

PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Report of: Director of Development

Date: 4 November 2014

Application No.: 13/0949/PA

Proposal: Land based low impact development

Location: Land adjacent to Gwalia, Glandwr, SA34 0YE

Applicant: Mr Robert Smith

THIS APPLICATION IS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION AS THE DIRECTOR HAS REMOVED IT FROM THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION.

1. Recommendation:

1.1 It is recommended that the application be APPROVED subject to a Section 106 Agreement and the following conditions:

- Development shall begin no later than five years from the date of decision
- Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
- The use of site shall be carried out in accordance with the Management Plan
- Submission of annual monitoring report and supplementary report setting out mitigation or corrective measures should the Management Plan criteria not be met
- New vehicle access shall be laid out and constructed before any other work commences on site
- New access shall be constructed and the eastern access stopped up for use by vehicles before any other work commences on site
- Visibility splays shall be provided on each side of the new access
- Parking and turning details
- Hedgerow realignment

1.2 If the section 106 legal agreement is not completed within 3 months of the foregoing resolution then delegated power be given to the Director of Development to exercise discretion to refuse the application on the grounds of non-compliance with Planning Policy Wales and TAN 8.

2. Main Issues

2.1 The main issues raised by this application are:

- Whether there are circumstances sufficient to justify an exception to the normal strict control over new dwellings in the countryside.

3. Description of site

3.1 The application site comprises two fields covering 3 hectares, in countryside approximately 80 metres west of Glandwr. The site is accessed from the public highway to the north and north east of the site via existing field gateways. Hedgebanks and mature trees comprise field boundaries. A Public Right of Way (PP44/40/1) runs to the south of the site in line with the field boundary. The site is surrounded by agricultural land, with the nearest residential properties located to the east.

4. Proposal

4.1 The application is made in the form of One Planet Development for a low impact smallholding that proposes to use permaculture principles to sustain a family of four. As well as cultivating the land, the proposal includes the erection of a number of structures in the form of a dwellinghouse, barn, shelter, polytunnels, compost toilet and ground mounted solar panels. The dwellinghouse would consist of a roundhouse constructed from a timber frame with straw bale walls under a turf roof. The accommodation would comprise an open plan kitchen and dining area with central lounge, three bedrooms, bathroom and office/storage areas.

5. Planning History

5.1 There is no relevant planning history for this site.

6. Evaluation:

Whether there are circumstances sufficient to justify an exception to the normal strict control over new dwellings in the countryside

6.1 National policy on One Planet Development in the countryside is contained in Planning Policy Wales Edition 7 (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities. Practice Guidance for One Planet Development (OPD) issued in October 2012 provides practical guidance in support of TAN 6. Whilst the Welsh Government supports the principle of low impact development it also places an emphasis on the need to ensure that it is properly controlled.

6.2 The Practice Guidance sets out the requirements that a planning application for OPD would need to cover. Together with TAN 6, it introduces and specifies details of a Management Plan that must be submitted with all OPD applications and an Ecological Footprint Analysis (EFA) that should be submitted with the Management Plan. The Management Plan should provide

evidence to demonstrate that the proposal meets the exceptional nature of OPD in the countryside. The EFA is an indicator tool of the sustainability of human activities in terms of their impact on the carrying capacity of the planet and provides a measure of the impact of a person's activities in terms of the 'global hectares' needed to support them, based on an assessment of household consumption.

- 6.3 Paragraph 9.3.11 of PPW defines OPD as development that through its low impact either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality. OPD should initially achieve an ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares (gha) per person or less in terms of consumption and demonstrate clear potential to move towards 1.88 gha over time. OPD should be zero carbon in both construction and use.
- 6.4 Paragraph 9.3.12 of PPW and paragraph 4.15.2 of TAN 6 state that OPD located in the countryside should provide the minimum needs of the inhabitants in terms of income, food, energy and waste assimilation over a period of no more than 5 years from the commencement of work on site. This should be evidenced by the Management Plan which should set out objectives of the proposal, the timetable for development of the site and the timescale for review.

