



Plascrug Active Travel Bridge Public Consultation Report

Prepared for Ceredigion
County Council

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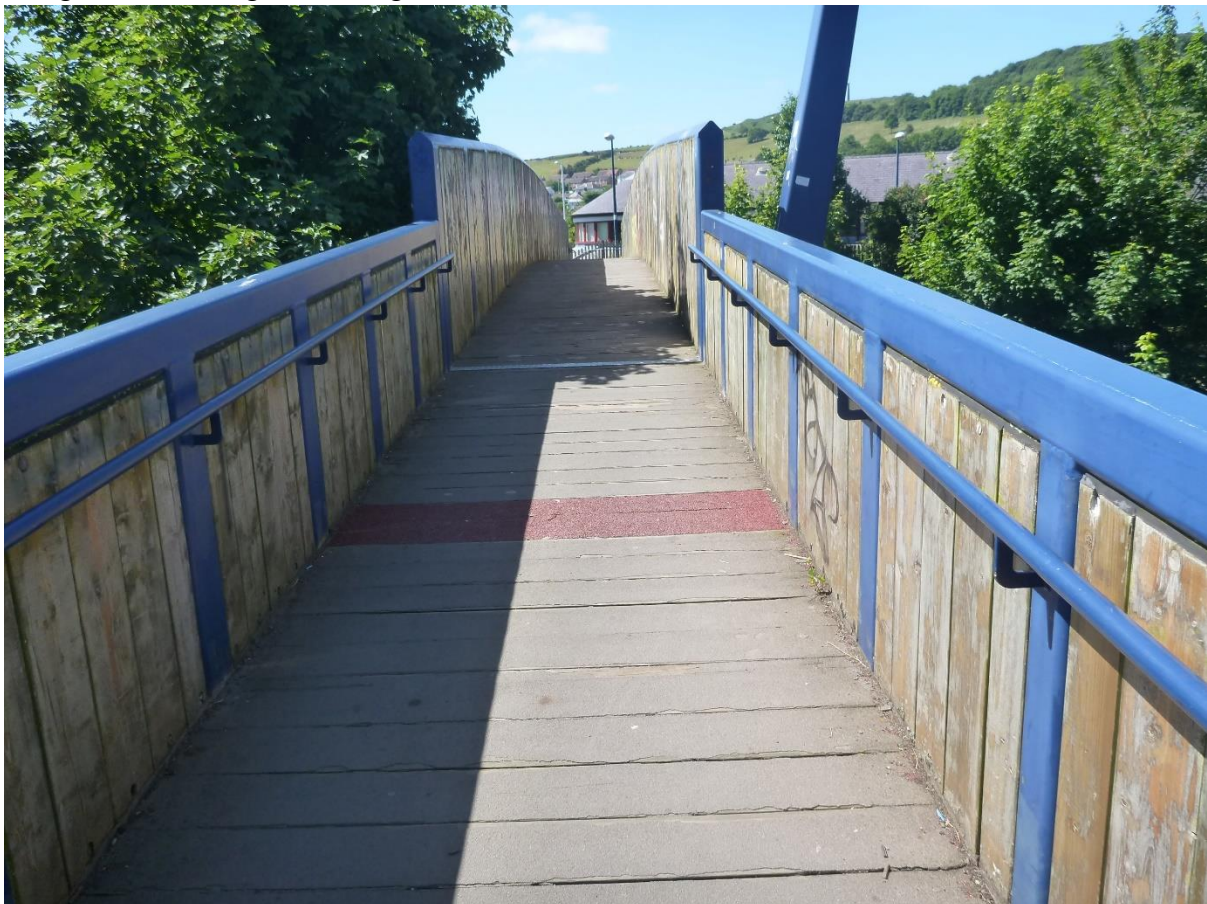
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Image 1: Plascrug Footbridge



Executive Summary

This report summarises the feedback received during the public consultation on three concept options for the Plascrug Active Travel Bridge in Aberystwyth. The consultation was undertaken to understand public and stakeholder views on the three options and to identify the issues that matter most to people who use this crossing.

