

Caulmert Limited

Engineering, Environmental & Planning
Consultancy Services

RHEILFFORDD LLYN TEGID LTD.

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION (AND LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION)
FOR THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF BALA LAKE NARROW GAUGE
RAILWAY COMPRISING OF 1200M OF RAILWAY, LEVEL CROSSING AND
ERECTION OF STATION AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT.
LAND AT LLYN TEGID, BALA, GWYNEDD**

COMMUNITY AND LINGUISTIC STATEMENT

Prepared by:

Caulmert Limited

Intec,
Parc Menai,
Bangor,
Gwynedd,
LL57 4FG

Email: contact@caulmert.com

Web: www.caulmert.com

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APPROVAL RECORD

Site: Land at Llyn Tegid, Bala, Gwynedd

Client: Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid Ltd.

Project Title: Full Planning Application (and Listed Building Application) for the Proposed Extension of Bala Lake Narrow Gauge Railway comprising of 1200m of railway, level crossing and erection of Station and Associated Development.

Document Title: Community and Linguistic Statement

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Project Director: Howard Jones

Project Manager: Neil Foxall

Caulmert Limited: Intec, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4FG

Telephone: 01248-672666

Author	Jenny Coxon MRTPI Senior Planner	Date	July 2021
Reviewer	Neil Foxall (BA) Hons MCD MRTPI Associate Director of Planning	Date	July 2021
Approved	Neil Foxall (BA) Hons MCD MRTPI Associate Director of Planning	Date	July 2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

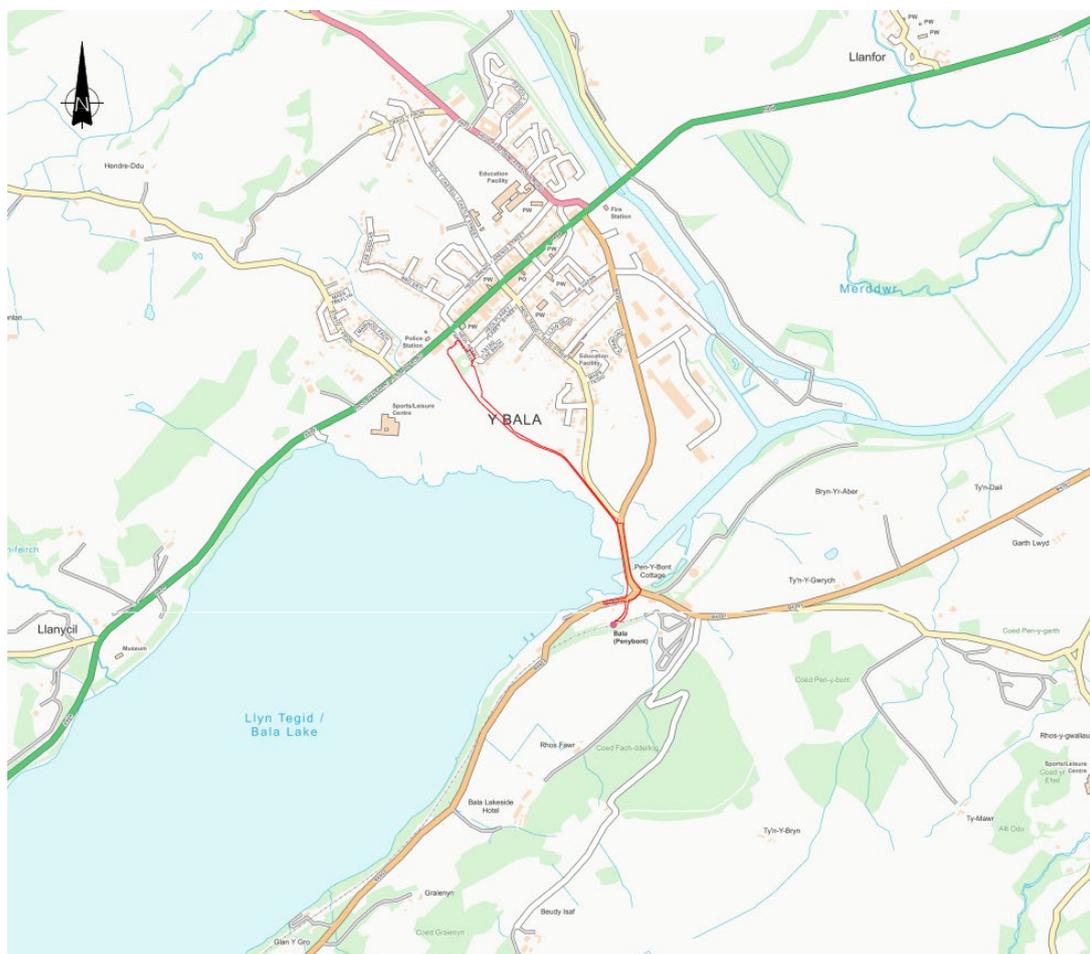
- 1.0.1 Caulmert Ltd has been appointed by Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid Ltd. (“the applicant”) to prepare this Community and Linguistic Statement.
- 1.0.2 This Community and Linguistic Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for the proposed extension of an existing railway from the present terminus at Pen y Bont into Bala Town, covering a distance of 1200 metres.
- 1.0.3 Development Policy 18 relates to Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of communities and requires that applications for tourist developments with an area of 1000m² or more are accompanied by a Community and Linguistic Statement.
- 1.0.4 The purpose of this Community and Linguistic Statement is to establish the likely impact of the proposed development on the local community, and on the Welsh language more specifically, and if appropriate identify measures that will either mitigate negative effects or protect/enhance/spread positive effects. It will help ensure that the linguistic implications of the proposed development are fully considered before the planning application is determined.
- 1.0.5 The importance of the Welsh Language as a planning matter is recognised in legislation and national planning policy. This is further supported by Snowdonia National Park Authority’s planning policies and, more specifically, its Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Planning and the Welsh Language’.
- 1.0.6 This Community and Linguistic Statement accords with Appendix A of the Draft SPG which sets out a series of questions which all Community and Linguistic Statements must address in order to demonstrate how the proposed development will impact upon the local community and the Welsh language.

