

**Application Number:** DM/2019/01004

**Proposal:** Demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with an active living centre providing 18 high quality retirement apartments, communal living space, an extensive landscape strategy (including green roof) with a private landscaped courtyard plus pool and gym facilities.

**Address:** Greenfield, Merthyr Road, Llanfoist

**Applicant:** Ikaria Development Ltd.

**Plans:** Block Plan 400 - P - 002 - P4, Site Plan 400 - P - 003 - P4, Floor Plans - Proposed 400 - P - 101 - P4, Floor Plans - Proposed 400 - P - 102 - P4, Floor Plans - Proposed 400 - P - 103 - P4, Floor Plans - Proposed 400 - P - 104 - , Elevations - Proposed 400 - P - 201 - P4, Elevations - Proposed 400 - P - 202 - P4, Elevations - Proposed 400 - P - 203 - P4, Elevations - Proposed 400 - P - 204 - P4, Cross Section 400 - P - 301 - P2, Other 400 - P - 900 - P3, Other 400 - P - 901 - , Block Plan 400 - S 002 - , Site Plan 400 - S 003 - , Floor Plans - Existing 400 - S 101 - , Floor Plans - Existing 400 - S 102 - , Elevations - Existing 400 - S 201 - , Elevations - Existing 400 - S 202 - , Location Plan 400 - S 001 - , Landscaping Plan Landscape  Visual Appraisal - GRE\_002 REV B, Ecology Report Ecological Appraisal  Protected Species Surveys - 22/10/19, Landscaping Plan Concept Landscape Design (Stage 2) - GRE\_001 REV E, Other Management Plan - , Landscaping Plan Concept Landscape Proposals - ,

## **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

Case Officer: Ms. Kate Bingham  
Date Valid: 18.07.2019

**This application is presented to Planning Committee due to there being more than five objections and also at the request of the Local Member**

### **1.1 Site Description**

1.1.1 The application site is located within the village of Llanfoist which is designated as a Rural Secondary Settlement under Strategic Policy S1 of the current Local Development Plan (LDP). Greenfields, is situated at the junction of Merthyr Road and Gypsy Lane. It is a full application that proposes the demolition of a single existing detached dwelling replacement with 18 retirement apartments, communal living space and a landscaped garden area and courtyard. The site as existing comprises one rendered two storey detached dwelling with triple garage at the centre of a large garden which is accessed via a tarmac drive from Merthyr Rd. The site currently has extant permission for four additional 4/5 bed dwellings.

### **1.2 Value Added**

1.2.1 In response to concerns raised by local residents, the Community Council, the Abergavenny Civic Society and Planning Officers, the overall scale and massing of the proposed design has been significantly reduced since the original application. The second floor penthouse apartment has been omitted from the north east corner, reducing height, and the length of the east facing elevation by introducing some smaller single bed apartments into the design. To further limit the impact of the east facing elevation, the massing at second floor level has also been reduced in two areas; firstly the gable end to the South has been stepped back by 2 metres and secondly the roof of the atrium has been reduced to second floor level creating a gap between the two wings of the building.

1.2.2 The tallest ridge of the roof form has been reduced by 1.7m, significantly reducing scale of the building at its most visible point and the proposed building has been re-positioned further away from the Merthyr Rd. site boundary by approximately 3m. This has the benefit of allowing larger scale tree planting to be introduced along the north elevation creating a thicker screening belt between the road and the proposed building.

1.2.3 To further reduce visual impact, the extent of brickwork has also been reduced at the gable ends and at the northeast corner. The use of timber cladding at the upper levels of the building will soften the building's appearance, helping it to blend into the surrounding landscape and reducing impact. Further efforts have also been made to demonstrate the visual impact the proposal will have on the site in comparison to the extant scheme of 4 x 4/5 bed dwellings. An additional drawing has been created overlaying the outline of the extant scheme which demonstrates comparable scale and visual impact (drawing '400 -P - 900').

## 1.2 Proposal Details

1.2.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling on the site and replace it with 18no. apartments limited to accommodating people over 60 years of age and includes communal living space and landscaped private grounds. The apartments will comprise of 16no. 2 bed apartments and 2no. 1 bed apartments. Vehicular access is proposed to be provided from Gypsy Lane with the existing access of Merthyr Road being closed. 21 off-road parking spaces are also proposed together with extensive landscaped grounds. The scheme also incorporates a mobility scooter store, plant room and refuse store close to the main access area. It is proposed for the building to be built through sustainable modular construction targeting a net zero carbon build. The total site is roughly 4194 sq.m of which the building occupies 270 sq.m, the remainder being private garden.

