

# 6. Housing (Omission) Sites

## Policy H1 – Location of Housing Development

### 6.1 Introduction and Recommendations

6.1.1 A significant number of sites were put forward as possible housing sites by objectors, in the event that additional sites might be needed to meet housing requirements to the end of the Plan period. My reasoning and conclusions in respect of each of these objection sites is given below.

6.1.2 The main issue in each case is whether or not the site should be allocated for housing purposes and added to Policy H1 of the UDP.

6.1.3 I conclude in Chapter 4 that there is no requirement for additional sites to be identified and allocated for housing in the UDP. My recommendation is therefore that few of the sites discussed below should be allocated for general housing purposes under Policy H1. However, my assessment of these sites is included in this chapter to inform the objectors, and to assist the Council over time as it monitors progress on all its housing sites and reviews their availability. I consider that the Council may wish to make minor amendments to the UDP when the results of its Housing Need Assessment (see my Chapter 5, section 5.17) are produced.

6.1.4 I make two exceptions to my general recommendation that no additional sites be allocated for housing. The first is for land at Wyndham Close, Brackla. For reasons given in section 6.4, I recommend that this site be allocated for housing. In section 6.32, I conclude that the Ty Draw Farm, Pyle site should not be allocated for employment use, but should be allocated for housing. For all the other sites named below, however, I recommend that there are no modifications to the UDP.

### 6.2 Land at Llangewydd Court Farm, Llangewydd

#### **Objection**

DO/51187/1372

Jenkins Gould Partnership

#### **Conclusions**

6.2.1 Llangewydd Court Farm is located in the countryside, well beyond the boundaries of main or smaller settlements. The objection site is rural in character and appearance. Policy EV1 of the deposit UDP reiterates established national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be strictly controlled. Preference is given, when new housing sites are sought, for brownfield land within main settlements. I conclude that this land should not be allocated for residential purposes.

## 6.3 Land at Tyn-y-Waun Farm, Llangynwyd, Maesteg

### Objection

DO/51167/1373

Mr A Garfield & Miss J Jones

### Conclusions

6.3.1 The objectors argue that there could be a shortage of housing land available in the Lower Llynfi Valley in the future, but the deposit UDP has sought to provide for the requirement of the County Borough as a whole, focusing development in the main settlements. The Plan does not prescribe new development in smaller settlements such as Pont Rhyd y Cyff, which adjoins the northern boundary of this site. I am satisfied that the Council's approach is reasonable and should give a fair distribution of new housing sites within the County Borough.

6.3.2 The objectors argue that a recent planning permission to redevelop a petrol filling station south of the settlement boundary, with new retail facilities and a traffic signal control, indicates that the settlement boundary should be moved southward. They contend that housing demand has changed since the Local Plan was adopted, and that this is a 'sustainable' site being in a public transport corridor and close to the local secondary school. However, the objection site is rural in character and appearance and, notwithstanding the position of the secondary school and petrol filling station, I consider it to be visually separated from the built up area of Pont Rhyd y Cyff to the north. In my opinion, the objection site occupies an area of countryside where development should be strictly controlled. I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing purposes.

## 6.4 Land at Wyndham Close, Brackla

### Objection

DO/51194/1471

Welsh Development Agency

### Conclusions

6.4.1 Land north of Wyndham Close is allocated for employment uses in the deposit UDP. However, the Council has agreed with the WDA who own this land that the line of the proposed Coity Bypass (T16(1)) should be moved northward and should follow the northern boundary of the objection site rather than Wyndham Close. The objector argues that, in these circumstances, the site would be better suited to housing use because the new road would provide a boundary between employment and housing uses. Housing would then be integrated with the adjoining Brackla housing area, and industrial traffic would be removed from Wyndham Close. The Council agrees in principle with the road re-alignment and does not object to allocating the objection site for residential use.

6.4.2 My conclusions are based on the assumption that the proposed Coity Bypass will be re-aligned to the north. I conclude that there would be benefits to the living conditions of residents locally if the objection site were allocated for housing instead of employment uses. The WDA advises that the site is approximately 2.2ha so that it could make a moderate contribution to future housing requirements. Parts of it are previously developed land, and by virtue of its relationship to the built up area of Bridgend to the south, I consider that an allocation for housing would be in keeping with policy in PPWales and the Council's land use strategy.

6.4.3 Although I concluded in Chapter 4 that there was no need for additional sites to be identified and allocated for housing under Policy H1, use of this site for housing rather than employment would bring important environmental benefits and a more sensible land use pattern. For this reason, I shall recommend that the site be allocated for housing.

## Recommendation

6.4.4 I recommend that land at Wyndham Close be allocated for housing under Policy H1.

## 6.5 Land at Island Farm, Bridgend

### Objection

DO/51210/1681 Mr L Joseph

## Conclusions

6.5.1 The objector submitted a schematic layout plan with a report entitled 'Comprehensive Development Proposals at Island Farm, Bridgend', showing residential development in the southern portion of the site adjacent to New Inn Road and the railway line. The schematic layout plan relates to a larger area of land than the objection site as illustrated on the original representation. Nevertheless, the latter referred to details set out in the attached report. I shall base my assessment of the objection on the larger area which extends to the A48 in the north.

6.5.2 The objector argues that the objection site is suitable to accommodate a major comprehensive development, comprising prestige sporting, leisure and recreational facilities, an hotel, employment uses and residential development. The Welsh Rugby Union is seeking a site for an academy, which would be of national importance and be used to train players, coaches and referees to the highest standards. It is envisaged that this could be built at Island Farm. The objector argues that it would be appropriate to introduce a new notation for comprehensive, mixed use development to the Proposals Map with relevant cross-references to topics such as housing. It is suggested that housing would be 'of crucial importance as a catalyst for the provision of prestige sporting facilities on adjoining land'.

6.5.3 PPWales para 2.4.2 indicates that mixed use developments should be promoted through, and fully justified in, the UDP. Such developments are envisaged to achieve regeneration and foster integrated communities within the existing settlement pattern. A mixed use scheme is advanced in this case so that some of the development, including housing, might subsidise the provision of a national academy for rugby. The objector lists a number of sites which the Welsh Rugby Union has investigated, and records that many were rejected because of a lack of funds to resource the development. The Council argues that there remains considerable uncertainty as to whether sufficient resources would be found to progress the national academy project at this site. I share the Council's concern that, if the allocation were made in the UDP and were not later taken up by the Welsh Rugby Union, it could lead to an undesirable 'open cheque book' for development of this large site.

6.5.4 At the Inquiry, it was confirmed that the proposed housing would not be functionally linked to the main sporting attraction ie it would not be intended to provide housing for workers and users of the academy. As to regeneration, a distinction was drawn by the Council between deprived valley communities in the north of the County Borough where

regeneration is needed and this relatively prosperous area south of Bridgend where needs are different. In my opinion, this mixed use scheme would neither foster regeneration nor an integrated community, as envisaged in PPWales.

