

ES4.5

Mr Vincent Maher Ma (Cantab) MCD MSc MBA MRTPI.

Inspector

Allan Thomas

76 Aberbeeg Road

Abertillery

Gwent

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NP13 2EQ

Personal response to Housing Six Bells Colliery Site H1.14, Warm Turn, Six Bells H1.15 .

The outgoing Unitary Development Plan was based on a population figure of 73,200.

Background UDP page 15, 2.5

Outward migration will be halted, and by 2006 reversed, and that the area experiences a small amount of inward migration which results in a population estimate of 73,725 in 2011 compared to a population figure of 73,250 in 1991.

It was proposed that 1,750 new dwellings would be required in Blaenau Gwent up until 2011. The housing control figure 1996-2011 is 2000 units.

Housing in emerging Local Development Plan, Spatial Strategy page 22, 5.5;

A key challenge for the area is to halt the declining population. A major part of this Strategy is to enable the growth in population from 69,300 to 71,100. To accommodate this growth 3,666 new houses will be required between 2006-2021.

Strategic Policies page 33, 6.35;

The LDP makes provision for the construction of 4,158 dwellings. This represents 492 (13%) units more than the required figure of 3,666 to allow choice and flexibility.

Clearly this strategy raises a number of issues regarding Housing allocation and future projections, the outgoing Unitary Development Plan based its housing allocations on figures already exceeding that of the emerging Local Development Plan. The proposals set out in the UDP catered for a population figure exceeding the emerging LDP by 3,950 (year figure 2006), and by 2,625 (year figure 2021).

Where does this leave the strategy of the Housing policy in the emerging Local Development Plan?

The principal hub for growth will be Ebbw Vale, this will lead to a migration of people from Six Bells area to the principal hub of Ebbw Vale. Six Bells is currently part of a renewal area scheme, resulting in group repair scheme targeted at 390 properties.

I therefore feel the case is not there for further Housing development in this area, consideration would also need to be given to the highway infrastructure at Warm Turn A467, failure of the Council to address the problems of the highway through Warm Turn, any new development at Warm Turn, or Six Bells Colliery Site would have to take into account the need to improve this section of road before any new development takes place, A467 is a strategic highway linking A465 Heads of the Valley to Newport M4, 16,000 plus vehicles a day currently pass through Warm Turn.

Six Bells Colliery Site has seen a significant change during the UDP period, which would put the future use of this site more in line with Tourism than housing development, Guardian Memorial, Ty-Ebbw-Fach, Ebbw Fach trail have all been developed during this plan period, proposal to designate a large part of the Six Bells Colliery site to a nature reserve further reinforces the future use of this site for leisure and tourism.

With the need to address Education facilities in this area, the proposal to allocate the lower plateau for a new primary school (outline planning permission granted 1997 not renewed) would impact on the use of this site as an open space already enjoyed by the residents of Six Bells, I propose the middle plateau be designated for a new primary school, utilising the site of the former Arael Primary school and the rest of the ground on the middle plateau, or the plateau at Warm Turn.

The local community of Six Bells are after many years of heavy industrial use are now starting to enjoy the benefits of this open space, with hopefully long term benefits in improved health through exercise.

I ask the inspector to take into account the comments made in this personal statement before reaching a decision.

Yours sincerely

Allan Thomas