

**MINUTES OF THE WORKING GROUP (CONSIDERING THE PROPOSED
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON LAND NORTH OF PONTARDDULAIS)**

HELD ON 28th FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT: Cllr J Harris (Chairperson)

Cllr R Jenkins

Mr A Capp

Ms L Evans-Leigh

Mr P Gealy

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Leigh-Evans and Mr Gealy informed the group that they were attending the meeting in place of Mr P Pendle.

**2.TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST FROM MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

No declarations were received.

3 TO VERIFY TRAFFIC RECORD COLLECTION FOR JUNCTION 48

JH opened the meeting by stating it would be difficult to discuss this point in the absence of CE who has collected the data but it is unclear if this has been passed on to the relevant organisation for analysis.

Discussion followed regarding the reason for improvements to J48 at Hendy. AC clarified that the reason for the improvements was not to ease the flow of traffic through Pontarddulais, but to mitigate the dangerous situation on the westbound carriageway of the M4 motorway where traffic was queuing on the hard shoulder. It was reported that there still appears to be significant levels of traffic at times on the Llanelli bound carriageway.

A pertinent question that needs to be clarified is to establish whether Persimmon has factored the risks involved into their plans because with an estimated 1000+ cars arising from the development, there remains the possibility that the traffic situation on J48 could deteriorate further.

A report on the success or otherwise of the motorway will be compiled during the spring. It is essential that all evidence is collated by then.

JH raised a query that doesn't seem to have been dealt with by Persimmon – when traffic arrives at the end of Tynybonau Rd, which way will it be directed? If left, then the bridge at the end of Dulais Road will have to be developed, if right, this may mean a two-way system down Water St to the lights. If the road layout is changed to cope with the extra traffic coming from the proposed development it would appear that St Teilo St could be frequently jammed with traffic.

JH stated that what had originally been included in the LDP was a spine road off the Tidal Reach junction in front of the surgery, near to the railway. In a report by Hyder (2014) it was decided that the Tynybonau Rd could not be used as a route for more traffic as the road was too narrow. The spine road was intended to go along the railway which would take the traffic safely away from residential areas.

LEL stated that currently, Glanffrwd Rd supports a large volume of lorries; with a proposed new bus route together with 150 new houses which will generate approximately 300 extra cars, this will create an increasingly dangerous situation.

JH stated that when they had a meeting with the Town Council, a bus route would be made through the houses, past Tynybonau connecting to Glanffrwd Rd. Only buses would be permitted along this route.

LEL explained that the proposed site is split – 450 houses on Tynybonau side, 150 on Glanffrwd side. The only access for the 150 would be from Glanffrwd Rd. This explanation conflicts with what the Council had been told. So, LEL asked then, considering the explanation the Town Council had been given, how was the traffic for the 150 houses going to be able to access their homes as the access road across the site appeared to be for use only by buses. Macmillan had also reported a lack of awareness of the proposals.

JH also pointed out that in the LDP, it is stated that brown field sites should be used first, not green field sites and this development did not appear to meet this criteria. The Welsh Government have also stated that housing should be built where there are jobs to go to. This is not the case in Pontarddulais.

One of the recommendations of the LDP is that the spine road should be constructed towards the industrial estate. In the present plan, the road is not going in that direction, it is going towards the houses.

LEL commented that the current LDP does not appear to comply with the Future Generations Act of the Welsh Government.

On St Teilo St, the road is blocked at peak times; sometimes, lorries are unable to turn from Dulais Rd onto St Teilo Street because of the narrowness of the street and parked cars. It can take a considerable amount of time for lorries to manoeuvre to be able to negotiate the turn. The main problem on St Teilo St is that there has already been a significant increase in traffic with the increased housing. Given there are narrow traffic routes through Pontarddulais and to Tesco and Hendy across the bridge, there is increasing evidence of traffic build up as only a few cars can get through the lights at a time.

If anyone has photographic / dashcam / video evidence of this danger and the other hold ups at J48, then the incidence needs to be collected as part of the evidence package to be included in this report.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

Check with CE if she has sent the data on.

Clarify whether the estimated increase in vehicles and the impact on J48 has been factored into their plans.

Collect evidence as a matter of urgency.

Establish with Persimmon the intended route from Tynybonau.

Invite a representative from Macmillan to gain their observations.

4 TO VERIFY RECORDS OF FLOODING

It was reported that the amount of water collecting during rainfall in residents' gardens is considerable, to the extent that it flows from the gardens, down drives and onto Glanffrwd Road. To exacerbate this, water also flows out from the fields increasing the volume of flooding. It would appear that management of water needs to be discussed.

In their plan, Persimmon has included approaching the Cricket Club to install pipes to direct the water away from areas prone to flooding aside from the several ponds they have included in their plans. Also, how large will the ponds be and what volume of water will they be able to contain and what happens should there be overflow? It has been suggested that discussions have occurred with local sports venues to deal with excess run off. LEL had reservations about the scale of mitigation given that more housing will increase the volume of flood water.

