



Transport Impact Assessment

Proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain
(English Medium Community) as of 31st August 2016

OCTOBER 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 Flintshire County Council is carrying out a formal consultation on a proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain as of 31st August 2016 with existing pupils transferring to other nearby schools subject to parental preference.

1.2 In this document the Council will:

- Summarise each of the issues in relation to the nature of the journeys to alternative provision and resulting journey times for pupils, including Special Educational Needs pupils; in particular whether primary school pupils will have a one-way journey in excess of 45 minutes or secondary school pupils one way journeys of over an hour;
- Arrangements for accessing alternative provision should encourage sustainable transport; and they should address the possible effect of any transport difficulties on pupils' engagement with attendance at school;
- Likely walking or cycling routes will be assessed for safety and accessibility should be assessed prior to bringing forward proposals'.

2.0 Background

2.1 Our aim is that children and young people in Flintshire will develop essential life skills, a strong desire for lifelong learning and be very well prepared for the world of work. All children and young people will be supported to progress through the different stages of their education. Every child and young person will be entitled to a learning programme that will be personalised to make the most of his or her abilities. Children and young people will learn in an exciting and innovative range of styles and settings. These will include vocational, enterprising, voluntary, spiritual, cultural and sporting learning experiences. School organisation objectives will provide opportunities for Welsh and English medium provision, and also faith provision.

Flintshire County Council is committed to continuing to raise standards, with key tasks to include securing:

- high expectations and a clear focus on improving teaching, learning and attainment in all school communities;
- all resources available to schools focussing on improving outcomes for children and young people in a context of annual budget pressures;
- a consistent approach to the collection, analysis and use of assessment information, including tracking systems, to target support and interventions; and
- continued commitment to the development of school teaching and support staff.

2.2 Flintshire County Council Cabinet approved the revised School Modernisation Strategy in January 2015, which was updated from the Council's previous strategy adopted by Cabinet in 2010. This document is available at the following link:

www.flintshire.gov.uk/schoolmodernisation.

2.3 The School Modernisation Programme is required because we need to:

- Ensure education provision is both high quality and sustainable;
- Improve the quality of school buildings and facilities;
- Provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right locations;
- Address unsustainable school buildings and supporting infrastructure;
- Recognise that doing nothing means higher pupil teacher ratios as funding reduces; and
- Ensure that we maximise external funding through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme.

2.4 The key 'drivers' or criteria for modernisation which underpin the above are:

- Educational improvement
- Resilient school leadership
- Suitable buildings
- Unfilled places
- Diminishing resources

2.5 The proposal is to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain (English Medium, community school) as of 31st August 2016 with the pupils transferring to the local network of schools based on parental preference.

2.6 The proposal is put forward on the basis of criteria laid down in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy, namely:-

- Unfilled places across the primary school portfolio – Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain as at January 2015 (PLASC¹) had 66 full time pupils with unfilled places of 13.16%. As of September 2015 the school population is 55 full time pupils with unfilled places at 27.63%;
- Diminishing resource criteria (i.e. schools supported by pupils not from their local community and/or small numbers within the community raise concern regarding sustainability within the school's portfolio) - 83.63% of pupils attending Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain are not attending their local school;
- Small School Criteria – The School population and capacity of Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain is lower than national designation of a small school, additionally school numbers do not meet the minimum requirements of

¹ PLASC – Pupil Level Annual School Census

primary school models as noted in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy, and

- Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain is also currently (July 2015) in Welsh Government categorisation 4, on a scale of 1 - 4, with 4 being the lowest for education standards. This is expected to change at the next annual review in December 2015.