Management Plan

Baseline

- 6.5 The Management Plan submitted in support of this application includes a thorough baseline description of the site establishing its context and current condition as well as identifying existing features and services. The site comprises two fields with a total area of 3 hectares bounded by mature trees and hedgebanks with access gained via two existing field entrances. The only existing services on site are a spring and surface water drainage ditch and drainage pipes along the north east corner of the north field. The site lies to the west of Glandwr approximately 80 metres from the settlement boundary. A residential property, known as Gwalia and its curtilage, separates the site from Glandwr. In terms of the tenure of the application site, information submitted confirms that the applicant has freehold ownership of the land and as such it is clear that the requirements of OPD would be capable of being adhered to.
- 6.6 As part of the baseline assessment of the site the applicant, in accordance with the Practice Guidance, have provided an audit in relation to the following areas:

Physical: Geology, topography and soils (including agricultural land classification)

- 6.7 An assessment of the site's geological landscape using Natural Resources Wales (NRW) LANDMAP assessment tool supports the description of the site being comprised of sloping stony ground with springs and streams. In addition, the LANDMAP assessment indicates that no geologically important

features are present within the site. The applicant indicates that the proposed activities and development that would be carried out on the site would have a limited impact on the land due to the low impact nature of the proposal.

- 6.8 Land levels slope to the east-north east, with the highest and flattest part of the site being to the south west at the top part of the south field. The lowest land lies to the north east at the field gateway adjacent to Gwalia. The site has been surveyed and existing and proposed plans, indicating site levels, as well as 3D contour modelling have been provided with the application.
- 6.9 The applicant initially undertook rudimentary soil analysis of the site using a simple garden centre kit to give a basic indication of the acidity and nutrient levels of the soil. This has been supplemented by professional soil testing of the site. These subsequent tests indicate that the site comprises sandy silt loam with a PH of 5.2 and high phosphorous and magnesium levels and low potassium levels. In order to address the acidity of the soil so as to improve land productivity, the applicant proposes to incorporate organic matter that has been produced on the land into the soil and apply lime supplied by a local company.
- 6.10 The site comprises grade 4 land as indicated by the former Countryside Council for Wales' Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map. This grade comprises moderate to poor quality soil, however taking into account the applicant's proposal to improve the soil and productivity of the land, it is considered that the site would be suitable for the proposed agricultural uses.

Biodiversity

- 6.11 The site includes approximately 900 metres of established hedgebanks and mature trees. The application proposes to retain and manage these. It is not the applicant's intention to engage in intensive agricultural methods across the whole of the site but to leave areas of the site as they currently exist and to create new wildlife areas. An ecological survey has been undertaken and a report and associated management plan for the site has been submitted with the application. Whilst there are no nature conservation designations on the site, protected species have been identified. A Badger sett is present within the site and additional information has been provided by the applicant indicating the location of the sett and runs as well as plans to limit potential impacts of the proposed development upon the protected species. The Council Ecologist advises that on the basis of the additional information provided, it is not considered that there would be any potential risk to Badgers or other protected species as a result of the proposed development and as such has no objection. NRW has no objection to the proposed development. In this respect, it is considered that the proposal would protect and enhance biodiversity on the site and would accord with criterion 6 of policy GN.1 (General Development Policy) and policy GN.37 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity) of the LDP.

Cultural Heritage

- 6.12 No existing buildings or structures are present on the site. The applicant has

consulted LANDMAP in addition to Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT). No known archaeological records are identified within the site. The nearest listed building, Glandwr Chapel, lies 75 metres to the south east of the site and a prehistoric enclosure is located in a field to the south. No other heritage designations are within or in close proximity to the site. In terms of the historic environment, it is considered that the proposed development would be of a sufficient distance from the nearest listed building and would be largely screened by existing and proposed planting within the site. In this respect, the proposed development would have no detrimental impact on the historic environment and would accord with policy GN.38 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the LDP and the requirements of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 6.13 LANDMAP assesses the landscape as having high cultural importance due to the strong culture and use of the Welsh language within the area. It is the applicant's intention to integrate into the local community. The children attend the local school and it is suggested that the family would learn to speak Welsh.

Landscape

- 6.14 The fields that comprise the application site have been used for hay and/or silage making and the surrounding landscape comprises similar parcels of agricultural land. To the east of the site are residential properties which comprise the village of Glandwr. The proposal indicates that existing landscape features would be retained with areas of the site given over to crop cultivation. It also indicates how new features and structures would integrate with the existing landscape. The dwellinghouse and agricultural sheds would be located on a relatively level part of site towards the south west corner. The application contains drawings indicating the proposed layout, features and uses of the site. It also indicates that natural materials would be used for their construction and would reduce their visual impact.
- 6.15 Due to land levels falling towards Glandwr and the fact that the proposed structures would be located on higher level ground, there would be potential, despite the low impact nature of the development and its use of natural materials, for the development to be visible within the locality. The applicant has indicated that existing hedgebanks and trees would be maintained and strengthened to act as screening for the site and for new tree planting to be undertaken towards the eastern boundaries of the site. This would have the effect of limiting the visual impact of the development. Buildings would be constructed into the land following existing contours.
- 6.16 The Council's Landscape Officer has no objection to the proposal but advises that should the realignment of existing hedgerows at the access openings be required to improve visibility, then the re-use of existing materials and re-formation of hedgerows should be conditioned to ensure that landscape features are retained. In addition, NRW has no objection to the proposal. Taking the above into account, it is clear that the proposal would comprise 'low-impact' type development that would have no significant detrimental

