

**ADRODDIAD PENNAETH
CYNLLUNIO, CYFARWYDDIAETH
YR AMGYLCHEDD**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF
PLANNING, DIRECTORATE
OF ENVIRONMENT**

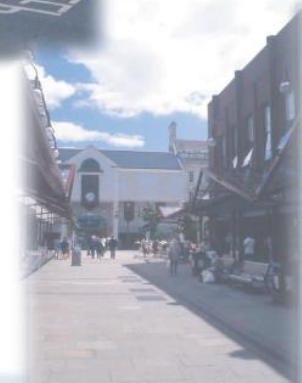
**AR GYFER PWYLLGOR CYNLLUNIO
CYNGOR SIR CAERFYRDDIN**

**TO CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL'S PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**AR 20 HYDREF 2020
ON 20 OCTOBER 2020**

**I'W BENDERFYNU
FOR DECISION**

***Ardal
Gorllewin/
Area West***



Mewn perthynas â cheisiadau y mae gan y Cyngor ddiddordeb ynddynt un ai fel ymgeisydd/asiant neu fel perchennog tir neu eiddo, atgoffir yr Aelodau fod yna rhaid iddynt anwybyddu'r agwedd hon, gan ystyried ceisiadau o'r fath a phenderfynu yn eu cylch ar sail rhinweddau'r ceisiadau cynllunio yn unig. Ni ddylid ystyried swyddogaeth y Cyngor fel perchennog tir, na materion cysylltiedig, wrth benderfynu ynghylch ceisiadau cynllunio o'r fath.

In relation to those applications which are identified as one in which the Council has an interest either as applicant/agent or in terms of land or property ownership, Members are reminded that they must set aside this aspect, and confine their consideration and determination of such applications exclusively to the merits of the planning issues arising. The Council's land owning function, or other interests in the matter, must not be taken into account when determining such planning applications.

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| COMMITTEE: | PLANNING COMMITTEE |
| DATE: | 20 OCTOBER 2020 |
| REPORT OF: | HEAD OF PLANNING |

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APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

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| Application No | W/39346 |
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|--------------------------------|---|
| Application Type | Full Planning |
| Proposal & Location | ONE PLANET DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE OF USE FROM FORESTRY TO RESIDENTIAL AND FORESTRY AT FLATWOOD, NEWCASTLE EMLYN, SA38 9RB |

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Applicant(s) | MR OLIVER WEIGHT |
| Case Officer | Helen Rice |
| Ward | Cenarth |
| Date registered | 23/08/2019 |

Reason for Committee

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee following a call-in request by Cllr Hazel Evans and following the receipt of more than one objection from third parties.

The application was initially considered by Members at the virtual Planning Committee on 16 July 2020 where it was deferred to enable further visual information of the site due to Covid19 restrictions on physical site visits. Additional visual information in the form of drone images have now been obtained and will be presented at the Planning Committee. Furthermore, during the debate on 16 July 2020, some Members suggested that there was insufficient information within the report although specifics were not provided. Nevertheless, the below report has been supplemented with additional information.

Site

The application site comprises a woodland area approximately 500m to the south east of the centre of the village of Cenarth. Whilst the site borders the main A484 along its northern boundary, access to this section of the woodland is gained via an existing access point from an unclassified highway to the south. The application site forms part of the north western end of a wider woodland area that extends towards the south east. Whilst at the time of the Officer's site visit there is no clear boundary feature delineating between the application site and wider woodland area, it is understood that the wider woodland is separately owned. Towards the north eastern end of the application site lies two residential properties known as 1 & 2 Flatwood which both front onto the A484

albeit their gardens extend towards the wider woodland area. These properties again are in separate ownership.

An existing track meanders through the undulating application site area which is currently characterised by the surrounding woodland and a network of small watercourses. The woodland mainly comprises Oak, Ash, Willow, Alder and Spruce. The site is not designated as an SSSI but is identified as forming part of an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.

Proposal

The proposal relates to a One Planet Development that is centred around the applicant's experience of woodland management and skills to create wood products including Windsor or Welsh stick chairs, stools, yurts, beds, timber framed buildings and including charcoal and firewood, all derived from the woodland itself. The proposals include various structures including:

- Feed store (for hay in relation to the working horses and other foodstuffs);
- Sawmill shelter;
- Polytunnel;
- Barn/Workshop (multifunctional space for timber framing, timber processing, running courses, fine woodworking and stores for sawn timber);
- Livestock shed;
- Forge/Metalshop, Root Cellar and Pottery – the applicant creates his own tools which are proposed to be done in the forge/metalshop over charcoal from the side, this building would also house a kiln in association with the intended pottery business
- Dwelling.

An existing shipping container on site currently used for the on site storage of forestry equipment could be used as temporary accommodation for the family to enable them to reside on the property whilst they erect the dwelling should planning permission be granted.

The application is supported by a detailed management plan as is a requirement for One Planet Development application that details the applicant's experience, proposals and how the development meets with the requirements of the Welsh Government One Planet Development Policy. The following provides a summary of the main elements of the management plan.

Land Based Activity

The submitted documentation specifies that within 5 years, 76% of the applicant and his family's basic food needs will be met from food produced directly from the land (53%) and food purchased using income generated from the land based activity (23%). Food produced directly from the land will derive from livestock (to include 2 pigs, 2 goats, 6 geese, chickens, ducks and sheep) and via the creation of a vegetable plot and polytunnel as soon as practicable once coppicing can take place to enable light to penetrate into the woodland.

In relation to the land based business initiatives proposed, the applicant already has a business, Weight-London Woodcraft that produces a variety of products, working mainly to commission including chairs, beds, timber framed buildings, yurts and shepherds huts, doors and window frames, hand dovetail drawers, bowls, stools, greenwood furniture, firewood and charcoal. In addition, educational services are also offered including green woodwork courses, tree felling and woodland work, carpentry and joinery, timber frame building design. It is intended that the products and services on offer would extend further should planning permission be granted, to include oak beams and gate posts, garden furniture and structures, woodchip as well as non-wood products such as sleep fleeces, felting and weaving, manure, clay oven making and fired pottery using clay from the site – along with complementary training courses. Full details are included in the Management Plan.

