the plans, most notably in terms of the loss of green space (which was raised by five teachers overall) and the impacts of this for local residents and wildlife.

Wider impacts of the plans on residents were also a concern for school staff, with five noting the proximity of the school building to residential properties in Option 1 (Buttercup Fields).

School staff also raised a number of concerns about the day to day running of the school in terms of access, impact on pupils during lessons and security. In relation to Option 1, nine school staff noted concerns about the distance of the car park from the school building and one noted that the lower elevation would offer less surveillance of school grounds. Concerns were raised by a couple of school staff in relation to both options about whether community access to sports fields would result in distractions for pupils during lessons. With Option 2 (Greenie), a couple also noted that the building was overlooked by the main road, also potentially resulting in noise or other distractions.

Comparatively in terms of the two options, more positive feedback was received from members of school staff in relation to Option 2 (Greenie). This related to the proximity of the school building to the car park (noted by seven), that pedestrian and/or road access was better in this option (also noted by seven), and the view that traffic management appeared more fluid (noted by three). In addition, three school staff commented on the elevation of the school building in this option, explaining that this would enhance natural

light within the school and facilitate surveillance of school grounds. Finally, one teacher praised the separation of junior and senior rugby pitches.

A few members of school staff expressed opposition to the merging of the existing schools into a 3-16 through school. As with parents, these were mostly general statements, however, a couple explained that they felt that the plans would have a negative impact on children's education.

Local parish members

A total of 49 respondents (6.3%) identified as local parish members, with a further three dual coding as local parish members and residents (0.4%) and one coding as parent and parish member (0.1%). As respondents were asked to select one category that best described them at Question 2, it is possible that other respondents would have dual-categorised if given the opportunity and that some of those who categorised as parish members may also have been residents or others.

Parish members who responded to the survey generally provided more negative than positive feedback and this primarily related to the plans as a whole, although some specific commentary on the two options was provided. Furthermore, the majority of responses from these respondents stated general opposition or favour to the plans without further elaboration. There were thirteen non-specific objections from parish members (such as 'no' and 'against') at Question 2 and eleven at Question 3. In contrast, there were eight responses from parish members at Question 2 and two at Question 3 which indicated approval or acceptance without further comment (such as 'good' and 'no objections').

As with other respondent groups, there was significant concern about the loss of green space (raised by 16 parishioners) and about impacts on local residents, particularly in terms of additional traffic congestion (raised by three).

There was marginally more negative feedback amongst local parish members in response to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). Although much of this feedback was general, one respondent highlighted concerns about the proximity of the school building to residents and the distance between the building and the car park. However, some concerns were also raised in response to Option 2 (Greenie), specifically in relation to the relocation of the community pitches to the south end of the site, which was noted by four parish members. Some of these respondents explained that this would mean moving the fields further from the communities that use them.

A few parish members praised the fact that the new school would result in improved facilities for pupils and the community, and a few others noted that the new plans addressed earlier feedback about the location of parking. Overall, there was more positive feedback in relation to Option 2 (Greenie), with two noting that the elevated position of the building would maximise light within the school and that this plan indicated better traffic flow and pedestrian access.

Local community stakeholders

In total, 25 respondents (3.2%) identified as local community stakeholders.

The majority of responses from local community stakeholders were only a few words, with most falling into the category of 'non-specific objection' (such as 'no thank you' and 'not great'). Among respondents who provided more substantive feedback, concern was expressed about the loss of green space associated with the build and about the associated impacts on local wildlife, noted by six community stakeholders.

Positive responses amongst local community stakeholders related to the regeneration of the site and community access to sports facilities, each of which were noted by a few respondents across the three open questions.

School pupils

Thirteen school pupils responded to the survey, making up 1.7% of the sample.

Similarly, to local community stakeholders, school pupils primarily provided answers of only a few words. Across the questions, three school pupils' responses were categorised as 'non-specific objection' (for example 'no' and 'not acceptable') and two pupils' responses fell into the 'non-specific approval or acceptance' category (such as 'do it' and 'good'). Four pupils at Question 2 and three at Question 3 provided no response.

A few responses to each question (Question 2, 3 and 6) provided a slightly more detailed response (all of which were one sentence). All of these referred to the loss of green space that would result from the build, with key concerns being that the fields are currently used for playing games, football or dog walking.

One school pupil also briefly referenced traffic concerns, and another expressed a preference for BHHS remaining at the existing site.

Other

In total, 52 respondents identified as 'Other' at Question 1, making up 6.6% of the sample. Amongst these respondents, a range of explanations were given for their relationship to the project, however all could be categorised as part of the local community or school community in some way. Some of these respondents indicated that they were not residents of the immediate area but either had family members in the area ('my dad lives there'), had lived there previously ('past resident') or lived in Merthyr Tydfil but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the school ('Merthyr Tydfil resident'). A few respondents who selected Other used the space to provide further information about their connection to the school ('Grew up in the area and grandchildren would be pupils at the new school').

The largest category of responses amongst those within this group was non-specific objection (including responses such as 'No' and 'Definitely NOT'). In total, 24 responses from respondents coded 'Other' fell into this category. In contrast, only three Other respondents provided responses that fell into the category of non-specific approval or acceptance (including 'Good' and 'I see no problem with building the school').

Within more substantial feedback, the most widely cited concerns amongst Other respondents were environmental, specifically a loss of green space, which was raised by 25 respondents in this category at either Question 2, 3 or 6.

A few Other respondents also raised issues about impacts on residents, particularly around traffic and the proximity of the school building to residents on Billingham Crescent in Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). A few also expressed concerns about road safety due to increased traffic coming to the school.

Some Other respondents provided positive feedback on the plans, and most of this related to the plans in general rather than specifically relating to either option. Amongst these, a few Other respondents felt that the plans would result in access to better educational or sports facilities for the community and a couple noted that the site is appropriate for a school, although little explanation was provided (e.g., 'Good space for new school' and '...this is the best location for a school of this size'). One Other respondent explained that the plans were favourable as they would disrupt anti-social behaviour that goes on the land, specifically the use of off-road motorbikes that cause damage to the grass.

Finally, three respondents in this category expressed a strong preference for the new school to be built as per the plans taken to the previous round of consultation and expressed frustration at what they perceived to be delays caused by opposition amongst some parts of the community. All three of these responses were from people who described themselves as parents (but had not selected 'parent of pupil' at Question 1). These responses did not specify what it is about the current two options that is less desirable than the previous plans. Moreover, some of these responses appear to indicate a misconception that the options in the current consultation involve moving the school to a new location altogether, rather than two alternative layouts of the site with all parking now on the Greenie/Buttercup Fields

I will not pick any other option for the new school as the current location is fine. Any other location could affect so many if not placed on the greenie as previously planned.

This new consultation is bending to the ones that clearly haven't been paying attention over the past few years...Please leave the plans as they are, stick with the plans that have been made, please think of who this will affect if the school is moved....SAVE OUR NEW SCHOOL BUILD AS PLANNED
['Other', Parent of child in local school, Question 3]

Further detail on themes raised across the respondent categories

The section below offers further insight into themes within consultation feedback by detailing the specific nature of comments made across all respondent categories in relation to each theme, in terms of any reasoning or qualification provided by respondents.

This section is organised by the four types of responses: concerns; praise or perceived advantages; suggestions; and requests.

The final section 'wider issues and comment' explores responses that included feedback on issues beyond the plans for the siting of the new school, such as comments on the consultation process, concerns about faith education or comments directed to the council more broadly.

Concerns

Some issues, such as concerns around traffic management and impacts on the environment, were frequently raised by respondents across categories.

Other concerns were more prominent amongst particular categories of respondents, with school staff and parents focusing more on issues around access and the day to day running of the school, whereas residents were more concerned about impacts on those living in the immediate vicinity of the school.

As noted earlier, a large number of concerns raised within the feedback related to the plans as a whole, however some specific issues were raised in relation to either option and this is clarified as relevant below.

Themes of concerns raised by respondents are discussed below in order of the frequency with which they were raised across respondent groups.

- *Environmental impact*

The most widely raised concerns amongst respondents as a whole related to the loss of green space associated with the building of the school and a spectrum of related environmental impacts. These concerns were raised by some respondents in all categories and related to the plans in general, though some concerns were also raised in relation to both options.

As noted earlier, potential environmental impacts were interrelated with impacts on residents and, to a lesser extent, with issues around health and safety (such as air pollution). Many respondents across respondent categories noted that the green space was widely used by the community (although a few respondents who were in favour of the new school disputed this). Some respondents suggested that the space had social and historical significance, claiming that it had been used throughout generations and was important to their memories of growing up in the area.

