

WELSH NEWTON AND LLANROTHAL GROUP NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Submission Draft Version

**Welsh Newton and Llanrothal Group Neighbourhood Plan
Examiner's Questions
by Independent Examiner, Rosemary Kidd**

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Welsh Newton and Llanrothal Group Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Questions

Following my initial assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan and representations, and my site visit, I would appreciate clarification and further evidence on the following matters from the Qualifying Body and/or the Local Planning Authority. In order to ensure openness and transparency of the examination process, these questions and the responses should be published on the Council's website.

1. Map 1 should be revised to only show the outer boundary of the Plan area.

HC will change this map so that it just shows the plan boundary

2. The Policies Maps have not been included in the Plan itself. I am going to recommend that they are included in the Plan at full page size. They include all the material shown on Maps 6 – 9 which could then be deleted. Would it be possible to include the viewpoints from Map 5 on the map for the Plan area?

HC will include the policies maps however it is not their standard approach to include views on these maps. If required the PC is happy to do this on a separate map.

3. Map 4 Significant Local Wildlife Sites is at a scale that could not be used by decision makers to determine the boundaries of a site and consider whether a development proposal would affect any of the sites. Is there an alternative source that could be referred to in the Plan?

Development Planners would probably not use map 4 in relation to Local Wildlife Sites. They are more likely to use either the Group Parish policies map or the village policies maps, or the internal Exponare mapping system. HC suggest renaming Map 4, as this isn't showing the designated Local Wildlife Sites (as per the Parish and village policies maps), it is showing Ponds, Orchards and Dormice sightings within the parish. The current title for map 4 is therefore misleading

4. What is the status / designation of the sites shown on Map 4? Reference to it in criterion 6 of Policy WNL6 is incorrect as the Map does not show sites of local, regional and national importance. As Core Strategy Policy LD2 provides appropriate policy position, I shall be recommending that criterion 6 is deleted. Ponds are covered in criteria 7, 8 and 11, orchards in criteria 8 and 10. No reference is made to dormice in the policy.

Map 4 shows sites of known local wildlife interest - ponds, traditional orchards and recent dormouse records.

Dormice could be added to one of the criteria eg 7.:

"Local habitats and wildlife should be preserved and enhanced by providing species rich hedgerows (which provide habitats for dormice), ponds and tree cover as part of a development. Vulnerable, established habitats such as species rich grassland, traditional meadows, existing ponds and ancient semi natural woodland will be protected from development. "

5. Would the QB confirm that the landowners of the proposed Local Green Spaces have been notified of the proposed designation. What evidence is there of the historic significance of the Glebe Field?

I believe they were invited to workshops.

Otherwise PC relied on general notifications eg at reg 14 about the NDP policies and proposals.

The Glebe Field protects the setting of the listed church. "Glebe" means church land so there may be parish records about the field or it might be marked and labelled on an old OS map?

6. Would the LPA confirm the number of dwellings required to be delivered to meet the indicative housing growth target of 14% growth. Would they also confirm the number of dwellings that have received planning permission and that have been completed in Welsh Newton Common since 2011. The SEA gives different figures to paragraph 5.2.3. Would you provide me with the up to date figures.

The housing figures from April 2011-2018 is of housing target of 14, 8 have been committed and 8 have been completed. Leaving a residual figure of -2. The 2019 figures have not been published yet, so the most up to date figures are from 2018.

7. The Welsh Newton Common Settlement Boundary includes a number of fields and large gardens. Paragraph 5.2.10 states that the inclusion of these areas does not infer that the community would welcome development there. However there is no policy to prevent development on these areas in the plan.

See Map 8 - large areas of the common are protected as Local Green Space.

The drawing of a settlement boundary around an area of scattered dwellings in large plots is not straightforward and this presented significant challenges for the NDP Group. Although the settlement is identified as one of the "Other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate" in Fig 4.15 the Core Strategy it is clearly highly

constrained by poor access and the "settlement" itself is very difficult to identify on the ground.

The Group, working with local residents, identified the settlement boundary and a policy following advice from HC but overall there remains a view amongst local people and the PC that the area is not suitable for significant residential development.

The Group has tried to 'plan positively' for new development in Policy WNL6 as required and paragraph 2 has been provided to help guide any proposals to ensure they protect local character.

Policy WNL6 is worded so that clusters of 1 or 2 dwellings could be built anywhere outside common land adjacent to existing groups. The access road into WNC is narrow and a cul-de-sac and some of the access roads in the community are unmade.

Agreed

Has the Highways Officer made any comments on the proposals for housing development in this community?

Transportation have commented at regulation 14 stage in 25/11/2015. They have commented about the public transport services available in the area and not directly about the housing. *Welsh Newton has a regular Monday to Saturday service between Monmouth and Hereford (Service 36) which is partly subsidised. The Common however has a Friday only service to Monmouth. It is considered these services meet requirements of the area which also already has coverage from a CT scheme.*

The Consultation Statement (Table 5B) includes comments from HC Transport and Highways. It is stated that "The NDP submitted by Welsh Newton and Llanrothal NDP has no major conflicts with the transportation section. We would broadly support the improvement of PROWs to support accessibility of sustainable transport routes within the parish." Other comments referred the PC to various staff members in relation to comments made by residents in the public consultation processes. There were no specific comments about access to Welsh Newton Common and the area's suitability or otherwise for residential development.

Would the QB explain what controls are intended to manage the development of the open land to the indicative growth level set in the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy has been specific about no minimum housing numbers and therefore there are no specific controls regarding the maximum number of dwellings

against the target. Criteria within policy WNL6 will ensure that development will only be small scale and adjoining clusters of buildings.