The applicant advises that the woodland at Flatwood offers a wide variety of species of trees that in turn provides a variety of opportunities to provide the wide range of products all from trees from the woodland itself. The Management Plan, includes a detailed breakdown of the products forming part of the business plan at pages 37 – 41 and indicates that all products can be made 100% from timber on the site. For instance the document explains that there is sufficient supply of Oak within the woodland to produce at least one or two timber frames for a house/car port/large shed per year for 25 years. The applicant has also further confirmed that based on his own experience as a craftsman that he is actually aware of the quality and quantity of material that is required to make each of his products to run a successful business and considers that there is enough timber growing on the site to sustain his woodcraft business for the rest of his life.

By way of an example, he has recently produced a bench from an Oak tree from Flatwood. The oak was felled, cleft and quartersawn by the applicant using the highest grade of oak from the butt of the tree, a short length of just 7meters but with the resultant product marketing for in excess of £1000, leaving a 6 meter saw log to mill up to create further products such as fenceposts etc, 1/4 cubic meters of fire wood to burn, a small pile of woodchip from the branches to add to the compost heap or use for horse bedding. In essence, he clarifies that his traditional craft of woodsmanship, once widely practiced in West Wales, adds value to every part of the tree. The applicant also advised that this level of sustainability, and resourcefulness only works effectively if the workshop and the homestead are on the same site, as they traditionally were. The management plan sets out the anticipated income derived from these activities suggesting a total annual income of £25,268.16 by Year Five, which exceeds meeting the minimum household needs which is calculated as £5,990.44 at year five which includes expenditure on clothing and footwear, IT/Communications, Travel, Council Tax and off-site food purchases. The management plan indicates that no additional labour is considered likely with a detailed breakdown of anticipated hours taken for key labour based activities split between the applicant and his wife. There is however the potential option for an apprentice to join the family.

Land Management

The application is centred around woodland management with the land based activity being effectively a by-product of that management but also supports improvements to the overall ecological value of the site. Management of the woodland in a sustainable manner is proposed with thinning enabling light to penetrate the woodland floor to

provide opportunities for re-growth whilst avoiding use of heavy machinery and relying upon working horses. The site has been effectively split into 7 different sections where different woodland management activities will take place as follows:

Compartments 1 – 5 – short rotation coppice comprising Ash, Sitka Spruce, Goat Willow, Beech, Alder, Birch, Larch, Fir and Oak – regular cuts producing a five- year rotation and a regular crop of useful material (firewood, kindling, charcoal, woodchip for bedding etc) and a return to more traditional forms of woodland management favoured by wildlife trust woodlands.

Compartment 6 – High forest – comprising Oak, Ash, Mixed Broadleaves with an understorey of Beech, Hazel and Holly - thinned over time in line with NRW felling licence (already obtained) and Continuous Cover Forestry practice (replicating the natural event of a tree falling in the woods by clearing a small area around the site of a mature crown each time such a tree is harvested), restocking through natural regeneration and some replanting from trees propagated on site from seed/cuttings – likely to favour Oak, utilising horse for extraction to minimise impacts on remaining woodland

Compartment 7 – High Forest/Wood Pasture – comprising Ash, Sitka Spruce, Goat Willow, Beech, Alder, Birch, Larch, Fir and Oak as above, but initially with greater felling to enable light penetration of woodland floor growth to support livestock grazing. Due to proximity to the rotation coppice sections of the woodland, it is anticipated that light penetration would promote side growth from dormant buds creating a type of timber known as 'Pippy Oak' that is highly prized by furniture makers.

The above proposals will be mindful of prevalent diseases such as Ash dieback.

The application is supported by an ecological survey that concludes that the proposal would represent opportunities to enhance existing biodiversity and the intended activities would not have a negative impact upon the nearby Afon Teifi Special Area of Conservation. The application has also been subject to supplemental information regarding protected species which conclude that the development has low potential to affect dormice populations.

Energy and Water

The applicant's existing solar system would be used to generate electricity and during the course of the development be duly upgraded with additional panels and storage to meet the electricity demands. Whilst some non-renewable sources will be required to operate chainsaws and the mill, mainly during the construction of the buildings. The applicant considers that the use of this is offset by the fact that no vehicle journeys would be required to transport the wood as it would be derived from the woodland. The majority of the products created are by hand only. Firewood and charcoal produced from the site will be the main fuel source for heating, whilst the dwelling has been designed to maximise solar gain.

The applicant aims to provide 100% of water needs directly from the land. Water for domestic needs, growing, irrigation and livestock will be met via on-site watercourses and rainwater harvesting. Drinking water will also be provided via one of the on-site watercourses that the applicant has recently been advised by contractors are more

than likely to be suitable for drinking water. There is also a spring within the village. A mains water pipe crosses the site which could be tapped into if deemed necessary. .

Waste

The management plan explains that all domestic food waste would be used for compost. Grey water would be passed through a wetland system, that would be sealed to prevent any contaminants permeating into the groundwater system. Human waste would be composted in a dry compost toilet, duly stored for two years and then used to mulch fruit trees and bushes in the orchard and forest garden. Green waste from growing food and timber would be composted on site with livestock manure used to improve and fertilize the soil. The applicants indicate that they are already minimising packaging and paper waste which will be even greater being self-sufficient, although it is recognised that where items cannot be used on site (e.g. batteries, old oil) waste will be disposed of appropriately at a Council waste recycling plant

Zero Carbon Buildings

All buildings are proposed to be zero carbon both in construction and use, through use of on-site materials, local stone for footings, straw/hemp/cob or natural fibre board for insulation, lime and/or clay render/timber cladding and slate roof. Full details of the construction process is set out in the management plan. All of the buildings are capable of being removed/recycled in the event of failure of the venture with limited environmental impacts.