I disagree with this siting. This is a historic field used by many in the community. Thousands of children have grown up with fond memories of playing in this area (myself included)
[Resident Question 2]

The greenspace described in option 2 is prime community green space...I would not like to teach in any school that was born out of such a loss to the community, which is well known for having little enough as it is.
[Teacher / member of staff, Question 3]

Not in favour. The meadows and fields are invaluable to local residents and to lose them for a new school build that could be situated elsewhere is not acceptable. There is not enough green space as it is near these residential areas, and it should be preserved...
[Resident, Question 2]

Finally, some respondents claimed that the plans could have a negative impact on the climate due to increased traffic and/or a decrease in vegetation to offset pollution levels. Whilst Option 2 (Greenie) was preferable overall amongst the school community (see 'Option Preferences' section) many respondents, particularly those in the local community, felt that this option entailed a greater loss of open space due to the relocation of community pitches. A smaller number of respondents, again primarily

residents, raised concerns about the drainage associated with the site. These concerns were raised most frequently in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) due to the school building being placed at the south end (and boggy part) of the site in this option. A couple of respondents had the same concerns about the south end of the site in Option 2 (Greenie) i.e. this is where the pitches would be located and therefore may be unusable during winter.

*...Facilities would be great for the school and massively diminished for an area that is already considered deprived. You are proposing providing just one grass pitch for community use which would be much further away from local residents and would be on boggy ground. I don't at all support anything about this option.
[Resident, Question 3]*

*If you build the school on these fields, you're taking away the only Greenland the children of nearing streets can play. Gurnos fc won't be able to train or play football which if you ask me is the only outside time some children have. To put building a school above children's health and wellbeing is absolutely diabolical
[Parent of pupil, Question 3]*

In addition, concerns were only raised about impacts on property values in relation to Option 1, which may reflect that the school building is located closer to properties on Billingham Crescent in these plans. Concerns around knotweed were raised by six respondents across the three open questions, with one respondent expressing concern that construction work on the site could cause the weed to spread closer to local dwellings.

*The development [also] poses major ecological issues, especially with the bats, foxes, hawks, and the plant-life on the field...How will you handle the knotweed that has been left untreated since pre-COVID times. By starting construction works, it allows the seeds to be kicked up and spread even closer to the resident homes.
[Parent of pupil, Question 2 and 3]*

- *Impact on residents*

A range of issues relating to impacts of the proposed plans on residents in the local area were raised by respondents. As with environmental impacts, these largely concerned the plans as a whole though some specific issues differed in relation to the two options. Issues around the impact of the plans on those living locally were raised by some respondents in all categories, though they were raised most commonly by residents.

The most widely raised issue in relation to impacts on residents was concerns around traffic. Across responses, a fair amount of explanation was given around traffic concerns, with many respondents explaining that the increased numbers of people travelling to a single site (due to the schools being merged) would create an increased traffic burden around pick up and drop off hours and some noting that this could be exacerbated by parents parking in the surrounding roads. Many respondents noted that roads surrounding the school were already congested.

*My concern is the traffic build up in that area which WILL happen because people will just park anywhere to collect their children. For Galon Uchaf and Penydarren top that road is out main link to Merthyr Town. The heads of the valley is currently congested due to road changes and thus will go on for a time to come yet...
[Resident, Question 2]*

*I have no problem with the idea but the increase of traffic will be enormous in our area and especially on a very dangerous area
Not only the building site work traffic, the actual school traffic and also the so called traffic that will bring with extra houses or similar being built on old school (although not confirmed you will be building on it so please don't deny)
The extraordinary amount of traffic I feel will be life changing bear in mind the work on the heads of valley which is soon to hit our area..
[Resident, Question 2]*

Concerns around traffic were often linked with worries about the health and safety of residents, particularly children and the elderly. Respondents who raised these concerns explained that they feared the additional congestion would increase the likelihood of traffic accidents and reduce air quality.

*It's a better layout than option 1, however, the traffic around that area will be chaos. With Gwaunfarren school being in close proximity, people driving o work at the hospital and then this school, it'll just be manic. I don't think the site is a good location.
[Teacher / member of staff, Question 3]*

Although concerns around traffic were raised in response to both options, they were slightly more common in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) (raised 40 times at Question 2 and 21 times at Question 3 across respondent categories). Some of those expressing concerns about traffic in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) explained that the drop off road in this option circles around residential properties on lower Galon Uchaf Road, which exacerbated concerns around noise and air pollution.

*...The proposed road layout for parent's and bus drop off will be causing the adjoining private residential estate on lower Galon Uchaf Road/Gwaunfarren Road to become a "roundabout" and to be sandwiched between the already busy Galon Uchaf Road and the new proposed one way drop off facilities for the new school. Not only is this going to impact on traffic noise levels but also poses a health concern to the neighbouring houses and their residents as congestion levels of stationary waiting cars and buses will be impacting air quality negatively.
[Resident, Question 2]*

In addition to issues around traffic, many respondents voiced concerns around noise and light pollution associated with the school and with community use of the sports pitches.

*My property backs directly onto the buttercup fields so noise pollution would be horrendous, plus blocking views and natural sunlight due to new tree line
[Resident, Question 2]*

Although these issues were raised in relation to both options, they were slightly more frequent in relation to Option 2 (Greenie), with some residents explaining that the pitches located behind the houses on Billingham Crescent could cause more issues with light and noise due to floodlights and matches held outside of school hours. A separate issue raised in relation to Option 2 (Greenie) was the relocation of the community playing fields, with a few respondents noting that the fields would therefore be out of action for a period during construction and others complaining that they would be located further from communities at the north of the site who use these fields most frequently.

*Playing field nearer to the residents of Billingham crescent would be a lot noisier as children tend to shout loudly during sports activities
[Resident, Question 3]*

The only negative with option 2 would be the fact that the community pitch would be out of use during the build...
[Teacher / member of staff, Question 3]

The proximity of the school site to residential properties was noted more frequently in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) (26 times versus 10 times for Option 2), and concerns around privacy were only mentioned in relation to this option (by two respondents).

The school building seems larger but the proximity to the local residents is less than ideal.
[Parent of pupil, Question 2]

I am not keen on the idea that the building is situated at the lower end of the site and is so close to the residents
[Teacher / member of staff, Question 2]

Respondents who provided further clarification expressed concerns about the school building being located behind houses on Billingham Crescent. Concerns around the site obstructing residents' views were raised by a few respondents in relation to both Options (five at Question 2 and four at Question 3), with some noting that the proposed new tree line would block their view in either option.

I am concerned about taking away the green space and increase of traffic to the area. I can see the fields from my bedroom window and to see a school being built there would be hideous
[Resident, Question 2]

Security concerns were also raised in relation to both options by a small number of respondents. Mentions of security were generally not elaborated on, making it difficult to determine what aspects of the plan's respondents viewed as a security risk.

Finally, a few residents specifically raised concerns about the noise and disruption that would be associated with the construction of the site itself.

- *Health and safety*

A number of concerns were raised in relation to health and safety impacts of the plans. Again, these issues related to both options though there were some specific differences. Health and safety issues were raised by some residents, parents and teachers.

The most widely raised concerns within this theme related to air pollution and road safety, particularly around what was commonly referred to as 'Dangerous Hill'. Both of these concerns were generally attributed to the increased traffic associated with the school and therefore were relevant to both options. However, some mixed views were reported in terms of which location of the school posed the greatest risk for road safety, with a few respondents claiming that the Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) places access at the steepest and/or fastest part of the hill and a few others claiming that the part of the road used for access in Option 2 (Greenie) is particularly dangerous due to the corner.

Option 1, has the visitor car-park much too close to the road junction of the Galon Uchaf road and the Gwaunfarren road; this is notoriously known by the locals as "The Dangerous Hill"; this is because it is an accident blackspot!
[Resident, Question 2]

Option 1 is my preferred based on the information presented.

Option 2 is further up the road with a difficult bend/ potential blind spot which could cause problems with vehicle access into and out of the site with a big potential for congestion...

[Parent of pupil, Question 2]

The level of traffic that will be funnelled onto the road leading down to the Dangerous Hill. At present only the Bishop Hedley phase 2 traffic directly impacts the traffic on that road, phase 1 traffic is often directed more towards the side streets of Penydarren. With the current school layout the road is already extremely busy, combining the 2 phases together along with 3 feeder schools can only mean a significant increase of traffic on an already busy and dangerous road...

[Resident, Question 3]

In addition to this, some respondents claimed that the loss of green space would have negative implications for the health and wellbeing of the local population. A number of respondents, primarily residents, noted that the land was important for mental and physical health as it was a space for physical activity and for children to play. Some of these respondents indicated that the area surrounding the land is relatively deprived and that the space provides a valuable resource in terms of enabling free activity. It was noted by some that the space had been particularly important during lockdown in the recent pandemic and that access to green space is a stated priority for local government. Some respondents further commented that the proposal goes against the Council's own policies and noted that the Leader of Merthyr Tydfil Council, Cllr Lisa Mytton has campaigned around the saving of green space.

