

## **CAERPHILLY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION**

### **HEARING SESSION 5: FORMER BEDWAS COLLIERY**

**Prepared by Boyer Planning on Behalf of R.E Phillips and Partners  
In respect of Bedwas Colliery HG1.64 2049.A6**

#### **Background to submitted Representations**

1. Representations were previously submitted on behalf of R.E. Phillips & Partners supporting the deletion of Bedwas Colliery for housing under allocation HG1.64 (2049.A6). The removal of the site and replacement with alternative sites that are deliverable within the plan period would contribute towards addressing the unsoundness in the housing strategy which we have identified in our representations to Policy SP16 (C2, CE1, CE2 and CE4).

2. The following document has previously been submitted and is relevant to this Hearing Statement:

- Alternative site submission HG1.64 (2049.A6)

#### **Delivery within the Plan Period**

3. We are aware that there will be detailed discussions on the extent to which delivery of the site is achievable within the plan period based on removing numerous technical constraints and the availability of grant. As such we have considered the ability of the site to deliver housing within the plan period on a number of scenarios related to the availability of grant:

##### Scenario 1

4. A best case scenario for the delivery of the site, would be based on all technical constraints being overcome, with funding in place immediately and all relevant documentation, approvals and developers would be in place at the earliest opportune moment.

5. Should the site be allocated in the LDP and comprehensive, upfront commitment to funding is in place by the Welsh Assembly Government (to which has been no indication of commitment to date), then it would be reasonable for the Council / landowner to commence working up a planning application by the end of 2010.

6. A minimum period of around 12 months should be allowed for preparation of all relevant studies and an Environmental Impact Assessment. This would also need to allow for a master planning exercise which the Welsh Assembly Government would require to involve local stakeholders and groups. Thus such a period is considered highly optimistic in light of the many technical constraints that would need to be assessed in order to prepare a scheme that would be satisfactory to form an outline application, as well as the procedures for procurement of services that would need to be adhered to (OJEU tender notices).

7. In addition, in light of the significance of the considerations and likely objections a period of at least 6 months should be assumed for determination of the

application by the Council and we assume that outline planning permission would be received no earlier than mid 2012. Although in light of known Councillor objections (evidenced by the removal of the site in by Councillors at the Focussed Changes stage) an additional period for a potential s78 Appeal could be needed.

8. Assuming an Appeal is not required, it is our view that a further period of up to 4 years would be required in order to undertake all of the following:

1. comprehensive ground remediation measures (although we are aware that funding may be phased over a period of up to 10 years) ;
2. prepare and secure the relevant Compulsory Purchase Order;
3. marketing and disposal of development parcels;
4. prepare and approve Reserved Matters applications;
5. discharge all relevant pre commencement conditions;
6. secure approvals for and install pre commencement infrastructure works.

9. Based on these requirements, the commencement of residential development under this most optimistic scenario is unlikely until at least 2016, with first completions during 2017. This is wholly reliant upon early commitment to funding and assuming that all technical constraints can be satisfactorily overcome. This aspect will no doubt be subject to separate scrutiny and we are aware that little evidence has been provided to date by the Council to give any confidence that this is achievable.

10. If it is assumed that the site achieves 25 completions during 2017 and 40 to 60 per annum between 2018 and 2021 then there would be 185 to 265 completions during the plan period – significantly below the requirement for 600. This level of completions is appropriate based on general delivery rates in the area. Indeed, within the most recent Joint Housing Land Availability Study, Windsor Colliery is identified as being 40 dwellings per annum and Penallta Colliery is around 38 to 50 completions over the next three years.

### Scenario 2

11. Based on the above considerations, if grant funding is not in place until say 2014, then it would be likely that planning consent for an outline application would not be achieved until mid 2015. There would then be a further period of around 4 years whilst the matters at para.8 (above) are dealt with. Based on this we would expect first completions during 2020 (25 units) and a further 40 in 2021. This would equate to around 65 units during the plan period.

### Scenario 3

12. There are considerable uncertainties surrounding grant funding and technical constraints. If there is no commitment to grant support by 2016 then there would be no prospect of any completions during the plan period. The nature of technical constraints means that delays could be experienced at any stage of the process.