Community Impact

The applicants at the time of the application were living nearby in a rented property in Boncath, they have since moved to an alternative rental property in the rural hamlet of Glogue, near Hermon. Their daughter remains to attend local education facilities in Cenarth. The applicant's wife is employed part time at a local agricultural college for students with special needs and frequently liaises with the local farming community. The applicant has already been working locally on restoration projects. The applicant is keen to involve the local community in their development through active participation in local events, discounted invitations to courses for local residents, open days, maintaining and sustaining local traditional crafts, shopping locally, using local craftsmen and contractors when necessary, their child is intended to attend the local primary school. Further details are included in the management plan.

Transport Assessment & Travel Plan

The application site is within easy walking distance of Cenarth and as such all normally daily trips are to be on foot, horse or bike (school, food, socialising). Whilst the applicant's wife will continue to work at the agricultural college and thus commuting trips will incur, these are intended to reduce as the development progresses and she becomes more involved in the land based activities. The applicant will utilise their working horses for both management and local trips. Due to the nature of the land based activity minimal trips will be required out of the site with deliveries or collection of items being occasional rather than frequent due to their production times.

Those attending courses will be encouraged to use sustainable forms of transport and will be encouraged to stay locally to avoid car trips.

Ecological Footprint Assessment

The submitted EFA indicates that the applicant's current footprint is 3.67 global hectares per capita, with this falling to 2.69 global hectares per capita upon first habitation and falling to 1.94 global hectares per capita after five years which would meet the target set out in TAN6 (2.4 global hectares per capita by year five with an overall target of achieving 1.88gHA/capita).

Phasing, Monitoring and Exit Strategy

A phasing programme is included within the management plan and is reproduced below for ease of reference:

Autumn/Winter 2019/2020

- Fell compartment 1
- Move container away from boundary and set back gate from lane
- Construction of horse shed,
- Purchase and siting of sawmill
- Begin planting of forest garden and orchard

Winter/Spring Summer 2020

- First 100m of track
- Feed store/temporary accommodation construction
- Establish Veg bed area

Winter 2020/21

- Fell compartment 2
- Harvest timber for barn

Spring/Summer 2021

- Begin groundworks and framing of barn

Autumn 2021

- Erection of barn frame
- Polytunnel construction

Winter 2021/22

- Fell compartment 3
- 2nd fix carpentry on barn

Spring/Summer 2022

- Dig footings for forge and begin building walls
- Sawmill shelter

Autumn/Winter 2022/23

- Fell compartment 4

Spring 2023

- Walls and trusses of forge
- Dig footings for Ty Coed
- Begin construction of dwarf wall for Ty Coed

Autumn /Winter 2023/24

- Fell compartment 5
- Harvest timber for Ty Coed

Spring /Summer 2024

- Begin framing of Ty Coed
- Finish dwarf wall and prepare for frame raising in spring 2025

The phasing programme is outdated due to delays in the planning application process and the originally anticipated start date but, in the event planning permission is granted the equivalent timescales would apply.

A commitment to provide an annual monitoring report is set out in the management plan that will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the development continues to meet with the strict guidelines set out in TAN6.

The management plan also includes an Exit Strategy as is required should the venture fail. The Management Plan details this as follows:

House : Porch and greenhouse dismantled, Timber frame dismantled and stored, recyclable materials sold, all natural non recyclable materials to be assimilated on site, all other materials removed and disposed of appropriately.

Horse shed, livestock shed, forge/root cellar : Roof and cladding removed and taken off site, timber frame dismantled and removed, high quality stone sold, remaining organic materials assimilated into the site.

Feed store and Barn : Left on site as agricultural buildings, and sold with the site.

Polytunnel : Plastic removed and saved if in good enough condition, timber frame dismantled and removed, remaining organic materials assimilated into the site.

This includes the removal of all structures or should it fail once permanent buildings are erected that options for someone else to take the site on as a One Planet Development are explored first subject to the necessary consents.

In addition to the management plan, the application is accompanied by a copy of the NRW's felling licence, obtained by the applicants for the woodland, that remains extant until February 2024.

Planning Site History

The following previous application has been received on the application site:-

W/40600 Proposed shed for working forestry horses at Flatwood,
Newcastle Emlyn, SA38 9RB
Forestry Prior Notification –
Prior Approval Not Required

01 June 2020

The above application was submitted after the submission of the application now before Members and replaced the horse shelter originally proposed within this application. The above application was assessed independently from this application under the Forestry Prior Notification Procedures and it was considered at that time that there was sufficient justification to warrant a building to house horses being used for the woodland's management.

Planning Policy

[Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan](#) (Adopted December 2014) ('the LDP')

Policy GP1 (Sustainability and High Quality Design)

Policy TR2 (Location of Development – Transport Considerations)

Policy TR3 (Highways in Development – Design Consideration)

Policy EQ1 (Protection of Buildings, Landscapes and Features of Historic Importance)

Policy EQ4 (Biodiversity)

[Carmarthenshire Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)

National Planning Policy and Guidance is provided in [Planning Policy Wales](#) (PPW) Edition 10, December 2018 and associated [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs) published by Welsh Government, specifically Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities.

<https://gov.wales/one-planet-development-practice-guidance>

Welsh Government Practice Guidance for One Planet Development (OPD) (2012) which provides practical guidance in support of TAN 6.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Head of Transportation & Highways – Has raised no objections in principle given the nature of the use although improvements to the visibility splays at the existing access will be required.

Cenarth Community Council – Objects to the development on grounds that it appears that the wider woodland within which this application is located, is being developed as a small settlement. Concerns raised about unauthorised development and other activities.

Local Member(s) - Councillor Hazel Evans has objected to the application on grounds that the proposal involves a number of buildings and there does not appear to be a need for them without having a detrimental effect on the ecology of the forest. In Cllr Evans' opinion, there is not enough forest to sustain the number of buildings and raises concerns on how the proposal fits within the One Planet Development policy. Cllr

Evans also raises concerns about the Habitat Survey and the effect of the development on the dense woodland which she regards as having special scientific interest. Cllr Evans requests that the application be determined by the Planning Committee.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) – Has raised various concerns over the course of the application regarding the impact of the development on the favourable conservation status of protected species, namely dormice, the need to ensure that the development would not have a significant effect on the River Teifi Special Area of Conservation, the need for a Construction Environmental Management Plan and foul drainage proposals. Through the course of the application, the applicant has sought to address the concerns raised, especially those relating to dormice and as a result, NRW has now confirmed that they raise no objections to the application subject to the imposition of various conditions to secure mitigation measures.