visual or landscape impact and as such would accord with policies SP 16 (The Countryside) and GN.1 (General Development Policy) of the LDP.

Transport

- 6.17 The site is accessed by two existing field gateways that lead directly onto the adjacent public highway. Currently, the site has limited use by tractors for hedge trimming and hay or silage making. Proposed access arrangements would remain as existing however a track would be constructed from the north access point to the roundhouse. The applicant intends to keep two vehicles for domestic purposes and a tractor for agricultural use. The site is within walking distance of Glandwr, some 80 metres away. A bus service runs between Glandwr and Camarthen once a month.

Design /Strategy

- 6.18 Following a baseline assessment of the site, the Management Plan includes a comprehensive design strategy for the proposal which clearly sets out the applicant's aims and objectives for the site. This is supported by a proposed plot layout plan (also shown on page 24 of the Management Plan) which indicates the main features, structures and uses of the site.
- 6.19 The Business and Improvement Plan comprises the main elements of the Management Plan. An assessment of the information provided is set out below.

Business and Improvement Plan

Land Based Activity

Food Production

- 6.20 OPDs are necessarily land based with an essential objective of *“providing for all residents’ minimum needs for food, and providing the minimum income necessary to meet their basic domestic needs, within five years of first habitation on the site”* (OPD Practice Guidance paragraph 3.17). The Practice Guidance also states that *“the number of occupants of a site should be directly related to the ability of the site to meet their minimum food and income needs, also taking into account the number of people needed to run the site effectively”*. The Management Plan confirms that the site would be the sole residence of the occupants and the nature of the proposal being land based development justifies the need for occupants to live on site.
- 6.21 An OPD should produce *“at least 65% of all food needs of all occupants”* from the site, or that a *“minimum of 30% of basic food needs of all occupants are grown and/or reared on the site”* with the remainder being bartered or purchased from revenue derived from the site. It should also be noted that paragraph 3.22 of the Practice Guidance states:

“Individual OPD management plans should describe and quantify how the minimum food and income needs will be derived from the site in ways that fit

with the particular site and OPD proposals”.

- 6.22 When considering an initial temporary period for an OPD, it is necessary to establish whether these requirements are achievable. Initially, it was not clear from the information provided in the Management Plan as to what specific percentage of food needs would be produced on site and/or what percentage would be purchased or bartered using income or surplus produce derived from the site. An extract from the applicant’s ‘Household Produce and Items Spreadsheet’ has been provided which indicates the daily consumption of produce and items by the family. The spreadsheet includes a column which indicates whether the items consumed would be produced from the site or if it could not be produced directly from the land and would need to be purchased. Notwithstanding this information, it was considered that insufficient evidence had been provided to clearly demonstrate that either 65% of all food needs would be provided from the site or that a minimum of 30% of basic food needs would be grown or reared on the site.
- 6.23 Subsequently, further information has been requested and the information provided by the applicant states that “we see all our food needs as a ‘basic needs’ and as such our overall plan provides 100% of our ‘basic needs’ either directly or indirectly”. In addition they state that more than 30% of basic food needs would be produced from the land. The 30% food supply figure appears to have been reached by the applicant equating it with one family meal per day directly coming from home grown produce from the site.
- 6.24 A table entitled ‘Income from our Land Based Activities’ forms part of the Management Plan and indicates the annual income that would be generated from individual products. The total of each of the individual incomes is expressed as an annual land based income which has also been expressed as a percentage of household need for each year. An updated table has been provided with the supplementary information which deducts 10% of the produce from year 5 figures to represent produce for the occupant’s consumption. It states that the occupants would be able to consume 10% of their total food production whilst retaining sufficient income to cover over 100% of their other household needs. Further to this a list of food equating to 10% of non-sale produce has been provided along with an estimation of the number of meals this produce would provide on a yearly basis using simple meal plans. This information indicates that per year 66% of breakfasts, 30% of lunches, 36% of main meals and 47% of desserts would comprise food produced on site. Overall, the figures demonstrate that by year five 45% of the family’s annual basic food needs would be grown or reared on site. In addition, the remainder of the family’s food needs would be purchased using income from their land based activities. This is supported by figures evidenced in the updated ‘Income from our Land Based Activities’ table.
- 6.25 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the supplementary information does sufficiently demonstrate that the required food needs of the household would be met from the site.

