**Ponthir Community Council met with Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Department on 14th December 2020, as part of the statutory consultation to discuss the replacement Local Development Plan and the implications this may have for the communities of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa within the Community Council’s area of interest.**

**Please see the comments below in relation to the questions we sent in advance and also posted on Social Media. Consultation with members of the public runs until January 22nd 2021 and any comments you may have can be sent to** **ldp@torfaen.gov.uk** **or telephone Planning on 01633 648039/648140.**

1.What is the number of proposed new houses to be built in Ponthir Community Council’s area of interest?

**Over a 15 year period, 780 houses will be built. The development will include high density and lower density housing, with social and affordable housing also included in the development at Llanfrechfa Grange. The types of housing proposed will be houses plus flats and some housing for those with disabilities. The site is not expected to break ground in the next five years as there are many stages of planning to go through. A Deposit Plan will be available in June/July 2021 and will include those candidate sites that have progressed to the next stage in the process. We do not expect any of the sites currently listed as candidates in the village of Ponthir to progress to the next stage. Total housing expected to be built at the site is 1,200 which includes the initial 780. We were not given timescales for expected completion of the site at Llanfrechfa.**

**Residential development is planned to the south of the new hospital site, with land to the north designated as business development for a medi-park. Torfaen CBC are working with various experts in this field to advise but are not at stage where more information is available yet.**

**Aneurin Bevan University Health Board/Welsh Government have requested an area of land around the Grange hospital to be ring-fenced for future hospital development.**

2 Roads through Ponthir are busy and in poor condition.  How will the suggested development effect,

* Number of vehicles travelling through the village **See below**
* Air pollution – has this been taken into account in the plan development and if so, what are the indications?

**We have been assured that the possibility of an increase in vehicles in the area and the resulting pollution that may bring will be looked at by various departments involved in revision of the Local Development Plan. We do not have timescales of when to expect results to be available. Councillors also asked for the possibility of increased traffic due to the building work at the Caerleon university site to be taken into consideration when modelling traffic flow and resulting pollution/damage to existing roads. If the site at Caerleon does gain approval for planning permission in coming months, it will mean heavy traffic will access the site via Ponthir/Llanfrechfa due to air pollution in Caerleon. We have asked Torfaen Planning to look into this as there is a possibility that the Llanfrechfa site will be in development at the same time as the Caerleon site which will cause extra problems on the roads and for pollution. We have been informed this will be investigated.**

* Is there a plan to develop a bypass as an alternative route to the section of road which currently runs from Llanfrechfa through Ponthir?

**There is not a plan to develop a bypass, but as a result of the Grange redevelopment, the current access road which passes Edgehill will be diverted slightly as this existing route will become a dead end road. Whilst there is no plan in place for a meaningful by-pass for Ponthir/Llanfrechfa, we await the outcome of the pollution and traffic investigations before making further comment.**

3. Infrastructure in the area is limited.  What is in place is poorly maintained and in some parts not fit for purpose.

* Pavements are poor and in some places non-existent. Some pavements and walkways are not in compliance with Equalities Act 2010 as no accommodation can be made for the disabled and other members of the public either with disabilities or a temporary need I.e., push chairs, motability scooters etc.

**The developer of the Grange site, Redrow, will put in place pavements and walkways in the new site. However, we have impressed upon Torfaen the need to consider the wider impact of bringing this amount of new housing to the area and how it will effect existing infrastructure. Our comments on the lack of investment in our current roads and pavements will be taken into account as part of the consultation.**

* There is no defined cycle path through Ponthir/Llanfrechfa, cyclists use the road.  Are there plans to change this?

**There are plans under the Active Wales Travel Plan to open up more cycle paths and as such we await confirmation of how Torfaen intend to meet this obligation.**

* Only one bus currently runs between Cwmbran and Newport.  How will public transport be addressed if there are to be more houses plus the Grange Hospital to service by public transport?

**We informed Torfaen that buses are not running as regularly through the village as they were and we now only have a bus once per hour rather than every forty minutes running through the villages. We have asked how this will be addressed to meet the needs of the new homes. Torfaen have informed us that this will be looked at by transport companies, as routes need to be viable.**

* Are there plans for more infrastructure e.g., hotel, pub etc at the Grange site?

**More infrastructure will be put in place in the new Grange area. There are plans for a new primary school with a maximum of 420 pupils. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board are investigating possibilities with existing GP practices in the Cwmbran Town Centre to support new residents. There are also plans for shops, recreational sites/venues and green spaces within the new development.**

* Ponthir has several areas deemed as vulnerable and of C2 classification due to flooding.  Is the current drainage system in Ponthir adequate to cope with a new housing development and how has this been determined?

**As a Community Council, we have asked Torfaen to consider the implications of extra drainage being needed outside of the development site. As Ponthir is at a lower level than Llanfrechfa, we have asked what the impact of the building will be as surface water has been a problem in Ponthir over a number of years. Torfaen have agreed to look at this. There are no sites expected to be developed in Ponthir village. One of the objectives of strategic development sites and the revised Local Development Plan is to avoid areas at high risk of flooding. We have asked Torfaen Planning to look at the area as a whole and the impact that building will have on established residential developments if the Grange plan progresses, as new and existing developments are co-dependant as far as drainage is concerned.**

* How has the planned development taken into account the impact on the quality of life of existing residents?

**At the moment, the Local Development Plan is at the stage of determining what realistic possibilities are for sites. Once that determination has been made and developers are asked to submit detailed plans for permission, residents who are affected by any new development will be included as a normal part of the planning application process.**

* Although renewal of the LDP is a statutory function, how does this fit in with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act other than to supply homes for assumed future demand and how has the amount of housing needed been determined?

**Future demand for homes is linked to job creation and many other development criteria associated with strategic development sites. Development of these strategic sites is known as ‘Placemaking’ and sites developed in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act are designed to support new ways of dealing with climate change, life course, employment, and relaxation, recreation and similar. This is to ensure that wellbeing is at the forefront of any plan in development. If you would like more on the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, please let the Clerk know on 07789 640709 or email clerk@ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk**

* What balance will be taken once consultation has closed and how will this be reflected in any final planning decisions given that the weight of intrusion experienced by building for existing residents may result in objections?

**Once some candidate sites have been ruled out as not suitable, we should see a high level master plan of the Grange site in the next nine months. The Local Development Plan, once concluded, will need to be adopted by Torfaen County Borough Council and this will be done via the democratic processes that all new policy follows in local government areas. The process will take into account all comments and suggestions collected from the local community and all interested parties and stakeholders in order to determine what the plan will look like. The Local Development Plan is not expected to be ready until 2022 at the earliest. There will also be an opportunity for a public test which residents affected by any proposed developments in the plan are invited to attend. We do not know when this will take place, but is not likely to be soon as it is too early in the process. We will be informed of future consultation opportunities.**

**If you have any other questions, please use the contact details to address the Planning Department in Torfaen County Borough Council directly. If you have difficulties in this respect, please let our clerk know on** **clerk@ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk** **or phone on 07789 640709. Please feel free to pass this information on and we look forward to a response from the Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Department in respect of the information we have requested and clarification of points for consideration.**