### Scenario 4

13. As noted earlier, the scheme is wholly reliant upon grant funding. As noted at para.8, grant funding may be made over a longer phased period. Should this be the case then it is unlikely that any completions could be achieved during the plan period.

### **Experience of deliverability of similarly constrained schemes**

14. There are numerous examples of similar schemes across the South Wales Valleys, former industrial sites, subject to significant constraints and dependent upon public sector intervention. We consider several of these below in terms of the potential implications for the delivery of Bedwas Colliery.

#### *Coed Ely, North of Llantrisant Rhondda Cynon Taf*

15. The remediation of Coed Ely site commenced in 1990 and was completed in 2008. A master planning exercise, led by the Welsh Assembly Government took a further 18 months. The former Colliery and Coking works site, like Bedwas Colliery, has been subject to considerable constraints and in need of major remediation works. It should be noted that there is currently no committed development for the site. Although it is employment rather than mixed use, this demonstrates the significant lead in times for development in situations where funding is in place.

#### *Newport Sites*

16. There are several large brownfield sites in and around Newport subject to significant contamination constraints that have remained undeveloped despite being longstanding allocations within the Development Plan framework. These include major sites at Llanwern Steelworks, within the City Centre, and Monmouthshire Bank Sidings and the Whiteheads Steelworks. These are sites that need significant remediation and infrastructure investment, where there has been limited evidence of deliverability.

#### *Ely Bridge, Cardiff*

17. The brownfield site was acquired by the WDA in 2002. Whilst an outline planning consent (subject to s106) was achieved in 2006, the site remains undeveloped despite being located in a generally sought after housing market where demand is relatively high. There is no prospect of commencement of development within the short term.

#### *Phurnacite Plant, Abercwmboi*

18. The plant is identified for 500 houses, it has been vacant since 1991 and partial land reclamation has been carried out. However, there remains a significant amount of reclamation work to be undertaken and there is no prospect of development commencing in the medium term.

#### *Penallta Colliery, Ystrad Mynach*

19. The colliery in Ystrad Mynach closed in 1992. Development on site did not start until 2005, further indication of the significant lead in times for development. Since then there have been around 200 completions (out of 525 private market dwellings). This has equated to around 40 completions per annum.

#### *Ebbw Vale Steelworks*

20. The steelworks site ceased production in 2002, Grant aid was subsequently secured from the Welsh Assembly. The Council purchased the site in 2005 and started reclamation work immediately, with outline planning approval in July 2007. Reclamation work is believed to be nearing completion as of 2010 and the infrastructure programme is planned over an 8 to 10 year period. The development includes 720 houses. The site is identified within the (now out of date) JHLAS as delivering 40 to 50 dwellings per annum.

21. The above examples of similar, large scale brownfield sites demonstrate a number of key elements:

- the importance of public sector investment. It is evident that these sites would not be deliverable without commitment to grant funding;
- lead in times for development are significantly greater than for an unconstrained Greenfield site - often 10 to 20 years from securing funding, resolving land ownership, and achieving necessary consents to the point of first completions on site;
- build out times are generally likely to be longer than more favourable market areas.

## **Summary**

22. Based on a best case scenario, we believe that there could be around 185 completions within the plan period on the subject site. However, that would assume that funding is currently available, all constraints can be overcome and all consents and approvals are in place at an opportune moment. It also assumes a level of housing completions that is significantly above existing or past levels achieved.

23. However, there is no current commitment to funding by the Welsh Assembly Government. Nor is there any reason to believe that this would be secured over the next few years. In which case the likely level of completions would diminish significantly over the plan period. Indeed, evidence of similar schemes which have been heavily reliant upon grant aid from the public sector demonstrate the very long lead in times for development where major remediation works are required.

24. In light of the significant constraints we do not believe that there is any prospect of the site achieving its required 600 dwellings over the plan period. Indeed, a best case scenario would be delivery of around 185 units which would result in a major shortfall. The extent to which this is achievable based on the known issues is highly questionable and the strategy would be unsound to assume any completions in the plan period.

**MJR / 06.805**  
**April 1, 2010**