



**A report on the findings of the consultation carried out between
January 6th and February 17th 2022 for the siting of a new 3-16
Voluntary-aided Catholic school**



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County Borough Council
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Report background and consultation objectives

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) has undertaken a series of consultations in respect of a 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 to consultation at this stage. 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
 - 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.
- Fourth public 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.

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.

The two options taken to the fourth consultation were:

- **Option 1 (Buttercup Fields):** A further development of the Buttercup Fields / Greenie site proposed in previous rounds of consultation. The school building was 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 (Greenie):** 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 earlier consultation feedback, all parking and drop off facilities were located on the same side of the road as the school building in both options and both included a shared school-community 3G pitch.

Outcomes of the fourth public consultation

The fourth consultation comprised of four virtual meetings between representatives of the project from the Council and contractors for the proposed development, and groups affected by the plans (head teachers and governors; residents; members of Gurnos FC and Merthyr Football League; and the general public), and a survey inviting feedback on the two proposed options, alternative site suggestions and broader comment.

A majority of those who responded to the consultation survey (66%) selected neither option, with 22% selecting Option 2 (Greenie) and 12% selecting Option 1 (Buttercup Fields). Responses to open questions in the survey indicated significant concern, particularly amongst residents and community stakeholders, about the loss of green space associated with the plans in either option, as well as broader concerns about the impact on local residents in relation to traffic congestion; air, light and noise pollution; privacy and security. Amongst these respondents, greater concern was expressed in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) due to the proximity of the school building to residential properties on Billingham Crescent. The most widely stated concerns amongst parents and school staff related to parking and drop off facilities, however these concerns were greatest in relation to Option 1 (Buttercup Fields) which was perceived to have poorer parking/drop off provision than Option 2 (Greenie).

Key concerns arising from consultation meetings largely reflected those within survey feedback and 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.

Following the fourth public consultation, the Council ruled out the least popular option, Option 1 (Buttercup Fields), as further scoping works indicated some risks to the viability of the site. Whilst most of the alternative site suggestions proposed by respondents in the survey were determined not to be viable in the earlier feasibility report, the existing BHHS site was deemed feasible, although significantly more complex and costly, provided one of the Buttercup Fields is used for a school sports pitch, therefore delivering the school across three sites. As such, the Council approved further public consultation to include a revised configuration of the Greenie site, adapted to reflect

consultation feedback, and a new option of the existing BHHS site with an additional sports field on Plateau 2 of the Buttercup Fields.

Current public consultation

Following the Council's consideration of findings from the fourth consultation and further scoping work of potential sites, a fifth consultation was launched on the 6th January until the 17th February 2022.

This survey sought feedback on two options for the new 3-16 school site, which were as follows:

- Option A – A revised configuration of the previous Option 2, with changes to absorb feedback from the fourth consultation, specifically:
 - The community playground would be relocated and kept near to the current community MUGA
 - The community changing rooms would be relocated to the Buttercup Fields next to the community grass pitch and shared third generation synthetic surface (3G) pitch
 - An additional green space community facility would be included on Phase 2 (Upper Site) of the current Bishop Hedley High School site. A question was included in the consultation survey (Question 4) to gather views regarding the potential use of this area as a community space
 - A safe pedestrian route would be provided from the location of the current Greenie playing fields to the Buttercup Fields and new community space on the BHHS Phase 2 site

As per the option put forward in the previous consultation, the school building with car parking and drop-off would be located on the Greenie playing fields, with both playing fields relocated to the Buttercup fields. One of the playing fields would be a shared school/community 3G football pitch, and the other would-be open access to the community.

- Option B – A re-development of the current BHHS site, which was requested in feedback to the fourth consultation. In this option:
 - The school building, primary drop-off and primary play areas would be located on Phase 2 of the current BHHS site
 - Car parking, sports hall and sports pitches would be located on Phase 1 of the current BHHS site
 - One of the current Buttercup Fields (plateau 2) would be redeveloped as a school rugby pitch

Disposal of Playing Fields Impact Assessment

The consultation was carried out in line with the requirements of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010 and updated Regulations of 2015. An impact assessment was carried out and was shared as part of the consultation papers which examined the potential impact of the two options in relation to the Local Development Plan (specifically Policy SW10 Protecting and Improving Open Spaces); opportunities for play for children and young people (via the MTCBC Play Sufficiency Assessment); the Local Wellbeing Plan; and MTCBC's Open Spaces Strategy and Open Spaces Action Plan.

Through the impact assessment, Option A (Greenie) was identified as having some impact on the availability of open spaces due to the use of the Greenie fields (Plateaus 3 and 4) for the school building, car park and school grounds and the relocation of the current community playing fields to Plateau 1 of the Buttercup Fields in this option. However, this impact is mitigated by the planned provision of a new open space on the current BHHS Phase 2 and a new shared school-community 3G pitch, also on Plateau 1. In addition, though the community playground is relocated in this option, the new playground would be marginally closer to neighbouring communities and would be updated with improved facilities; as such, Option A (Greenie) was deemed to have a positive impact on children's opportunities for play.

As Option B involves utilising the existing BHHS Phase 1 and 2 for the majority of the school site, this option was deemed to have no impact on any of the aforementioned plans. Although this option includes the use of one of the Buttercup Fields (Plateau 2) for a secondary school rugby pitch, this area is not priority open space and the existing community playing fields remain unaffected.

Whilst there were no specific questions on the impact assessment within the consultation, feedback relevant to the assessment has been discussed on page 52.

Consultation analysis objectives

The overall objective of the consultation was to provide all groups who will be affected by the plans with an opportunity to give feedback on the revised plans and inform Council decisions about the siting and configuration of the new school². 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

Define was contracted as an independent research company to:

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

Consultation and consultation analysis methodology

Consultation method

MTCBC went live with the fifth public consultation between 6th January and 17th February 2022.

Consultation activity included:

² Groups impacted by the plans and specifically invited to participate in the consultation include residents of areas surrounding the proposed sites, school pupils, school staff and parents of pupils, local community stakeholders (such as people who use the greenie for sport or recreation and family members of residents), and members of local Catholic parishes.

- A consultation pack (Appendix 1), including details of the proposed plans, an executive summary of the S278 Highways Improvement plans, and a consultation survey which was made available online via the Council webpage and was further promoted through the Council's social media.
- Over 4,700 letters were delivered to residential properties in Penydarren, Galon Uchaf and the Gurnos Estate which included details of the consultation and how to access the consultation pack and survey online or as a hard copy, and a consultation notice in line with the requirements of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure, 2010 and Regulations, 2015.
- As required by the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure, 2010 and Regulations, 2015 A Consultation Notice was published for two consecutive weeks in the local newspaper the *Merthyr Express* on January 6th and January 13th. Consultation Notices were also erected on the entrances to the Greenie Playing Fields and on fencing around the Buttercup Fields site.
- Hard copies of the consultation pack were provided to the four local churches in addition to a display pack for each.
- Hard copies of the consultation pack were provided to prominent local shops in the areas surrounding the proposed development, including one each in Penydarren Galon Uchaf and two in the Gurnos Estate and the Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC) of the Gurnos Estate. A display pack was also provided to the NLC, Gurnos Estate and the Calon Las building, Gurnos Estate.
- Display packs were provided to each of the four local schools and a letter was sent to each of the 800 families across the four schools as well as to staff and governors informing them of the consultation, providing links to the consultation pack and explain how to access hard copy packs.
- The consultation was also promoted at least weekly via MTCBC social media channels including website, Facebook and Twitter.
- In line with the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure, 2010 and Regulations, 2015, five statutory consultees were invited to submit feedback to the consultation. A PDF copy of the consultation notice in English and Welsh (Appendix 2) was sent by email to representatives of: Merthyr Tydfil Football League; Gurnos FC; Sport Wales; Fields in Trust and Play Wales.
- In order to capture the voice of pupils and ensure as wide a participation of pupils as possible, meetings were held with the school councils / School Parliaments of each school and pupils were given an opportunity to select their preferred option. In addition, schools were provided with boxes and counters for pupils in the school as a whole to indicate their preferred options. Pupil preferences were counted separately from survey responses and are reported on pages 62-63.

Consultation survey

The consultation survey consisted of the following nine questions:

1. Are you: (Please select one only that best describes you)
 - a resident
 - local community stakeholder
 - school pupil
 - parent of pupil
 - teacher/member of staff
 - member of a local parish
 - Other (please specify below)

2. If you wish to be informed directly regarding the outcome of the consultation and to receive a copy of the decision notice and any final Council report please provide details of your full name, address and email address below.

Please also indicate whether you wish to receive a hard copy of the above information otherwise only an electronic copy will be sent.

3. What is your view of Option A - Greenie? (School building on Greenie with additional community facilities on Phase 2 (Upper Site) of BHHS)

4. If option A was taken forward, what open air community facility would you like to be developed on the Phase 2 (Upper site) of the current BHHS site? For example, this could be an open green space only, or also a playground, or you may have other suggestions.

5. What is your view of Option B – Current BHHS sites? (School on existing Bishop Hedley High School site with school rugby pitch on plateau 2 of Buttercup Fields)

6. Please rank the options out of 5. (1 = unfavourable; 3 = satisfactory; 5 = favourable)
 - 6a. Option A (Greenie with additional open space on BHHS phase 2)
 - 6b. Option B (BHHS site with school rugby pitch on plateau 2 of Buttercup Fields)

7. What is your preferred option?
 - Option A – Greenie, with additional open space on current BHHS phase 2
 - Option B – Current BHHS Sites with school rugby pitch on plateau 2 of Buttercup Fields

8. Are there any changes or suggestions you would like to make with respect to your preferred option?

9. Are there any further comments you would like to make on the proposals?

Of the above questions, Questions 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 were wholly open, one was a closed question with some open text (Question 1) and two were wholly closed questions (Questions 6 and 7). There was an additional open question (Question 2) where respondents were asked to provide contact information for receiving information about the progress of the project, which was not analysed for the purposes of this report.

Changes to the consultation survey

A number of minor amendments were made to the survey during the first two weeks that it was live, in order to address issues that had been identified through early responses. Amendments did not involve changes to the wording of questions themselves or to the two options. The changes are as follows:

- A technical error with Question 1 was detected on the first day that the survey was live (6th of January). Some respondents had been unable to select 'resident' in response to this question and had been asked to provide a response in the open-text ('other') field. The issue was rectified at around midday on the 6th of January and any respondent who indicated that they were a resident in the open-text field was re-coded as such.
- The ranking system at Question 6 was initially unlabelled such that some respondents were unclear which number (1 or 5) represented the highest ranking. This issue was addressed before midday on the 7th of January. Responses up until this point were read to identify instances in which respondents had interpreted the ranking order in the opposite direction to that intended (i.e. with 1 interpreted as the highest ranking) and 12 responses to Question 6 were re-coded on this basis. In each of these cases, the ranking of each Option was inverted.³ Re-coding was based on responses to Questions 3 (views on Option A), 5 (views on Option B) and 7 (Option preference) in particular, but also took into account responses to Questions 4, 8 and 9. Three of the twelve respondents explicitly clarified their interpretation of Question 6 in the general comments section (Question 9). The remaining respondents had all made clear their option preference across the open text responses and at Question 7.
- The format of Question 7 was amended in the third week that the consultation was live to correct an error that had affected a single response. Though the question requested that respondents select only one option, it was initially possible to select both options. In this period, one respondent selected both Option A (Greenie) and Option B (BHHS) and when this was identified the survey was adjusted to facilitate smoother analysis of Option preferences. The one respondent who selected both options at Question 7 indicated in other responses that Option A (Greenie) would be their least favoured option and

³ For example, where a respondent ranked Option B (BHHS) as 1 (unfavourable) and Option A (Greenie) as 5 (favourable) but made clear across their open text responses and at Question 7 that their preference was for Option B, this ranking was inverted so that 1 became 5 and 5 became 1. The same pattern was followed for each number in the ranking system, 2 would become 4, 4 would become 2 and 3 would remain the same.

therefore, for consistency, this respondent has been included as voting for Option B (BHHS).

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 respondent sub-group
- 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 respondent 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. In addition to analysis by individual respondent category, responses to closed questions were grouped into two broader communities:

- Local community (including residents and local community stakeholders⁴)
- School community (parents of pupils, teachers / members of staff, school pupils, parish members and governors)

Those who selected Other were allocated into either of the above two groups depending on their specified 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. There were three respondents who indicated that they fell into both communities (e.g. 'parent and resident'), and these respondents were allocated to an additional 'Dual-coded' group. Whilst this categorisation is imperfect (given that some respondents may fall in both categories without stating this explicitly) it was deemed the most appropriate for the purposes of analysis.

The two categories were created to aid understanding of how and whether perspectives differed between those with a direct connection to the existing schools and/or the proposed new 3-16 school and those within the local community who may be impacted by the plans, but do not necessarily have a connection to the schools.

For Question 6, Excel functions were used to tally the different rankings for each option amongst all respondents, the community groups and for each respondent category. Bar

⁴ Excluding school governors.

charts were produced for both options to show the percentage of respondents who ranked them as 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'at least satisfactory' (3-5), amongst all respondents, the local community, school community and for each respondent category. Identifying the percentages of those who ranked each option as 'at least satisfactory' is hoped to facilitate the Council in determining whether either option would be acceptable to different groups of those affected by the plans. However, in the interests of full transparency and to capture detailed findings, tables have also been included to show the breakdown of responses for each specific ranking (1-5) from all respondents and for each of the two community groups.

For Question 7, tables and bar charts were created to tally the number of respondents selecting either Option A (Greenie) or Option B (current BHHS site) for all respondents, the local and school community, and for each of the respondent categories.

Thematic analysis

Responses to open questions (Question 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9) 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 consideration⁵. Once identified, all individual themes within the consultation feedback (such as *expressions of concern about disruption to students' education*) were organised into overarching themes (for example, *schooling*) to enable reporting of findings in a coherent way and to facilitate the Council in actioning any changes to the proposal that may be required.

The coding framework for each question can be found in Appendix 3.

For Questions 3 and 5, which asked for views on Option A (Greenie) and B (BHHS_ respectively, themes were organised into 'expressions of approval', 'objections', and 'further comment'. For Question 4, which asked for suggestions with regards to the new open-air facility that would be developed should Option A (Greenie) go ahead, the most common suggestions were given a specific code (e.g. 'playground', 'open space' etc.). Suggestions that were made by less than five respondents were categorised under 'other' and then counted manually. As Question 8 asked respondents for further suggestions with respect to their preferred option, these responses were separated by the respondents stated option preference at Question 7. Responses were then grouped in terms of themes of suggestions (such as those relating to 'traffic management', 'sports pitches and fields' and so on) in relation to each option. Finally, responses to Question 9, which asked for any further comment in relation to the proposals as a whole, were organised by the type of feedback being given (for example 'feedback on consultation process', 'support for new school', 'opposition to new school' and so on).

Later stages of thematic 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.

⁵ Responses often contain more than one theme are therefore coded multiple times so that their content can be reviewed when analysing each of the relevant themes.

Two full rounds of coding⁶ were conducted on Excel, which was felt to be the most suitable format to enable MTCBC to later access and use the data.

Within the discussion of the thematic analysis (Questions 3, 5, 4, 8 and 9), frequencies of codes (i.e., the number of times a particular issue was mentioned) indicate how often a given issue was raised overall and by different groups of respondents. As the analysis relates to open questions, the frequency of a code reflects how often issues were *spontaneously raised*, which may indicate which issues were salient for different types of respondents but does not provide a complete picture of their perspectives. Where frequencies are not provided, 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.

⁶ 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 between the 6th of January and 17th of February 2022. The consultation primarily comprised of a survey that could be completed online or via hard copy.
- In order to encourage as wide a participation by school pupils as possible and capture the ‘pupil voice’ the consultation also included school council meetings and whole school votes at the four schools due to be merged.
- 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 a fourth public consultation. Option 1 situated the school building at the south end of Galon Uchaf Park (Buttercup Fields) and Option 2 located the buildings at the north end of the park (the Greenie). Outcomes of the fourth consultation indicated that neither of the two options were acceptable to the community, with 65.8% (499) of respondents selecting ‘neither option’ when asked to indicate their preference. Responses to open questions indicated that the primary concerns of respondents related to the loss of community green space, the availability of sufficient parking facilities and impacts on residents from traffic, noise and light pollution.

Fifth public consultation (6 weeks from 6th January to 17th February 2022)

- Following the fourth consultation and further scoping work, the Buttercup Field site was discounted and two further options were brought to the fifth consultation in January 2022:
 - Option A - Greenie: a revised version of the previous Option 2 site with new community open space planned to be developed with community input on the current BHHS Phase 2 site.
 - Option B – BHHS: a new site option, with school buildings located on the current BHHS site and a secondary rugby pitch located on Plateau 2 of the Buttercup Fields.
- In total, the consultation survey received 738 responses. The majority of those who responded, 67.9% (501), identified as residents, with 13.8% (102) identifying as parents of pupils, 4.7% (35) as local community stakeholders⁷, 4.5% (33) as members of school staff, 3.7% (27) as local parish members and 2.7% (20) as school pupils. A further 2.6% (19) of respondents identified as ‘other’ and provided an open text

⁷ Respondents who selected ‘other’ at Question 1 and indicated that they were family members of residents or users of the Greenie (such as for playing sports or dog walking) were re-categorised as local community stakeholders.

response, and these included wider county residents, former residents, former pupils, those who spanned multiple categories (such as parents and residents) and those working with the local community. One response (0.1%) was received from Sport Wales, the national Welsh body for promoting sport and activity.

