

Comment Number 1044

Mrs Haf Madoc Wilson [263]

Comments for hearing session 11.

- a. Comment number 1044, Map 7 – Porthmadog.
- b. Existing site use: agriculture/no use.
Proposed use: housing
- c. Size of site: 0.4 Ha
Up to 14 units are proposed, a figure based on 35 units per hectare.
- d. Timescales. It is expected that the houses could be supplied within 4 years.
- dd. The site should be allocated for housing.
- f. The alternative site would contribute towards the plan's aims and objectives:

Theme 1: Support and create safe, healthy, distinctive and vibrant communities

- Safeguard the Welsh language by supplying affordable housing for the residents of Porthmadog. Community infrastructure is in place to cope.
- Close links with the town centre on foot, by bicycle and public transport.

Theme 2: Sustainable living

- There is no flood risk to the site and, therefore, there would be no need to mitigate any impacts due to climate change.

Theme 3: Support growth and regeneration

- Contribute to a vibrant and prosperous Porthmadog town centre by supplying houses for the town's residents

Theme 4: To give everyone access to a home appropriate to their needs

- The site would provide a supply of houses in a sustainable location, a mix of high quality houses which are also affordable.

Theme 5: Protect and enhance the natural and built environment

- No designated sites in relation to the environment or monuments would be affected.

e/ff:

The site is located within 500m of Porthmadog town centre, and within 650m of Porthmadog High Street. It is noted that there are currently houses located within the development boundary, to the north, which are further from the centre and facilities than this alternative site.

A bus stop with a regular service is located near the site entrance on the highway, and a pavement runs all the way to the town. There is also a short pedestrian or cycle link to Borth y Gest to the south, and to Porthmadog by following the path to Garth Road.

The site is within 100m of the Borth y Gest development boundary, and is within 50m of Porthmadog's development boundary. It is surrounded by houses in all directions, and is within 100m of Borth y Gest's development boundary and 50m of Porthmadog's boundary.

The site is surrounded by a built environment, and the development of the site would not create a single site in the countryside. There are two dwellings opposite the entrance to the highway. From the entrance, a number of houses are located to the north towards Porthmadog, and to the west towards Morfa Bychan. 50m to the east there is an unbroken chain of houses towards Porthmadog. The first dwelling in the Borth y Gest built area is located 70m to the south.

It is considered that developing the site for housing would not create a single, unconnected site, but rather a site that would become part of the existing built environment which is linked to Porthmadog town.

The plan has not allocated land for housing in Porthmadog as it is believed that all the suitable sites are located on the flood plains, and consequently, it is intended to move the housing allocation for Porthmadog to other locations such as Penrhyndeudraeth and Cricieth.

This conclusion is disputed as this site is suitable for housing and satisfies the sustainability and environmental criteria. This site would provide housing to meet the town's needs. Providing a housing supply for Porthmadog's residents in Penrhyndeudraeth and Cricieth would lead to an increase in commuter travelling and car usage by residents and their families, to schools, shops etc., and would decrease sustainability.

The Council has stated a concern about the topography, the "topographical problems that will affect the deliverability of the site". No further evidence or information has been submitted to expand on this assertion.

It is not uncommon to construct houses on uneven ground, there are examples in Porthmadog (Awel y Grug above Penamser Road), Dolgellau and Cricieth (Morannedd) for example, and this would be no obstacle to experienced architects, engineers and builders. Houses could be located on different levels, creating flat areas for parking/gardens, with link roads. It would be a matter of good design and planning to ensure that the development was suitable for the site. Pre-planning advice could be sought to ensure that the houses were acceptable in relation to numbers, affordability needs and design.

To the west of the site there is woodland which runs along the road to Borth y Gest. The trees screen the site very effectively from external viewpoints. It is important to note that the woodland along the western boundary is under the same ownership as the alternative site. It is proposed that the trees should be retained in order to ensure that there would be no increase in the visual impact. There would be no objections to conditions to retain the trees, or even to a tree preservation order. The trees also contribute to biodiversity.

The Council states that there is poor access to the site. No evidence has been submitted by a Council engineer or Highways Officer. The existing entrance has good visibility with at least 100m in both directions, and is within a 30 mile per hour zone. A design that satisfies the acceptable standards would ensure adequate access following the renovation and expansion. The land surrounding the

entrance is under the same ownership as the alternative site, which would facilitate the improvements. A path for pedestrian access along the footpath could be ensured.

g. A sustainability appraisal has been previously submitted.

Conclusion

The inspector is respectfully requested to include the alternative site in the Local Development Plan as:

- it is totally suitable to meet Porthmadog's housing needs and will reduce the burden on services in Penrhyndeudraeth and Cricieth;
- it is not located on a flood plain;
- it has good links and is close to Porthmadog town centre on foot or by public transport;
- the site would form a natural part of the built environment which surrounds it in all directions;
- the topography does not pose an obstacle to the development of the site;
- the site would not be visible from external vistas;
- the site would contribute towards the plan's strategic objectives;
- the site would be acceptable according to a sustainability appraisal.