Would the LPA and QB comment on whether it would be appropriate to include an additional requirement that new dwellings in WNC should be accessed directly from a made up road? This would limit the areas suitable for development or result in the making up of other roads.

Accepted by the PC. HC made the following comment –“No comments have been received from transportation on this matter, including this requirement it is likely that this would be quite restrictive”.

8. There is repetition of matters set out in the Natural Environment policies and Building Design policies and other policies such as WNL6 and 7. I shall recommend that there is no need to repeat matters that are covered in the general policies that are applicable throughout the plan area.

Accepted.

9. In Policy WNL6, how is “Elevations must reflect the rural environment” and “Designs that are urban in nature will not be supported” to be interpreted?

Perhaps better wording would be something like "Designs should be informed by the distinctive local character of the rural area" and delete the above 2 sentences.

Would reference to designs respecting the local vernacular be more appropriate?

Yes - or see above.

Would the QB also explain how Policy WNL7 criterion 3 “and should not look like an alien feature” is to be interpreted.

Perhaps better wording could be something like "and not be visually intrusive."

10. Paragraph 5.2.14 refers to the use of holiday lets for short term or residential accommodation being supported. This is a policy statement and is not appropriate for inclusion in the justification. There are no policies on the conversion of holiday lets to other forms of residential accommodation. Would the LPA confirm whether it is controlled in Herefordshire.

HC would agree that this policy statement is not appropriate for inclusion. Holiday lets are not controlled within Herefordshire and subject to standard policies as set out in the Core Strategy.

Is the reference to the barns at Gwenherrion still correct?

Yes

11. Policy WNL8 includes Extensions to Houses in the title but the policy only addresses the conversion of buildings. I shall recommend that the title of Policy WNL8 is revised to refer to conversions only.

Accepted.

Criterion 5 of Policy WNL7 addresses extensions. However it is not relevant to the consideration of new dwellings in the countryside and would be better set out as a separate policy. Is it intended that it should apply throughout the plan area or only in the countryside outside the WNC settlement boundary?

WNL7 should apply to the wider countryside in the Parish outside the settlement boundaries.

12. Would the LPA comment on whether the requirement in Policy WNL7 on maintaining agricultural occupancy in perpetuity is implementable. Also would they comment on the deliverability of the second matter that the dwelling should be removed (demolished?) or given over to affordable housing if no longer required. Does the QB have evidence to justify and support this requirement.

The policy team have raised no issues with this policy and confirmed the policy is in conformity with the Core Strategy. Maintain agricultural occupancy in perpetuity may be hard to deliver, it may be better to add in 'where possible' to this section.

13. The justification to Policy WNL11 is based on the principles in the 2008 Poly tunnels SPD. It is noted that there is 2018 Poly tunnels Planning Guide. Would the LPA and QB consider whether any of the principles in WNL11 need to be updated to reflect changes in the new guidance. In view of their comments on the final point on location in the fluvial floodplain, would the LPA suggest any revisions to the wording of this point that may be required.

HC have produced a Poly tunnels Guidance notes in June 2018, reference to flooding: *'Flood risk and surface water run-off should be carefully addressed, as should potential adverse impacts on local water resources. Active management techniques and mitigation measures proposed should also be taken into account. Careful management using drains and gullies will allow surface water run-off to be diverted into watercourses where it can be used for irrigation. SuDS features need to be incorporated to ensure that sufficient treatment stages are incorporated so that the discharged water meets quality objectives.'*

HC suggest putting more mitigation measures in such as the following:

Discharging into existing drainage ditches or constructing them where they do not exist so there is a logical flow into the greater river system. • Discharging from surface water attenuation at greenfield discharge rate. • Providing surface water attenuation such as attenuation basins storage tanks, lagoons or farm storage reservoirs. • Using swales to cleanse water and also to disperse a proportion of the runoff via soakaways • Discharging runoff to soakaways or using drainage basins to cleanse water and disperse run-off via soakaways. • Mitigation management measures could include: Constructing drainage channels/tile drains/French drains etc. as necessary so that surface water run-off from poly tunnel development is captured effectively and directed into attenuation lagoons.' •

In the text the policy could mention the support of using sustainable drainage systems SUDs for active water management as a mitigation measure to prevent harm to existing watercourses, ecological assets and soil erosion. HC thinks to bolster the reference to drainage and flooding in poly tunnel schemes will help to update the policy making it more informative.

14. Policy WNL14 will be used to determine applications for non-community led (ie commercial) renewable and low carbon developments. How will criterion 3 be applied to such schemes.

This could be amended to " Community based projects will be encouraged and supported."

15. Bearing in mind that the NPPG states that inflexible rules on separation distances should not be used to rule out renewable energy schemes, on what basis what does the QB justify setting a minimum distance of 400m between a turbine and a dwelling in Policy WNL14.4?

Can this be re-phrased to "a recommended desirable distance" rather than a specific distance? There is a lack of clarity about where this figure came from.

16. Policy WNL14.8 sets a minimum distance from bridleways and other routes. This criterion is considered to be vague and imprecise and could not be used consistently by decision makers.

HC agrees that this set distance from a vague point could be hard to implement, it may be wise to remove the livestock rider section and route habitually used by horse rider as this could be misconstrued.

17. Policy WNL16 on community facilities refers to community infrastructure in Appendix 3. This includes a wide range of infrastructure that would not be applicable to this policy eg roads, drainage, broadband. Are there any recreational areas other than those shown as common land?

No

Would the QB provide a list and map of the community facilities that this policy is intended to apply to.

The village hall and St Mary the Virgin church, Welsh Newton and the redundant church of St John the Baptist, Llanrothal

18. It is noted that the development of the former garage site at Welsh Newton (Policy WNL9) is largely complete. I shall recommend that the policy and justification is deleted.

Accepted.

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