- 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' (including pupils, parents, staff members and local parish members) or the 'local community' (including residents and community stakeholders). Local community respondents made up 73.7% (544) of all respondents, whilst the school community made up 25.6% (189).⁸ Responses to closed questions were analysed by both individual respondent category and the wider respondent community.
- Across the two open questions which requested feedback on the two options (Question 3 and 5), Option B (BHHS) received more positive feedback than Option A (Greenie) overall, with much of the positive feedback from Option B coming from residents and local community stakeholders and most positive feedback on Option A (Greenie) coming from parents and school staff. The most widely stated benefits of Option A (Greenie) were that it would minimise disruption to education as the school would be built off-site (noted by 38 respondents) and that the proposed configuration is more appropriate due to all buildings and sports pitches being located on one side of the road (noted by 22 respondents). Amongst those who expressed criticism of Option A, the most widely stated objection was that it would result in the loss of green space for the community, specifically the Greenie (noted by 225 respondents). The most commonly stated advantages of Option B (BHHS) were that it would preserve most of the Greenie as open space for community use (noted by 111 respondents). The most common objections to Option B (BHHS) were that it would involve greater disruption to pupils education as building work would need to take place while current BHHS pupils were onsite (noted by 41 respondents) and that the site configuration was less well suited to the running of a school (noted by 31 respondents).
- When asked at Question 4 what open air community facility should be developed on the current BHHS Phase 2 site if Option A (Greenie) were taken forward, amongst the 210 respondents who provided suggestions, the most popular suggestion was open green space, which was suggested by 39% (82) of those who responded to this question, a playground by 34.8% (73) and playing fields by 7.6% (16). Other sports facilities, a 4G pitch, swimming pool, allotments and wildlife preserve, or forest school were all suggested by between five and ten respondents each. The full list of suggestions can be found on page 26.
- At Question 6, respondents were asked to rank the two options from 1 (unfavourable) to 5 (favourable), with 3 representing a satisfactory outcome. Responses to this question indicate that, for most residents, parish members, local community stakeholders, 'other' respondents and for Sport Wales, Option B was the only satisfactory option (ranked 3 or above). In contrast, Option A (Greenie) was

⁸ Three respondents indicated that they were members of both communities and therefore were categorised as dual-coded and two respondents selected 'other' but did not specify who they were and, as such, were categorised as uncoded. These five respondents make up the remaining 0.7% of all respondents.

deemed the only satisfactory outcome by most school staff, whilst parents and pupils indicated a greater openness to both options.

- Option B (BHHS) was ranked 'at least satisfactory' by 81.3% (600) of all respondents, 88.8% (445) of residents, 82.9% (29) of local community stakeholders, 88.9% (29) of parish members, 78.9% (15) of 'other' respondents, as well as by 60.8% (62) of parents and 65% (13) of pupils, but only 33.3% (11) of school staff. In contrast, Option A (Greenie) was deemed 'at least satisfactory' by 22.8% (168) of all respondents, 78.8% (26) of school staff, 70% (14) of pupils and 57.8% (59) of parents, but only by 22.2% (7) of parish members, 20% (7) of local community stakeholders and 30% (3) of 'other' respondents. Sport Wales indicated that Option B was a satisfactory outcome (3), and Option A (Greenie) would be unfavourable (1).
- Responses to Question 7 (option preference) indicate a strong preference for Option B (BHHS) amongst all respondents, which was chosen as preference by 80.5% (594) of respondents overall. This preference was partly due to the strong favour of this option amongst the local community (residents and local community stakeholders), with 92.1% (501) of the local community selecting Option B as their preference. Preferences amongst the school community (parents of pupils, school staff, pupils, parish members and governors) were split, with a marginal slant towards Option A (Greenie) (selected by 51.9% / 98 respondents) over Option B (selected by 48.1% / 91 respondents).
- When broken down by respondent category, Option B was the preferred Option of 91.8% (460) of residents, 88.6% (31) of local community stakeholders, 77.8% (21) of parish members and 78.9% (15) of 'other' respondents. Parents were relatively split across the two options but showed a marginal preference for Option A (Greenie), which was selected by 52% (53). Sport Wales also selected Option B as their preferred Option. In comparison, pupils and school staff indicated a preference for Option A, which was selected by 72.7% (24) of staff and 60% (12) of pupils.
- In line with the requirements of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010 and updated Regulations of 2015, an impact assessment of both options was carried out and shared as part of the consultation papers. The Impact Assessment determined that the loss of open green space with Option A (Greenie) would be mitigated by the provision of new open space on the current Phase 2 BHHS site. Option B (BHHS) was deemed to have no impact on the availability of priority open space as the new school would be built on the existing BHHS site⁹. As 225 respondents voiced concerns about the loss of green space that would result from Option A (Greenie), responses to the consultation suggest that many respondents do not feel that the new open space would compensate for the loss of the Greenie. In response to Option B, most respondents indicate that a school rugby pitch on Plateau 2 would be acceptable, however, across the open questions, a total of 42 respondents objected to this element of the Option B.
- At Question 8, respondents were asked for suggested changes with respect to their preferred option. There were 131 responses to this question, 83 of whom suggested changes to the options, with the remainder offering general comment. In total, 6.9%

⁹ Although a secondary rugby pitch would be located on Plateau 2 of the Buttercup Fields in this option, this was deemed acceptable as this is not designated priority open space.

(10) of those who selected Option A (Greenie) and 12.3% (73) of those who selected Option B (BHHS) suggested changes. In relation to Option A (Greenie), a couple of respondents suggested that the Council maximise the community open space by leaving the area surrounding the school open or ensuring that the new green space on Phase 2 of the current BHHS site is large enough. For Option B (BHHS), 20 respondents requested that the school rugby pitch be incorporated within the current BHHS site. Two respondents also suggested constructing a pedestrian bridge from the school building to the sports pitch on the Greenie site and a few respondents requested additional parking and drop off facilities for each option.

- Respondents were also provided the opportunity to offer general feedback at Question 9. Responses to this question primarily reiterated concerns expressed at earlier questions. However, 49 respondents provided feedback on the consultation process itself. Of these, 37 respondents were critical of the consultation with some suggesting that the selection process had been unfair or that green spaces should not have been considered for the site. Other respondents made general comments (such as 'you cannot please everyone') or expressed brief criticism of the council or council leader that was not explicitly linked to the consultation. Across Questions 8 and 9, 20 respondents in total suggested the school be built elsewhere, the most popular suggestion of which was Goat Mill Road (the full list of alternative site suggestions can be found on page 52.).
- At the school council meetings at the four schools, Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option overall. In total, 59.5% (50) of all school council members selected Option A. When broken down by school, Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option at St Illtyd's Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, with 89.5% (17) of school council members at St Illtyd's and 100% (11) at St Mary's selecting Option A (Greenie) as their preference. At St Aloysius Primary School and Bishop Hedley High School Option B (BHHS) was the most popular option, being selected by 60.7% (17) and 57.7% (15) of school council members respectively.
- Key themes of questions asked by pupils across the school council meetings related to: facilities (including for play, sports, libraries and IT); day to day changes (such as in uniform, teachers and class sizes); separation of age groups, particularly primary and secondary; access (including drop-off procedures, buses, roads and safety); construction (including timelines of the two options and plans for the existing school sites) and security (relating fences and boundaries of the school).
- Amongst wider school pupils who submitted their preferences for the school site, Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option with 67.5% (768) of all pupils selecting this option, compared to 32.5% (369) who selected Option B (BHHS). In total, 98.7% (233) of pupils who submitted preferences at St Illtyd's, 87.3% (186) at St Mary's and 51.9% (303) at BHHS selected Option A (Greenie). Pupils at St Aloysius Primary School indicated a slight preference for Option B (BHHS), which was selected by 55.8% (58).

Findings in Detail

Breakdown of survey respondents by category

At Question 1, respondents were asked to select one category that best described them in terms of their relationship to the proposed new school. Table 1 outlines the total number of responses received respondent category.

Table 1. Total survey responses by respondent category.

Category	No.	%
Resident	501	67.9%
Parent of pupil	102	13.8%
Local community stakeholder	35	4.7%
Teacher / member of school staff	33	4.5%
Member of local parish	27	3.7%
School pupil	20	2.7%
Other	19	2.6%
Sport Wales	1	0.1%
Total	738	100%

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the respondents who selected 'other' at Question 1. Of the five statutory consultee organisations invited to submit feedback to the consultation, only Sport Wales explicitly responded¹⁰ and, as such, Sport Wales has been considered as a separate category.

Table 2. Breakdown of 'other' respondents.

Description	No.
Member of public	4
Former resident	4
Wider family of pupil	2
Parent and resident	2
Former pupil	2
Unspecified	2
Working in area	1
"Interested in best learning environment for the children"	1
Resident, parish member and former teacher	1
Total	19

¹⁰ Statutory consultees included: Merthyr Tydfil Football League, Gurnos FC, Sport Wales, Fields in Trust and Play Wales. It is possible that representatives from other statutory consultees responded to the survey but identified themselves as local community stakeholder, resident or another category as relevant. In addition to the five organisations, statutory consultees included residents living immediately adjacent to the fields and users of the fields. As respondents were asked to select the category that best described them, these respondents will be considered in relation to their self-selected category. Those who selected 'other' and indicated that they were users of the Greenie were re-categorised as local community stakeholders.

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 stakeholders¹¹) and school community (including pupils, parents, members of school staff and members of local parishes). 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, wider county residents were categorised under local community and former pupils were categorised under school community.

Respondents who 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. Two respondents selected ‘other’ at Question 1 but did not provide an open text response, and these respondents have been grouped under ‘uncoded’.

Table 3 summarises the totals of survey respondents by community groups, dual and uncoded respondents.

Table 3. Total responses by community group.

Category	No.	%
Local community	544	73.7%
School community	189	25.6%
Dual-coded	3	0.4%
Uncoded	2	0.3%
Total	738	100%

Responses to Option A (Greenie)

QUESTION 3: VIEWS ON OPTION A (GREENIE)

Question 3 asked respondents for their views with regards to Option A – Greenie (School building on Greenie with additional community facility on Phase 2 (Upper site) of BHHS). Responses to Question 3 are discussed below by theme and sub-theme, in order of those which were most frequent across all respondents. Further discussion of each sub-theme explores the nature of issues raised in terms of any reasoning provided by respondents and any differences in views across respondent categories. As explained on page 12, when discussing how often particular issues were raised, the terms ‘some’ refer to 6-15 respondents and ‘a few’ refers to fewer than five respondents. Quotes are also included throughout where helpful to illustrate issues of concern. Quotes are included verbatim, though some minor adjustments to spelling or grammar have been made where deemed necessary to aid comprehension.

It should be noted that responses were coded for each theme and sub-theme present and, as such, often responses were coded more than once. For example, if a respondent noted that Option A (Greenie) would result in less disruption to pupils due to building work taking place off-site but also noted that the site layout was preferable to that of Option B, this response would be coded for both ‘lesser disruption to pupils’ and

¹¹ Two respondents selected ‘other’ at Question 1 and stated that they were school governors. These respondents were re-categorized as ‘local community stakeholders’, however they were included in the ‘school community’ group in the broader community group analysis.

‘suitability of site layout’ and would be discussed under both themes. The number of respondents who provided positive versus negative comments overall were also tallied and tables have been included to outline these numbers at the beginning of the relevant section (Table 4 for respondents expressing approval of Option A and Table 5 for respondents objecting to Option A).

Approval

In total, 112 respondents expressed approval of Option A (Greenie) at Question 3, and these responses are broken down by category in Table 4.

Table 4. Positive feedback in response to Option A.

Respondent category	No.
Parent of pupil	37
A resident	35
Teacher / member of staff	22
School pupil	8
Local community stakeholder	4
Member of local parish	4
Other (please specify below)	2
Total	112

Benefits of Option A (Greenie) identified by respondents primarily related to the day to day running of the school due to perceived advantages of the layout and the lesser disruption to BHHS pupils during the construction phase relative to Option B (BHHS). Beyond this, some respondents noted the proposals for improved community facilities and/or praised the lower cost than Option B.

Nonspecific positive responses

44 respondents made nonspecific expressions of approval, such as ‘great idea’ and ‘best option’ in response to Option A (Greenie). These responses largely came from parents but were also received from some respondents from all categories.

Schooling

Better for pupils / lesser disruption to education

The most frequently identified benefit of Option A (Greenie) was that it would minimise disruption to pupils’ education during the school’s construction and/or that it would be ‘better for students’ generally (i.e. without further explanation). In total, 38 respondents said that they felt Option A (Greenie) would be better for pupils, including some parents and school staff and a few respondents across other categories.

This is the best option by far, the school will have more space and much less disruption to learners during the building phase.
Parent of pupil, Q3

This seems the best option since there would be the least disruption to the learners in the school and that education can continue for most of the time uninterrupted and fulfils the RARS strategy for the borough to the greatest extent.

Teacher / member of staff, Q3

This option would be far less disruptive to the education of the pupils at Bishop Hedley. In the interim there would be a loss of green space but this would be given back once the BHHS site is cleared.

Teacher / member of staff, Q3

Some of these respondents also noted that construction would take less time with this option, with a couple further expressing concern that the complexity of Option B (BHHS) may result in delays during the construction period.

Suitability of site layout for school

22 respondents praised the configuration of Option A (Greenie) and/or the size of the site and said that they felt it was better suited to the running of a school. Such respondents often noted that all buildings and sports pitches are located on the same side of the road and in closer proximity to each other than in Option B (BHHS). Some respondents noted that this would reduce the amount of time for pupils to travel between lessons, thereby increasing time for learning, and others said that they felt it would be safer by avoiding the need for road crossings. One member of school staff specifically noted that Option A (Greenie) would be more accessible for disabled pupils.

I think this is the most suitable option as it is important to have the school and facilities on one site and the design of the school is more appropriate to the needs of the pupils, in-line with 21st Century schools.

Member of local parish, Q3

This is the best option because everything is on one site. Better sports facilities for the school children and the wider community as well. Less disruption for the Bishop Hedley children while the school is being built.

Teacher / member of staff, Q3

The suitability of the site layout was raised most frequently by parents (9 parents) and school staff (6 school staff) but was also noted by a few residents, pupils, and parish members.

Impacts on residents

Community benefit e.g. new community facility / green space

17 respondents in total (including residents, school staff, parents and a school governor) noted at Question 3 that Option A (Greenie) would be better for the community due the improvement in community sports facilities. These comments were generally not further expanded upon but appear to reflect the proposals to develop new shared school-community pitches on the Buttercup Fields and the new enhanced all-weather community pitch. A few respondents also said that the new green space that would be developed on the current BHHS Phase 2 site would be an improvement on the current community green space, as they felt that the Greenie is unsafe or poorly maintained.

Surely this is the better option for the community since the school and the community will gain more sports facilities
Parent of pupil, Q3

I think this is a good idea as the integration of new sports facilities for the area would be an improvement on what currently exists with the 3G pitch.
Parent of pupil, Q3

Greenie not currently well utilised

Related to the above, a few respondents claimed that a new school would be a positive use of the Greenie as they felt that it was currently underutilised or that it was frequently used for criminal or anti-social activity.

Better traffic flow

Three residents noted in response to Question 3 that Option A (Greenie) would result in better traffic flow in the surrounding area as there would be less pressure on Gwaunfarren Road junction than with Option B (BHHS). Though this was only mentioned by three respondents at Question 3, nine respondents raised concerns about traffic in relation to Option B, suggesting that better traffic flow was viewed by some as a benefit of Option A.

Preferable option. Cheaper, less disruption to school day during construction and also disrupts less residents off gwaunfarren road junction, which would not be able to cope with the traffic option b would attract.
Resident, Q3

Option A allows for a single design to support the pupils. It's not perfect but will be 'slightly' better for school access/egress. (Vehicle movements)
Parent of pupil, Q3

Development / construction

Lower cost of development

On the whole, the lesser cost of Option A (Greenie) was raised as a benefit by 10 respondents to Question 3, (including by parents, school staff, and one pupil, resident and governor). A couple of respondents suggested that the money saved relative to Option B (BHHS) could be used for further investment, with one parent suggesting it be used to improve facilities for the local community and one member of school staff proposing it be put towards better facilities for pupils.

This is my preferred site. I understand this will cost less and I am in favour of the option to develop the phase 2 sites for the community.
Teacher / member of staff, Q3

Costs less than Option B - this extra funding could be used to further support children attending the new school or could be put into improving the local community.
Parent of pupil, Q3

Objections

A total of 416 respondents raised objections to Option A (Greenie) at Question 3, and these are broken down by respondent category in Table 5.

Table 5. Negative feedback in response to Option A.

Respondent category	No.
a resident	338
parent of pupil	25
local community stakeholder	23
Other (please specify below)	13
member of local parish	13
teacher / member of staff	2
school pupil	1
Sport Wales	1
Total	416

As with expressions of approval, these responses are discussed below by theme, in order of the frequency with which they were raised, and sub-themes within these.

Impacts on residents and community

Loss of the Greenie

The most frequently raised objection to Option A (Greenie) was that it would result in a loss of green space, specifically the Greenie, for the community, which was raised by 225 respondents in total. These concerns were primarily voiced by residents (188) but were also voiced by parents of pupils (11), local community stakeholders (12), parish members (6), one school pupil (1), and 'other' respondents (7) including former residents, former pupils of BHHS, Sport Wales and a support worker working with local residents.