A total of 1,977 responses were received. Of these, 296 blank online submissions were removed, leaving 1,681 responses included in the analysis. The consultation showed a very strong preference for Option A. Of the analysed responses, 1,602 selected Option A as their first choice, compared with 21 for Option B and 35 for Option C (23 no. responses were unclear in terms of Option preference).

Across the consultation, respondents consistently emphasised the importance of retaining a direct, convenient and inclusive route in or close to the existing corridor. Key issues raised included school access, safeguarding, accessibility, personal security, the protection of green space and the risk that longer or less convenient routes would lead to increased car use for short local trips.

Feedback from schools, childcare providers, local representatives and other stakeholders broadly reflected these themes. While most stakeholders supported Option A, several also identified important matters that would need to be addressed before any scheme could be taken forward, particularly in relation to construction impacts, temporary access arrangements, land requirements, emergency access, rail and utility approvals, and the detailed usability of the final design.

This report therefore presents the consultation findings, explains the main themes raised, and identifies the questions that still need to be resolved before a final deliverable scheme can be confirmed. The consultation indicates that Option A should be taken forward for further development, subject to feasibility, approvals and the resolution of the issues set out at the end of this report.

1. About the Scheme and the Consultation

The Plascrug Active Travel Bridge is an important local walking and wheeling link across the railway corridor in Aberystwyth. It is used by pupils, families, staff and other residents travelling between Penparcau, Llanbadarn Fawr, local schools, nearby community facilities and the wider town. Because of its location near Ysgol Plascrug, childcare provision, the rugby club, local businesses and the railway, any future scheme must respond to a complex local setting.

Three concept options were developed to test different ways in which a replacement bridge might be provided within the physical and operational constraints of the site. They were presented for consultation to understand which approach respondents preferred, what concerns they had, and which issues should inform the next stage of design work. The consultation was therefore about identifying a preferred concept direction, rather than seeking approval for a final detailed design.

The consultation ran from 14 January to 25 February 2026 and included an online questionnaire, paper response forms, a public information event, and targeted engagement with key stakeholders. Responses were reviewed to identify preferred options, recurring themes and specific matters raised by organisations or groups with a direct interest in the scheme. Supporting charts, maps and stakeholder summaries are included in the appendices.

Image 2. Cllrs Shelley Childs and Alun Williams viewing plans at the consultation event:



Image 3: Materials presented at the consultation event:



The consultation event was very well attended by stakeholders and members of the public.

2. **Headline Results**

A total of 1,977 responses were received during the consultation. After 296 blank online submissions were removed, 1,681 responses were included in the analysis.

The analysed results showed a very strong preference for Option A. Of the responses included in the analysis, 1,602 selected Option A as their first choice, while 21 selected Option B and 35 selected Option C (23no. responses were unclear in terms of Option preference). This indicates a clear preference for a solution that retains a direct crossing route in, or close to, the existing corridor.

The responses were predominantly local, with most coming from the Aberystwyth area. The evidence also suggests that the bridge is used primarily for everyday local journeys, especially school-related travel. Supporting charts, maps and questionnaire data are provided in the appendices.

3. What We Heard

Directness, school access and everyday use

The strongest message from the consultation was that this bridge is an important everyday route, particularly for school journeys. Respondents described the current corridor as a key link for pupils, families, staff and local residents travelling between Penparcau, Llanbadarn Fawr, nearby schools, the town and local facilities. Many respondents said that maintaining a direct and convenient route was critical, and that longer diversions would make some trips less practical.