According to MTCBC's Green Spaces plan we are already short of 7 hectares of Green Spaces in the Penydarren area and now you want to take away more. You are going against your own policies...

[Resident, Question 6]

Concerns in relation to security of the school itself were also raised by some school staff. In relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) in particular, some school staff noted that the lack of surveillance of the school grounds (due to low elevation) was regrettable.

- *Accessibility of the site*

Concerns around the accessibility of the site were primarily raised by parents and members of school staff. Amongst these, the most prominent concerns related to the availability and location of parking and drop off facilities.

Some concerns were expressed in relation to both options about whether parking facilities would be sufficient for the numbers of parents and staff driving to a 3-16 school. A few parents with younger children also noted that they would not be able to use drop off facilities as their children could not walk unaccompanied to school gates.

I would like to see more options for parent parking not just drop offs. I have young children who cannot be dropped at the curb to walk into school by themselves, so would need provision to park and walk them to class. Also at collection times the whole of the primary sector will need to be picked up from classrooms and so parents would need to park their vehicles. I would guess that the vast majority of these parents will be driving due to the wide catchment area associated with one faith school providing education in the whole Borough...

[Parent of pupil, Question 2]

This[sic] benefit of this option is that the main building is at the top of the site but the parking seems poor.

[Parent of pupil, Question 3]

Although, as detailed below, a number of parents noted that the location was relatively central and easy to get to, a few felt that the location was less convenient as it was a greater distance from their home than their children's current school.

In relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), a few school staff in particular expressed concerns about the distance of the car park from the school building, due to the need to carry teaching materials and/or difficulty for younger and less mobile pupils.

The school is too far away from the parking. As Primary staff we bring resources etc into school and the walk is too far.

[Teacher / Member of staff, Question 2]

In contrast, one member of school staff noted that, in Option 2 (Greenie), the distance of the fields from the school building may pose issues at sporting events for young children who frequently need to use the toilet.

- *Pupil experience*

Following the full analysis, an additional theme (beyond those identified in the coding framework) was identified that would capture issues raised in relation to both education and to the day to day running of the school. Issues under this theme were raised primarily by parents and teachers.

A few teachers felt that the proximity of the school buildings to local dwellings could result in distractions for pupils. However, a few others expressed concern that the building in Option 2 (Greenie) and noted that this could result in noise and other distractions during lessons. A couple of parents indicated that they did not like that the school building was close to the Galon Uchaf and Gurnos area in Option 2 (Greenie).

Although option one offers the requirements of the school the car parking facility for staff is not appropriate. The situation of the building does not offer good surveillance of the school grounds which could pose a problem for management overseeing the grounds. School building can be integrated within the woodland belt which is ideal for primary school children. Allows existing community sports pitches to remain in situ which continues to support community use throughout the build.

[Teacher / member of school staff, Question 2]

A small number of respondents expressed opposition to merging of the four schools and the creation of a 3-16 through school. These responses primarily came from parents and teachers / members of staff, though a few residents also stated opposition to the new school. Most of these responses simply stated opposition without further clarification (such as 'I am against the proposal of a super school' and 'no super school'). However, some respondents provided further reasoning for their concerns, which related the safety and wellbeing of younger pupils, the differing needs of younger and older pupils and concerns around potential impacts on educational standards. A few parents and teachers also stated that they did not want the new school because they did not want to lose their existing school.

Dreadful. We don't want the schools to be merged anyway - so I don't find ANY of the sites favourable. We want to stay where we are and we want you to update our schools where we already are...

[Teacher / member of school staff, Question 2]

There is no option on whether the community actually agrees with the combined school. As it stand BHHS provides an excellent standard. Why would parents want to change this and a super school in a covid environment is probably the worst outcome in this environment. Academically, this is also a very wrong move for our community and doesn't provide results for our future generations. I don't agree with the new school proposal full stop so location is not relevant at this stage.

[Other, resident and parent of pupil, Question 2]

- *Non-specific objection*

In addition to detailed responses, a total of 241 responses to Question 2 and 230 responses to Question 3 were received which stated general opposition to the plans without further clarification (such as 'shouldn't be built' or 'no'). The majority of these responses came from residents, however there were also responses in these categories from all other respondent types.

Perceived advantages / Praise

Positive feedback was primarily received from parents of pupils and from some teachers / members of staff, though some respondents within each of the respondent categories expressed approval for the plans. Some positive feedback, such as around the benefits to the community of a more modern school and access to facilities, related to the plans as a whole. However most positive responses referred to relative advantages of either option. Themes within positive responses are outlined below in order of the relative frequency with which they appeared within consultation feedback.

- *Geography of the site*

Feedback was provided on aspects of the geography of the planned site and the specific advantages of either option from respondents in all categories except pupils. This feedback related to overall site layout, the positioning of the school building and implications of the layout for pupils and residents.

Amongst residents, there was mixed feedback around whether it was preferable for the school building to be located at the south end of the site (as in Option 1) or towards the north end (as in Option 2, Greenie). Some residents felt that having the school building at the south, behind houses on Billingham Crescent, would be less noisy and pose a lesser security risk than if community playing fields were placed there. It was also noted that this layout would cause less obstruction to view due to the lower elevation of this part of the site. In contrast, however, a few residents felt that it was preferable for the school building to be further from houses on Billingham Crescent, as in Option 2 (Greenie).

Option 1 would directly impact the lives and wellbeing of neighbouring residents, as the proposed school building and Drop-off road would be right along their fence boundaries and only metres away from their properties.

[Resident, Question 2]

I wouldn't be affected by the school building as much but still issues with position of playing fields, traffic, noise pollution etc, a new tree line(shocking) which would block all of my natural light plus dozens of other issues
[Resident, Question 3]

Amongst school staff and parents there was more positive feedback around the geography of the site in relation to Option 2 (Greenie) than Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). Five respondents, including teachers, parents and parish members, commented on the benefits of having the school building at a position of higher elevation (as in Option 2) to maximise natural light within the building and facilitate surveillance of the school grounds. A few teachers also noted that the overall layout of Option 2 (Greenie) was more fluid and better reflected the day to day functioning of a school.

The view of the school being elevated. Further away from residents. Improved traffic flow. Better access for pedestrians.
[Teacher / member of staff, Question 3]

A few members of school staff felt that Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) had the benefit of integrating the school building into the surrounding woodland and a couple of parents felt it was preferable for the school to be closer to the Penydarren area.

- *Facilities*

The benefits to pupils and the community of new and improved facilities in both options was praised by some respondents within all categories. There were also perceived to be relative advantages of either option in relation to the facilities provided. A few parents felt that their provision of outdoor space was larger in Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) than in Option 2 (Greenie) and a number of respondents expressed appreciation for the fact that existing community playing fields remained in place in this option.

Option 1 is a much preferable option in my view. The school is not prominent, keeping the green views. It maintains the existing grass pitch and playground and includes the current football pitch that will be used for school/community, therefore keeping the green areas with the school tucked away down the bottom. Option 1 keeps all the community areas in place, nearer the communities of Gurnos and Galon Uchaf who mainly use these areas, still allowing the younger children that currently walk to them without their parents to travel to them without walking along the main road...
[Resident, Question 2]

Some other respondents, however, felt that Option 2 (Greenie) offered better facilities. For example, many respondents claimed that the provision of parking was preferable in this option as it was located closer to the school building.

Prefer this option. I like the position of the school and car parking area. More provision of privacy for residents too.
[Teacher / member of school staff, Question 3]

- *Access*

A number of respondents across respondent categories noted that all parking and drop off facilities are located on the same side of the road as the school building in both options, and a few praised the fact that previous consultation feedback on this had been addressed in the plans.

Some respondents claimed that the design of traffic flow appeared better in Option 2 (Greenie) and that the car park is closer to the school building in this option. The proximity of the car park to the school building in Option 2 (Greenie) was particularly noted by school staff and some parents, teachers and parish members also felt that this option also offered better pedestrian access to the school.

*I prefer this option as I feel the flow of traffic would be redirected from Gwaunfarren road and the parking facilities would be more suitable.
[Teacher / member of school staff, Question 3]*

A few respondents also felt that access to the school in Option 2 (Greenie) is safer as it is further from the more dangerous part of Galon Uchaf Road. In contrast, a couple of respondents noted that the separation of car park and drop off facilities in Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) may ease traffic congestion as people using them will enter at separate ends of the site.

