

# **P/2017/0329 & P/2017/0154 – Land at Minffordd and Land adjoining the Garage, Adfa, Newtown**

## **Sustainability and Welsh Language and Culture consideration**

This assessment has been carried out following the Planning Committee's decision to defer the above applications until an assessment was carried out in terms of the sustainability of the developments and potential implications of the developments on the Welsh Language and Culture of the settlement.

The officer's committee report quite clearly set out the sustainability credentials of the proposed development and village, which I have extracted from the report for ease of reference:

### **Sustainability**

*Adfa is classified as a large village within the Powys Unitary Development Plan. Four sites were allocated for housing development within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP); M103 HA1 (0.40ha Land adjacent to timber yard), M103 HA2 (0.44ha Land opposite Maesgwastad), M103 HA3 (0.65ha Land adjacent to village hall) and M103 HA4 (0.58ha Land opposite the Manse). In addition, the UDP recognises that there may be further opportunities for infill development within the settlement and opportunities for affordable housing adjacent to the settlement development boundaries. On allocated sites it was stated that 42 dwellings would be an appropriate level of growth for Adfa within the plan period (which has now come to an end). Three out of the four allocated sites have been completed.*

*Representations made in response to the application have raised concern regarding the lack of services within Adfa to support additional new residential development. Policy SP2 confirms land is allocated for development to reflect the needs and capacity of each planning area/community and principles of sustainability in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, for which 'large village' is third in the hierarchy. Adfa is classified as a large village within the UDP and has facilities including Chapel, community centre, garage, postbox, protected play area and post office. It is located on a public bus route and does connect to the A483 trunk road which allows access to Welshpool and Newtown. As such, while there are concerns regarding the lack of services and the village services becoming overstretched, the proposed development is not considered to exceed the capacity for the settlement as outlined in the UDP.*

*As well as contributing to the Council's housing land supply and the site being in a sustainable location, consideration must be given to other material planning considerations.*

This extract is policy based, and complies with National and Local Planning Policy. Adfa is stipulated as a large village within the Unitary Development Plan, which has seen a number of allocated sites approved and built on, which shows the demand of housing there is in the area.

The matter of fact is, that Adfa is recognised as a large village with allocated sites and sufficient services to accommodate housing, which illustrates the sustainability credentials of the village has been well established, and has gone through a robust process. The settlement has a Chapel, Community Centre, Garage, Postbox, Formal Play Area and Post Office/Shop, with easy connectivity to larger towns such as Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool and Newtown.

In light of this, Adfa is categorically a sustainable settlement, which cannot be questioned through planning policy. The next question is, the amount of housing that could be built in Adfa without putting undue pressure on the existing services provided.

Additional housing in Adfa, will not put pressure on existing services, but improve those services, and ensure that these services are not lost due to lack of use. The shop and post office could open for more hours to accommodate additional housing.

Both applications (P/2017/0329 & P/2017/0154) that was heard in July's committee have been reduced to up to 5 dwellings for each site. Which brings the cumulative proposal down to 10 dwellings, which the Cllr's openly stated that they could accept.

As stipulated in the settlement hierarchy of policy HP4, large villages such as Adfa can easily accommodate a further 10 dwellings as windfall sites, without putting pressure on existing services. In light of the above and Powys' current shortfall in housing land supply, both applications should be considered acceptable in terms of their sustainability.

## **Welsh Language**

UDP Policy GP5 together with Technical Advice Note 20 (Planning and Welsh Language (2013)) emphasises the importance of considering the Welsh Language when determining development's.

Dwyriv has been identified as one settlement in Powys that the Welsh Language should be regarded as being important to the social, cultural and community fabric of the settlement. In light of the above, we need to ensure that these two developments will not have a significant harm on the Welsh Language and Culture of the settlement.

27% of Dwyriv's population can speak, read and write welsh, this is only a fraction down from 1991, when 30% could speak, read and write welsh. Developments equating to up to 10

dwellings, is not considered to have any significant impact on the Welsh Language, given the nature and scale of development.

National Policy documents such as TAN20 (2013) and PPW (2016), has emphasised that a policy led approach should be the main instigator in determining the acceptability of developments within a settlement that the Welsh language is seen as an important factor. The determination of planning applications has to be in accordance with the adopted development plan, and therefore a strong local plan, can ensure developments will not harm the Welsh Language.

Unfortunately, Powys is in a position where the new Local Development Plan has not been adopted, and the current Unitary Development Plan is out of date, and has limited guidance on the consideration of the Welsh Language. In light of this, limited guidance is given on the acceptability of sites in relation to the Welsh Language.

*TAN20 stipulates that 'All LPA's will have assessed the implication of their development plan strategy, policies and allocations on the Welsh Language. As Development Plan include an allowance for non-allocated sites (windfall sites) for various types of development, planning application on non-allocated sites should not be subject to a further assessment of impacts on the Welsh Language.'*

*TAN20 also stipulates that 'In determining individual planning applications and appeals where the needs and interests of the Welsh language may be a material consideration decision must, as with all other planning applications, be based on planning grounds only and be reasonable. Adopted development plan policies are planning grounds, including those which have taken the needs and interests of the Welsh language into account. Planning applications should not be subject to Welsh language impact assessment, as this would duplicate LDP site selection processes where LDP objectives indicated the need for such an assessment.'*

The proposals are up to 5 dwellings each site, which is 10 in total. This is considered proportionate to the settlement, given that no additional housing has been provided within the settlement for over 5 years. Adfa has a local garage, chapel, village hall, post office and shop.

It is clear that rural villages like Adfa have suffered in recent years with young local people moving out of the area. These kind of developments, will ensure there will be housing/plots available to young people which will help them remain in the area. There are only 2 properties in Adfa for sale, which illustrates the demand for housing in the area.

In relation to economic development, it is considered that the potential construction of the dwellings would contribute to the economy of the local area. This is based on the

assumption that most construction projects of this scale are normally undertaken by local trade's people. It is therefore considered that the construction of these developments would have a neutral or positive impact on the local economy and jobs which is considered positive from a Welsh language and culture perspective.

In conclusion, the scale and type of both developments cumulatively is considered not to have a significant detrimental impact on the Welsh Language and Culture of the settlement, and therefore, fully complies with National and Local Policies.