6.5.5 Though the schematic layout plan shows development on brownfield land adjoining the A48, much of the representation site including the land shown for residential development is greenfield, and lies beyond the built up area and the employment land allocation south of Bridgend. The objector argues that New Inn Road would provide a more 'logical' southern boundary for Bridgend than that implied by the allocation under Policy E6(1) Bridgend Science Park/Island Farm, and shown on the UDP Proposals Map. However, I consider that the southern edge of the E6(1) site, which follows existing field boundaries, is clearly identifiable. Although the southern part of the objection site is not designated as green wedge or landscape conservation area in the deposit UDP, it is countryside. As such, national and local planning policies aim to place strict controls on its development. If additional sites for housing development were required for the Bridgend County Borough, this land would be a low priority as it is not brownfield and is outside the urban area.

6.5.6 Though the objector argues that the comprehensive development might include provision for a new passenger rail halt and a new public transport service, and the Council advises that negotiations concerning new Vale of Glamorgan services have been held with RailTrack, it seems to me that realisation of the facility could be some way in the future. It does not alter my conclusion that the objection site should not be allocated for housing in Policy H1 as part of a mixed use development.

6.5.7 A planning application for comprehensive development of the site was being considered by the Council at the time of the UDP Inquiry. The Council indicated that this was likely to be determined before my report on the UDP would be published. The Council may consider that the scheme is permissible, for example, because of special circumstances surrounding the provision of sporting facilities in Wales. However, on the basis of the evidence before me at the Inquiry, I conclude that the larger site should not be allocated for mixed uses and there should be no housing allocation under Policy H1 of the UDP.

**6.6 Land Adjoining the B4265, East of Island Farm, Bridgend**

**Objection**  
DO/51220/1735 Mr M A Richards

**Conclusions**

6.6.1 The objector argues that housing development would consolidate existing developments in the vicinity of the objection site along Ewenny Road, and would complement the comprehensive scheme of development which is envisaged for land at Island Farm to the west. I have dealt with a related objection to the green wedge policy in my Chapter 3.

6.6.2 I consider that the objection site is located in the countryside. It is outside the confines of Bridgend, in an area which is designated as green wedge in the deposit UDP. It is established national and local planning policy that housing development in the countryside should be strictly controlled. PPWales advocates a search sequence when identifying sites to be allocated for housing in UDPs. Local planning authorities should start with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings before considering urban extensions. Using this

approach, this site would not be a high priority. If the proposed comprehensive development at Island Farm does not go ahead, I consider that this objection site would be an isolated site in the countryside, and would rank lowly in terms of the search sequence. If land at Island Farm is developed in the manner which the objector describes, the railway line would, in my opinion, form a strong physical barrier between Island Farm and this objection site. Housing development on the site would still not be well related to the main built up area of Bridgend.

6.6.3 The objection site is visible from Ewenny Road and New Inn Road. Though there is roadside development along both, the area is mostly rural in character and appearance. I consider that housing development on the objection site, even at low density, would have an undesirable, urbanising effect and contribute to urban sprawl. I conclude that this land should not be allocated for housing.

**6.7 Land and Buildings at Parc Farm, Coity**

**Objection**  
DO/51226/1759 Mr M Phipps

**Conclusions**

6.7.1 The objector argues that the former farm building complex and adjoining land is suitable for conversion and/or redevelopment purposes, and could effectively round off the north-east corner of the large Parc Derwen site, allocated as H1(25).

6.7.2 Parc Derwen is one of the largest sites identified in the UDP, having been carried forward from the Ogwr Borough Local Plan. A development brief for the comprehensive development of the site was approved as SPG by the Council in December 2000, and an outline planning permission granted, subject to a S106 obligation, in June 2002. I see no reason to recommend departure from the ongoing process for development of the H1(25) site by including this objection site.

6.7.3 The former farm buildings and adjoining land are rural in character and setting, and I agree with the Council that a proposal to develop here would not at this stage amount to rounding off a settlement. I have taken account of the objector's observation that the allocation in the deposit Plan and the site boundaries in the Development Framework Plan are slightly different. However, I conclude that the objection site should not be added to the Policy H1(25) housing allocation.

**6.8 Land at Llangewydd Road, Bridgend**

**Objection**  
DO/51226/1761 Mr M Phipps

**Conclusions**

6.8.1 This site lies within a Landscape Conservation Area, and I have dealt with the objector's case for its removal from the designated area in my Chapter 3.

6.8.2 Whether or not the site lies within a special landscape area, it is located in the countryside, where national and local policies require that development especially for residential purposes should be strictly controlled. I agree with the Council that the site lies outside the settlement boundary of Bridgend. Therefore, in terms of the site sequence which should be applied when new residential sites are sought (PPWales para 9.2.7), it would amount to a greenfield, settlement extension site. As such, it should not be given high priority for allocation or development. The objector points out that Llangewydd Road is linked by bus services to the city centre, and has demonstrated that the site could accommodate some affordable housing and an area for formal and informal recreation. However, these factors are insufficient, in my opinion, to outweigh the harm which would be done to the countryside if the land were allocated for housing.

## 6.9 Land at Abergarw, Bryncethin

### Objection

DO/50999/1101 Droxford Limited

### Conclusions

6.9.1 The objectors contend that the objection site currently allocated for employment land should be allocated instead for housing development. In their view, there is limited demand for employment use of the site which has had planning permission for the same since 1966. Prospects for its use for industrial purposes are alleged to have deteriorated with the omission of the Bryncethin bypass from the deposit UDP. The objectors argue that it could usefully provide for housing demand in the Bryncethin/Brynmenyn area.

6.9.2 The Council has assessed the future requirement for housing on a County Borough-wide basis, focusing new allocations on brownfield sites and the main settlements. I am satisfied with its approach, and consider that the Maendy Farm allocation, where a reserved matters application for 50 dwellings has been recently approved, should meet demand locally.

6.9.3 The Council provides evidence from the planning history to show that there has been, and remains, considerable interest for employment use of this site. Earlier applications for residential development have been refused and dismissed on appeal. I consider that it is important to safeguard potential employment land, and conclude that there is insufficient justification to allocate this site for housing purposes instead.

## 6.10 Land off Maesteg Road, Neuadd Domos, Maesteg

### Objection

DO/51228/1819 Mrs C M Roberts

### Conclusions

6.10.1 In my Chapter 3A on objections to Environment policies, I refer to this site and its designation as part of a special landscape area.

6.10.2 The site lies adjacent to land allocated as site H1(33) in the Plan. I consider that the site would be suitable for new housing and could reasonably be regarded as an extension to that allocation. However, the site is identified for future educational purposes in the UDP.

Although the objector claims that it is unlikely to be acquired for this purpose within the Plan period, the Council's Director of Education has given contrary advice via the planning authority. The site is well placed to meet any needs for expansion at the local Primary School, and I consider that it should remain available for this purpose. I conclude that the site should not be allocated for housing.

