

Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan Examination
Hearing Session 6 - Transportation

Representations 2630 on behalf of Wellstride Ltd

- 1.1 My name is Alun Rees and I hold a Bachelor of Engineering (Hounours) degree in Civil Engineering from Glamorgan University. I am a Chartered Member of the Institution of Logistics and Transportation and a Member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
- 1.2 I am currently a director of Acstro Ltd., a transport planning consultancy. Until 2008 I was a Director of DLP Transportation Ltd. and was responsible for preparing a Transport Assessment and negotiating highway related S106 issues on behalf of the applicant (Wellstride Ltd) in relation to the land that has now been granted planning permission for HG1.16.
- 1.3 I have been asked by Wellstride Ltd. to comment on the questions raised by the Inspector in relation to the Aberbargoed to Bedwellty Relief Road. I understand that the following queries have been raised:

TR 7.1 Aberbargoed to Bedwellty Relief Road.

- What evidence exists to demonstrate the justification for this scheme?
- What is the overall estimated cost and how will it be funded?
- What is the timescale for delivery - and is there sufficient certainty that this can be achieved?
- Is there sufficient certainty that the proposed scheme can be accommodated between the land granted planning permission for HG1.16 and the adjacent Bedwellty spoil heap?

What evidence exists to demonstrate the justification for this scheme?

- 1.4 In support of the planning application granted permission in 2009 (HG1.16) DLP Transportation prepared a Transport Assessment that considered the impact of development generated traffic on the surrounding highway network and in particular on the Bedwellty Road / Commercial Street signal controlled crossroads in the centre of Aberbargoed. The conclusion of the Transport Assessment was that the proposed development land could accommodate up to 350 dwellings without causing capacity problems at the signal-controlled crossroads. The Transport Assessment adopted an assessment year of 2021.
- 1.5 The Transport Assessment was accepted by officers. I understand that the Council's position now is that the spare capacity of the junction has since been taken up by traffic generated by committed developments. In order for the Council to take this position I would expect that detailed analysis of those committed developments, the volume of traffic that they generate and the distribution of that traffic on local roads has been undertaken. Without such detailed analysis it is impossible to say with certainty whether traffic generated by distant development will be routed through this junction and what the impact of that traffic upon it will be. On behalf of my client, I would like to reserve the right to comment on this information if and when it becomes available.
- 1.6 The need or otherwise of the relief road is therefore questionable given that recent (2007) detailed analysis demonstrated that the junction in the middle of the village had significant spare capacity and did not need to be eased by a relief road.

- 1.7 Furthermore, as far as I am aware there has been no detailed assessment of alternative methods to accommodate traffic growth e.g. the provision of MOVA signal control at the junction, which adjusts the timing of the signals in response to actual traffic demand. These systems can provide a capacity saving of up to 20% when compared with standard, fixed cycle signals. Other measures that could form a package of initiatives aimed at reducing car borne traffic would be improvements to public transport, cycle and pedestrian links and the adoption of Travel Plans.

What is the overall estimated cost and how will it be funded?

- 1.8 As part of the planning application now granted detailed assessment of the alignment and cost of the relief road were undertaken. Our cost estimates were limited however to the portion of the relief road that runs through Wellstride's land. Detailed costings were provided to the Council and formed the basis of the agreed £1Million S106 contribution.
- 1.9 Detailed costings were not undertaken by DLP Transportation of the portion of relief road to the south west of Wellstride's land. However the allocation of additional land for development (As being promoted by Wellstride Ltd Ref: E70) would allow further developer contributions to be sought should the need for the Relief Road be demonstrated, in order to enable the relief road greater probability of being delivered. Alternatively such contributions could be directed toward other transport improvements deemed necessary both to support the allocation of land and in order to address any existing transportation issues in this area.

What is the timescale for delivery - and is there sufficient certainty that this can be achieved?

- 1.10 I have no comment to make in relation to this question, other than to state that the allocation of the additional land provides the opportunity to secure transport improvements, in whatever form they may be deemed necessary, at an earlier stage.

Is there sufficient certainty that the proposed scheme can be accommodated between the land granted planning permission for HG1.16 and the adjacent Bedwelty spoil heap?

- 1.11 Detailed alignment design was undertaken by DLP Transportation in order to satisfy our client and the Council that sufficient land was set aside to enable the delivery of the relief road.
- 1.12 The Masterplan for the proposed allocation (as enclosed in the evidence on behalf of Wellstride Ltd for Site E70) makes allowance for and accommodates the relief road alignment.

Summary

- 1.13 In summary I question the justification for the relief road given that previous work has demonstrated that there is significant spare capacity at the critical junction in Aberbargoed and that other, less intrusive and more sustainable, methods of managing and accommodating traffic appear not to have been considered.
- 1.14 However, should the Inspector be persuaded that the need for the relief road exists then the land granted permission for HG1.16 does not obstruct the delivery of the scheme. Indeed the land set aside for the relief road and the significant S106 contribution towards its construction assist significantly in its delivery.

- 1.15 Furthermore, the allocation of additional development land (E70) will allow for further developer contributions towards the delivery of the relief road.
- 1.16 It is therefore suggested that the Inspector allocates land at Site E70 for residential development, with the recommendation that a transport assessment be undertaken to determine the need for a relief road or any other transport improvements that may be necessary, in order to serve development in this area and resolve any existing highways capacity problems in the vicinity, with appropriate financial contributions to be sort toward such transport improvements for such additional development.