2.0 APPLICATION SITE & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Application Site

- 2.1.1 The application site is located on the southern side of the settlement of Bala. Llyn Tegid borders the site to the south-west stretching some near 6km south-west.
- 2.1.2 The application site comprises of existing highway, land which will form NRW proposed embankment works, margins of the Bala Rugby Club fields together with agricultural land.
- 2.1.3 The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Site Location



2.2 The Proposed Development

- 2.2.1 Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake Railway) currently offers a 4.5 mile/ 7.2km long, 2' / 600mm gauge heritage railway which has run between Llanuwchllyn and Pen y Bont since 1976. The narrow gauge steam trains give excellent views of the lake amid its surrounding scenery including the nearby mountains of Arenig Fawr, Aran Benllyn and Aran Fawddwy.

- 2.2.2 The proposed development comprises of a 0.75 mile extension to the existing railway line in order to start and terminate within the centre of Bala. The full extent of the proposed railway line can be seen on submitted plan ref 4267-CAU-XX-XX-DR-C-1801.
- 2.2.3 The first 70 metres of the proposed route crosses the field near Lake Cottage to bring the railway from its present terminus to the B4403. It is proposed to cross the B4403 using a level crossing. The proposed line then continues alongside the B4391 and branches off to continue running alongside Tegid Street. The proposed line leaves Tegid Street to pass alongside Bala Rugby Club and runs through the Green Wedge, designated by the Eryri Local Development Plan 2016 – 2031. The proposed development site ends to the rear of the buildings along the Pensarn Road (A494), namely Neuadd Buddug and Monfa Bed & Breakfast. The proposed site also backs on to the dwellings on Aran Street and this part of the site falls within Bala Conservation Area.
- 2.2.4 The proposed development, in brief, comprises of the following elements:
- 0.75 mile 2' / 600mm gauge railway line from Pent y Bont to Heol Aran
 - Erection of no. 2 Platforms at Heol Aran Station
 - Erection of Railway Station and associated parking and services
 - Erection of Carriage Storage Shed
 - Erection of Locomotive Shed
 - Erection of Signal Box
- 2.2.5 The railway has a long-held ambition to extend the line to a terminus within the town of Bala. Land has been acquired on Heol Aran for use as a station site and a strip of land has also been acquired from the Rugby Club to allow this site to be accessed from the shore of the lake.
- 2.2.6 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have recently been granted planning permission for essential safety works to improve the embankment facing the lake. RhLIT have worked closely with NRW which has allowed consented works to the embankment to include a corridor for the proposed railway extension. Discussions have also taken place with the Highways Dept of Gwynedd Council to establish how the railway can be carried over the River Dee using the bridge at Pont Mwnwgl y Llyn and along the causeway which carries the B4391.
- 2.2.7 The trains which run on RhLIT are relatively small and operate at low speeds which provides an opportunity to construct a railway which will have a minimal impact on the surroundings and environment. For the majority of its length it is proposed that the railway will be unfenced and will operate at speeds no greater than 5mph. The proposed route of the railway has a number of distinct sections:
- A shallow cutting will be required to cross the field from the existing terminus to the B4403 near Lake Cottage;
 - The B4403 will be crossed by a level crossing, with the railway then running on the lake side of both the old and new bridges at Pont Mwnwgl y Llyn and along the side of the B4391 as far as Heol Tegid;

-
- At the B4403/ Heol Tegid junction the proposed route is along the crest of the new flood defence embankment, passing behind the Rugby Club building. A level crossing will be provided over footpath 4; and
 - Near the junction of footpath 4 & footpath 5 the proposed route leaves the flood embankment and will run in a strip of land between footpath 4 and the rugby pitch, before crossing footpath 5 by another level crossing and entering the station site to the rear of Neuadd Buddug (with access from Heol Aran opposite the Heol Plasey car park).
- 2.2.8 To accommodate the railway alongside the B4391 it is proposed to narrow the carriageway slightly and move the lakeside footway slightly to the east to form a corridor for the railway between the footway and the top of the embankment. No fence is proposed between the rail track and the footway.
- 2.2.9 It is envisaged that the majority of journeys will start and end in Bala, rather than at the present main terminus at Llanuwchllyn. A shed to store the train and separate shed to store the locomotive will be provided near the station, together with a station building which house a ticket office, café, tourist information space, together with an administration office.
- 2.2.10 Currently the railway carries 29,000 passengers/ year on a train service running on 173 days/ year and it is envisaged that this number will increase by to 60,000 visitors/ year. All trains run inside daylight hours. The most common timetable (operating on 97 days/ year) has 8 trains/ day (4 trains each way), while the busiest timetable has 18 trains/ day (9 trains each way).

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.0.1 This section sets out the relevant legislation, national and local planning policies and guidance that recognise the importance of the Welsh language as a material planning consideration.

3.1 Legislation

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

3.1.1 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (National Assembly for Wales, 2011) provides a legislative framework for the Welsh language and makes provisions for the official status of the Welsh language in Wales.

Planning (Wales) Act 2015

3.1.2 Sections 31 of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 confirms that the effects on the Welsh language may be a consideration when determining planning applications, so far as it is material to the application.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

3.1.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets long term well-being goals for the people of Wales, one of which is to create a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language.

3.2 National Planning Policy & Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (2021)

3.2.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) ("PPW") was updated most recently in February 2021 and sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government.