Amongst those who commented on the loss of green space, relatively few respondents explicitly acknowledged the proposals for new open space to be developed on the current BHHS Phase 2 site. However, specific issues raised included: an overall reduction in the availability of open space; the social and historical significance of the Greenie; and concerns about spaces for children to play.

In terms of the availability of green space, some respondents felt that Option A (Greenie) would result in less space for community use, with some noting that the space that was currently available was already limited. Some of these respondents explained that open space was particularly important as a source of free activity due to high levels of deprivation in the areas surrounding the site.

not good, we need more space not less
Resident, Q3

Wherever possible the loss of a playing field should be avoided.
Sport Wales, Q3

Moreover, some respondents explained that the Greenie was a central part of the local community and that it was important to their memories of growing up in the area. Such responses suggested that, for some, the Greenie has social significance and sentimental value that would not be compensated for by the development of new open space nearby.

I am very unhappy with this option.
The Greenie fields have been used for recreation for many years and are already set up for sports. There should be more facilities available, not less. The area is very urban as it is.
Resident, Q3

Finally, some respondents expressed concern that Option A (Greenie) would result in less spaces for children to play outside. These comments were generally not expanded upon and therefore it is difficult to know whether such respondents felt that the proposed new open space were not sufficient to mitigate the loss of the Greenie, or whether they were not aware of these aspects of the proposal.

My view is that the people have lost enough places where their children can go to play and greenie should not be yet another loss
Resident, Q3

Should never even have been thought of. It will mean us losing something we have had for years - a place for our children to play. No no no
Resident, Q3

Traffic concern

Eleven respondents in total, including seven residents, two parish members and two parents raised concerns around traffic management in relation to Option A (Greenie). Some of these responses were brief, for example 'traffic will be terrible'. However, a few noted that congestion in the surrounding area was already high, that the roads were too narrow to support an increase in traffic, or that they were concerned about traffic building up on the bend on Gwaunfarren/Galon Uchaf Road.

No need for it when you have already got the land with the existing school, also the traffic build-up on that road and the bend in the road will be horrendous
Parish member, Q3

Other impact on residents

Some respondents raised concerns relating to impacts on residents from noise pollution, privacy and/or security and often these issues were raised in conjunction with each other. In total, seven respondents expressed concerns about such impacts on residents in relation to Option A (Greenie), including responses from six residents and one parent. Concerns around flooding (discussed further on page 25) were also noted by a couple of respondents who said that they lived close to the site.

We have many concerns with option A as our residence would be right next to the build.
Loss of a common green area which widely used by all in the area.

Noise and mess of construction next to our property.
Interference of drainage, possible flooding risks.
Security risk, as opening up access to rear of our property.
Privacy, building and access overlooking our property.
Resident, Q3

No, do not agree, too much disruption to residents
Resident, Q3

Takes up way too much green space. It'll be an eyesore, noisy and cars parking wherever they can as usual by a school. I believe the car park would not be used by everyone.
Resident
Q3

Goes against community preference

A further objection made in response to Option A (Greenie) was that it went against the preference or best interests of the local community. Such statements were generally brief and did not provide further explanation. However, in light of wider comments from local community respondents in relation to Option A (Greenie) and to the previous consultation, such comments may be seen to reflect concerns about the loss of the Greenie. Responses in this category came from five respondents, including four residents and one parent.

I believe this is the more negative option in consideration of the needs of the local community
Resident, Q3

I am not a local resident. I am a parent of a student but I do sympathise with the local community concerns. I was undecided on both options previously however now with the new option I feel that developing the school and renewing the original building is the better option.
Parent, Q3

Nonspecific objections

135 respondents rejected Option A (Greenie) without providing an explanation. This included statements such as 'ridiculous' and 'not happy with this' (both from residents). Nonspecific objections were received from all groups except pupils.

Consultation process

Criticism of consultation process or of Council / Council Leader

A number of responses to Question 3 did not provide feedback on Option A (Greenie) but instead expressed criticism of the Council generally and/or of the Council Leader. A total of 27 responses to Question 3 fell into this category and these primarily came from residents but also included two parents and one local community stakeholder. These statements tended to refer implicitly to the proposal to build on the Greenie in Option A, but did not further expand on the issues of concern. Some of these respondents provided further comment in relation to the consultation process in response to Question 9 (general feedback) and these are discussed on page 49.

Greenie already rejected

12 respondents stated that Option A (Greenie) had already been rejected by the community and therefore should not have been tabled again. These responses came from local residents and one local community stakeholder. Some respondents broadly stated that Option A (Greenie) had 'already been rejected' and others specifically referenced the previous consultation in which a version of the current Option A (Greenie) was put forward. These respondents did not acknowledge the amendments made to the Greenie proposal in this consultation, such as the new open space on Phase 2 of the BHHS site and the updated community playground. However, it can be inferred that, for such respondents, these amendments were not sufficiently different from the previous Greenie proposals to justify bringing this option back to public consultation.

This has been rejected by the majority of Consultees in the previous round therefore it should be rejected.

Resident, Q3

Negative. My objections would be the same as those expressed by the public previously to the development of the Greenie & buttercup fields.

Resident Q3

New site unnecessary

A few respondents (three residents and two parents) said that it was unnecessary to build the 3-16 school on a new site given that the current BHHS site already occupies a large plot of land close to the Greenie. These responses were brief but tended to highlight potential disadvantages of Option A (Greenie) and indicate that they felt these outweighed the value of building a new school.

This shouldn't be considered when you have a site [of] the old bishop hedley school
Parent of pupil, Q3

Waste of money which could be better spent, especially in this current climate. An existing school is already in place

Resident, Q3

Geography of site

Topography of site: sink holes and flooding

Some respondents (five residents and one parish member) made brief comments about the topography of the site, noting that the ground was prone to flooding and/or sink holes and indicating that it was therefore unsuitable for building a school.

Not practical. Some of the ground is an old tip and the area has a lot of sink holes

Resident, Q3

Location of site: further from current school

In addition to the topography of the site, two respondents (one resident and one parent) noted that using the Greenie for the site would mean that the new school would be further from the current BHHS site and therefore potentially further for pupils to travel.

I think this is a bad option, developing a new site when there is already a perfectly good option on the existing site of BHHS. This will cause more disruption for the families of kids who attend the school as it will be further for them to travel. Kids in the catchment area may have to now use transport to get to school rather than be able to walk there.

Resident, Q3

Don't think it's a good idea at all. I think the school is in a fab place where it is now.

The new school be near a main road which concerns me as for example there's been many children run over near goetre school as that's near a main road. There's not been an accident down St Alouysis!

I have many concerns, how my child will get to & forth from school as it's a fair distance. etc!

Parent of pupil, Q3

QUESTION 4: COMMUNITY OPEN-AIR FACILITY PREFERENCE

Question 4 asked respondents for suggestions with regards to the proposed new open-air facility on Phase 2 of the current BHHS site if Option A (Greenie) were to be taken forward. Table 6 below lists all suggestions received, along with the number of respondents who suggested them.

Table 6. Open-air community facility suggestions by number of suggestions.

Suggestion	No	%*
Green space	82	39.0%
Playground	73	34.8%
Playing fields	16	7.6%
Sports facilities / gym	7	3.3%
4G pitch	5	2.4%
Swimming pool	5	2.4%
Allotments	5	2.4%
Nature area / wildlife preserve / forest school	5	2.4%
Community area	4	1.9%
Cycling / running track	2	1.0%
Bike / skate park	2	1.0%
Housing	2	1.0%
Youth club	2	1.0%
Total suggestions	210	100%

*Percentage of overall suggestions for the new community space.

Of the 210 respondents who made suggestions for the new open air community facility, 53.3% (112) stated a preference for Option A (Greenie) and 46.7% (98) stated a preference for Option B (BHHS) at Question 7. Table 7 provides a full breakdown of suggestions by respondents' option preference so as to illustrate whether preferences for the community facility differed depending on option preference. As shown, a playground was a more popular suggestion amongst those who selected Option A (Greenie) than amongst those who selected Option B (Greenie), with 46 of those who selected Option A (Greenie) suggesting a playground be included compared to only 10 of those who selected Option B. Open green space was a popular option amongst both

groups, being suggested by 40 of those who selected Option A (Greenie) and 42 of those who selected Option B.

Table 7. Breakdown of open-air community facility suggestions by option preference.

Suggestion	Option A (Greenie) preference	Option B (BHHS) preference
Green space	40	42
Playground	46	27
Playing fields	6	10
Sports facilities / gym	3	4
4G pitch	2	3
Swimming pool	2	3
Allotments	3	2
Nature area / wildlife preserve / forest school	5	0
Community area	0	4
Cycling / running track	2	0
Bike / skate park	1	1
Housing	1	1
Youth club	1	1
Total suggestions	112	98

A further 118 respondents re-stated rejection of Option A (Greenie) at Question 4 and 38 respondents said ‘nothing’ or ‘no’, which also implies rejection of Option A. By contrast, seven respondents made general statements that indicated approval of the plans without further clarifying (such as ‘yes’ and ‘in favour’).

Responses to Option B

QUESTION 5: VIEWS OF OPTION B

Question 5 asked respondents for their views of Option B - Current BHHS sites (School on existing Bishop Hedley High School site with school rugby pitch on plateau 2 of Buttercup Fields). As with Question 3, responses to this question can broadly be broken down into expressions of approval and objections to Option B (BHHS) and are discussed below in turn.

Approval

Across respondents, 356 respondents provided positive feedback about Option B (BHHS). These are broken down by respondent category in Table 8.

Table 8. Positive feedback in response to Option B.

Respondent category	No.
resident	277
parent of pupil	27
local community stakeholder	22
other (please specify below)	13
member of local parish	11
teacher / member of staff	3
school pupil	2
Sport Wales	1
Total	356

The primary benefits of Option B (BHHS) identified by respondents related to the preservation of the Greenie for community use and associated benefits for the wellbeing of residents, with many also saying that they felt it made sense to use land that is already allocated to a school. 23 respondents specifically indicated that they felt that the use of Plateau 2 for the secondary rugby pitch was an acceptable compromise, with statements such as ‘Option B although still taking away elements of the buttercup field would be more acceptable’ (‘other’ – wider county resident).

Nonspecific approval

The most common category of positive response to Option B (BHHS) was a general expression of approval without qualification. 199 responses fell into this category, including responses such as ‘B is the best option’ and ‘much better’. These responses were primarily from residents and local community stakeholders but included some respondents from all categories and one response from Sport Wales.

Impacts on residents and the community

Reduces loss of green space

The most frequently stated benefit of Option B (BHHS) was that it would preserve more green space for the community by using the current BHHS site for the majority of the school grounds. Statements along these lines were received from 111 respondents in total, including some respondents from all categories except school staff (92 residents, six local community stakeholders, and a few respondents from each remaining category). Such respondents sometimes suggested that this option was fairer because it preserved community access of the Greenie whilst enabling pupils to benefit from updated facilities.

This is a much better option as the local community would still have use of their green spaces.
Parent of pupil, Q5

Preferred option, retain some green space and update the school
Resident, Q5

Community preference / community benefit

24 respondents (including 20 residents, three parents and one grandparent) stated that Option B (BHHS) should be chosen because this was the preference of the community or, more generally, that it was 'better for the community'. A few of these respondents who provided further clarification explained that they felt Option B (BHHS) would result in less disruption to the local community during the construction of the new school due to building work taking place on the current BHHS site.

Best option for community.
Resident, Q5

The new school should be built on the existing site of BHHS. I am a parent of a child that uses the school and a local resident and I believe this would be the best option for the community.
Parent of pupil, Q5

Best option site is already developed
Local community stakeholder, Q5

Acceptable compromise

Lastly, some respondents (23 in total, including 19 residents and two parish members, a local community stakeholder, and a wider county resident) indicated that Option B (BHHS) was an acceptable compromise for the community as, although one of the Buttercup Fields would be utilised for a school rugby pitch, the majority of the current open space and the Greenie itself would be preserved. Some of these respondents further requested that the school rugby pitch on Plateau 2 be open to the community.

Yes to option B I accept a rugby pitch on buttercup field. Community accessible.
Resident, Q5

Option B although still taking away elements of the buttercup field would be more acceptable
Other (wider county resident), Q5

Development / construction

Suitability of site

In total, 43 respondents explained that Option B (BHHS) would be appropriate for the site of the new school as the land is already utilised for a school. Many of these respondents tied this benefit to the protecting of community greenspace, however a few respondents also suggested that construction may be easier as the infrastructure for a school is already in place.

This option suits better. The infrastructure is already there and nobody has to lose out on public space.
Resident, Q5

Yes, there has been a school stood here for years. It is a good site to continue using
Resident, Q5

Schooling

Better access for pupils

On the whole, there were relatively few comments relating to the benefits of Option B (BHHS) for schooling, however three respondents (a resident, parish member and school pupil) suggested that this option would result in easier access for current BHHS pupils than Option A, due to the school remaining onsite.

Objections

A total of 116 respondents raised objections to Option B (BHHS) and these are broken down by respondent category in Table 9.

Table 9. Negative feedback in response to Option B (BHHS).

Respondent category	No.
a resident	54
parent of pupil	30
teacher / member of staff	16
local community stakeholder	5
member of local parish	4
school pupil	4
Other (please specify below)	3
Total	116

On the whole, objections to Option B (BHHS) largely mirrored perceived advantages of Option A (Greenie). These included concerns that there would be greater disruption to pupils' education during construction and that the site layout was less conducive to the day to day running of a school. Such concerns were primarily expressed by parents of pupils and school staff. However, a number of respondents, primarily residents, objected to Option B (BHHS) on the basis that they did not want the school rugby pitch to be located on the Buttercup Fields (25) or due to concerns around traffic management (9). All of those who objected to the rugby pitch being on Buttercup Fields went on to select Option B (BHHS) at Question 7. Of those who voiced concerns about traffic management, six went on to select Option A (Greenie) and three to select Option B (BHHS).

Schooling

Greater disruption to education / safety risk

The most commonly raised objection to Option B (BHHS) related to potential disturbance to the education of current BHHS pupils. Such concerns were raised by 41 respondents in total, including 17 parents, 13 members of school staff and a few respondents from all other categories. Some of these respondents explained that, as building work would take place on the current BHHS site, this would involve some disruption to learning with others saying they had concerns about pupils' safety. A few respondents further noted that Option B (BHHS) would take longer to build therefore prolonging the disruption to education and meaning pupils would need to remain in their current schools for longer.

This would be more disruptive to the pupils already in the school, with a lot less sports facilities available for the community/children.

Parent of pupil, Q5

In addition, one member of school staff expressed concern that the challenges of building the school whilst pupils were on-site could result in delays to the completion of the project. This respondent suggested that other sites could be considered beyond the BHHS or Greenie sites, adding that building the 3-16 school on a new site would encourage a sense of ownership amongst members of the other three schools to be merged.

Option B would significantly disrupt cohorts of learners in the secondary phase while the site is rebuilt and indirectly impact on the primary schools as they will need to remain in their current buildings for years longer than initially agreed. There are implications to ensure that the schools can deliver the new curriculum and if delayed until 2026 the existing buildings will require investment which is an additional unnecessary cost.

The current BHHS site presents significant challenges and any delay to the timeframe will affect the delivery of the vision of a through school and potentially have a negative impact on all stakeholders.

Option B is a brand new proposal and it should be questioned therefore why other sites or school organisation models are not also being considered. It is important that if the 3-16 model is committed to, then all the schools being brought together require a sense of ownership and identity in a new location.

Teacher / member of staff, Q5

Site configuration less suitable

In addition to concerns about building work that would take place on site, some respondents felt that the configuration of Option B (BHHS) posed more challenges for the day to day running of the school. Such respondents noted that the site was more dispersed, with greater distances between school buildings on the two Phases and between the main school ground and the secondary rugby pitch. Such concerns were raised by 31 respondents, including 10 school staff, nine parents, seven residents and a few respondents from all other groups except pupils.

Option B confirms an extended footprint for the school which will inevitably mean more difficulty for pupil and staff using it every day.

Parent of pupil, Q5

Children will be crossing a busy main road which is dangerous not only for the children but also drivers

Also may not be accessible for the younger children in the school as the walk will be too far. Thirdly how will that work with the school day if pupils will have to make their way over to that sport field taking up half of their sports lessons affecting their ability to have essential fitness but also putting added stress on the child to get over as fast as they can putting them at further unnecessary risk

Parent of pupil, Q5

Impacts on residents and the community

Use of Buttercup Fields for school rugby pitch

In total, 25 respondents, all residents, objected to the secondary rugby pitch being built on the Buttercup Fields. Such respondents sometimes said that there was sufficient space on the existing BHHS site for the rugby pitch to be located there or that they did

not feel the rugby pitch was essential to the new school. Some responses included in this category referred generally to things being taken from the community, but can be inferred as referring to the rugby pitch as this is the only public space that would be used for the school in Option B (BHHS).

Would not like to see the rugby pitch on the plateau
Resident, Q5

Still taking something off us. Find another place. Better than a though
Resident, Q5

Traffic concern

Nine respondents, all residents, objected to Option B (BHHS) on the basis that it would result in a greater traffic burden on surrounding roads around school drop-off and collection times. A couple of these respondents said that Gwaunfarren Road is narrow, with one respondent expressing concerns about the number of buses that would be travelling along the road.

