

PLANNING STATEMENT

Cwmrhydderch Court, Cwm, Ebbw Vale

November 24



Summary

Proposal

Proposed residential development and associated works

Location

Land at Cwmrhydderch Court, Cwm, Ebbw Vale, NP23 7UE

Date

November 24

Project Reference

24.193

Client

Tai Calon

Product of

Asbri Planning Limited
Unit 9 Oak Tree Court
Mulberry Drive
Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff CF23 8RS

Prepared by

Iestyn Richards | Student Planner

Approved by

Dylan Green | Associate

Report Revision No.

Revision A

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for the sole and exclusive use of client whom it was commissioned and has been prepared in response to their particular requirements and brief. This report may not be relied upon by any other party.

The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this report and the provisions of the said Act are expressly excluded from this report. This report may not be used for any purpose other than that for which it was commissioned. This report may not be reproduced and/or made public by print, photocopy, microfilm or any other means without the prior written permission of Asbri Planning Ltd. The conclusions resulting from this study and contained in this report are not necessarily indicative of future conditions or operating practices at or adjacent to the Site. Much of the information presented in this report is based on information provided by others. That information has neither been checked nor verified by Asbri Planning Ltd.

Content

Section 1 Introduction	4
Section 2 Site Description and Context	6
Section 3 The Proposed Development	8
Section 4 Pre-Application Discussions	12
Section 5 Planning Policy	15
Section 6 Appraisal	25
Section 7 Conclusion	28

Introduction

- 1.1 Asbri Planning is appointed as planning agent to Tai Calon to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany the proposed residential development and associated works on land at Cwmrhydderch Court, Cwm, Ebbw Vale.
- 1.2 The site formerly comprised of Cwmrhydderch Court; a three-storey building comprising of 30 retirement flats, which was built in the late 1970s. The site, located adjacent of Station Terrace and the A4046, with its main entrance facing Station Terrace is now vacant following the demolition of the former building in 2022.
- 1.3 The planning application seeks full planning permission for the development of 18 residential units, comprising a mix of flats and houses to address local housing needs. The dwellings will be delivered as 100% affordable, managed by Tai Calon and as such will ensure that the properties house an appropriate mix of local residents to promote a successful integration into the local community.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide a clear and logical document to outline the planning considerations and planning policies relevant to the proposal. The document also acts as a method of demonstrating the details of the planning application in a way that can be read both by professionals and the public.
- 1.5 The Planning Statement acts as a supporting document to the accompanying planning application and should be read in conjunction with all other elements of the application. The following drawings prepared by RLH Architects to accompany the application:

Drawing name	Drawing reference
Topographic Site Plan, Site Location Plan & Site Section	R547 S-01
Site Services and Constraints Plan	R547 P-01
Proposed Site Plan	R547 P-02
Proposed Block Roof Plan	R547 P-03
Proposed Site Sections Street Elevations	R547 P-04
3D Views & Map Key	R547 P-05
Proposed Domestic Lighting Plan	R547 P-06
Proposed External House Type Finishes Site Plan	R547 P-07
Proposed External House Type Finishes	R547 P-08
2P1B Block of Flats Floor and Elevation Plan	R547 P-09
4P2B Terrace (Split Level) Houses Floor and Elevation Plan	R547 P-10
5P3B Terrace (Split Level) Houses Floor and Elevation Plan	R547 P-11
Soft Landscape Proposals	1221.01 Rev B_
Tree Constraints Plan	24-078
Drainage Layout Plan	IR21090 - 100

1.6 In addition, the following supporting documents are submitted.

Document	Prepared by
Planning application forms (1APP)	Asbri Planning
Design and Access Statement	Asbri Planning
Planning Statement	Asbri Planning
Ecological Impact Assessment 2021	Wildwood Ecology
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 2024	Wildwood Ecology
Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Report	TerraFirma
Green Infrastructure Statement	DP Landscape Architecture
Landscape Management Plan	DP Landscape Architecture
Tree Survey Report	Steve Ambler Associates
Noise Assessment	Inacoustic
Transport Statement	Acstro
Drainage Strategy	Intrado

1.7 This Planning Statement presents the planning case for the proposed development having regard to the site and its surroundings, the planning history, and policy context. It considers the key policy issues and planning merits of the proposed development. The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2: provides a description of the site and its surroundings, including a review of the site's planning history;
- Section 3: summarises the development proposals.
- Section 4: provides an overview of pre-application dialogue undertaken in regard to the emerging scheme.
- Section 5: outlines the relevant planning policy context, at both the national and local level.
- Section 6: addresses the key planning considerations associated with the development proposal.
- Section 7: provides a conclusion regarding the overall acceptability of the application.

Site Description

The Site

- 2.1 The site is situated approximately 4km south of Ebbw Vale in the settlement of Cwm, on grid co-ordinates E: 316832; N: 212479. The site is located to the north of Station Terrace along the eastern edge of Cwm. The site's eastern boundary is formed by School Terrace whereas the A4046 runs along the western boundary. The northern boundary is formed by agricultural fields beyond which are a number of residential properties.