3.2.2 PPW acknowledges that *"the Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being will depend upon a wide range of factors, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities and places."* It recognises that *"the land use planning system should take account of the conditions which are essential to the Welsh language and in so doing contribute to its, use and the Thriving Welsh Language well-being goal."*

3.2.3 It emphasises that *"considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be taken into account by decision makers so far as they are material to applications for planning permission."*

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 Planning and the Welsh Language (October 2017)

- 3.2.4 Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language, emphasises the need to address how the land use planning system can be used to consider and, if necessary, mitigate any effects of development on the Welsh language and the sustainability of Welsh language communities. The TAN states that in some areas both the number of Welsh speakers and the use made of the language is increasing, but in other areas there is a decline.
- 3.2.5 With regard to development management, the TAN maintains that, in determining individual planning applications and appeals where the needs and interests of the Welsh language may be a material consideration, decisions must, as with all other planning applications, be based on planning grounds only and be reasonable. Adopted development plan policies are planning grounds, including those which have taken the needs and interests of the Welsh language into account.

Welsh Language Strategy – Cymraeg 2050

- 3.2.6 In 2017, Welsh Government announced its plans to double the number of Welsh speakers to one million by 2050. One issue mentioned was the threats to traditional Welsh speaking communities due to young people moving away to find work and incomers who do not speak the language. Proposals were outlined under six key areas for discussion;
- Planning – making the Welsh language a part of every aspect of life
 - Everyday life – encouraging people to use Welsh and to respect those who speak it
 - Education – introducing people to Welsh in schools, colleges and adult learning
 - People – making sure that the language is passed on to children and that it is used in the workplace
 - Support – through dictionaries, digital tools and Welsh language media
 - Rights – ensure that laws promoting the official status and use of Welsh remain effective.

3.3 Local Planning Policy & Guidance***Eyri Local Development Plan***

- 3.3.1 The statutory Development Plan for the area within which the application site is located is the Eyri Local Development Plan, which was adopted on 6th February 2019, with a plan period of 15 years (2016 – 2031).
- 3.3.2 Development Policy 18 relates to Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of communities and states:

“In determining all planning applications within the National Park the needs and interests of the Welsh Language will be taken into account. This will be achieved through:

- i. Supporting development which maintains or enhances the integrity of the Welsh language.*
- ii. Refusing development which, due to its size, scale or its location, would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community. To be able to make an informed decision on applications that may have an effect on the future of the Welsh language within communities, applicants will be required to submit a:
 - a) ‘Community and Linguistic Statement’ to accompany a planning application for unanticipated windfall sites of 5 or more residential units; a commercial, industrial or tourist development with an area of 1000m² or more; a development which is likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities and a tourism development creating ten or more holiday units.*
 - b) More detailed assessment in the form of a ‘Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment’ to accompany a planning application where developments are on a larger scale. Larger developments in this case are regarded as proposals which are substantially above the thresholds outlined in criterion (a) and are likely to be located on unallocated sites, have some significance beyond the National Park boundary and be unrelated to specific policies in the Plan.**
- iii. Mitigating against any adverse effect through requiring, in appropriate circumstances a financial contribution through a Section 106 agreement.*
- iv. Encouraging all signage by public bodies and by commercial and business companies to be bilingual or in Welsh only to protect and promote the distinctive cultural amenity of the National Park.*
- v. Encouraging the use of Welsh place names for new developments, house and street names.*

Snowdonia National Park Authority’s Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Planning and the Welsh Language’ (February 2021)