*Same as option 1, the location is central and easily accessible for local residents
[Parent of pupil, Question 3]*

- *Community benefit*

As noted above, the community benefits associated with access to facilities were noted by some respondents in all categories except pupils. Similarly, some local community stakeholders also felt that parts of the land designated for the site as a whole were currently run down or under-used, and that regenerating the site for the purposes of a new school would be beneficial to the community. Finally, some residents specifically noted that by placing the school building at the north end of the site, Option 2 (Greenie) may reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour that currently occurs there.

*Same as option 1, on a rare occasion you see kids playing down there and I've lived in Galon Uchaf all my life and passed the fields every day to go to work. The noise with the bikes down on the fields is terrible, sooner have a school there.
[Resident, Question 3]*

*The land is only used for illegal off-road bikes dangerously screaming around the fields so if it can be put to good use that's fine with me
[Other, Walker, Question 3]*

- *Non-specific positive responses*

In addition to the specific feedback outlined above, a number of responses were received which indicated general approval for the plans without further comment (such as 'great' or 'I am very happy about it'). This included a total of 68 responses to Question 2 and 36 responses to Question 3, most of which were provided by respondents in the school community.

Suggestions and Requests

In addition to feedback on two options, some respondents made suggestions regarding the development of the school or asked questions / made requests of the Council. These responses fell into six categories including: suggestions regarding the site layout; suggestions or requests for facilities; suggestions for things to be considered in the design and development of the school (for example, with regards to carbon footprint or noise management); information requests; and wider requests of the council (including

things outside of or in place of the proposal, such as requests for other ways to use the park). Each of these is detailed below, in order of the frequency with which they arose in the feedback.

- *Site location or site layout*

Across the three open questions, 17 respondents made suggestions for the layout of the site¹⁶. These responses came from a range of respondents, including residents, parents, members of local parishes and one member of school staff.

The majority of these responses suggested retaining some or all of the existing BHHS site for part of the school and using only a portion of Galon Uchaf Park with the rest of the land remaining as open community space. The suggestions can be summarised as:

- Improve and modernise the current BHHS site
- Utilise the existing BHHS site for school buildings and some of Galon Uchaf Park for sports fields
- Separate the primary and secondary schools, with one on the existing BHHS site and the other on Galon Uchaf Park
- Use the current BHHS car park for the drop off facilities of the new school
- Stagger the modernisation / improvements to the BHHS site, so that all pupils can be re-located to the Phase 1 building whilst Phase 2 is being updated and vice versa

- *Facilities*

Fifteen respondents, made up of residents, parents and school staff, made suggestions about what facilities should be included in the new development. General feedback on the proposed facilities in the two options are detailed in the earlier sections 'Accessibility of the site' and 'Facilities' as relevant and, as such, this section refers only to specific suggestions or requests for facilities. These are outlined below, separated by respondent category:

Residents suggested the site includes:

- Facilities that would be available to the community free of charge
- A larger playground and MUGA
- A library on site for community use
- Additional parking and play area close by to the site
- The maintenance of the existing playing field at the top of the site

In addition, school staff made suggestions that the site incorporates:

- A toilet block closer to the playing fields in Option 2 (Greenie) for younger children
- Separate outdoor facilities for primary and secondary pupils
- Separate school and community changing rooms
- A forest school
- An indoor 3G pitch
- Separate staff, primary and secondary parking areas
- Primary parking closer to the school building for ease of access of younger children

¹⁶ Suggestions for alternative site locations altogether are considered under 'Alternative site suggestions' on p.20

Finally, parents made a number of suggestions for facilities, specifically in relation to parking and drop off provisions. These included suggestions to:

- Provide additional parking spaces or to ensure sufficient parking
- Ensure ample drop off and pick up spaces

- *Information requests*

A total of nine respondents made requests for information from the Council regarding the plans for the school's development or the outcome of the consultation. Information requests came from residents, school staff and one parent and these are summarised below, separated by respondent category.

- Residents
 - o Two residents made requests to see risk assessments for the plans, with one specifying that they would like to see risk assessments for noise pollution, air pollution and road safety
 - o One resident requested that the community be informed of the outcomes of the consultation
 - o One resident requested information on plans for the existing school sites and for further consultation with residents in relation to any plans for development at these sites
 - o One resident requested overhead plans for each option
- School staff
 - o One member of school staff requested information regarding community access to sports facilities (i.e., which facilities will be available when)
 - o Another requested clarification on whether building will start in 2023 and on how the safety of the road crossing will be ensured
- Parents
 - o One parent requested that they be kept informed about any changes to the plans for how schools will be ran during the lead up to the transition to the new school and for clarification on whether a new headteacher would still be appointed by the end of the year

- *Wider requests of the council*

Nine respondents made requests of the council that either did not relate directly to the plans or which asked the council to consider using the proposed site in other ways. All of these responses came from residents, and these can be summarised as follows:

- Five residents requested that the land remain a park for community use and that the Council invest in further developing the park by planting more trees and flowers and/or by securing the area to prevent anti-social behaviour and off-road motorbike use
- Another two residents requested further investment in the park, but did not clarify whether they felt this should be in addition to or instead of the new school
- One resident asked that the council cut back the trees on Goetre Lane and install CCTV to address issues of criminal activity that currently occurs there
- One resident requested the establishment of a Welsh medium school

- *Development considerations*

A total of five respondents made suggestions of issues they felt needed to be taken into account in the design and development of the site. Four of these responses came from residents and these included:

- One request that the Council establish plans to limit / reduce noise pollution
- One request for the Council to provide new windows to the houses in the immediate vicinity of the school to reduce the impact of noise
- One request that any development plans for the existing BHHS site be designed in an environmentally friendly way so as to reduce carbon footprint and energy costs
- One request that the Council take into account additional development time that may be required for levelling the ground on the Greenie for the construction of the school

One parent also made a suggestion that double yellow lines are added to the roads connecting the current BHHS phase 2 entrance down to Billingham Crescent and connecting BHHS phase 1 to the junction with 'Dangerous Hill'.

- *Access*

Three respondents made suggestions or requests regarding access to the school, two of which were from parents and the third from a resident of Penydarren (coded Other). One parent asked whether there would be access to the school from Goetre Lane, with another requesting that cycle routes and bike storage be incorporated into the plans. The third respondent requested that the roads and pavements be made wider and more user friendly to ensure road safety.

Wider issues and comments provided within the consultation survey

In addition to themes relating specifically to the site plans, some respondents offered more general comments on the consultation process or on the motivations for, or wider implications of, the proposals. These issues were primarily raised in response to Question 6 and are discussed below. Many other responses to Question 6 reiterated concerns or perceived advantages that have been discussed above. These have not been detailed again here to avoid repetition.

- *Dissatisfaction with consultation process*

Some respondents, primarily residents, said that they had been unaware of previous rounds of consultation and criticised their lack of inclusion.

Others felt that this particular consultation phase been less than satisfactory due to there being limited options included for the site's development and as both options were on the land that was commonly referred to as 'The Greenie' (as Buttercup Fields, at the south end of the site, was also known locally as part of The Greenie). Some residents indicated that they felt that their perspectives had not been taken into account because the area surrounding the school, in which they lived, was relatively deprived. These comments were sometimes combined with expressions of general frustration towards the Local Authority or local politicians.

Why have no hard copies been posted to the surrounding areas as standard. Relying on social media and word of mouth is not good enough. At every stage all residents in penydarren, gallon uchaf and the gurnos should have been made more aware of these consultations, not just mentioning on Facebook, or putting an ad in the news, who reads newspapers these days.

[Resident, Question 6]

Very disappointed with the Council's approach, lack of initial consultation and disregard for the local community. This is been a very ill thought out and with poor communication throughout.

[Resident, Question 6]

- *Concern about motivations for the plans*

Some respondents felt that plans to develop the new school were motivated by a drive to save costs on running the school (i.e., as a single 3-16 school versus four separate schools) and/or as they believed the previous Bishop Hedley High School site would be sold to developers. These concerns came from residents, parents and one parish member.

Please listen to the communities, big schools aren't good they may be more cost effective in that they will save money but can never be more cost effective in the type of education they provide to the children.

[Member of local parish, Question 6]

What will happen to all the School sites??? Sold off for housing development I bet! While yet more green space is lost forever!!

[Resident, Question 6]

- *Concerns around faith schooling*

Finally, some respondents, primarily residents, expressed resistance towards further investment in faith education and a range of reasons were cited for this. Some claimed that Bishop Hedley High School and / or other Catholic schools were under-occupied and therefore did not warrant additional investment and, relatedly, a few respondents claimed that faith schools were less beneficial as they do not serve the whole community. A small number of residents expressed anger towards the church or diocese for their involvement in the plans and the loss of open space for the community that would result from the development. Contrarily, one parish member claimed that faith schools took financial resources from the church without supporting the faith as they felt many pupils and staff were not practicing Catholics.