Income

- 6.26 In addition to subsistence food production, net income would need to be generated from the site to fund assorted expenditure for other household items or needs such as travel, clothes, communications and Council Tax etc which cannot be grown on site or bartered. In terms of monitoring requirements, once established, the occupants would need to produce detailed income/expenditure accounts for the site and household.
- 6.27 A number of spreadsheets have been provided as part of the Management Plan which cover 'Annual Costs', 'Household Produce And Items not produced from land' and 'Transport Fuel Costs'. The total annual expenditure for these items/goods has been calculated (£11,200) and when compared with the updated 'Income from Land Based Activities' table it is evident that at year five the annual income of the household from land based activities (£11,403) would exceed the annual expenditure. In this respect, it is calculated that by year five 102% of household needs would be met by income generated from the site and that the occupants would be self sufficient.
- 6.28 It is evident both the minimum food needs and basic domestic needs of the household would be met from income derived from produce grown and reared on site as well as from other income streams including training events and educational courses that are linked to land based activities of the site. In addition, the land based activities would provide food and other products to local markets.

Occupants

- 6.29 The Practice Guidance indicates that the number of occupants must be directly related to the ability of the site to support their minimum food and income needs and the number of people needed to run the site effectively. The site comprises an area of approximately three hectares over two fields and would need to support a household of four comprising two adults and two children. From the information contained within the Management Plan, it is considered that the site would be able to support the minimum food and income needs of a household of four. It is proposed that the running of the site would require one person full time and another half time with additional help from the two children from time to time. On this basis it is considered that this number of people would be able to run the site effectively.

Land Management

- 6.30 A baseline assessment of biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape character has been undertaken by the applicant, together with proposals for the enhancement of site features. The Officer's assessment of this information is contained within the preceding paragraphs of the report which comprise the baseline description of the site.

Energy and Water

- 6.31 The Practice Guidance states that the energy needs of the site must be minimised and met from sources of renewable energy on site, with the

exception of small amounts of non-renewable fuel for particular uses for which they are best suited and justifiable.

- 6.32 The Management Plan indicates that the household's electrical requirement would be 5kwh per day (including electrical supply for water treatment and pumping) and that electricity would be primarily generated from ground mounted solar panels. Supporting information indicates that the solar panels would generate more than the household's basic electrical requirements for eight months of the year. In the remaining four months (Nov-Feb) it is intended that electricity would be produced by a wood-gas charging system powered by the wood fuel supply from the land. Electricity generated from the solar panels and the wood-gas generator would also be stored in a large battery bank on site.
- 6.33 It is proposed that short rotation coppice willow would be grown to produce wood fuel to power the wood-gas charging system and to run a small burner (rock mass heater), designed and constructed by the applicant, to heat the roundhouse and a hot plate for cooking as well as providing hot water. The wood-gas generator would be used to produce electricity for heating purposes during the winter months (for around 120 days of the year). It is the applicant's intention to undertake hedgerow maintenance in order to produce a supply of sticks and woody vegetation for wood fuel that would supplement the willow crop. Scrap timber from building waste would also add to the wood fuel supply during the initial years.
- 6.34 Taking the above into account and the supporting figures contained within the Management Plan, it is evident that the majority of energy needs of the inhabitants would come from the site and would largely be generated from a renewable source.
- 6.35 The Practice Guidance also states that the water needs of all activities must be met from water available on site unless there is a more environmentally sustainable alternative. It clarifies that any abstraction from water bodies (including ground water sources) must be at levels that would not cause environmental harm, such as from the lowering of surface and ground water levels. The re-use of water including rainwater harvesting from buildings and structures must be maximised and the water needs of the site minimised through sustainable design and technology.
- 6.36 The Management Plan indicates that an onsite spring would supply water for domestic and non-domestic use along with rainwater harvesting from polytunnels which would provide drinking and cooking water once filtered and sterilised. The water source is located in the northern field and test results (Appendix 10) indicate that it is acceptable for human consumption. However, given that it may contain traces of chemicals from surrounding fields, the applicant does not propose to use it for drinking and cooking purposes.
- 6.37 A more permanent well structure would be created at the water source with water piped by electric pump to the top of the south field for irrigation and home use. In addition to this, a number of swales would be created and

improvements made to existing drainage ditches in order to help reduce surface water flow and improve land irrigation. The Practice Guidance indicates that any water pumping should be renewably powered. With this in mind, it is the applicant's intention in the longer term to install a small water wheel to drive the pump.