**6.11 Land South of High Street, Laleston**

**Objection**  
DO/51210/1879 Mr L Joseph

**Conclusions**

6.11.1 The objector argues that opportunities for infilling and rounding off in the smaller settlement of Laleston, which has a good range of employment and local facilities, are very limited. In the interests of broadening the choice of housing in a variety of locations, the objector contends that this site adjacent to the settlement should be developed. The site has no special countryside designation, and the objector claims that its development would not lead to the coalescence of settlements nor to sporadic/ribbon development. Landscape proposals are put forward to screen the development from the south and west.

6.11.2 However, the site is located in the countryside, beyond the settlement boundary of Laleston, where national and local policies make clear that development should be strictly controlled. In terms of both the Council's preferred land use strategy and the search sequence for new housing sites, which is described in PPWales para 9.2.7, I consider that this greenfield site, outside a smaller settlement, would be lowly ranked. I accept that Laleston is accessible by public transport and the private car to Bridgend and other main settlements in the County Borough. This means that any future housing needs not catered for in the village could reasonably be met in the main settlements.

6.11.3 Other factors which count against the allocation of this site are that it occupies Grade 2 agricultural land (among the best and most versatile) and is adjacent to a site of local importance for nature conservation. I conclude that the case for new housing development on this site is insufficient to justify extending the boundary of this small settlement or permit encroachment in the countryside.

**6.12 Land off Rogers Lane, Laleston**

**Objection**  
DO/51216/1730 Mr L Joseph & Mr J J Williams

**Conclusions**

6.12.1 The objector argues that the site, comprising land in two parcels on the western periphery of Laleston, would round off this part of the smaller settlement. I have taken account of the submission that the objection has been withdrawn in respect of an additional parcel of land to the east of Roger's Lane. In the interests of broadening the choice of housing in a variety of locations, the objectors contend that this (western) land should be developed. The

objectors assert that the site has no special countryside designation, and its development would not lead to the coalescence of settlements nor to sporadic/ribbon development. Landscape proposals are put forward to provide a firm and attractive limit to the development.

6.12.2 However, the site is located in the countryside, beyond the settlement boundary of Laleston, where national and local policies make clear that development should be strictly controlled. In terms of both the Council's preferred land use strategy and the search sequence for new housing sites, which is described in PPWales para 9.2.7, I consider that this greenfield land, outside a smaller settlement, would be lowly ranked. I accept that Laleston is accessible by public transport and the private car to Bridgend and other main settlements in the County Borough. However, this means that, even if the opportunities for infilling or rounding off are limited, any future housing demand not catered for in the village could reasonably be met in the main settlements.

6.12.3 I have taken account of the Council's opinion that there could be a disproportionate increase in the size of the settlement, especially if all the objection sites adjoining the Laleston boundary were allocated in the Plan. Whether or not this would be the case, I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing because it would amount to harmful encroachment into the countryside, contrary to national policy and the Council's preferred land use strategy.

**6.13 Land East of Laleston**

**Objection**

DO/51224/1748 Manning Construction & William Bros

**Conclusions**

6.13.1 The objectors argue that opportunities for infilling and rounding off in the smaller settlement of Laleston are very limited. They claim that the settlement has a good range of employment and local facilities, and is popular with house buyers and small builders. In the interests of broadening the choice of housing and location, the objectors contend that this site adjacent to the settlement should be developed. Landscaping is proposed to screen the development along its eastern and south-eastern edge.

6.13.2 However, the site is located in the countryside, beyond the settlement boundary of Laleston, where national and local policies make clear that development should be strictly controlled. In terms of both the Council's preferred land use strategy and the search sequence for new housing sites, which is described in PPWales para 9.2.7, I consider that this greenfield site, outside a smaller settlement, would rank lowly. I accept that Laleston is accessible by public transport and the private car to Bridgend and other main settlements in the County Borough. This means that any future housing needs not catered for in the village could reasonably be met in the main settlements.

6.13.3 The site lies close to the Laleston Conservation Area, though the Council agreed that the site could be developed in such a way that it would not harm the setting. The objectors argue that the land is not an integral part of a farm unit. However, it lies in the fragile gap designated as green wedge between Laleston and Bridgend, and occupies Grade 2 agricultural land (among the best and most versatile). I conclude that the case for new housing development on this site is insufficient to justify encroachment into the countryside.

## 6.14 Land at Caer Cymrig, Garth

### Objection

DO/50955/1044 Mr D Jones

### Conclusions

6.14.1 The objector expresses concern about the provision of sites for new housing development in the Llynfi Valley. He argues that sites currently allocated are either under construction or unlikely to be available in the short term, or heavily constrained and uneconomic to develop. In his opinion, the site at Picton Street falls into the last category, and should be replaced by the objection site. I deal with the allocation of the Picton St site in my Chapter 5. The site at Caer Cymrig is on the eastern side of the Valley, which Mr Jones perceives to be more attractive for housing development than the western side.

6.14.2 There is a dispute as to the exact location of the objection site, with the objector asserting that it is located immediately south of the turning head at Caer Cymrig adjacent to housing in St Mary's Crescent. Whether or not the boundaries were correctly drawn on the original objection, I consider that land in this locality is peripheral to the settlement of Maesteg. However, if it were regarded as a site which would round off the settlement, the Council advises that a proposal for 6-8 dwellings could be assessed in terms of Policy H3. I agree with the Council that there would be no need to make an allocation under Policy H1 for a development of that size.

6.14.3 Though the objector argues that there is scope to enlarge the site to include it in Policy H1, this was not the basis for the duly-made objection. In any event, for reasons given in my Chapter 4, I see no pressing need for the identification of a large new housing site.

6.14.4 The deposit UDP shows that a community route is proposed for pedestrians and cyclists at the rear of existing properties in Caer Cymrig and St Mary's Crescent. Whether or not the community route could be accommodated with any new housing development, I conclude that additional land need not be allocated here under Policy H1.

## 6.15 Yrysfya / Y Parc, Fairfield Avenue, Maesteg

### Objection

DO/51143/1316 Coytrahen Estate

### Conclusions

6.15.1 The Council advises that this land was allocated for housing in the Ogwr Borough Plan, but is one of a number of sites which have not been carried forward to the UDP. The Council argues that the site has long been acknowledged by the Joint Housing Land Availability Study Group as having access problems, and that there is potential danger of instability from past mining activities. The objectors contend that the issue of access could be overcome and that there would be a benefit if the extent of risk associated with former mining activity were fully investigated, and possibly remedied.

6.15.2 I consider that it is sound for the Council to review earlier and unimplemented housing allocations and delete sites, such as this one, which have unresolved constraints likely to prevent or significantly delay their availability. I have taken account of the objectors'

argument that housing development here would complement neighbouring areas and relate well to the proposed community route. However, there remains uncertainty over the site's viability and the Council indicates that small scale infilling may occur, if the land is not allocated for housing. I conclude that it should not be allocated under Policy H1.