3.0 Sources of Information

3.1 The following sources of information have been used for the purposes of this document:

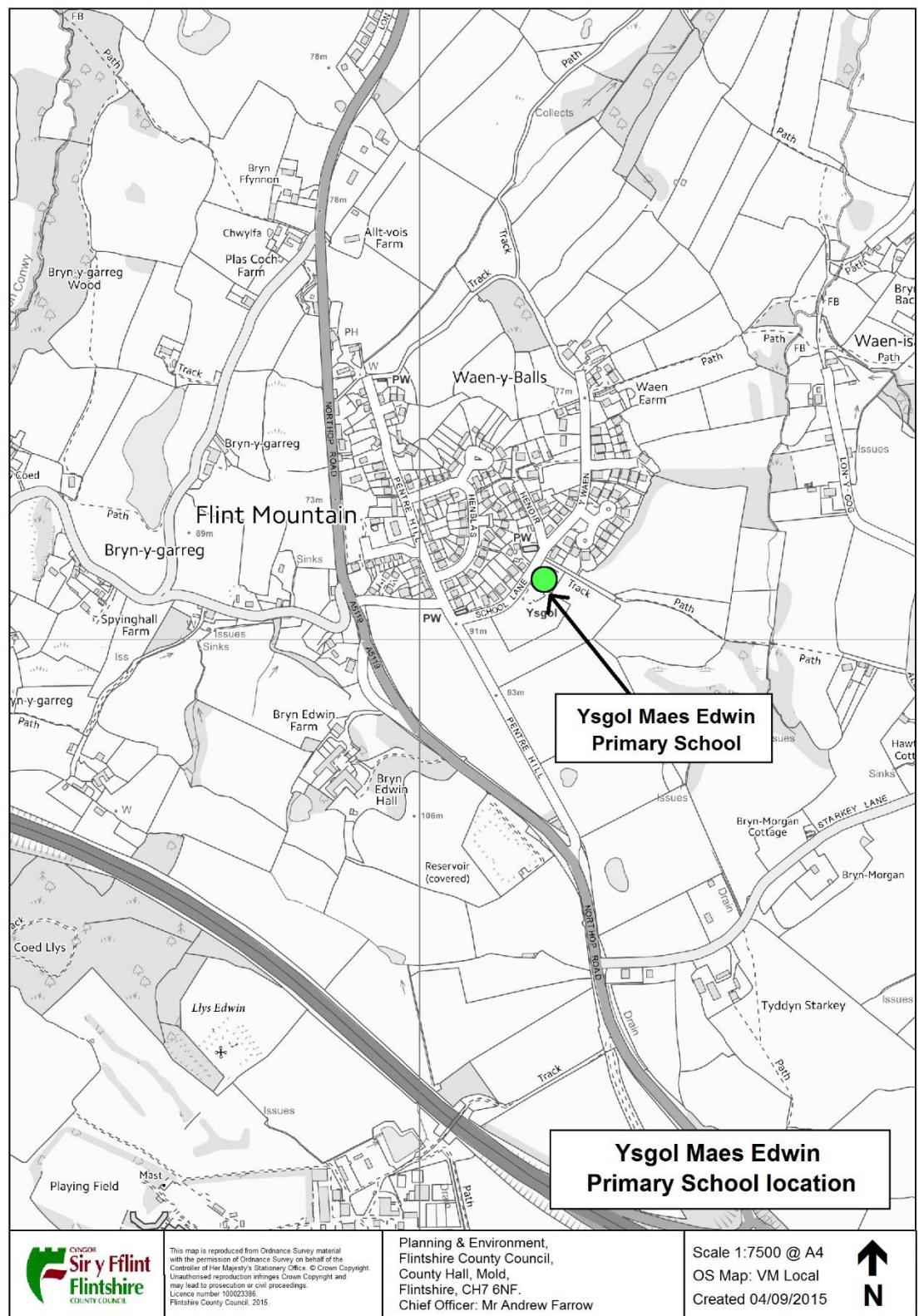
- PLASC January 2015 data;
- Statistical information stored by the Council;
- Informal consultation responses;
- Transport Policy;
- School Transport Monitoring Team Information; and
- Road Safety Team Information.

4.0 Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain

4.1 Ysgol Maes Edwin is located in the village of Flint Mountain. Ysgol Maes Edwin is an English Medium primary school for pupils aged 3-11 years of age. It is currently Category 4 in the Welsh Government categorisation model.



4.2 Location of Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain is shown below;



Pupil Numbers

- 4.3 As the current proposal relates to primary provision, should the proposal progress and educational provision in Flint Mountain ceases parents would seek alternative provision. The alternative schools have been identified as able to deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain are:-

Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint

Cornist C.P. School, Flint and

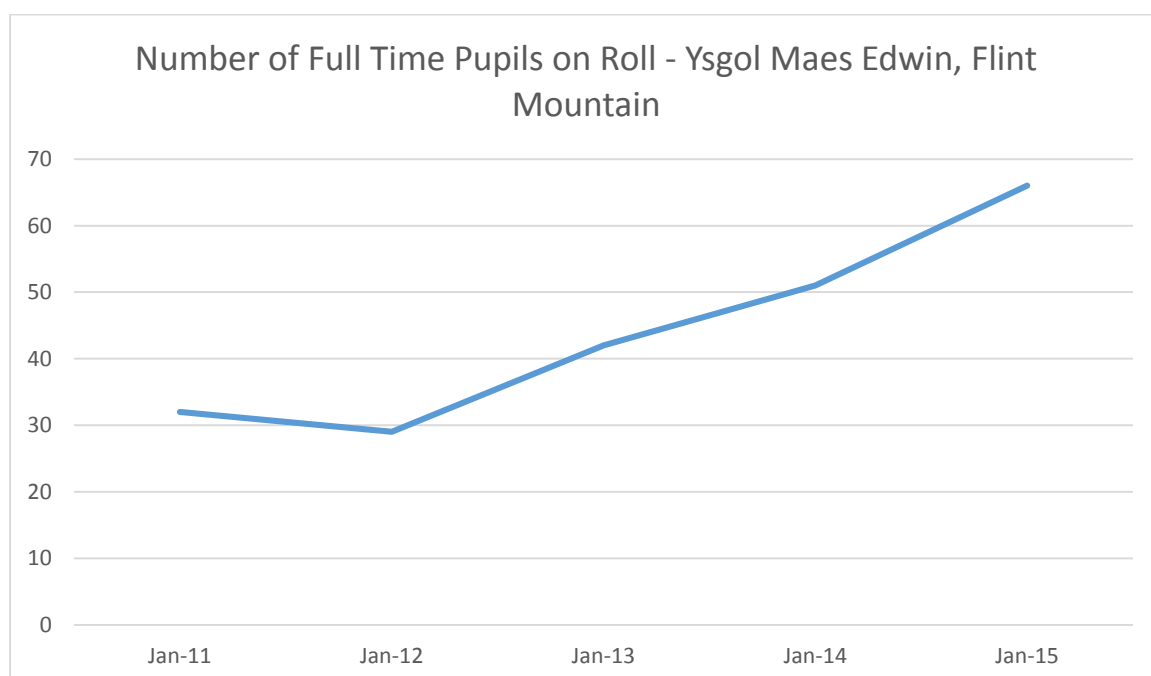
Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop, Flint

Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint, Cornist C.P. School, Flint and Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop are also English Medium community primary schools for pupils aged 3-11. The Council acknowledges that parents may wish to choose alternative provision in the area. The schools above have been identified within the formal consultation document.

