

P-05-1069 Save the farmland and green fields at Cosmeston, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.02.21

P-05-1069 Pwyllgor Deisebau 09.02.21 / Petitions Committee 09.02.21

To the Petitions Committee,

Thank you for sending the response of Rebecca Evans, MS Minister for Finance and Trefnydd.

Due to the short notice of receiving this response and the time constraints of the Petitions Committee I have only been able to give a brief response, but I believe that previous comments made are appropriate, and that it will be up to the Local Planning Authority and/or the Planning Directorate to show whether the Welsh Government have appropriately addressed the various comments made on the proposed development and outside of the immediate locality of the development.

It is felt by many of residents in the locality and surrounding areas that the Welsh Government are failing to adhere to the principles of their environmental and climate change policies and the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 in order to locate a major housing development on an area of scenic coastal fields and farmland lying between the villages of Cosmeston and Sully in the Vale of Glamorgan seemingly in the name of contributing to the housing need of the Vale of Glamorgan but seemingly being driven by the Minister for Finance.

The development will decimate our local environment and biodiversity by decimating our countryside farmland, mature trees and hedgerows, wildlife and their habitats, the historic cultural heritage. Its distance from necessary urban facilities will seriously affect climate change, air pollution and air quality in the area. It will also place a strain on nursery and secondary education in the surrounding areas. The development will also be affected by flooding as it is adjacent to a historic flood zone, coastal erosion as it located on top of coastal cliff, and land contamination from an historic landfill site.

It is concerning that the Minister regards objections to the development as a threat to the Welsh Government contribution to the housing need in the Vale of Glamorgan, and failure of the Welsh Government to deliver 280 affordable homes, and as such undermines the 'soundness' of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Local Development Plan 2017 (LDP) which the Welsh Government approved. Alternative sites to Cosmeston in other areas of the Vale of Glamorgan were provided, but turned down, and the housing need figures were regularly contested as overestimated during the LDP process and the percentage for affordable homes was increased since the LDP was adopted.

The Minister indicates that there was plenty of time to object to the proposal prior to the application being submitted on the 23rd of October 2020, whether it was during the LDP process or by way of the Public Consultation event held in September 2019.

However, the LDP process and the allocated site proposed in that LDP, and, as a member of the applicants' agents stated as "artists' impressions of what we hope the development may possibly look like", presented at the Public Consultation event, can be regarded as totally different in plans and details to that of the current planning application. It may have been a coincidence that the Welsh Government Lockdown begun the same day that the Application was submitted, but this has annoyed many residents as they have been unable to access the documents and plans submitted by the Welsh Government. Whether through lack, of personal computers and the ability to visit friends and family with computers, public meetings, leafletting, etc.

The Minister states that it is up to the LPA to confirm whether the site conforms to the site allocated in the LDP, although illustrations within the application already confirm this. Site Notice posted by the LPA, on the 23rd of October 2020 also indicate that the: - "Development not in accordance with the development plan and may be of public interest".



The extensions to the allocated site appear to be made to counter the loss of housing development land within the allocated site due to severely contaminated land arising from the dumping of toxic chemicals at an historic landfill site operated by the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council in the late 70's to early 80's, and extra set-back from the cliff edge due to coastal erosion.

The land provision to the Vale Council for a primary school is also extending the site outside the LDP allocated site boundaries, which will require the demolition of the 17th century farm buildings which contain many historical architectural features.

These extensions cannot be "exceptional circumstances" as required in the LDP.

These extensions into the allocated "Green Wedge" will lead to further coalescence between Penarth and Sully which the Green Wedge allocation is supposed to prevent. A policy that the LA and Welsh Government felt was "sound" in 2017, but now possibly willing to overlook in order to fulfil the provision of a school on land provided by the Welsh Government, and the Welsh Governments contribution the housing needs.

As indicated in the Ministers response, the Vale of Glamorgan Council are proposing to build a Special Needs School on land owned by the Welsh Government with Welsh Government officials already agreeing funding, suggesting that the application as already been determined.

It is also apparent that there is a lack of provision of Nursery and Secondary Education in the local area, another issue that was not identified within the 'sound' LDP.

Regarding the land contamination on the site, which appears to emanate from an incorrectly developed landfill area, (investigations note that there was no base present), and the dumping of various toxic chemicals, which it seems the Vale of Glamorgan Council have failed to inspect and regulate over the past years.

It is a concern that while some of the contamination can only be removed by development of the site, some cannot be removed either because it is too dangerous or too expensive and that it is being recommended to keep the area as 'public open space' putting both the residents and school children at risk.

It should be noted that the Applicant has not addressed the issue leaching of chemicals into local watercourses and of airborne contamination/pollution from asbestos and carcinogenic materials on nearby residents during the development, nor the leaching of the chemicals into the watercourses has not been addressed.

A request for call-in has been made to the Planning Directorate as the application will have wide effects and substantial controversy beyond the immediate locality, will significantly affect sites of scientific, nature conservation and historic interest, and does not conform to the Vale of Glamorgan Council Local Development Plan 2017 (LDP). I understand that the Planning Directorate is awaiting the report of the Local Planning Authority to see if these issues have been addressed.

The traffic assessment considerably underestimates highway and vehicle usage from the estate, in the hope that residents will walk or cycle or use the inadequate public transport service to travel to employment, education, health and shopping locations, etc, many of which are located away from the immediate locality and over the permitted maximum walking distances. This will of course lead to increased use of the motor vehicle and exacerbate traffic congestion, tail backs, pollution, and air quality on the already inadequate highway infrastructure in the locality and areas outside the immediate locality using the Barry to Cardiff/M4 routes, i.e., Merrie Harrier and Baron's Court junctions in Penarth, Dinas Powys, Culverhouse Cross, etc. The assessments also appear not to consider traffic usage of other housing developments in the surrounding area.

I would like to thank the Petitions Committee and staff members for your efforts and assistance in listening and taking an interest in the concerns of the residents of Cosmeston and surrounding areas, and for writing to and obtaining a response from the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd.

Yours Faithfully

Michael Philip Garland