**6.16 Land West of Cwrt Colman Street, Nantymoel**

**Objections**

- DO/51193/1463 JST Developments
- DO/51193/1464 JST Developments

**Conclusions**

6.16.1 The objectors argue that land west of Cwrt Colman Street and Nantymoel Row should be allocated for housing purposes under Policy H1. In view of planning permissions recently granted, the objectors contend that para 4.4.4 of the UDP is not relevant to this land. The Council advises that it was originally allocated for residential development in the Local Plan adopted in 1983, and was carried forward into Policy H10 of the Ogwr Borough Local Plan. Notwithstanding the planning permissions granted in the past, the Council views the prospects for the development of these sites as poor. Other members of the JHLAS have supported this view in the categorisation of sites. When reviewing the earlier Local Plan allocation and preparing the UDP, the Council identified high infrastructure costs associated with developing a steeply sloping site and possible flood risk from surface water affecting nearby properties.

6.16.2 I have visited the land and see no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment, which is supported by the fact that the land has remained undeveloped for a very long period. The Council advises that, when determining planning application P/00/797/OUT, it took the view that this land was appropriate for small scale residential development under Policy H12 of the Ogwr Borough Local Plan. Policy H3 of the UDP also permits such development in urban areas, as I point out in Chapter 5, section 5.13. I have taken account of the objectors' argument that development of the smaller site would enable the larger site to be developed. I have also considered the recent renewal of planning permission P98/897/OUT, which is surprising because of the site's acknowledged constraints. However, I am satisfied that sufficient housing sites without this one have been allocated in the UDP. I conclude that this site should not be allocated under Policy H1.

**6.17 Ogmores Vale Health Clinic**

**Objection**

- DO/50946/1029 Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust

**Conclusions**

6.17.1 The objector points out that a new health clinic will be developed on land at the rear of Commercial Street, Ogmores Vale, and argues that the old site at Park Avenue should be allocated for housing. It is located within the main settlement and is previously developed land. However, the site is very small compared with most of those allocated in Policy H1, and I consider that Policy H3 of the UDP would cater for any proposal to develop here. The Council informs that outline planning permission for residential development on the site has already

been granted as it would amount to appropriate infilling. I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing under Policy H1.

**6.18 Land East of Cemetery Road, Ogmores Vale**

**Objection**  
DO/51204/1560 Mr & Mrs James

**Conclusions**

6.18.1 The objectors argue that opportunities for new housing development in Ogmores Vale are very limited, as existing allocations are largely built out or heavily constrained. They claim that the Council is investing in regeneration in Ogmores Valley, and should be prepared to support it with new housing provision in this main settlement. The objectors highlight difficulties associated with the topography of the wider area, but argue that this flat site would form a linear and logical extension to the settlement. It is described as partly brownfield and suitable for some 30 new houses, being close to the main facilities in the village centre and accessible to Bridgend by public transport.

6.18.2 However, the Council contends that the site is located in the countryside, beyond the settlement boundary of Ogmores Vale, where national and local policies make clear that development should be strictly controlled. I agree that the petrol filling station and garage on the northern side of the objection site form a suitable boundary to the settlement. Though the objectors argue that the site itself has strong physical boundaries, my opinion is that this elongated site would amount to an urban extension rather than rounding off. Therefore, in terms of both the Council's preferred land use strategy and the search sequence for new housing sites, which is described in PPWales para 9.2.7, I consider that housing development, outside the main settlement boundary, should not be a high priority.

6.18.3 The Council has established the requirement for new housing on a Borough-wide basis. It argues that sufficient sites have been allocated to serve this and neighbouring settlements, which have experienced decline in the past. The objectors allude to housing for special needs, but provide no supporting evidence of specific and significant unmet needs in this locality. I have scant evidence that new house building on this site, even by local builders, would have a sustained and positive effect on the local economy.

6.18.4 The Council argues that development on the site would be highly visible and intrusive in the landscape. Although it would be readily seen from the adjoining main road and the proposed community route for pedestrians and cyclists, I consider that its position on the valley floor would substantially reduce any adverse impact. In addition, the objectors indicate that the existing allotments might partly be retained. However, these considerations are insufficient to override my conclusion that the site should not be allocated for new housing development.

**6.19 Land at Heol Y Geifr, Pencoed**

**Objection**  
DO/50967/1057 Mr J E J Thomas

## Conclusions

6.19.1 The objector argues that the site comprises the remnants of an agricultural holding bounded by land adjoining the M4 and residential development, within the logical boundary of Pencoed. Access could be obtained, it is claimed, from the north-west where the Council owns land.

6.19.2 I understand that the objector has already discussed with the Council the possibilities for housing development on the site, but has encountered difficulties over the provision of improved vehicular access. The Council argues that this creates uncertainty over the development prospects of the site. However, development would be appropriate in terms of Policy H3 of the deposit UDP, on a windfall site within the logical boundary of a main settlement. I agree with this assessment. On my site inspection, I saw that the southern end of Heol Y Geifr is narrow and would not provide suitable access for a substantial number of new dwellings. I conclude that uncertainty over access arrangements weighs against the site's allocation under Policy H1.

## 6.20 Land West of the A473, Pencoed

### Objection

DO/51174/1384 Pencoed College

## Conclusions

6.20.1 The objectors argue that development of this site would amount to logical rounding off to Pencoed, extending it eastward to the A473, which would provide a strong and defensible boundary. The land is severed by the main road from the college, and is alleged to serve no important anti-coalescence or agricultural role. A similar site was considered by the Inspector at the Ogwr Borough Local Plan Inquiry. He concluded that the Ewenny River formed a clear edge to the eastern side of Pencoed and, despite the presence of the A473 road, the objection site belonged visually to the countryside. I consider that there has been no significant change in circumstances since the Inspector's report. Housing development on the objection site would be contrary to national and local policies to restrict new development in the countryside.

6.20.2 Latest information on flood plains from the Environment Agency Wales indicates that much of this site could be liable to flooding. In such areas, national planning policy is that built development should be 'wholly exceptional'. The objector advises that use of the land for housing purposes would provide finance for much-needed improvements to the college. Though I am sympathetic to the cause of educational improvement, it does not outweigh the harm that could ensue from a housing allocation in the flood plain and in the countryside in this case. I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.21 Land North of Coychurch Road, Pencoed

### Objection

DO/51190/1442 Mr B Manning, Mr T Refell & Mrs Metcalf-O'Daily

## Conclusions

6.21.1 The objectors argue that the Council has under-estimated the role of Pencoed as a growth point in the M4 corridor. Population figures from the Censuses 1961 to 1991 were submitted to show that the population of the Pencoed Ward increased from 3,948 to 9,277, at a significantly higher rate than the County Borough as a whole. The objectors contend that the settlement is likely to remain popular, especially among commuters to Cardiff, and provision for new housing should be increased accordingly. They also argue that allocations in the deposit Plan have almost reached completion, except for the Hendre Road site which is constrained by the need for completion of the Pencoed Inner Relief Road. The objectors estimate that the objection site could benefit the town and accommodate some 300-350 dwellings.

