

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 March 2026 18:30

To: LDP <LDP@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>

Subject: Objection to inclusion of Site 370 Bryn Melin in the RLDP for Vale of Glamorgan

OBJECTION TO INCLUSION OF SITE 370 - (BRYN MELIN) IN THE RLDP PROPOSAL

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the inclusion of Site 370, Bryn Melin, in the RLDP Proposal for The Vale of Glamorgan.

My objections are based on:

1. Placemaking, Character and Identity of Place

A comparison of the characteristics of the proposed locations in Cowbridge has been included in the RLDP; however, there appear to be significant inconsistencies in the suitability scores assigned to Bryn Melin when compared with those given to other sites. Several examples of these discrepancies are outlined below.

This comparison considers sites proposed within the Cowbridge area: Site 370 (Bryn Mellin), Site 367 (South of Llantwit Major Road), and Site 455 (Primrose Hill). It is understood that planners, or their representatives, were expected to visit each location to assess a number of sub-criteria. However, it may be more appropriate for the local council to carry out these assessments to determine which site is most suitable for the town.

Policy BP16 states that where several sites are identified within a settlement, those that achieve proportionately more positive scores against the assessment criteria should be ranked higher than those that generate a disproportionate number of negative scores.

Bryn Melin shares many characteristics and potential impacts similar to the other proposed Cowbridge sites, yet it has been assessed as being more suitable for development.

In addition, Bryn Melin is located within the Thaw Valley, which is designated as a Special Landscape Area that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has a responsibility to protect.

This raises the question of whether the planners' prior receipt of a developer proposal, and their existing interest in the site, may have influenced the assessment outcome.

Loss of Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity

The proposed site represents a significant loss of "Best and Most Versatile" (BMV) agricultural land and green infrastructure. We have photographic evidence from a wildlife camera installed in our rear garden, which adjoins the proposed site, of badgers, foxes, barn owls, weasels, sparrow hawks, green and great-spotted woodpeckers, all of which emerge from the proposed Bryn Melin site. To disrupt and wipe out this wealth of wildlife would be an incomprehensible and totally unnecessary action.

Relationship to and compatibility with existing build form, layout, scale, density, and building types

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been rated green, while Site 367 (south of Llantwit Major Road) has been given an amber rating and Site 455 (Primrose Hill) a red rating.

However, Bryn Melin should more appropriately be assessed as red, as there is currently no comparable housing density within the Thaw Valley. The assessment appears to overlook the wider context of the

Thaw Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA), which is a significant factor when considering compatibility with existing character and development patterns.

Visual impact on landscape, streetscape, and the historic environment

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been given an amber rating, whereas Sites 367 and 455 have both been assessed as red.

However, Bryn Melin is located within the Thaw Valley, which is designated as a Special Landscape Area. Given the sensitivity and importance of this protected landscape setting, the site should more appropriately receive a red rating due to the likely visual impact on the surrounding environment.

Significance of the site to the surrounding area

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been rated amber, while Sites 367 and 455 have both received red ratings. The reasoning for this difference is unclear.

Bryn Melin is located within the Thaw Valley, which is designated as a Special Landscape Area. Given the importance and sensitivity of this protected landscape, the site would be expected to receive a red rating.

Development at Bryn Melin would also have a considerable impact on the residents of Windmill Lane. Windmill Lane is a private lane with very limited access, and increased pedestrian movement resulting from development of the site would likely affect the privacy and security of residents living there.

In addition, the council has previously refused planning permission for development on this site. One of the reasons given was that the proposal would harm existing local amenities by altering the character and route of a public footpath that is valued by residents in the area. This decision was upheld on appeal by the planning inspector, who noted that the value of the section of footpath crossing the site would be significantly reduced if the land were to be developed, regardless of how the path might be redirected.

Density of the proposal in relation to existing developments

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been given a green rating, while Sites 367 and 455 have both been assessed as amber. The justification for this difference is unclear.

Given that Bryn Melin is located within the Thaw Valley, where there is currently very limited residential development, the density of any proposed housing would be significantly different from the existing character of the area. For this reason, it is difficult to understand why Bryn Melin has been assessed more favourably than the other sites in terms of density when compared with surrounding development.

Vehicular access and movement to the site

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been rated amber, the same rating given to Sites 367 and 455.

However, it appears that vehicular access issues at Bryn Melin would be more significant than at the other sites. St Athan Road has notable width restrictions, which could increase the risk of conflict between general traffic and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) associated with the development. In addition, HGVs turning into the site are likely to create delays for vehicles travelling to and from St Athan Road.

The layout of the site and the incline of the surrounding land may also lead to an increased carbon footprint, as vehicles accessing and operating within the development would require greater energy use due to the gradient and site configuration.