All representations can be viewed in full on our [website](#).

Summary of Public Representations

The application was the subject of notification by way of a site notice.

7 representations were received in total, 3 objecting and 4 in support. The matters raised are summarised as follows:-

Objections:-

- Increased risk of flooding to property due to felling of trees;
- No information to state how surface water run-off is to be treated;
- Lack of information relating to solid waste disposal;
- Woodland is rich with wildlife that will be disturbed and/or lost as a result of this development;
- No communication of proposals by the applicant with neighbours;
- Impact upon the local highway network, including noise and inconvenience for users of the highway;
- Loss of the woodland would decimate the existing country appearance opening up views from the countryside to the county highway;
- Unsustainable land to rear livestock;
- No input to the local community;
- Destruction of broadleaf wood and habitat;
- Insufficient woodland to sustain business and livestock management.

Support:-

- One Planet Developments are required to demonstrate increased biodiversity of the land, which this application will achieve and therefore objections on loss of biodiversity are unfounded.
- One Planet Developments are not a free for all application, but rather places significant burdens on the applicant for ongoing assessment of their impact on the land which they must demonstrate through an annual monitoring report. The applicant has sought to ensure that they comply with the policy and have a

commitment to ensure that they continue to meet the stringent tests and are aware that if they do not, they stand to lose the home and livelihood.

- Application should be considered on its own merits based upon the One Planet Development policy.
- Proposal represents opportunity for the woodland to be properly and sustainably and traditionally managed.
- Welcome addition to rural enterprise.
- The development and wildlife can exist side by side.

All representations can be viewed in full on our [website](#).

Appraisal

Whether the Proposal Satisfies National Planning Policy Requirements in Respect of One Planet Development

The proposal falls to be considered under national policy on One Planet Development in the countryside that is contained in Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities. Practice Guidance for One Planet Development (OPD) issued in October 2012 provides practical guidance in support of TAN 6. Whilst the Welsh Government supports the principle of low impact development it also places an emphasis on the need to ensure that it is properly controlled.

The Practice Guidance sets out the essential characteristics that all OPDs in the open countryside must have. These are that OPDs must:-

- have a light touch on the environment - positively enhancing the environment where ever possible through activities on site.
- be land based - the development must provide the minimum needs of residents in terms of food, income, energy and waste assimilation in no more than five years.
- have a low ecological footprint - the development must have an initial ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person or less with a clear potential to move to 1.88 global hectares per person over time - these are the ecological footprint benchmarked for OPDs over time.
- have very low carbon buildings in both construction and use.
- be defined and controlled by a binding management plan which is reviewed and updated every five years.
- be bound by a clear statement that the development will be the sole residence for the proposed occupants.

(para 1.9 One Planet Development Practice Guidance)

TAN6 requires proposals for OPD in the open countryside to quantify how the inhabitants' requirements in terms of income, food, energy, and waste assimilation can be obtained directly from site. The land use activities proposed must be capable of supporting the needs of the occupants, even on a low level or subsistence basis, within a reasonable period (no more than 5 years). This should be evidenced by a management plan produced by a competent person(s). The management plan should

set out the objectives of the proposal, the timetable for the development of the site and the timescale for review. It should be used as the basis of a legal agreement relating to the occupation of the site, should planning permission be granted. The content of the Management Plan will be assessed against the OPD guidance below.

The proposal will also be assessed against the relevant LDP policies, namely Policies GP1 (Sustainability and High Quality Design), TR2 (Location of Development – Transport Considerations), TR3 (Highways in Development – Design Consideration) and EQ 4 (Biodiversity).

Compliance with TAN6

The application is supported by all of the relevant documentation as required by TAN6 in support of One Planet Developments. The submitted Management Plan is the fundamental document that explains how the proposal complies with all of the various stringent tests set out in the TAN. These are assessed further below.

Land Based Activity

The land based activity element of the management plan centres on justifying the need to live on site and how the site will sustain occupants' minimum food needs and how income will be derived from the land, within the first five years of first habitation on the site. This is the basis of the need to live on site and the reason why the site should be the sole residence of occupants.

Food production – The Practice Guidance states that an OPD should be expected to be able to produce at least 65% of basic food needs on the site or a minimum of 30% on the site with the further 35% being purchased or bartered using the income or surplus produce from other produce grown (such as timber) or reared on the site.

The information provided in the management plan acknowledges that within the first few years the majority of the food needs derived from the site would be from livestock although it is intended that once the initial area is coppiced that food production via a vegetable plot and polytunnel will commence. Nevertheless, the applicant remains realistically cautious about food production due to the nature of the site being within a woodland and accepts that by year 5, 53% of their food needs will be grown from the site with up to 23% of their food needs being met using income from their land based activity. Whilst there are some reservations about the ability of the site to produce 53% of food needs, it is considered that this is a realistic target having regard to the applicant's statements within the management plan.

As such based on the information provided it is considered that there is a realistic prospect that the site could grow/rear or purchase using income derived from other produce grown and rear on the site, at least 65% of their food needs by Year 5.

Income - The guidance recognises that even if a site is able to support the majority of the occupants' basic food needs, it is expected that monetary income will need to be generated to enable the purchase of other basic needs, such as clothes, travel, IT/communications and Council Tax and the remaining food needs which cannot be grown or reared on the site or gained through bartering.

OPD's must earn their occupant's sufficient income to meet their minimum income needs through sales of produce from the site (which may involve processing and adding value). It may also include other income streams derived from the productive and regenerative capacity of the site, such as from training and education courses, or consultancy directly linked to land based activities on the site. The guidance stresses that these latter activities should be clearly subsidiary to the primary activity of growing and rearing produce.