1.1.2 Being for people aged over 60 only the apartments will benefit from the following:

Wheelchair accessible

24-hour Emergency alarm system and monitoring

CCTV camera entry system,

Built to Lifetime Homes Standards.

Communal facilities, lounge & kitchen, health/leisure

Minimum 2-hour care per week for residents, whether required or not on entry, included in monthly charge.

Apartment's designed to include specialist features.

Provision for private external 24-hour care if required.

House Warden available to assist.

## 2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2018/02090	Demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with an active living centre providing 18 high quality retirement apartments, communal living space, an extensive landscape strategy with a private landscaped courtyard plus pool and gym facilities.		25.06.2019

DM/2019/01502	Modification of condition no. 2 of planning consent DC/2015/00811. This application seeks to extend the time for submission of reserved matters to enable details to be submitted within the next 3 years.	Pending Section 106	
DC/2015/00811	New residential development on the land surrounding Greenfield House for four additional 4/5 bed properties	Approved	20.12.2016
DC/2006/01709	Erection of 3 houses in the garden of the existing house 'Greenfields'.	Approved	21.09.2007
DC/2006/00561	Renewal of permission for application M/5551 (first floor extension over existing garage to provide residential flat)	Approved	13.09.2006

### **3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

#### **Strategic Policies**

S1 LDP The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision  
S12 LDP Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk  
S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment  
S16 LDP Transport  
S17 LDP Place Making and Design  
S4 LDP Affordable Housing Provision

#### **Development Management Policies**

H1 LDP Residential Development in Main Towns, Severnside Settlements and Rural Secondary Settlements  
DES1 LDP General Design Considerations  
LC5 LDP Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character  
MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations  
NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development  
GI1 LDP Green Infrastructure  
SD4 LDP Sustainable Drainage  
SD2 LDP Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency  
LC2 LDP Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site

### **4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

#### **Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10**

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.

The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well being, creating prosperity for all.

## **5.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

### 5.1 Consultation Replies

**Llanfoist Community Council** - Recommend refusal. The consensus view of Members who responded is that the revised proposals contained in this re-consultation do not alleviate previous objections raised.

Previous comments:

- \* Members remain disappointed that there has been minimal attempts to consult directly with the Community Council during the planning process to date.
- \* The scale, height and composition of the proposed design is not considered acceptable and/or sensitive for a development at the centre of Llanfoist.
- \* The Management Plan with car parking provision of 21 spaces is still considered inadequate for the size of the development. The demographic of the target residents and size of the apartments is likely to (i) attract more than one vehicle per apartment (ii) attract family visitors, and (iii) as the age and care needs of the residents increase (as highlighted by future proofed design features to allow apartment upgrades for wheelchair access) parking provision for care needs will also be required.
- \* The height of the proposed building(s) present privacy issues by overlooking existing neighbour properties.
- \* The access point (off B4269 Gypsy Lane) will cause considerable traffic congestion throughout both a construction phase and thereafter. There are already significant congestion problems in this area particularly during school and business "rush hour" periods. It should also be noted that the B4269 is the diversionary route when the A4042 is closed at Llanellen bridge due to flooding. This diversionary route will become even more critical when A&E Services are discontinued at Nevill Hall Hospital and transferred to the new facility at Llanfrechfa.
- \* Members note that Mon CC Highways have raised a number of objections which have been countered by a Technical Note on behalf of the applicant. Members of the Community Council share many of the concerns raised by Mon CC Highways and are not satisfied that the Technical Note addresses them adequately.
- \* Members consider that Llanfoist has already reached a development saturation point. This proposal constitutes over development.

**MCC Highways** - No objection subject to conditions.

The applicant in response to highway observations and comments provided on 1st August 2019 provided a highway rebuttal dated 22nd August 2019 that was proceeded by a meeting with the applicant and planning and highway colleagues on the 3rd September 2019. Revised drawings and a management plan have been subsequently submitted in part to address the concerns raised regarding car parking, servicing provision, waste collection and the means of access.