- 6.38 Rainwater would be harvested from the polytunnels for drinking and cooking water. This would be filtered and treated using an electrically powered ultra violet water sterilising unit before being used.
- 6.39 Whilst it is estimated that approximately 100 litres of water would be required for heating and washing purposes the application does not quantify the amount of water that would be required for other uses or whether there would be a sufficient amount of water that could be obtained from the site to meet the household's needs. Equally, there is no indication as to the level of water abstraction required from the site and whether this would result in environmental harm from the lowering of surface and/or ground water levels. However, the Practice Guidance does advise that reporting on the use of water sources and ground and surface levels would form part of a monitoring strategy for the development that would indicate whether water needs are being met from water available on site and whether any environmental harm is being caused. It is considered that the water needs for all the activities could potentially be met from water available on site.

Waste

- 6.40 TAN 6 requires quantification of how the inhabitants' requirements for waste assimilation can be obtained directly from the site. The amount of waste should be minimised through a reduction in the amount of disposed material, re-use of any of that material and the recycling of as much waste as possible. The Practice Guidance states that all biodegradable waste produced on site must be assimilated on site, the only exception to this being occasional off-site disposal of small non-biodegradable amounts of waste, and that all waste handling and assimilation on site must be compliant with industry guidelines.
- 6.41 The Management Plan proposes the installation of two compost toilets on site with the compost produced re-used on the land. These would also help to reduce water consumption. All domestic food waste and green waste would be composted and used on the land or fed to livestock. Grey water from washing and bathing would be treated by a reed bed system and used to irrigate the willow crop. In terms of recycling, supplementary information has been provided which details how each waste stream would be dealt with and a rough indication given of the likely quantities of these materials. Whilst it is evident that the majority of waste material would be assimilated on site, a number of waste products such as plastics, metals, textiles, oil and batteries would either be re-used or recycled offsite. It is considered that the proposed strategy to minimise, assimilate and reuse/recycling waste would meet the requirements of the Practice Guidance.

Ecological Footprint Analysis (EFA)

6.42 Paragraph 4.15.1 of TAN 6 states that:

“One Planet Development is potentially an exemplar of sustainable development. One Planet Developments should initially achieve an ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person or less in terms of consumption and demonstrate clear potential to move towards 1.88 global hectares target over time”.

6.43 The Practice Guidance (paragraph 1.5) acknowledges that an ecological footprint of 1.88 gha per person is “a very challenging but necessary target”.

6.44 Using the OPD EFA tool, as recommended by the Practice Guidance, the applicant has submitted the required data sets and assessed the domestic per capita Ecological Footprint of their proposed OPD. Results from the analysis spreadsheet indicate that the current annual household Ecological Footprint is 2.32 gha per person. This figure indicates that the household is already low consuming and low in impact in terms of lifestyle given that it already achieves an Ecological Footprint below that which is expected by year five. The estimated Ecological Footprint for year five and at first habitation (year 4/5) is 0.5 gha per person, a significant decrease from the household’s existing Ecological Footprint and well below what they are expected to achieve. In this respect, the proposal demonstrates that it would meet this important requirement of OPD. The Management Plan, together with a number of spreadsheets and tables on household expenditure, provide the necessary figures which have been inputted into the assessment tool. This is supported by additional commentary which explains how the figures have been derived.

6.45 In addition, the Practice Guidance requires proposals to consider the impacts, both positive and negative, of OPD on other footprints. Whilst the Management Plan does not itemise other footprints or provide a comprehensive assessment of them per se, it does however include a general consideration of impacts throughout.

Zero Carbon Analysis

6.46 TAN 6 advises that OPDs should be exemplars of the Welsh Government’s zero carbon aspiration and achieve zero carbon status in terms of construction and use. It also advises that planning applications for OPD should be accompanied by supporting information confirming zero carbon status and that plans should be monitored annually the applicant.

6.47 The proposed OPD would consist of a roundhouse constructed from a timber frame. External timber would comprise reclaimed telegraph poles and internal timbers comprising locally sourced Douglas fir. Walls would comprise straw bales on stone plinth foundations. The straw walls would be externally rendered with a mix of traditional non-hydraulic lime putty and sand. Internally the straw walls would be lined with clay plaster. The roof structure would be a timber frame with straw bale insulation, an EPDM pond liner as a

waterproof membrane and turf roof. Windows, doors and furniture would be reclaimed.