Building a larger school on an already build up area where parking during drop-off and collection times can lead to blocked roads as well impact to the surrounding houses
Resident, Q5

Although this seems to be an easier option to build on the existing sight, the road that runs dawn in-between phase 2 and our homes in gwaunfarren rd is soo small that numerous buses on this road is going to be a disaster, basically according to the plans it's like a crossroads more or less and this is going to course major disruption to the area.
Resident, Q5

Other impacts on residents

The majority of concerns about impacts on residents resulting from Option B (BHHS) related to traffic management. However, one resident also claimed that the view from their property would be impacted by the plans to build another level to the BHHS building.

Too disruptive. School traffic is already unbearable and dangerous at the end of the school day with a lower student attendance. Merging 4 schools will be horrendous for residents trying to get around the area. Also I am a resident living near to this site and do not like that we will be visually impacted. BHHS is high enough as it is!
Resident, Q5

Development / construction

Cost of development

The greater cost of Option B (BHHS) was noted by 14 respondents in total, including seven school staff, five parents, one governor and one school pupil. This objection was generally made in conjunction with other concerns such as the potential disruption to pupils' education during the construction phase.

Far too disruptive and costly. Issues around transport (buses and drop off points for pupils) loss of playing areas as the yard would have to be used to place Portakabins, the additional cost would be exorbitant and would have to be clawed back from somewhere.

Teacher / member of staff, Q5

I think this option will negatively impact the students we teach during the building phase and it is much more expensive option.

Teacher / member of staff, Q5

Nonspecific objections

In response to Question 5, 13 respondents rejected Option B (BHHS) without providing explanation, with comments such as 'not wanted' and 'rubbish option'. These responses came from ten residents, two parents and one school pupil.

Question 6: Option Rankings

Questions 6a and 6b asked respondents to rank each of the two options from 1 (unfavourable) to 5 (favourable), with 3, the middle value, representing satisfactory. Responses to Question 6 therefore provide an indication of whether either, or both, of the two options would be acceptable to respondents as a whole and to different groups who will be affected by the plans. Beyond this, rankings provided at Question 6 provide some indication of the strength of favour or disfavour towards each of the two options amongst different segments of the community.

The option rankings of all respondents, the two community groups and of each respondent category are reviewed below in turn. Bar charts (Figures 1-3) outline the percentage of respondents in each community group and respondent category who ranked each option as 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'at least satisfactory' (3-5). These aggregated rankings are intended to facilitate the Council in determining whether either of the options would be acceptable to groups affected by the plans. For each community group, a table is also provided outlining the percentage of respondents who selected each value (1-5) and these tables offer more granular data in relation to how favourably each option was perceived.

As shown in Figure 1, Option B (BHHS) was the most acceptable option to respondents as a whole, with 81.3% (600) ranking Option B 'at least satisfactory' (3-5) and 18.7% (138) ranking it as 'less than satisfactory'. In contrast, Option A (Greenie) was ranked 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) by 77.2% (570) of respondents and 'at least satisfactory' by 22.8% (168).

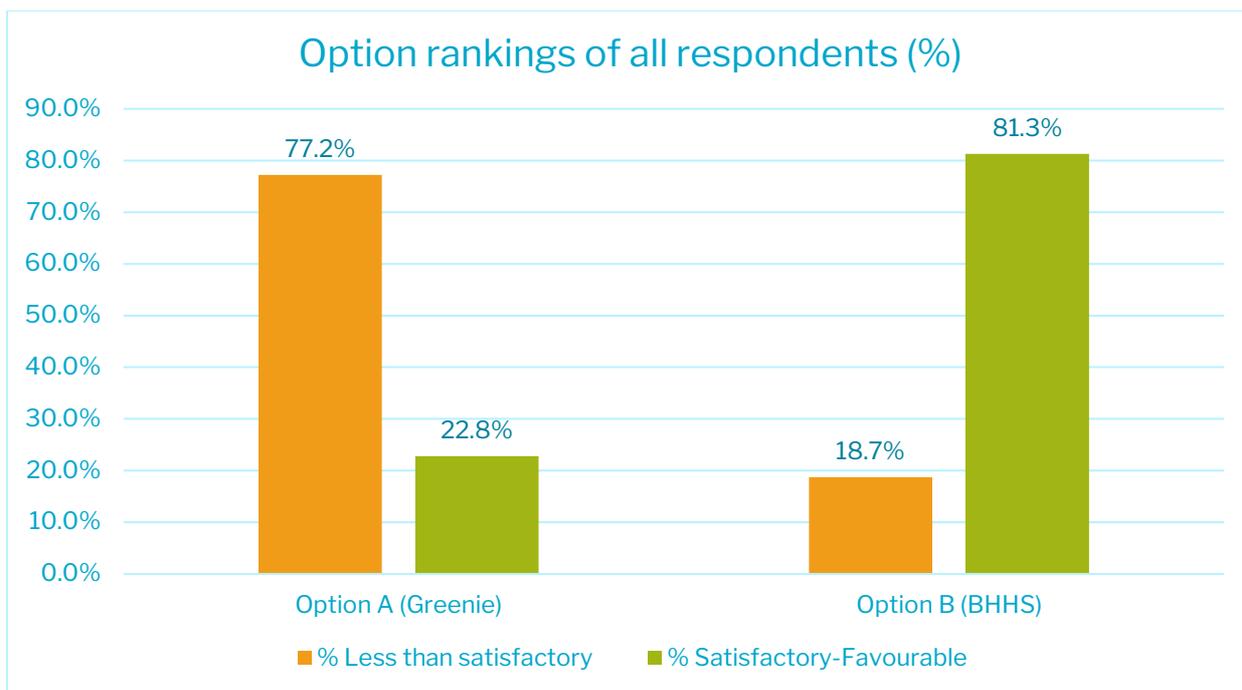


Figure 1. Percentage of all respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory – favourable' (3-5). [Base 738]

Table 10 breaks down rankings for each specific number (1-5) across all respondents. Rankings for each option, and particularly for Option A, are weighted towards either end of the scale (1 or 5), potentially indicating the strength of feeling amongst some of those who responded to the survey with regards to the proposals. Whilst Option A (Greenie) was ranked as 1 (unfavourable) by 75.3% (556) of respondents, the second most common ranking was 1 (favourable) which was selected by 16.5% (122). The three rankings in between (2, 3 and 4) were each selected by fewer than 5% of respondents. Option B (BHHS) was found to be favourable by most respondents overall (65.4% / 483) and responses to this option were more distributed, with a further 5.1% (38) ranking it 4 and 10.7% (79) ranking it as 3 (satisfactory). Option B (BHHS) was ranked as 1 (unfavourable) by 15.7% (116) and 2 by 3% (22) of respondents.

Table 10. Full breakdown of responses to Question 6 from all respondents

	Unfavourable		Satisfactory		Favourable	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Option A (Greenie)	75.3% (556)	1.9% (14)	3.5% (26)	2.7% (20)	16.5% (122)	100.0% (738)
Option B (BHHS)	15.7% (116)	3.0% (22)	10.7% (79)	5.1% (38)	65.4% (483)	100.0% (738)

In addition, 29 respondents overall indicated that both options were less than satisfactory, selecting either 1 or 2 for both Options A (Greenie) and B (BHHS). Amongst these respondents, Option A (Greenie) was again the least favourable option, with 96.6% (28) selecting the lowest ranking (1) compared to 72.4% (21) for Option B (BHHS).

Community group breakdown of responses to Question 6

When broken down by community groups, Option B (BHHS) appears to be acceptable to the majority of local community respondents (Figure 2), whilst both options appear acceptable to over half of the school community (Figure 3). In total, 88.6% (482) of local community respondents ranked Option B (BHHS) as 'at least satisfactory' compared to only 10.3% (56) who ranked Option A (Greenie) 'at least satisfactory'. The full breakdown of rankings (1-5) from the local community are provided in Table 11.

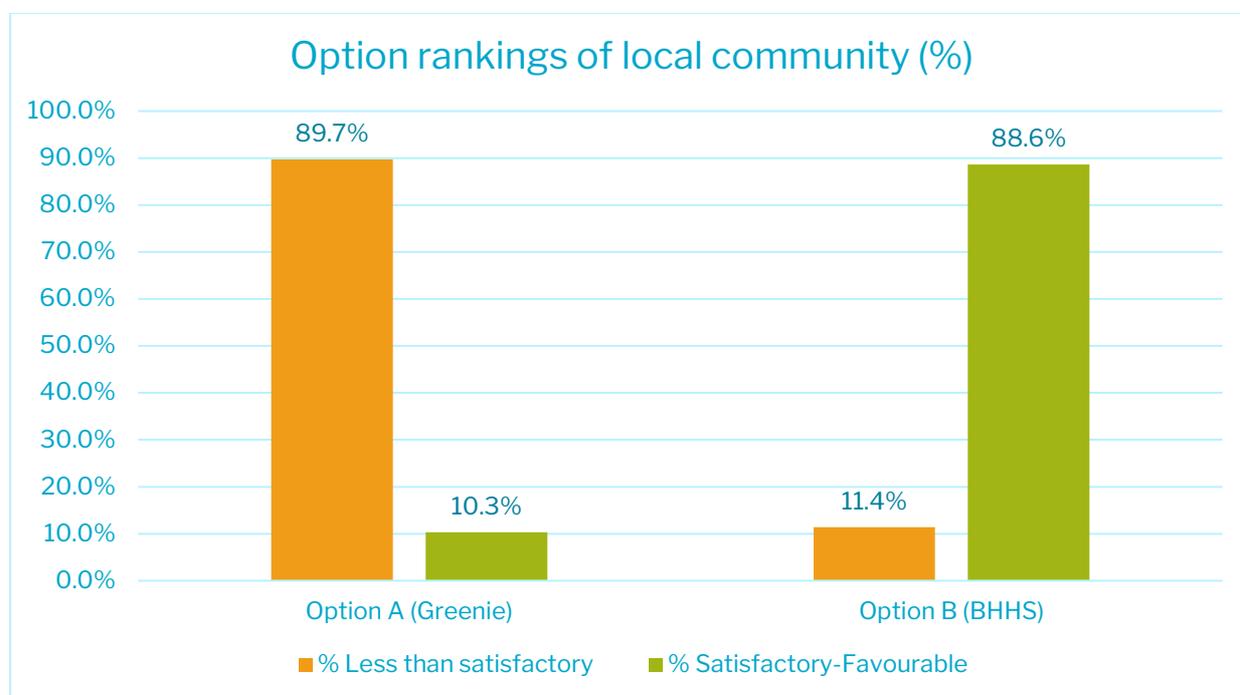


Figure 2. Percentage of local community respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory – favourable' (3-5). [Base 544]

Table 11. Full breakdown of local community responses to Question 6

	Unfavourable		Satisfactory			Favourable	Total
	1	2	3	4	5		
Option A (Greenie)	88.4% (481)	1.3% (7)	2.6% (14)	0.6% (3)	7.2% (39)	100.0% (544)	
Option B (BHHS)	9.2% (50)	2.2% (12)	8.3% (45)	5.3% (29)	75.0% (408)	100.0% (544)	

25 local community respondents ranked both options as 'less than satisfactory' (1 or 2). Amongst these, 100% (25) ranked Option A (Greenie) as 1 (unfavourable), the lowest ranking, compared to 68% (17) for Option B (BHHS).

Rankings amongst the school community, as shown in Figure 3, were comparatively more split across the two options, with 57.1% (108) ranking Option A (Greenie) as at least satisfactory and 60.8% (115) ranking Option B (BHHS) as 'at least satisfactory'. Accordingly, Option A (Greenie) was deemed less than satisfactory by 42.9% (81) and Option B (BHHS) by 39.2% (74) of the school community. The full breakdown of school community responses to Question 6 are outlined in Table 12.

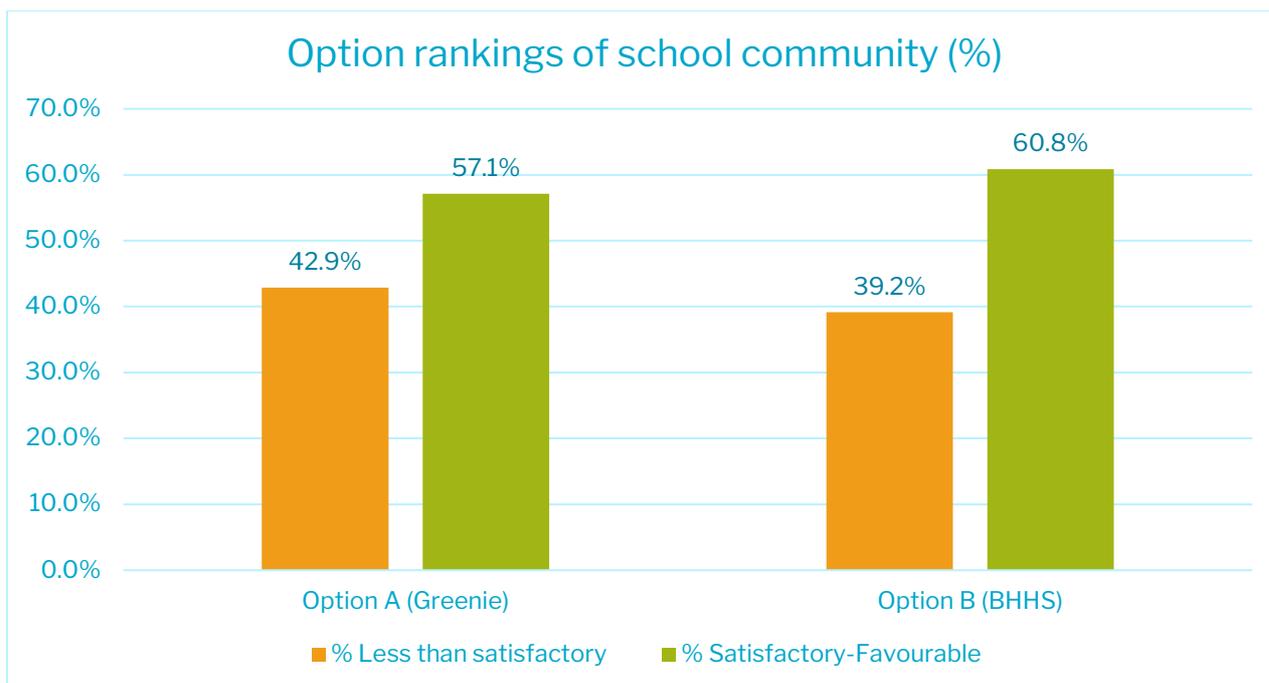


Figure 3. Percentage of school community respondents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory' (1-2) and 'satisfactory – favourable' (3-5). [Base 189]

Table 12. Full breakdown of school community responses to Question 6

	Unfavourable		Satisfactory		Favourable	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Option A (Greenie)	39.2% (74)	3.7% (7)	5.8% (11)	8.5% (16)	42.9% (81)	100.0% (189)
Option B (BHHS)	33.9% (64)	5.3% (10)	17.5% (33)	4.2% (8)	39.2% (74)	100.0% (189)

Within the school community, four respondents ranked both options as 'less than satisfactory' (1 or 2). Amongst these respondents, Option B (BHHS) was the least favourable option, with 100% (4) selecting 1 (unfavourable) for this option, compared to 75% (3) for Option A (Greenie).

Finally, three respondents who selected 'other' at Question 1 and provided an open text response explained that they were members of both the school and local community (including two parents and residents and one resident, parish member and former teacher). Given the small number of these respondents, the rankings of dual-coded respondents are outlined in full in Table 13 below.

Option B (BHHS) was the most favourable option for dual-coded respondents overall, with all three respondents selecting a value above 3 (satisfactory) and two of the three respondents ranking it higher than Option A (Greenie). Option A was also found to be at least satisfactory by two of the three respondents, with one of these respondents ranking it higher than Option B (BHHS) but was deemed unfavourable by the third respondent.

Table 13. Full breakdown of dual-coded responses to Question 6

	Unfavourable		Satisfactory		Favourable	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Option A (Greenie)	33.3% (1)	0.0%	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	0.0%	100.0% (3)
Option B (BHHS)	0.0%	0.0%	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	100.0% (3)

A further two respondents selected ‘other’ at Question 1 but did not indicate their relationship to the project. These responses have also been outlined in full in Table 14. Both uncoded respondents ranked Option A (Greenie) as 5 (favourable) and Option B (BHHS) as 1 (Unfavourable).

Table 14. Full breakdown of uncoded respondents’ responses to Question 6

	Unfavourable		Satisfactory		Favourable	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Option A (Greenie)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0% (2)	100.0% (2)
Option B (BHHS)	100.0% (2)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0% (2)

Respondent category breakdown of responses to Question 6

When broken down by specific respondent category (as in Figures 4-10), approval of Option B (BHHS) appears to be strongest amongst residents, local community stakeholders, parish members and ‘other’ respondents as well as with Sport Wales. A majority of respondents in each of these categories found Option A (Greenie) to be ‘less than satisfactory’. In contrast, a majority of school staff found Option B (BHHS) to be ‘less than satisfactory’ and Option A (Greenie) to be ‘at least satisfactory’. Responses amongst parents and school pupils indicate an openness to either option, with both options being ranked ‘at least satisfactory’ by more than half of these respondents.