Why is so much money being put into catholic schools when the other secondary schools are in such a bad way! Not good enough

[Resident, Question 6]

Would a "Faith School" in this day and age really be considered 'inclusive' for all?

[Local Community Stakeholder, Question 6]

Greenie / Buttercup Fields Petition

Separately to the consultation survey, a petition started by Mark Anthony George Morris, a resident of Gurnos ward, to stop any proposed developments on The Greenie or Buttercup Fields was submitted to the Council on the 24th of September 2021 with 958 signatures. Some of those who signed the petition may also have completed the consultation survey. The petition argued that green spaces are a vital part of the community and are significant to the health and wellbeing of the local residents, particularly that of children. In addition, the petition criticised the consultation process surrounding the proposed siting of the 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic School, explaining that only 144 residents received letters about the consultation despite their being over 10,000 residents in the local area. It was further stated that the consultation survey failed to provide an alternative option that did not utilise land that is part of the Greenie / Buttercup Fields.

Four requests of the council were stated as part of the petition:

- To stop any proposed development on the Greenie or Buttercup Fields
- To protect local green space
- To consult residents using hard copy letters sent to residents throughout the Gurnos and Penydarren wards
- To provide an alternative option for the new school, such as the existing BHHS Phase 1 and 2 site

In full, the petition read:

Stop any proposed developments on the Greenie or Buttercup Fields. These greenspaces are important to the community and especially for the health and wellbeing of our young children and everyone else who currently uses these spaces. Greenspaces are a vital part of any community, and the Council should be doing everything they possibly can to preserve these areas.

The Open Space Strategy dated June 2016 has three key themes and objectives these are derived from National, Regional and Local Priorities...

Health to improve the general health of residents of the County Borough

Environment to maintain, enhance and promote the ecological and environmental assets of the County Borough

Economy to promote the economy and generation of wealth

We also believe the consultation was woefully inadequate with only 144 residents receiving letters out of 2 wards with approx. 10,000 residents. We want the Council to consult properly via the use of hard copy letters sent to residents throughout the 2 wards, Gurnos & Penydarren. We also want another option to choose from, which does not include either the Greenie or Buttercup Fields, E.g. The existing Bishop Hedley High School site to include both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Although the petition was received following the closure of the consultation, the Council determined that it should be considered as part of the consultation given its value in understanding community perspectives on the proposals. The key issues raised by petitioners around the loss of green space and the impacts of this for the local

community were prominent within the consultation survey and meetings. In addition, as noted on p.24, many respondents to the consultation that the current BHHS site be considered as a possible site for the new school. As such, the views expressed by petitioners reflect those of some respondents to the consultation.

Appendix 1: 3-16 Catholic School Site Consultation Pack

The consultation pack that was provided to potential respondents is available on the Merthyr.gov.uk website at:

<https://democracy.merthyr.gov.uk/documents/s54115/Appendix%201.pdf?LLL=0>

Appendix 2: Initial Coding Framework

Introduction

Codes in the proposed framework are summary codes drawn from across the reports of prior consultations. They are identified from themes shown in sub-headers that have been used previously for categories of responses or by summarising identified issues/themes reported into an overview theme.

Some points in previous consultations which can be considered sub-themes (e.g. concerns around security of residents' gardens and anti-social behaviour) are currently subsumed into one theme (e.g. to Security risks) to reduce the initial number of codes. However, these nuances / details of any specific issues raised will be drawn out in reporting. If analysis highlights that they warrant an individual code (e.g. through weight of response) this will be added during the analysis process.

It is possible that some of the themes below that are drawn from previous reports do not feature in the new consultation data. Where this is the case, we will highlight at the end of the analysis process (and in reporting if appropriate) that these themes from earlier stages did not surface in this latest consultation stage.

Further codes are also likely to be added during analysis of the most recent consultation responses, to reflect new themes or as sub-themes/nuances/details within themes as noted above.

For example, assessing the first two questions has highlighted the following specific issues:

Additional concerns:

- Preference for alternative site (a number mentioned, including an existing school site)
- Proximity of the school to residential area / homes (impact on residents)
- Light pollution, specifically for residents' homes
- Mental health impacts related to loss of green space (impact on residents)

Additional praise:

- Community benefit / access to facilities
- Regeneration of land
- Reduction of anti-social behaviour (by disrupting criminal activity that currently goes on in the site)
- Accessibility of the school to local residents

Proposed coding framework

Support / praise

- Modernisation / improved facilities
- Preservation / continuation / improvement of Catholic education
- Smoother transition from Primary to Secondary education
- Increased resources for primary schools
- Greater cohesion of education (due to staff collaboration and organisation)

- Other (to capture new codes / content which will be subsequently allocated to new themes)

Concerns

- Impact on environment
 - o Drainage of site
 - o Loss of green space
 - o Negative impact on wildlife
 - o Decrease in property values
- Impact on local residence / quality of life
 - o Noise of construction
 - o Noise of school
 - o Security risks
- Health and Safety
 - o Contamination
 - o Traffic congestion and air pollution
 - o Safety concerns for younger children mixing with older
 - o Road crossings
 - o General physical health
 - o General mental health
- Impact on education / maintenance of standards
 - o Impact of single headteacher for ages 3-16
 - o Differing needs of primary and secondary students
 - o Class sizes
 - o Impact on other schools in wider area
 - o Loss of community from smaller schools
- Accessibility of site
 - o Availability of parking
 - o Provision of safe walking routes to school (off main road)
 - o Community access to school facilities
- Impact on school staff
 - o Potential for job losses
- Preference for alternative site solution
- Other (to capture new codes / content which will be subsequently allocated to new themes)

Summary of previous consultation themes

Sep – Oct 2018 Consultation

Relevant codes

Support / praise

- Modernisation / improved facilities
- Preservation / continuation of Catholic education
- Improved transition from Primary to Secondary education
- Increased resources for primary schools
- Greater cohesion of education (due to staff collaboration and organization)

Concern

- Mixing of ages
 - o Safety concerns for younger children
 - o Differing needs of primary / secondary
- School site
 - o Ease of access
 - o Proximity to Catholic community
- Loss of community surrounding smaller schools
- Traffic / congestion
- Potential job losses
- Maintenance of standards
 - o Role of head teacher
 - o Class sizes
- Impact on other primary schools in wider area

Nov 2020 Consultation

58 responses to consultation around school site options A and B

Respondent categories:

- Resident
- School Community (inc. Parishes)
- Other

Relevant codes drawn from feedback to option A, which was determined to be the preferred option for the site:

Support / praise

- Modernisation / facilities
 - o Forest school
 - o Dance studios
 - o Sports facilities
 - o Macadam area
- Outdoor space
- Safety
- Lack of disruption due to building works
- Potential for developing green space / communal land

Concerns

- Safety
 - o Busy road (student crossing)
 - o Traffic congestion
 - o Air pollution
 - o Drainage concerns (removal of vegetation, impact of disturbing land on local H&S)
 - o Security to residents (school backing onto gardens)
 - o Impact of shared spaces on younger students
- Accessibility
 - o Accessibility of site that avoids main road
- Facilities
 - o Availability of parking
 - o Drop off spaces
 - o Loss of privacy due to proximity of school to residential area
 - o Orientation of school building (influence of residents)
 - o Lack of grass sports areas (potential neg. impact on primary students)
- Other impacts on residents
 - o Noise / disruption (by building works, school activities)
 - o Impact on property values
 - o Loss of green space
 - o Impact on wildlife

April-May 2021 Consultation

Key themes drawn from stakeholder consultation groups and the consultation survey are outlined below:

Stakeholder consultation groups

Consultation feedback organised by stakeholder group

Governors / Headteachers

- Positive that all facilities are on the same side of the road
- Size of school footprint and costs/timescales of each option
- Ground conditions and drainage
- Parking / Drop off – Sufficiency of places provided
- Travel plan
- Separate changing rooms for community use
- Impact of floodlights on residents
- Retention of some current Bishop Hedley sporting facilities

Gurnos FC / Merthyr Football League

- Size of 3G pitch
- Minimum standards to allow league progression
- Parking for 3G pitch, distance significant for Option 2
- Assurance re community use of pitch
- Access to separate changing facilities

- Over-reliance on school to access facilities
- Cost to hire facility
- Booking arrangements for pitch
- Access for other users

Residents

- Ground Conditions / Drainage / Landfill
- Extent of community use of playing fields and school site
- Anti-social behaviour
- Parking / drop Off
- Site security
- Privacy
- Location of community playgrounds
- Traffic calming measures

Public

- Parking / Drop Off
- Noise pollution / Light pollution
- Traffic impact assessment
- Traffic Calming Measures
- Access / egress
- Travel Plans
- Anti-social behaviour
- Ground conditions / Drainage
- Floodlights
- Impact on wildlife
- Privacy

Consultation survey

In addition, 81 responses were received to the consultation survey. These responses largely overlap with the themes covered above, however some nuances or additional points were raised, including:

- Loss of green space for community
- Need for sustainable building design and low carbon footprint
- Future plans for current Bishop Hedley High School sites
- Concern that the site has been chosen without proper consultation with residents

Appendix 3: Updated Coding Framework

Introduction

The coding framework outlined below reflects the range of issues identified within the consultation following two full reviews of survey responses. Coding began using the coding framework developed from summaries of previous consultations (deductively generated) and was adjusted as some issues were not raised within the most recent consultation and as new themes became apparent (inductively generated).