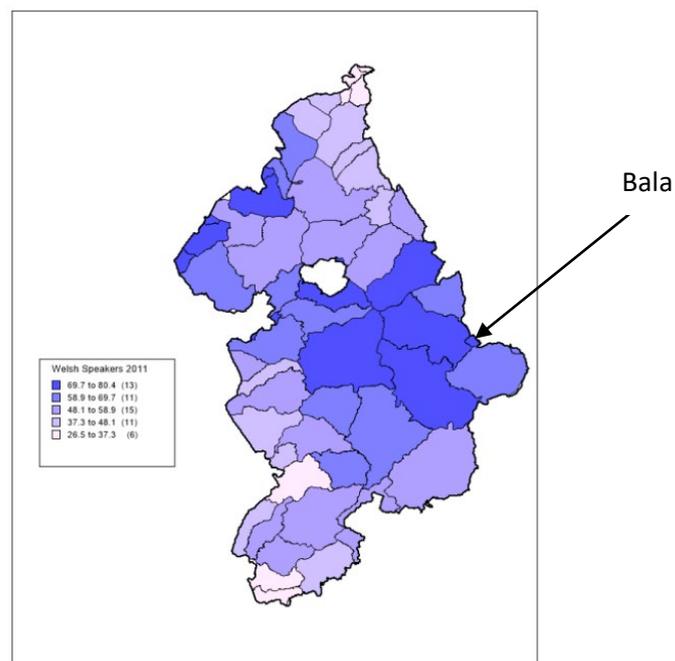
3.3.3 In February 2021 Snowdonia National Park Authority’s published its Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Planning and the Welsh Language’ for consultation. This provides guidance on how the local planning authority will make decisions regarding the effect of proposed developments on the Welsh language. It sets out a methodology which Community and Linguistics Statements should follow in assessing the impact of developments on the local community and Welsh language and culture.

4.0 WELSH LANGUAGE PROFILE

4.1 Welsh Language in Snowdonia National Park

- 4.1.1 Welsh language is a key part of the fabric of society and linked to the culture and traditions of the communities within the Snowdonia National Park. In 2011 the Welsh language was spoken by 58.6% of the resident population within Snowdonia National Park compared with just 19.0% of the population of Wales. There is considerable variation within the different communities of the National Park however, with lower proportions (26- 40%) of Welsh speakers in some communities in Conwy, Arthog, Aberdyfi and Penmaenmawr and higher proportions of Welsh speakers in areas such as Llanuwchllyn (80.4%), Bala (75.1%) and Ysbyty Ifan (77.0%).
- 4.1.2 The site lies within the community of Bala, where in 2011 75.1% of the local population spoke Welsh. In 2001 this figure was 79.7%, which represents a decline in Welsh speakers between 2001 and 2011 of 4.6%. A decline in Welsh speakers was seen across the majority of the National Park communities, and despite this decline Bala has one of the highest proportions of Welsh speakers of all communities within the National Park.
- 4.1.3 The map below shows the percentage of Welsh speakers in communities in the National Park in 2011, with the darker purple representing a higher percentage of Welsh speakers, and the lightest representing a lower percentage of Welsh speakers.

Figure 1 Percentage of Welsh speakers in wards in Snowdonia National Park (2011) from Draft SPG



5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.0.1 This Community and Linguistic Statement accords with Appendix A of the Draft SPG which sets out a series of questions in order to demonstrate how the proposed development will impact upon the local community and the Welsh language.

5.1 Relevant Expertise

5.1.1 This Community and Linguistic Statement has been prepared by Chartered Town Planners at Caulmert Ltd, who are full Members of the Royal Town Planning Institute and have previous experience in linguistic planning.

5.1.2 Caulmert Ltd. has prior experience in the preparation of Community and Linguistic Statements to support planning applications.

5.2 Appendix A of Snowdonia National Park Authority's Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Planning and the Welsh Language' (February 2021)

5.2.1 This section of the statement responds to the questions included in the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Planning and the Welsh Language', published by Snowdonia National Park Authority in February 2021.

General (all types of development)

5.2.2 Is the development consistent with local and national strategies/plans?

The information below provided in answer to this question is not intended to be a complete strategy/policy review (this can be found in the Supporting Planning Statement), but rather focusses on the vision for the area and the overarching principles of the proposed scheme.

