

Formal Planning Representation

Objection to Site 370 – Bryn Melin, Cowbridge

Submitted for consideration within the Vale of Glamorgan Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

Background

This document sets out the planning, sustainability, transport, and landscape reasons why Site 370 (Bryn Melin) should not be included as a residential allocation within the Local Development Plan.

Cowbridge is not a high employment location.

Cowbridge has no Mass Transport System.

Cowbridge has undergone a major expansion with approximately 530 additional homes approved since 2018. This expansion has already stretched capacity on the high street and feeder roads, and parking areas are extremely stretched, and yet there are still more than 150 houses of this allowance to be completed.

The topography of the town centre is such that it sits in a bowl with steep gradients from the centre to outlying residential spaces which includes Llanblethian.

Cowbridge population has a higher-than-average older resident age group, so a higher-than-average proportion of the population do not walk or cannot walk the distance, they drive to the shopping areas, health facilities and schools.

Thus, Cowbridge does not fit an average road users traffic profile and traffic has a higher proportion of cars per household than average also.

This site represents 105 approx. dwellings in an overall plan of 8700. This represents an allocation of merely 1.25% approx. Why are the Council planners so determined to contravene National Government Planning Policy Wales for such little value

There are other better suited and sustainable locations within Cowbridge and the wider Vale as a whole.

Inspector's Key Points Summary

Site 370 is poorly connected to sustainable or mass public transport and would result in car-dependent development. **This contradicts Welsh Government Policy (PPW)**

Development would harm the landscape setting within the Thaw Valley Special Landscape Area. **This contradicts Welsh Government Policy (PPW)**

The development will rely on pedestrian access via Windmill Lane, which is a constrained rural lane without pedestrian infrastructure and is unsuitable as a primary access corridor. This presents real safety concerns as described in an independent Safety Audit undertaken by Lime Transport Ltd. **This contradicts Welsh Government Policy (PPW) (TAN18)**

The gradient and topography of the site raise engineering, drainage, and deliverability concerns which are adding significant cost to the development and increasing the Carbon Footprint. **This contradicts Welsh Government Policy** Note reference to this feature was totally omitted in the Sustainability assessment and this misrepresentation therefore favours this site inclusion.

Cowbridge Town Council and local residents have raised clear safety concerns regarding this site's inclusion due to the increased car traffic across already high-capacity roads and junction on the East side of the town. The sharp Bends and incline adjacent to the sites access and entry have been identified as high risk to traffic users, within the Lime Transport Road Safety Audit and this will be further exacerbated during construction phase.

Including this site demonstrates a complete lack of respect for Welsh Government Policy promoting sustainable transport and placemaking.

Planning Representation - Objection to site 370 inclusion in RLDP

This representation objects to the inclusion of Site 370 (Bryn Melin) within the Vale of Glamorgan Replacement Local Development Plan. The site fails to meet key planning principles relating to sustainable transport, safe access, landscape protection, and placemaking.

The land occupies a sensitive position on the edge of Cowbridge and contributes to the wider rural setting associated with the Thaw Valley landscape. Development in this location would extend the urban form of the town into open countryside and introduce significant landscape change.

1. Lack of Sustainable Transport

Welsh planning policy promotes development in locations supported by sustainable transport. The Bryn Melin site is not served by high-capacity public transport and therefore future residents would likely rely heavily on private vehicles for daily travel. A bus service to Cardiff offering 2 buses per hour at peak times does not equate to mass transport access.

Such a pattern conflicts with national objectives aimed at reducing carbon emissions and encouraging sustainable travel behaviour.

2. Landscape and Thaw Valley Setting

The site contributes to the wider landscape setting of the Thaw Valley, which has been identified as a Special Landscape Area within the Vale of Glamorgan. Development on rising ground would be visually prominent and would extend suburban form into countryside currently forming part of the valley landscape. This would erode the rural character and scenic quality associated with the Thaw Valley setting. Planning Policy Wales talks of efficient use of land and prioritising Brown Field sites and protecting boundaries of open countryside. Vale of Glamorgan planners are ignoring this.

3. Topography and Deliverability

The gradient across the site introduces engineering challenges which may require extensive earthworks, retaining structures, and complex drainage infrastructure. Such interventions can increase environmental impact while also affecting the economic and design viability of development.

The site access on the St Athan Road will present Road Traffic incidents for existing car users who will be forced to face numerous fully laden Heavy Goods Vehicles throughout the period of construction. This will place commuting and servicing traffic on the St Athan Road at risk for a period of 12 months or more.

The council has a Duty of Care to ensure Road traffic users are not placed in harm's way by knowingly permitting HGV traffic increase on the narrow St Athan road. Sites with fewer constraints should logically be prioritised.

4. Impact on the Setting of Cowbridge

Cowbridge is valued for its historic character and relationship with surrounding countryside. The Bryn Melin land currently helps maintain a clear transition between the town and rural landscape of the Thaw Valley. Development would extend the built edge into open countryside and alter this relationship, potentially diminishing the distinctive character of the settlement.

5. Sequential and Spatial Strategy Test

National planning policy requires local authorities to prioritise development in the most sustainable locations. Both Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 promote a “town centre first” and sustainable settlement hierarchy approach.

The Bryn Melin site sits on the edge of the settlement pattern and is not strongly connected to sustainable transport infrastructure. As alternative sites exist **closer to services or public transport**, those should be prioritised. This site fails the sequential test of sustainability.

6. Rural Lane Capacity and Safety Precedent

Planning decisions across Wales consistently recognise that narrow rural lanes without pedestrian infrastructure are unsuitable as primary access routes for major residential development.

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport emphasises safe access and protection of vulnerable road users. Windmill Lane’s constraints present a clear safety issue, and required engineering works would further harm the landscape and compromise existing resident’s quality of life.

7. Placemaking and Well-Being of Future Generations

Development reliant on constrained rural access, limited public transport, and car-dependent travel would not meet sustainable placemaking principles. It risks creating a community that fails to deliver walkable, connected, and inclusive living environments, which is contrary to national well-being objectives

8. Better Suited Alternatives

Cowbridge is not a place of high employment. It is not served by a mass transport system.

The recent Clare Village development in Cowbridge will, upon completion, have provided 475 homes which will represent a 22% increase in housing population alone since 2018.

Additional sites such as the Old 6th form block and the development of the Local police station will add approximately a further 60 homes, a mix of retirement and Social housing.

These additional residences have yet to complete and already the town is suffering congestion and serious restricted mobility especially on the eastern Junction of the St Athan Road and Primrose Hill. The addition of a further 100 homes, with multiple

cars per household being the most likely scenario, as there is no mass transport system in Cowbridge, and this particular site having no infrastructure for safe pedestrian or cycling routes for all ranges of mobility and age groups, as TAN18 requires, will likely be the Straw that breaks the camel's back.

Cowbridge has a high percentage of older age residents and given the town centre is in a bowl surrounded by steep elevations to the residential areas driving to the local shopping areas is undertaken by a very high proportion of residents. This creates major traffic obstructions through the town.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council, and their planners, needs to understand and accept that developing any site in Cowbridge would fail the Welsh Government Place Making and Transport Directives. Continuing to develop Cowbridge is irresponsible and demonstrates a complete lack of respect for Welsh Government policy and for the people of Cowbridge.

Brownfield sites in areas served with mass transport capability do exist within the Vale. They are not in Cowbridge.