6.21.2 However, the Council's approach has been to consider the housing requirement for all the County Borough, rather than more localised requirements. Given the high level of accessibility between settlements within the County Borough, and the fact that most parts of it have good links with Cardiff by way of the motorway and the railway, I see no need to provide for differentially high levels of growth in Pencoed.

6.21.3 Pencoed is a main settlement, and the UDP does not show the settlement boundary. Until recently, it was widely accepted that the M4 provided a logical western boundary for Pencoed. A number of appeal decisions were put forward by the Council to support its view that land off Coychurch Road was in the countryside and outside the settlement. However, I consider that the recent planning permission for B1 employment and residential uses and flood storage purposes on the neighbouring site at Junction 35 of the M4 motorway (the Triangle site) is a significant material change. The position of the objection site and the 'logical' settlement boundary on this side of the town now need to be re-assessed.

6.21.4 I have already recommended that the Council should be explicit about main settlement boundaries, and show them in the UDP (Chapter 3, section 3.3 of this report). I consider that it would be particularly helpful for the west side of Pencoed. In my view, the Triangle site with planning permission for some 96 new dwellings, could now be considered as part of the settlement of Pencoed. However, land on the north side of Coychurch Road including the objection site is currently rural in land use and appearance. Though the proposed road junction improvement and development to the south are likely to change the character and appearance of Coychurch Road, I consider that land to the north will continue to be countryside, and should remain outside the settlement boundary. As such, applying the search sequence, the objection site should not be a high priority for housing purposes, as it would amount to an urban extension onto greenfield land.

6.21.5 The Council argues that development of the site for housing would be harmful to the setting of the landscape conservation area and the SSSI to the north. It suggests that development of the site could result in greater human access leading to destruction of trees and hedgerows. However, it seems to me that the landscape conservation area and SSSI are somewhat detached, being on elevated land and across the railway line from the objection site. Also, they have retained the special features in spite of close proximity to the western built up fringes of Pencoed. I therefore attach limited weight to these arguments. Nevertheless, because of the harm which would arise from loss of part of the countryside, also designated as green wedge, I conclude that the objection site should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.22 Land at Hendre Road, Pencoed

### Objection

DO/51201/1525

Bellway Homes (Estates) Ltd

### Conclusions

6.22.1 The objectors accept that the site is located in the countryside, beyond the settlement boundary of Pencoed, where new housing allocations would not be a high priority. However, they argue that the Council will need to take greenfield sites to accommodate additional housing developments, and that Pencoed requires this proposed urban extension.

6.22.2 The objectors contend that the UDP does not provide sufficient new housing for Pencoed in the Plan period. The town occupies a strategic position along the M4 corridor, and it possesses substantial and expanding employment opportunities as well as a good range of community facilities. It has achieved steady rates of housing completions in the 1990s which, according to the objectors, would not continue with the allocations in the deposit UDP. Based on the JHLAS figures for past build rates, the objectors estimate that the current supply equates to 9 years' completions. If, as the objectors claim, the site south of Hendre Road (H1(16)) achieves fewer dwellings than shown in the Plan, the supply would equate to only 6 years.

6.22.3 The Council has sought to provide for the housing requirement of the County Borough as a whole by allocating sites principally in the main settlements. It has not made local projections for each settlement and I consider this to be a sound approach, given the distribution of and good accessibility between settlements. However, as main settlements are to be the focus for new development, I regard it as important that demand for new housing development in each one should not be seriously constrained. In the interests of sustainability, PPWales para 2.5.3 calls for a broad balance between housing and employment opportunities.

6.22.4 The Council argues that the capacity of the objection site is greater than 200 dwellings as proposed, and its development if taken with other objection sites could result in disproportionate growth of the settlement. I consider that, if necessary, it would be quite reasonable for the UDP to allocate only one of the objection sites, so I attach little weight to this argument. However, even if the objectors are accurate in predicting that the site off Hendre Road at Duffryn Farm (allocation H1(16)) will only provide 200 rather than 300 additional units, the Council has recently granted permission for almost 100 new houses on the Triangle site, Pencoed, south of the M4. I am also aware that the figures for past housing completions in Pencoed were inflated by one very high figure in 1992. I consider that the UDP makes reasonable provision for new housing development in Pencoed.

6.22.5 Concerning the suitability of the objection site for housing, the northern part lies between existing residential development to the east and common land to the west. The southern part is adjacent to the Duffryn Farm site. In my opinion, development for housing would result in the loss of an area of pleasant countryside, and change to the rural character of this part of Hendre Road, though the objectors demonstrated how trees and hedgerows might be incorporated into any new development. I agree with the objectors that a housing development could be designed so as not to harm the nearby special landscape area (the Strategic Coalfield Plateau and its Associated Valley Sides) or views in and out of it. I accept that development of the site would not have a significant adverse effect on nature conservation interests or land of high agricultural quality.

6.22.6 Para 6.9.14 of the deposit UDP indicates that no further development will be permitted west of the railway line in Pencoed until a new road bridge over the railway has been

implemented. An interim inner relief road has been constructed in association with the Duffryn Farm development but the railway bridge remains to be constructed. The objectors have offered to fund this highway improvement, arguing that the Duffryn Farm scheme is unlikely to do so. I have considered whether the benefits from the highway improvement would be so great that a housing allocation beyond the current settlement limits and in the countryside should be made. Although the objectors assert that a new bridge would address economic, social and environmental problems, the scheme is justified primarily for the relief of traffic congestion. There is also uncertainty as to the full costs of a new bridge, fuelling doubts as to the capability of the proposed development to fund the bridge and make a contribution to necessary drainage works. On balance, I conclude that the potential benefits would not outweigh the harm to settlement strategy and countryside which housing development on this site would cause. I conclude that it should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.23 Land South of Penyfai, Bridgend

### Objection

DO/51187/1430 Jenkins Gould Partnership

### Conclusions

6.23.1 The objectors initially submitted representations in respect of parcels of land on either side of the Penyfai to Cefn Glas road. Representations in respect of land on the western side were subsequently withdrawn, and I shall make my recommendation for the eastern parcel of land only.

6.23.2 It is argued that the settlement boundary around Penyfai is drawn so tightly that any rounding off of the settlement is precluded. The most logical direction for the settlement to expand, the objectors claim, is southward where the objection site would be suitable for new housing. However, Penyfai is identified in the deposit Plan as a smaller settlement where only small scale infilling and limited rounding off will be permitted. Even when the western portion of the representation site is excluded, the objector's evidence is that the site covers some 9.5ha and could accommodate approximately 175 dwellings. In my view, that would be substantial and would not amount to 'limited' development.