- 4.4 As of January 2015 PLASC Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain has 66 Full Time pupils on roll. As of September 2015 Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain had 55 Full Time pupils on roll. Pupil numbers over a 5 year period are displayed below:

Numbers of **full time pupils** on Roll (*Source: Jan Annual PLASC Data*) Jan 2011-2015

Jan 11	Jan 12	Jan 13	Jan 14	Jan 15
32	29	42	51	66

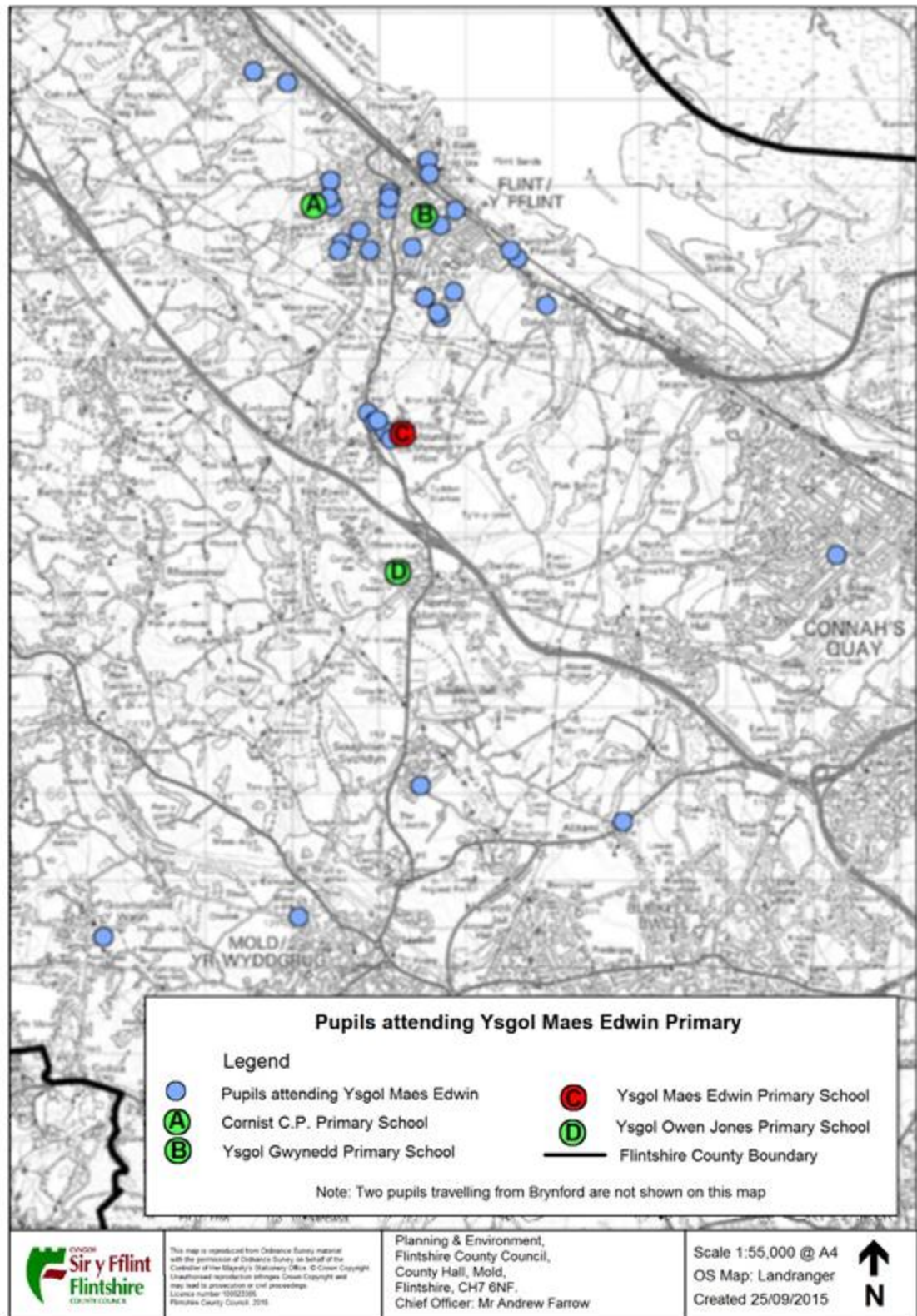


- 4.5 Until the recent drop in pupil numbers at Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain (as of September 2015) it is noted that from 2011, there had been an increase in pupil numbers at Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain. However, the school population is supported by pupils largely from the Flint area for whom Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain is not their nearest school. Additionally, the school has low numbers of pupils attending (29%) from the village and surrounding area, with a larger number of primary school pupils (71%) from the local community selecting other English Medium community schools in the local network.