Accessibility and inclusive design

Accessibility was a recurring issue throughout the consultation. Respondents highlighted the need for a route that works well for wheelchair users, people using mobility aids, pushchairs and a range of cycles, including adapted cycles. Options that appeared to involve longer distances, tighter turns or greater effort were commonly viewed as less inclusive. Many respondents considered Option A to offer the best basis for an accessible solution because it maintains the established desire line while allowing the crossing to be upgraded.

Safeguarding and personal security

Safeguarding and personal security were central concerns, particularly in relation to the nearby school environment and the use of the route by children and vulnerable users. Respondents raised concerns about overlooking, opportunities for anti-social behaviour, reduced natural surveillance, and the possible interaction between bridge structures and school grounds. These concerns were especially associated with the alternative alignments presented in Options B and C.

Environmental effects and wellbeing

Many responses also focused on the importance of protecting green space, trees and the school's outdoor areas. Respondents linked these concerns not only to biodiversity, but also to children's wellbeing, outdoor learning and the wider character of the area. There was a clear preference for solutions that minimise land take and avoid unnecessary impact on established green spaces and community amenities.

Mode shift and behaviour change

A further common theme was that longer, less direct or less comfortable routes could discourage walking and wheeling. Some respondents said they would be more likely to drive short journeys if the route became less convenient or felt less safe, particularly outside daylight hours. This reinforces the importance of a design that supports everyday active travel rather than unintentionally creating barriers to it.

4. Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback from stakeholders broadly reflected the themes identified in the wider public consultation, including strong support for a direct, safe and practical crossing that works for daily users. However, stakeholder responses also added a more detailed operational perspective, particularly from organisations directly affected by the bridge and its surrounding access arrangements.

In addition to supporting Option A, stakeholders raised specific concerns that go beyond the headline public themes. These included the effect of any scheme on nursery and school operations, emergency evacuation and emergency access, parking and servicing arrangements, supervised movement of children between sites, the protection of play and outdoor learning areas, safeguarding in relation to overlooking and objects being thrown into school grounds, and the need for safe and workable temporary arrangements during construction. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of ensuring that the detailed design works in practice for adapted cycles, wheelchair users, pushchairs and other users with additional accessibility needs. Detailed stakeholder material can be found in Appendix 4.

5. What the Consultation Means

The consultation provides a clear indication of public and stakeholder preference. The scale and consistency of support for Option A suggest that respondents strongly favour a future bridge solution that remains in, or closely aligned with, the existing corridor and that preserves a direct, accessible and familiar route.

At the same time, the consultation does not by itself determine the final scheme. Further technical, legal, land, operational and funding work is still required before a deliverable design can be confirmed. The consultation should therefore be understood as a strong evidence base for taking Option A forward for further development, rather than as the final stage in the decision-making process.

6. Recommended Next Steps

In light of the consultation findings, the next step should be to take Option A forward for further design development, subject to feasibility, statutory and third-party approvals, funding considerations, and the resolution of the outstanding issues identified through consultation.

This next stage should include continued engagement with directly affected stakeholders as the design develops, particularly in relation to access, safeguarding, temporary arrangements during construction, operational impacts and detailed accessibility requirements.

7. Matters Still to Be Resolved

- Can Option A be delivered within the physical constraints of the site and to current design standards, and if not, what compromises would be required?
- What requirements are there from funders/grant making bodies/Welsh Government and can they be accommodated on this site in a way that attracts funding?
- What land, rail, utility or other third-party permissions and agreements will be required?
- What temporary crossing or alternative access arrangements will be needed during construction to avoid severance of this important route?
- How will safeguarding, overlooking, supervision and personal security concerns be addressed through detailed design?
- How will the final design meet the needs of wheelchair users, people with pushchairs and users of adapted cycles?
- What mitigation will be required to minimise impacts on school operations, childcare provision, parking, servicing, emergency access and green space?
- What further engagement will be undertaken with affected stakeholders before a final scheme is confirmed?