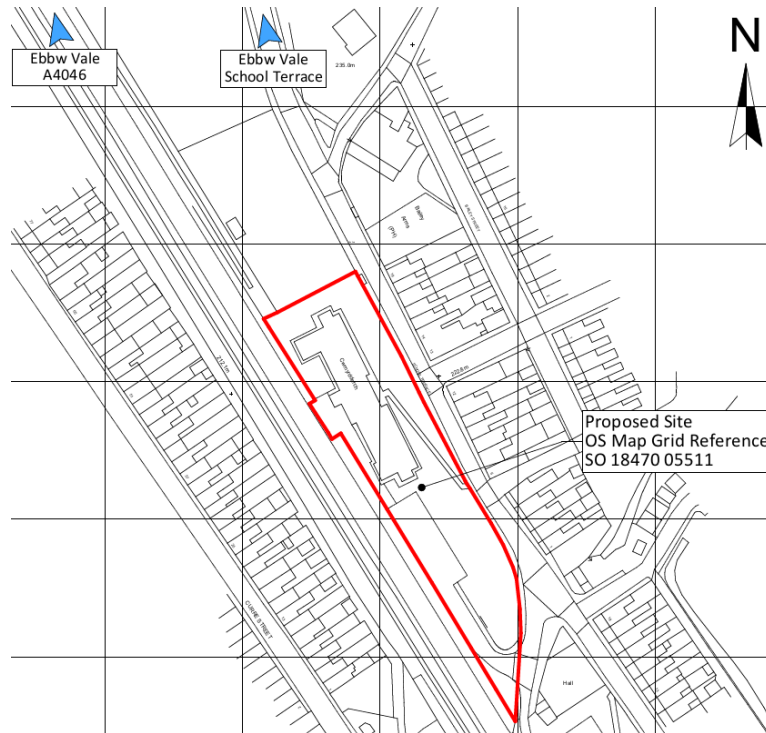


Figure 1 : Site Location Plan

Site Description

- 2.2 The site occupies a linear plot at the junction of Station Terrace and the A4046, with its main entrance facing Station Terrace. It consists of long rectangular shaped parcel of land covering approximately 0.47 hectares. Currently, the site is vacant following the demolition of Cwmrhydderch Court; a three-storey building comprising of 30 retirement flats, which was built in the late 1970s. This building was demolished in 2022 and the site now comprises a cleared site with a few retained mature trees and remnants of landscaped grounds that once included a communal garden.
- 2.3 The site has a sloping topography rising towards School Terrace, along the south-east boundary. The eastern part of the site is elevated, requiring the incorporation of retaining walls to manage the levels along School Terrace. The western boundary is defined by a concrete wall, used to screen the site from the A4046 while any remaining landscaped areas are enclosed by fencing. The access road serving the former Cwmrhydderch Court ran from Station Terrace along the site's western boundary.
- 2.4 The site sits in an area that is notably residential in character; the built form largely comprises of terraced properties and streets, characteristic of established South Wales Valleys communities. To the north-east of the site is a residential terrace of houses on School Terrace; privacy and distances must be respected as well as managing the levels to elevated rear entrances to the new houses.

- 2.5 Access into the site is achieved via Station Terrace, to the south of the site. The A4046 adjoins the site along its western boundary with School Terrace abutting to the east. There are no public rights of way within or adjoining the site. Station Road connects Cwm to the A4046 to the west and provides access to surrounding residential areas, enhancing connectivity within the local community.
- 2.6 A 14-meter easement over a drainage run crosses the site in an east-to-west direction near the access. Existing utilities and services include mains water supply, overground and underground mains electric supplies as well as telecom services. Utilities are mainly located to the west of the site. The developable site area is reduced by features located within the site, as well as features on the boundaries.
- 2.7 The site is considered to be of low ecological value albeit consists of few mature trees which are to be retained in the proposed site development.
- 2.8 A review of Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) Development Advice Map (DAM) indicates that the site is located within flood zone A as such is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding. Whilst not yet adopted, NRW's Flood Map for Planning (TAN15) should also be used to guide development proposals. This confirms that site is within flood zone 1 for both river and sea flooding and flooding from surface water and small water courses. As such, flood risk will not present a constraint to the development.
- 2.9 A review of the Historic Wales Records shows that there are no listed buildings identified within or adjoining the site. There are also no scheduled ancient monuments identified within or surrounding the site.
- 2.10 The Coal Authority Interactive Mapping shows the site is not within a 'Development High Risk Area'. It is not near any mine entry points.
- 2.11 Pedestrian and vehicular access into the site is currently achieved from Station Terrace, located on the site's southern boundary. National Cycle Route 446 is located approximately 300m west of the site and links Pontypool to Ebbw Vale; therefore, there are active travel transport opportunities for the future residents of the proposed development. The nearest bus stop is situated directly adjacent to the site from the site, providing exceptional convenience for residents. This bus stop offers regular services to Ebbw Vale, with buses departing every hour, ensuring easy access to local amenities and services. Notable facilities nearby include the Cwm Community Centre, a local convenience store, and a range of takeaways, enhancing the community's accessibility to everyday services. Additionally, Cwm Primary School is situated approximately 200m to the north of the site along School Terrace, providing educational opportunities for local families.
- 2.12 Ebbw Vale town centre is approximately 2.5 miles to the north, offering an extensive range of shopping options, including retail chains and specialty stores. Ebbw Vale Town train station is also located here, providing convenient transport links to destinations such as Cardiff, Newport, and beyond, making it an attractive location for residents.
- 2.13 In terms of the residential context, the settlement comprises a mix of architectural styles, resulting in a mixed built character and vernacular throughout the community. In respect of scale, dwellings are predominantly two-storey however some bungalows are present within the settlement. The residential dwellings located to the east of the site comprise of mainly terraced dwellings; the facades of which consists predominantly of brick. The roofs are brown concrete tiles with white uPVC rainwater goods, fascias and soffits.

Planning Context

Planning History

- 3.1 Blaenau Gwent as a Planning Authority do not have an online search facility for planning applications. Notwithstanding, Asbri Planning have made contact with the Planning team to ascertain the site's planning history and the only planning application of relevance is the below:

- C/2021/0359 - Prior notification for demolition. Approved 31st January 2022.

- 3.2 The previous building has since been demolished, in line with the above permission.

Pre-Application Enquiry (PA/2022/0026)

- 3.3 A pre-application enquiry was submitted by Asbri Planning in April 2022 (Ref No. PA/2022/0026) for a redevelopment of the site for 21no. residential dwellings and associated works. The plans that were submitted detailed that the development would make use of the existing vehicular access leading from Station Terrace with the residential units provided in a linear arrangement adjacent to the north-eastern boundary fronting School Terrace from which pedestrian access would be gained. Amenity spaces would be provided to the west of the dwellings with parking and vehicular access beyond. Given the topography the dwellings were designed as three storeys. The previous layout is enclosed, below:

- 3.4 The previous pre-application response confirmed the following:

Planning Assessment

- The proposal would be compatible with neighbouring land uses
- The site is large enough to accommodate the development proposed whilst providing a mix of property types appropriate in terms of housing need for the area
- The principle of development is acceptable subject to the application satisfying a number of material considerations

Design and Sustainability

- The Authority would welcome an innovate, highly sustainable, low-carbon design which incorporates and responds to the energy hierarchy of reducing energy demand through passive design, promoting energy efficiency through use of appropriate building fabric and inclusion of renewable and low/ zero carbon energy generation technologies
- The proposed linear arrangement reflects and respects the context and urban grain of the area
- To reduce the impact of residential amenity, the dwellings should be set as low into the site as possible, finished with single storey front elevations, facing School Terrace
- The front elevation of the development (facing School Terrace) should be finished with stone/composite stone
- The first-floor accommodation should be set well within the eaves of the building, with the gap between the eaves and the ground floor
- All dormer windows should be finished with a pitched roof and be of a subordinate size and scale
- There is an opportunity to make use of a more varied pallet of materials on the rear elevations of the dwellings
- Additional pedestrian connections are required between flats proposed at the northern end of the site and School Terrace
- The development should make use of all traditional boundary treatments where possible