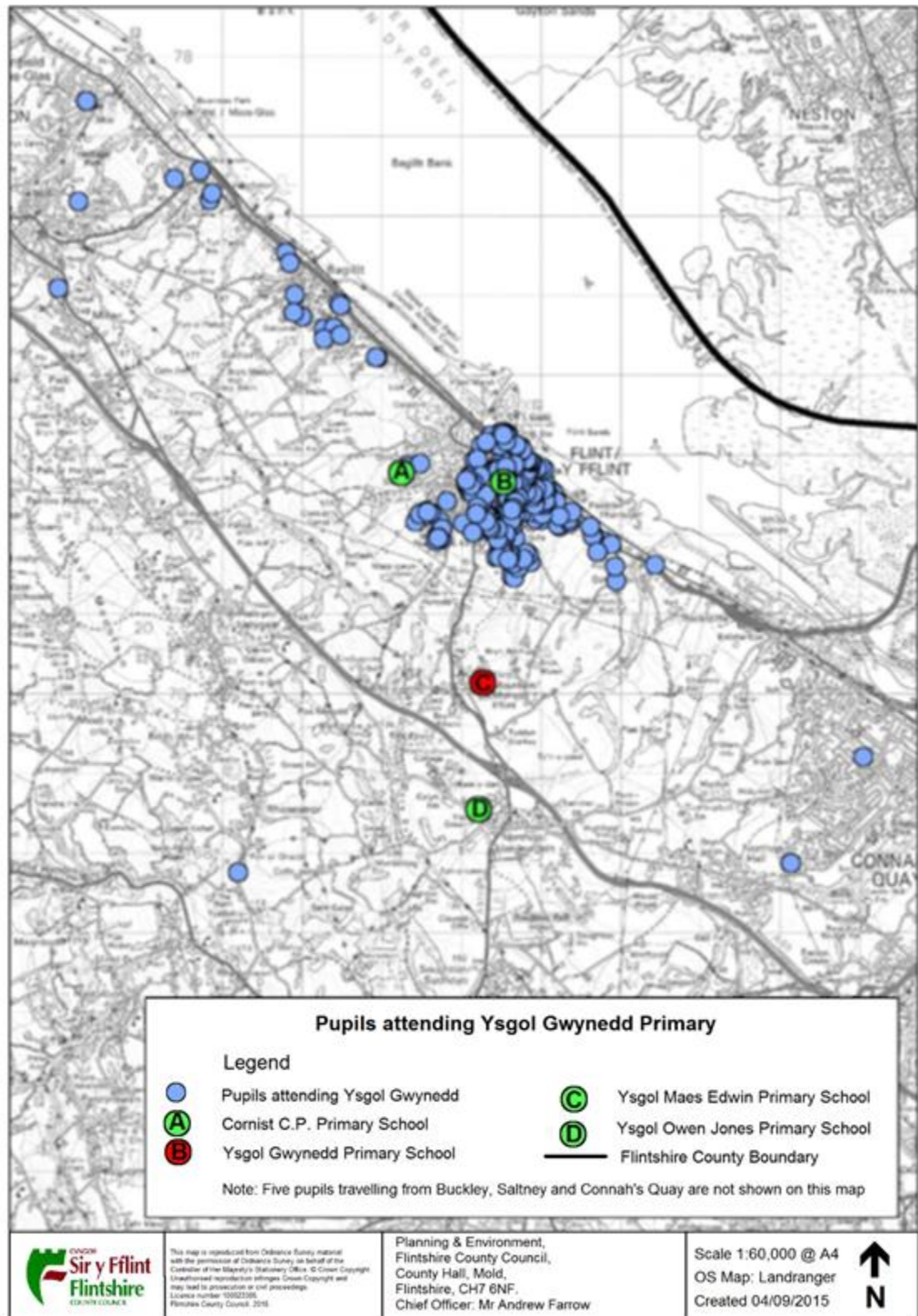
Pupil Home Location

- 4.6 The Council operates school admissions on a parental preference basis not a catchment area basis. Schools are referred to as the 'nearest suitable school' which takes into account language and faith preference. Parental preference means parents may choose any school for their child/children as long as there are available spaces.

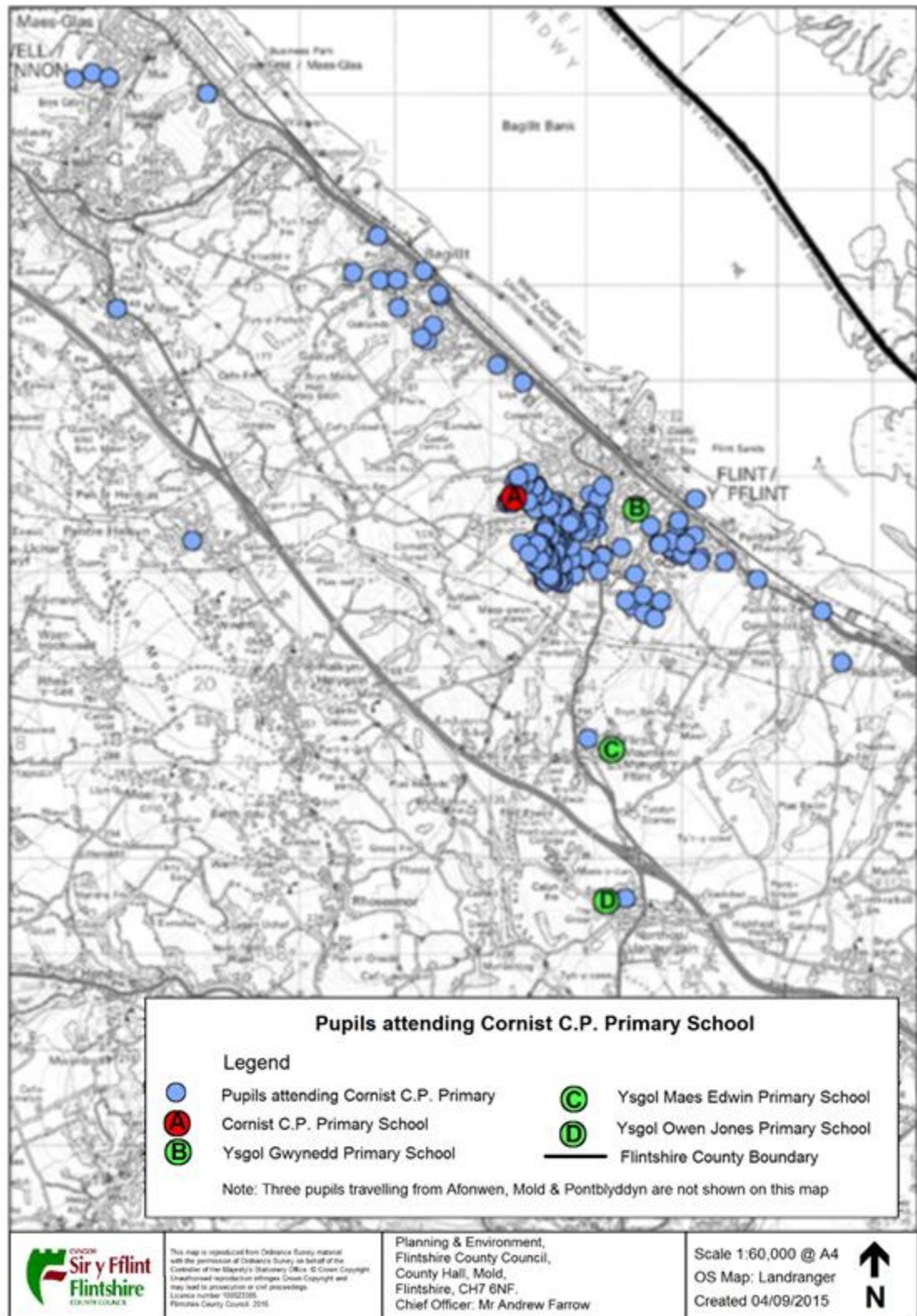
- 4.7 The current home location of Ysgol Maes Edwin pupils (as at September 2015) is displayed in the map below;



