

Statements by NAEG for Hearing Session 8

Newport Area Environment Group's aim is to achieve a permanent residency policy applied to all Newport new build residential accommodation

Over 40% of households in the Centre of Newport were not in full time occupancy in 2011. Between 2001 and 2011, the increase in households "not in full time occupancy" in Newport was 2 and a half times more than the increase in households with at least one usual occupant. **All** the new dwellings on the only housing development built since then were sold as second homes. Without application of a permanent residency policy, there is nothing to stop any further market housing becoming second homes or investment properties.

There is precious little scope for development in Newport – The 2007 settlement Capacity Study concluded *"There is no potential to assimilate any further residential or commercial development without adversely affecting the sense of place"*. We have already described weaknesses in Newport's infrastructure – which should set limitations on development – the inadequacy of the sewage pumps at Cwm which are logistically difficult to upgrade, causing too-frequent spills of sewage, treated only by filtration, into the Bay, sometimes for more than 100 hours at a time –even now; the fragile retail infrastructure; traffic, parking and pedestrian problems; narrow lanes without passing spaces and no pavements - even before houses on HA1 and HA2 are occupied, let alone with 15 more houses to be built on HA3, probably even more on the business park, not to mention an extension to HA3.

It is imperative that the little development land available is used to house people who live here.

We strongly support identification of the community's true housing need being done by producing a Place Plan for Newport, but we already know that more appropriate housing is needed ...for example for older folk to downsize into more easily managed property, for more aspiring young people who want to join the housing ladder, to meet the needs in Health and Social services provision in future, as well as opportunities to self-build. We hope that further development anywhere in Newport can be delayed until a Place Plan is written by Newport Town Council working the NP, PCC and with ourselves and other stakeholders, giving clearer information on the housing that Newport needs.

NAEG is not objecting to a new Housing Allocation for Newport on Pen Y Bont being introduced in LDP2, **if the amended policy 3a) to include a principal residency restriction is introduced to apply to the site**, because we do firmly believe that **some purpose-designed housing is needed which is appropriate to enable people to live here**. We have no objection to a single phase of development in those circumstances as community cohesiveness will increase - because all residents will live there, contributing to the economy and wellbeing.

But we have queried why the Community boundary has to be moved outwards to form a Housing Allocation **yet again** to encompass a green field - which is part of the setting of the conservation area, on the edge of the mediaeval town, which was previously considered to be unacceptable with regard to landscape impact upon the existing character and special qualities of Newport, bordering the TAN15 C2 flood zone, and with habitat issues - when the de-allocated remaining part of Newport Business Park is currently left as a potential housing windfall site, but could be allocated instead.

Mrs Hirst has explained that a candidate site application was submitted and passed requisite tests to be suitable for housing, and that de-allocation of the business park would maintain an 'in principle' acceptance of employment or commercial use on that site under national planning policy

But, we still have concerns that if HA3 is developed, this could blight further development on the remainder of the Business Park, whatever its use. How much development off Pen Y Bont in addition to HA3 will Highways tolerate, when it has tolerated none in the past, with the difficulties of providing safe pedestrian use and the problems with the main road junction (which will already be aggravated when the Feidr Eglwys site is occupied)? To widen Pen y Bont at the point where a stretch of ancient hollow way survives will certainly severely adversely affect the special qualities of Newport and sense of place.

Officers have allocated the Development of the north-west corner of the candidate site only, with the single access point from Feidr Pen-y-Bont.

Arwel Evans and Hayston Developments and Planning have proposed potential larger extension of the HA3 site.

We see no case for this extension and would be concerned about high visibility of further development from Carningli and from the North, as well as possible impact on habitats etc. This would represent a **mass development** totally inappropriate to Newport, especially when development of the business park goes ahead.

In a town where Government population predictions indicate a reduction in households by 52 units and where any more market housing driven by development led calculations without PR applied is likely to be used by 2nd homers, why is there need for an extension?

In addition, the National Park has aimed to produce 250 AH during the Plan Period. How is that figure and distribution of AH affected by the strong possibility of 140 AH being provided by PCC in Tenby? How is the Newport allocation going to be affected?

Bear in mind that according to the final report of the NP Affordable Housing Study for the PCNPA Replacement LDP (the Golland Report 2017), the land value bench mark per hectare for Newport was £552, 273 in 2017 compared with the 'ballpark' figure used as a marker previously by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park LVB of £300,000, and this compares for instance with £171,000 for St Brides Bay – and that figure is based on new build house prices in the Newport AH Sub-market area – not Newport alone where house prices are considerably higher.

Some of my colleagues argue that the proportion of affordable housing of 50% should be looked at again.

But, NAEG certainly considers that it is not unreasonable to apply a principal residency policy in Newport.

However, I have shown that the total sum of market house prices for a mixture of house sizes with no occupancy control could be very similar to the total sum of market house prices with an occupancy control applied, even assuming a 15% reduction in price due to the policy, if instead of 7 larger houses providing 21 bedrooms in the former case, 11 smaller houses also providing 21 bedrooms are provided in the latter.

I would assume that 8 affordable homes would be provided in both cases and I consider that a total of 19 smaller houses on this half hectare site could provide a very pleasant development.

In the event, a fair proportion of AH with a PR policy applied would obviously be the subject of proper calculation and negotiation.