Highways

- The Council's Highways Department have provided the following response:
- Whilst the actual number of proposed parking spaces appears acceptable, I have concerns regarding the length of the proposed linear parking bays. These should be 6.0 metres in length (I will accept at an absolute minimum a bay length of 5.5m only where two adjoining parking bays are for the same property)
- The proposed junction access (as per existing arrangements) is acceptable
- The proposed internal road layout is also acceptable

Ecology and Trees

- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in conjunction with a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, must be undertaken and the findings of surveys and assessments used to influence the design and layout of the scheme
- Information relating to mitigation, compensation and enhancements to ensure the site delivers net benefit for biodiversity must also be provided
- A Tree Survey should be submitted as part of any future planning application
- A robust landscaping scheme should be provided with any future application and provision of soft landscaping to the frontages should be retained where possible
- Native planting that considers pollinators should be used in the landscaping and passes in the development boundaries and between gardens are encouraged. Passes are a 13x13cm hole cut to enable access for hedgehogs

Surface Water Drainage

- A fully integrated SUDs scheme throughout the development should maximise the capture of surface water run off throughout the whole development
- Proposals within the streetscape should incorporate rainwater gardens, permeable paving and a clear system of innovative drainage channels leading to swales and attenuating features where possible
- A drainage strategy needs to be in place at the same time as determining the biodiversity value of these areas, particularly for species and habitat diversity which should be incorporated as part of the overall design

Foul Water Drainage

- When drawing up sewerage proposals for any development, the first presumption must always be to provide a system of foul drainage discharging into a public sewer
- If, by taking into account the cost and/or practicability, it can be shown to the satisfaction of the planning authority a connection to a public sewer is not feasible, a package sewage treatment plant should be considered

Conclusion

- The proposed residential development of the site is acceptable
- A planning application would be supported subject to the above issues being addressed

3.5 Following the client's design review, the scheme was amended further to reduce the number of dwellings in order to accommodate increased areas of informal public open space, with the one to the south inclusive of SuDS features. Additional planting and vegetation have been incorporated within the design to enhance the landscape and improve the biodiversity of the site area. The reduction in numbers allowed greater flexibility to provide all required amenity and engineering provisions in the layout and improved the viability of the site. Accordingly, a new scheme was prepared comprising of a reduced number of 18no. properties and this was re-submitted to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a follow-up pre-application enquiry.

Pre-Application Enquiry (PA/2024/0149)

- 3.6 Following the design evolution of the feasibility master planning, the number of units was reduced to 18 - eight of 2P1B walk-up flats, five of 4P2B houses and five of 5P3B houses. Ground Floor flats were also updated to accommodate wheelchair accessible accommodation. The layout was largely similar to the original layout albeit the numbers reduced to allow greater flexibility and to value engineer and to improve deliverability and viability.
- 3.7 The pre-application was allocated to the same officer who advised the following (with corresponding comments *italicised*):

Summary

- Recommend we undertake pre-application discussions with The Coal Authority prior to the submission of an application. *(They will be statutory consultees on the PAC)*
- As a result of the brownfield status of the land, any application for planning permission should be supported by a contaminated land and site investigation report. *(Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report prepared by TerraFirma)*
- The principle of development is acceptable subject to the application satisfying a number of material considerations.

Design

- To reduce impact with the dwellings on the eastern side of School Terrace, the dwellings should be set as low into the site as possible, finished with single storey front elevations, facing School Terrace. Any application should be supported by sectional drawings to clarify the impact of the development on the 25 and 45-degree light angles of the existing dwellings and how the proposed properties will be sited to prevent direct overlooking on the existing dwellings.
- The front elevation of the development (facing School Terrace) should be finished with stone/ composite stone. The first-floor accommodation should be set well within the eaves of the building, with the gap between the eaves and the ground floor window heads reduced.
- In compliance with the Councils Householder Design Guide SPG, all dormer windows should be finished with a pitched roof and be of a subordinate size and scale.
- There is an opportunity to make use of a more varied pallet of materials on the rear elevations of the dwellings.
- Additional pedestrian connections are required between flats proposed at the northern end of the site and School Terrace. *(there is already a pedestrian connection with School Terrace within the layout)*
- The development should make use of all traditional boundary treatments where possible.
- Given the proximity of the dwellings to the bypass, the application should be supported by a noise assessment. *(Noise Assessment will accompany the PAC)*

Highways

- Concerns regarding length and width of some parking bays *(parking bays to be increased in length within the submitted scheme)*
- The turning head is non-standard, whereby the carriageway width has been reduced in one of the heads to 4.8m, as opposed to 5.5m. As advised previously, the applicant will need to undertake and submit a swept path analysis for a refuse lorry to demonstrate this will work. *(vehicular tracking provided with the application)*
- Additionally, the parking bays for plots 11 & 12 access via this head, the applicant will need to provide swept path turning movements for an SUV to prove that a vehicle could safely access/exit the driveways. *(As above)*

- The applicant is advised to undertake a sustainability assessment in accordance with Appendix 5 of the SPG to justify this reduction in spaces. *(The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which assesses the development against the Sustainability Assessment)*
- Unless the scheme is revised, the highway authority would likely recommend refusal *(Scheme updated to reflect comments received)*

Ecology and Trees

- The Former Tai Calon Social Housing block was demolished several years ago (approx. 2 years). Prior to demolition an Ecological Survey took place. Within the report it had outlined recommendations for biodiversity enhancement measures to ensure the proposed new development is in accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, that we seek to not only avoid a net loss, but 'maintain and enhance' biodiversity and also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystem. The enhancement measures will also ensure the proposed new development complies with policies:
 - SP10 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
 - DM14 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement
- Some of the proposed housing incorporate bat bricks into their designs and make provision for a bat roost in one or two of the loft spaces. Further bat boxes should be placed within the trees. *(Application is accompanied by a GI Statement and bat box positions are identified on Proposed Roof/Block Plan)*
- Bird Boxes should be incorporated into the design and swift bricks incorporated into the houses themselves. *(Identified on Proposed Roof/Block Plan)*
- Gaps (13cmx13cm) should be left in bases of all boundary fences/walls including site boundaries to allow passage of hedgehogs across the site. *(Identified on Proposed Roof/Block Plan)*
- Any existing trees to be lost through the proposed development will require an ecological assessment by a qualified ecologist.
- Tree loss mitigation is required. *(Identified on Soft Landscape Proposals plan)*
- Tree Root Protection Zones will be required. *(Identified in the Tree Survey and on Development Constraints Plan)*

Surface Water drainage

- The development will require full SAB approval, with a comprehensive SUDs scheme designed to capture surface water runoff through. Biodiversity considerations, such as species and habitat diversity, should be integrated into the drainage strategy, and the location of ponds or swales must be carefully planned to avoid negative impacts.
- It is recommended that the developer engage in a Pre-App with the SAB Team early in the design process to address SUDs requirements and ensure compliance with local and national guidelines. Consulting the Ciria SuDS Manual and arranging a pre-app discussion with the drainage consultant will help ensure the proposed system meets all relevant standards.

