

Vale of Glamorgan Planning
Ref: 2016/01427/OUT

Dear Sirs

I would like to object to the proposal with the above reference, submitted for 300 dwelling at Eglwys Brewis, St Athan.

There are a number of grounds to my objections:

- 1) **Sustainable development** - Planning statement 4.4 states that *Sustainable development forms a key consideration central to all policies contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Paragraph 4.4.3 of PPW sets out a series of objectives which development proposals should seek to achieve – those of key relevance to the application include the following:*
 - a) *minimise land-take and urban sprawl, especially through preference for the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, wherever possible avoiding development on greenfield sites;* The majority of this site is 'outside' the current settlement boundaries, and is on greenfield, so is completely against this planning policy. While there are a significant number of brownfield sites in the Vale of Glamorgan linked to employment but with a 164yr supply these are very unlikely to be deliverable!
 - b) *'Locate developments so as to minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car' –* this developments is badly served by routes to the main employment areas of Cardiff and Bridgend, and will exacerbate already current traffic issues in the locality especially the 'rat runs' via single track rural lanes through Flemingston, Llantrithyd, and St Hilary back to the A48 and Cardiff. The route via St Athan Village includes a junction which is nearing capacity. Although in the LDP there are plans for a Northern Access Road, this is yet to go through the planning process and may not be delivered, therefore this development would certainly worsen the traffic using the Eglwys Brewis to Llantwit Major Road which is already causing issues and is a dangerous route for pedestrians and cyclists. Alternatively the rural lanes from Cowbridge road towards Llandow will be badly affected by commuters to Bridgend district.

- 2) **Loss of Greenfield, Agricultural Land** - I totally question how this land can be described as *'Grade 3b agricultural land at best'*. 3.44 in the Agricultural land classification report included with this application states the soil as 'extensive distribution of well-drained calcareous clayey soils over the site' this would indicate, that it would be a fertile soil, suitable for 'Cereals, short term and permanent grassland with dairying and stock rearing', it must also be pointed out that as it is stated in paragraph 5.44 *'Prior to its return to grassland management, some 3-4yrs ago, the fields were previously managed for crop growing'*! A change in a farms, farming policy should not constitute a land degrade. To state the obvious we are on a small island without a limitless supply of agricultural land which once gone under concrete and brick is

gone forever for future generations – it is essential for good planning that we do not pander to developers and landowners looking to make quick money and waste this essential resource. It cannot be replaced!

- 3) **Overdevelopment.** During the LDP process the housing allocation in the Vale of Glamorgan was questioned considerably, and was revised considerably downwards after consideration of the more up to date population figures. However, 1,600 dwellings were parachuted into the plan based on totally speculative ‘potential’ employment linked to the Welsh Government Strategic sites that have been proposed for a number of years without any real employment being delivered. There currently appears to be no shortage of properties in this area and little local work opportunities, necessitating additional commuter traffic to Cardiff and Bridgend. This proposal would be overdevelopment in a poorly served rural location.
- 4) **Lack of infrastructure/Highways** St Athan over a number of years has seen significant increases via many recent developments and previously following the release of the former MOD houses into civilian ownership - some 600 dwellings were added without any planning or provisions for impact, even though they had been previously served by employment and amenities at RAF St Athan. All these additions without any improvements to local infrastructure. This development is badly served by routes to the main employment areas of Cardiff and Bridgend, and will exacerbate already current traffic issues in the locality especially the ‘rat runs’ through rural lanes. More attention should be given to the wider highway impacts including to the West where major work is required from Llantwit Major to A48, and onwards to the M4. The improvements needed to the roads, junctions, pavements, cycle routes and provision of additional open space will be much more than 106 monies can deliver.
- 5) **Flooding** - The development site includes the Nant-y-Stepsau River to the North West that lies within Zone C2 and is considered to be a medium/high risk of flooding. Current proposals are to discharge surface water runoff into the Nant y Stepsau River via flow control set at green field run off rates; on site attenuation will be required. The solution offered by the developers is an open lagoon – it appears no consideration has been made to the impacts on sites ‘downstream’ of this development.
- 6) **Loss of local amenities** – This development does not comply with Policy MD5 as laid out in the LDP and Planning statement as it will result in the ‘*unacceptable loss of public open space*’ part of the site described as in 2.2 of the planning statement as ‘*one smaller parcel which lies within the settlement boundary limits and is currently comprised of a tarmacked area, mown grass and landscaping*’ borders a community facility ‘The Gathering Place’ and is currently enjoyed by a number of existing local residents as a public open space, the provisions within the plan will not satisfy this loss as it will only serve the new development ; This development will have *unacceptable impact on the amenity and character of the locality by way of noise, traffic congestion and parking; and ‘Does not make appropriate provision for community infrastructure to meet the needs of future occupiers’.*
- 7) **Premature** – The LDP Hearing document statement of the Vale of Glamorgan states ‘*this greenfield site was not submitted as a candidate site but was allocated by the Council following discussion with the landowner in order to support the St Athan Strategic Opportunity*

Area. No formal planning application has been submitted to date; however, the Council has received confirmation from the landowner and their agents that they are still interested in developing the site for residential use following adoption of the Plan. This application is therefore pre-empting the LDP process, in which its inclusion was questionable especially in light of what appears to be an unusual route into the plan in the first place.

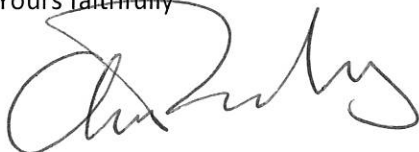
The applicant through their consultants planning statement indicates the development is 'adjoining the existing MOD St Athan base' which I find a strange statement, where everyone that knows the locality is aware that this site of some 700 acres, is currently in the main vacant, redundant with no evident plan! The outline planning that was granted back in 2009/2010 for this site, covering a proposed defence college and aerospace business park included a large area near the location of this current proposal that was earmarked as 'accommodation, leisure and amenities'. I strongly believe that we should not be building on any green field in this locality until the Welsh Government outlines the actual use of this site – for this whole area to be marked as 'employment' is not sustainable.

In addition I am concerned that as the applicant of this proposal is our elected Vale of Glamorgan Councillor it means that we have no Council representation, and that the very valid community concerns will not be fully and properly addressed, and would also question why it is being rushed through before the adoption of the LDP.

In conclusion I believe this application should be rejected on the grounds, it is speculative that it will be included in the LDP when adopted, it is overdevelopment 'outside' the current settlement boundaries, it includes a C2 flooding risk, will cause significant highways issues, is a loss of good agricultural land, hedgerows and trees and includes the loss of a community open space.

This is a major proposal that will have a long term significant consequences to the area.

Yours faithfully



Ann Barnaby

5th January 2016