

Statement from Newport Area Environment Group (NAEG) (ID 3778)

To the PCNPA LDP2 Planning Inspector

in relation to Matter 1 Plan Preparation and Strategy

In the following all emphasis is our emphasis

Issue – Is the Local Development Plan legally compliant, and is the LDP Strategy justified and likely to be effective in ensuring that development needs of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park can be met throughout the Plan period in a way that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development?

Plan Preparation

1. Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the necessary procedural requirements?

a) Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement, including the Community Involvement Scheme?

Answers:

*“The fundamental concept of the Local Development Plan system is that the plan **is the product of a thorough and comprehensive process of engagement with the community**, where the planning authority has refined the options to produce what it considers to be a sound plan.”*

Delivery Agreement Soundness Tests Appendix 1 Page 27

So keen was NAEG to get involved, that even before public involvement in the LDP2 process began, NAEG invited Development Plan Team Officers to Newport to meet together with the Town Council.

The consultation period for the Delivery Agreement for LDP2 coincided with that of the Review Report and Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, giving insufficient opportunity to comment, especially for those grappling with a process which was new to them. Certainly NAEG found it so, and thus we lacked capacity to grasp the implications of, and comment on, the Delivery Agreement within the time frame, which we regret.

In view of our track record of involvement over 2 previous Local Plan processes and having commented on Annual Monitoring Reports, NAEG asked for close involvement with the process but subsequently, NAEG has felt that our allocated position in the hierarchy of consultees has mitigated against adequate engagement.

*“We are committed to ensuring that we communicate and consult with **all sections of the community**, including those who have not traditionally participated in plan production, using a range of appropriate approaches to maximise effectiveness”*

Delivery Agreement *“What principles of engagement can you expect from us?”* Page 19

For each of the consultation stages – Preferred Strategy, Deposit Plan, and Focussed Changes, a notice was apparently published in only one newspaper, the Pembrokeshire Herald, circulation of which in the North of the County is poor. In our view, not many people, other than those on the PCNPA circulation list, are aware of the LDP process.

“The Authority intends to utilise the networking capabilities of Town and Community Councils to disseminate information throughout the National Park communities and to encourage engagement in their respective areas”.

“Town and Community Councils and their Councillors can provide a central source of information for their local communities, they can help to raise awareness of the revision process and relay local views and opinions back to the Authority”

Delivery Agreement *“Community and Town Councils”* Page 28

Whilst a series of meetings engaged Town and Community Councils, in NAEG’s view, the Authority was far too optimistic about how this would amount to a *“thorough and comprehensive process of engagement with the community”* NAEG heard nothing about what Newport Town Council either learnt from or contributed to this series of meetings.

Very early on, NAEG wrote to the Development Plan Team requesting that they come to Newport again, this time to explain the process at a public meeting. One of the only 2 community meetings that the Authority now reports to have arranged took place here in Newport hosted, at the Authority’s suggestion to NAEG, by the Town Council, not by this organisation.

We were told at that meeting that this community’s proposal for Policy 3a) was against Government Policy. We asked Officers present to seek government confirmation of this and gathered that we would be informed of the result, but we heard no more until the Deposit Plan Consultation Report was published.

At the time of the LDP Review in 2016, when the Authority knew well of this community’s concerns about Policy 3 a), NAEG sought an in-depth study of Newport’s needs from the planning process, through a “Place Plan”. We were told by the Development Plan Team that *“It is not the Authority’s intention to prepare individual statements for areas within the National Park”*

“NP response 21st July 2017 to LDP SB letter” – attached

Whilst the Authority has considered the text of the Deposit Plan as fit for purpose against PPW 10, it has not considered the implications of PPW 10 in relation to the development process in creating a Replacement Plan *“A variety of tools (such as development briefs, design frameworks and supplementary planning guidance, including Place Plans) can be used to outline specific sustainable design requirements where applicable to a particular local issue...”* PPW 10 paragraph 3.15 page 30

The Officer response in the Deposit Plan Consultation Report to NAEG’s remark within its consultation statement on the Deposit Version of the Plan that *“NAEG has regretted that officers have not sought to work more closely with us whilst investigating alternative options for proposals for the Deposit Plan”* is that *“Officers were not aware that specific feedback to NAEG was anticipated in addition to the formally approved response by the Authority (of which all representors were notified)”*

NAEG wrote to the Development Plan Team asking whether PCNPA would cooperate in carrying out a referendum asking whether or not residents on the electoral roll support all new housing in Newport being restricted to those who occupy it as their main or principal place of residence. Not even an acknowledgement of this request was received

b) Has the Plan been subject to a robust Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment/Appropriate Assessment?