The Eryri Local Development Plan sets out the following spatial vision for Snowdonia:

“By 2035 Snowdonia will continue to be a protected and evolving landscape, safeguarded and enhanced to provide a rich and varied natural environment; providing social, economic and well-being benefits nationally and internationally. National Park purposes will be delivered through a diverse and prospering economy adapted to the challenges of climate change and founded on natural resources – its landscape qualities, opportunities for learning and enjoyment, cultural and natural heritage. With thriving bilingual and inclusive communities partnership working will have demonstrated that more can be achieved through working together. Communities will have adopted innovative solutions in a changing World – a low carbon economy will have strengthened residents' link with the environment, providing a better standard of living and ensuring Snowdonia's reputation as an internationally renowned National Park and one of the nation's breathing spaces.”

The proposal comprises the expansion of an existing tourism use, and the Local Development Plan Objective of Supporting the Rural Economy, endorses such proposals at paragraph 1.67 of the LDP.

Paragraph 2.13 of the LDP identifies Bala as a Local Services Centre and therefore an area of opportunity, where most housing and employment related development will take place, reflecting the scope for development, based on accessibility and scale of existing facilities.

Strategic Policy C of the LDP states that within the Local Services Centres support will be given to improving existing and providing new facilities to serve local residents to strengthen their role as a local service centre and to support their role as a visitor destination.

The proposals are therefore supported by the LDP strategy in supporting the role of Bala as a visitor destination.

The planning application is supported by an Environmental Statement, which concludes in respect of Noise, Dust & Odour, Ecology, Landscape and Cultural Heritage that the development will not have any adverse impacts upon the surrounding area, nor would there be any impact upon the local residents.

The proposed development is consistent with the key principles of Planning Policy Wales as well as local policies in the adopted Local Development Plan.

5.2.3 Is the development likely to satisfy local and community needs?

The proposal consists of an extension to an existing tourist attraction, which provides excellent views of the lake amid its surrounding scenery including the nearby mountains of Arenig Fawr, Aran Benllyn and Aran Fawddwy. Its purpose is therefore to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park and Bala, rather than being to specifically satisfy particular local and community needs.

The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that it does not detract from the quiet enjoyment of the National Park nor the quality of life of local residents.

Access to/from BLR in Bala town itself is currently very poor and has precluded this 'attraction' playing a fuller part in the local economy. The proposals would provide a stunning perspective across Llyn Tegid which is thought would be amongst the most idyllic in the UK, as well as address the access and parking issues currently affecting this important tourism attraction for the town.

Booking information will confirm that in general visitors should park at a public car park (the Plasey Street site is directly across the road from the station) and that 3 on-site spaces are available for disabled customer use. The Transport Statement Ref 4369-CAU-XX-XX-RP-C-0300.C1 confirms that the Plasey Street public car park has plenty of available capacity to accommodate the predicted number of cars generated by the proposed development.

5.2.4 Is the development likely to maintain or add to communal facilities?

Bala Town Centre contains a variety of different shops, tourist facilities and general local amenities.

The Bala Lake Railway route currently runs between Llanuwchllyn and Pen y Bont, and the proposed development will extend the existing railway line so that it starts and terminates within the centre of Bala. Currently the railway carries 29,000 passengers/ year on a train service running on 173 days/ year and it is envisaged that with the proposed extension this number will increase to 60,000 visitors/ year. Following the proposed extension it is envisaged that the majority of journeys made by people using the railway will start and end in Bala, rather than at the present main terminus at Llanuwchllyn. The proposed development will significantly increase visitor numbers to Bala, supporting the local economy and helping to sustain local communal facilities and services.

- 1.1.1 In addition, the new Heol Aran Station building will be home to a café, retail area and a small tourist information area, providing additional community facilities.

5.2.5 Is the development sustainable in the long term?

The Bala Lake Railway currently terminates at Pen y Bont, a remote terminus half a mile from Bala Town itself. With limited parking, a poor visible profile and no amenities, passengers rarely venture into Bala Town and visitors to Bala Town are largely unaware of the railway's existence.