- 6.48 The Management Plan indicates that the roundhouse has been designed to minimise energy use in terms of it having a smaller surface area that is based on a round layout plan and using materials which comprise high thermal insulation and draught proofing properties. The green roof would limit the amount of water run-off as would the compost toilet and rainwater harvesting from other buildings on the site.
- 6.49 The roundhouse and water for domestic use would be heated by a wood burning stove and the applicant's electricity would be generated on site from a ground mounted photovoltaic array and wood-gas generator.
- 6.50 Other structures on-site would comprise a wood/sheep shelter constructed of a timber frame and corrugated sheeting that has been reclaimed. A separate barn would be used as a workshop, food and tractor/equipment store. This would be constructed from timber with a turf roof. Two second hand polytunnels would be erected on the site which comprises steel frames and polyethylene sheeting.
- 6.51 The applicant's aim is to be zero-carbon but recognises that this may not be totally achievable and as such has chosen the least carbon option for the design of the buildings. The majority of buildings would be constructed using natural materials that could be raked into the ground or composted at the end of the building's life. However, some aspects of the proposal would involve the use of small amounts of materials with high embodied energy such as concrete, metal and plastic. The applicant indicates that these would be sourced from reclaimed items rather than purchasing new materials. As these would be difficult to assimilate on site it is recognised that these would need to be disposed of at civic amenity sites and recycled where possible.
- 6.52 The Practice Guidance indicates that for the proposed development to be zero carbon in construction and use, OPD buildings must meet the standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH), in respect of Category 3 (materials). This category covers five main elements of the building and an OPD home is required to achieve a rating of A+ or A6 for at least four of these elements. In addition, 80% of the assessed materials in these building elements and finishing elements must be responsibly sourced. 100% of any timber must be legally sourced.
- 6.53 The Management Plan states that the roundhouse would be built to conform to Building Regulations and would be constructed from materials having similar attributes to more conventional materials which would conform to the requirements of Category 3 of the CSH as shown in the submitted report (Appendix 11 of the Management Plan).
- 6.54 The Practice Guidance recognises that many aspects of the CSH are not suited to assessing the overall sustainability of an OPD home. Consequently, it advises that where it can be demonstrated that materials without a recognised published rating would have similar attributes to materials with

published ratings this would be acceptable. The assessment confirms that four of the five main building elements would achieve a rating of A+. The assessment indicates that none of the assessed materials used for basic building elements, and only 60% of the assessed materials used in the finishing elements, would be responsibly sourced. Additional information has been provided by the applicant addressing this issue. Taking this into account, it is clear that much of the material including stone, earth, clay and some timber products would come from the site and would be used in a sustainable way. Other materials that are proposed have been reclaimed or have been sourced locally but are nevertheless low impact materials. It is considered that these materials would be responsibly sourced and that sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed use of these less commonly used materials and finishes would be practicable and achievable. The timber that is proposed to be used would be legally sourced and would either comprise reclaimed telegraph poles or timber from sustainably managed woodlands close to the site.

- 6.55 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered on balance that the development could be zero carbon in construction and use.

Community Impact Assessment

- 6.56 TAN 6 requires the Management Plan to identify potential impacts of the proposal, both positive and negative, on the host community. The Practice Guidance requires that a thorough assessment of all impacts on neighbouring communities be undertaken and for any negative impacts to be mitigated. The Management Plan includes a section on this where the applicant states that it is their wish to become active and involved in the local community. The family would shop locally and use other local businesses as well as supplying food and other produce locally. It is understood that the two children already attend the local school and would continue to do so and that the family would learn Welsh. It is also their intention to join local clubs and groups and to make their home open to visitors to learn about the site and OPD. A Public Right of Way (PP44/40/1) runs to the south of the site along the field boundary and would not be affected by the proposal. It is the applicant's intention to create a footpath off the Public Right of Way to encourage people to walk to and stop at the site. Photographs have been provided from a number of viewpoints in the surrounding area which indicate how visible the site is at these locations and what the potential visual impact of the proposed development would be. The applicant states that the proposed buildings and structures have been located to minimise their impact and that planting would provide effective screening.
- 6.57 The information provided in the Management Plan does not identify or assess any potential negative impacts of the proposal. It is clear that only positive impacts have been considered by the applicants in their assessment and as such further information has been requested. Additional information has subsequently been provided which identifies visual impact as the main negative impact of the proposal. The Management Plan provides a comprehensive plot layout including a planting scheme and building design for the site which would reduce its visual impact. The Management Plan

provides a schedule of works which indicates tree and hedge planting to be a priority. The Officer's assessment of landscape and visual impact is provided within the preceding paragraphs of the report and concludes that the proposal would have no significant detrimental landscape or visual impact. The applicant states that competition from the sale of produce locally could also be a negative impact, however they propose to combine their efforts with other producers to create a more constant and varied supply of produce to the local community.