The management plan sets out that the income proposed to be derived from land based activities could meet the applicants' minimum needs as outlined above. It is evident from the information submitted with the application that the applicant has vast experience of producing a varied range of wood products with different markets and income yields and there are prospects of further widening the services/ and crafts on offer as the site develops and the applicant's wife becomes more involved. The applicant has also explained that there is enough wood within the woodland to sustain the business for the rest of his life. It is considered based on the applicant's experience that there is reasonable prospect of the income quoted being created. However, there are concerns that the applicant is heavily reliant upon himself with limited contingency plans in the event of unforeseen circumstances. However, this is the case for any small self-employed business and as such, this would be a matter for monitoring during the course of the first 5 years, as acknowledged in the exit strategy. The monitoring process would ensure that the OPD targets in terms of food and income are being met and thus that the development is properly controlled.

Occupants – The intention of land based OPDs are to support the minimum food and income needs of the occupants. This is the main reason that justifies in planning terms, such developments. Therefore, it is of critical importance that the number of occupants is directly related to the ability of the site to support them and the number of people to run the site effectively.

The Management Plan explains that the applicant and his family would reside at the site as their sole residence, following leaving their current rented accommodation. As stated above, the information provided within the management plan in respect of food production and income is sufficiently detailed to conclude that, on balance, there is a realistic prospect of the site and proposed development being able to provide for the basic needs of the intended occupants.

In terms of labour requirements, the applicant will be heavily involved with his wife undertaking increasing labour requirements as the project continues. There is concern that the project appears to be highly reliant upon the applicant with limited contingencies in the event of unforeseen circumstances as referred to above. It is acknowledged that the applicant states he has previously trained apprentices and that this could be an option in this circumstance. The Management plan stipulates that such a post would likely be voluntary with possible financial remuneration via charitable bodies or trusts. However, this is not currently proposed and should this be necessary, adjustments would be done via the monitoring report and any required consents sought.

Land Management – Paragraph 3.37 of the Practice Guidance states that One Planet Development in the open countryside should have the objective of conserving, managing, and wherever possible, enhancing environmental quality. OPD's should

conserve and enhance the site's biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape. This may include improving soil organic matter, creation of ponds and increasing populations of pollinating insects and natural predators to pests and diseases.

The development is centred around management of the woodland in a more traditional and sustainable manner that seeks to enhance the site's biodiversity whilst also providing for the applicant's needs as required. The applicant has set out his experience of managing woodland elsewhere for a sustained period of time and thus has gained knowledge and experience sufficient to undertake the same at the site. Whilst it is accepted that the development will change the appearance of the woodland, particularly from the minor road to the south due to the short term rotation coppicing of the woodland that will open views into the site, the overall appearance of the area would remain to be primarily dominated by woodland with views of the structures from the south. The woodland area bordering along the main road will be largely managed to maintain coverage through traditional forms of felling as covered by NRW's felling licence. The form of woodland management proposed is considered to be far less damaging than more modern commercial woodland activities. The site is classed as an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and therefore consideration must be given to the impact of the development on this status. However, as referred to above, the proposal seeks to adopt a traditional approach to the management of the woodland and whilst there will be activity in the form of the construction of the various structures these are centred around an existing clearance area within the woodland at present. The views of NRW have been sought on the application, and they have raised no objection to the development and in any event, NRW have issued a felling licence that remains extant until February 2024.

In terms of impacts upon ecological interests and biodiversity, the applicant has sought to address the issues through the submission of an ecological report as required by TAN6. Whilst initial concerns were raised by NRW in relation to the impact of the development on Dormice, this has since been addressed through supplementary information to the extent that NRW no longer object to the development provided that the development is undertaken in accordance with the recommendations included in the submitted reports. NRW have raised no other objections to the development in terms of its impact upon protected species. The submitted ecological report concludes that there was no evidence of badger activity on the site surveyed with many areas being considered unsuitable for burrowing activity. Similarly, there was no evidence of otter activity found. The submitted report acknowledges that the felling of trees, albeit granted under a licence could impact upon bats. The ecological report includes various recommendations to increase bat roost provision within the site.

The development is within 400m of the Afon Teifi Special Area of Conservation and whilst a TLSE has been completed, this concludes that as the development relies upon mitigation measures to avoid impacts an Appropriate Assessment of the development will be required to be undertaken by the Council prior to issuing planning permission as such, any positive recommendation will be subject to the conclusion of an Appropriate Assessment for the development.

Energy and Water - Paragraph 3.53 of the Practice Guidance acknowledges that energy and water are both resources which development consumes, and so create environmental impact. It is an essential characteristic of OPD that the use of these resources is minimised and re-used wherever possible and that the energy needs of

inhabitants come from the site. The guidance indicates that this should also be the case for water, unless a more environmentally sustainable alternative can be demonstrated.

In terms of energy consumption, the Management Plan states that the applicants intend to meet their energy needs from the site, predominantly by generating electricity through the use of a solar photovoltaic array and fuel for cooking and water from the woodland itself. .

Paragraph 3.62 of the Practice Guidance states that *“all the water needs of all activities should be met from water available on site, unless there is a more environmentally sustainable alternative”*. The site is crossed by watercourses and it is anticipated that non-domestic water will be via these watercourses, as well as drinking water subject to the watercourse being duly tested albeit indications suggest that this will be possible. Nevertheless, the applicant comments that they currently utilise drinking water from the spring in the village and there is the potential to connect to the mains water supply that runs through the site should this be required.

The management plan therefore predicts that water needs can be adequately catered for on site. This will need to be reported in the annual monitoring.

Waste Assimilation – Waste produced by both domestic and other activities on site is likely to include, domestic food waste, grey water, human waste, packaging and paper, green waste from growing food and timber and livestock manures.

The practice guidance provides essential criteria for the assessment of waste on site. These states:-

- All biodegradable waste on site is assimilated on site in environmentally sustainable ways;
- The only exception to this is the occasional off-site disposal of small non-biodegradable amounts of waste which cannot be assimilated on site which arise from things used on site wearing out or breaking irreparably;
- All waste handling and assimilation on site must comply with Environment Agency guidelines (paragraph 3.75).

As detailed above, the applicants have set out how they intend on disposing waste to the extent that it is considered to meet the requirements of the practice guidance.

