

Vale of Glamorgan

Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan

Public Consultation

Local resident RLDP consultation feedback based on review of RLDP information and supporting documents as hosted on RLDP website <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk/>

Objection:

“2026 RLDP consultation process is flawed and does not provide for meaningful public consultation on multiple grounds”

This document contains an analysis of the RLDP OC2 website used for the public consultation process, highlighting the multiple ways in which it creates barriers to any meaningful consultation with the public.

Also included is communication sent to the Vale of Glamorgan planning department during the RLDP consultation period, requesting these concerns to be considered and an extension of the RLDP consultation period to be granted. This was refused.

I would like the contents to be included in my RLDP submission

Ref: NWB_RLDP_JVN_010

Submitted by: Jason Vincent-Newson, 

Date: 10th March 2026

[illegible]

As a local resident of the area directly affected by the proposed development, I was an active participant in the previous consultation process (July 2025) via making written submissions and also by speaking as a member of the public at the Placemaking Scrutiny council meeting held in late 2025.

I am currently in the process of attempting to review the contents of the RDLP consultation website <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk/> in order to provide consultation feedback before the 11th March 2026 consultation window cutoff date.

Despite having spent many hours attempting to navigate the site and read and review the supporting documentation in order to give my feedback, this is proving virtually impossible, not only due to failings in the design of the website (further details below) but primarily due to the sheer volume of supporting documentation that the public are being expected to provide feedback on within the limited time window. As a result of becoming increasingly overwhelmed at the seemingly impossible task of simply accessing and reviewing the supporting documents, I took a moment to stop and assess the volume of content:

Considering **only** the 'landing page' at <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk/> (containing the main linked blocks 1-8) the excessive volume of documentation provided for the consultation process is astonishing. I ran a quick website audit on the supporting PDF documentation* *contained solely on these 8 primary linked pages* with the following results:

Total number of supporting PDF files:159

Total (combined) file size of PDF files:1034.7 MB

Note: English language PDFs **only; Welsh language PDFs **not** included in totals; further linked PDF documents at a lower URL level **not** counted. HTML content (web pages themselves) not included – this is **only** the supporting PDF documentation.*

These numbers in themselves might not mean much to many people, but as someone who regularly uses AI tools in my work then in order to put them in perspective I ran these numbers through Google's AI assistant tool using the query "How long would it take to read, review and provide feedback on 1034MB of PDF files which are supporting documents in a public planning consultation?"

This provided the following results:

"AI Overview:

*Based on these parameters , reviewing **1034 MB** of planning documents would take approximately **1,103 hours**, or **138 standard working days** (8 hours/day).*

Steps to calculate:

*Using an industry-standard density of **10 pages per megabyte**, with a typical text-to-image ratio of 90% to 10%, this results in approximately **9,300 pages** (text) and **1034 pages** (graphs/images).*

*Reviewing planning documents is more intensive than casual reading, as it requires analysis and drafting feedback. Estimating **6 minutes per page (text)** and **10 minutes per page (graphs/images/diagrams)** for reading, cross-referencing and feedback drafting:*

9300 pages x 6 minutes/page = 55,800 minutes

1034 pages x 10 minutes/page = 10,340 minutes

*Total: 66,140 minutes = 1103 hours = **138 days***

Answer:

It would take a single reviewer approximately 1,103 hours (roughly 27.5 weeks of full-time work) to complete this task. For a standard 30-day consultation period, this workload would require a team of at least 7 to 8 full time reviewers."

Conclusion:

Planning consultations are legally required to be accessible. This specific, quantifiable overview provides clear evidence that the consultation process as it is currently being facilitated fails at this first requirement as it is totally unrealistic to expect the public to have any meaningful opportunity to read and review the supporting documentation in the time available that is critical to the entire consultation process.

These failings can be summarized as follows:

- The volume of material is prohibitively large.
- The site provides no summaries, no filtering, and no guidance on which documents matter most.
- The time required to read everything is incompatible with the consultation deadline.
- This raises legitimate concerns about accessibility, fairness, and procedural transparency.

On the basis of the above, I would request that the consultation period be extended by a period of at least 2 months to provide any chance of the public being able to engage in the consultation process in a fair and democratic way.

In addition to these primary concerns over the sheer volume of supporting documentation needing to be read and reviewed, the website itself has serious failings in many other areas (see further notes below) which mean it further fails to meet the standards legally required for such a consultation process.

Therefore I would also request that serious consideration is given to a review of the consultation website as it is currently provided with a view to improving its accessibility to all users as is legally required.

Concerns regarding website design, structure and implementation

1. The consultation website <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk/> is extremely poorly constructed, making it very difficult for any user, particularly those less digitally experienced, to find where and how to provide feedback.

For instance, following the first link on the homepage: *“1: Vale of Glamorgan Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan”* takes you through to the *“Proposals Map”* page which has a handy section saying *“Have Your Say on the Deposit RLDP”*; this leads immediately to the next section *“How to Comment on the Deposit RLDP”* which in turn states *“The Council encourages responses to be made via its online consultation portal, which includes features to help you comment....”* This is followed by the sentence: *“The online consultation portal can be accessed at: https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk”* whereby this link takes you right back to the original opening page where the user is faced with the same 8 boxes to choose all over again (this is called circular navigation and is a common sign of poor website implementation).