As shown in Figure 4, 88.8% (445) of residents ranked Option B (BHHS) ‘at least satisfactory’, in comparison to only 10% (50) for Option A (Greenie).

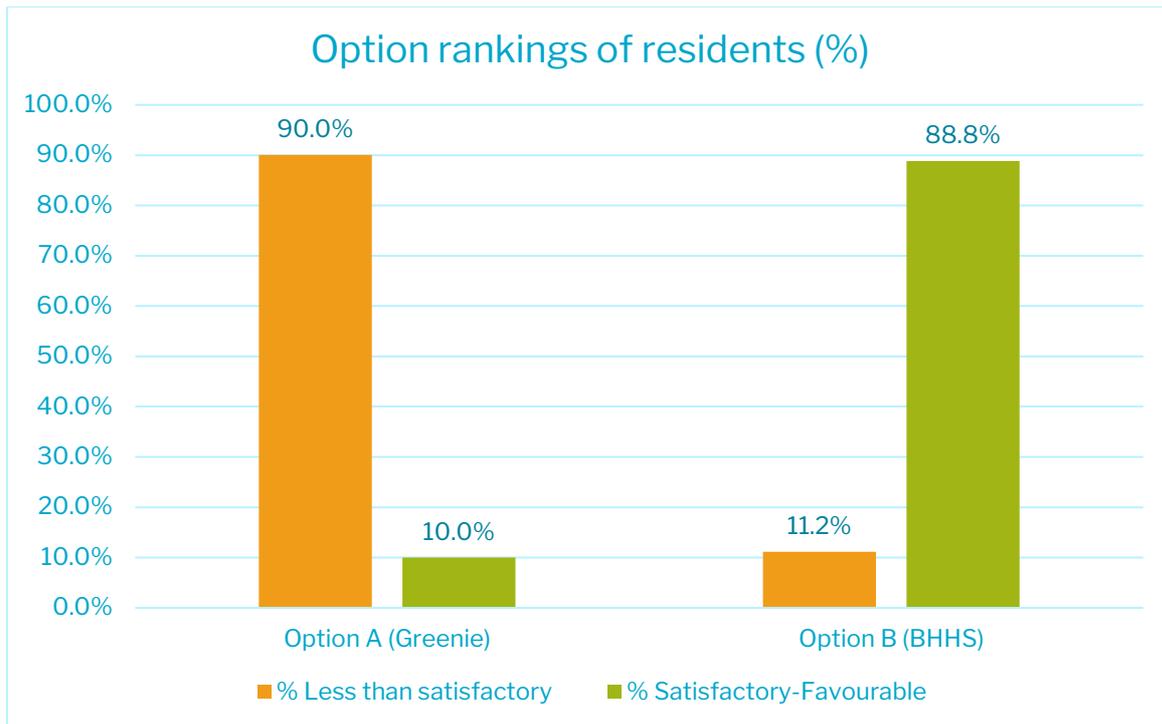


Figure 4. Percentage of residents ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory’ (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 501]

24 residents ranked both options as ‘less than satisfactory’ (1 or 2). Of these, 100% (24) ranked Option A (Greenie) as 1 (unfavourable) compared to 66.7% (16) for Option B (BHHS), indicating that Option A was the least favourable option for these respondents.

Amongst local community stakeholders (shown in Figure 5), 82.9% (29) ranked Option B (BHHS) as ‘at least satisfactory’ with just 20% (7) ranking Option A (Greenie) ‘at least satisfactory’. One local community stakeholder ranked both options as 1 (unfavourable).

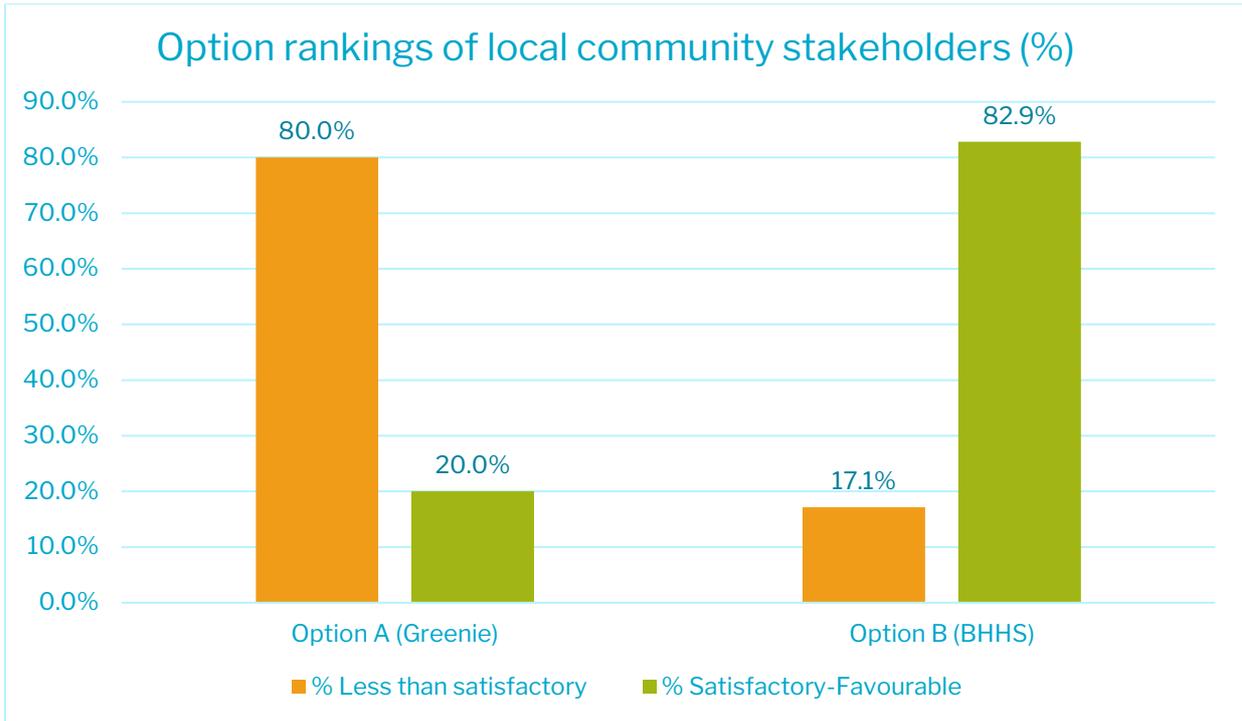


Figure 5. Percentage of local community stakeholders ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 35]

Option B (BHHS) was also ranked ‘at least satisfactory’ by 88.9% (24) of local parish members, whilst Option A (Greenie) was deemed ‘at least satisfactory’ by less than a quarter (22.2% / 3), as shown in Figure 6. One parish member also ranked both options as 1 (unfavourable).

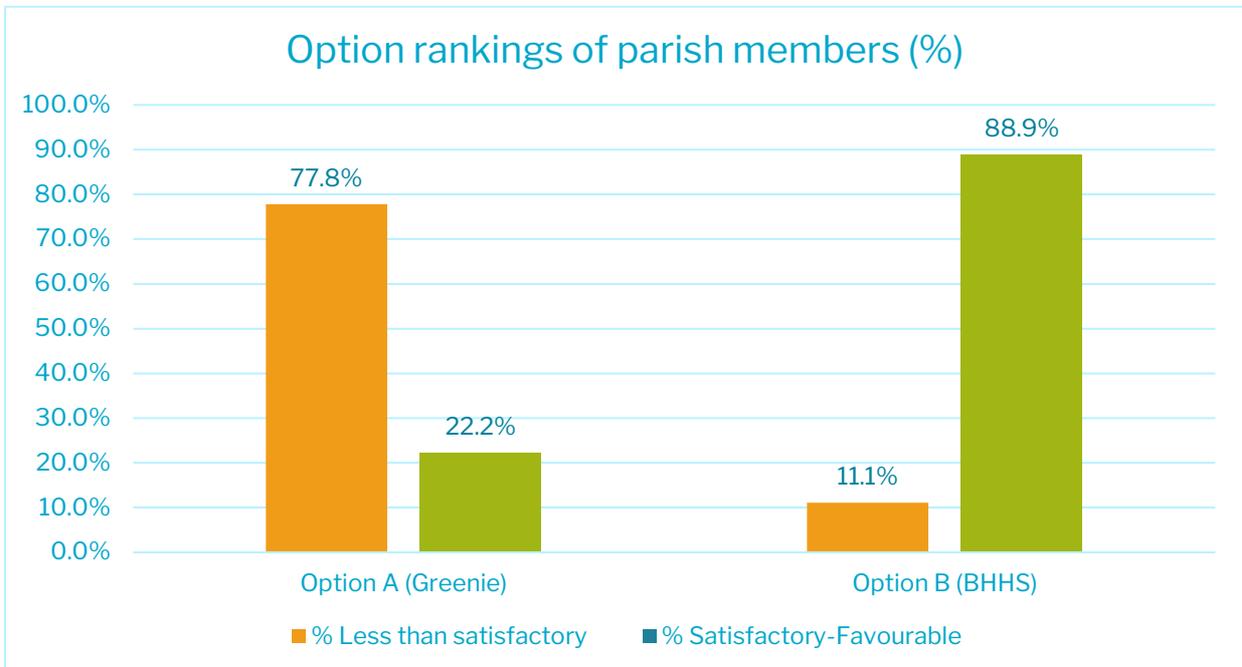


Figure 6. Percentage of parish members ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 27]

Of the 19 respondents who fell into the ‘other’ category, including former residents, wider county residents and those working with local residents, Option B (BHHS) was

deemed the most favourable option, with 78.9% (15) indicating that this was ‘at least satisfactory’ (shown in Figure 7 below). In contrast, 68.4% (13) of ‘other’ respondents found Option A (Greenie) to be ‘less than satisfactory’.

All ‘other’ respondents ranked at least one of the two options ‘at least satisfactory’. The representative from Sport Wales also indicated a preference for Option B (BHHS), ranking Option A (Greenie) as 1 (unfavourable) and Option B as 3 (satisfactory).

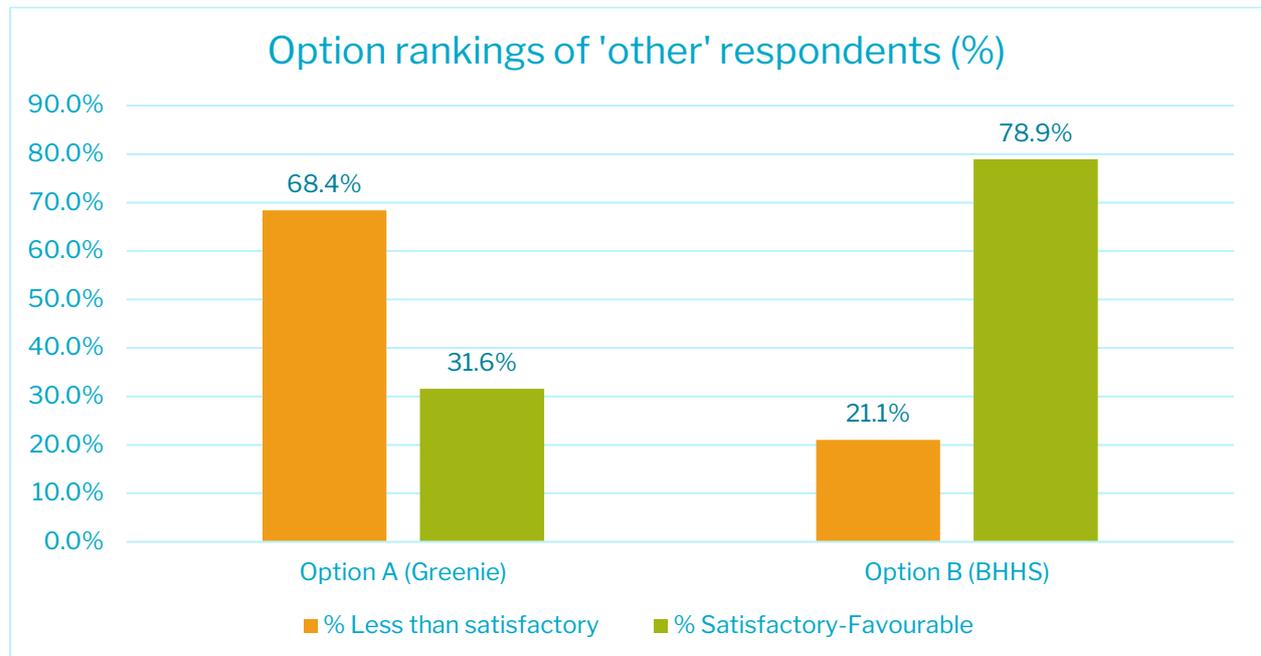


Figure 7. Percentage of ‘other’ respondents ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 19]

In contrast to responses from residents, local community stakeholders, local parish members and ‘other’ respondents, Figure 8 illustrates a strong preference for Option A (Greenie) amongst school staff, with 78.8% (26) of school staff ranking this option as ‘at least satisfactory’ compared to 33.3% (11) for Option B (BHHS). One member of school staff ranked both options ‘less than satisfactory’ (selecting 1 for both).

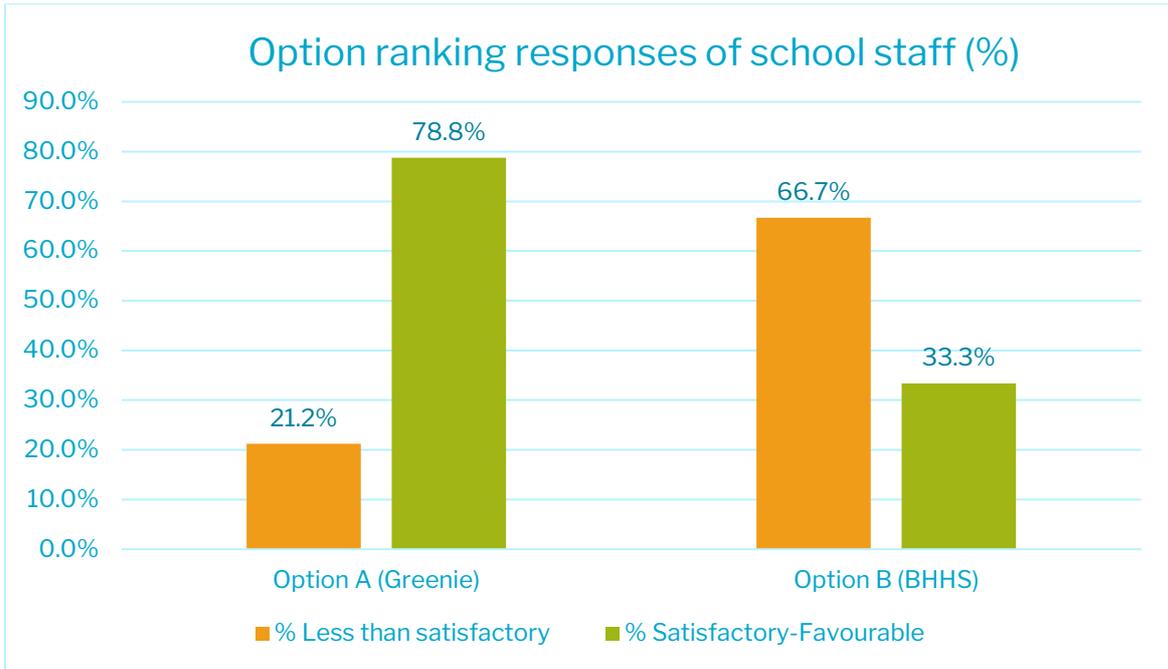


Figure 8. Percentage of school staff ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base 33]

As noted, both options appeared to be acceptable to over half of parents who responded to the survey, with 57.8% (59) ranking Option A (Greenie) as 'at least satisfactory' and 60.8% (62) ranking Option B (BHHS) 'at least satisfactory (shown in Figure 9). Accordingly, however, each option was found to be less than satisfactory by around 40% of parents, with 42.2% (43) for Option A (Greenie) and 39.2% (40) for Option B (BHHS). However, only one parent ranked both options as 'less than satisfactory' (selecting 1 for both).

