

## **Deposit Plan Consultation RLDP 2021 - 2036**

### **Objections to the Inclusion of Candidate Site - ID 370 Bryn Melin, Cowbridge in the RLDP 2021 -2036**

#### **Summary of Objections**

My objections are detailed in full below this summary.

1. The site has unsafe access for vehicles, pedestrians & cyclists – three different areas of concern are St Athan Road, Windmill Lane & Bessant Close (Brookfield Park).
2. Planning applications have been refused in the past with the same reasons for refusal relevant today.
3. Special Landscape Area. The site is visible from a wide area. Building houses on this site will have a detrimental impact visually on a very pretty area.
4. Inconsistencies with excluding other Cowbridge sites from the RLDP, the reasons for their exclusion should also apply to this site.

#### **1a. Access – Road Safety – St Athan Road – Significance of the site to the area**

According to the planning application 2022/00958/FUL, “The horizontal geometry of St Athan Road in the immediate vicinity of the site is also challenging with an almost 90 degree bend in the road on the frontage of the site access.”

The right turn from Cowbridge into the candidate site would be very dangerous for the driver or cyclist as the bend obscures their view of the road ahead (see photograph 4 below).

Similarly turning right from the candidate site onto St Athan Road will also be blind and dangerous (see photograph 3 below) there is also another sharp bend (about 50m away) further up the St Athan Road towards Cowbridge. Large vehicles need to cross over the double white lines to drive around this other bend (see photographs 1,2 & 5 below).

The St Athan Road is particularly dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists, there are no pavements or street lighting on this road, increased traffic from the candidate site will only make the road more dangerous for everyone regardless of their mode of transport.

Access is dangerous and additional traffic from this site would increase congestion along St Athan Road at the traffic lights in Cowbridge and by the school on the Aberthin Road.



Vale of Glamorgan recycling lorry driving towards Cowbridge on the double white line (1) & due to the narrow road over the double white line (2) approaching the other bend viewed from the site.



Blind right turn out of the candidate site (3).

Blind right turn into the candidate site driving from Cowbridge (4).



Lorry & car meeting on the third bend viewed from the site. The car is driving towards Cowbridge.

#### **1b. Access – Road Safety – Windmill Lane – Significance of the site to the area**

Windmill Lane is a quiet, private, unadopted narrow lane with no pavement and only two small street lights, there is a pedestrian right of way along the lane but cycling (other than for residents or their visitors) is not permitted.

Many residents of the lane have to reverse out of their drives into it, even driving forward from your drive means you have to be very careful. It will be very dangerous and serious accidents will occur if cyclists from the candidate site are allowed to cycle up and down the lane. The motorist will more than likely be blamed for the accident despite the actions of the cyclist (speed, not concentrating etc). Windmill Lane slopes down to Broadway from the field (Bryn Melin site) and cyclists can build up a considerable speed over this distance. The lane also narrows towards Broadway and there is no room for a car and bike to pass each other safely without one stopping (see photographs below). Also turning left into Windmill Lane from Broadway a motorist is unable to see a car or bike on this bottom stretch of the lane until they have turned into it (see photograph below).

There is no safe access for pedestrians or cyclists due to the lack of a pavement or adequate street lighting. This also applies to the proposed access to / from Bessant Close (Brookfield Drive).



The bottom of Windmill Lane looking towards Broadway.



The bottom of Windmill Lane from Broadway (left) & left turn into the Lane from Broadway (right).

## 2. Refused Planning Applications in the past

Planning permission for this site has been refused in the past.