Zero Carbon Buildings

Para 3.105 of OPD Practice Guidance lists the essential criteria in respect of the environmental performance of proposed buildings:-

- Domestic and ancillary buildings will be ‘zero carbon’ in construction and using the up to date Welsh definition of zero carbon;
- Proposals will identify which structures require Building Regulations approval and is obtained either before or during construction;

- All structures identified for removal in the Exit Strategy are capable of removal with low environmental impact.

The guidance also states that the buildings should make as much use of recycled materials as much as possible.

The proposed structures are all proposed to be constructed from natural or recycled materials, the majority of which will be from the woodland itself or the local area, based on the following principles:-

- Stone foundation using local stone and traditional lime and earth mortars, keeping concrete to a minimum;
- Timber frames and cladding utilising wood from the woodland or other local woodland;
- Insulation/thermal mass infill wall; straw, hempcrete, cob or natural fibre board e.g. wood/wool;
- Lime and/or clay render;
- Welsh Slate Roof (house);
- Metal box profile roof (ancillary buildings).

The information submitted indicates that the dwelling and ancillary buildings will be constructed from onsite and/or local and natural materials.

The proposals for the proposed dwelling are considered acceptable subject to obtaining Building Regulations Approval the outcome of which can be detailed in future monitoring reports.

The Practice Guidance indicates that for the proposed development to be zero carbon in construction and use, OPD buildings must meet the standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) in respect of Category 3 (materials). This category covers five main elements of the building and an OPD home is required to achieve a rating of A+ or A6 for at least four of these elements. However, the guidance also recognises that many aspects of the CSH are not suited to assessing the overall sustainability of an OPD home. Consequently, it advises that where it can be demonstrated that materials without a recognised published rating would have similar attributes to materials this would be acceptable. A rating assessment of similar materials has been provided in support of the current application which indicates that the materials would meet the required standards. As such, and for the reasons set out above it is considered that on balance the development could be low carbon, both in construction and use.

Community Impact Assessment – The essential criteria are that:-

- There is a thorough assessment of all impacts of the proposal on neighbouring communities. One Planet Development in the open countryside should not impact negatively on neighbouring communities.
- Any negative impacts are mitigated.

The Management Plan includes an assessment of positive community impacts and mitigated negative impacts in association with the proposed development.

In terms of positive community impacts, these include involvement in community activities, educational establishments, facilities and services, discount rates for local residents for on-site training courses, open days and courses, maintenance of a permissive right of way, continue with local craft traditions, share skills gained from the development to support more sustainable means of living, learning Welsh and enhancing local biodiversity, culture and the landscape.

Negative community impacts are identified as being potentially the presence of structures within the woodland and traffic generation associated with construction phase for stone deliveries, and people attending courses and open days. In seeking to mitigate these negatives, the applicants explain that they have sought to site their structures in areas which can be screened by vegetation but also on areas that are cleared already. Whilst the presence of structures within the woodland will be evident, and may be more evident at times when the surrounding compartments are felled, it is considered that the overall impact of the development is not so significant to have a detrimental effect on the landscape. The structures would be viewed in the context of the wider woodland within which they would be situated and directly relate to their intended use. In terms of transport effects, the applicant offers discounts for those attending courses via public transport/foot and to locals.

The proposal will result in a change, as with any development, however it is considered that the impact of the development on the wider community has been duly covered by the applicant and complies with the requirements of the policy.

Transport Assessment and Travel Plan

In accordance with the practice guidance, the applicants' have provided the necessary assessment information in the form of a transport baseline, an assessment of movements proposed to and from the site (by car, public transport, horse, foot and cycle) along with a Travel Plan which details how vehicle movements can be minimised in respect of each activity the movement is associated with.

The information provided provides a breakdown of the type and frequency of trips per year upon establishment and occupation of the site and a breakdown of the average distances per trip. Strategies to minimise trip generation include combined/shared journeys, purchase of bulk products, using public transport, horse and cycling when possible.

The application site is within walking distance to Cenarth where there are various facilities, services and the local school. The applicant recognises that there will be a need to use a vehicle for the delivery of products, and these are primarily to be undertaken via their Land Rover running on biodiesel. Furthermore, it is considered that the current trips to the applicant's wife's place of work will diminish as the venture proceeds.

The annual monitoring report is required to detail annual movements to and from the site and look at ways to continually reduce these if the proposals in the Travel Plan are not met.

Ecological Footprint Analysis

PPW requires One Planet Development to initially achieve an ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person or less in terms of consumption and demonstrate clear potential to move towards 1.88 global hectares over time. The submitted EFA indicates the applicant would achieve this target by year 5. The applicants must provide the actual figures for assessment and scrutiny by the Council in the annual monitoring report. The results will be interpreted using the current practice guidance and OPD Ecological Footprint Calculator.

Phasing, Monitoring and Exit Strategy

The Management Plan contains a phased programme of works along with a monitoring and exit strategy that complies with the requirements of TAN6 as summarised above. It is considered that the proposed phasing of the development appears realistic and will enable the applicants to set up the venture to seek to meet their 5 year objectives. The applicant acknowledges that in the event that the venture may fail for either economic or personal reasons that structures can be removed from the site and recycled with any natural materials left being assimilated into the site where appropriate. The applicant does state that some landscaping features (tracks, ponds, planting, banks) would not be returned to their former state as this may result in adverse biodiversity impacts. In addition, it is possible that the OPD could be transferred to another person, although this would have to be the subject of an application to amend to the Management Plan to reflect the change and to ensure that the new occupant can meet the OPD requirements.

In any event, the progress of the development will be annually monitored. Commitments which have not been reached will have to be evidenced in the annual monitoring report. Critical failures need to be remedied with solutions and of how quickly they can be achieved. The Council will assess the monitoring report criteria outlined in the practice guidance. The applicant sets out their commitment to provide this monitoring report in the management plan.

Compliance with ODP Policy

In summary therefore, the applicant has addressed the main principles of the One Planet Development Policy set by Welsh government, and following an assessment it is considered that there is a reasonable prospect that the applicant will meet all the various objectives of the policy. It will of course be the subject of on-going monitoring to ensure continued compliance however, based on the information submitted, it is considered, on balance that the proposal complies with the policy requirements of TAN6 in relation to One Planet Developments.