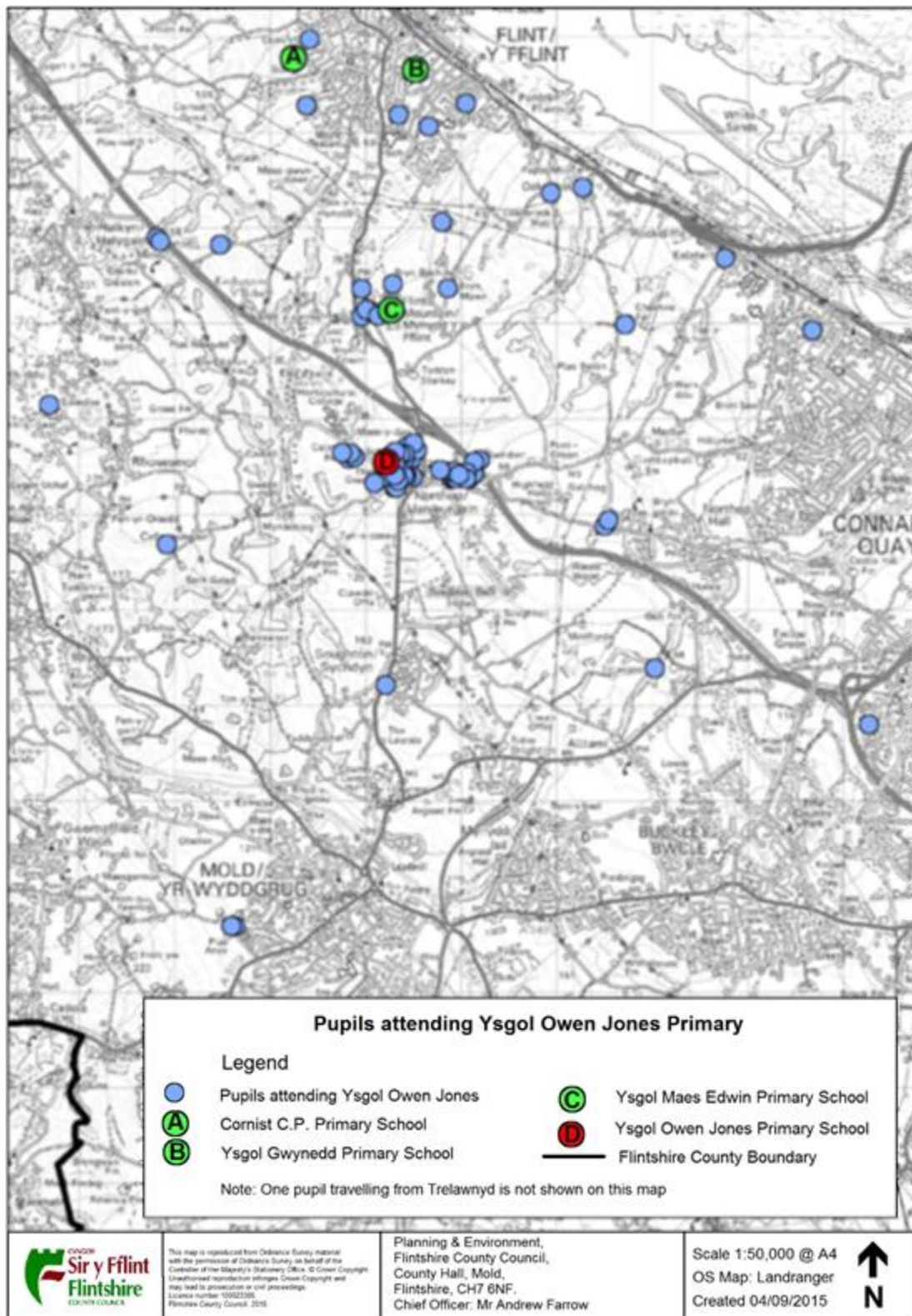
- 4.8 The current home location of of Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint pupils (as at July 2015) is displayed in the map below;



