

**NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION**

**HEARING SESSION 14: ALTERNATIVE HOUSING SITES**

**LLWYNHAID FARM, BETTWS**

**Prepared by Boyer Planning on behalf of Mr R.A.I. Herbert (1117)**

**Background to this Statement**

1. This statement is prepared on behalf of our clients Mr Herbert, who control approximately 16 ha of land at Llwynhaid, Bettws. The site (Appendix 1) is located immediately adjoining the built up edge of Rhiwderin and is capable of accommodating approximately 200 dwellings.
2. The site is immediately available for development and complies with the relevant technical objectives of PPW including para 4.4 in meeting the needs of residents and para 9.2.3 of PPW insofar as it is free from constraints and economically feasible for development. It would contribute towards the overarching strategy of the plan in providing housing to meet the needs of Newport and help align housing supply to job creation and growth.
3. In this regard, we would expect that subject to detailed planning permission it would contribute towards the housing land supply and be developed over a period of up to 7 years.
4. In response to the Deposit LDP, Boyer Planning submitted representations proposing the inclusion of land at Llwynhaid within the list of allocated housing sites (1117.L1/H01) as well as the inclusion of the site within the Settlement Boundary (1117.L4/SP05) and removal from the Special Landscape Area (1117.L3/SP08). This representation, concerning the alternative site, is to be read in conjunction with representations in relation to the Deposit LDP's housing provision strategy (1117.L2/H01) and the Hearing Statements submitted to Examination Sessions 2 and 3 (ED004.8/ED005.7).
5. For the reasons set out herein, the subject site should be expressly identified for housing, additional information in this regard is provided in the following appendices which is to be read in conjunction with this Statement:

- Appendix 1: Site Location Plan
- Appendix 2: Development Framework Document
- Appendix 3: Illustrative land use masterplan
- Appendix 4: Ecological Assessment
- Appendix 5: Access Drawings
- Appendix 6: Letter from Llanmoor Homes

**Question 1: On what basis is the allocation contended to be needed in order to make the Plan sound?**

6. Based on the evidence presented at Hearing Sessions 2 and 3, it is presently the case that the plan would fail a number of the relevant tests of soundness (including C2, CE1, CE2 and CE4). Following the initial hearing statements it is the case that:
  - i. The distribution of proposed housing allocations does not reflect a robust nor appropriate range and choice of housing for existing communities contrary to the requirements of PPW para 9.1.1;

- ii. The LDP strategy and approach to housing supply is based on a continuation of the UDP approach and is fundamentally reliant upon sites that have largely remained unimplemented and that do not comply with the PPW para 9.2.3 requirement to be free, or readily freed, from planning, physical and ownership constraints, and economically feasible for development, so as to create and support sustainable communities where people want to live;
- iii. The residual requirement of the LDP is already increasing and it is plainly the case that the reliance upon windfall sites (to make up for the shortfall in new allocations and lack of delivery of strategic sites) seems set to continue with the identified supply already reliant upon sites such as the the former Panasonic site which represents a significant element of double counting;
- iv. If the annual housing target (which is now at least 734 dwellings) is to be met then it will require the supply to be comprised of a mixture of deliverable sites in a range of locations across the Local Authority area. Historically the Council confirmed that on when completions achieved around 700 per annum it has been based on deliverable sites in a wide range of sites (including Afon Village at Rogerstone, Celtic Horizon at West Newport, as well as sites within the urban area of Newport and at Langstone and Caerleon). Such a mix is required if the LDP requirement is to be achieved;
- v. There is agreement that there is a shortfall in housing numbers identified within the supply to meet the requirement. Whilst the exact shortfall is to be determined when more accurate information is prepared by the Council, it is likely to be in excess of 1,000 dwellings due to:
  - reliance upon s106 sites (250) that have remained unsigned for several years. These sites are windfall sites, that do not have planning permission and cannot be considered to be available in line with PPW. Accordingly such cannot be relied upon as part of the supply pool;
  - sites remain that are still subject to constraints and unlikely to be available for development. There are numerous sites that have been within JHLAS schedules for over 15 years and absent any evidence of progress they will be removed from the 2014 JHLAS. In addition based on evidence submitted to the examination and proposed location of H16 (i and ii) allocations other sites will be moved into 3(i) of the JHLAS. Such sites could account for up to 700 dwellings;
  - in addition we note the East Bank is a railway siding and is being used for storage by Network Rail and there are around 100 dwellings at City Vizion that have been double counted. These would account for a further 200 shortfall; and
  - reliance upon windfall sites and double counting of windfalls. The UDP relied upon windfall sites being identified due to the failure of allocated sites to be brought forward for development and deliver at the rates required. The LDP relies upon precisely the same sites and due to the failure to date of large sites to be delivered is already reliant upon windfall sites (such as Panasonic).
- vi. There are substantial concerns over the ability of the four sites that comprise the Eastern Expansion Area to deliver c.3600 dwellings during the plan period (300 per annum between April 1st 2014 and march 31st 2026) based on historic lack of