Each code reflects a category of issue (e.g. road safety) and is grouped within a broader theme (e.g. health and safety). Codes are also grouped in overarching categories relating to whether the response is positive (concern), negative (praise) or is a suggestion for, or request of, the council.

The same coding framework was used for Question 2 (concerning Option 1) and 3 (concerning Option 2), though specific issues varied somewhat in relation to either option. For example, responses coded under 'Positioning of school building' (grouped under the theme 'Geography' and the category 'Praise') include positive responses about the integration of the school building into the surrounding woodland for Option 1 and about the elevation of the school building for Option 2. Differences in concerns and perceived advantages noted in relation to the two options will be drawn out in reporting.

Organising codes in this way enables us to compare views towards each option in relation to different issues (such as environmental impact), helping MTCBC to identify how concerns could be appeased in either scenario. This approach also allows us to easily identify issues raised in relation to both options.

For information: In the later stage of consultation (July-September) a majority of responses referred to both options, whilst the earlier stage (April-May) received some more substantive feedback relating specifically to the Options. This appears to reflect the distribution of respondent category between the two stages, with a majority of responses (459 / 702) in the July-September stage coming from residents, many of whom state opposition to both Options, where responses to the April-May stage were more distributed across respondent categories.

A separate coding framework was developed (inductively) to group responses to Question 6 ('Are there any other comments/issues you would like us to consider?'). Whilst some responses re-stated issues raised in response to Question 2 or 3, others included commentary on the consultation process or on wider impacts of the new school. As such, some codes overlap with the primary coding framework and others have been added to ensure all responses are captured. As there were fewer responses to Question 6 overall, categories are broader than the primary coding framework.

Questions 2 & 3 Coding Framework

Support / Praise

- Geography of site
 - o Location (i.e. of overall site)
 - o Positioning (inc. elevation, proximity to woodland, proximity to residents)
 - o Size of site

- Facilities
 - o Modernisation / improved facilities
 - o Positioning of playing fields
- Access
 - o General accessibility (by car or pedestrian)
 - o Traffic flow
 - o Availability / location of parking
- Community impact
 - o Community access to facilities
 - o Regeneration of land
 - o Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Other positive
- Non-specific positive

Concern

- Impact on environment
 - o Loss of green space
 - o Negative impact on local wildlife
 - o Decrease in property values
 - o Other environmental impact (e.g. statements about climate change)
- Impact on local residents
 - o Proximity to residential area
 - o Noise pollution
 - o Light pollution
 - o Security risks
 - o Privacy concerns (e.g. due to building overlooking properties)
 - o Obstructed views
 - o Building works disruption
 - o Traffic
- Health and safety
 - o Air pollution
 - o Road safety
 - o Mental health impacts (of lost green space)
- Schooling
 - o Opposition to 3-16 school
- Accessibility of site
 - o Parking concerns
 - o Distance to travel for parents and pupils
 - o Pedestrian access
- Preference for alternative site*
 - o Existing BHHS site
 - o Goat Mill Road
 - o Unspecified alternative (e.g. brownfield land)
 - o Other (to capture range of other sites suggested)
- Other negative
- Non-specific negative

*Although site preference and alternative suggestions are captured in Question 5, a significant number of responses to Questions 2 and 3 state a preference for an alternative location without further comment. As such, the codes in 'Preference for alternative site' above have been added to capture these responses.

Suggestions and requests

Given the relatively small number of responses that offer specific suggestions for site construction or which make requests of the council (e.g. to see a report), these have been captured under one code. All suggestions and requests will be listed within the report.

Q6 Coding framework

The following list reflects the full range of responses that came up in response to Q6.

- Health and wellbeing
 - o Loss of green space / environmental impact
 - o Impact on physical and mental health
 - o Air pollution
 - o Road safety
- Concern about motivations
 - o Concerns that the change is financially motivated
 - o Political comment (including criticism of LA or local politicians)
 - o Criticism of diocese or resistance towards faith schooling
- Consultation process
 - o Dissatisfaction with consultation process
- Education / schooling
 - o General opposition to 3-16 school (reason unspecified)
 - o Concerns about mixing younger and older children
 - o Impact on educational standards
- Impact on residents and environment
 - o Traffic concerns
 - o Parking concerns
 - o Light pollution
 - o Noise pollution
 - o Loss of biodiversity
 - o Reduction of anti-social behaviour (positive)
 - o Concerns about plans for current BHHS site
- Other
 - o General statement of favour for plans

Appendix 4: Consultation Meeting Attendees List

Governors & Headteachers, Thursday 29th April 2021

Project representatives:

Mrs Sue Walker – Chief Education Officer, MTCBC
Mrs Anne Robertson – Director of Schools, Archdiocese of Cardiff
Mr Anthony Lewis – Head of School Planning and Improvement, MTCBC
Mr Chris Jones – Building and Property Services Manager, MTCBC
Mrs Jayne Jones – Clerk to the 3-16 Governors
Mr Dan Jones – Bid Manager, Wilmott Dixon
Mrs Simon Kneafsey – Lead Architect, Atkins
Mr Jason Pritchard – Project Manager, Aecom
Mr Gary Mitchell – Consultant Engineer, Cambria Consulting

Attendees:

Councillor Julian Amos (Chair of Governors)
Canon Barry English (Vice Chair of Governors)
Mr Adam Ridley
Councillor Lee Davies
Mrs Kath Phelan
Deacon David O’Keefe
Mr Julian Long
Mrs Mary Eaton
Mrs Karen Jones
Mrs Judith Budding
Mrs Sarah Thomas
Mrs Suzanne Williams
Mrs Georgina Thomas
Mrs Karen Lewis – Headteacher, St Aloysius RC Primary School
Mrs Karen Wathen – Executive Headteacher, Federation of St. Mary’s and St Illtyd’s RC Primary Schools
Mrs Sarah Hopkins – Headteacher, Bishop Hedley RC High School

Gurnos Football Club & Merthyr Football League, Friday 30th April 2021

Project representatives:

Mr Anthony Lewis – Head of School Planning and Improvement, MTCBC
Mr Chris Jones – Building & Property Services Manager, MTCBC
Mr Dan Bufton, Sports Development Manager, MTCBC
Mr Jayne Jones – Clerk to the 3-16 Governors, MTCBC
Mr Dan Jones – Bid Manager, Willmott Dixon
Mrs Fiona Gwilliam – Project Architect, Atkins
Mr Jason Pritchard – Project Manager, Aecom
Mr Ben Whyman – Consultant Engineer, Cambria Consulting

Attendees:

Mr Micheal Ronan, Merhtyr Football League
Mr Jamie Morgan, Gurnos FC
Mr Neil Williams, Gurnos FC
Mr Jamie Minett, Gurnos FC

Residents, Tuesday 4th May 2021

Project representatives:

Mrs Sue Walker – Chief Education Officer, MTCBC
Mr Chris Jones – Building and Property Services Manager, MTCBC
Mrs Jayne Jones – Clerk to the 3-16 Governors
Mr Dan Jones – Bid Manager, Wilmott Dixon
Mrs Simon Kneafsey – Lead Architect, Atkins
Mrs Fiona Gwilliam – Project Architect, Atkins
Mr Jason Pritchard – Project Manager, Aecom
Mr Gary Mitchell – Consultant Engineer, Cambria Consulting

Attendees:

Residents x 5

Public, Wednesday 5th May 2021

Project representatives:

Mrs Sue Walker – Chief Education Officer, MTCBC
Mr Chris Jones – Building and Property Services Manager, MTCBC
Mrs Jayne Jones – Clerk to the 3-16 Governors
Mr Dan Jones – Bid Manager, Wilmott Dixon
Mrs Simon Kneafsey – Lead Architect, Atkins
Mrs Fiona Gwilliam – Project Architect, Atkins
Mr Jason Pritchard – Project Manager, Aecom
Mr Gary Mitchell – Consultant Engineer, Cambria Consulting

Attendees:

Members of the Public x 6
Councillor L Davies
Councillor D Isaac
Councillor K Gibbs
Councillor J Davies
Councillor B Smith

Appendix 5: Responses to Q5 closed before and after the extension of the July-September phase of the consultation

The second phase of the consultation was initially planned to run from the 15th of July to the 6th of September. The consultation was later extended until the 20th of September, following a request by Ward Councillors who had been informed by some residents that they had not received consultation invitation letters and to give parents of school children more time to complete the survey. Additional letters were sent out to specific streets in the Gurnos Ward at the beginning of the extended consultation period. A Freedom of Information request was later made for the Council to release data from prior to and following the extension, to clarify that there was not a significant skew in responses in the extended period.

