

NEATH PORT TALBOT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Response from Cilybebyll Community Council to Candidate Sites

Cilybebyll Community Council has given due consideration to the process involved in preparing the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, and the current requirement to respond to the second round of candidate sites which have been put forward within its area. We understand that there are a further 12 sites now identified in addition to the 30 previously identified. The Council's views on the 12 additional sites are now conveyed in this paper, and do not differ from those previously expressed, being equally applicable to this second round of identified candidate sites.

The Council acknowledges that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will have to identify land for development in the Local Development Plan. Some allocations may be proposed in the Cilybebyll area, but the Council is adamant that any proposals will need to be sensitive to the character of the Cilybebyll area, and its constituent settlements of Alltwen, Gellinudd, Cilybebyll, Rhos and Fforestgoch. The Council is keen to assist in defining the character. Its fundamental starting position in this respect is that it is a semi rural area, with many attributes arising from its landscape and surrounding countryside which demonstrate why it is so attractive, and which gave rise to a raft of policies in the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan. These include countryside protection policies, green wedge policies, and settlement limits which define boundaries for development. Notwithstanding the role and sustainability of the Cilybebyll settlements, such policies need to be replicated if the character of the Cilybebyll area is to be maintained.

The scale of development anticipated if the 12 candidate sites (or 42 if you also consider the original 30 candidate sites as well) or even a significant proportion of these were to be contemplated would be totally unacceptable and would intrinsically destroy the character of the area. At present, the Council will resist the temptation to identify particular candidate sites that would be more or less acceptable than others, and for the moment will offer no support for any one of the candidate sites. It is acknowledged, however, that Neath Port Talbot CBC will identify its development strategy for the area in due course, in advance of proposals for individual land parcels. At this stage, the Council will consider its view on the likely scale of development reflected in the strategy, and acknowledges that some allocations may be appropriate in order to support the sustainability of the Cilybebyll settlements. It is anticipated that this could only be acceptable if the emphasis is on limited organic growth, through high quality developments which promote good design and reflect sustainable development principles.

The Council contends that the 12 candidate sites fundamentally transgress some basic principles which the Council consider to be sacrosanct –

- The coalescence of individual settlements is totally unacceptable and this principle should not be compromised. It follows that the Council's support for the UDP Green Wedge policy will continue, and it is recommended that this should be "rolled forward" intact into the LDP. No site should be allowed to

broach this policy, and no precedent should be allowed where this might weaken the policy.

- A similar argument is put forward for countryside policies outside the settlement limits.
- Council's view is that brownfield locations should be developed before greenfield sites, and that in order to facilitate this, developers should be required to meet the cost of reclaiming such sites with or without government assistance, even if this means that the cost of development is higher.
- Development in the Cilybebyll area would require significant investment in infrastructure – highways, drainage, utilities and other services. Roads, sewers and services are unable to cope with, and were not necessarily designed for existing development, let alone any expansion. Whilst the development industry may be able to bear the cost of such infrastructure investment, this should not be allowed to happen at the expense of the character of the area. In particular, significant infrastructure investment is unlikely to make large scale development acceptable to the Council or to the people of the Cilybebyll area.
- The Council believes that some of the 12 candidate sites will automatically be ruled out of contention because of their location, their means of access, their value as agricultural or amenity land and/or their contribution to biodiversity. The Council is confident that in considering the 12 sites, Neath Port Talbot CBC will adopt a rigorous sieving and testing process with regard to all of the sites, and Cilybebyll Community Council will monitor the assessment process during stages of LDP preparation to ensure that this happens.

In conclusion, Council's view is that allowing 12 candidate sites, particularly in addition to the 30 sites originally proposed, to be considered further would compromise the character of the Cilybebyll area and its constituent settlements. It believes that many are not worthy of realistic consideration. Very few may have to be considered, in order to meet the requirements of the development strategy for Neath Port Talbot as a whole. These should, however, be rigorously tested and sound reasons for allocation will be needed, and will have to demonstrate to the Council that the principles identified above have not been unduly compromised.

Rowland Lanchbury
Clerk to the Council
Cilybebyll Community Council

11 September 2010

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan

Schedule of Candidate Sites Submitted to Neath Port Talbot CBC following second invitation in July 2010

Site Reference	Location of Site	Category	Ward
P54	Neath Road, Forest Goch	Residential	Rhos
P56	Land at Rear of Tesco Stores, Pontardawe. (Possible name Gwynn's Drift)	Community Use	Alltwen
P57	Neath Road Forest Goch	Residential	Rhos
P58	Neath Road Forest Goch	Residential	Rhos
P59	Land forming part of Pen yr Alltwen Farm Rhos The site is outlined in red on attached plan No.1	Residential	Rhos
P63	Land at Cwm Nant Llwyd Road Gellinudd Pontardawe	Residential	Pontardawe
P64	Land adjoining 28 New Road and opposite Retail and Service Station premises, New Road, Gellinudd	Residential	Rhos
P65	Land adjoining 28 New Road and opposite Retail and Service Station premises, New Road, Gellinudd	Residential	Rhos
P66	Land adjoining 28 New Road and opposite Retail and Service Station premises, New Road, Gellinudd	Residential	Rhos
P67	Land within Village Area A, Land immediately adjacent village Area B- Land Adjoining the Laurels Cilybebyll	Residential	Rhos
P68	Land within Village Area A, land immediately adjacent village Area B- Land adjoining the Laurels Cilybebyll	Residential	Rhos
P69	Land within Village Area A, Land immediately adjacent Village Area B- Land adjoining the Laurels Cilybebyll	Residential	Rhos