Please see below for details of the failed application in 1980:

*Enquiry held on 3-6 June 1980 at the Duke of Wellington Hotel in Cowbridge*

*Appeal by Northway Bros and the Land Authority for Wales against the refusal to allow residential development in the land adjoining St Athan Road, South of Brookfield Park*

*Reasons for the refusal of planning permission are :-*

- 1. The proposal would result in an undesirable and conspicuous extension to the built up area of Cowbridge southwards into the attractive open countryside comprising the Upper Thaw valley which area has been identified as being of special landscape character in the structure plan.*
- 2. The proximity of the site the existing sewage works would result in an unsatisfactory form of development by virtue of the smell affecting the amenities of the site.*
- 3. The scale of the development would increase the strain on existing facilities in the area*
- 4. The proposal is located in a 'white area' on the Cowbridge Town map where it is the policy of the local planning authority that in order to protect the countryside, no development shall take place other than in the interests of agriculture, forestry or the working of minerals.*

*The proposal is premature to the preparation of a local plan for Cowbridge (and district) and approval of ad hoc developments at this time would substantially prejudice the implementation of such a plan.*

### Inspector's conclusions

49. Bearing in mind the above facts, it appears to me that the appeal sites, which are situated in a very attractive part of the Vale of Glamorgan, could be readily developed for housing. Access and services can be provided and, notwithstanding the occasional smells from the sewage treatment works nearby, it is likely that dwellings there would sell without difficulty. Were development to be permitted, it would be necessary to divert public path No 58, possibly by using the estate roads. However, I consider that 70 dwellings erected on the sites would be very prominent in appearance when viewed from the south and west, irrespective of landscaping works within the sites, so that the visual amenities of that part of the River Thaw Valley would suffer by the spilling over of urban development, extending Cowbridge southwards into open countryside. The proposals clearly conflict with Policy 55 of the approved Structure Plan.

50. Sufficient land to meet the estimated requirements of the Vale as a whole appears to be available, the drainage constraints being capable of resolution well within the Structure Plan period. Most of the available sites are in the Eastern Vale, around the urban areas of Barry and Penarth, but there is an unfulfilled demand for housing land in the Rural Vale which may need to be satisfied to a greater extent than the County Council appear to envisage in their Rural Settlement Strategy. This difficulty was pointed out by the panel at the Examination in Public and was endorsed by the request of the Secretary of State for the identification and location of sites under Policy 27 in paragraph 3.5 of the approval letter of 14 January 1980. Existing permissions and other identified sites in the Rural Vale are unlikely to provide sufficient land to cater for the natural growth requirements there so that the Council's present policy will lead to in-migration from the Rural Vale to the Eastern Vale before the end of the plan period if Policy 2 of the Rural Settlement Strategy is implemented.

51. Although 70 plots on the appeal sites would contribute to meeting the demand in the Rural Vale, it seems to me that the proposals would conflict with all the parts of Policy 27 of the approved Structure Plan. The scale of development proposed is more than double the maximum limit of 2 ha specified for guidance in paragraph 3.6 of the approval letter of 14 January 1980 and there is a conflict with countryside and landscape protection policies. Additional school places could be provided in Cowbridge but the parking and recreational demands created by the proposals might be less easily met; the effect on the character of Cowbridge and Llanblethian of further substantial suburban type development could be harmful, in my view. I am not satisfied that the sites are the only ones on which residential demands may be met in the locality; it may well be that sites of a more acceptable scale and location will be identified in the course of preparation of the Local Plan, possibly by closer co-operation with builders and the Land Authority along the lines of the emerging national policy.

Reasons 1, 2 & 3 are still very relevant today

### 3. Special Landscape Area

The views from the public footpath through the middle of the field (Candidate site 370) from Windmill Lane to St Athan Road at present are of the open countryside of the neighbouring Upper & Lower Thaw Valley (Special Landscape Area) and beyond. Also the views from the surrounding area back towards the site would be an unpleasant one of houses rather than of the existing greenfield site with grazing sheep and cows.

This field used to be designated a Special Landscape Area but that was removed presumably to enable the field to be included in the original Local Development Plan. If this field wasn't a candidate site it would still be designated as a Special Landscape Area. In addition allowing this site in the RLDP will have an adverse impact on the adjacent Special Landscape Area.

### 4. Inconsistency

Other candidate sites in Cowbridge will not be included in the RLDP for reasons that are all also applicable to this candidate site. This shows inconsistency.