Table 1 below outlines the number and percentage of respondents who completed the survey prior to and following the extension of the consultation. As can be seen, 90.2% (633) of responses were received prior to the extension (between 15th July – 6th September), with 9.8% (69) responses being received after the extension (7th September – 20th September).

Table 1. Number of responses received prior to and following the 6th September extension to the consultation

Q5 July-September consultation responses before and after the extension		
Consultation period	No. of responses	%
Pre-Extension (15 th July – 6 th September)	633	90.2%
Post-Extension (7 th September – 20 th September)	69	9.8%
Total	702 ¹⁷	100%

Figure 1 below outlines the percentage of respondents selecting each option in the period before the extension (15th of July – 6th of September), following the extension (7th September – 20th September) and for the two periods together. As shown, there was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents selecting neither option in the extended period of the consultation versus the earlier period, with 71.4% (452) of respondents prior to the extension selecting neither option and 79.7% (55) of those after extension. Accordingly, there was a decrease in the percentage of those selecting either of the two options. Option 2 (Greenie) remained the preference of the two options, with 18.2% (115) selecting Option 2 (Greenie) as their preference prior to the extension and 14.5% (10) selecting Option 2 (Greenie) following the extension.

¹⁷ In addition, 81 responses were received to the April-May phase of the consultation, bringing the total number of responses overall to 783.

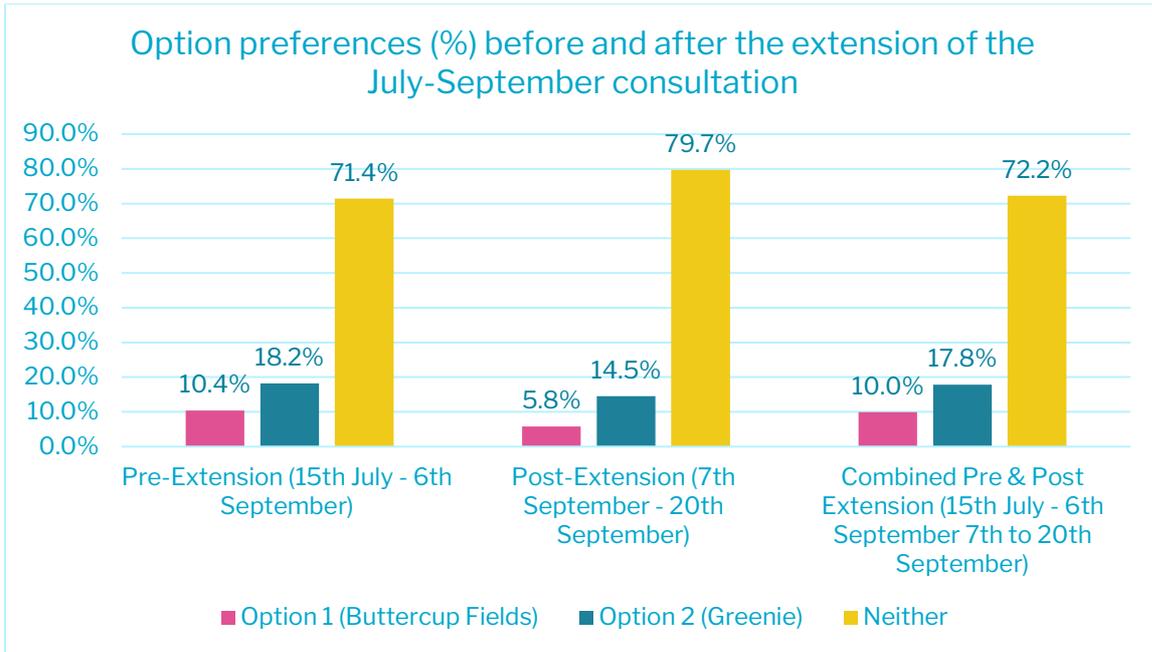


Figure 1. Overview of option preferences before the extension, following the extension and the two periods combined. [Base: 702]

Figure 2 below illustrates the percentage of respondents in each phase of the consultation expressing favour or opposition to the plans overall at Question 5: i.e. selecting Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) or 2 (Greenie) versus neither option. As can be seen, in the 15th July – 6th September period 28.8% (181) of respondents selected either Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) or 2 (Greenie), which fell to 20.3% (14) of respondents in the 6th September to 20th September period. As noted above, the percentage of those selecting neither option rose accordingly (exact figures above). The red dotted line in Figure 2 indicates the slight increase in those selecting neither option from the 15th July – 6th September to the 7th September – 20th September period.

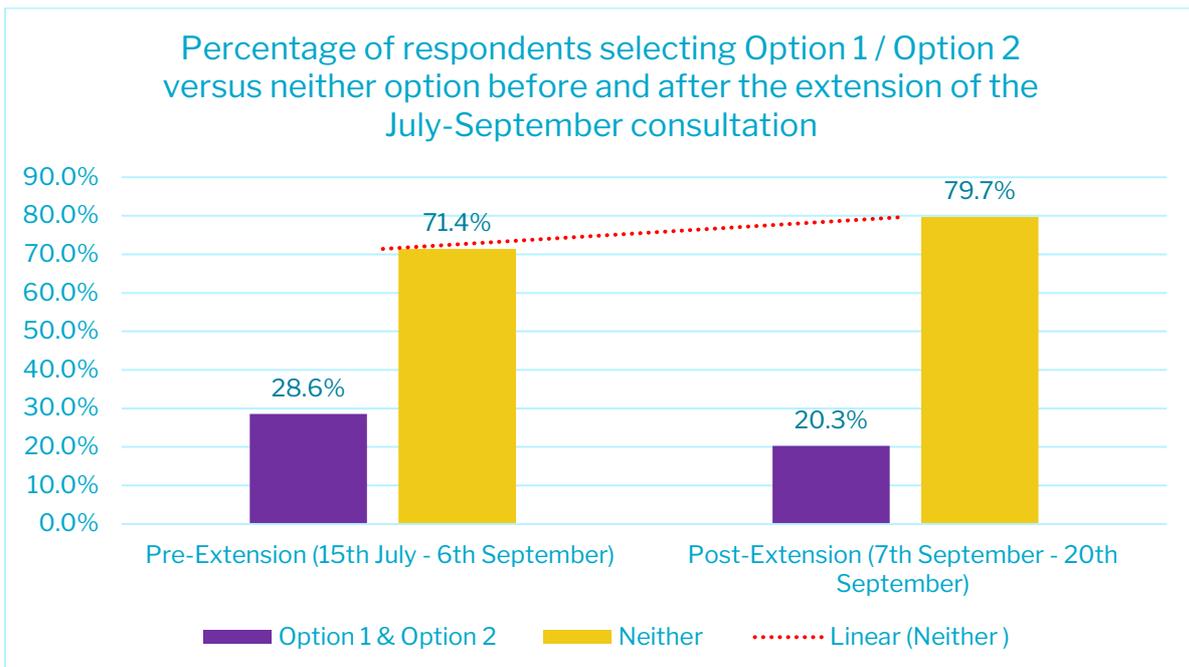


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents selecting Option 1 or 2 versus neither option in prior to and following the extension of the July-September consultation. [Base: 702]

The specific number of respondents selecting Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), Option 2 (Greenie) or neither option prior to the extension, following the extension and for the full period of the July-September phase of the consultation are outlined below in Tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 1. Responses to Q5 closed before the extension of the July-September phase of the consultation

Q5 Responses 15th July – 6th September		
Option selection	No. of respondents	%
Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)	66	10.4%
Option 2 (Greenie)	115	18.2%
Option 3 (neither)	452	71.4%
Total responses	633	100%

Table 2. Responses to Q5 closed after the extension of the July-September phase of the consultation

