

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council response to Redrow pre-application consultation for Proposed Residential Development, Land West of Windmill Lane (Bryn Melin) Cowbridge.

14th July 2022

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council held an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday 12th July 2022 at 6.00pm to review and consider a response to the Redrow pre-application consultation for Proposed Residential Development, Land West of Windmill Lane (Bryn Melin) Cowbridge.

In addition to Councillors there were a number of members of the public present and written statements had been received from members of the public.

After Councillors had expressed their views the **Council voted unanimously to strongly object** to the proposed development for the following reasons:

1. It appears that statements made by the developer and/or their agent cannot be relied upon.

On 11th November 2021 planning application number 2021/00956/FUL “Upgraded agricultural access” to “Land adjacent to The Windmills, St. Athan Road, Cowbridge” was approved.

The Agent for this application was RPS Planning & Development of 2 Callaghan Square, Cardiff, the same agent as for this current pre-application consultation.

The planning application included the following statements:

“The Thomas Trust owns the farmland adjacent to St Athan Road. The land is currently tenanted and used for the grazing and rearing of livestock (cattle). “

“It is therefore proposed that the existing agricultural access be upgraded with hard standing to allow for agricultural vehicles to easily pull off the highway into a newly created layby which would allow the driver/passenger to leave the farm vehicle safely and without causing any potential highway hazard before opening the gate to enter the field and the same when leaving to close the gate. “

The work has now been completed and appears to be as per the approved application but the nature of the work and the fact that it has been done immediately prior to the pre-application consultation for housing and the fact that the agent for both is the same would lead most reasonable people to conclude that the upgraded access is not for agricultural purposes as described but for the housing development. It should therefore have been included with the pre-application consultation and not done beforehand by submission of a separate planning application said to be for a different reason.

Also, a temporary footpath closure order was obtained which ended on 28 April 2022 but the public footpath remains blocked by a double fence. A permanent barbed wire fence plus a temporary Hellas fence.

This all suggests that statements made by the developer and/or their agent cannot be relied upon.

2. The Council is not convinced that additional housing is required in Cowbridge.

The large Taylor Wimpey development, Clare Garden Village, is far from complete and appears to be progressing quite slowly with apparently weak demand.

3. The local infrastructure is not adequate to support additional housing developments.

Schools, surgeries and parking cannot cope with additional demand.

In theory extra housing brings more money into the town with people shopping on the High Street and spending their cash in the restaurants and bars but without adequate parking this will not happen.

4. The proposed development will consume farmland currently used for rearing livestock.

The land is said not to be of high quality but it is nevertheless a greenfield site currently used for food production. Food security and locally sourced foods are being seen as more and more important.

5. The proposed development will seriously encroach upon the special Thaw valley landscape.

Local residents say that this field once held the status of being a Special Designated Landscape and that the fields around it are still in a Special Designated Landscape area.

There are long distant views over the Thaw valley which is a valuable area for wildlife habitats and species. and is popular with walkers. It would be a tragedy for any development to damage this area and its biodiversity in any way.

6. The sloping nature of the site is very problematic.

The steeply sloping site is liable to result in an ugly stepped development with retaining embankments and walls, particularly with the proposed density.

7. The proposed density is too great.

The proposed housing density is such that there is insufficient green space, insufficient garaging and insufficient parking for both residents and visitors. The proposed density together with the awkward topography is likely to lead to a visually unattractive development.

8. Vehicle access to the site is unacceptable.

Proposed vehicle access to the site is on a blind, narrow bend on a steep hill. This is already a dangerous bend. Putting a junction on this bend seems completely unacceptable even if sight lines are slightly improved. Reducing the speed limit will make no difference since vehicles already have to slow down to negotiate the bend.

The traffic survey quoted appears to be from 2011 which is clearly out of date. A new up-to-date survey is required.

9. Pedestrian, cyclist and wheelchair access to the site is unacceptable.

There are currently no pedestrian or cycle paths on St Athan Road and this does not seem to have been adequately addressed in the documents.

It is certainly not acceptable to rely upon paths from the site into Windmill Lane and Bessant Close.

Windmill Lane is a private, unadopted road. The residents have not given permission for it to be used as an access route for cyclists.

Also the documents seem to assume that the majority of people are willing and able to walk for 30 minutes to reach their destination rather than travel by car or bus. This is unrealistic.

Wheelchair access will be particularly problematic given the sloping nature of the site.

10. Concerns about flooding and drainage.

The area below the proposed site is boggy and frequently floods.

The documents refer to pumping sewage up to the main sewer in Windmill Lane. The residents are alarmed by this and many more details are required.