delivery, location of gypsy allocations, lack of present interest from volume housebuilders and historic completions rates on sites elsewhere in Newport (Afon Village at Rogerstone averaged 95 dwellings per annum). This could result in a significant material shortfall in dwellings over the plan period.

7. Accordingly further additional deliverable land is required to be identified in order to achieve the overall housing requirement, strategy of the plan and aims of the Welsh Government and Welsh Minister. Such further sites are required in order to satisfy the following tests of soundness:

- C2 to ensure that the Plan is sufficiently robust and flexible to ensure compliance with Planning Policy Wales and allocate sufficient and appropriate land for housing;
- CE1 to ensure that Policies flow logically from the strategy of the plan which seeks to identify suitable land for housing to match job growth with strategy and meet the needs of the community;
- CE2 to ensure that it is based on credible and reliable evidence; and
- CE4 to ensure appropriate flexibility to deal with the continued shortfall of housing land, the failure of existing sites to be developed and reliance upon unidentified supply.

**Question 2: Is the site free from constraints and deliverable?**

8. As part of the ongoing promotion through the LDP process detailed assessments relating to the site have been undertaken to confirm the deliverability of the site. The assessments informed the production of the Development Framework Document, submitted as part of the of the Deposit LDP stage which has been updated for submission as part of this Hearing Statement (as attached at Appendix 2).

9. An illustrative masterplan (Appendix 3) has been prepared and submitted as part of the Development Framework Document to illustrate the way in which development could proceed.

10. The masterplan provides 6.89ha of developable land for residential use which is capable of providing approximately 200 homes at a density of 30dph. The layout has taken account of the ecological and flooding constraints in relation to Bettws Brook and has provided a sufficient buffer from any proposed residential development. Furthermore the residential development has been located within the field parcels, with the majority of the surrounding and internal hedgerows and woodlands retained and enhanced where appropriate. This also assists in continuing to contain the site physically and visually. Given the fact that the site is well related to the settlement boundary and seen in the context of the built up area of Bettws it is considered to provide a logical extension.

11. Llanmoor Homes have considered the site and confirm that from their perspective it is deliverable and development could proceed as we have suggested.

12. It is considered that there are no obstacles to the delivery of the site. On approval of a planning application it would be available to contribute towards the TAN 1 five year supply of genuinely available land for housing. We summarise the main technical considerations below

Sustainability

13. The site is located in an eminently sustainable location, close to a range of facilities including local shops, schools, community facilities and in terms of being served by existing bus routes.

14. Indeed, regular bus services, typically 20 minute frequency, run to and from Newport City Centre along Monnow Way. These services would be within 400 metres of the proposed development areas.

15. In the centre of Bettws there are a number of local shops, including Spar shop, post office, health centre, chemist, dental surgery and hairdresser which are within close proximity. Furthermore, Monnow Primary School is approximately 400m away and Bettws Secondary School within 1.5km of the site. Bettws also has a number of sports grounds, playing fields and a leisure centre (active living centre).