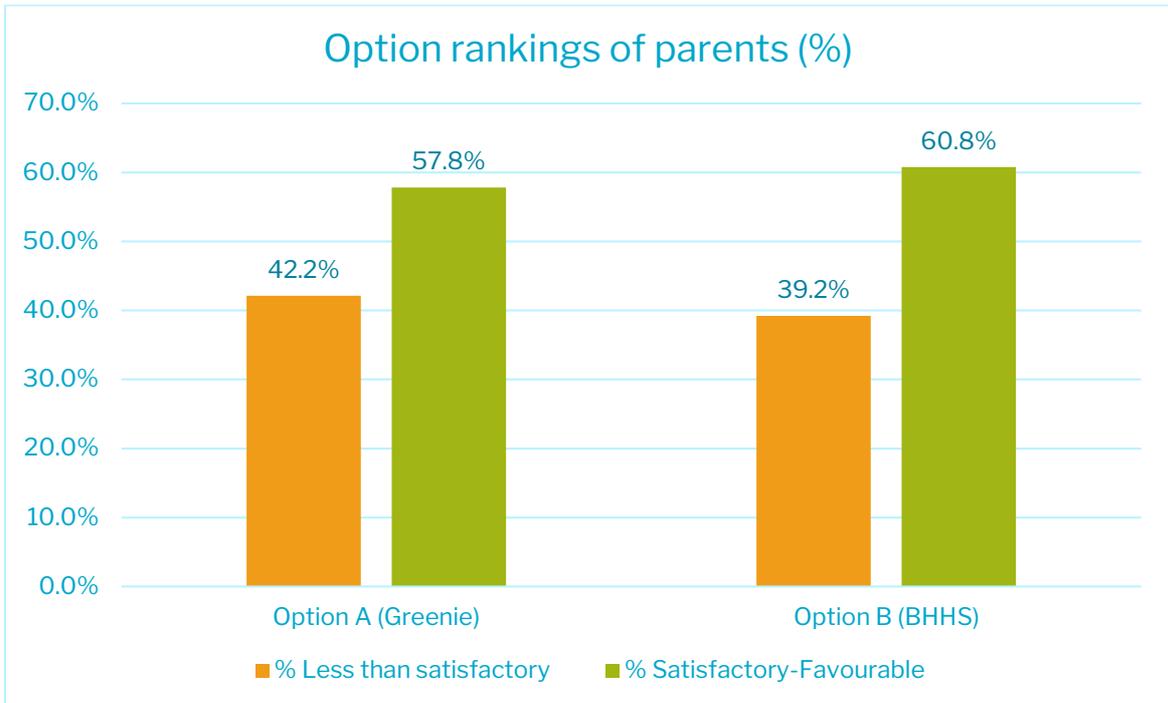


Figure 9. Percentage of parents ranking each option 'less than satisfactory (1-2) and 'satisfactory - favourable' (3-5). [Base 102]

Both options were ranked as ‘at least satisfactory’ by around two thirds of pupils who responded to the survey, with 70% (14) for Option A (Greenie) and 65% (13) for Option B (BHHS), as shown in Figure 10. Accordingly, Option A (Greenie) was found to be ‘less than satisfactory’ by 30% (6) and Option B by 35% (7). Of these, one pupil ranked both options as ‘less than satisfactory’. For this respondent, Option B (BHHS) was the least favourable of the two options (ranked 1, with Option A ranked 2).

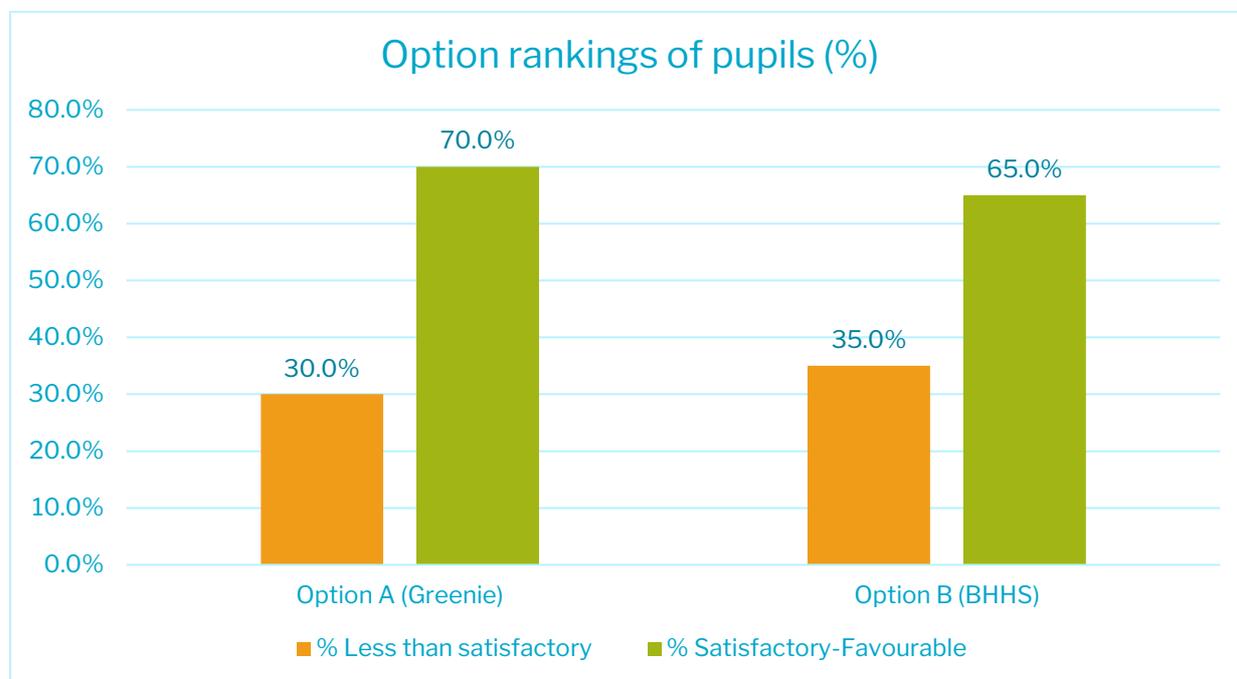


Figure 10. Percentage of school pupils ranking each option ‘less than satisfactory (1-2) and ‘satisfactory – favourable’ (3-5). [Base 20]

Question 7: Option Preference

Question 7 asked respondents to select their preferred option. Respondents were asked to select one preference only and could not leave the field blank. As such, responses to Question 7 indicate which option was most preferred by respondents as a whole and amongst different groups of those affected by the plans.

As shown in Figure 11, the strongest preference amongst all respondents was for Option B (BHHS), with 80.5% (594) of all respondents selecting Option B and 19.5% (144) selecting Option A (Greenie). When broken down by community group, there was a strong preference for Option B (BHHS) amongst the local community, who collectively make up 75.7% of respondents, and a marginal preference for Option A (Greenie) amongst the school community, who comprise 25.6%¹². Option B (BHHS) was selected by 92.1% (501) of the local community, with just 7.9% (43) selecting Option A (Greenie). Amongst the school community, Option A (Greenie) was selected by 51.9% (98) and Option B (BHHS) by 48.1% (91).

¹² The remaining 0.7% is made up of dual-coded and uncoded respondents.

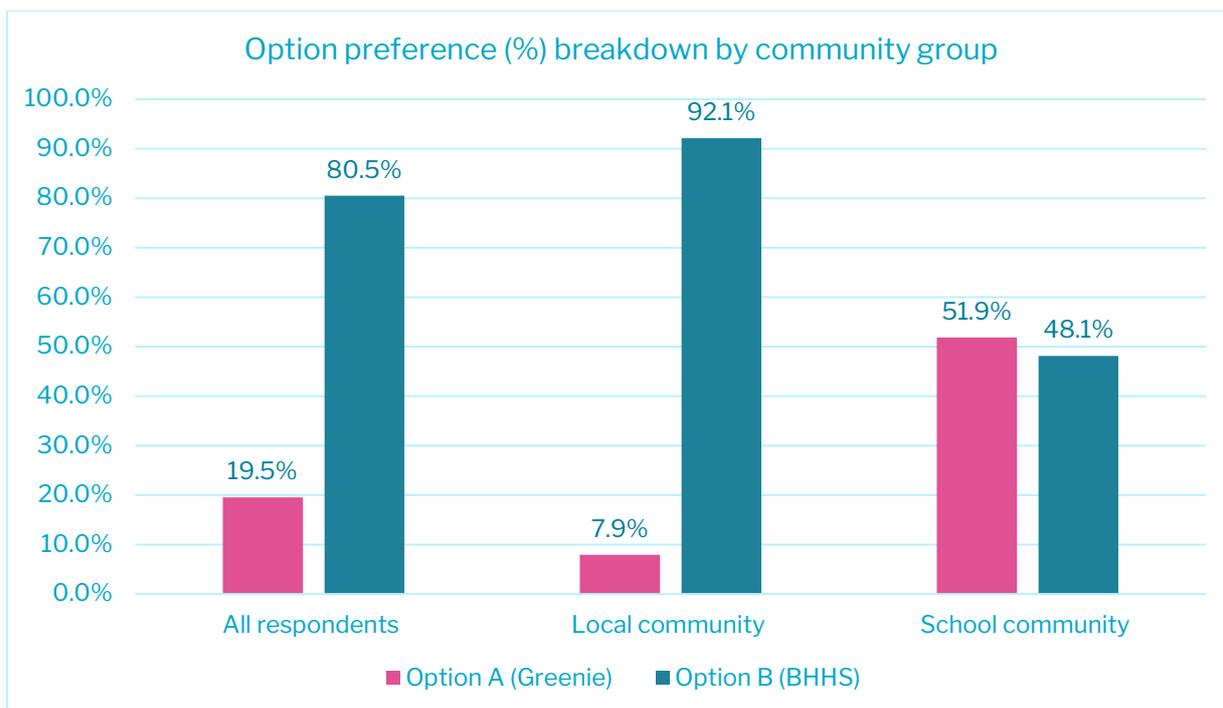


Figure 11. Option preferences of all respondents, local community, school community and dual-coded respondents [Base: 738]

The full breakdown of option preferences by community group, including numbers of those who selected each option, is outlined in Table 15 below.

Table 15. Option preference by community group

Community group	Option A (Greenie)	Option B (BHHS)	Total
Local community	7.9% (43)	92.1% (501)	100% (544)
School community	51.9% (98)	48.1% (91)	100% (189)
Dual-coded	33.3% (1)	66.7% (2)	100% (3)
Uncoded	100% (2)	0.0% (0)	100% (2)
All respondents*	19.5% (144)	80.5% (594)	100% (738)

Of the three respondents who indicated that they were members of both the school and local community at Question 1, one respondent (resident and parent) selected Option A (Greenie) and two respondents (one parent and resident and one resident, parish member and former teacher) selected Option B (BHHS). Of the two respondents who selected 'other' at Question 1 but did not specify their relationship to the project, both selected Option A (Greenie).

Breakdown of responses to Question 7 by respondent category

Figure 12 provides a further breakdown of responses to Question 7 by respondent category. There was a strong preference for Option B (BHHS) amongst residents, parish members, local community stakeholders and 'other' respondents, with 91.8% (460) of residents, 77.8% (21) of parish members, 88.6% (31) of local community stakeholders and 78.9% (15) of 'other' respondents selecting Option B (BHHS). The representative from Sport Wales also selected Option B (BHHS) as the preferred option.

Responses amongst parents were split, but marginally favoured Option A (Greenie), with 52.0% (53) selecting Option A (Greenie) and 48% (49) selecting Option B (BHHS). Finally,

pupils and school staff indicated a preference for Option A (Greenie), with 72.7% (24) of school staff and 60% (12) of pupils selecting Option A.

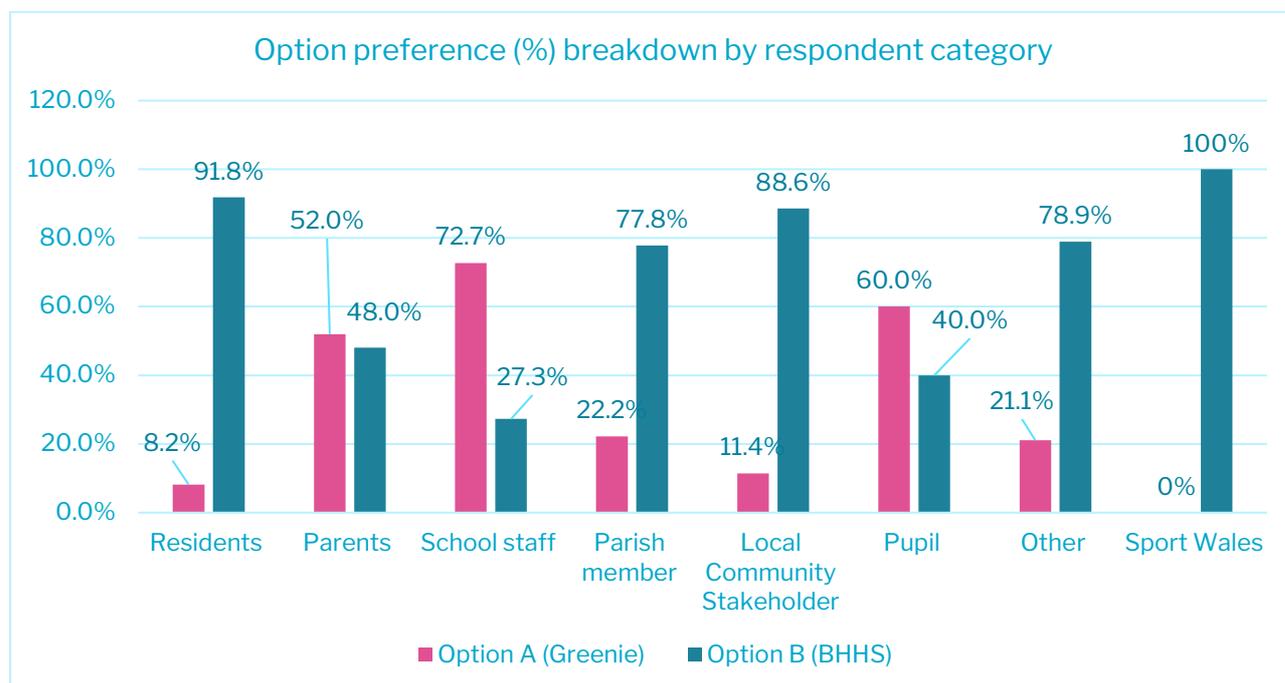


Figure 12. Bar chart of option preferences by respondent category. [Base: 738]¹³

The full breakdown of option preferences by respondent category, including numbers of those who selected each option, is outlined in Table 16.

Table 16. Option preference by community group

Respondent category	Option A (Greenie)	Option B (BHHS)	Total
Residents	8.2% (41)	91.8% (460)	100% (501)
Parents	52.0% (53)	48.0% (49)	100% (102)
School staff	72.7% (24)	27.3% (9)	100% (33)
Parish member	22.2% (6)	77.8% (21)	100% (27)
Local Community Stakeholder	11.4% (4)	88.6% (31)	100% (35)
Pupil	60.0% (12)	40.0% (8)	100% (20)
Other	21.1% (4)	78.9% (15)	100% (19)
Sport Wales	0% (0)	100% (1)	100% (1)

Question 8: Suggested changes to preferred option

Question 8 requested additional feedback and suggested changes with respect to respondents' preferred option. The majority of respondents did not provide an answer to this question and most of the feedback that was received related to Option B (BHHS). There were 131 responses to Question 8 in total (excluding those who responded with

¹³ One respondent selected both options as their preference. This respondent indicated from their responses to open questions that their least favoured option would be Option A (Greenie), and as such their preference has been counted as Option B (BHHS).

'no' or 'n/a') with 20 of these coming from respondents who selected Option A (Greenie) as their preference and 111 from those who selected Option B (BHHS). Of these, 10 respondents made comments or suggestions relation to Option A (Greenie) and 73 made comments or suggestions relating to Option B (BHHS), amounting to 6.9% (10) of those who selected Option A and 12.3% (73) of those who selected option B.

The remaining 48 respondents did not make suggestions in relation to either of the options but provided feedback on the consultation process or for the Council more generally. This feedback overlaps with Question 9 (general comments) and as such these responses are considered under responses to Question 9 (pages 49-52).

SUGGESTED CHANGES TO OPTION A (GREENIE)

Traffic, parking and drop off

Six respondents, including three residents, one parent and two members of school staff, made comments in relation to parking and drop off arrangements in relation to Option A (Greenie). Most of these six respondents did not make specific suggestions but noted that parking and drop off would need to be carefully and safely managed. One respondent suggested including an 'American style' drop off area and another suggested that additional parent parking be developed on the green of the current BHHS Phase 2 site.

Have a american style drop off area so the parking isn't a trouble because as it is now is so dangerous
Resident, Q8

Not sure where parents would park when picking up. Would the option of a new school on the Greenie provide parking. If not, perhaps additional parent parking could be provided on the existing green outside the top school. This could be resurfaced and would provide parking off the main road easing congestion.
Resident, Q8

Community green space

Two of those who selected Option A (Greenie) offered feedback with regards to the provision of open green space for the community. These included one resident who stated that the community 'should not be forgotten' during the process and a parent who agreed with the proposal to develop a new community facility on BHHS Phase 2 and suggested it include a green space and playground that would be secured at night.

Upper side could be a Green space and as well a playground
But have to be close at night otherwise will be damage likely every other one around the community
Parent of pupil, Q8

Bridges and walkways

Two respondents, including one parent and one resident, suggested that a bridge be erected for pupils to cross the road between the school site and the new open air community facility on the current BHHS Phase 2 site.

SUGGESTED CHANGES TO OPTION B

Community green space

A total of 29 respondents used the opportunity of Question 8 to emphasise their view that green spaces should be protected (sometimes in the context of reiterating their preference for Option B - BHHS) or to make suggestions with regards to how the existing green space can be improved. Responses in this category were received from 19 residents and a few respondents from all other respondent types except pupils. Many of these statements were brief, for example 'leave the greenie alone' (member of local parish) and 'don't take the greenie away' (resident). A few respondents, however, provided feedback about how the existing green space could be improved and this included suggestions of installing benches and updating the park.

