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Planning Policy Team
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Holton Road
Barry

Subject: Formal Objection to the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) – Impact on St Athan, Flemingston, Eglwys Brewys and Clive Road Playing Fields

Introduction

I recognise that additional housing is needed across the Vale of Glamorgan and that well-planned development is essential to meet demand both now and in the future. However, several of the proposals outlined in the RLDP place housing and associated development in locations that are wholly unsuitable, unsustainable, and unsupported by the necessary infrastructure. In particular, the plans affecting St Athan, Flemingston and Eglwys Brewys raise serious concerns about environmental impact, transport capacity, community safety, and the long-term wellbeing of existing residents. The RLDP does not demonstrate that these rural communities can sustainably support the scale or type of development proposed, nor does it provide credible evidence that the required transport, drainage, employment, or community facilities will be delivered. The plan also threatens long-established open spaces, including the Clive Road playing fields, which are central to the identity and wellbeing of the local community.

Loss of Long-Established Open Spaces – Clive Road Playing Fields

The proposed development of Clive Road playing fields is wholly unacceptable. This land has served as a vital recreational and social asset for generations. Its loss would remove one of the few remaining accessible green spaces in St Athan, reduce opportunities for youth engagement, and permanently erode the character of the village. The RLDP provides no compelling justification for sacrificing this land, nor does it offer any equivalent replacement. If this space is developed the nearest remaining green space would be the Paul Lewis playing fields approximately a 19 minute walk from Clive Road. As the only remaining accessible green space in the village, the playing fields will inevitably become an extremely busy location. Additionally, formal rugby and football pitches do not provide an appropriate substitute for informal recreational land and present safety risks if used for dog walking, a distinction recognised by Welsh Assembly Governments Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16. If the green space at Clive Road is lost, this space can never be restored.

Inadequate Public Transport and Increased Car Dependency

The RLDP repeatedly claims to promote sustainable travel, yet the proposals for these villages directly contradict that aim. St Athan, Flemingston and Eglwys Brewys have no railway station, limited and unreliable bus services, and no realistic active-travel links. Without credible, funded improvements, new development will force residents to rely almost entirely on private cars, increasing congestion, pollution, and carbon emissions. This directly undermines the Council's own climate-change and sustainability commitments.

Lack of Commitment to a Railway Station at St Athan

Despite decades of discussion, there is still no commitment from either Welsh Government or Transport for Wales—financial, strategic, or operational—to delivering a railway station at St Athan. No feasibility study, timetable, or land safeguarding exists. Yet the RLDP assumes that large-scale housing growth can be justified in the area. This assumption is not supported by evidence and locks the community into long-term car dependency. Even if a railway station at St Athan is developed in future years, it is highly likely the then ingrained dependence on car use will be extremely difficult to reverse.

Absence of Local Employment Opportunities

The RLDP proposes significant housing growth without any realistic strategy for local employment. Previous employment sites have either reduce, closed or been repurposed, leaving limited job opportunities especially in the more rural areas where the majority of the housing development seems to be proposed. Most residents must commute to Barry, Cardiff, Bridgend or further afield, and new development will only increase outward commuting. This contradicts the RLDP's stated objective of creating balanced, self-sustaining communities.

Increased Surface Water Flooding from Loss of Farmland

The conversion of agricultural land into housing poses a serious flood-risk concern. Farmland currently provides natural drainage and water absorption. Replacing it with hard

surfaces will increase surface water run-off, heighten flood risk for existing homes and roads, and place additional pressure on drainage systems already known to be fragile. The RLDP does not provide robust, site-specific drainage strategies or long-term maintenance plans to address these risks.

Increased Use of Cardiff Airport – Environmental and Transport Impacts

The RLDP's support for increased activity at Cardiff Airport further undermines its environmental and sustainability claims. The plan fails to acknowledge the significant negative impacts that increased aviation activity will have on nearby communities, including St Athan, Flemingston and Eglwys Brewys. More flights and airport-related traffic will increase noise pollution, carbon emissions, and congestion on the A4226, B4265 and surrounding rural roads. The RLDP offers no credible mitigation strategy for these impacts.

No Provision for Upgraded Infrastructure or Essential Services

One of the most serious shortcomings of the RLDP is the complete absence of any provision for upgraded essential infrastructure to support the proposed population growth. The plan does not include additional GP or dental capacity, increased fire, police or emergency service provision, meaningful road network improvements, or investment in community facilities. This omission makes the RLDP fundamentally unsound, as it fails to provide the basic services required for safe, healthy, functioning communities.

Potential for Increased Anti-Social Behaviour and Pressure on Policing

The RLDP also fails to consider the social impacts of large-scale development in rural villages. Rapid population growth without corresponding investment in community facilities, youth services, open spaces, and policing capacity increases the risk of anti-social behaviour. St Athan, Flemingston and Eglwys Brewys are currently served by a police force that is already stretched, with limited local presence. Additional housing without increased policing resources will place further pressure on officers, reduce the ability to respond promptly to incidents, and undermine community safety and cohesion.

Concerns Regarding the Church Farm Development

The proposals for Church Farm raise several serious concerns that further demonstrate the unsoundness of the RLDP.

A1 Retail Unit and Risk of Change of Use

The inclusion of an A1 retail unit within the Church Farm plans is presented as a community benefit, yet there is no guarantee that this unit will ever operate as a shop. Developers routinely apply for change-of-use permissions after approval, and there is a legitimate concern that this "retail unit" could later be converted into additional housing. This would reduce promised community facilities while increasing housing density beyond what has been publicly consulted on. The RLDP provides no safeguards to prevent this outcome.

Unsafe and Inappropriate Access Point

The proposed entrance to the Church Farm development is extremely concerning. It is

located on a narrow section of road, in close proximity to a school, and adjacent to an existing shop that already generates local traffic and pedestrian activity. Crucially, this road is the only route into the village from the east. Introducing hundreds of additional vehicle movements at peak times will create serious safety risks, particularly for children walking to and from school. The RLDP provides no evidence that this road can safely accommodate the increased traffic.

Traffic Chaos at Peak Times

Because this road is the sole eastern access into St Athan, the additional vehicles generated by the Church Farm development will cause significant bottlenecks. Morning and evening peak times will be particularly affected, with queues forming along a route that has no capacity for widening or alternative diversion. This is a clear example of development being proposed in a location where the road network is fundamentally unsuitable.

Conclusion

The RLDP, in its current form, is not sound in relation to St Athan, Flemingston and Eglwys Brewys. It fails to demonstrate:

- Protection of long-established community open spaces such as Clive Road playing fields.
- A sustainable transport strategy supported by real commitments.
- Any credible plan for employment growth.
- Adequate flood-risk mitigation or drainage capacity.
- A realistic assessment of the environmental and transport impacts of increased Cardiff Airport activity.
- Provision of essential infrastructure including healthcare, emergency services, and road improvements.
- Consideration of the increased risk of anti-social behaviour and the pressure on an already overstretched police force.
- Safe and sustainable development at Church Farm, including concerns about the A1 retail unit, change-of-use risks, and dangerous access arrangements.
- A development pattern that respects the character, scale and needs of existing communities.

For these reasons, I object to the RLDP and request that the proposals for these areas be withdrawn or fundamentally revised.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Jenkins