Cyngor Cymuned **Carreghofa** Community Council

Notes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 10th September 2024

at Llanymynech Village Hall

to discuss the Powys Replacement Local Development Plan (2022-2037)

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE NOTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL RATIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING ON 24th SEPTEMBER 2024**

1. **Present:**

Cllr R Dover (Chair)

Cllr C Hall

Cllr C Jones

Cllr I Parry

Cllr C Savage

In attendance:

County Cllr Arwel Jones

Mr M. Donkin: Clerk to the Council

4 members of the general public

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr. I Done

Cllr. F James

1. **Discussion**

The Chairman opening the meeting by welcoming everyone present and explaining that the meeting had been called for one item only, to discuss the Powys Replacement Local Development Plan (2022-2037). Submissions to Powys County Council had to be made by 7th October and he wanted to gauge the strength of local opinion before the Community Council’s next meeting on 24th September. He said that there was some uncertainty about what action other community councils were taking.

Powys County Council is consulting on a replacement for the current local development plan and had published a list of candidate sites which have been suggested for inclusion in

the revised plan. The sites within Carreghofa are:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ID** | **Location** | **Site Area** | **Proposed Use** |
| 292 | Land West of Parc Llwyfen (appears to be the current football field, but not adjacent land) | 0.53 hectares | Open Market Housing, Affordable Housing |
| 293 | Land North of Montgomery Canal (adjacent to site of new Carreghofa Lane Bridge) | 2.18 hectares | Open Market Housing, Affordable Housing |
| 357 | Land North of Carreghofa Lane | 1.58 hectares | Open Market Housing |

Although these sites are out for comment it does not necessarily mean that all will be developed. Nonetheless it could mean that, in Powys, between 3,000 and 5,000 additional homes could be built over the next ten years of which 110 new dwellings could be in Carreghofa. The minimum density for building is 25 dwellings per hectare which would lead to a considerable increase in population.

The subject was then put out for comment and discussion by the meeting and the following points were made:

The revised plan allows for individuals to comment privately as well as a corporate approach from the Community Council.

The Community Council needs to be clear on its position.

The community straddles the border between England and Wales. Shropshire County Council appears to be “Wales blind” and Powys County Council appears to be “England blind” when it comes to planning additional dwellings within the village. There is a real danger of double development unless the two county councils liaise with each other and plan accordingly.

The increase in the numbers of school children and traffic will cause chaos at the crossroads where the A483 intersects with the B4398 in the centre of the village. This was described as a ‘nightmare’ particularly when children are going to and from the school.

There was also concern that the new canal bridge will create another crossroads opposite Parc Llwyfen producing similar traffic hazards.

Without sufficient infrastructure the village will not cope. There is now no shop, no post office and no GP practice and the school will be under pressure to cope with the increase in numbers. It was pointed out that Powys County Council has proposals, under the Transformation programme, which may involve the relocation of primary education services to a hub outside the village.

The Country has elected a government whose aim is to double all home building. This is a key pledge and will go ahead. If we try to block sites it simply means that the houses will be built elsewhere within the area. Fighting the principle is not helpful; what should be done is to try to minimize the impact on the community.

The Community Council could work out the likely numbers and the infrastructure needed to support these developments. Developers need to understand the ramifications. However, it was pointed out that these stipulations should not be put forward at this time. If the sites are approved it will be for the developers to assess what they need to do. The response to this was that this need not be a stipulation but just offering foresight to the planners. If the Community Council could not stipulate, it could request.

A question was asked about whether the County Council could use compulsory purchase to gain sites. County Councillor Arwel Jones said that they could not. Nonetheless this is will not be an issue as the sites have all been offered up by the owners of the land.

The discussion moved on to consider specific sites.

**Site 357**

A question was asked about whether site 357 was in the original LDP. In answer to this it was pointed out that the site was in the original LDP but with an initial allocation of 20 dwellings. Subsequently, in September 2017, a pre-planning submission was made for a total of 40 dwellings which originated from the owner of the site.

There is a highway issue with this site. There would be serious visibility problems because of the bend in the road. It was suggested that the disused railway line could be a better alternative as access to this site and to site 293. Concern was voiced about the threat to the public right of way running between sites 357 and 293. This is likely to be the main road access for both sites.

There are also issues relating to the provision of services, drainage and gas. A comment made by Cllr Done, who had sent apologies for absence stated ‘The area is totally unsuitable due to it being an endorheic basin with major drainage problems.’ This, in effect means that there is a ‘bottomless’ pond with no access or egress for water which is subject to occasional flash flooding.

While this is a not a problem for Powys County Council it would be for the developer who eventually shows an interest in building on the site, it is likely to be an important disincentive to developers with the result that the County Council’s objective may not be realised.

**Site 293**

This is agricultural land at present. There could be as many as 60 houses built on this site. This would result in the disappearance of the ‘green corridor’ between Carreghofa and Llanymynech and consequent loss of the ‘green’ environment.

This site has similar issues with drainage as site 357. There is a pond on the site. As with site 357 it was felt that the drainage problems may well have a negative effect on developers wanting to build on the site.

As with site 357 it was suggested that the disused railway could be used as a means of access.

Will site 293 eventually be joined to site 357? If so then the result will be to produce one large estate with no additional infrastructure to support it.

Is the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT) aware of these developments. The Chairman said that he had kept the CRT updated.

**Site 292**

This site is currently occupied entirely by the community football field, a valuable and much-used community facility which, if developed, would be a great loss to the community.

The representative of the Junior Football Club said that the club was not against development but that alternative facilities for the school and the football club must be found.

It was felt that the site was unsatisfactory for housing as access through Parc Llwyfen would be difficult and there are gas tanks in the vicinity.

Moreover, there is an alternative site to the south of site 292. This would be a more satisfactory solution for housing as this land is already in the current LDP. Site 292 is only ½ hectare whereas the alternative site is in excess of 2 hectares and there is an obvious access road to the west of the football field. Utilising this site would mean that a valuable community asset would not be in jeopardy.

1. **Conclusions**

The Community Council recognises that development must take place but stresses that it is essential Powys County Council and Shropshire County Council liaise over their separate allocations to ensure that the village is not swamped by overdevelopment, and that due consideration should be attended to the site-specific concerns outlined above.

The Community Council emphases the need for a proper and sufficient infrastructure to support any further development. The only general shop in the village has recently closed and been replaced by a ‘mini mart. There is no GP surgery and no post office. Traffic is already very heavy on the A483 through the village and unless the ‘projected’ bypass is built the situation will become untenable. As one person put it, with the increase in population, particularly school age children it is ‘an accident waiting to happen’

Nonetheless the Community Council accepts the allocation of sites 357 and 293 with reservations concerning the wisdom of these sites for the reasons laid out above, principally concerned with access, drainage, flooding and road safety.

The Community Council opposes the allocation of site 292. Access through Parc Llwyfen will be difficult and the planning for the new Carreghofa Bridge and the presence of gas tanks will add to these problems.

Furthermore, site 292 is a valued piece of land and is much used by the local community.

Additionally, there is a site adjacent to site 292 already in the current LDP and has the advantage of good access.

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**Next steps**

The Chairman emphasised that any individual could make representation on the Replacement Local Development Plan and urged people to do so.

The Chairman will compile a corporate response from Carreghofa Community Council which will be considered at the Council’s next meeting on Tuesday 24th September at 7.00pm at Llanymynech Village Hall.

Members of the public are always encouraged to attend Community Council meetings.