Foul Water Drainage

- When designing sewerage proposals for a development, the priority should be to connect to a public sewer in consultation with the local Sewerage Undertaker. If this is not feasible due to cost or practicality, a package sewage treatment plant should be considered, ensuring full treatment with effluent discharge meeting the standards set by Natural Resources Wales.

Education

- The Education Officer has confirmed that there is a short fall in secondary education places to serve the development. As a result, they will be seeking contributions to the sum of £28,842.00 as part of any application for planning permission.

Proposals

- 4.1 To ensure that the development effectively responds to the local context, the principal considerations that will form the chapter, and to which the application will be assessed on, will be the five objectives of good design which are a set of principle considerations, as outlined in Technical Advice Note 12. These include an assessment of the proposed access, the overall character of the site including the amount, scale and layout, the appearance and landscape as well as the community safety of the site.

Amount

- 4.2 The planning application seeks full planning permission for the development of 18 residential units, comprising a mix of flats and houses to address local housing needs. The proposed schedule of accommodation includes:
- 8no. 2-bedroom, 1-person walk-up flats
 - 5no. 4-person, 2-bedroom houses
 - 5no. 5-person, 3-bedroom houses
- 4.3 It is considered that the scheme represents an efficient use of land within Cwm and the development of the site will reflect and enhance the residential character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the proposed mix will ensure that the site can accommodate a range of persons with different needs through the use of apartments and houses.
- 4.4 The dwellings will be delivered as 100% affordable, managed by Tai Calon and as such will ensure that the properties house an appropriate mix of local residents to promote a successful integration into the local community.
- 4.5 The proposed dwellings will be designed to ensure wheelchair accessibility for the ground-floor flats, promoting inclusivity. The development will feature consistent architectural finishes across all property types, eliminating any perceived hierarchy, thus promoting a cohesive streetscape.
- 4.6 The layout plan indicates that the 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom houses will be positioned towards the southern portion of the site, each with a private patio and garden area, while the 1-bedroom flats will occupy the northern section.
- 4.7 The three-storey houses will feature a main entrance accessed via a private garden area on the ground floor with a secondary access point provided at first floor from the School Terrace elevation, creating an efficient flow between units and communal areas. This design is aimed at encouraging community interaction while maintaining privacy.
- 4.8 Additionally, a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) will be integrated into the southern part of the site, contributing to flood management and enhancing local biodiversity. Green roofs are also proposed to further aid in rainwater absorption and runoff reduction, ensuring the project aligns with sustainable development principles.
- 4.9 From the above, it is clear that a positive residential development can be delivered which complies with relevant planning policy and is compatible with the overall character and density of the area.

Appearance

- 4.10 The surrounding area is not considered to possess a significant architectural style or identity, with variations in brick, rendered, and stone buildings within the local area. Accordingly, the proposed pallet contains the following:
- Walls:
 - o Flats: Sand/cement render & brick and fibre cement cladding
 - o Houses: Gormley Grey brick, natural stone finish & Fibre cement cladding
 - Roof:
 - o Flats: Bauder or Sim Green Roof System
 - o Houses: Cedral Thrutone textured fibre cement slates (Colour blue/black) with angled ridge tiles to match
 - Windows: Anthracite uPVC windows with concrete cills
 - Doors: Composite PAS doors
 - Fascias, Barges and Soffits: Black uPVC
 - Guttering and Downpipes: Black uPVC
- 4.11 The material palette utilised within the scheme recognises and enhances the vernacular of the local area. It is intended to create a development that acknowledges its context whilst enhancing the wider area through distinct design choices to create a contemporary aesthetic. The linear layout provides an opportunity to provide two principal elevations, both of which will need to address its context and be sympathetic to the locality. Accordingly, the eastern elevation fronting onto School Terrace provides a grey brick elevation to tie it into the existing properties whereas the western elevation comprises a grey coloured cladding which aims to provide a more contemporary approach from key views along the A4046. Materials will offer good longevity in terms of the life-cycle of the dwellings; low maintenance and from responsibly sourced manufacturers.

Access and Parking

Vehicular Access and Parking

- 4.12 The existing 4.8m wide access to the site will be retained and this will lead to a new turning head that will be located at the northern end of the internal road. This has been designed to allow a refuse collection vehicle to turn within the site and re-enter Station Terrace in forward gear.
- 4.13 The 2m wide footway along the street's eastern side will be retained but re-aligned to accommodate a row of 12 car parking spaces located in front of the 10 terraced houses. Each of the parking spaces are 6m in length to allow for parallel parking apart from the most northerly space which is 4.8m long. Drivers using this space will be able to enter or exit it by driving or reversing straight to or from the development's turning area and will not need to undertake a parallel parking manoeuvre.
- 4.14 In addition to the row of 12 parking spaces in front of the terraced housing, 12 perpendicular parking spaces are arranged around the site's turning area and the courtyard for the flats. In total therefore the development provides 24 car parking spaces. This meets, in full, the requirement to provide 23 residents' parking spaces and provides one dedicated visitor parking space. The Parking Standard suggests that four visitor parking spaces are required and against this measure there is therefore a shortfall of three visitor parking spaces. It is considered that these three spaces can be safely accommodated informally along the western side of the street within the development or otherwise in the nearby public car park accessed from Station Terrace. The car park is located only 40m from the development's access.
- 4.15 Three pedestrian access points from School Terrace are proposed.

Boundary Treatment & Landscaping

- 4.16 The landscape proposals have been designed to contain a range of measures to ensure GI is maintained and enhanced as part of the development. Key measures include:
- Native tree planting around the site. This provides an attractive setting for the development and adds to the existing landscape infrastructure.
 - Native hedge planting to boundaries provides a food source and nesting opportunities for birds.
 - Shrub planting including species known for wildlife value. This softens building frontages and enhances biodiversity
 - The inclusion of wildflower meadow area to the SUDS features and around the site generally provides further ecological benefits and enhances the external environment.
- 4.17 The combined effect of the above measures will be the creation of a species rich landscape, appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.
- 4.18 Where removal of existing vegetation has been unavoidable, either due to the development or due to other reasons, this has been minimised and then mitigated with new planting and ecological measures to ensure the appropriate restoration of habitats. All of the mitigation measures have been included within the site, demonstrating that all attempts have been made to compensate on site
- 4.19 The boundary treatment currently comprises metal railings along School Terrace with concrete walls fronting the A4046. It is proposed to enhance the overall appearance by providing new 1.8m hit and miss boundary fence and black powder coated metal railings along the site boundaries. The garden areas for the houses will be separated by vertical timber fencing above a stone wall.

Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 5.1 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (which came into force on 1st April 2016) requires “public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle”.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 plays a significant role in shaping the planning system in Wales, embedding sustainable development principles into planning policy and decisions. The Act reinforces the planning system’s shift towards a holistic, sustainable approach, emphasising that planning in Wales must consider not just present needs but also the well-being of future generations.
- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The Development Plan comprises the following:
- National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February, 2021);
 - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Local Development Plan (November 2012)
- 5.5 In addition to the Development Plan, the Planning Application has been informed by Policy and Guidance set out in the following:
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February, 2024), informed by The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and supplemented by Technical Advice Notes;
 - Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

- 5.6 The National Development Framework: Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 was published on 24th February 2021. ‘Future Wales’ sets out the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy; achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience; developing strong ecosystems; and improving the health and well-being of our communities. As stated above, the National Development Framework has Development Plan status.
- 5.7 Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 Outcomes. As set out on Pages 54-56 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years’ time, as follows:

A Wales where people live:

- 1 ...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
- 2 ...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
- 3 ...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
- 4 ...in places with a thriving Welsh Language
- 5 ...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
- 6 ...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
- 7 ...in places where travel is sustainable

- 8 ...in places with world-class digital infrastructure
- 9 ...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
- 10 ...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
- 11 ...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient

Growth Strategy

- 5.8 The Welsh Government's strategic growth strategy is set out in Policy 1 of Future Wales as follows:

Policy 1 – Where Wales will Grow

The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales. In three National Growth Areas there will be growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure. The National Growth Areas are:

- Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys
- Swansea Bay and Llanelli
- Wrexham and Deeside

- 5.9 It is further explained that *“Our strategy is to build on existing strengths and advantages. It encourages sustainable and efficient patterns of development, based on co-locating homes with jobs and vital services and the efficient use of resources” (page 60).*

Placemaking

- 5.10 Placemaking forms a key concept upon which many national planning policies are based. It is set out at Page 65 of Future Wales that *“Placemaking is at the heart of the planning system in Wales and this policy establishes a strategic placemaking approach and principles to support planning authorities to shape urban growth and regeneration”.*

- 5.11 Policy 2 of Future Wales is of key relevance in terms of placemaking, which states the following:

“The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- *creating a rich mix of uses;*
- *providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- *building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- *increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities; establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;*
- *promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and*
- *integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.”*

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 5.12 It is identified at Page 76 that the strategic focus of Future Wales on urban growth requires *“an increased emphasis on biodiversity enhancement (net benefit) in order to ensure that growth is sustainable” (page 76).*
- 5.13 In addition to this, the associated importance of green infrastructure is highlighted:

“As the population of Wales becomes increasingly urban, the opportunity to optimise well-being benefits from green infrastructure will be greatest in and around these areas. Innovative use of nature-based solutions and integrating green infrastructure in and around urban areas can help restore natural features and processes into cities and landscapes. Providing locally accessible, high quality green spaces and corridors helps to maintain and enhance the strategic functioning of our natural resources and ecological networks and address physical and mental well-being” (page 78).

- 5.14 Policy 9 of Future Wales is of key relevance in regard to green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement, which states the following:

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

- *identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and*
- *identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.*

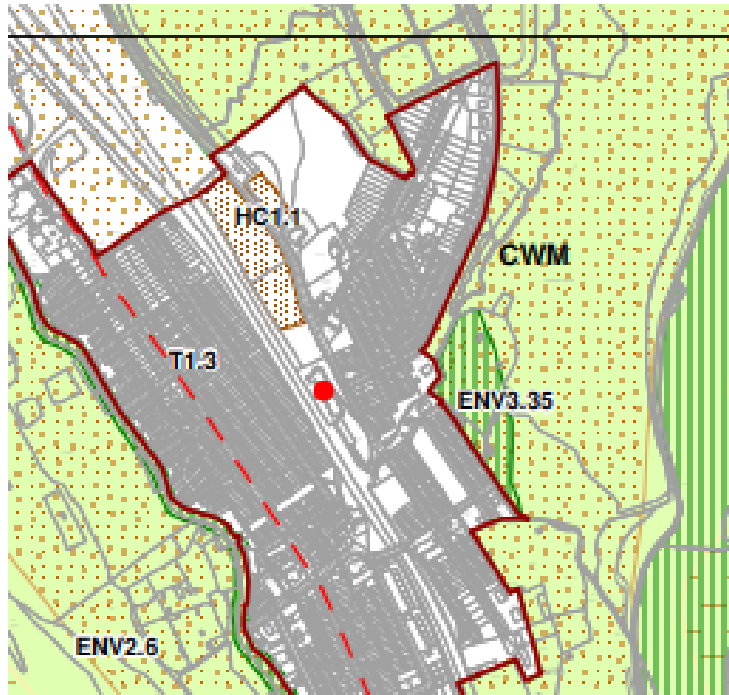
Transport

- 5.15 Future Wales identifies that transport in Wales is currently dominated by the car and that *“our reliance on travelling by car is limiting the opportunity for physical activity and social contact to be built into people’s everyday lives and is exacerbating air and noise pollution, particularly along major routes and at busy destinations...This has an adverse impact on people’s health and well-being, contributing to life-limiting illnesses associated with physical inactivity, loneliness and isolation” (page 85).*

- 5.16 The importance of the implementation of policies which require development to be directed towards sustainable locations and designed to make it possible for everyone to make sustainable and healthy travel choices is highlighted in Future Wales, and it is stated that planning authorities will be required *“to refuse planning permission for car-dependent developments which would otherwise encourage car use and undermine sustainable travel” (page 85).*

Local Development Plan

- 5.17 The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan was adopted in November 2012 and covers the period 2006 to 2021. Within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council’s LDP Proposals Map, the site is shown to lie within the defined Settlement Boundary for the plan area and is unaffected by any other designation or allocation. The site is indicated by a red dot, below:



5.18 Accordingly, the following LDP policies are considered relevant in the context of the proposed development:

Policy reference	Relating to
<i>Strategic Policies</i>	
SP1	Northern Strategy Area – Sustainable Growth and Regeneration
SP4	Delivering Quality Housing
SP5	Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites
SP6	Ensuring Accessibility
SP7	Climate Change
SP10	Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
<i>Development Management Policies</i>	
DM1	New Development
DM2	Design and Placemaking
DM3	Infrastructure Provision
DM4	Low and Zero Carbon Energy
DM7	Affordable Housing
DM16	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection
<i>Allocations and Designations</i>	
SB1	Settlement Boundaries