A previous road safety survey indicated that the road infrastructure surrounding the proposed site was inadequate and in parts very dangerous.

Access to Public Transport, Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been rated green, while Sites 367 and 455 have both been assessed as amber. The basis for this difference is unclear.

In reality, Bryn Melin appears to have the poorest access to pedestrian routes, cycle infrastructure and public transport, and therefore would more appropriately fall within a red category. Development of this site is likely to lead to a significant increase in private car use due to the limited and difficult access to public transport services.

There are no pavements on the roads providing access to Bryn Melin, and the walkway from Brookfield Park does not meet the council's minimum width requirements. By contrast, Sites 367 and 455 benefit from closer proximity to public transport services and provide safer and more direct access to established pedestrian and cycle routes.

Accessibility of the Site for All Users

Bryn Melin has not been given a rating under this category, which represents a significant omission in the assessment process.

Given the approximately 12% slope across the site and the poor access arrangements, Bryn Melin should reasonably receive a red rating in terms of accessibility. In comparison, Sites 367 and 455 are rated amber, yet they clearly offer better accessibility than Site 370.

Opportunities for Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Active Travel

Bryn Melin has been rated green, while Sites 367 and 455 have both received amber ratings. This assessment is difficult to justify.

Access to Bryn Melin relies on the substandard walkway through Brookfield Park and the private roadway of Windmill Lane. These access limitations significantly restrict opportunities to support active travel or meaningful green infrastructure improvements. For these reasons, Bryn Melin would more appropriately receive a red rating.

Although Bryn Melin does have access to bus services to Cardiff, the main employment centre, these services operate at a limited frequency of only two buses per hour during peak periods. This limited provision is likely to increase reliance on private vehicles for commuting to Cardiff.

It also raises the question of why the Vale of Glamorgan Council is not prioritising development around established rail transport hubs such as Barry or Penarth, where sustainable transport options are significantly stronger.

Placemaking Outcome Summary

Site 370 (Bryn Melin) has been categorised as green.

However, this rating appears inconsistent with the wider context of the site. Development within the Thaw Valley represents a significant contradiction to Welsh Government policy aimed at protecting Special Landscape Areas. The site has very limited public transport provision and development would likely lead

to increased reliance on private vehicles for commuting, shopping, and access to services, leisure facilities and healthcare.

Cowbridge and Llanblethian Town Council unanimously opposed the inclusion of this site within the RLDP. The Town Council is responsible for developing the Cowbridge Placemaking Plan and therefore plays an important role in shaping the town's future development.

The report states that:

Development of the site has the potential to enhance the character of the area and contribute positively to national sustainability and placemaking principles. A planning statement has been provided in support of the current planning permission which sets out how the proposal would respond to its setting and location in relation to placemaking.

However, it is difficult to see how development could enhance the character of the area when it would involve the loss of landscape, alteration of a valued public footpath, and potential impacts on local habitats and ecological stepping stones.

By comparison, Site 455 (Primrose Hill) has been assessed as amber, with the report suggesting that development would likely have a neutral or negligible impact on local character and sense of place, provided appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

Site 367 (Land South of Llantwit Major Road) has been rated red, with the report stating that development would likely be detrimental to local character and sense of place.

Emerging Placemaking Principles for Cowbridge

The draft Cowbridge Placemaking Plan places strong emphasis on protecting local identity, promoting sustainable growth, and safeguarding the character of the town, its public spaces, and its surrounding town-edge environment.

Allocating large areas of greenfield land for development, contrary to these principles, risks undermining the locally developed placemaking vision. It also appears that there has been limited involvement from the local council in determining the placemaking criteria or in assessing the suitability of the proposed sites around Cowbridge.

Cowbridge Town Council unanimously rejected the inclusion of Site 370 within the RLDP on 24 February 2026.

Conclusion and Proposed Changes

The site should remain designated as open countryside and continue to be protected under existing rural planning policies.

Future growth should instead be directed toward locations where environmental enhancement and green infrastructure can be delivered while supporting the Vale of Glamorgan's biodiversity network and placemaking objectives.

Clear and transparent evidence, supported by up-to-date landscape and ecological assessments, should be provided before any greenfield site allocation is included within the plan.

In addition, the council should demonstrate clearly that alternative sites are less appropriate before extending the physical boundary of Cowbridge into the surrounding countryside.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Council reconsiders the inclusion of Bryn Melin within the RLDP and prioritise sustainable and more appropriate alternative sites that won't have such an impact on environmental assets and community wellbeing.

Thank you for considering my objection and I look forward to confirmation that my concerns have been formally recorded.

Yours sincerely,

Philip L Holtam

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