

HG1 KS1 Land at North West Barry - Proposed Development at Weycock Cross ("WC")

I set out below (and within the enclosed supplemental pages) my objections and questions in respect of the proposed development at WC.

It is well documented that development plans for WC were previously refused between 2013/2016 and as such, I will not repeat the reasons as to why this site was deemed unsuitable at that time save that those reasons still stand and the concerns that were raised are still present and have not improved with age. Indeed, the challenges facing the infrastructure within the area have only worsened and it would be disingenuous for the Council to say otherwise. Notwithstanding that it has been over 10 years since the last proposed development for housing on WC was refused, it is difficult to comprehend the rationale for the Vale of Glamorgan Council wishing to revisit this and it is submitted that it fails to align with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the “**Act**”).

It is averred that the proposed development at WC is not sustainable and will have both a negative and detrimental impact on following:

- The infrastructure to include placing additional strain on the local GP Practices, the dentist surgeries and schools.
- The wildlife and surrounding environment to include not just the green space at Weycock but to Millwood Forest and its watercourses, which lead and flow down to Porthkerry Park.
- The sewage system, which will have a direct impact on the local residents in the surrounding area.
- The traffic and congestion, which will not just impact the local residents of Barry but also have an adverse impact on the neighbouring communities of Rhoose and St. Athan.

Having considered the Council's responses as set out in the document known as 'Housing Growth in Barry, Report of Public Consultation (November 2025)' ("**Consultation Report**"), it is surprising to note the manner in which the issues and concerns raised that developing WC would cause have seemingly been dismissed. Indeed, it gives the impression that a predetermination on this development has already been made before the Consultation Process has even finished and if that is the case, then the consultation would be fundamentally flawed.

The failure to consider material factors and ignoring the genuine concerns that have and are being raised by the constituents of Barry leaves one to question the legality of the

proposed development and if there are any findings that give rise to any environmental and/or statutory violations, the Council run a significant risk of steps being taken to explore the lawfulness of its decision to proceed with the development at WC.

OBJECTION 1 - IMPACT ON LOCAL GP SURGERIES

Within the Consultation Report at Annex 1(A1-1), the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, stated that the development of 376 homes will bring an average of 850 new residents into the area, which equates to an increase of 10.9%.

In response, the Council simply say 'Comments are noted' with the action being to 'engage with the Cardiff and Vale UHB in the development of the RLDP and explore opportunities for health provision.'

The response provided by the Council is wholly unacceptable and completely inadequate with the presumption being that no assessment has been undertaken which clearly explains how the current three local GP surgeries would cater for the influx of 850 new residents.

As the Council does not have the direct funds to recruit new doctors, the recruitment of medical staff is the responsibility of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Welsh Government, not the local council. However, the Council is involved in supporting the health infrastructure through planning, and it is noted that it faces a significant shortfall itself, having projected a £7.8 million gap in its own 2024/2025 budget.

It is noted that recruitment incentives include the Welsh Government providing incentives, such as £20,000 to encourage doctors to train in targeted areas, though research indicates that these have recently focused on areas other than Vale of Glamorgan.

Recent reports indicate that GP practices in the Cardiff and Vale are among the lowest funded in Wales, which clearly make it much harder to attract and retain staff. In short, and as the Council does not hold the budget or the mandate to directly hire medical professionals and has no ability to influence the recruitment process, please clearly set out the following:

- i) the number of fulltime new doctors that have been recruited from January 2021 to January 2026 by the Vale Group Practice, The Waterfront Practice and West Quay Medical Practice.
- ii) whether the local GP surgeries have been asked by Council to opine on the number of new GPs that would be required.

- iii) the local GPs' views on how many new doctors would need to be recruited to service the needs of 850 new residents.
- iv) in the event the recruitment of new doctors or medical staff is not possible and the development of WC was to proceed, please clarify whether you have undertaken an assessment of what the additional waiting times will be for residents to receive a GP appointment if these three surgeries have to try and accommodate 850 new residents using the current staffing levels.
- v) If the Council have not obtained the information at paragraphs (i) to (iv), please clearly explain the rationale for not obtaining this information at this stage.

Given the local GP surgeries are already heavily under resourced and over worked, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place. To ignore these concerns would be a dereliction of duty by the Council.