The proposed development will allow users of the Bala Lake Railway to start and end their journey at Heol Aran Station within the centre of Bala Town. Car parking is available at the Plasey Street site immediately opposite from the station. As previously stated in section 5.2.3 above, the public car park directly across the road from the station (Plasey Street) will provide car parking for visitors to the railway, and this is considered to have plenty of available capacity to accommodate the predicted number of cars generated by the proposed development. Furthermore, 3 no. parking spaces for disabled visitors will be provided at the station itself.

The proposed development will address the access and parking issues currently affecting this important tourism attraction for the town, thus making it more sustainable in the long term as a tourist attraction.

The new Heol Aran Station building will be home to a new café, retail area and a small tourist information area, providing users of the railway with a comfortable and inviting experience.

The proposed development will improve access to/from Bala Lake Railway to Bala Town, which will help support and sustain local facilities and amenities within Bala Town Centre, contributing greatly to the local economy.

The Planning Application is supported by an Environmental Statement which provides a detailed assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development. This concludes in respect of Noise, Dust & Odour, Ecology, Landscape and

Cultural Heritage that the proposed development will not have any adverse impacts upon the surrounding area nor would there be any impact upon the residents as a result.

Thus, it can be concluded that the proposed development is sustainable in the long term.

5.2.6 Is the development likely to be supported by the local community?

The Bala Lake Railway has a long-held ambition to extend the line to a terminus within the town of Bala.

The level of public and community support for the extension of the Bala Lake Railway is clearly evident by the results of the online petition launched by the Bala Lake Railway Trust. It attracted over 1,000 signatures in a little more than 24 hours since it was launched. In addition, a huge amount of support has been received from many of the businesses in Bala, some of whom are promoting written petitions to complement the online petition. In addition, the Bala Lake Railway Trust set up an appeal for donations to contribute towards the extension, which as can be seen by the level of donations received to date, has been well received by the local community as a whole and by a number of business and organisations.

Population Characteristics (all types of development)

5.2.7 Will the development attract newcomers to the area?

The proposed development is a tourist attraction designed to improve the level of service on the Bala Lake Railway and to bring passengers into Bala Town.

Currently the railway carries 29,000 passengers/ year on a train service running on 173 days/ year and it is envisaged that this number will increase to 60,000 visitors/ year. Following the proposed extension, it is envisaged that the majority of journeys made by people using the railway will start and end in Bala, rather than at the present main terminus at Llanuwchllyn.

Whilst the proposed development is likely to increase the attractiveness of Bala as a tourist destination, it is unlikely to result in newcomers moving into the area to live permanently and is therefore unlikely to affect the balance of the local population in any way.

5.2.8 Will the development contribute to migration from the area?

The proposed development has been carefully and sensitively designed to ensure that there are no adverse impacts upon the surrounding area and no impact upon local residents.

The proposed development will deliver significant benefits to the local economy, by way of increased business and employment in an area that relies heavily on a few key sectors.

Thus the proposed development is unlikely to contribute to migration from the area, but rather should help to sustain the local population.

Residential**5.2.9 Will the development reflect local housing need including affordable homes?**

This question relates to residential development and is therefore not considered to be relevant to the proposed development.

5.2.10 Will the development resemble other developments completed during the last five years? If so, what are the cumulative impacts?

This question relates to residential development and is therefore not considered to be relevant to the proposed development.

Employment**5.2.11 Will the development call for labour skills which are available locally? Will the development create jobs for the local workforce?**

The Bala Lake Railway Trust commissioned JOP Consulting to conduct an Economic Impact Assessment (November 2016) into the effect that the construction of the extension of the railway to Bala Town would have on the local economy. The assessment used a year-long survey of the railway's passengers and a consultation evening with local business as its basis.

The Assessment revealed that construction of the extension will create the equivalent of 10 full-time (FTE) jobs in the Bala area and support a further 9 FTE jobs over 12 months. When completed, the extension will support 12 FTE jobs in the local economy.

According to the 2011 Census 10.5% of Bala's population in employment were employed in the construction industry. Thus, many of the job skills required for the construction of the proposed development are expected to match with local people's labour skills and Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid Ltd. is committed to sourcing these locally.