6.23.3 The objection site is green and open land which slopes down from the settlement towards the stream and railway line. In my opinion, housing development on it would be harmful to an area of countryside which represents an attractive setting to the south side of Penyfai. I respond in my Chapter 3 to the implications of developing this site for green wedge policy. I conclude that development of this site for housing would be contrary to the preferred land use strategy and harmful to the countryside. The allocation should not therefore be made.

## 6.24 Land at Pont Rhyd Y Cyff

### Objection

DO/51225/1754 Mr P Allport

## Conclusions

6.24.1 This site is shown within the Strategic Coalfield Plateau and its Associated Valley Sides in the UDP, and I have dealt with the objector's case for its removal from the designated area in my Chapter 3. I have also covered in that chapter the case for amending the settlement boundary of Pont Rhyd y Cyff.

6.24.2 Whether or not the site should lie within a special landscape area, it is located in the countryside, where national and local policies require that development especially for residential purposes should be strictly controlled. The site lies outside the designated boundary of the smaller settlement, Pont Rhyd y Cyff, and is greenfield. In terms of the site sequence which should be applied when new residential sites are sought (PPWales para 9.2.7), I consider that it should be given low priority for allocation or development.

6.24.3 The objector argues that there are limited opportunities for rounding off and infilling in the settlement, and there is a need for new housing to support community facilities. However, the Council's land use strategy does not require smaller settlements to cater for new housing, which should be directed to the main settlements. Pont Rhyd y Cyff offers some local facilities, and is linked by bus and rail services (from Cwmfelin) to Maesteg, Bridgend and other settlements, which offer a wider range of employment and community services.

6.24.4 The objector has demonstrated that the site could accommodate a landscaped recreational area. At the Inquiry, much was made of the acknowledged shortage of open space for children's play and recreational facilities in this settlement. However, in my opinion, provision of these facilities on this site would not outweigh the harm which would be done to the countryside if the balance of the land were allocated for housing.

## 6.25 Land West of Moor Lane, Porthcawl

### Objection

DO/50016/1000 Wilcon Homes Western

## Conclusions

6.25.1 The objectors argue that residential development on the site, which is adjacent to existing development accessed from West Road, would be well integrated with the urban area. The suitability of the site for housing was acknowledged by its inclusion in the deposit draft Ogwr Borough Local Plan. It is claimed that allocations in the deposit UDP for Porthcawl are limited to small sites and the regeneration scheme, which may take time to come on stream. All the allocations are located in the southern part of the town whereas the objection site would serve the northern part, on land which has the advantage of being free from landscape and nature conservation constraints.

6.25.2 The Council responds that the allocation of this land for housing was withdrawn at the PIM stage of the Ogwr Borough Local Plan and, at the Plan Inquiry, similar objections were heard for a larger area of land which included this site. The previous Inspector concluded that the site should not be allocated for development, because it would be harmful to the pleasant rural character of the area, and would extend the built up area in an illogical way. I agree with those views and consider that development on the site would amount to an

undesirable, urban extension into the countryside where development should be strictly controlled.

6.25.3 Though the objectors suggest that the land is undistinguished and unprepossessing, I consider that it is seen as part of an open, green expanse between the existing housing area to the west and Moor Lane. Furthermore, the Council contends that it has value as substantially Grade 2 agricultural land. Allocation for housing would be contrary, in my opinion, to advice in PPWales which favours development on brownfield sites in urban areas, and to the Council's approach to honouring established commitments and identifying new sites on brownfield land within the main settlements.

6.25.4 I have taken account of the planning permission for industrial units on a neighbouring site, but consider that this should not provide a precedent for allocating this countryside site for housing. The Council has allocated sufficient housing land on a County Borough-wide basis for the Plan period, and I consider that the allocations for Porthcawl, taken with those for Bridgend and North Cornelly, will adequately serve the south-west of the County Borough. I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.26 Land to the Rear of West Road, Nottage

### Objection

DO/50903/975

Barratt South Wales

### Conclusions

6.26.1 The objectors argue that the housing allocations for Porthcawl are inadequate, and that too large a proportion is associated with the regeneration scheme, which is uncertain and is likely to cater for a specialist housing market. However, the Council's approach to meeting the future requirement for additional housing has been to adopt a County Borough-wide approach, to re-assess outstanding commitments (deleting the least promising ones), and to add new allocations on brownfield land within main settlements. As explained in my Chapter 4, I am satisfied with this approach.

6.26.2 My response to objections relating to the Porthcawl regeneration project are given in Chapter 17. It is clear to me that there is currently interest from developers in progressing it. The allocation for 300 dwellings is intended to meet general housing requirements, and I am satisfied that it would be separate from new accommodation for tourists. I consider that the Policy H1(58) site is well placed to meet new needs for housing associated with the revitalisation of the town's traditional role as a resort for tourism and recreation progresses. In the meantime, the smaller allocations for housing in the deposit UDP in Porthcawl, and the larger allocations in neighbouring settlements should cater adequately for a wide range of housing requirements, in my opinion.

6.26.3 The objectors also argue that the objection site would represent acceptable rounding off of the settlement of Nottage. However, I consider that the objection site, located beyond the existing confines of the suburb of Nottage, would represent a significant extension of Porthcawl into the adjoining countryside. It would not, in my view, be well integrated with the main settlement. Though the objection site is not designated as a special landscape area or green wedge, it lies in the countryside where national and local policies require development to be strictly controlled. I agree with the Council that, if additional land for new housing were

required in the County Borough, application of the search sequence as described in PPWales and the Council's own land use strategy would not make this greenfield land in the countryside a high priority.

6.26.4 The Council refers to other objection sites in the vicinity of this one. I consider that, were this site allocated for development in the UDP, it would be distinguished from neighbouring unallocated land. Its allocation would not provide a precedent for development on other unallocated sites beyond the site's boundaries in the countryside. However, this factor does not provide sufficient justification for allocating the site.

6.26.5 I have considered the objectors' argument that the land is of limited value for agriculture, being severed, isolated and subject to trespass and vandalism. I have also taken account of the observation that the data on agricultural land classification is dated and inappropriate for use at a local level. However, PPWales reinforces earlier policy that the best and most versatile land should be conserved as a finite resource for the future, and I have seen no evidence to contradict the Council's view that this site is predominantly Grade 2 in quality. I conclude that this land should not be allocated for housing.

**6.27 Land North of Cypress Gardens, Porthcawl**

**Objection**  
DO/51006/1118 C H Knight & Partners

**Conclusions**

6.27.1 The Council regards this site as part of the countryside and shows it on the UDP Proposals Map as within the green wedge and the coastal zone. I deal with the objections to its inclusion in these designations in my Chapter 3. I agree with the objectors that the site, surrounded on three sides by existing housing, shares the character and appearance of the surrounding urban area.

6.27.2 An illustrative plan was submitted with the objection showing how four dwellings might be accommodated on the site. A proposal for development on these lines could, in my opinion, be considered on its merits under Policy H3, which permits small scale infilling and rounding off in main settlements including Porthcawl. However, I conclude that there is no reason to allocate it for housing under Policy H1 of the UDP.