SUDS will undertake a survey once Persimmon's application is completed and they will approve the development if they have satisfied the criteria that there will be no surface water flooding and also that no rainwater enters the sewer system so overloading the whole system.

SUDS has the power to overturn a planning application even if it has been approved by the Council. Should the application be approved, SUDS will insist that anti-flooding measures are undertaken prior to the build commencing.

Discussions took place regarding flooding and other risks. There is a water pipe running through the northern area of the proposed site. It is 3' below the ground, is 5'6" high and is at very high pressure as it is coming from Llandoverly and flows into the reservoir at Velindre. As the pipe mainly flows through agricultural land, Welsh Water deemed it is safe. Welsh Water opposed the plan on that site 5 years ago when the current LDP was put in place, but in discussions with Persimmon they said that if Persimmon built a bund, which is basically a wall around the pipe, so that if the pipe were to burst, the water will be contained in the bund. However, the current plan that Persimmon have produced does not make provision for a bund.

LEL stated that she spoke with Asprey, the planning consultants about three months ago who confirmed that they have been liaising with Welsh Water and Asprey have developed a plan for a bund. However, AC stated that he has proof that this is not the case, and read out the letter he received from Welsh Water last week.

Welsh Water's position remains opposed to the application and Persimmon will have to satisfy Welsh Water's requirement to comply with the Reservoirs Act 1975. There still remains a problem as the Planning Committee does not have to listen to Welsh

Water's objections. In order to make an informed decision, the Planning committee has to take on board the comments of approximately 20 consultees, but they do not have to accept the considerations of the consultees.

JH stressed the importance of engaging with the public to ensure they have an awareness of all that is proposed and the outcome of additional housing. The public have a right to be listened to and to explain to the Planning Committee the consequences of further housing on traffic and their well-being. It is public pressure that usually sways the decisions of the Planning Committee. AC stated that writing to the Planning Committee objecting to the development would highlight the arguments against the development going ahead become against the development going ahead.

Discussions took place regarding possible new building regulations regarding energy efficiency and the need for new building standards to be met. Discussions took place about the possibility of a proposed primary school as part of the plan at the end of the development in 8-10 years-time and the possibility given other local evidence that developers are not always able to fund proposed 106 agreements.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

Establish how Persimmon intends to manage water and the potential for flooding over and above the suggested ponds.

Photographic evidence of flooding to be produced for SUDS.

Establish if the drainage plan to take floodwater away from affected areas is evident in the plans.

Establish where the pipes will deposit the flood water.

Arrange for a Public Presentation

5. TO VERIFY DATA COLLECTED FOR LEAFLETS

AC has already put together a large amount of information in the form of "public alerts" to raise public awareness of the problems the proposed development will have on the town.

JH confirmed that booking the Rugby Club for the public meeting is a preferred location with the date to be confirmed after leaflets have been distributed. Possible date for the meeting will be in 2-3 weeks-time.

LEL suggested that people should be advised about how they can successfully object to the development emphasising the grounds on which they can object. People often feel threatened about writing to councils and will need support. AC added that if the public's letters run in line with the 20 consultees' recommendations, then this will add weight to the objections. JH pointed out that the other body that can overrule the Planning Committee's decision is the Welsh Government. Green sites are being used for building instead of brown sites and over 20 years congestion has increased.

JH considered that a public meeting is required and that a planning meeting is required ensure that well thought out objections are available.

ACTIONS:

Distribution of alerts to the public.

Confirm and book a date for the Rugby Club

Prepare a leaflet to advise on how to object to the application.

6. TO DISCUSS PRIORITY ISSUES RE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT COLLATED BY MR A CAPP.

JH stated that the group has the priority issues from AC. To prepare for the public meeting there needs to be another small meeting to get things together – for example running off 300 copies of leaflets. The discussions of this meeting will be taken to Town Council to agree on the Public Meeting.

ACTIONS:

JH to report back to Full Council

7. TO PREPARE FOR THE PUBLIC MEETING

AC expressed reservations as to what a Public Meeting would achieve.

LEL suggested that if people are supported, they will come forward. Flyers need to be concise and state what the meeting is about and what people will be offered. LEL continued that the meeting should also be concise – laying out concerns about the proposed site and if they wish to object, demonstrate how this can best be achieved by providing them with valid objections.

Other considerations about phosphorus levels, well-being concerns, use of the Welsh language and respect for the public were discussed. JH suggested that the next two weeks should be spent collecting and collating evidence before the next meeting and the organisers should be present. Also, AC suggested that the only way to stop this site from being developed is the unprofitability for Persimmon. LEL raised the question of whether a new site should contain more bungalows to accommodate the aging population many of whom are living in large houses. It would be beneficial to approach Swansea Council to suggest that bungalows should be included in the plan to address the need for accommodation for older people as well as affordable housing.

ACTIONS:

Collection and collation of evidence before next meeting

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 15th March 2023, The Institute, St Teilo St.