Other material planning considerations

Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

The proposal will introduce built form into the existing woodland and activity associated with the woodland management and associated residential use coupled

with a change in the tree coverage. However, in terms of the tree coverage, a felling licence has already been issued for the site by NRW and in any event, planning permission for the felling of trees is not required. In terms of the built form, whilst this will be a change, it is considered that the overall scale, design, siting, coverage by existing vegetation and use of natural materials will assimilate the development into the wider area without having a detrimental impact upon the wider character and appearance of the area. The structures will primarily only be visible from the unclassified highway to the south and would in any event be viewed within the wider context of the woodland and thus complies with policy GP1 of the LDP.

Residential Amenity

There are nearby properties within the vicinity of the site which will experience a change in comparison to the current situation due to increased activity within the woodland. However, given the intended nature of the development, minimising the use of machinery and using horses to aid extraction and that the proposed dwelling and other structures are situated approximately 150m from the nearest existing residential dwelling, the development is not considered to give rise to unacceptable impacts upon living conditions and thus complies with policy GP1 of the LDP.

Highway Impacts

The submitted management plan has gone into some detail about the transport implications of proposal which are not discussed further here. However, in terms of the access provision, the development will utilise an existing access into the woodland from the unclassified highway. No other accesses are proposed. The existing access is substandard with limited visibility and the proposal will result in an increase in use of this access. However, given the nature of the development that is based on a requirement to minimise vehicular movements, it is considered on this occasion that visibility splays associated with the Council's typical layout for agricultural access would be acceptable and are achievable. As such, it is not considered that the proposed development would have unacceptable highway impacts and complies with policy TR3 of the LDP.

Flood Risk/Drainage

The application site is not within a flood risk area, however, concerns raised by local residents regarding the downstream impacts of the development, principally the felling of trees upon drainage are acknowledged. However, it is the case that planning permission is not required for the felling of the trees and this is rather governed by the felling licence which is already in place. Therefore, the only drainage matters that can be considered relates to the physical alterations to the land through the creation of ponds etc and construction of structures. The Authority's drainage team have been consulted on the application and raise no objections to the proposal. Furthermore, since the original report for the application was written, the Sustainable Drainage Body (SAB) consent for the development has been approved.

Third Party representations

Representations have been received objecting to the proposed development. The concerns raised by objectors have been addressed in the preceding paragraphs of the report.

Planning Obligations

The applicant is aware that should Members be minded to grant planning permission that they will need to enter into a Section 106 agreement to tie the dwelling to the land and include a commitment that the dwelling will be the sole residence of the occupants.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The decision considers the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act). The decision takes into account the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act and it is considered that this decision is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Conclusion

The proposed development complies with Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010) and the accompanying One Planet Development Practice Guidance and policies GP1, TR3, EQ4, EQ5, of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan Adopted 2014 ('the LDP') in that the proposal is supported by sufficient information to demonstrate that there is a strong prospect that the proposal would substantially meet the One Planet Development criteria within the required timescales. The submitted information indicates that the development would achieve the overall target of 1.88 global hectares per person as set out in the One Planet Development policy and practice guidance documents. The proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area and includes various proposals to improve the site's environment and biodiversity and would not have an unacceptable impact upon the living conditions of nearby residents. It is also not considered that the development would result in unacceptable impacts to highway safety and would not create unacceptable drainage/flood risk implications.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the completion of the Appropriate Assessment process, the applicants entering into and completing a section 106 agreement and the following conditions:

Recommendation – Approval

Conditions and Reasons

Condition 1

The development hereby approved shall be commenced before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Condition 2

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents, unless otherwise stipulated by conditions:-

- 1:1250 scale Location Plan and Access [A01];
- 1:100 scale Floor Plan & Elevations Polytunnel [H01];
- 1:20 scale Floor Plan & Elevations Sawmill Shelter [I01];
- 1:200 scale Floor Plans & Elevations Barn [C01];
- 1:100 scale Floor Plans & Elevations Feed Store [E01];
- 1:100 scale Floor Plans & Elevations Forge [G01];
- 1:10 scale Floor Plans & Elevations Livestock Shed [F01];
- 1:100 scale Floor Plans & Elevations Ty Coed [B01];
- 1:500 scale Proposed Works to Gateway and Entrance [A04];
- Ecology Survey report by Landsker;
- Crop Lists;
received 4 August 2019;
- M.avellanarius Assessment and Impact Report;
Received 24 January 2020;
- 1:1250 scale proposed Layout Plan;
- 1:1250 scale Proposed Layout with Land use;
- Flatwood One Planet Development Management Plan by Oliver, Lily and Poppy Weight- London;
received 22 June 2020.

Reason: In the interest of clarity as to the extent of the permission.

Condition 3

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in full accordance with the Flatwood One Planet Development Management Plan (including the objectives, phasing and monitoring requirements) by Oliver, Lily and Poppy Weight- London received 22 June 2020

Reason: To ensure commitment and compliance with the objectives of TAN6 and the One Planet Development Practice Guidance and to avoid the creation of an unencumbered dwellinghouse in the open countryside contrary to national and local planning policies.

Condition 4

No later than 1 April each year, commencing in the second year after development commences, the occupiers of the site shall submit to the Local Planning Authority an Annual Monitoring Report giving details of the activities carried out during the previous

calendar year (1 January to 31 December), setting out performance against the One Planet Development essential criteria as stated within the One Planet Development Management Plan by Oliver, Lily and Poppy Weight- London received 22 June 2020. Where the report identifies that the expected performance targets against any of the essential criteria has not been met, the report shall also set out corrective or mitigating measures sufficient to address the identified deficiencies in performance. These measures shall be implemented, in full and within the timescales stated, as set out in the report and shall form the basis of assessment, along with the original One Planet Development Management Plan for the subsequent Annual Monitoring Report.

Reason: To ensure commitment and compliance with the objectives of TAN6 and the One Planet Development Practice Guidance and to avoid the creation of an unencumbered dwellinghouse in the open countryside contrary to national and local planning policies.