5.19 The most pertinent planning policies have been copied below

5.20 All new developments must adhere to the requirements of Policy DM1 (New Development) which advises development proposals will be permitted provided they can demonstrate compliance with the below:

1. Sustainable Design

- a) *Energy efficient design is achieved;*
- b) *The proposal makes efficient and effective use of resources by employing sustainable building techniques, incorporating energy and water conservation measures, and wherever possible, the use of renewable energy;*
- c) *Construction waste and pollution is minimised and the proposal incorporates facilities for the segregation, recovery and recycling of waste;*
- d) *Recycled or sustainable products and resources are used in construction, where practicable;*
- e) *The proposal reduces surface water run off through minimising an increase in impermeable surfaces and using Sustainable Drainage systems, where appropriate; and*
- f) *The proposal does not result in a net loss of biodiversity and provides where necessary mitigation and/or compensation measures.*

2. Amenity

- a) *The development would be compatible with other uses in the locality;*
- b) *There would be no unacceptable adverse visual impact on townscape or landscape;*
- c) *There would be no unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;*
- d) *In the case of residential development including extensions and sub-division of dwellings, dwellings must be of appropriate size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity;*
- e) *There would be no adverse impact upon the water environment or an unacceptable risk to the quality of controlled waters (including groundwater and surface water);*
- f) *The proposal contributes to improving water quality wherever practicable;*
- g) *The proposal does not result in airborne emissions which have an unacceptable effect on the health, amenity or natural environment of the surrounding area, taking into account cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the vicinity.*
- h) *There would be no unacceptable risk of harm to health and/or local amenity from unacceptably high levels of noise, vibration, odour or light pollution;*
- i) *The land is made stable and capable of supporting the development without risk of damage to buildings on the site or adjoining land; and*
- j) *Practicable and effective measures are taken to treat, contain or control any contamination.*

3. Accessibility

- a) *The proposal has regard for the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network;*
- b) *The proposal ensures that developments are designed to an appropriate standard that prioritises the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before that of the private car;*
- c) *The proposal secures appropriate provision for people with special access and mobility requirements;*
- d) *Parking, appropriate servicing and operational space has been provided; and*
- e) *Where a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan is required by national planning policy, they must demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on trip generation and travel demand.*

5.21 Policy DM2 (Design and Placemaking) is of particular importance as it is imperative that any new residential development is designed to adhere to Placemaking Principles and the requirements of this local policy, which confirms development proposals will be permitted provided: -

- a) *They are appropriate to the local context in terms of type, form, scale and mix;*

- b) *They are of good design which reinforces local character and distinctiveness of the area or they positively contribute to the area's transformation and raise density, where appropriate;*
- c) *The development has regard to 'Secured by Design' principles;*
- d) *In the case of extensions to buildings, they reflect, complement or enhance the form, siting, materials, architectural details and character of the original building, its curtilage and the wider area;*
- e) *In the case of proposals for new and replacement shopfronts and signage, they make a positive contribution to the street scene. Roller shutters should be sensitively designed and integrated into the overall design of the shopfront;*
- f) *In the case of the public realm and key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions, the character and quality of the built form is to a high standard of design and, where appropriate, includes public art; and*
- g) *Landscaping and planting, where appropriate, achieves a suitable visual setting for the scheme and integrates it into the wider context.*

Planning Policy Wales Edition 12

- 5.22 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 was published in February 2024. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 5.23 Sustainable Development is defined at Page 7 of PPW as follows: *"the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals"*.
- 5.24 Paragraph 1.18 sets out that *"Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated"*.

Placemaking

- 5.25 In accordance with the National Development Framework, placemaking is also at the heart of PPW – Paragraph 2.1 for example states that *"Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking in both plan making and development management decisions in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities"*.
- 5.26 It is summarised succinctly at Paragraph 2.3 that *"The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all"*.
- 5.27 Placemaking is defined at Page 14 of PPW as follows:
- "Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense. Placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings"*.
- 5.28 Paragraph 2.23 confirms that *"Building Better Places recognises the pivotal role that planners play in shaping our society for the future. They must plan for our priorities around placemaking, decarbonisation and well-being. Building Better Places starts to identify action to achieve this and upon which we must build; future reviews of Planning Policy Wales will enable us to further integrate this work. Everyone has a part to play to ensure that the communities of tomorrow benefit from the foresight of today"*.

Good Design

- 5.29 The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted at Paragraph 3.3 of PPW where it is stated that *“Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area”*.
- 5.30 In addition, it is highlighted that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals - Paragraph 3.7 states for example that *“Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution”*.
- 5.31 The importance of good design in term of ensuring high environmental quality is set out at Paragraph 3.8: *“Landscape and green infrastructure considerations are an integral part of the design process. Integrating green infrastructure is not limited to focusing on landscape and ecology, rather, consideration should be given to all features of the natural environment and how these function together to contribute toward the quality of places”*.
- 5.32 Paragraph 3.12 outlines that good design is also about avoiding the creation of car-based developments by minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys. It is stated that *“Achieving these objectives requires the selection of sites which can be made easily accessible by sustainable modes as well as incorporating appropriate, safe and sustainable links (including active travel networks) within and between developments using legal agreements where appropriate”*.

Sustainable Transport

- 5.33 PPW advises at Paragraph 4.1.10 that the planning system has a key role to play in reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car, and supporting sustainable transport, by facilitating developments which:
- *“are sited in the right locations, where they can be easily accessed by sustainable modes of travel and without the need for a car;*
 - *are designed in a way which integrates them with existing land uses and neighbourhoods; and*
 - *make it possible for all short journeys within and beyond the development to be easily made by walking and cycling”*.
- 5.34 Paragraph 4.1.11 summarises that: *“Development proposals must seek to maximise accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, by prioritising the provision of appropriate on-site infrastructure and, where necessary, mitigating transport impacts through the provision of off-site measures, such as the development of active travel routes, bus priority infrastructure and financial support for public transport services”*.
- 5.35 It is Welsh Government policy to require the use of a sustainable transport hierarchy in relation to new development, which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport ahead of the private motor vehicles. Paragraph 4.1.13 sets out that *“The sustainable transport hierarchy should be used to reduce the need to travel, prevent car-dependent developments in unsustainable locations, and support the delivery of schemes located, designed and supported by infrastructure which prioritises access and movement by active and sustainable transport”*.

Active Travel

5.36 The importance of developing local active travel networks to help mitigate the impact of new development by providing an alternative mode of travel to the private car is highlighted in PPW. It is stated at Paragraph 4.1.30 that *“Provision for active travel must be an essential component of development schemes and planning authorities must ensure new developments are designed and integrated with existing settlements and networks, in a way which makes active travel a practical, safe and attractive choice”*.