Answers:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requires a rigorous assessment not only of environmental but also social, effects of the plans. Insufficient regard has been given to the very marked demographic imbalance in Newport and the exodus of young people, especially more aspirant people who seek to join the housing ladder, in part, because of a lack of intermediate housing

The Scoping Report should explain how any harmful effects of the replacement Local Development Plan can be avoided or offset, and how the beneficial effects can be maximised.

The harmful effects of far too many homes unoccupied all year round in Newport has not been properly taken into account in writing Policy 3a).

c) Has the Plan been informed by a robust consideration of reasonable alternatives?

Answer:

The Consultation Report on the Deposit Version of the Replacement Plan states that *“A submission regarding principal residences at Preferred Strategy Stage was considered as an additional housing option, (see Alternative Options & Appraisal Background Paper (March 2018), and this has not resulted in it becoming the preferred housing option for the Plan.”* However, the Officers add **“This assessment was on the basis of a Park wide application of the Policy.”**

The modification of Policy 3a) – which applies to Newport alone - to restrict new housing to those who would make it their main or principal residence - was first proposed to the National Park in 2016 by Newport Town Council. Neither Newport Town Council nor NAEG have ever sought a Park-wide change of Policy. The Development Plan Team have not carried out a robust consideration of the proposed modification of Policy 3a) alone.

d) Has the Plan had regard to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015?

Answer:

In refusing to consider Newport’s proposed modification to policy 3a) the Authority has disregarded the economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of this community and future generations in respect of the need for new housing to be appropriate for those who live here.

Vision, Objectives and Strategy

3. Is the Plan's Vision sufficiently aspirational and locally specific to form the basis for planning to 2031?

b) Should Objective E be amended to make reference to the need to sustain local communities?

Answer:

Thank you for drawing our attention to the crux of the matter.

How does *providing for or permitting housing to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing* ensure the sustainable development of communities like Newport unless occupancy controls are applied?

8. Is the approach to site selection sufficiently clear and transparent, and is it founded on a robust evidence base?

a) Are the allocated sites based on a robust site assessment methodology that takes into account all potential constraints?

Answer:

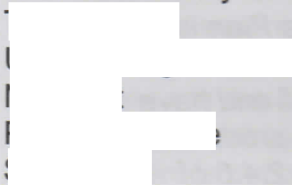
It is difficult to understand why in past Plans the Highways constraints of the A487 and Pen Y Bont in Newport have prevented the development of land now allocated for housing, but not in LDP2.

We query the practice of quietly moving the *community boundary or development line* outwards during the LDP process to incorporate a new housing allocation, without proper consultation on the implications of moving the line - as has occurred for Newport in this Deposit Plan and as also occurred in the development of the current LDP before 2010. The land allocation HA3 should have been left as a potential exception site providing 100% affordable housing, whilst the existing undeveloped employment land, now de-allocated, would provide for housing with safe pedestrian access to town, which HA3 presently does not.

SB/NAEG/June 2019

21st July 2016

Mrs Sandra Bayes



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Dear Mrs Bayes,

Re: Local Development Plan (Replacement): Newport

I refer to your email sent to Martina Dunne, dated 27th June 2016. Martina has asked me to respond.

In your email you state the following:

'In relation to LDP2/339/RR/1, you state "As advised previously the whole Plan is subject to review including Policy 3 for Newport along with the strategic policies for other Centres in the hierarchy". However, in the Draft Review Report at Table 4 it is stated under "Effectiveness of policies 2 to 7 when used at appeal" i.e. in relation to Strategy Policy 3 that "Inspector does not raise issues regarding the effectiveness of the policies or supporting supplementary planning guidance". Presumably, and as Policy 3 is mentioned nowhere else, it is for this reason that it is not considered to be "an area in which the Plan is not working well", despite your now having been told by those few in this community prepared to put any more effort into LDP policy that they do not agree.