- 6.58 Taking this additional information into account, it is clear that a more balanced assessment of the impact on the local community has been undertaken and that mitigation for potential negative impacts is proposed. The fact that the OPD children would attend the local school and that the household would shop and sell produce locally and would support and take part in local groups and clubs and encourage visitors to the site, would all be positive aspects that would help the family integrate into and support the local community.
- 6.59 The local community council objects to the proposal on grounds that the proposal would be located on land outside of the village boundary and that development of a similar nature has been erected nearby. In addition to this, two third party representations have been received objecting to the proposal raising concern over the impact on the existing drainage system, highway safety and on neighbouring properties.
- 6.60 The principle of residential development in a countryside location is only permitted in specific circumstances under Policy GN.26 (Residential Development) of the Local Development Plan (LDP) for Pembrokeshire. It is clear that the proposed development does not fall under any of the circumstances specified in this policy; however National Planning Policy permits OPD where an application meets requirements set out in the supporting Practice Guidance to TAN 6. The application is being assessed on this basis in order to establish whether the requirements of the practice guidance would be met and which would justify an exception to the normal strict control over new dwellings in the countryside.
- 6.61 In terms of the impact on the existing drainage system, both NRW and the Council's Drainage Officer have no objection to the proposal but recommend good practice guidance be followed. The proposal includes the use of sustainable drainage systems such as swales and reed beds to improve water drainage on the land and to reduce water flows across the site. An assessment of the impact of the proposal on highway safety is contained within the following paragraphs of the report.

Travel Assessment and Travel Plan

- 6.62 TAN 6 requires planning applications for OPD to be accompanied by an assessment of the traffic generated from the use of the site by the residents and visitors. It specifies that a travel plan should also accompany the application, clearly identifying a preference for low or zero carbon modes of transport. In addition, the Practice Guidance advises that the proposal would

need to achieve a significant reduction in transport impacts from all activities on site and that there would need to be detailed monitoring of all trips.

- 6.63 A transport baseline for the site has been established in preceding sections of the report. Further to this, the Management Plan contains a statement on transport which indicates that travel by car would be kept to a minimum (two cars) and that bicycles would be used whenever possible. A breakdown of transport costs for both vehicles and anticipated number of journeys per year is set out in a table entitled 'Transport Costs'. This table has been updated and additional commentary provided which together make up a more comprehensive transport assessment and travel plan for the OPD. From this information it is evident that the family would use the vehicles for school runs, vegetable box deliveries, shopping trips, visiting relatives and for towing/transporting larger goods. Car travel for the family is estimated at 5,680 miles per year equating to fuel costs of £889.98 per year. The Management Plan indicates that the applicant would keep the number of journeys by car to a minimum by delivering vegetable boxes at the same time as school runs and by sharing school runs with other families. Produce for sale would be delivered locally by using a bicycle with trailer. In addition, the family would use bicycles as transport in and around the local area and would occasionally make use of the local bus service that operates monthly. It is anticipated that a number of educational courses would be held per year that would equate to four families staying at the site per year comprising an additional 32 car movements per year. Visitors by foot, bicycle or horseback would also be encouraged. Whilst the household would primarily be relying on cars for transport, it is clear that journeys would be kept to a minimum and supplemented by more sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.64 The Head of Highways and Construction has no objection to the proposal on highway safety grounds but recommends a number of conditions be attached to any consent granted relating to vehicle access and parking and turning areas. Taking these into account it is that the proposal would comply with criterion 6 of Policy GN.1 (General Development Policy) of the LDP.