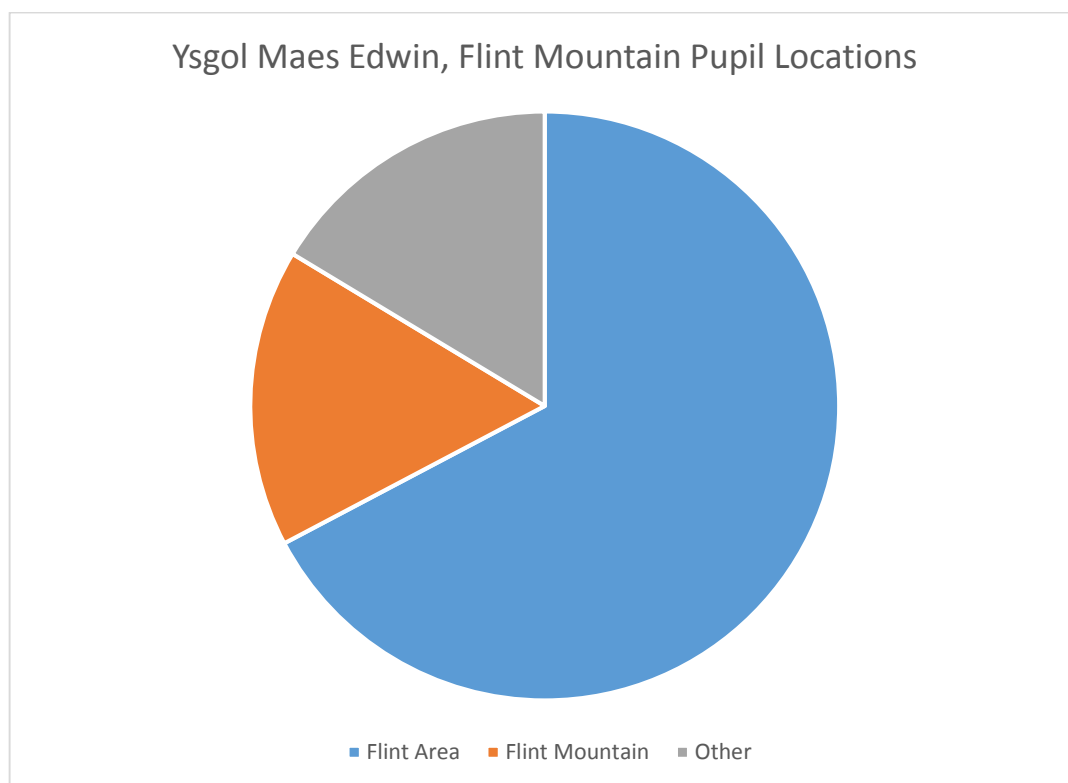
- 4.9 The current home location of of Cornist C.P School, Flint pupils (as at July 2015) is displayed in the map below;



4.10 The current home location of Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop pupils (as at July 2015) is displayed in the map below:



- 4.11 The chart below displays the current (September 2015) home location for Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain



- 4.12 **Percentage of pupils not attending Ysgol Maes Edwin as their nearest school** (Source: snap shot of pupils from the ONE system, as at September 2015)

School	% of pupils not attending their nearest school	% of pupils who reside in Flint Mountain village	% of pupils who reside in Flint	% of pupils who reside in other areas
Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain	83.63%	16.36%	67.27%	16.36%

5.0 **Transport Policy**

- 5.1 The current annual transport costs to Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain are £5,510 per annum which is based on shared transport provision with another primary school.
- 5.2 The Council will provide transport in accordance with it's Transport Policy.

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Lifelong-Learning/Schools/School-Transport/Transport-Eligibility-Criteria-.pdf>

In Summary the Council provide free transport for children residing in Flintshire of compulsory school age, where a child receiving primary education lives over two miles from the nearest appropriate school.

The Council also provides free transport for pupils residing in Flintshire of statutory school age:-

- where the route to school is considered to be hazardous by the Local Authority;
- where transport to a named school is identified in a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs. This would normally be on medical or educational grounds and would be deemed essential in the context of other criteria identified in this policy
- where a child requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists;

Free transport is also provided for pupils residing in Flintshire of statutory school age:

- where a child whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax Credit resides more than 2.5 miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- to the nearest Welsh medium school under the criteria identified above;
- to the nearest voluntary aided school where the admission to the school is on denominational grounds, subject to the distance criteria. Consultation with individual schools will take place to confirm the admission criteria under which pupils are admitted. Suitable evidence of adherence to the faith of the school such as a baptismal certificate or a letter from a priest may be requested.

6.0 Impact on Journey Times

- 6.1 Sections 3 and 4 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 states that transport arrangements are not suitable if ‘they take an unreasonable amount of time’.
- 6.2 Although the measure does not specify a time limit for all journeys. Welsh Ministers consider that normally journey times should be no more than 45 minutes for primary school travel and 60 minutes for secondary travel.
- 6.3 To assess any impacts of the options on the journey times for pupils, the Council has undertaken an exercise to ascertain the approximate difference in the journey time from
- The distance from Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain to the alternative school Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint.
 - The distance from Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain to the alternative school Cornist C.P. School, Flint.
 - The distance from Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain to the alternative school Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools	Location	Distance from Ysgol Maes Edwin (approx.)	Approximate Car Journey time (minutes) – assessed using google maps	Type	Language Category
Ysgol Maes Edwin, School Lane, Flint Mountain, CH65QR	Flint Mountain	N/A	N/A	Community	English Medium
Ysgol Gwynedd, Prince of Wales Avenue, Flint, Flintshire, CH6 5NF	Flint	2.24 Miles	6 minutes	Community	English Medium
Cornist C.P. School, Ffordd yr Ysgol, Flint, Flintshire, CH6 5ET	Flint	2.73 Miles	8 minutes	Community	English Medium
Ysgol Owen Jones, Ffordd Owen, Northop, Flintshire, CH7 6AU	Northop	1.43 Miles	4 minutes	Community	English Medium

Distance Source: Route Finder 3.41 Flintshire County Council Mapping System

- 6.4 Fewer than 10 pupils at Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain are eligible for transportation.