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: 3D models of Options A, B and C

Option A



Option B



Option C



Appendix 2 - Detailed consultation analysis

This appendix provides a concise summary of the consultation methodology; headline questionnaire results and the main qualitative themes identified through the response analysis.

1. Methodology

The analysis draws on questionnaire responses submitted online and on paper, together with letters and other written representations received during the consultation period. Valid questionnaire responses were used to identify first-choice preferences, while qualitative comments and stakeholder representations were reviewed to identify recurring themes, concerns and requirements. Blank online submissions were excluded from the analysed dataset. The headline preference figures reported in this document are based on the valid recorded first-choice selections.

Responses were reviewed to identify preferred options, reasons for preference, concerns associated with each option, and recurring issues relating to accessibility, safeguarding, environmental effects, construction impacts and route functionality. This allowed the consultation findings to be presented both quantitatively, through the recorded option choices, and qualitatively, through the themes raised by respondents and stakeholders.

2. Quantitative Results

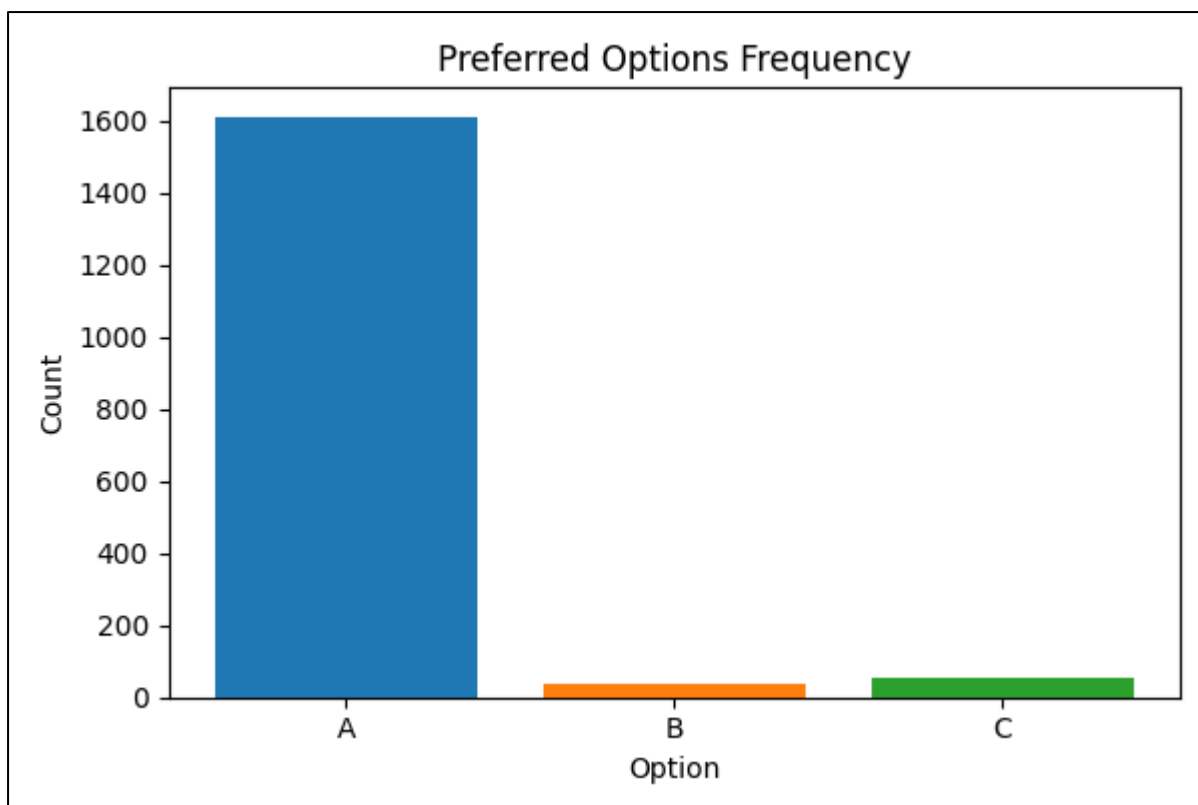
Option choice preferences

This section summarises the consultation response dataset and the headline first-choice preference results for each option. A total of 1,977 responses were received. Of these, 296 online responses were removed from the dataset because they were submitted without containing any information (i.e. blank) leaving 1,681 responses included in the analysis.