This site (370) appears to be the only site in the Rural Vale listed in the Candidate Site Stage 2 Assessment Register (Background Paper – BP18A) under “Sites suitable for further consideration”. All the other 8 candidate sites in Cowbridge and Llanblethian are listed in this document under “Not suitable for further consideration”.

The following “Conclusions at Preferred Strategy Stage” in Background Paper – BP18A for five of these sites are listed as:

1. *The site would represent unacceptable intrusion in to the open countryside. The site is located on the outskirts of Cowbridge and not conveniently situated for walking, cycling and public transport accessibility.* Site ID 438 Land to the South of Church Rd, Llanblethian.

2. *The site would represent unacceptable intrusion in to the open countryside. Development is likely to result in a substantial change in character and/or significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity.* Site ID 455 Land North of Primrose Hill

3. *The development of this site would be an arbitrary incursion into the countryside in this location. Development will significantly affect stepping stones, green networks, or wildlife corridors.* Site ID 514 Land East of St Athan Road

4. *The development of this site would be an arbitrary incursion into the countryside in this location.* Site ID 555 Land off Vale Court, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan

All four of the above “conclusions” are also very relevant to site 370 (Bryn Melin) which should therefore (according to consistency) be removed from the sites suitable for further consideration in the document “Conclusions at Preferred Strategy Stage” in Background Paper – BP18A and reallocated within the document to sites not suitable for further consideration. As previously said it is the only site in the whole of the Rural Vale included in this category:

5. *The site is allocated in the adopted LDP and is considered suitable to be ‘rolled forward’ as an RLDP housing allocation as it is considered to be deliverable and accords with the Strategy. The site is subject to a planning application.* Site ID 370 Bryn Melin

Site 370 is already in the current LDP, a planning permission application is in progress. It seems very likely that this is the reason why this site is to be included for further consideration. When compared to the 8 other sites in the Rural Vale (Cowbridge & Llanblethian) there are many similarities that should cause the status of the site to be changed to not suitable for further consideration.

Reasons for the other sites being excluded:

- *The site would represent unacceptable intrusion in to the open countryside.*
- *The site is located on the outskirts of Cowbridge.*
- *Development is likely to result in a substantial change in character and/or significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity.*
- *The development of this site would be an arbitrary incursion into the countryside in this location.*

All the above are very relevant to site 370 but are ignored. This shows inconsistency.

## **5. Other Considerations**

There is no public transport for the site, developing this site will result in a significant increase in car use with the obvious problems this will cause including environmentally.

This site fails as it will not be accessible to all users. According to the current planning application the slope of the field is 1 in 6 (17%) the new housing development would also have a steep gradient, pushing a wheelchair or a pram up or down such a gradient would be very difficult and very dangerous (particularly should someone trip over while doing so), such a slope would also cause problems for someone with limited mobility. From experience I know that pushing a wheelchair up and down Windmill Lane, which is not a steep slope, was difficult enough.

It is currently very difficult to get an appointment to see a doctor or dentist in Cowbridge, with more houses being built the wait for these appointments will be even longer.

At present it is not easy to park in Cowbridge with the additional cars from more housing developments it will become even harder to find spaces. People will then decide not to shop in Cowbridge but drive to the out of town stores where they can park.

Loss of a greenfield site which has a very popular and well used public footpath running through it. Once it is built on it will be lost forever.

Developing this land will have a detrimental effect on the local character and contribute negatively to the sustainability of the area.



This is the land that will be lost forever

Please protect this site from development and retain it as agricultural open countryside.

Cowbridge Town Council unanimously rejected the inclusion of Site 370 in the RDLP in a meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026. They are responsible for the Cowbridge Placemaking Plan which is in place (amongst other priorities) to protect public spaces and the town-edge environment.

Inconsistencies and other facts listed above show that the inclusion of Site ID 370 Bryn Melin in the RLDP is not appropriate regardless of whether planning permission has been applied for.

Due to the reasons given above I am objecting to the inclusion of Candidate Site – ID 370 Bryn Melin in the RDLP 2021 -2036.

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9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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