Further, you state "The Review Report sets where change is needed in principle and in many instances those changes will mean a need to look once again at various policies for the Centres (amongst other policies), for example changes in household projections will potentially affect all locations in the Plan and any other policy of the Plan that relies on household projections." To my mind, to look piecemeal at bits and pieces of Strategy Policy 3 as and when you as officers see the need to arise out of consideration of other parts of the Plan, is not good enough, especially when considering a Replacement Plan to last until 2031. That is not to fulfil the need as stated by NAEG - "Newport requires an in-depth study of its needs from the planning process over the next 15 years, and a reconsideration of strategy policy, which should be a specific part of the Review process". That was said over 3 years ago. I know that opportunities to affect planning afforded to communities in Wales differ from those in England in not benefitting from the Localism Act 2011, in



Yn hapus i gyfathrebu yn
Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg

Happy to communicate
in Welsh or English

being able to use neighbourhood planning, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders so that they have real some clout, but is there nothing you could have done in a Replacement process to strengthen input from at least tier 2 and 3 communities?

*The term "Place Plan" was introduced at paragraph 26 of the Draft Delivery Agreement and this was responded to by the Welsh Government at LDP2/4340/DA/3 who advocated a clearer statement on what a Place Plan is, but this seems to be in relation to smaller communities only. In the Draft Agreement you wrote about "Place Plans for specific allocated sites." and have now proposed 'Additional guidance can however be programmed for production after adoption of the replacement plan in accordance with paragraph 2.4.6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 8) 2016. This could for example include the production of Place Plans for specific allocated sites where the existing networking capabilities of Town and Community Councils, with their respective communities, can be utilised to encourage community engagement to inform the process. *Underlined text to be added.* By this, I assume you mean, when the Review/Revision/Replacement process is all over. I realise that this is the stage that the Welsh Government itself advises such Plans could be produced, but to me it is very much putting the cart before the horse in that the time for this work is now, before consideration of sites for specific purposes. It also appears that, even then, you are looking to work with communities – but only in relation to allocations – not by building holistic plans for a settlement.*

Cllr Harries has said that you have indicated that there will be an opportunity to look at Policy 3 in January 2016. I agree wholeheartedly with Newport Town Council's/Newport Community Forum's Working Group that the order of work in the Review process should be to review Policy 3 first i.e. now, before considering candidate sites for allocations.'

PCNPA Response

With regard to policy 3 as advised previously the policy is being reviewed and revised. The reference to household projections was used by way of example. The Authority's understanding of Place Plans and their role is as set out in the revised Delivery Agreement. We are awaiting confirmation or otherwise of this approach by Welsh Government. The approach to and timing of candidate site submission and drafting the Preferred Strategy is also set out in the Delivery Agreement. Both elements will be open to comment by Newport Town Council (circa January 2017). The processes will inform each other. A formal consultation period will run in April/May 2017 on the Preferred Strategy.

In your email you also state the following:

'You are not proposing updating the Settlement Capacity Study (2007 revised 2011) – by which I am astounded. Not that the statement made therein about Newport did anything to influence the decision in 2010 to include Feidr Eglwys as a Housing Allocation for 20 units of accommodation, or the decision by Officers to recommend approval for 35 houses on that site. If this is a final decision, might you consider as an alternative pilot study for Newport an alternative as advocated by the Civic Trust for Wales which is a Characterisation Study (as initiated by Cadw) which will provide evidence of the finer grain detail and local distinctiveness of this community. Is there any chance at all that the

National Park might be interested in cooperating with this community in such a study here?'

PCNPA Response

There will be an update of the Settlement Capacity Study for certain Centres of which Newport will be one of them. The Authority also has Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Newport and Newport Parrog and a Landscape Character Assessment covering the wider Newport area.

In response to the attached questions in your email, the approach to engagement and consultation for preparation of the Local Development Plan replacement is set out in the Delivery Agreement approved by the National Park Authority and reflects input discussion and comment both prior to and during the consultation period with various commentators. Information regarding the plan can be found in the various Background Papers on the Authority's website which will continue to be added to. It is not the Authority's intention to prepare individual statements for areas within the National Park.

Yours sincerely,



Richard James
Planning Officer (Park Direction)