Within the analysed dataset:

1,602 respondents selected Option A as their preferred choice
21 selected Option B as their preferred choice,
35 selected Option C as their preferred choice, and
23 responses were unclear in terms of Option preference.

Within the Option A first-choice group, 211 respondents chose not to rate any other option and 763 rated both other options as their third choice.



Preferred option frequency table

The frequency table shows how many respondents selected Options A, B and C as their preferred choice.

Option A received the vast majority of Rank 1 selections, indicating an overwhelming community preference for retaining the established crossing corridor while delivering an upgraded facility.

Options B and C received comparatively negligible Rank 1 support, consistent with the concerns raised in the written and other comments received regarding the perceived safeguarding, personal security, environmental effects and increased journey effort.

The analysed responses showed a very strong preference for Option A. Of the 1,681 responses included in the analysis, 95.31% selected Option A as their first choice. This provides a clear quantitative indication that respondents strongly preferred a solution that retains a direct crossing route in or close to the existing corridor.

The questionnaire results should be read alongside the qualitative comments and stakeholder responses summarised in the main report and the appendices that follow, as these provide important context on why respondents preferred particular options and what issues they most wanted the project team to address.

4. Qualitative Themes

Review of all responses identified a number of recurring themes, which are summarised below. Across the dataset, respondents consistently described the bridge as critical infrastructure for school journeys and daily active travel trips and emphasised the importance of retaining a direct route that feels safe, convenient and inclusive for all users.

Accessibility and inclusive design

Respondents repeatedly referenced the need for an accessible route suitable for wheelchair users, mobility scooters, people with pushchairs, and cyclists (including non-standard cycles), with Accessibility & Inclusive Design accounting for approximately 8.2% of all comments. Options involving longer routes, tighter geometry, or additional gradients were perceived as increasing user effort and reducing inclusivity. For example, one respondent noted that *“Option b and c look as though they would take the best part of the day to traverse in my wheelchair”*, while another highlighted everyday needs stating *“I use a buggy so need accessibility...”*. Option A was commonly described as the most accessible because it maintains established desire lines while enabling the upgraded crossing to be widened and improved. In summary:

- Respondents stated that Option A best maintains accessibility by preserving a direct desire line while enabling widening and improvements to the existing crossing.
- Options B and C were frequently described as adding unnecessary distance, gradients and complexity which would disadvantage users with reduced mobility.
- User groups that were specifically referenced in responses included wheelchair users, mobility scooter users, people with pushchairs/prams, and cyclists (including adapted cycles).
- Options B and C would add unnecessary distance and effort and offer a less convenient route.
- Users with mobility issues would struggle with increased distances associated with options B and C.
- Wheelchair and buggy users were strongly opposed to options B or C.
- There is a need for a wider, safer re-built structure in the same location, i.e. Option A.

Environmental effects and wellbeing

Many responses associated with options B and C raised concerns about potential loss of trees, woodland, and school nature areas, with Environmental Effects & Wellbeing accounting for approximately 5.1% of all comments. Respondents

frequently highlighted the resulting impact on biodiversity and children's outdoor learning and wellbeing at Ysgol Plascrug in particular. For example, one respondent stated that *"there is no need to move the location... it would cause unnecessary biological and biodiversity damage"*, while another emphasised the importance of the area's amenity value, noting *"please don't ruin the peace and beauty of the avenue"*.

