

**LDP WORKING GROUP – MEETING MONDAY 19 APRIL 2021**  
**THE NEWTOWN AND LLANLLWCHAIARN PLACE PLAN DRAFT SPG**  
**SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

**1. Introduction**

The consultation was held only on-line due to the issues surrounding the safe provision of hard copies during the pandemic. The Draft SPG was publicised on the Council’s website and made available via a link to the Newtown Town Council website. The consultation ran for a six week period until Tuesday 9 March 2021.

The Council received 17 representations in total. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) requested an extension to the deadline which was agreed. NRW comments were received 19<sup>th</sup> March, alongside one other late representation from the Local Access Forum (received and accepted 18th March).

**2. Responses and Issues Raised**

The 17 representations comprised:

4 individuals (including a County Councillor)
10 organisations (including NRW and Natural England)
1 Local Authority (Caerphilly)
1 firm of local architects (Hughes Architects)
1 TCC (Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn)

Please see appendix 1 for more summary detail on the representations received.

Three representations, those from National Grid, Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Coal Authority, were actually confirming that they had “no further comment to make”.

Of the remaining 14 representations, the main topic issues have been identified as:

- Comments on the possible pedestrianisation of parts of the town.
- Comments on the importance of preserving the town’s heritage including targeting regeneration grants to green the town, promote a café culture and bring disused buildings back into re-use. Planning policy is already aware that our Listed Buildings and Conservation expert has been involved in one of the proposals mentioned in the Place Plan (the greening of High Street).
- Comments on making more reference to promoting Newtown as a tourist destination.
- Comments on reinforcing the importance of the canal and its linkages to green/blue space, ensure consistent wording re: sensitive repair/restoration, highlight the importance of waterways to health and well-being.
- Comments on including creative industries as part of economic well-being, ensuring enough focus is given to culture and the arts, including the protection of the existing cinema and theatres as important cultural venues.
- Comments on Active Travel and Public Rights of Way – planning policy would suggest that the Ramblers comments and the Local Access Forum comments are circulated to the Council’s PROW team and the Active Travel Officer for information.

- Land allocations – this topic has been raised by the architect firm who have a large presence in Newtown. Extracts from the rep are provided below:

*“Looking at the proposed housing sites, we agree that the Treowen site is of great importance and every effort should be made to achieve an exemplar development here in terms of design and sustainability.*

*However we don’t think the other sites referred to for future development are suitable for a number of reasons:*

*Hendidley – The site is very steep and suffers from poor access onto Milford Road*

*Dolfor Road – This site is incredibly steep and would be very difficult to develop fully, it may provide some extension to the existing allocated site, but not whole of the hatched area on the map.*

*Llanllwchaearn – Very steep site, poor access, poor highways infrastructure.*

*We think that current sites with permission should be included such as the remainder of the site at the top of Bryn Lane and the site alongside Glandulas Caravan Park. There may be others.*

*In terms of other sites to bring in, we’d suggest the opposite side of the road to Rock Wood in Llanllwchaearn, land around the Gro and possibly Wern Ddu Lane*

The concerns raised about site suitability have yet to be investigated. The Place Plan should not include totally unrealistic sites. However, sites are screened further either through pre-application advice or the candidate sites process in order to determine if planning constraints can be addressed. It is not considered appropriate for new sites to be offered up at this stage as the LDP review (LDP2) will provide the most appropriate platform for them to go through the system as “candidate sites”. All candidate sites are closely screened in the LDP preparation process. It is agreed that it may help with clarity if other sites with current permissions are included on the Place Plan maps (it is noted that the Glandulas site is probably just beyond the Town Council area but could be included as an adjacent site which will use the town’s facilities).

*“The need for additional employment land is agreed. We think proposals of where to place this should be made, with contingencies in place if the current sites cannot expand. For example could the Golf Club be relocated to free up vital land? What is the future of Fronlas Farm? That site could allow expansion at Mochdre. A long term plan with public sector involvement and support is required”.*

As employment sites have not been suggested by the community, the Place Plan has not put forward any sites for future consideration. Planning policy considers this to be understandable and would comment that the lack of employment land (or the need for the reconfiguration of sites) is probably more of a strategic matter for the next LDP. The need for a long term plan with public sector involvement and support is not disputed.

- Place Making - the Design Commission for Wales (DCFW) recommends the inclusion of a link to the Placemaking Wales guide as a useful resource.  
<http://dcfw.org/placemaking/resources/>
- Ecological - Natural England have raised the issue of the Severn Estuary SAC and Ramsar site to which the River Severn is hydrologically linked, highlighting the importance of migratory fish and the work of “*Unlocking the Severn*” partnership to restore the Severn to enable fish to move within the river and to increase people’s engagement. They consider the Place Plan provides an opportunity to remove any barriers to fish migration and to enhance the river and riparian habitat.

*“Natural England has become concerned about the impact of upstream development proposals on migratory fish species designated as part of the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site, which spend part of their life cycle in the wider Severn hydrological catchment”. As the Plan falls within the hydrological catchment of the Severn Estuary SAC/RAMSAR, we would advise you consider potential impacts on these sites from the proposed plan”.*

Natural Resources Wales have brought attention to the wide range of issues, including the Plan’s alignment to their goals regarding SMNR (sustainable management of natural resources) and the need to include consideration of the Mid Wales Area Statement.

### **3. Proposed Changes/Responses to the Comments**

The Planning Policy section are working with the Town Council to agree what changes should be made as a result of the consultation feedback. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that there will be the opportunity to draft all the responses in time for the April meeting of the LDP Working Group. In terms of timescales, the Town Council Officers hope to take an amended document to the next Committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May and to then to the Town Council for approval on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Because the SPG comments are mainly focussed at the local level it is considered that they are generally most suitable to be addressed and determined by the Town Council themselves, provided any text alterations and additions are agreed in advance with PCC Officers. However, Planning Policy Officers will work in particular with the Council’s Ecology team to deal with the Natural England comments and they will also be closely involved with any responses concerning land allocations in either the current or the replacement LDP.

The Place Plan is ultimately written by the Town Council so in this case it is considered appropriate that most of the changes, provided they do not go to the heart of the planning decision making process, are left to the Town Council to decide upon with the guidance and support of the County Council to ensure accuracy/conformity with LDP etc.

### **4. Summary**

We hope that this short summary is sufficient to provide a flavour of the comments which have been received. The Town Council will produce a consultation document and make it available in their usual manner (the Place Plan has already had much public involvement). The SPG consultation comments will be recorded by PCC in the usual manner.

### **5. Recommendation**

To help ensure the Place Plan is adopted within the most appropriate timescale and in the knowledge that this is a supplementary guidance document which must not seek to apply policy beyond that found in the over-arching LDP, the Planning Policy unit are seeking the LDP Working Group’s agreement to the proposal that Officers can take the amended Place Plan to the Cabinet meeting in mid June for adoption as SPG without bringing it back in the interim for the further attention of the Working Group.