Q5 Responses 7th September – 20th September		
Option selection	No. of respondents	%
Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)	4	5.8%
Option 2 (Greenie)	10	14.5%
Option 3 (neither)	55	79.7%
Total responses	69	100%

Table 3. Responses to Q5 closed for the full July-September phase of the consultation

Q5 Responses from the two periods combined		
Option selection	No. of respondents	%
Option 1 (Buttercup Fields)	70	10.0%
Option 2 (Greenie)	125	17.8%
Option 3 (neither)	507	72.2%
Total responses	702	100%

Appendix 6: Overview of coding frequencies

The frequencies provided in the tables below provide an overview of the number of times issues were raised within responses to the open questions of the consultation survey. Tables 1-9 outline *the number of times a particular issue was raised in response to each question*, separated by the three types of comments (Concern; praise; and suggestion). Table 1 outlines the number and type of concerns raised at Question 2, Table 2 outlines the number and type of positive responses or praise raised at Question 2 and Table 3 outlines the number and type of suggestions raised at Question 2, with the subsequent tables following the same pattern for Questions 3 and 6. Following this, separate frequencies are provided for the *number of respondents across the three open questions* who raised each of the most frequent themes and sub-themes in consultation survey responses. Overall respondent totals are only provided for key concerns, as positive feedback generally related to the relative advantages of one option versus another and as suggestions were more specific (meaning that frequencies are less helpful) and have been outlined in full in the body of the report.

Notably, as some respondents raised the same issue in response to multiple questions, the total number of responses across the three questions is different to the number of respondents who raised the issue overall. For example, though traffic concerns were raised by 40 respondents at Question 2, 21 respondents at Question 3 and 43 respondents at Question 6, it was only raised by 87 respondents overall (rather than 104, which is the total of the frequencies for this code at each question). This is because some of those who raised traffic concerns at Questions 3 and 6 were the same as those who raised them at Question 2.

As questions were open, frequencies should only be interpreted as rough indicators rather than accurate representations of the level of concern around a particular issue amongst the community. For example, it is possible that had respondents been asked a closed question such as *'Are you concerned about increased traffic congestion as a result of the school being built at the site?'* many more respondents would have selected 'yes' or, in contrast, more respondents would have selected 'no' than 'yes'.

The frequency with which issues were raised at Question 2 and 3 may indicate to some extent which concerns were more widespread in relation to either of the options. However it should be noted that although certain issues were raised more frequently in response to Option 1 (Question 1) than Option 2 (Question 2), it is possible that some respondents felt that they had already expressed their concerns at Question 1 and therefore did not feel the need to repeat them. As such, the thematic analysis in the main body of the report provides greater insight into differences in perspectives of the two options amongst those responding to the consultation.

Frequency of codes in response to each question

Question 2 Coding Overview

Table 1. Concerns / negative responses at Question 2 (Option 1)

Question 2. Concerns / negative responses	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
Impact on environment	196
Loss of green space	173
Negative impact on local wildlife	15
Other environmental impact	6
Decrease in property values	2
Impact on local residents	95
Traffic	40
Proximity to residential area	26
Noise pollution	9
Light pollution	4
Security risks	4
Privacy	2
Litter	1
Obstructed view	5
Building works disruption	4
Health and safety	43
Air pollution	11
Road Safety	21
Mental health and wellbeing	11
Schooling	15
Opposition to 3-16 school	15
Accessibility of site	24
Parking concerns	23
Distance to travel	1
Preference for alternative site	39
Existing school site	22
Goat Mill Road	9
Unspecified	4
Other alternative site	4
Other	n/a
Nonspecific negative	241
Preference for option 2	12
Other negative	26
Total negative comment at Q2	691

Table 2. Praise / positive responses at Question 2 (Option 1)

Question 2. Praise / positive responses	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
Facilities	30
Modernisation / improved facilities	13
Position of playing fields	17
Geography	21
Size of site	6
Location	4
Position / layout	11
Access	28
General accessibility	3
Availability / location of parking	7
Community access to facilities	9
Regeneration of land	3
Reduce ASB	6
Other	n/a
Non-specific positive	68
Other (positive	9
Preference for Option 1	50
Total positive comment at Q2	206

Table 3. Suggestions at Question 2 (Option 1)

Question 2. Suggestions / requests	
Sub-theme	No. of time raised
Facilities (e.g. parking and sports)	4
Site / Site layout	3
Information requests	1
Wider	1
Total suggestions / requests at Q2	9

Question 3 Coding Overview

Table 4. Concerns / negative responses at Question 3 (Option 2)

Question 3. Concerns / negative responses	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
<i>Impact on environment</i>	216
Loss of green space	180
Negative impact on local wildlife	3
Other environmental impact	33
<i>Impact on local residents</i>	57
Traffic	21
Proximity to residential area	10
Noise pollution	10
Light pollution	4
Security risks	6
Obstructed view	4
Building works disruption	2
<i>Health and safety</i>	22
Air pollution	10
Road Safety	7
Mental health and wellbeing	5
<i>Schooling</i>	12
Opposition to 3-16 school	12
<i>Accessibility of site</i>	7
Parking concern	6
Distance to travel	1
<i>Preference for alternative site</i>	35
Existing school site	23
Goat Mill Road	5
Unspecified	5
Other alternative site	2
<i>Other</i>	n/a
Nonspecific negative	229
Preference for option 1	15
Other negative	6
Total negative comment at Q3	599

Table 5. Praise / positive responses at Question 3 (Option 2)

Question 3. Praise / positive responses	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
Facilities	4
Modernisation / improved facilities	4
Geography	15
Location	8
Position / elevation	7
Access	32
General accessibility	16
Traffic flow	6
Availability / location of parking	10
Community impact	12
Community access to facilities	4
Regeneration of land	3
Reduce ASB	5
Other	n/a
Non-specific positive	36
Other (positive)	13
Preference for Option 1	51
Total positive comment at Q3	163

Table 6. Suggestions at Question 3 (Option 2)

Question 3. Suggestions / requests	
Sub-theme	No. of times raised
Facilities (e.g. parking and sports)	1
Access / road & parking	1
Site / Site layout	2
Procedural & development considerations	1
Wider	1
Total suggestions / requests at Q3	6

Question 6 Coding Overview

Table 7. Q6 Concerns / negative responses

Question 6. Concern / negative response	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
Health and wellbeing	54
Impact of loss of green space on H&WB	26
Air pollution	7
Road Safety	21
Concern about motivations	96
Concerns that residents are being ignored/mistreated	23
Concern that change is financially motivated	11
Frustration towards LA or local politicians	53
Frustration towards Diocese / resistance to faith schools	9
Consultation process	37
Dissatisfaction with consultation process	37
Education / schooling	29
General opposition to 3-16 school	23
Fear of impact on educational standards	2
Concerns around mixing older and younger students	4
Environmental impact	156
Loss of green space / environmental impact	150
Loss of biodiversity / wildlife	6
Impact on residents	57
Light pollution	6
Noise	8
Traffic concerns	43
Accessibility	13
Access / parking	13
Site	42
Preference for existing BHHS site	17
Preference for alternative site	19
Inappropriateness of site	6
Other	n/a
Other negative	3
Total negative comment at Q6	487

Table 8. Q6 Praise / positive responses

Question 6. Praise / positive response	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
<i>Impact on residents (positive)</i>	12
Reduced ASB	12
<i>Other</i>	n./a
Expressions of support for school	39
Total positive comment at Q6	51

Table 9. Q6 Suggestions

Question 6: Suggestions / requests	
Sub-theme	No. of times raised
Facilities (e.g. parking and sports)	10
Access / road & parking	3
Site / Site layout	10
Procedural & development considerations	3
Information requests	10
Wider	8
Total suggestions / requests at Q6	44

Number of respondents who raised each of the key themes across the three open questions

Table 10. Key themes of concerns / negative responses across consultation survey

Respondent total: Concerns / negative responses (themes)	
Themes	No. of times raised
Impact on environment	306
Impact on local residents	97
Health and safety	86
Accessibility of site	40

Table 10. Key sub-themes of concerns / negative responses across consultation survey

Respondent total: Concerns / negative responses (sub-themes)	
Theme / sub-theme	No. of times raised
<i>Impact on environment</i>	
Loss of green space	302
<i>Impact on local residents</i>	
Traffic	87
Other impacts on residents (proximity to residential area, noise and light pollution, security risks, privacy, litter, obstructed views and building work disruption combined) ¹⁸	65
<i>Health and safety</i>	
Air pollution	21
Road Safety	39
<i>Accessibility of site</i>	
Parking concerns	39

¹⁸ Relatively small numbers of respondents raised each of these issues alone, however concerns around impacts on residents generally were widespread. Traffic concerns have been separated out as concerns relating to traffic were raised most frequently.