There was also concern that high-sided bridge structures or enclosed approaches, as presented in options B and C, could create visually and physically intrusive features and reduce sunlight to adjacent play areas. Respondents generally supported solutions that minimise new land take and avoid impacts on established green space, particularly within Ysgol Plascrug, but also across the wider Plascrug Avenue area, reflecting the strong link between environmental quality, wellbeing, and the character of the local environment.

In summary:

- Concerns that school gardens, woods, biodiversity would be harmed by both options B and C.
- Protecting green space is important for children's wellbeing.
- Nature areas are used for outdoor learning and must be preserved.
- Options B and C are considered to create a negative aesthetic impact – described by some as an *"industrial eyesore"* or *"prison-like structure"*.

Additional comments were made in respect of linked potential loss of sunlight, perceived loss of amenity value and increased stress for pupils to options that would affect school grounds or require new more intrusive structures that effect sight lines

Current use and key desire lines

The bridge is used as a daily connector for school journeys, access to leisure facilities, and commuting, walking, and cycling trips, with Current Use & Key Desire Lines accounting for approximately 59.6% of all comments, making it the dominant theme in responses.

A high proportion of respondents indicated very frequent weekly use with 76% using it between 1-10 times a week and a further 19.7% using the bridge more than this reflecting the very significant role of the crossing as a core active travel link. For example, one respondent stated that *"we use the bridge many times a day to access the schools... skatepark and daily walks"*, while another noted that it is *"the quickest and safest way to school and work from our house"*.

The need to maintain directness of route and minimise diversion distance were common requirements, with several respondents indicating they would change mode (including increased car use) if routes became longer, less convenient, or felt less safe.

Many respondents described very frequent use (often multiple trips per day), supporting the view that the bridge is a key connector for routine journeys. The most commonly cited trip purposes were school runs, access to leisure facilities, and commuting or errand trips:

- School journeys (drop-off, pick-up and travel between nearby education sites).
- Access to leisure and sports facilities.
- Commuting and local trips on foot/by cycle (including links towards nearby residential areas and services).

Mode shift risk and behaviour change

A recurring message is that indirect or constrained routes (as perceived by respondents for Options B and C) could reduce use of the crossing, particularly outside daylight hours, and encourage a shift towards driving for short trips that are currently made on foot or by cycle. Respondents linked this directly to concerns around personal security, accessibility and increased journey effort that were perceived to be associated with options B and C.

Respondents frequently stated that if the route became longer, less direct, or felt less safe and secure (particularly after dark), they would be less likely to walk or cycle and more likely to drive for short trips that are currently made using the existing footbridge corridor.

Safeguarding and personal security

Concerns around safeguarding issues — particularly for young children and vulnerable adults — were a dominant theme throughout stakeholder meetings and consultation responses, accounting for approximately 27.1% of all comments.

This was particularly the case in relation to the proximity to Plascrug School and the potential for any new bridge structure to directly overlook school grounds. For example, one respondent raised a direct safeguarding risk, stating *“I have safeguarding concerns... how does [the council] ensure no dangerous debris is thrown... onto the school playing field?”*, while another highlighted personal vulnerability, noting that *“options B and C could leave you very lonely and at risk”*.