- 6.5 Most pupils at Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain would have a reduced distance from their home to the alternative school and could utilise walking routes within their local communities.

Flint area

Should Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain close, the eligibility of pupils for free home to transport would be as follows:

- Ysgol Gwynedd – not eligible under distance criteria < 2 miles
- Cornist C.P School – not eligible under distance criteria < 2 miles
- Ysgol Owen Jones – not eligible (not the nearest school)

- 6.5 For a small number of pupils currently living in Flint Mountain the distance travelled would increase, however this would not be in excess of the learner travel guidelines. The distance from Flint Mountain village to Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop is under 2 miles, it is likely that pupils in the Flint Mountain area would be eligible for transport under the criteria that the route to their new schools would be considered as hazardous.

Flint Mountain

- Ysgol Gwynedd – not eligible, not the nearest school
- Cornist C.P School – not eligible, not the nearest school
- Ysgol Owen Jones – not eligible, under distance criteria < 2 miles, but eligible under hazardous route to school criteria

7.0 Walking Routes, Safety Crossings & Transport Links

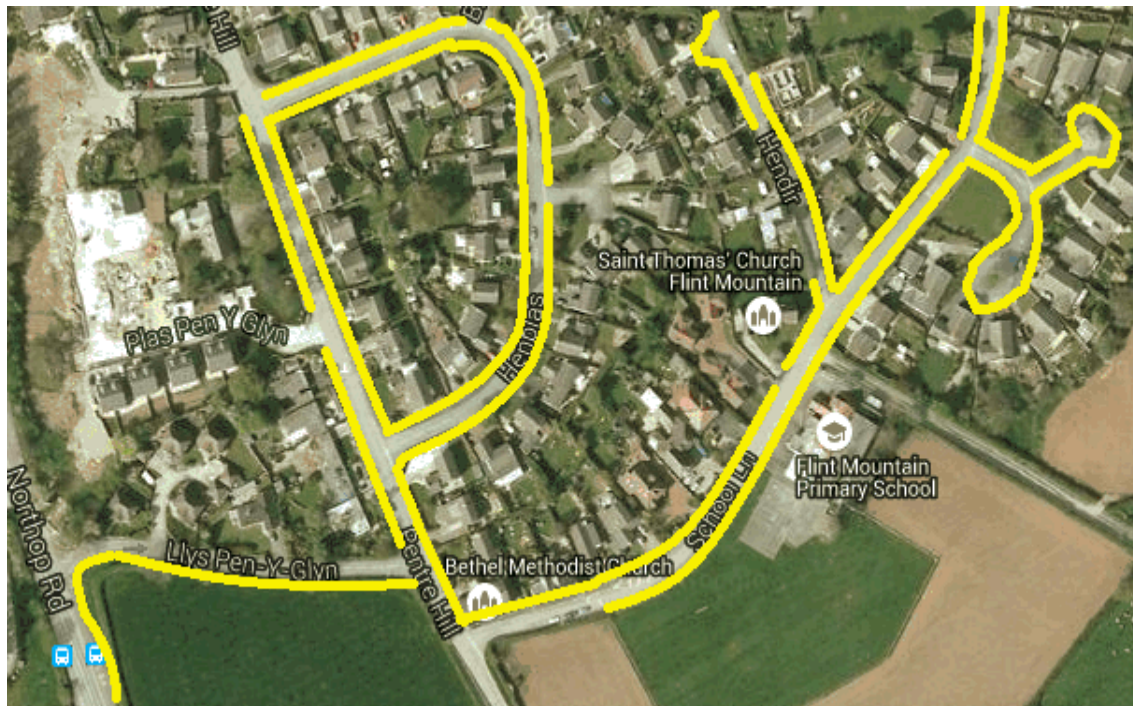
- 7.1 The safer route in the communities programme aims to improve accessibility and safety, and encourage walking and cycling within communities. The aim of programme is to change how people travel, resulting in greater social inclusion and improved community safety.

Safe Routes in Communities funds capital works such as:

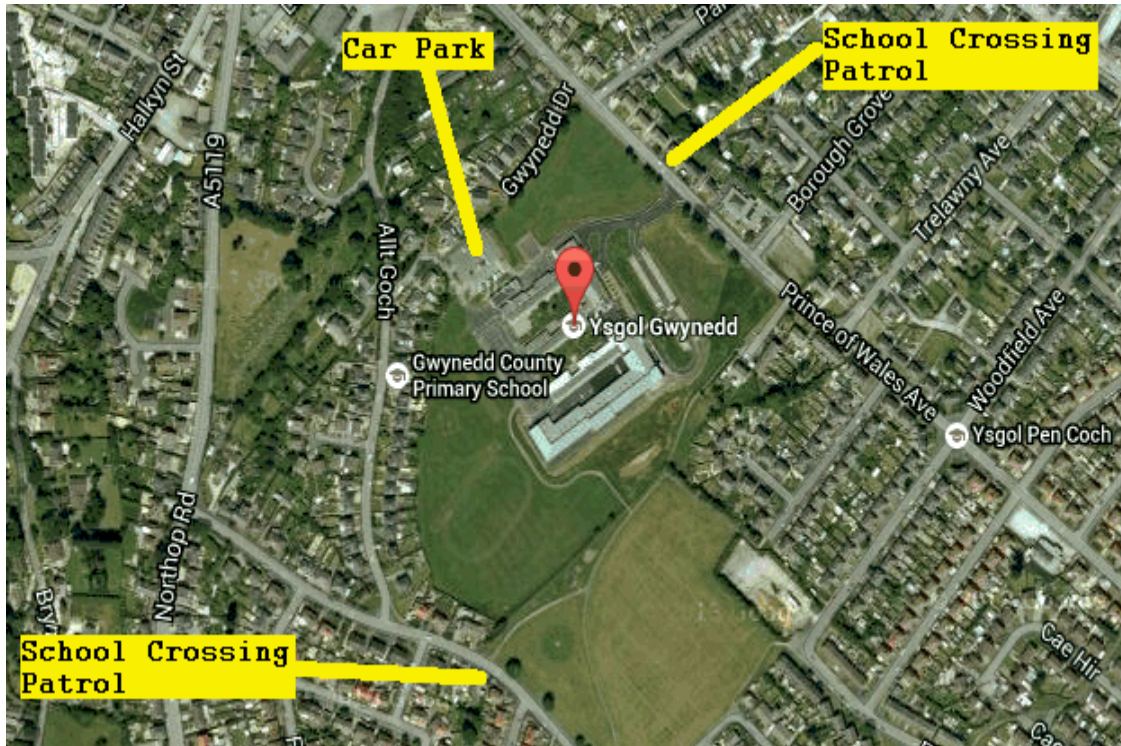
- crossings,
- traffic calming measures,
- cyclepaths,
- footpaths,
- secure cycle facilities (including stands and CCTV), lockers and changing facilities.