Public Transport

5.37 PPW advises that the availability of public transport is an important part of ensuring a place is sustainable. Paragraph 4.1.36 highlights that the planning system should facilitate this *“by locating development where there is, or can be, good access by public transport”*.

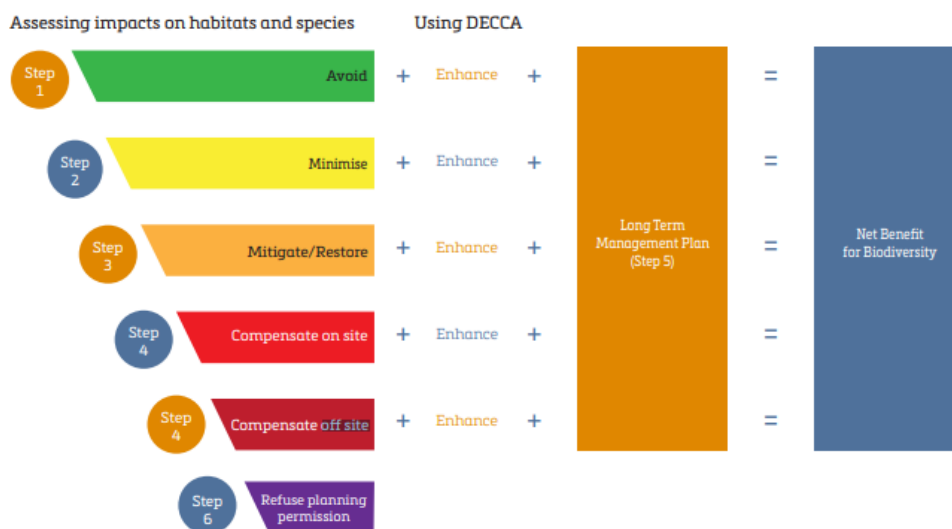
Green Infrastructure

5.38 The importance of green infrastructure is highlighted throughout PPW. It is summarised at Paragraph 6.2.11 that *“The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes”*.

5.39 Paragraph 6.2.12 confirms that *“A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied”*.

5.40 The Step-Wise Approach is depicted at figure 12 and discussed at paragraph 6.4.15 which confirms that the first priority for planning authorities is to avoid damage, if that is not possible then there is a requirement to minimise, mitigate, compensate on site, and then only as a last resort off-site compensation for unavoidable damage must be provided.

Figure 12: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach



Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 5.41 The importance of considering SuDs as an integral part of the development process is highlighted at Paragraph 6.6.18 of PPW where it is stated that *“The provision of SuDS must be considered at the earliest possible stage when formulating proposals for new development”*. It is advised at Paragraph 6.6.19 that *“Design for multiple benefits and green infrastructure should be secured wherever possible and as part of Green Infrastructure Assessments suitable approaches towards the provision of SuDS should be identified”*.

Technical Advice Notes

- 5.42 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANS) are of relevance to the proposed development:
- 5.43 TAN 2 Planning and Affordable Housing (2006): outlines the general concept of affordable housing as being: *“the ability of households or potential households to purchase or rent property that satisfies the needs of the household without subsidy”*. The guidance requires local planning authorities to: *“include an affordable housing target in the development plan which is based on the housing need identified in the local housing market assessment, indicate how the target will be achieved using identified policy approaches and monitor the provision of affordable housing against the target and where necessary take action to ensure that the target is met”*.
- 5.44 TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009): provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It seeks to demonstrate how local planning authorities, developers and key stakeholders in conservation can work together to deliver more sustainable development that does not result in losses from the natural heritage but instead takes every opportunity to enhance it.
- 5.45 TAN 11 Noise (1997): provides advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development. It outlines some of the main considerations which local planning authorities should take into account in drawing up development plan policies and when determining planning applications for development which will either generate noise or be exposed to existing noise sources.
- 5.46 TAN 12 Design (2016): provides advice on design considerations and states that development should aim to:
- *Create places with the needs of people in mind, which are distinctive and respect local character*
 - *Promote layouts and design features which encourage community safety and accessibility*
 - *Focus on the quality of the places and living environments for pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles*
 - *Avoid inflexible planning standards and encourage layouts which manage vehicle speeds through the geometry of the road and building*
 - *Promote environmental sustainability features, such as energy efficiency, in new housing and make clear specific commitments to carbon reductions and/or sustainable building standards*
 - *Secures the most efficient use of land including appropriate densities*
 - *Consider and balance potential conflicts between these criteria*
- 5.47 TAN 18 Transport (2007) confirms that integration of land use planning and development of transport infrastructure has a key role to play in addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development. Paragraph 2.4 indicates that by influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help to reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.

Local Planning Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.48 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is of relevance to the proposed development:

- Access, Car Parking and Design (March 2014)
- Model Design Guide for Wales Residential Development (March 2005)
- Planning Obligations (September 2011)

Appraisal

Overview

- 6.1 As stated above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the Planning Statement aims to identify the main issues of relevance to the determination of the Planning Application, and assess the scheme against the Development Plan.
- 6.2 The key material planning considerations are as follows:
- **The principle of development** in terms of land use and dwelling density;
 - The impact of the development on the **character of the surrounding area and residential amenity;**
 - Impact of the development on **residential amenity;**
 - Impact on surrounding **highways.**

Principle of Development

- 6.3 As established within this Statement, the application site is located on a brownfield vacant site within the settlement boundary for Cwm as defined by LDP Policy SB1 (Settlement Boundaries). As such, the site is located in an area where development is generally favoured in principle, subject to detailed considerations.
- 6.4 The development has been designed in accordance with policy SP4 of Delivering Quality Housing and will contribute to the LDP's policy of Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in accordance with policy SP1. The development will also adhere to policy SP4 as it directly contributes to Blaenau Gwent's objective of providing sufficient affordable dwellings of the right tenure and mix during the adopted period. By addressing the pressing need for affordable housing, this initiative supports the community's long-term goals and enhances the overall quality of living in the area.
- 6.5 The pre-application enquiries with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council officers have already previously confirmed the principle of development is acceptable, subject to compliance with all other national and local planning policies.
- 6.6 Given the above, this application is considered to be acceptable in principle and adheres to national and local planning policies in particular SP1, SP4, SP5, DM1, DM2 and SB1 of the adopted LDP.