Condition 5

The use of the proposed temporary accommodation (shipping container) for residential purposes shall permanently cease upon first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved. Upon cessation of the residential use, the temporary accommodation (shipping container) shall thereafter only be used for non-residential uses associated with the woodland management or shall be permanently removed from the application site.

Reason: To ensure commitment and compliance with the objectives of TAN6 and the One Planet Development Practice Guidance and to avoid the creation of an unencumbered dwellinghouse in the open countryside contrary to national and local planning policies.

Condition 6

The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with Section 8 and Appendix 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Landsker Ecology dated July 2019 and received 4 August 2019.

Reason: To ensure commitment and compliance with the objectives of TAN6 and the One Planet Development Practice Guidance and to avoid the creation of an unencumbered dwellinghouse in the open countryside contrary to national and local planning policies.

Condition 7

The existing vehicular access shall be improved to comply with the Council's Typical Layout for Agricultural Access Standards (Unclassified Roads) (specification for which is attached to this planning permission), prior to the commencement of the construction works of any of the proposed structures hereby approved. Thereafter it shall be retained, unobstructed, in this form in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

Notes/Informatives

Note 1

Please note that this consent is specific to the plans and particulars approved as part of the application. Any departure from the approved plans will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action. You (or any subsequent developer) should advise the Council of any actual or proposed variations from the approved plans immediately so that you can be advised how to best resolve the matter.

In addition, any Conditions which the Council has imposed on this consent will be listed above and should be read carefully. It is your (or any subsequent developers') responsibility to ensure that the terms of all Conditions are met in full at the appropriate time (as outlined in the specific condition).

The commencement of development without firstly meeting in full the terms of any Conditions which require the submission of details prior to the commencement of development will constitute unauthorised development. This will necessitate the submission of a further application to retain the unauthorised development and may render you liable to formal enforcement action.

Failure on the part of the developer to observe the requirements of any other Conditions could result in the Council pursuing formal enforcement action in the form of a Breach of Condition Notice.

Note 2

Comments and guidance received from consultees relating to this application, including any other permissions or consents required, is available on the Authority's website (www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk).

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| APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL |
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|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Application No | PL/00101 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|

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| Application Type | Full Planning |
| Proposal & Location | REPLACEMENT SINGLE STOREY DWELLING, BRODAWEL, LLANARTHNE, CARMARTHEN, SA32 8JD |

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Applicant(s) | NIA THOMAS |
| Case Officer | Gary Glenister |
| Ward | Llanddarog |
| Date registered | 25/08/2020 |

Reason for Committee

The application is being reported to Committee at the request of the Local Member.

Site

The application site is an existing dwelling in open countryside approximately 205m South of the edge of the village of Llanarthne. Llanarthne is a rural village approx 11km East of Carmarthen in the Towy valley. The site is north of a cluster of five properties without a defined settlement limit, the closest property is some 60m away.

The site has a road frontage of approximately 18m opening out to 27m width at the rear of the site and a depth of approximately 91m. The existing dwelling is of a modest scale being approximately 67sqm in footprint and single storey in character with a half hip roof design.

The existing dwelling is set to the front of the plot just off the highway with a large garden to the rear that is defined by clear hedge boundaries. The garden area appears to have been largely cleared of trees and vegetation however there is a large tree towards the rear of the site which is proposed to be retained as part of the development.

Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for a replacement dwelling of the site. The proposed dwelling is of a single storey design, however is considerably larger than the existing, being some 277sqm in floor area.

The proposal includes three large bedrooms, one with attached ensuite and dressing room, home office, kitchen, dining room, utility room, lounge and integral double garage.

The replacement dwelling is proposed to be set further into the site with a relocated access where the existing dwelling now stands. The site opens out to the rear so the repositioning would allow more space for the dwelling and allow a new access to be further away from a bend in the highway to the benefit of highway safety.

Planning Site History

D4/13925 Vehicular access
 Refused
1986

11 September

Planning Policy

Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (Adopted December 2014) ('the LDP')

SP1 Sustainable Places and Spaces
SP2 Climate Change
SP14 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
GP1 Sustainability and High Quality Design
GP2 Development Limits
H4 Replacement Dwellings

Carmarthenshire Supplementary Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy and Guidance is provided in [Planning Policy Wales](#) (PPW) Edition 10, December 2018 and associated [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs) published by Welsh Government.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Head of Transportation & Highways – has no objection subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Llanarthne Community Council - No observations received to date.

Local Member(s) - Councillor A Davies has requested the application be reported to Committee as the size of the proposed dwelling is not overly large and sits neatly within the plot.

Natural Resources Wales – has no objection to the proposed development.

All representations can be viewed in full on our website.

Summary of Public Representations

The application has not received any third party representations from neighbours.

Appraisal

The proposal is for a replacement dwelling in the open countryside so is covered by Policy H4 of the LDP.

Siting

The proposal is set back within the plot however the re-positioning is considered acceptable as the repositioning of the access is considered a highway safety gain. The position of the replacement dwelling is therefore not in contravention of Policy H4 a).

Scale

It is noted that the existing dwelling is modest so a reasonable increase in footprint would be acceptable, however the proposal is 277sqm compared with approx 67sqm for the existing. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy H4 d) in that the scale is considered to be disproportionately larger than the modest existing dwelling.

Planning Obligations

There are no planning obligations as the proposal is a replacement dwelling and would not therefore result in a net increase in units.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The decision considers the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act). The decision takes into account the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act and it is considered that this decision is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Conclusion

After careful consideration of the site and surrounding environs, it is considered that whilst the principle of a replacement dwelling is acceptable and the position would be a highway safety gain, the scale of the proposal is disproportionately larger than the existing dwelling and it is therefore not in compliance with Policy H4 of the Local Development Plan.

Recommendation – Refusal

Reasons for Refusal

The proposal does not comply with Policy H4 d) of the Local Development Plan in that the scale of the replacement dwelling is considered to be disproportionately larger than the original dwelling to the detriment of the character and appearance of the open countryside.