A successful scheme should demonstrate co-operation between local authorities and the wider community, including schools.

- 7.2 The site map below shows Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain, which has footpaths indicated on map below (yellow). No crossing facility in vicinity of school.



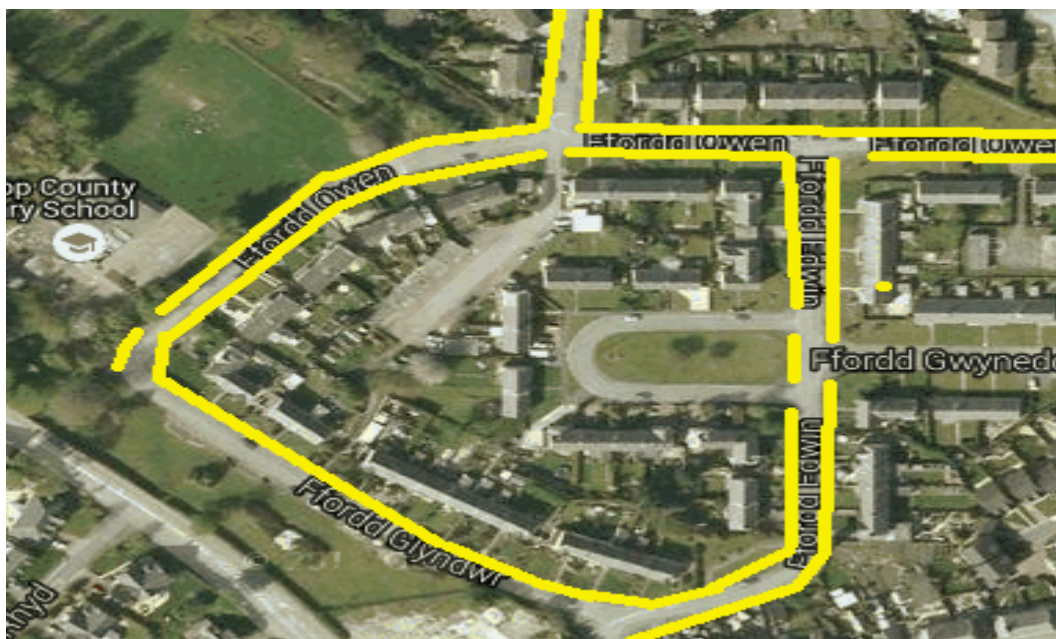
- 7.3 The site map below shows Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint, which has a school crossing patrol and is located in area with traffic calming measures and footpaths.



- 7.4 The site map below shows Cornist C.P School, Flint. Footpath all round school, and traffic calming on Windsor Drive. No crossing facility in vicinity of school.



- 7.5 The site map below shows Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop, the school is located in an estate with footpaths. There is no school crossing patrol or crossing facility outside the school.



- 7.7 There are no bus services which run during school hours in and out of the village of Flint Mountain.
- 7.6 There are no railway links to the village of Flint Mountain. The nearest railway station is located in the town of Flint.

8.0 Impact on Transportation Costs

- 8.1 The current annual transport costs to Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain are £5,510 per annum which is based on shared transport provision with another primary school.
- 8.2 Should the proposal be implemented fewer than 10 pupils would be entitled to free home to school transport based on the assumption they transfer to their nearest school Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop on the basis of the following grounds:-
- That the route to the alternative school would be considered to be hazardous by the Council due to its rural location which has limited walking pathways in and out of the village.
- 8.3 The estimated annual cost of home to transport provision would be £9,120.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 On the basis of the overall transportation impact assessment, the findings are that the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain would provide some change to the current transport arrangements and journey times for pupils.

- 9.2 The number of eligible pupils residing in Flintshire for free Home to School transport is fewer than 10 pupils based on the assumption that the nearest available school is Ysgol Owen Jones, Northop and would also be eligible for transport on the basis that the nearest appropriate school route would be considered to be hazardous by the Council due its rural location which has limited walking pathways in and out of the village.
- 9.5 Taking this into account, it is anticipated that there may be additional costs in transporting pupils should the proposal be progressed.
- 9.6 The annual estimated cost of transporting pupils will be £9,120.
- 9.7 It is important to note that transport costs are not straightforward and are subject to change. The size of the vehicle required, and how many pupils travelling will impact on how much certain contracts cost. Also it is difficult to estimate as each contract goes out for tender and depending on where the operator is located prices can vary.