The Economic Impact Assessment found that of the estimated £2.5million construction cost, it is anticipated (based on previous capital projects in Gwynedd) that 55% (or £1.375million) would be spent in the local area.

5.2.12 Will the development attract workers from outside the County?

The proposed development calls for labour skills that are thought to be available locally, thus it is considered unlikely that the development will attract workers from outside the County. Rheilffordd Llyn Tegid Ltd. is committed to sourcing jobs locally within the county, to ensure that the local economic benefits of the proposed extension are maximised.

5.2.13 Will the development create new opportunities for the workforce?

The proposed development will create new opportunities for the existing local workforce, during the construction phase, and also through new growth and jobs created within the local economy.

5.2.14 Will the development lead to further investment?

The Economic Impact Assessment found that the railway is a key component of the tourism offering of the area, and the average stay of railway passengers in the area is 1½ days, showing that the railway brings a significant economic benefit to the area.

As has already been stated above, it is estimated that the construction of the extension will create the equivalent of 10 full-time (FTE) jobs in the Bala area and support a further 9 FTE jobs over 12 months. When completed, it is estimated that the extension will support 12 FTE jobs in the local economy.

The Economic Impact Assessment concluded that the construction of the extension will provide a 60% increase in the existing baseline contribution of the railway to the local economy (from £700,000 to £1.12million).

As is identified in the Economic Impact Assessment the proposed development is likely to lead to further investment in the area by enhancing the appeal of the whole area, by allowing the town to develop other key leisure facilities (for example a lake path), helping to extend the tourist season beyond the current levels, creating a much wider appeal to visitors with mobility issues, and creating a more convincing link to the town and indeed other paths and trails.

Mitigation Measures

5.2.15 Would it be possible to alleviate the negative effects? Is there an opportunity for improvements or upgrading that would positively impact the language? Where relevant, these could include; provision of bilingual signs within and outside the development; support and funding for language lessons for staff; bilingual marketing and advertising; supporting local labour and employment; support and funding for cultural and language initiatives or local projects/centres; phased development (e.g. if a large housing development).

It is considered that the proposed development will not have any negative impact upon the character and language balance of the local community. On the contrary, it will provide opportunities to promote, wherever possible, the use of the Welsh language, in particular through visual means, as well as introduce social and economic benefits to the area.

Opportunities created by the proposed development to promote the Welsh Language include the provision of bilingual signage within the development, bilingual marketing and

advertising not just for the railway but for other tourist facilities through the new tourist information area within the new station; and supporting local labour and employment.

In June 2021, the railway celebrated the progress of the extension with the Bala ReRailed event, where for the first time in 56 years it was possible to experience the sight and sound of a steam locomotive in the town of Bala. Rides were given along a demonstration line that has been constructed on the site of the new Bala Town station, and there was a miniature railway, displays of cars and guided walks along the route of the proposed extension. It is anticipated that the proposal will facilitate further events in the future providing opportunities to celebrate Bala's history and cultural heritage including that of the area's Welsh Language.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.0.1 This Community and Linguistic Statement has been prepared in support of a Planning Application for the proposed extension of an existing railway from the present terminus at Pen y Bont into Bala Town, covering a distance of 1200 metres.
- 6.0.2 The proposed development will promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park and Bala, therefore enhancing the appreciation of the special character of the area.
- 6.0.3 It is considered that the proposal would maintain the integrity of the Welsh language and would not cause significant harm to the character and language balance of the local community.
- 6.0.4 The proposed development will provide opportunities to promote, wherever possible, the use of the Welsh language. Due to the opportunities created it is considered that the proposed development is anticipated to have a positive impact on the Welsh language and its future in the community of Bala and the surrounding area.
- 6.0.5 On the basis of the information provided as part of this Statement, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Development Policy 18 of the LDP.



Registered Office: InTec, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4FG

Tel: 01248 672666

Fax: 01248 672601

Email: contact@caulmert.com

Web: www.caulmert.com