OBJECTION 2 – ADVERSE IMPACT ON LOCAL DENTIST SURGERIES

The current waiting list for new patient access for dentists in Barry is circa 18-24 months. I can speak directly to this on the basis that I myself have been on a waiting list for over 2 years. Indeed, the only space that was capable of being offered was in St Athan, which is a damning indictment of how local dentists in Barry are unable to cope with servicing the current population of Barry never mind being able to service an influx of new residents to the area.

With this in mind, please answer the following:

- i) clarify and set out the assessment that has been undertaken and the evidence that has been obtained from the local dentist surgeries that supports the position that they will be able to service the needs of circa 850 new residents.
- ii) noting the same recruitment challenges exist in the dentist industry as they do in the GP industry, should the recruitment of new dentists not be possible regardless of any new funding that may be received from developers, please clarify whether you have undertaken an assessment of what the additional waiting times will be if a new resident wishes to be seen as an NHS patient.

Given the local dentist surgeries are already heavily over stretched and have no new openings, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place for dentist surgeries is sustainable long term. As above, to ignore these concerns and the impact that additional housing at WC would have would be a dereliction of duty by the Council.

OBJECTION 3 AND QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON LOCAL SCHOOLS

Turning to schools, I strongly object to the proposed development at WC on account of the fact that it appears that little or no evidence has been collated that the necessary steps have been taken to meet and consult with each of the impacted schools to understand the challenges that they currently face with regard to admission waiting lists/times and also ensuring that they have the ability to cater for children who have additional learning needs.

I refer to report prepared by the Auditor General for Wales dated December 2025 (website: www.audit.wales) (the “AG Report”). The primary purpose of the recent audit, that was prepared less than three months ago, was to consider whether the Vale of Glamorgan Council has arrangements to support and challenge its schools to recover from their budget deficit positions.

At point 3, page 1 of the AG Report, it confirms the percentage of schools in deficit as at 31st March 2024 was 42% with this increasing to 53% at the end of March 2025 with the schools forecasting further overspends against their allocated funding in the next two to three years so increasing the overall deficit position. It states, ‘the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025-2028 states that ‘School balances are a major concern if the current level of spend in schools isn’t brought in line with budget during 2025/2026’.

At paragraph 4 (page 5) of the AG Report, it states that the Council’s own forecasts confirm that its level of usable reserves will reduce by half in 2025/2026, in part due to schools overspending. ***These challenges pose a risk to the Council’s overall financial sustainability.***

At paragraph 5, page 5 of the AR Report, it states that the ‘Estyn report of the Council’s education service, published in April 2024, stated that ‘despite the authority’s support and challenge to schools during the development of their plans, including the use of data and peer review, it has evaluated that almost all of the schools currently in deficit will be unable to return a balanced position at this time. ***This poses a notable on-going risk to the sustainability of the individual schools’ budgets.***

At paragraph 6, page 6 of the AR Report, its findings reveal that ‘*many schools in deficit either don’t have recovery plans or the plans aren’t robust. This raises concerns about how schools will achieve the step change needed to become financially sustainable. This could impact on the Council’s overall financial sustainability. There are shortcomings in the Council’s reporting of this significant risk. This limits the effectiveness of monitoring and challenge in public committees.*

The AG Report concludes that the ‘robust recovery plans’ the Council are seeking from all 36 schools that are in a deficit position are deficient and fail to set out how they will

recover within five years and that this limits the Council's ability to assess how well placed each school is to recover. AG Report goes on to say that this 'presents a risk to the Council that those school deficits might further increase challenges to its financial sustainability...' Indeed, Exhibit 1 at page 7 of the AG Report highlights that the projected reserve balances across all schools in the Vale of Glamorgan will continue to decrease year on year.

At paragraph 9, page 8 of the AG Report, it states that the Council have determined that 27 schools of the 36 that were in deficit and had provided recovery plans concluded that they contain 'unexplained and sometimes unrealistic proposals to reduce staff and other cost centres'.

At paragraph 13, page 9 of the AG Report, it states that the 'poor quality of Schools' recovery plans poses not only an on-going risk to the sustainability of individual schools' budgets but also to the financial sustainability of the Council itself. Without robust school recovery plans, it is difficult for the Council to develop accurate Medium Term Financial Plans and help forecast any necessary future calls on reserves.