Impact of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

- 6.7 A review of the residential context in the area has confirmed that adjacent to the site are numerous two storey terraced houses. The proposal is set to follow the architectural style and scale of these existing residences, ensuring that the new development harmonises with the established neighbourhood character. Overall, it is considered that the proposal in terms of its character and appearance is in keeping with the context of the site and surrounding area.
- 6.8 In terms of scale, the proposed development matches the existing surrounding housing stock and the layout has been progressed to work with the sites' levels. The dwellings will appear as single-storey from Station Road and have been set-back from the road to ensure a positive relationship is achieved.
- 6.9 The initial pre-application enquiry confirmed the proposal would be compatible with neighbouring land uses and advised the proposed linear arrangement reflects and respects the context and urban grain of the area. This overall design has been maintained within the current layout, as such is considered to be

acceptable. Further advice was provided noting the dwellings should be set as low into the site as possible, finished with single storey front elevations, facing School Terrace to reduce the impact of residential amenity. As above, this has been accommodated within the proposed layout and the proposed storey and a half with dormer roofs is deemed to be a positive relationship to the surrounding built context.

- 6.10 Accordingly, the development is an acceptable form of development and it would provide an attractive design which would complement the existing residential context and assimilate into the wider residential area. On this basis, it is considered to be an appropriate form of development in accordance with national policies and local policy SP1, SP4, SP5, DM1 and DM2 of the adopted LDP.

Impact of the development on residential amenity

- 6.11 The proposed development is strategically positioned in relation to the surrounding area, ensuring that it does not have an overbearing impact on the adjacent area. To the north, the woodland area serves as a natural buffer, helping to integrate the development with the surrounding environment while protecting the natural landscape and the habitats found within the woodland. To the south, the presence of Station Terrace and an unused building further mitigates any potential concerns regarding overlooking or visual intrusiveness. The existing built context create a sense of continuity within the built environment, and the relationship between the proposed development and these adjacent buildings is unlikely to result in any detrimental effects.
- 6.12 Additionally, the site is set at a lower elevation compared to the street to the south. This lower-level positioning plays a crucial role in minimising the visual impact of the development on the adjacent street. As a result, the proposed building will blend more seamlessly into the landscape, reducing any feeling of overshadowing or encroachment on the neighbour's views and privacy. Furthermore, the west of the site borders the A4046, an important arterial road that connects to Ebbw Vale. The presence of this busy road adds another layer of separation, effectively diminishing the perception of the development's mass and height from nearby residential areas.
- 6.13 This development aligns with policy DM1 regarding amenity, as it is compatible with existing uses in Cwm and respects the privacy of neighbouring residents on School Terrace through careful consideration of building heights and orientation. The storey and a half step minimise overlooking and respects the existing lines of sight, thereby ensuring that the amenities of existing occupants are safeguarded. It has also been designed to provide appropriate living space and amenity levels, including private gardens and communal open spaces. This will ensure that future residents experience satisfactory living conditions reflective of local standards. The application will be accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment to ensure that any noise from the adjacent road has been sufficiently mitigated.

Impact on surrounding highways

- 6.14 The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which confirms the following:
- The site is in a sustainable and accessible location. The site is accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. This increases the possibility that journeys generated by the development can be made by sustainable forms of transport.
 - There is a good range of services and facilities that cater for the day-to-day needs of future residents of the site available within reach by sustainable methods of travel. This reduces the need to travel by car and ensures that future residents without access to cars are not socially excluded.
 - The site benefits from a safe means of access.
 - The site will be served by an adoptable street. Off-street parking is provided for each property and accords with the adopted Parking Standards for residents. One dedicated visitor parking space is

provided but more visitor parking can be accommodated informally along the development's street or in the nearby public car park.

- The site is located within a sustainable location, as demonstrated within the Sustainability Assessment contained within the Transport Statement. As such, the parking requirement will be 27 spaces in total (23 residents' spaces and 4 visitor spaces)
- The estimated traffic generation of the proposed development is insignificant and will cause no detrimental impact to the continued safe operation of the surrounding highway network.

6.15 As such it is considered that the application site meets planning policy requirements in terms of being in an appropriate location that is safely accessible by all forms of transport and that the impacts of the development on the continued operation and safety of the surrounding highway network would be acceptable. It is concluded therefore that there are no transport related issues that should prevent planning permission for the proposed development from being granted.

Impact on Noise

6.16 The planning application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment which advises that the site is entirely acoustically influenced by road traffic, primarily vehicles travelling along the A4046 Cwm Bypass Road. Occasional, but notably less significant acoustic contributions are experienced from vehicles passing the site on School Terrace and DMU trains on the Ebbw Valley Railway Line. The Assessment confirms the site is largely categorised as NEC B of TAN11 during the day, with the closest façades of the proposed flats overlooking the A4046 Cwm Bypass reaching NEC C levels of exposure; The extent of NEC increases at night, due to the higher receptor height and reduced influence of the roadside barrier.

6.17 The majority of the site will achieve the internal amenity criteria set out in BS8233:2014 with traditional, thermally insulating façade treatments, but that the closest façade of the flats complex overlooking the A4046 Cwm Bypass will require additional mitigation; and the majority of the site will exceed the daytime <55 dB(A) criterion for external amenity. Accordingly, the assessment confirms that with the mitigation measures in place satisfactory acoustic conditions are met and the site is predicted to meet the requirements of the relevant British Standard and planning guidance. On this basis, it is considered that noise does not present a constraint to the residential development of the site.

Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the proposed development of 18 residential units, comprising a mix of flats and houses, at Land at Cwmrhydderch Court, Cwm, Ebbw Vale, NP23 7UE on behalf of Tai Calon.
- 7.2 The principle of development is well-established, as the site is located within the settlement boundary of Cwm, in line with Policy SB1 of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan. The site's location is well-served by public transport links, with a bus stop immediately adjacent to the site, and local amenities and services within walking distance, reinforcing the sustainability credentials of the development.
- 7.3 The proposed development will contribute significantly to meeting the area's pressing need for affordable housing, providing a mix of unit types to cater to a diverse range of residents. The design respects the character and scale of the surrounding residential area, incorporating a mix of houses and flats that align with the existing vernacular. The development will be carefully integrated into the local environment, with sensitive attention to the site's sloping topography, the retention of mature trees, and the introduction of additional landscaping to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- 7.4 The development will be accessible, with pedestrian routes integrated into the site, and adequate parking provided for both residents and visitors. Although a reduction in parking spaces is proposed, this is considered appropriate given the site's proximity to local facilities and public transport options, supporting the broader national policy of reducing car dependency.
- 7.5 The proposed development has been designed with careful consideration for the residential amenity of both future and existing residents. The layout and building heights ensure there will be no detrimental impacts on the privacy, daylight, or views of neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the site's orientation and landscaping will help integrate the development into its surroundings and mitigate any potential adverse impacts.
- 7.6 Given the alignment of the proposal with relevant planning policies, its positive contribution to the local community, and the measures taken to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area, it is respectfully requested that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council grant planning permission for the development.