Update the parks and green area so the wide public can use them...
Resident, Q8

How about a few benches for us older folks to rest when we take the dogs over the fields?
It's the only greenspace for miles and me and my little terrier only have little legs!
Resident, Q8

Location of rugby pitch

The proposed location of the secondary school rugby pitch was raised by 20 respondents at Question 8 (including sixteen residents, two parish members, one parent and one former resident). These respondents all indicated that they would prefer for the rugby pitch to be incorporated into the existing BHHS site grounds rather than on Plateau 2 of the Buttercup Fields. Three of these twenty respondents also objected to the use of the Buttercup Fields for the rugby pitch at Question 5, meaning that, in total 42 respondents objected to this element of the proposal (including the remaining 23 who raised this objection at Question 5, as discussed on page 31).

Yes there is no Need for the Rugby Pitch to be on the Greenie it can be on Phase 1 of BHHS unless it's for the community to use
Resident, Q8

Yes don't build on the buttercup fields at all. Turn it into a green space to plant trees, wild flowers and encourage wildlife.
Resident, Q8

Other feedback around sports pitches and fields

A further 12 respondents (10 residents, one parish member and one local community stakeholder) gave specific feedback relating to school sports pitches, and these responses primarily concerned public access. Two respondents requested that the rugby pitch not be gated and another two suggested that it should be open to the public. Two respondents, however, argued that the rugby pitch should be gated to prevent it being used by motorbike riders.

Don't fence the rugby pitch.
Resident, Q5

Make sure the existing football/rugby pitch is retained in its existing position to ensure Gwaunfarren junior school have easy access on foot
Resident, Q5

In addition to suggestions regarding the rugby pitch, one respondent requested that the existing football/rugby pitch be retained in its current position to ensure easy access for pupils from Gwaunfarren Junior School. One parish member also suggested relocating the forest school to where the multi-use sports court is currently situated in Option B (BHHS) to improve primary pupils' access to this facility.

Remove the multi use hard surface sports court (25) and relocate the Forest school in this area This space will be vital for outdoor learning a major component of the New Curriculum. It will afford more opportunities and easier access for young learners plus much closer to the primary building for toilet facilities.
Parish member, Q8

Traffic, parking and drop off

As with those who selected Option A (Greenie), 10 respondents (all residents) whose preference was for Option B (BHHS) made suggestions in relation to traffic management, parking or drop off facilities. Most of these suggestions involved ensuring sufficient parking facilities to prevent parents parking along the road and thereby increasing congestion. Two respondents, however, said that both proposed options would result in high levels of congestion and that they would therefore prefer the school to be built elsewhere. Finally, one respondent suggested that speed limiting devices be installed on roads surrounding the site to prevent accidents.

Speed limiting devices needed on the busy main roads particularly the main hill known as dangerous hill locally for a reason - in the evenings this is used as a racetrack by youths in modified cars and is a serious accident waiting to happen - also the buttercup fields are used by illegal motorbikes so a more secure method of enclosing the fields is required than a thin wire fence which is easily cut and has been on many occasions as I walk my dog there regularly
Resident, Q8

A better system for traffic inside and outside the school grounds, build a better bigger carpark for parents etc to pick up/drop off their kids. currently there is a jam outside the

school as there is not enough space for parking and traffic moving through the area is slowed right down due to parked cars on both sides of the road. Also not very safe for kids to pass, walk or cross the road.

Resident, Q8

Bridges and walkways

Finally, two respondents suggested that a canopy be included from the carpark to the school building to shelter pupils and staff from the rain during bad weather.

Shelters/canopies to walk from the carpark to school. So children and staff won't be in wet clothes for the day

Parent of pupil, Q8

FURTHER COMMENT

In addition to specific feedback in relation to the two options, a number of respondents provided feedback on the plans as a whole. This included one parent who suggested separating the primary and secondary aspects of the school and one parish member who requested options for Welsh-speaking classes. One respondent stated that the school needed to be 'community oriented' but did not provide suggestions.

In addition to the above, 15 respondents reiterated their preference for Option B (BHHS), five said that they would prefer the schools to remain separate and four expressed support for the new school overall. 12 respondents suggested building the school on an alternative site altogether (the full list of alternative site suggestions made by respondents can be found on page 52). All but one of these 12 respondents had selected Option B (BHHS) at Question 7.

16 respondents used Question 8 to provide feedback on the consultation process or for the Council more generally and, as noted earlier, these comments have been incorporated into analysis of Question 9.

Question 9: Further comments

Question 9 asked respondents whether there were any further comments they would like to make on the proposals. In total, there were 142 responses to Question 9, excluding those who responded 'no', 'nothing' or 'n/a' and those who responded primarily used the opportunity to reiterate views expressed in response to earlier questions or to express criticism of the consultation or the Council more broadly. As noted above, feedback at Question 8 which related to the consultation process is also discussed below.

Feedback on consultation process

In total, 60 respondents across Questions 8 and 9 provided feedback relating to the consultation process. Feedback on the consultation was varied and, as such, has been broken down into sub-themes below.

General comments and requests

Some respondents made general comments and requests directed to the Council, such as 'listen to the people' and 'don't forget the community' and these responses came from residents.

Perception of unfairness in the consultation process

Some respondents indicated that they felt that the process for determining the site for the new school had been conducted unfairly. Most of these responses were brief and without further explanation, therefore it is difficult to determine what aspects of the consultation process the concerns related to. However, a few respondents indicated that they believed the site for the 3-16 school had been determined prior to the consultation and that construction on the site would go ahead regardless of consultation outcomes. In addition, a few respondents suggested that residents in the surrounding areas had not been properly consulted in the initial stages of the project, which led them to feel that the procedure for selecting the school site had been underhanded.

As of now this procedure has been put through council in an underhand manner, if residents and community were informed of this proposal from day one I personally don't think it would have got this far and could have saved time and money which is hard to come by these days.

Resident, Q9

General criticism of Council / Council leader

Some respondents, all residents, made critical comments about the Council or Council Leader but did not provide further explanation for their views.

Feedback relating to Question 6 of the consultation survey

As discussed on page 9, during the first few hours that the consultation was launched, the ranking system in Question 6 was not labelled and, as such, it was not clear whether 1 or 5 represented the highest ranking. This issue was highlighted by 12 respondents across Question 8 and 9 and was subsequently rectified.

Preference for 'neither option'

Five respondents across Questions 8 and 9 said that they would have liked to select neither option at Question 7 and expressed frustration that this was not possible (all of these respondents selected Option B (BHHS) at Question 7).

Notably, only one of these respondents had objected to the use of the Buttercup Fields for the rugby pitch at Question 5. Of the remaining four, one had made a nonspecific objection ('no'), two had provided nonspecific positive responses (such as 'much better') and another had indicated that Option B (BHHS) was an acceptable compromise (such as 'If there are only 2 options then this option is the best as it limits the disruption to the well located current green space').

Concern about cost of consultations

A few respondents indicated that they were displeased about the time and resources that had been invested into the consultation, with four suggesting that there should be an investigation into the consultation process or Council leader. Three of these respondents did not provide reasoning, however one specifically called for an investigation into why the option to build on the current BHHS site was initially discounted and then put forward as an option in the fifth consultation and another said there should be an investigation into the cost of consultations thus far.

Perception that green spaces should not be considered for developments

Three respondents expressed frustration that a community green space was considered as an option for building the new school and indicated that they felt the Council had an imperative to protect green spaces. A few of these respondents noted the importance of green spaces for wildlife and the environment, with others citing their importance for the wellbeing of local populations.

It's disappointing that we have had to have several 'consultations' that all reached the same conclusion - not to build anything any longer on green spaces!
Local community stakeholder, Q9

Positive feedback on the fifth consultation

Two respondents said that they were pleased that the Council had come back to public consultation with new options and indicated that they felt the fifth consultation had been fair.

Comments on community impact of the plans

Of those who responded to Question 9, 29 reiterated their concerns about the loss of green space that would occur with Option A (Greenie) and these responses generally reflect those discussed under responses to Question 3 (see page 22). Sport Wales also commented that community access to the indoor and outdoor sports facilities at the school should be maximised where possible.

A further ten responses expanded on their concerns around the implications for traffic management, and these responses appeared to relate to both options. Such respondents noted that the areas surrounding the Greenie and the current BHHS site are already subject to heavy traffic and expressed concern about how the road network would support the increase of traffic resulting from the new school. A few of these

respondents further expressed concerns about air pollution affecting residents and/or pupils or cited concerns around road safety, particularly on Gwaunfarren Road.

I think the school would be too large a facility for this urban area and will cause too many impositions on the residents. Not to mention all the pollution this will create. It is not a facility for the vast majority of the local residents. It seems very badly thought out with little consideration for those living close by.

With the changes to the A465, I am very concerned about the traffic management in the surrounding area.

Resident, Q9

The LA need to be mindful of the increase in traffic considering at the moment the area is very busy with the existing Bishop Hedley school and Gwaunfarren [road] in close proximity as well as staff driving to PCH

Resident, Q9

Site preference / alternative site suggestion

A few respondents used the opportunity of Question 9 to restate their preferred option, with eleven respondents restating their support for Option B (BHHS) and two respondents restating support for Option A (Greenie).

In addition, across Question 8 and 9, fifteen respondents suggested that the school be built on an alternative site. Of these, five respondents did not provide specific suggestions but simply said that the school should be built 'elsewhere' and one suggested that it be built in a 'less built-up area'. The full list of alternative suggestions made by respondents along with the numbers of respondents who suggested them is included in Table 17. Those who stated that they would have liked to have been able to choose 'neither option' as their preference (as discussed on page 49) have been included with those who suggested the school be built elsewhere in the table below.

Table 17. Alternative site suggestions in responses to Question 8 and 9.

Site	No. of respondents
Elsewhere (unspecified)	10
Goat Mill Road	10
Old British Steel site (Dowlais)	2
'Heartlands'	1
Trago Mills	1

*Two respondents made more than one suggestion.

Further comment

Finally, 20 respondents in total made wider comments relating to the proposals as a whole. Of these, nine respondents stated opposition to the 3-16 school, seven expressed support for the new school and two expressed opposition to religious schools in general. The remaining two respondents made general statements relating to schooling, with one parish member expressing concern that it would be difficult to keep up teacher morale over the construction period (without linking this specifically to either option), and one parent stating that the site of the school was less important than ensuring that there are enough teaching staff.

Feedback Relevant to Disposal of Playing Fields Impact Assessment

Feedback from across the open responses relevant to the Impact Assessment are discussed below for each option in turn.

Option A

The Disposal of Playing Fields Impact Assessment deemed that, while Option A (Greenie) would entail some development on current priority green space (the Greenie), this would be mitigated by the development of new community green space on Phase 2 of the existing BHHS site. In addition, it was deemed that children's opportunities to play would be somewhat improved due to the updating of the playground facilities and relocation of the playground closer to neighbouring communities.

Sport Wales, the statutory consultee that responded to the survey, however, indicated that Option A (Greenie) would not be a satisfactory option at Question 6, explaining that *'[w]herever possible the loss of a playing field should be avoided'* at Question 3.

A total of 225 respondents objected to Option A (Greenie) at Question 3 due to the perceived loss of green space for the community (making up 86% of those who provided a reason for their objection). The majority of these respondents did not explicitly acknowledge the proposed new green space and/or community facility in their responses to Question 3. These responses included comments such as the following:

Terrible, more loss of green space
Resident, Question 3.

This green area should be left green there's nothing left if this is taken away children need somewhere to play
Resident, Question 3.

Many of these respondents did not provide an answer to Question 4 (suggestions for the new community green space / open-air facility), simply stated 'no' or 'nothing' or re-stated their objection to Option A (Greenie). Some respondents who did provide further clarification (either at Question 3 or 4), explained that they did not feel the proposed new community space would be sufficient to compensate for the loss of the Greenie. Some respondents further indicated that the Greenie had sentimental value, claiming that it had been used throughout generations and/or that it was important to their memories of growing up in the area.

The addition of any open-air facility in this space will not in my opinion make up for the loss of the vast green space that would be lost due to Option A.
Resident, Question 4.

I wouldn't [make any suggestions for the new open-air facility on Phase 2 of BHHS], there is nothing I would want. Lived in the penybryn for 25 years and now my son is growing up and would like him to have the freedom and use of the greenie as I did
Resident, Question 4.

I think the proposal to build a school on the Greenie is wrong. Successive generations of children have played on it for many years.
Resident, Question 3.

The importance of preserving green space echoed in responses to Question 8 and 9. At Question 9, three respondents indicated that they felt that green spaces should not be considered for new developments as the Council has an imperative to protect green spaces wherever possible. Two of those who selected Option A (Greenie) as their preference and provided suggested changes at Question 8 indicated that they felt additional action should be taken to preserve accessible green space if this option would be taken forward, such as opening the area surrounding the school to dog walkers and maximising the size of the proposed new community open space on BHHS Phase 2.

The proposal to update the community playground in Option A (Greenie) was not specifically mentioned by any respondent. However, twelve respondents expressed approval of Option A (Greenie) on the basis that it would offer improved community sports pitches, making up 10% of those who provided a reason for approving of Option A.

Option B

As Option B (BHHS) would involve primarily utilising the current BHHS site for the proposed new school and as the current community playing field would remain intact, this option was deemed in the Council's Impact Assessment on the Disposal of Playing Fields to have no impact on the availability of open space or for opportunities for children to play. Though this option does involve a proposed secondary rugby pitch being developed on Plateau 2 of the Buttercup Fields, this land is not deemed priority open space and would not necessitate the relocation of community sports pitches.

Responses to the open questions indicate that most respondents feel that Option B (BHHS) is an acceptable option for the community. Some respondents did feel that the use of Plateau 2 for the school rugby pitch did entail some loss to the community, however the majority of these respondents indicated that this was a fair compromise overall. Some respondents suggested that the rugby pitch could also be open to the community to mitigate this loss. As discussed on page 47, 42 respondents in total across the open questions objected to the use of the Buttercup Fields for the school rugby pitch.

Sport Wales did not object to the use of Plateau 2 for a rugby pitch but stated that community access to indoor and outdoor facilities should be maximised as much as possible.

School Council Meetings and Pupil Voice

As part of the fifth consultation, school council meetings to discuss the proposals were held at each of the four schools due to be merged:

- St Illtyd's Primary School
- Bishop Hedley High School
- St Aloysius Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School

The meetings were intended to provide pupils with an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the proposals and select their preferred option. In addition, pupils at the schools were provided with an infographic describing the two options and any differences between them (Appendix 4) and ballot boxes were used in school to enable all pupils to select their preferred option as well as hands up counts in classrooms being undertaken.

In addition to the school council meetings, ballot boxes were placed around each of the four schools to give pupils across the school an opportunity to submit their preference for the site of the new 3-16 school.

School council meetings are summarised below in turn. Subsequently, option preferences from school councils and wider school pupils from each school are outlined in Figures 13 and 14 on pages 62-63.

School Council Meetings

All meetings were attended by pupils who were school council members, at least one member of school staff, and three representatives from MTCBC. Meetings began with a member of school staff explaining the proposals before opening out to questions and ended with pupils being asked to state their preference of the two options.

The full minutes of the school council meetings, including the full list of attendees, can be found in Appendices 5-8. Across the schools, key themes of questions from pupils related to:

- Facilities (Including around play and sports facilities, libraries and IT)
- Day to day changes (such as potential changes in uniform, teachers, class size, how many years in the school)
- Separation of age groups, particularly primary and secondary (including questions about how and whether the school would be partitioned and what facilities would be available to whom)
- Access (including changes to drop off procedures, exits, navigating roads, safety)
- Construction (such as around timelines of the two option and plans for the existing school sites)
- Security (relating fences and boundaries)

Each meeting is summarised separately below in terms of the key questions and themes of discussion.

St Illtyd's Primary School

The school council meeting at St Illtyd's Primary School took place on the 10th of February and was attended by one member of school staff, 19 pupils from the school council and three representatives of MTCBC.

Questions raised by pupils related to:

Facilities

Pupils asked a range of question about the facilities that would be available at the new school, including around sports pitches, IT and prayer facilities.

One pupil asked whether there would be lines for different sports on the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at the new school in either of the options. A representative explained that there would be three MUGA's on site A and four on site B, meaning that pupils would be able to play different sports at the same time. A representative also noted that, in addition to sports facilities, there would be a forest school on the new site in either option where pupils could learn about plants and wildlife.

Another pupil questioned whether there would be a computer room at the new school. It was explained that there would be an IT classroom in the secondary area but that this could also be booked for primary school lessons. Representatives also explained that primary pupils would have the same classroom for all lessons but secondary pupils would have each lesson taught in a different room.

One attendee asked whether there would be a church at the new school, to which it was explained that there would be a chapel on site that would be used by pupils throughout the 3-16 school.

Separation of primary and secondary pupils

Pupils at St Illtyd's asked whether primary and secondary schools would be separated at the school to ensure that primary pupils feel safe. Representatives explained that there would be designated areas that were primary or secondary only, but that the 3-16 school would have the benefit of enabling primary pupils to access specialist facilities (such as science labs, drama studios and textile rooms) that would usually only be available at secondary schools.

Day to day changes

Pupils attending asked whether there would be new school uniforms once the schools were merged into the 3-16 through school and whether the uniform would be the same for primary and secondary pupils. It was explained that this would be decided by the new headteacher and that they may be given an opportunity to share their views on this.

Access and accessibility

One pupil asked whether there would be buses to collect pupils who do not have access to a car and who live too far to walk to school. Representatives clarified that transport arrangements are still being determined but that some transport would be provided for pupils depending on the distance they lived from the new school. It was also explained

that the site will be designed so that buses can drive onto the site to drop pupils off safely.

