

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP)

Note for Matters Arising Changes Hearing Session

1. The Council will remember that our Preliminary Findings on Housing Provision¹ were that the overall amount of housing provision was appropriate. Nonetheless, we had concerns regarding the viability and likely development of several allocated sites to the extent where we considered that the delivery of the total requirement might be threatened. An additional hearing session² and further evidence provided by the Council, at our request, have allayed most of these fears.
2. In the case of H1/LB/13 Blaenbaglan Farm, however, we remain unconvinced that the development of the site is likely to commence before the end of the plan period. The extant planning permission for 219 dwellings dating from 1992³, which was confirmed by the positive outcome of the lawful development appeal⁴ in November 2000, does not reassure us. Indeed, it leads us to the view that, there having been little interest in the site for over 20 years, the likelihood of any being generated in time for dwellings to be completed within the plan period is small.
3. Furthermore, having seen on-site how little connection there is with the parcel of land to the rear of Blaenbaglan School, we are not confident that the marketing and development of the considerably more realistic allocation there, H1/12, would revive interest in, or enable the development of, Blaenbaglan Farm.
4. It is therefore our intention to remove the housing allocation from the site at Blaenbaglan Farm. The location of the settlement boundary in this area as a result of that action is a matter on which we would like to hear from you at the hearing.
5. FC14 reduced the number of dwellings estimated to be completed on the Blaenbaglan Farm site during the plan period from 260 to 160. It is our view that the 10% flexibility allowance, equating to 800 dwellings, would be necessary as the delivery of the required number of dwellings will still be a challenge for the County Borough. Provision must therefore be made elsewhere for the number of dwellings lost through the de-allocation of Blaenbaglan Farm.
6. As well as hearing from a number of site proponents at the additional site sessions we have looked in detail at the consultation report on the alternative sites⁵. As a result our view is that an appropriate option would be to allocate

¹ ED07

² Session 12 held on 14 April

³ 92/8571

⁴ AP4.14

⁵ SD17

part or all of the Tirbach Washery site at Ystalyfera⁶. This is a brownfield site of nearly 11ha in area, a size which would enable biodiversity, rights of way and other constraints to be mitigated and still provide at least 120 units. It is in a sustainable location close to the facilities and services offered by Ystalyfera, classified as a large local centre, and Ystradgynlais, one of the larger settlements just over the boundary in Powys.

7. Although in the Swansea Valley and not one of the valley growth points of Pontardawe or the Upper Neath Valley area the Council stated that this was not a reason in itself not to allocate the site. Taking into account the loss of units at the existing site in Ystalyfera, Compair, and their replacement at the new site proposed in Pontardawe, the change in the distribution of housing would be slight and not contrary to the spatial strategy, as indicated in the amended LDP table below.

Table 5.3 Distribution of Overall Housing Provision

Spatial Area	Land Bank Sites	New allocation	Windfalls	Small Sites	Total Provision	Share Out
Neath	2,890	1,075	290	210	4,465	51.9%
Port Talbot	476 <u>316¹</u>	1,249	260	100	2,085 <u>1,925</u>	25.0% <u>22.4%</u>
Afan Valley			39	65	104	1.2%
Amman Valley			39	70	109	1.3%
Dulais Valley	105		33	70	208	2.4%
Neath Valley	114	150	68	85	417	4.8%
Pontardawe	215	399 <u>449²</u>	80	135	829 <u>879</u>	9.9% <u>10.2%</u>
Swansea Valley	172	120 <u>230³</u>	16	75	383 <u>493</u>	4.6% <u>5.7%</u>
Total	3,972 <u>3,812</u>	2,993 <u>3,153</u>	825	810	8,600	100%

¹ remove Blaenbaglan Farm allocation -160 dwellings

² add new allocation at Parc Ynysderw +50 dwellings

³ remove dwellings from Compair allocation – 50, add new allocation at Tirbach Washery + 160

8. The Council's main concern and reason for not allocating the site was uncertainty as to its delivery; at the hearing we heard from the site owner that, when the current use ceases in about a year's time and were the site to be allocated, he has the resources and motivation to remediate the site ready for residential development.

⁶ AS(N) 56. NB AS(N) 57 is the western part only of the site.

9. We have also looked at the proposals for amendments to the settlement boundary in various locations. In the interest of consistency with the criteria set out in the settlement topic paper⁷ we propose to alter the settlement boundary in the following cases:

- AS(N)12 – Land at Moorlands, Dyffryn Cellwen
- AS(N)49 – Land at Rutherglen Yard, Felindre
- AS(SL)3 – Land adjacent to Taverncore, Pentwyn Road, Cynonville
- AS(SL)7 – Land adjacent to Brookside, Pontrhydefen, Neath

These alterations will also benefit overall delivery of the housing requirement through improving the likelihood of achieving the windfall/small sites allowances.

10. We hope that it is helpful to raise these matters in advance of the hearing and that you will have sufficient time to put forward additional matters arising changes (MACs) which will address our concerns. In the light of the short notice draft versions of any such changes will be acceptable and can be tabled at the hearing.

Siân Worden
Nicola Gulley

Inspectors

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⁷ SD40, appendix A, Stage 3