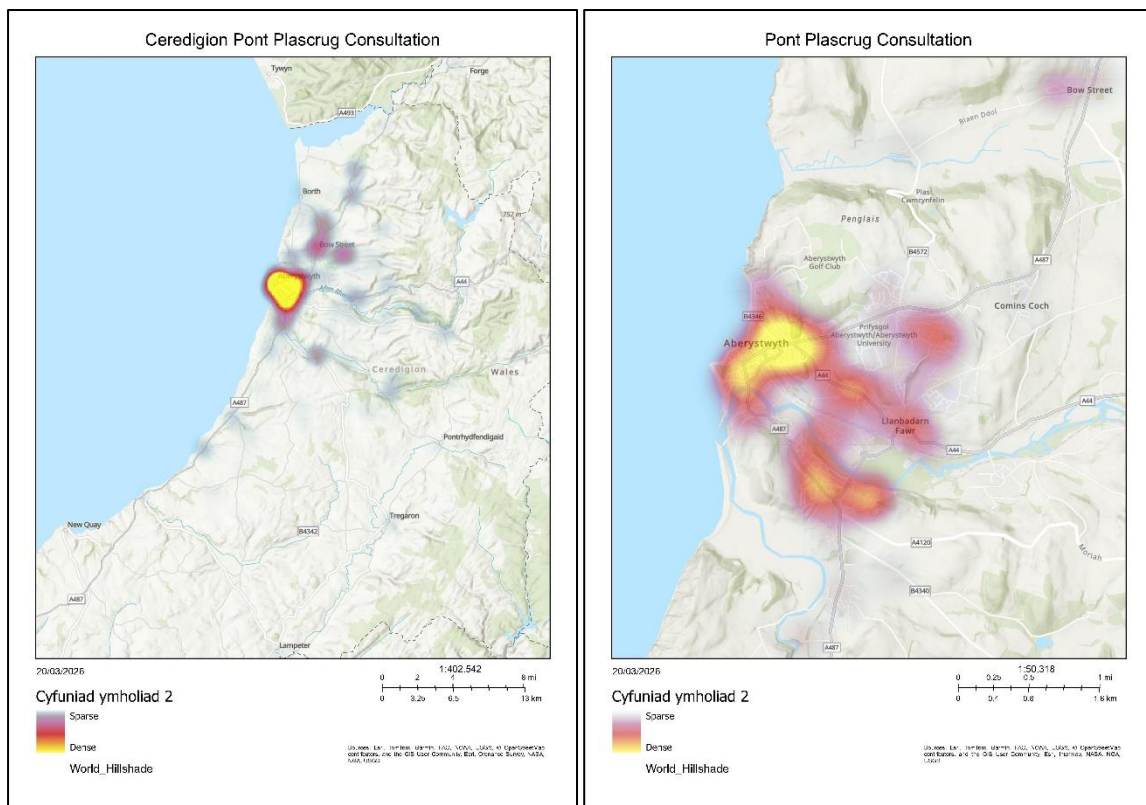
Comments also referenced risks associated with secluded or enclosed routes, blind corners, and perceived opportunities for anti-social behaviour. These concerns were raised in conjunction with personal security for vulnerable users (including children, older people and lone pedestrians) and were a key driver for opposition to Options B and C.

Appendix 3 - Geographical distribution and journey patterns

Responses were predominantly local, with 93% living in and around the SY23 postcode. Most respondents were from the Aberystwyth area, with postcode information showing a strong concentration close to the bridge location. A smaller number of responses came from nearby communities and a limited number from further afield. This suggests that the consultation mainly captured the views of people with a close local connection to the route and its surrounding community facilities.

The response data also indicates that the bridge is used primarily for everyday local journeys, especially school-related travel. Respondents repeatedly referred to movement between Penparcau, Ysgol Plascrug, nearby childcare provision, Plascrug Avenue and surrounding community destinations. Secondary destinations included parks and play areas, the town centre, the leisure centre and the rugby club. Overall, the pattern of responses suggests that the bridge functions principally as a school and community access link rather than as a route used mainly for occasional or longer-distance trips.

Geographical distribution of responses



Heat map of respondents

Most respondents (93%) live in and around the **Aberystwyth (SY23)** area, with postcodes showing a tight cluster close to the bridge location. A smaller number

come from nearby rural communities such as **SY24, SY25 and SY20**, with only a few outliers from further afield. Overall, the data shows a predominantly local response, with a limited but noticeable spread across the wider region.