In addition, the AG Report considers that the size and trajectory of the deficit position and quality of recovery plans, the Council's 2024-2025 assessment does not capture entirely the significance of this issue. Neither does the Council's quarter one budget monitoring report. This, therefore, limits awareness and understanding among members and residents of the potential impact the schools' financial position may have on the Council's financial sustainability. Given the lack and poor quality of the reporting of this issue, the AG Report concludes that it will not enable Committee members to challenge and assess how well the Council is mitigating this risk.

The current waiting list for the Whitmore High School for the coming year is unprecedented with the maximum intake being 180. It simply does not have the capacity to offer spaces to the pupils in the current catchment area, and the waiting list will only continue to grow. Following a conversation with several parents, the indication at this early stage of the year is that for new Year 7 pupils that will be attending this school from Autum 2026, is that the waiting list was significant.

Given the damning nature of the AG Report and the current financial crisis and increasing pressures schools are facing particularly in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet demand for school places, please explain and provide evidence of the following:

- i) If the Council is proposing to obtain funding from the developers using Section 106, please confirm the average level of funding that the Council would expect to receive to ensure that the proposed development at WC would be sustainable.

- ii) That the Council has consulted with the local schools to confirm that they will be able to accommodate and cater for additional applications that will materialise should the development at WC proceed. This is especially so given the drive to reduce the current level of deficit and budgets. If this information has not been obtained, please clearly explain why you consider this is not information that is considered necessary at this stage.
- iii) Given the current school waiting lists for admissions that the local schools in Barry are experiencing, please explain how the development at WC is considered to be 'sustainable' in light of the findings of the AG Report, which highlights the crisis that schools are currently facing.
- iv) Given the adverse consequences for children should they not be able to select a school that is appropriate for their needs, please explain and provide the evidence that that the proposed development at WC will not have a negative impact on the existing school infrastructure, which is already under severe pressure.
- v) Given the lack of school spaces currently available, please explain and provide evidence that new residents would have reasonable access to attend the local schools in this area.
- vi) If the proposed development were to proceed, please provide evidence that each of the schools (to include Whitmore High, St. Richard Gwyn) have been consulted on whether an influx of new residents will place additional strain specifically on Specialist Education requirements and how this will impact their current deficit (if any). If this has not been completed, please explain why this is not considered necessary given the ever-increasing need for special educational needs (SEN) places.

When considering this question, I draw your attention to the Estyn Report for St. Richard Gwyn dated May 2025, which confirmed that 19.3% of the school's pupils were identified as having additional learning needs with it being noted that the national average in Secondary Schools is 11.2%.

- vii) Despite undertaking research of the Council's data bases, it has not been possible to locate or obtain copies of the Local Authority Reports for the capacity levels for each school. Please set out the data for each school that would be an option for the proposed development at WC and confirm the

current capacity levels for 2025/2026 and the current waiting lists (projected or otherwise) for 2026 through to 2028.

Objection 4 – Adverse Impact on the wildlife and surrounding environment to include not the just the Green Wedge land at WC but also the environment impact to Millwood Forest and its watercourses, which lead and flow directly down to Porthkerry Park

The land at WC, is still officially recognised as green wedge land with one of the main reasons for this designation being to prevent the urban sprawl between Barry and neighbouring Rhoose and to prevent an adverse impact to wildlife.

The Green Wedge at WC was preserved to ensure the following:

- Prevent the coalescence of Barry and neighbouring Rhoose.
- Manage urban form through controlled expansion.
- Safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
- Protect the setting of urban areas.

It is submitted that this parcel of land should continue to be afforded the protection it has received to date and that the arguments that this needs to be reconsidered as a consequence of WC being viewed as a 'suitable site' for housing development are misleading and flawed.

Within the Consultation Report (A1-4 - A1-6), Natural Resources Wales ("NRW") repeat their comments from 2023 on the basis that nothing has changed from their perspective.

It remains that the area surrounding WC is home to several protected species to include bats, badgers, foxes, hedgehogs and the dormice and recognised for its biodiversity, which includes an ancient woodland and habitats for these animals. These species are protected by UK law and permitting this proposed development will invariably lead to the loss of and/or disturbing the habitat for these species.