**6.28 Land West of Moor Lane, Nottage, Porthcawl**

**Objection**  
DO/51212/1718 Mr & Mrs Battrick

**Conclusions**

6.28.1 I consider that the objection site, located beyond the existing confines of Porthcawl, would represent an extension into the adjoining countryside. Though the objection site is not designated as a special landscape area and has been used as a touring caravan park, it lies in the countryside where national and local policies require development to be strictly

controlled. I agree with the Council that, if additional land for new housing were required in the County Borough, application of the search sequence as described in PPWales and the Council's own land use strategy would not make this site a high priority. The Council advises me that the objection site formed part of a larger area of land which was considered by the Inspector at the Ogwr Borough Local Plan. He concluded that development here would be harmful to the character of the countryside, and I agree with that assessment.

6.28.2 The Council refers to other objection sites in the vicinity of this one. I consider that, were I to recommend allocating this site for development in the UDP, it would be distinguished from neighbouring unallocated land and its allocation would not provide a precedent for further development in the countryside. Though the objectors argue that the site would be suitable for housing, in that utility services and access are available, and employment and community services in Porthcawl and Nottage are accessible, nevertheless, I conclude that the site should not be allocated for new housing.

## 6.29 Land at Pwll Y Waun Pond, Porthcawl

### Objection

DO/51213/1720 Mr R H Knight

### Conclusions

6.29.1 The site is located within the main settlement of Porthcawl. It is close to established residential areas and, if used for housing, would be well served by existing facilities, employment and public transport. Though it is not brownfield land, I consider that it could feature for consideration at the second level of the site sequence for housing sites, being urban land in a main settlement.

6.29.2 The objectors point out that Pwll y Waun Pond was identified as an area of public open space as early as 1959, but no progress has been made on either the acquisition of the land or securing better public access. The site is allocated for the general provision of amenity open space under Policy RC9 of the deposit UDP. In view of current financial constraints, the objectors argue that the site is unlikely ever to be acquired for its allocated purpose, and puts forward a 'mixed use' scheme to be promoted in its place.

6.29.3 PPWales para 7.2.1 indicates that land which cannot realistically be taken up in the quantities envisaged over the lifetime of the UDP should be reviewed. Whether some of the land might better be used for housing, mixed uses or no longer be designated for development should be considered. It seems to me that the time has arrived for a fundamental review of this allocation and for one of the above alternative ways ahead to be selected.

6.29.4 The Council argues that Pwll y Waun is a SINC and is afforded protection under Policy EV19 of the deposit UDP. At the UDP Inquiry, there was some ambiguity as to whether the Council would seek greater public access to the land in accordance with Policy RC9, or whether it would favour the opposite, in the interests of habitat protection. The Botanical Survey commissioned by the objector concluded that the southern part of the land had ecological value which should be conserved, whereas the northern part was unlikely to be important.

6.29.5 Taking account of all the above, my conclusion is that this site should not be allocated under Policy H1 as I see no need currently to identify additional housing land.

However, I consider that the time has come to look very closely at the options, especially as it is land in a main settlement. In my opinion, a mixed use development could be expected to yield some new housing, greater public access to amenity land on the eastern side of the pond, and improved protection and management of the biodiversity resource. I give further conclusions for this site in my Chapter 11, in respect of the objection to Policy RC9.

**6.30 Land at Nottage Mead, Porthcawl**

**Objection**  
DO/51214/1723      Davies Bros (Waste) Ltd

**Conclusions**

6.30.1      This site was included in a larger area that was considered for allocation in the Ogwr Borough Local Plan. The objectors argue that the current site should be allocated for housing together with adjoining land. However, the Inspector at the Ogwr Borough Local Plan Inquiry concluded that the area lay outside the built up area of Nottage where new development would be contrary to policy to protect the countryside, and harmful to the pleasant, rural character. I consider that there has been no material change in circumstances since then to alter this conclusion. I agree that housing development on the objection site, located beyond the existing confines of Porthcawl, would represent an undesirable extension into the adjoining countryside.

**6.31 Land East of Dan Y Graig Avenue, Porthcawl**

**Objection**  
DO51215/1728      Mr R P Lewis

**Conclusions**

6.31.1      The objector argues that this site should be omitted from the green wedge and Coastal Zone. These objections are dealt with in my Chapter 3. It is contended that housing on the site would comprise a continuation of the development on Chestnut Drive. It would represent rounding off of the settlement and could accommodate some 7 or 8 dwellings. As the site is relatively small, the objector claims that the loss of farmland would be insignificant.

6.31.2      The planning history indicates that previous proposals to develop this site have been refused by the Council and dismissed on appeal. In addition, the Inspector at the Ogwr Borough Local Plan Inquiry recommended against allocating this land for residential development. I have taken account of the site's size and characteristics and close proximity to Dan y Graig Avenue. However, I agree with my predecessor that this site is located in the countryside, where development should be strictly controlled, and should be left open as it affords an attractive outlook towards the coast. I consider that there have been no material changes in circumstances in the intervening years, which would lead me to a different conclusion. I conclude that this site should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.32 Ty Draw Farm, Pyle

### Objection

DO/51194/1479

Welsh Development Agency

### Conclusions

6.32.1 The site is located on the east side of the main settlement of North Cornelly. The Council argued at the Inquiry that the site is outside the logical settlement boundary. Nevertheless, it was allocated for housing in the draft deposit UDP and changed to employment in the deposit UDP. In my opinion, the site is closely related to established residential areas in the settlement and, if used for housing, would be well served by existing facilities, employment and public transport. I have already recommended in Chapter 3 that the UDP should be explicit as to where the boundaries of the main settlements lie. I consider that it would be very helpful in this instance. If the site were included in the settlement, the A4229 would form a firm eastern boundary, and development on it would amount to rounding off.

6.32.2 The Council has allocated the site as a special employment site in the UDP under Policy E6(5). The objectors argue that there is no real prospect of its development for such purposes, and point to unsuccessful efforts to market it for various types of employment use for more than twenty years. At the Kenfig Hill/Pyle Local Plan Inquiry in 1986, the Inspector concluded that the site would be equally suitable for housing or employment use, but that the potential of a site which enjoys exceptional access to the road and rail networks should not be wasted. He recommended that it should be allocated for special employment use. In the Ogwr Borough Local Plan, 1995, the site was allocated for B1 use, which should have widened its attractiveness to business users.

6.32.3 Notwithstanding the Council's evidence that past marketing exercises could have been more intensive, there has been limited interest in this site for the last 20 years either for special employment or B1 uses, and it remains undeveloped. PPWales cautions against identifying quantities of land which cannot be taken up in the period of the Plan, and calls for realism in planning. I consider that the history of this site counts against its inclusion in the UDP for employment purposes.