### Ecology

16. Ecology is not considered to be a constraint to the development of the site. This was confirmed by a Desk based assessment and Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey (Appendix 4) which were undertaken on the site, by a qualified Ecologist (Soltys Brewster Ecology).

17. The Extended Phase I Habitat survey revealed that the site consists mainly of improved grassland enclosed by a network of species-rich hedgerows.

18. In terms of the site's development potential, the large areas of improved grassland are of little or no ecological interest and represent the most suitable areas to support development. This would also include a network of hedgerows and woodland areas largely retained and used to frame the development footprint and contribute to a green infrastructure network.

19. Regard is a had to Bettws Brook which transverses the site to the south and is identified as a SINC (BT7)<sup>1</sup>. It is not intended that any development would be located within the SINC due to the associated floodplain area as discussed below. Any development on the site would provide sufficient separation from the development and the Brook. Furthermore it recognised in the Authority's Background Paper<sup>2</sup> that the SINC designation is not an unduly restrictive designation but developments should minimise their impact through mitigation measures and offset by the use of compensation measures to ensure that there is no overall loss to nature conservation.

20. Taking into consideration the assessments it is evident that the development of the site is primarily associated with the large areas of improved agricultural grasslands, which were considered of little or no ecological interest. Also that consideration will be given to the retention of key hedgerow features as far as practicable together with all woodland areas and the Bettws Brook corridor.

### Vehicular Access

21. Stuart Michael Associates have confirmed that the northern parcels can be accessed from a number of locations (Ogmore Crescent and Henllys Lane) either as individual plots or in conjunction with rationalising access as shown Access Drawings No 4836.004A – Northern Access Drawing, which provides an indication of these options. There is also scope to create a new link road between the plots. The southern parcels can also be accessed by a rationalisation of Parc-Y-Brain Road (as shown at Access Drawings No 4836.007 – Southern Access Drawing). Both access drawings are at Appendix 5.

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<sup>1</sup> SD78 – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Background Paper (June 2013)

<sup>2</sup> SD78 – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Background Paper (June 2013)

22. Ogmore Crescent connects with Monnow Way, a local distributor road, to the north of the site. Monnow Way in turn connects with Bettws Lane which provides a high standard highway corridor and route to the strategic highway network (A405 and M4).

23. The proposals for access and the standard of the local highway network are capable of accommodating the potential trip generation from the site.

### Landscape

24. The site adjoins the settlement boundary of Bettws at Ogmore Crescent and Derwent Court to the north and is subject to urban and human influences including residential dwellings, parking areas, garages and public footpaths.

25. In considering the site characteristics it is evident that the site is well contained both physically and visually. The site itself is not widely visible and in the limited local views in which it features it is seen in the context of the built up area of Bettws. It is therefore considered that the site is located with a clearly defensible boundary and should form a logical settlement extension.

26. The northern section of the site is located within the North of Bettws Special Landscape Area and contains the Llwynhaid Farm buildings. However, it is noteworthy that the UDP Inspector recommended "*that the Special Landscape Area (SP5 i) in which the site is located should be deleted*" (para 3.47 refers).

27. Consequently the landscape of the site is not considered to be a constraint, and the development of the site as proposed would not adversely impact upon the SLA. Given the urban influences, the visually contained nature of the site and proposed green infrastructure on site it is evident that the site would not have any adverse impact upon the existing landscape setting.

### Flooding

28. TAN 15 Development Advice Maps indicate that the proposed development will be located within Zone A – Considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal flooding and would not constitute a constraint.

29. Also that a central section of the site, following the Bettws Brook, is located within Zone C2 – Without significant flood defence infrastructure and small areas adjoining in Zone B – Areas to have known to flood in the past. However these areas relate to the woodland adjoining the Brook and part of the fields which would be retained as part of the landscape structure.

### Drainage

30. Surface water run-off from the proposed housing development can be controlled and discharged at rates not exceeding the existing and currently undeveloped site. Opportunities can be taken to introduce Sustainable Drainage Systems in accordance with current best practices.