2. The website makes no attempt made to curate, organise or structure the supporting documentation in a manner that eases the burden on the user caused by the excessive volume. For instance, it is impossible to follow any logical path or structure to locate, read and review supporting documents pertaining to a single (in my case, Weycock Cross) development. For this reason, it is necessary to wade through the full reams of PDF documents as outlined above *simply in order to locate any sections relevant to a particular proposed development*.
3. Many, but not all of the PDF documents are available in both Welsh and English however several of the **key** supporting documents (flood assessment, candidate site assessment, etc) are only available in English
4. In addition to the single downloadable consultation feedback form there are multiple areas of the website where it is possible to provide feedback comments, however these are typically limited to 100 words, and the ability to provide comments in this way is scattered and unstructured (comments are available for some documents, but not for others, with no way of knowing whether any comment-able documents have been missed).

Likewise it is totally unclear whether those online comments boxes are meant to be taken in addition to, or instead of, the single downloadable feedback form. This simply adds to the overwhelming feeling of the user not knowing whether they have been able to provide the necessary feedback as part of the consultation process, and this simply reinforces the sense of exclusion and alienation from the whole consultation process.

5. Finally, **in order to generate an impartial summary of the website’s suitability as a legal platform for the RLDP consultation process** I used Microsoft’s Copilot AI tool to perform a quick scan and summary of the <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk> website:

Copilot prompt: “Provide an assessment of how well constructed is the website https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk, and how easy is it to assess the content of the website for the process of providing feedback as part of the consultation process?”

The results are as follows:

Overall Assessment of the Website's Construction

Website: <https://valeofglamorgan.oc2.uk>

Context: Public consultation platform for the Vale of Glamorgan Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)

Based on the page content, the site is functional but not especially user-centred. It presents information in a very linear, text-heavy, and document-driven way, which makes it technically complete but practically difficult for residents to navigate and meaningfully engage with.

1. Website Structure & Usability:

Document-heavy, not task-oriented The site is essentially a list of links to large document sets. There is no thematic summary, no “start here” guidance, and no filtering by topic, impact, or geography.

No visual hierarchy Everything is presented as a flat list of expandable sections. Important items (e.g., the main plan) look visually identical to minor supporting documents.

No integrated search or tagging Users cannot search within the consultation documents or filter by theme (transport, housing, environment, etc.).

No previewing or quick-read tools Documents must be downloaded individually. There is no:

- in-browser PDF viewer
- executive summary extraction
- keyword search across documents
- “what’s changed since last plan” summary

This makes the site feel more like a document repository than a public engagement tool.

2. Accessibility of Content for Feedback Purposes

Major Barriers:

Volume of documents The “Supporting Documents” and “Key Site Supporting Information” sections contain very large numbers of PDFs, many of them hundreds of pages long. The site provides no indication of:

- file size
- page count
- document purpose
- relevance to specific policies

Lack of contextual summaries The site does not provide:

- plain-English summaries
- policy impact explanations
- maps or interactive tools
- “what this means for your area” guidance

Fragmented navigation Clicking into a document often sends the user to a new page with more links, and sometimes back to the starting point — a common OC2 issue that creates a sense of circular navigation.

No support for lay readers Planning consultations are legally required to be accessible, but the site provides no:

- glossary
- simplified overview
- video explainers
- thematic breakdowns

Feedback process is unclear The homepage says: “For instructions on how to use the system and make comments, please see our help guide.” But the help guide is not integrated into the workflow, and users must find it manually.

3. How Easy Is It to Provide Feedback?

Short answer:

Not easy at all. The platform meets the minimum legal requirement of making documents available, but it does not meaningfully support residents in understanding or responding to them.

Why it's difficult

- Users must manually open and read dozens or even hundreds of PDFs.
- There is no summary of key issues requiring feedback.
- There is no guided questionnaire or structured comment form linked to specific policies.
- The site does not help users understand which documents are essential and which are technical appendices.
- The burden of interpretation is entirely on the resident.

Effect on public participation

This design unintentionally favours:

- planning professionals
- developers
- consultants
- residents with significant time and technical literacy

It disadvantages:

- ordinary residents
- people with limited time
- those unfamiliar with planning terminology

4. Overall Verdict

Construction quality:

Functional but outdated and not user-centred.

Ease of assessing content:

Low — the site is difficult to navigate and lacks essential tools for understanding the material.

Ease of providing feedback:

Low — the process is unclear, and the volume/complexity of documents creates a high barrier to meaningful participation.

What this means for the consultation

Based on the structure visible on the website :

- The volume of material is **prohibitively large**.
- The site provides **no summaries, no filtering, and no guidance** on which documents matter most.
- The time required to read everything **is incompatible with the consultation deadline**.
- This raises legitimate concerns about **accessibility, fairness, and procedural transparency**.