Monitoring and Exit Strategy

- 6.65 The Management Plan contains a phased programme of works and monitoring for the OPD as well as an exit strategy. The phasing programme comprises a schedule of works that would be undertaken over the first five years of the site's development and which covers the critical aspects of the OPD. A statement of monitoring and review has been provided which indicates that annual monitoring reports would be provided that would take the form recommended by the Practice Guidance. In addition, it advises that the Management Plan would be updated every five years as part of the Management Plan review. A basic exit strategy has been provided in which the applicant states that it would be a simple process to deconstruct areas of the OPD as the buildings have been designed to be easily removed and recycled or disposed of. It includes a general indication of how the site would be restored to its former condition in terms of identifying those buildings/structures that would be removed and how they would be assimilated on the site or disposed of. However, the Practice Guidance

advises that the Management Plan will need to identify what would constitute a failure of the site as a whole (i.e. a failure to achieve one or more of the essential characteristics of OPD over a period of two years without instituting clear and effective measures to address the identified problems).

- 6.66 More detailed information has been requested in relation to the exit strategy. The applicant has provided additional information which clearly indicates what they consider a failure of each of the essential characteristics would be. They state that should a whole site failure occur that could not be rectified then the exit strategy for the site would be implemented. This would ultimately lead to the removal of all buildings and structures as well as returning the site to its former condition.

Conclusion

- 6.67 On balance, it is considered that there is a strong prospect that the proposal would provide a sufficient livelihood that would substantially meet the needs of residents on the site. It is also likely that this would be achieved within the required timescale.
- 6.68 The proposal indicates that the essential criteria set out in the practice guidance and a number of contributory criteria for each element of the OPD Management Plan would be met. It is however recognised that some aspects of the OPD could only be thoroughly assessed and problems identified and mitigated during the course of development. Careful monitoring and review could ensure that the OPD would be properly controlled.

Other Matters

Public Right of Way

- 6.69 A Public Right of Way (PP44/40) crosses the site. The applicant is aware of this and intends to create a new link from the footpath to the site. It is the applicant's hope that this would encourage visitors to the site. The Council's Public Rights of Way Officer has no objection to the proposal but recommends that an advisory note be attached to any consent granted. Taking this into account, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the right of way.

Mineral Resource

- 6.70 The site falls within a hard rock resource safeguarding area, where the prior extraction of any economic reserves should be carried out where economically feasible prior to development commencing. However, there is no evidence that the reserve is presently economic and given the relatively small land take, the size of the site would be considered insignificant when other more viable resources are available within the County. In addition, the low impact nature of the proposed development would not preclude the potential to extract this resource in the future. As such it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy GN.22 (Prior Extraction of the Mineral Resource) of the LDP.

Section 106 Agreement and Conditions

- 6.71 It is recommended that a Section 106 Agreement is completed by the applicant to tie the dwelling to the land which justifies this grant of planning consent.
- 6.72 No planning conditions other than those detailed in the preceding paragraphs of the report are necessary to ensure the appropriate implementation of the proposed development.

Conclusion

- 6.73 On balance, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the requirements of national policy and meets the qualifying criteria set out in the OPD Practice Guidance. In this respect, the proposal justifies an exception to the normal strict control over new dwellings in the countryside subject to a Section 106 Agreement being completed and conditions being imposed.

Annex

A.1 The Development Plan/Other Material Considerations.

A.1.1 The Local Development Plan

Policy SP 1 Sustainable Development

Policy SP 16 The Countryside

Policy GN.1 General Development Policy

Policy GN.2 Sustainable Design

Policy GN.22 Prior Extraction of the Mineral Resource

Policy GN.37 Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Policy GN.38 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

A.1.2 Other Material Considerations/ Weight Attached

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7 July 2014)

Significant weight

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010)

Significant weight

Practice Guidance – One Planet Development
Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable
Rural Communities (October 2012)

Significant Weight

A.2 Consultation Responses.

A.2.1 Head of Highways and Construction

Highways

No objection

Drainage

No objection

A.2.2 Head of Public Protection

No objection

A.2.3 Natural Resources Wales

No objection

A.2.4 Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

No objection

A.2.5 Council Ecologist

No objection

A.2.6 Council Landscape Officer

No objection

A.2.7 Council Public Rights of Way Officer

No objection

A.2.8 Crymych Community Council

Object

A.2.9 Representations

Two responses to consultation have been received objecting

to the proposal on grounds of the potential impact on the existing drainage system and concern for highway safety.

Background Documents:

(Copies of all the Background documents referred to in this report are available on

the planning application file for inspection by Members of the Planning and

Rights of Way Committee on request to the Planning Support Team).

- Consultation replies from the Head of Public Protection, Head of Highways and Construction (Highways and Civil Engineering Sections), Natural Resources Wales, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Crymych Community Council, Council Ecologist, Council Landscape Officer, Council Public Rights of Way Officer and two third party representations.