Objection 5 – Adverse Impact on Millwood Forest, its wildlife and its watercourses, which lead and flow directly down to Porthkerry Park

It is noted that the Consultation Report provides that the Council will heed the NRW's recommendations, but what is unclear is whether any assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact that the proposed development will have on Millwood Forest.

Given the adverse impact that the proposed development will have on Millwood Forest, please confirm:

- i) what assessments will be undertaken and when.

- ii) with regard to the existing problem that concerns the surface water that cascades from the fields down the back of the forest and which regularly floods the footpath and causes the watercourse to rise significantly, please explain the reasoning why it would not be prudent to undertake a flood consequences assessment at this stage to so this could be determined before further costs and expenses are incurred.

Flooding of the forest can lead to the destruction of nests and habitats and high-water levels can be seen to have submerged trees on the banks which have led to the loss of nesting cavities for birds and burrowing sites for mammals.

Video footage of the water surface issues at Millwood are available and will be enclosed as part of this submission.

Objection 6 – Insufficient access to travel and public transport

Within the Consultation Report, the Council state that the land at WC is being considered as it is in a sustainable location within reasonable walking and cycling distance of Barry station and a range of other services and facilities.

It is submitted that this statement is completely misleading. Whilst it is not disputed that Barry Train Station is 1.3 miles from the proposed site at WC, I note that assertion at A1-10 of the Consultation Report that it is a short 5-10 minute cycle from the train station and a 28 minute walk.

The walk from Barry Train Station to WC is a significant, sustained uphill climb. The route involves a steady, steep elevation gain, often cited as a major, challenging incline for pedestrians and cyclists moving from the lower town area to the higher Colcot/Weycock area. In addition, the route has no safe cycle lanes.

Given the challenges that this route presents for pedestrians walking or cycling to the train station, and on the basis that the Council indicate that this is one of the reasons that makes this site suitable, it is requested that the Council provide the following:

- i) Evidence or the results of any survey that confirm the current number of people who walk and/cycle from WC and the immediate surrounding area to Barry Train Station.
- ii) Presuming that the evidence requested at (i) above does not exist, and it is recognised that walking and cycling to and from the train station is not a viable option, does the Council accept that the people will simply revert to travelling by car?

- iii) Barry Train Station currently has a maximum parking capacity of 124 cars. If people are commuting from WC and the surrounding area, they use their car and will wish to park in train station. As such, please explain how the train station and immediate surrounding area will cope given the parking shortage if the station has to cater for additional residents commuting from WC.

Objection 7 – The adverse impact that the proposed development at WC will have on the sewage system and the impact that this will have on current local residents

The existing infrastructure regarding the sewage system is already wholly inadequate and the pumping station at Nant Talwg Way/Millwood cannot cope. This is demonstrated by the volume of complaints that have been made to Welsh Water by the local residents of Nant Talwg Way since circa 2015.

It is well documented that the pungent and foul odours that constantly emanate from the already overloaded pumping station in this area, causes residents to have to close their windows and not to be able to use their gardens.

The pungent odours are evidence that sewage system is not functioning correctly and poses risks to public health and the environment and causes distress and anxiety to those who live in close proximity.

The existing drainage systems for Nant Talwg Way were designed without any Climate Change uplift, and with no allowance for any future development above the estate. As such, any suggestion that the drainage system can simply be upgraded to cater for an additional 376 houses is wholly misleading and will lead to flood risk and foul sewer back up.

The culvert size running under the whole of the Nant Talwg Way estate is not identified anywhere within the plans and this is already backing up during heavy rainfall (videos can be provided as evidence). Despite all the mitigation measures, the building of 376 houses at WC will pose a real risk of flooding to the houses situated within Nant Talwg Way.

Conclusion

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the “**Act**”) was supposed to be a ground-breaking law that requires public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. It is submitted that this legislation is supposed to make public bodies think more about the long term, work better with people and communities, and take a more joined up-approach to prevent problems. As such, the Council must act in a manner that seeks to ensure the needs of the present are also met and not simply continue with this development at any cost.

In summary, it is averred that the proposed development at WC is simply not sustainable and entirely conflicts with the aim of the Act. Given the significant strain this proposal will place on local infrastructure, particularly, traffic safety on Weycock and Port Road and the overloading of GPs, Dentists, and schools, it is submitted that the site at WC should be removed from the RLDP.