6.32.4 The site has been selected for potential employment use because of its location in close proximity to the M4. The WDA argues that the site is not very visible from the motorway and that accessibility is not a straightforward matter. However, I see no physical reason why access could not be achieved, and the prominence of the site improved by pruning the surrounding vegetation. The site is located next to an existing housing area, but neither special employment nor B1 uses should be ruled out as bad neighbours, judging by experience and expectation at Bridgend Science Park and The Triangle site, Pencoed.

6.32.5 Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis et al's assessment of potential employment sites in the County Borough (CD155) concluded that Ty Draw Farm was only a long-term prospect and was suitable for alternative uses, for example residential. However, I share the concerns expressed by the Council at the Inquiry that there is a disparity between the subjective and objective assessments of this site as reported by the consultants. The site is ranked out of the 13 sites as 4 on environmental impact, 8 on economic impact, 1 on social impact and 6 on deliverability. These results do not match the highly critical overall conclusion.

6.32.6 The Council argues that, if this site is withdrawn from the employment land bank, there will be a dearth of developable sites on the west side of the County Borough, which will be in conflict with sustainability. The WDA argues that not all settlements in the County

Borough have employment sites, and that Pyle is well served by public transport and roads, so that commuting to Bridgend or Neath/Port Talbot and beyond is feasible. I agree with this, and consider that the presence of the Village Farm estate, which has some available land, should not be overlooked.

6.32.7 The WDA draws attention to a local press report, in which the allocation at Ty Draw Farm was justified on the grounds that sites adjacent to Junctions 35 and 36 on the M4 have been filled, and demand is moving westward. I accept that it is naïve to perceive the take-up of employment sites in terms of a simple east-west movement down the motorway. In my opinion, the attractiveness of sites is much more complicated and the pattern of take up is a function of other factors including marketing. The south-east portion of the County Borough has been most successful in recent decades in attracting and developing industry and commerce. I consider that the factors accounting for those successes go beyond proximity to a motorway junction, and this leads me to the view that access to J37 alone is insufficient reason to persist with the Ty Draw allocation.

6.32.8 The Council brought substantial evidence to the Inquiry to demonstrate that the objection site lies within an area of serious social deprivation. It refers to the acquisition of Objective 1 status for the region, and argues that development of the Ty Draw Farm site would make a significant contribution to the economic and social regeneration of an area still suffering from the decline of traditional heavy industries. However, the WDA advises that only a limited number of sites could be considered for funding, and Bridgend made a bid in late 2000 for employment sites at Brocastle, Waterton and Island Farm (reserve), with no reference to Ty Draw Farm. It also claims that the European funding system has moved away from providing infrastructure and property, and is focussed on human resources' development, education and training. Though the Council points out that other funds are available for the private sector, I consider that the emphasis on developing people, and supporting small and medium enterprises, would not necessarily help to bring forward this site for development.

6.32.9 The Council argues that the WDA has the responsibility to support and bring forward sites which are not automatically viable. However, the WDA claims that the Land Division has considered providing infrastructure in advance of development on the site, but could not justify it because of the costs and lack of demand. On the basis of all the above, I conclude that the site should not be allocated for special employment uses.

6.32.10 The WDA has submitted a unilateral undertaking indicating that, if planning permission for housing is granted on the site, it will invest the net proceeds in the provision of sites for employment uses in Bridgend. This is a matter for the Council.

6.32.11 PPWales para 7.2.1 calls for realism when designating land for employment needs. The Council has identified an abundance of land available for employment purposes, and a number of other special employment sites. I conclude that it is timely to review the future of this site and that it is eminently suitable for housing.

## Recommendation

6.32.12 I recommend that the site at Ty Draw Farm be allocated for housing.

## 6.33 Land at Cymdda, Sarn, Bridgend

### Objection

DO/51168/1374 Mr H B K Angell

### Conclusions

6.33.1 The objector seeks a change to the Plan whereby the site would be allocated as an extension to the adjoining H1(5) site. He argues that the boundary of Sarn would be more 'logically' defined by the dual carriageway to the south and the main road to the east. All the Cwmdda, and an existing group of six dwellings on the objection site, would then be included in the settlement.

6.33.2 However, the objection site comprises mainly grass and trees, with the south-western section forming a ridge/embankment to the A4063. I consider that the existing built up area immediately north of the site has a firm edge which forms a clear boundary to the settlement of Sarn. In my opinion, the group of six dwellings with its separate access is detached from the urban area and is rural in character and appearance. A proposal for two dwellings on the objection site was dismissed on appeal in 1992, and the Inspector described the intended development as likely to be an undesirable urban intrusion into the countryside. The objector explained at the Inquiry that the open land on the site has been visually improved by clearance and mowing in recent years.

6.33.3 Nevertheless, I agree with the Council that the objection site is part of the countryside for planning purposes, where new development should be strictly controlled. When allocating new sites for housing development in development plans, priority should be given to brownfield sites and land within urban areas. This site would not meet those criteria. I conclude that the site should not be allocated for housing.

## 6.34 Land at South Cornelly

### Objection

DO/51207/1579 Messrs M J & E D Thomas & Other Land Owners

### Conclusions

6.34.1 The Ogwr Borough Local Plan reserved this site for a community hospital, and the objectors contend that this establishes the site's suitability in principle for development. However, the hospital has not been built and the site is shown in both the Local Plan and the deposit UDP as being outside the settlement boundary for South Cornelly. I agree with the Inspector at the previous development plan Inquiry that there is no reason to amend the settlement boundary so that it coincides with the bypass.

6.34.2 The objectors argue that not all land outside the currently defined settlement boundary can be regarded as countryside. Parts may constitute urban fringe. However, I consider that this site with its fields and hedgerows is rural in character and appearance. It is grade 2 quality agricultural land, being among the best and most versatile for such purposes, even if the objectors are correct that it would be difficult to exploit it to its full potential. I am in no doubt that the site comprises countryside, where national and local policies make clear that new development should be strictly controlled.

6.34.3 The Council argues that development of this site would lead to disproportionate growth adjacent to a smaller settlement, and the objectors reply that the site could provide about 80 new dwellings, which would represent a similar rate of growth in South Cornelly as in the past. I consider that a development of 80 dwellings could not sensibly be described as small scale infilling or limited rounding off, as permitted in Policy H4 within smaller settlements. In addition, the land use strategy underlying the UDP *permits*, but does not *require*, the growth of housing in smaller settlements. The preference is for development on brownfield sites and in the main settlements. I consider that this approach is consistent with the promotion of more sustainable development. In terms of both the Council's preferred land use strategy and the search sequence for new housing sites, which is described in PPWales para 9.2.7, I consider that this site would be lowly ranked.

6.34.4 I have taken account of the community hall and informal recreation area which the objectors propose. I accept that these would benefit the local community and meet some of the deficiencies which the UDP acknowledges. The objectors provide landscape evidence, to indicate how housing development could be accommodated on the site with minimum visual harm to the surrounding area including the listed building to the north. However, I consider that these benefits would not outweigh the harm to the countryside and settlement strategy which would result from housing development on the objection site. I conclude that the site should not be allocated for housing.