31. A detailed flood risk assessment would be prepared following the preparation of a detailed proposed site layout. A robust strategy would be proposed to manage flood risk and control surface water runoff to deliver sustainable development on the Site to accord with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government and Natural Resource Wales, as outlined in TAN15.

32. The capacity constraints in the foul sewerage network (as noted at the previous UDP Inquiry) can be remedied by upgrades under the water company's asset management plan. Developer contributions can bring forward any necessary works in order to service the site. Dwr

Cymru Welsh Water is being consulted on this basis. DCWW confirm that the local sewer network can accommodate the anticipated foul flows.

### Conclusion

33. It is evident from the assessments undertaken as part of the Development Framework Document (as detailed above) and the separate submissions made to the Deposit LDP in regards to Policy SP5 – Countryside, H1 – Housing Site (Allocation) and SP8 – Special Landscape Areas, that there are no overriding constraints to the development of the site.

34. The allocation at Llwynhaid will assist in providing certainty over delivery and housing supply within the plan period together with alternative range and choice.

**35. Question 3: Would allocation of the site fit with the plan strategy? What principal factors lead to this view.**

36. As has been demonstrated, the dLDP presently fails to address the need for sufficient housing land to be identified in line with PPW and the strategy of the Plan itself. In allocating a site that is genuinely available for development there will be certainly that needs can be met rather than relying upon sites that are unidentified and have previously remained unimplemented.

37. The allocation of the site is therefore required in order to address the following objectives of the plan:

- *Objective 1 – Sustainable use of land:* the site is located in a sustainable location in terms of existing facilities and will positively contribute towards the needs of the local community;
- *Objective 2 – Climate change:* the site will contribute positively in terms of mitigating against the impacts of climate change by providing for the needs of its population, mitigating against out commuting from Newport and longer distance commuting across the city and incorporating sustainable design measures as appropriate at the detailed design stage;
- *Objective 3 – Economic Growth:* the site will complement the existing land supply and help match the level of future job growth with land for housing. It will help mitigate against the problems of a constrained housing land supply and:
  - i. Contribute towards the level of growth envisaged for Newport County;
  - ii. Provide adequate housing for the workforce to grow appropriately;
  - iii. Provide housing to help attract and retain a working age population and ensure no adverse impact on labour supply;
  - iv. Facilitate the formation of new households by matching supply to demand;
  - v. Help provide affordable housing across all parts of the city not just on the east;
  - vi. Help reduce reliance upon commuting out of the county
- *Objective 4 - Housing provision:* the site will ensure that there is an adequate supply of land in a sustainable location and ensure that the quantity, quality and variety of housing meets the needs of the population. It will ensure a PPW compliant supply of land for housing;
- *Objective 5 – Conservation of the built environment:* insofar as there will be no adverse impacts upon the quality of the historic or built environment;
- *Objective 6 – Conservation of the Natural environment:* as demonstrated by technical evidence submitted there will be no adverse impacts on landscape or biodiversity;

- *Objective 7 – Community Facilities:* as there will be an opportunity to provide community benefits to the local area;
- *Objective 8 - Culture and Accessibility:* the site will ensure access for all is achieved;
- *Objective 9 - Health and Well Being:* it will provide an environment that is safe and by encouraging walking will help promote suitable lifestyle choices;
- *Objective 10 – Waste:* it will incorporate measures to minimise the impact of waste.

38. Given the above, we consider that the site will contribute positively towards the existing strategy of the Plan and achieving the vision for Newport. It will complement the existing approach being taken by ensuring an additional source of deliverable and sustainable land for housing. In this regard it will plainly ensure that the supply of housing is robust and sound in order to match the economic growth strategy being taken.

39. The changes to the Plan sought in relation to land at Llwynhaid, Bettws are a direct response to the inherent problems with the present land supply identified and will contribute towards the tests of soundness as set out in this statement.

### **Required Changes**

40. The allocation of the land at the Llwynhaid, Bettws in Policy H1 for 200 dwellings.

41. The alteration to the settlement boundary and removal from the SLA are consequential changes to the plan that would logically follow its allocation for development.

***Boyer Planning***  
***April 2014***