



Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan

HG1.72 Caerphilly Miners Hospital Statement of Common Ground

**Caerphilly County Borough Council
and
United Welsh Housing Association**

Examination 2010

Caerphilly County Borough Council submission

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Statement of Common Ground – HG1.72 Caerphilly Miners Hospital

Purpose of the Statement

The purpose of this statement is to jointly outline the positions of United Welsh Housing Association (proposed developers) and the Council with regards to HG1.72 Caerphilly Miners Hospital, indicating where there is agreement by both parties. It is intended that this statement will help the Planning Inspector appointed to conduct the Caerphilly LDP Examination in respect of the soundness of this allocation.

Background

Caerphilly Miners Hospital is allocated for housing in the Deposit LDP for an indicative 114 dwellings. The site comprises the existing hospital and car park as well as an area of land to the south of site, which is within the ownership of the Council. Given the relationship between these two pieces of land and the fact that they are both in public ownership the two sites have been identified as one housing allocation within the LDP. This decision was taken in order to ensure that the whole of this area be developed comprehensively. The advantages associated with a comprehensive development at this location are significant.

Representations have been received as part of the 6-week Deposit consultation on the LDP, with several representors objecting to the allocation of the site solely for housing. A number of representors indicated that the site should be allocated for a mixed-use development incorporating housing and a community facility. Other representors also wished to see the housing site deleted, the boundary amended and the site allocated for leisure. Full details on the consideration of these representations can be seen in the report on the consideration of the representations received as part of the Deposit and Alternative Sites consultation (**SB60**). It will be noted from this document that a decision was taken at this Council meeting held on 15th September 2009 that the site be identified for mixed-use development, specifically community facilities and leisure, and not solely for housing. This was advertised as a Focused Change (FC16).

A meeting of Special Council was called on 1st December 2009 to consider the representations made to the Focused Changes consultation. At this meeting, a decision was made to formally withdraw the Focused Change to the plan, thereby reverting to the original Deposit position. Details of this can be found in the Council Consideration of Focused Changes report (**ED11**).

A consultation was held on the Comprehensive List of Changes (incorporating Focused Changes and Additional Focused Changes) (**SB83**). As part of this consultation a representation was received from United Welsh Housing Association (UWHA) objecting to the decision to withdraw Focused Change 16 as they consider that the site should be allocated for mixed-use, incorporating housing and a community facility.

UWHA Position

UWHA are currently seeking to purchase the Caerphilly Miners Hospital site from Gwent Healthcare Trust (now Aneurin Bevan Healthcare Trust) as part of the protocol for the disposal of surplus NHS land for affordable housing.

Subject to the granting of planning permission, UWHA aim to develop housing allocation HG1.72 in a comprehensive manner whilst working with the Caerphilly

Miners Hospital Management Committee to ensure that the building known as the Beeches is retained for community use.

UWHA consider the single use allocation of the site for housing to be inflexible as it does not allow for the necessary flexibility to enable it to deal with changing circumstances. As a result they believe that the Plan is unsound on the basis of Soundness Test CE4.

Council position

The Council recognises that the part of the hospital known as the Beeches is an important building in Caerphilly's history. As indicated in **SB81** Appendices to Written Statement (incorporating Focused Changes and Additional Focused Changes), it is proposed that the text in Appendix 7 be amended to state "*the Council will look favourably on the retention of part of the existing hospital building for community use*".

However, whilst the retention of part of the building for use by the community is desirable, it should be noted that it is not a listed building and consequently the Council cannot insist that the buildings be retained as an integral part of the redevelopment of the site.

The Council's position is that the allocation of the site solely for housing allocation would not preclude the use of the Beeches for community use, as this would be ancillary to the housing development. It is not therefore considered necessary for the site to be subject to a mixed-use allocation in order to provide a community facilities use on the site.

It is considered that a mixed-use allocation incorporating housing and community facilities would reduce the flexibility of uses on the site if it is later determined that the proposed retention of the building for community use is not feasible or would result in the housing development becoming unviable. This is particularly important given that the findings of the feasibility study commissioned by the Caerphilly Miners Community Centre Management Committee are unknown.

Areas of Agreement:

- Both parties would support a community use on the site as part of a wider housing development.
- Both parties agree that the Beeches (also known as Beech House) is the most appropriate part of the hospital to be retained for community use given its historical value, subject to it being feasible and viable to retain the building.
- Both parties support the comprehensive development of the whole site included within the boundary of HG1.72 (the hospital site and adjoining Council land).