Attendees also asked how pupils would get around the school building in Option A. Representatives explained that the main entrance was in the middle of the building but it was likely that primary pupils would go directly to their classrooms from the drop off area. A separate dining area would be provided for primary and secondary pupils, both of which would be on the ground floor. It was further explained that if primary pupils have lessons in the sports hall or other specialist area they would be taken there directly by teachers. Attendees also asked whether there would be more than one exit in either option. Representatives clarified that the school would be compliant with building regulations which state that all classrooms must be within a certain distance from a fire exit. It was explained that there would be more than one exit from the school and each primary classroom would have an exit leading directly outside.

One pupil asked whether a lift would be provided for disabled pupils. It was explained that lifts would be provided in both options and that the school would be compliant with the Equalities Act.

Construction

Pupils enquired how long the new school would take to build, to which it was explained that this would be dependent on which option was taken forward. With Option A (Greenie) construction work would begin straight away and would be completed by 2025. With Option B (BHHS), the existing school would need to be demolished before building work could take place, and as such this would be finished a year later, by 2026.

Security

One pupil asked whether there would be a fence around the school grounds, to which it was explained that the school would be designed to be secure and would have a fence.

Bishop Hedley High School (BHHS)

Two meetings were held at BHHS on the 11th February 2022. Both meetings were attended by a deputy head teacher and three representatives of the project from MTCBC. Meeting One was held with 16 pupils from the School Parliament across Years 7-9 and Meeting Two with 10 pupils from the School Parliament in Years 10 and 11.

As questions in both meetings largely overlap, these are discussed jointly below by theme.

Construction

A key theme of questions raised by BHHS pupils across the two meetings related to the construction of the site in either option. Pupils asked how long demolition of the current BHHS site would take if Option B (BHHS) were to be chosen, and when this would begin. Representatives explained that demolition would begin in 2023 and would take between two and three months. It was also explained that the new school would be complete by 2026 and that temporary buildings would be erected on site to accommodate pupils

during this period. Lessons would be timetabled appropriately to ensure that there were sufficient classrooms available.

Pupils asked what would happen to the current BHHS building if Option A (Greenie) were taken forward. It was explained that this had not yet been decided but that Gwaunfarren Primary School may continue to use the sports pitches. One pupil asked whether a memorial could be created on the current school site if the school were built on Option A (Greenie) to commemorate the old school, and the representative said this could be considered. Pupils were told that Option A (Greenie) would be completed by 2025.

Attendees also asked about the size of the new school, to which it was explained that the new building would be approximately 10,000 square meters (in either option) in line with building regulations. It was further noted that, if the current BHHS site (Option B) were to be used, the site would be redesigned to make more efficient use of space.

In addition to questions about the site itself, pupils asked about whether building works would affect roads in the surrounding area. Representatives explained that there would be fencing in place to block off areas under construction and that building materials would be safely delivered to the contractors, ensuring that highways are kept clear.

Site organisation

Pupils at BHHS asked a number of questions with regards to the organisation of the new school, particularly pertaining to the separation of ages and the partitioning of different parts of the school. Representatives explained that the core teaching and dining areas for primary and secondary pupils would be separated but that the school would have a shared chapel. In addition, pupils asked whether there would be an indoor break area, to which it was explained that this would be determined by the headteacher.

Access and accessibility

In terms of access to the school, pupils asked about the facilities for parking, drop off and buses. Representatives explained that there would be sufficient car parking spaces but that the school was being designed to be carbon neutral and therefore the Council would improve active travel routes to minimise the number of pupils needing to be dropped off by car.

With regards to buses, it was explained that there would be safe access areas for buses to drop pupils off and that bus routes would be determined based on calculations of the numbers of pupils needing bus transport. It was also explained that primary and secondary pupils would most likely have separate start and finish times, meaning that buses would not arrive at the same time, and that there would be different drop off areas.

In terms of accessibility of the site, attendees asked whether the tunnel would be accessible to people with limited mobility. Representatives clarified that the site would be compliant with the Equalities Act to ensure that all aspects of the school were accessible to those with disabilities. A lift would be installed to ensure that wheelchair users could access the tunnel.

Day to day

One pupil asked how timetabling of lessons would work at the new school and it was explained that this would largely follow the current model. Attendees also asked whether teachers currently working at the primary schools would be employed at the new school, to which it was explained that this would be determined by the new governing body. Pupils were also interested in whether year groups would still be separated in the new school, and it was explained that this would be the case.

Facilities

Discussion around facilities included questions about sports pitches and communal green space, libraries and parking facilities.

Pupils enquired about the sports pitches that would be available with Option B (BHHS) and representatives clarified that a secondary rugby pitch would be created on the part of the Buttercup Fields. Pupils asked whether a hockey pitch would be available at the new school in either option and it was explained that there would be MUGAs which could be used for different kinds of sports but that there would be no specifically designated hockey pitch. A question was asked about whether benches could be included on the school grounds and representatives explained that this could be considered.

With regards to Option A (Greenie) specifically, pupils asked how the communal green space would be managed. It was explained that one grass pitch would be located outside of the school boundary but would be open to pupils for use after hours as well as to organised community groups. It was further explained that sports facilities would be largely similar in both options but would be slightly smaller in Option B (BHHS).

In response to a question about whether there would be a library on site, it was explained that there would be a learning resource centre.

A general question was asked about how car parking would be organised, and it was explained that there would be sufficient parking in both site options, but that the Council were working to improve active travel routes to minimise the need for car travel.

Admissions and pupil numbers

One pupil asked how the Council had calculated the projected number of pupils as 600, and it was explained that this was based on data on the number of pupils in each school as well as local birth data. It was further noted that these numbers are used to indicate what size buildings need to be in line with Welsh Government regulations.

Security

Pupils asked whether the gates would be removed from the Greenie if Option A (Greenie) were taken forward and a representative explained that new, secure fencing would be erected.

St Aloysius Primary School

The school council meeting at St Aloysius Primary School was held on the 14th of February 2022 and was attended by three representatives from MTCBC, one member of school staff and 28 Year 6 pupils.

Questions raised by pupils related to:

Construction

Two pupils asked questions regarding the implications of each option. These pupils wanted to understand what would happen to the BHHS site if Option A (Greenie) were to be chosen, and where current BHHS pupils would be accommodated during the construction phase if Option B (BHHS) were to be chosen. Representatives explained that if the new school is built on the Greenie (Option A) the top end (Phase 2) of the current BHHS site would be converted into a park and or other open-air community facility, which would be decided with the input of the community. It was then explained that if the school were to be built on Option B (BHHS), pupils currently at the school would be moved to the bottom site (Phase 1) whilst construction work takes place on the upper site (Phase 2) and that all pupils would be moved to the new building once complete.

Pupils at St Aloysius also asked how long the new school would take to build. It was explained that work on Option A (Greenie) would be completed by 2025 and Option B (BHHS) by 2026.

Day to day changes

One pupil asked what would happen to the current teachers at their school. It was explained that a new executive headteacher has now been appointed to run all of the four schools until they are merged into the 3-16 through school and that this headteacher, along with the governing body, would determine a new staffing structure. Pupils also wanted to know whether their school uniform would remain the same. As at St Illtyd's, it was explained that this would be decided by the new headteacher and that they may be asked for their views. Finally, one pupil asked what would happen to their current school building to which representatives explained that this had not yet been decided.

Access

One attendee noted that around half of pupils currently walk to school and asked whether it would be safe for pupils to walk to the new 3-16 school site. Representatives explained that the Council is required to create Active Travel routes across the county borough, including cycle paths, wider pavements, a new crossing on the main road and traffic calming measures and, as such, walking to school would be easier and safer once the new school is constructed.

Implications for pupils at other schools

In addition to implications of the two options, one pupil asked whether the development would impact pupils planning to attend Pen Y Dre High School. Representatives explained that the proposals for the new 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic school would not directly affect Pen Y Dre School, but that some improvements would also take place at Pen Y Dre.

St Mary's Primary School

The school council meeting at St Mary's Primary School took place on the 16th of February 2022 and was attended by two representatives from MTCBC, one member of school staff and 11 pupils from the school council.

Site organisation

Many of the questions from pupils at St Mary's Primary school pertained to how the school site would be organised. In particular, pupils were interested in whether pupils from the three primary schools would be combined into one class per year or whether there would be more than one class per year group. Representatives explained that there would likely be more than one class per year and that the school was being designed with this in mind. It was explained that the school must be designed in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines that stipulate that class groups should be around 30 pupils.

In addition to questions about the numbers of pupils in each class group, pupils were interested in the number of year groups that would be at the school overall. It was explained that the school would start from nursery for children aged three all the way through to GCSE's (for pupils up to 16). This would mean that when pupils go from primary to secondary school they would stay on the same site. In response to questions about whether there would be separate yards for pupils of different ages it was explained that there would be separate yards for nursery, primary and secondary pupils.

A question was asked about the number of floors that would be at the school and representatives explained that this would depend on which of the two options was taken forward. Option A (Greenie) would have two floors, with primary pupils situated on the ground floor and secondary pupils on the first floor. The layout of BHHS would be different because the ground there is steep. The nursery would be on the ground floor at the top of the slope and where the land drops, it would become two storeys, with primary classrooms over the two floors. At the bottom of the slope, secondary classrooms would be over three storeys with lifts installed to ensure that the site is accessible for people with disabilities.

Pupils attending also asked whether there would be a single kitchen for the whole school and it was explained that this is yet to be decided but that there would be separate dining areas.

Clubs and Facilities

In relation to facilities, questions were asked about the size of schoolyards and play facilities that would be available. Representatives explained that there would be larger schoolyards to accommodate the greater number of pupils that would be at the school, as well as MUGAs (three in Option A and four in Option B) on which pupils could play a range of different sports. With regards to play equipment, it was explained that new play equipment would be provided and this would be embedded in the ground to ensure that it is safe to use.

In terms of clubs and extra curricula activities, pupils asked whether clubs such as 'Eco Club' and after school clubs would still run. It was explained that the specific clubs that would be available are yet to be decided but that pupils could use their school council to have input on which clubs are made available. It was also noted that the new school

would be carbon neutral and that the Council representatives could speak to the Eco Club at St Mary's to explain this.

Access

With regards to access, one attendee asked whether there would be any bus transport to the new school. Representatives explained that buses would be available to some pupils depending on how far they lived from the school. In addition, a question was asked about whether there would be road safety lessons and it was explained that the walking routes to the school would be updated, with new zebra and puffin crossings and wider pavements, to ensure that pedestrian routes to the school are safe.

Day to day changes

Pupils were interested in whether their current teachers would be employed at the new school. Representatives clarified that the new headteacher would determine the staffing structure, but that many of their current teachers would likely be at the new school.

Pupils and admissions

Pupils at St Mary's asked whether the new school would have the capacity to hold more pupils than are currently at each of the schools separately. It was explained that the new school building would be for just over 1,250 pupils but would be separated for primary and secondary pupils.

Construction

A couple of questions were asked with regards to the construction of the new school, including whether there were differences in costs between the two options and what would happen to the old sites. In terms of costs, it was explained that Option A (Greenie) was around £5million cheaper than Option B (BHHS) due to the need to demolish the old school and level the ground in the latter. With regards to the old sites, representatives said that, with Option A (Greenie) the top part of the current BHHS site would be turned into community green space, but that there were no final plans for the other school sites.

School Pupil Preferences

As shown in Figure 13, Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option overall amongst the school councils, with 59.5% (50) of all pupils selecting Option A, although at St Aloysius Primary School and Bishop Hedley High School, Option B (BHHS) was the most popular option, being selected by 60.7% (17) and 57.7% (15) of school council members respectively.

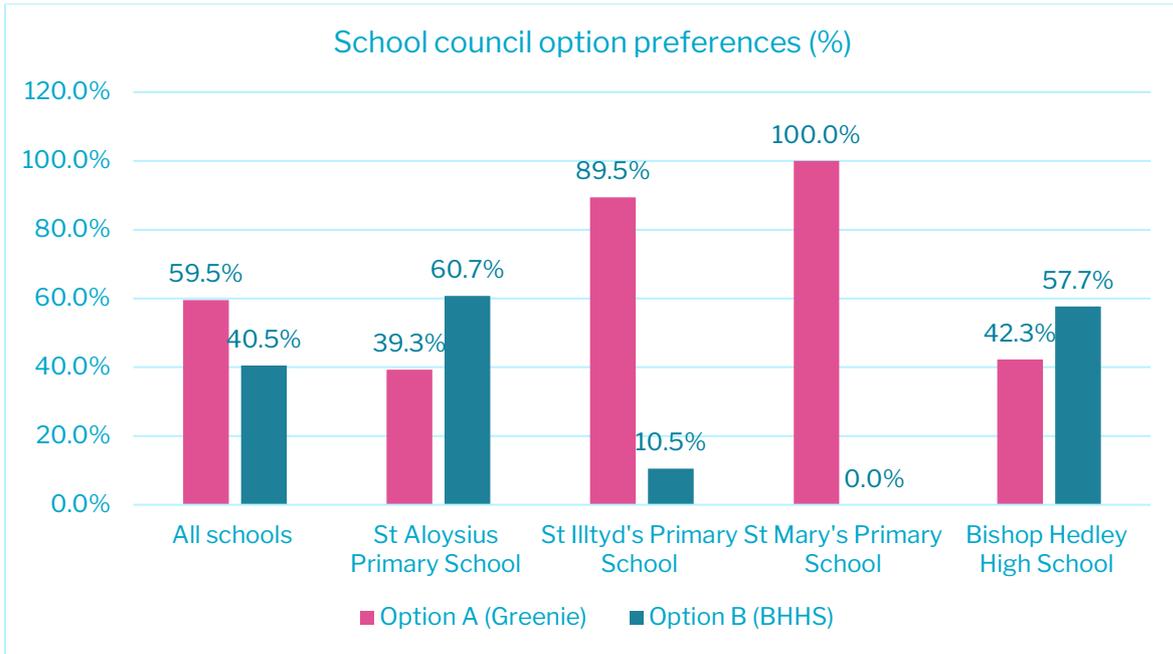


Figure 13. Option preferences of pupils at school council meetings held at the four schools to be merged. [Base: 84]

Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option at St Illtyd's Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, with 89.5% (17) of school council members at St Illtyd's and 100% (11) at St Mary's selecting Option A (Greenie) as their preference.

Wider School Pupil Preferences

The most popular option amongst pupils across the four schools was Option A (Greenie), with 67.5% (768) of all pupils selecting this option as their preference, compared to 32.5% (369) who selected Option B (BHHS).

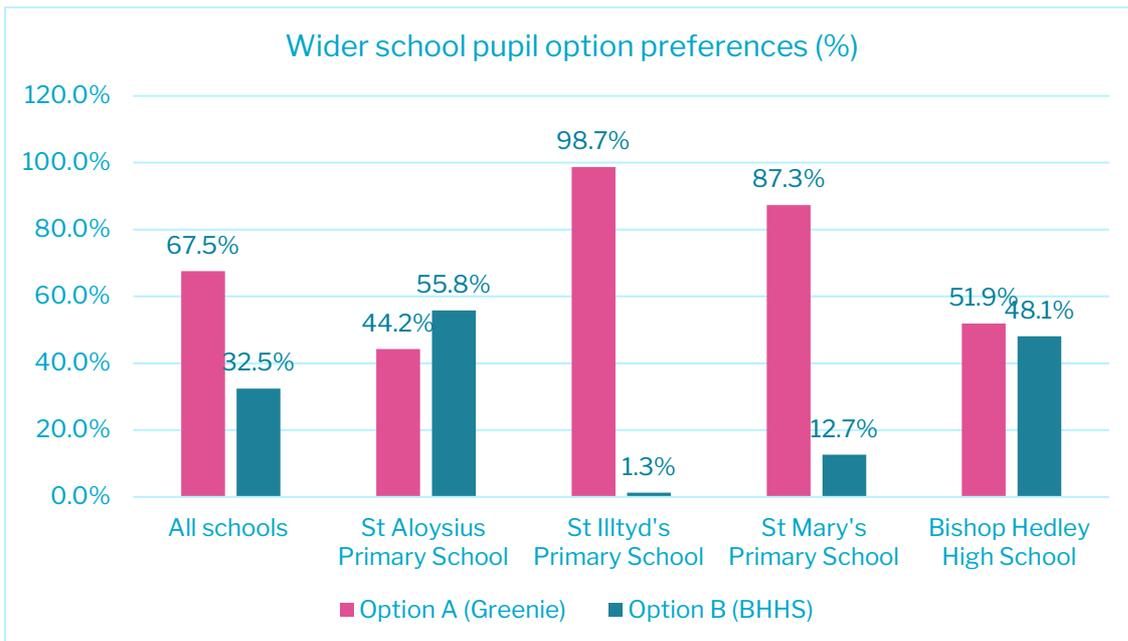


Figure 14. Option preferences of wider school pupils of the four schools to be merged. [Base: 1137]

As with the school councils, Option A (Greenie) was the most popular option amongst the pupils who submitted preferences at St Illtyd's Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, with 98.7% (233) of those at St Illtyd's and 87.3% (186) at St Mary's selecting Option A. Option A was also marginally more popular amongst the pupils at BHHS who submitted their preferences, being selected by 51.9% (303) of these pupils. Pupils who submitted preferences at St Aloysius Primary School indicated a slight preference for Option B (BHHS), which was selected by 55.8% (58).