Survey responses indicate that the bridge is used primarily for school related travel, with Plascrug Primary School and the surrounding education sites mentioned far more frequently than any other destinations. People consistently described daily movement between Penparcau, the school entrances, and Plascrug Avenue, forming the main travel corridor used for school runs, walking, and cycling. Parks and play areas feature prominently as secondary destinations, followed by regular trips to town, the leisure centre, and the rugby club. Mentions of the hospital and university are comparatively low, indicating these are occasional rather than routine routes. Overall, the quantitative patterns show that the bridge is fundamentally a school access link, essential for families, staff, and pupils moving between Penparcau, the car parks, and the cluster of nearby schools.

Appendix 4 - Stakeholder feedback summary

Targeted engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders including schools, childcare providers, local representatives and other interested organisations. Their feedback broadly reflected the themes identified in the wider public consultation, while also highlighting specific operational and site-related issues that will need to be considered during the next stage of scheme development.

- A strong emphasis on retaining a direct and practical route for daily users, particularly for school journeys.
- Concerns about safeguarding, overlooking, natural surveillance and the interaction between any new structure and nearby school environments.
- The need to maintain accessibility for wheelchair users, pushchairs and adapted cycles through the detailed design.
- Concerns about impacts on green space, outdoor areas, parking, servicing, emergency access and surrounding facilities.
- A clear need for careful construction planning, including temporary access or crossing arrangements during any closure of the existing route.

These responses provide important context for the main report. They show that, although there was broad support for Option A, stakeholders also expect the next phase of work to address detailed issues around usability, safeguarding, construction impacts and operational arrangements before a final scheme is confirmed.

Meithrinfa Camau Bach and Mudiad Meithrin – main thoughts and concerns

Meithrinfa Camau Bach and Mudiad Meithrin raised operational and safety considerations for the nursery setting and offices that they wish to be addressed as the project develops. Key points include maintaining workable emergency evacuation arrangements (including continued use of existing escape routes and sufficient space to evacuate very young children, including those moved using evacuation trolleys and those with mobility needs), maintaining suitable parking and step-free access (including disabled access), and ensuring safe and practical crossing arrangements during construction given regular escorted movements of children between nursery/ cylch provision and local schools. Both organisations also highlighted concerns about any permanent or temporary loss of land used for parking, servicing and emergency access, and the need to confirm any mitigation, accommodation works or replacement arrangements as designs progress.

Ysgol Plascrug – main thoughts and concerns

Feedback from Ysgol Plascrug raised safeguarding and wellbeing concerns where bridge proposals would interact with the school grounds. Representations were received from across the school community — including pupils, the School Council, PTA, governing body, individual parents, and staff — highlighting a shared set of issues. These include the risk of litter or objects entering play areas from an

overhead route, potential overlooking or photography into the school site, and any reduction in staff visibility for supervision. The school also emphasised the importance of its limited green space for play and outdoor learning, as well as the need to minimise disruption during construction and maintain safe, practical routes for pupils and families.

Ysgol Gymraeg – main thoughts and concerns

Additional comments were also received from Yr Ysgol Gymraeg, Aberystwyth, raising similar safeguarding concerns and noting the implications for pupils travelling between sites.

Aberystwyth Rugby Club – main thoughts and concerns

Aberystwyth Rugby Club also submitted written feedback, particularly regarding potential travel disruption affecting movement to and from the schools, rugby grounds and the wider area.

Local representatives – main thoughts and concerns

Many local bodies and representatives specifically expressed their support for Option A, which would seek to replace the Plascrug footbridge in its current location, noting its perceived limited impact on surrounding land, its direct and convenient routes, and its suitability for active travel needs. A variety of concerns were raised regarding Options B and C, including the potential reduction of outdoor space at Ysgol Plascrug, decreased visibility in certain areas, longer travel routes, and possible implications for safety and supervision. Environmental considerations — such as the effect on mature trees and established green areas — were also highlighted. Overall, the feedback emphasises the need to carefully assess community views and consider the long-term effects of each option on local facilities, public spaces, and travel patterns.