

# SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTION

Sustainable development does not focus solely on environmental issues. More broadly, sustainable development policies encompass three general policy areas: economic, environmental and social. In support of this, several United Nations texts, most recently the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, refer to the “interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars” of sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

In Planning Policy Wales (2002) key Sustainable Development principles which relate directly to the content and operation of the UDP’s They include:-

- putting people, and the quality of life now and in the future, at the centre of concern.
- taking a long term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations, whilst at the same time meeting the needs of people today.
- respecting environmental limits, so that resources are not incorrectly depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged.
- applying the precautionary principle.

Para 9.3.6 of the UDP states:-

The concept of sustainability underpins the housing land allocations. The sites identified should make full use of existing and planned infrastructure. They should be located to reduce the need to travel and facilitate use of alternatives to the car by being in close proximity to public transport provision, employment opportunities and other community facilities. The development and maintenance of viable communities, where the quality of life and access to facilities are good, is a priority. The countryside will be conserved and enhanced, and development located where appropriate on previously developed land.

**OBJECTION:** The Development of Bryncoch Farm and the extension of the Settlement Limit directly oppose many of the issues raised in this paragraph . The various issues are clarified under the following headings.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Para 2.8.3 says of Neath:-**

There is little scope to to create new sites for business and industry within the town, but improvements to the major new developments at Baglan and Llandarcy will be promoted.

Para 4.4 EMPLOYMENT states:-

Focus key employment provision within Port Talbot and Neath at Llandarcy Urban Village, Jersey Marine, Baglan Bay Development, Port Talbot Docks and Margam, together with important sites within the valleys at Abernant (Cwmgors), Glanrhyd (Pontardawe), Glynneath, Resolven and Cymmer.

**Objection:-** Locating the development at Bryncoch farm, where there is no local employment, whilst aiming to concentrate future employment opportunities at Llandarcy, Jersey Marine, Baglan and Port Talbot Dock, is directly opposed to the idea of sustainability. Most people require access to the M4 for work - the closest interchange is at Llandarcy.

### **CLOSE PROXIMITY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Objection:** There may well be a half hourly bus service (currently under threat?) but most journeys to work are considerably longer than a run into Neath or Pontardawe. The feasibility of walking or cycling (other than recreational) is limited because of the topography of the area. Our own survey shows that 66% of homes in Bryncoch never use public transport, and that less than 5% of homes use public transport daily. The next heading explains why.

### **REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL /CLOSE PROXIMITY TO OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

They are addressed together because they are interlinked.

**Objection:** A cursory look at the more frequent journeys undertaken by households (other than the vitally important employment issue already discussed) indicates that none are in easy reach of Bryncoch, certainly not by public transport.

National health service – there are no facilities in the Clydach Valley. Hospitals are significant journeys to Baglan, Morriston or Singleton. There are no General Practitioners, Dentists or Chiropodists.

Supermarkets – Only one is convenient by public transport – Neath Abbey and Pontardawe are less accessible.

Shopping - Many people shop in Swansea or Llansamlet retail park because of the limited choice at Neath.

Schooling – Secondary and tertiary education generally mean a journey to Dwr-Y-Felin or Pontardawe. The Church in Wales primary school is oversubscribed meaning that Blaenhonddan will need to be expanded – it is not in walking distance.

Library – there is no library in the Clydach valley – though a mobile library visits, Neath Library is the mainstay

Sporting facilities – limited to the private Rugby/Cricket club. There are no public facilities.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE ....IS A PRIORITY**

**Objection:** Just a short while ago Bryncoch was a small village and its residents feel that it still retains that community spirit. Only a few years ago that community spirit manifested itself in the support for the proposed purchase of Dyffryn Woods by Coed Cadw, with door to door collections and large individual donations turning the proposal into a reality. In recent years they have seen the encroachment of housing as the Development at Waunceirch has taken away a large tract of green countryside. The community feels oppressed, and frankly uncared for. The proposed loss of more countryside and the firmly held belief that the loss of Bryncoch farm to housing would be the precursor to urban sprawl advancing down the Clydach Valley, compounded by the lack of local facilities and the already difficult traffic issues, has brought villagers even closer together to oppose the proposal.

### **COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE PRESERVED AND ENHANCED**

**Objection:** 8.5 of the 17 Ha are already admitted to be of ecological importance and worthy of conservation. If the other 8.5 Ha are developed the proper management of this ecologically sensitive site will be extremely difficult as we are advised that it needs to be grazed regularly by horses or cattle – and it will effectively be landlocked. The 8.5 Ha proposed for development is, according to our independent ecological survey, important under the local biodiversity action plan and is discussed in the Ecology section of the dossier. Similarly Landscape issues and the elevation of the land are discussed under the landscape section.