**MCC Landscape and Green Infrastructure** - No further objection to the proposal from a landscape and GI perspective subject to conditions.

**MCC Biodiversity** - No objection subject to conditions.

**MCC Housing Officer** - It is a basic principle of Local Development Plan Policy S4 that all residential developments (including at the scale of a single dwelling) should make a contribution to

the provision of affordable housing in the local planning area. As affordable housing won't be provided on site, the calculation of the financial contribution that will be required is £107,184.

**MCC SAB** - The proposed scheme will require a sustainable drainage system designed in accordance with Welsh Government Standards for sustainable drainage.

SEWBRc Search Results - Bats and Great Crested Newts recorded within the vicinity of the site.

## 5.2 Neighbour Notification

Representations from 56 households received.

55 object on the following grounds:

### 1. Close to adjoining properties/Loss of Privacy/Noise nuisance:

None of the graphics demonstrate the view from The Old Rectory which has close and direct sight of this plot.

Loss of privacy for houses on Briardene and Gypsy Crescent and Orchard Lea.

As a neighbour I will suffer loss of privacy, noise intrusion and probable loss of value to my property.

The north elevations onto Merthyr Road are exceedingly dominating over existing properties.

There is a bedroom window at the West end of the elevation that seems to be less than the required 21m from the overlooked windows in Llanfoist Cottage.

The development of the buildings would cause significant noise, which would be heard from my property (on Briardene).

### 2. Inadequate access and parking provision

The new proposed parking for the residents is inadequate as most will have cars not the contemplated 6 as mentioned.

The traffic egress is onto a school walking route on a hill with poor visibility where traffic already queues every day.

Treacherous access in snowy conditions.

Existing access on Merthyr Road should be retained and the building should be pushed back to the south of the site.

Concern about service vehicles and refuse collections blocking the entrance.

The developers should have to provide a shelter for the bus stop outside the site.

Consideration of driverless cars should be included.

Family visits are expected on holidays and weekends. Because the property does not accommodate adequate visitor parking, the visitors will park on adjacent streets. St Faith's Close and the other parallel road are likely to be popular offsite parking zones for visiting families.

### 3. Increase in traffic and pollution

Need to consider the effect that the 100+ Grove Farm housing development may have on traffic converging at the Llanfoist mini-roundabout will have.

Health and safety issues regarding the pedestrian access to the village school would be concerning.

The top storey should be abandoned and that there should be a third less apartments which would reduce the traffic congestion to and from the development.

Extra traffic adding to longer queues at certain times of the day with added pollution.

The covering letter states that potential residents who own a car but are unable to rent a parking space will not be able to become resident until a parking space becomes available, so they will not be parking their car on the public road. Doubt how this can be enforced.

This construction project will likely disrupt the Llanfoist community for more than a year including road closures for the installation of energy, water/sewer and communication utilities; each closure typically lasting several days, if prior history of such work on Merthyr road is an indication.

Construction workers at the site will likely drive to the site, parking in the adjacent streets resulting in unacceptable parking and driving congestion. Construction workers are likely to park in Briardene, St Faiths Close, Gypsy Cres and Thomas Hill Close.

Noise and dust pollution will also be an issue during construction. Methods to mitigate these problems should be addressed in the application.

#### 4. Out of keeping with character of area:

The development is out of character with what survives of the local village character.

Resembles a large office block, more appropriate for an industrial estate than a residential area.

The proposed building is incongruous and would stand out rather than blend in with the local properties: it does not 'respect local distinctiveness'.

The proposed building is in juxtaposition to the character of the site and its surroundings and does not 'respect the character of the site and its surrounding'.

The proposed building would detract from the existing built environment, which is small residential properties, and does not conform to the need 'to protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environments'.

The building's prominent location will dominate the entry to the village.

This design is more suited to a city.

The replacement of an art-deco residence, with a warehouse- like condominium, however empathetic the landscaping, will not conceal this monstrous 'carbuncle', which would be utterly out of keeping with its environs.

The site is elevated and the proposed building, even with reduced height on the latest proposal, would dominate the area.

This development will be a blot on the landscape and an eyesore to an already over developed village which is losing its identity.

No consideration has been given to the vernacular scale and this development represents a huge departure from the grain of existing development.

#### 5. Over development:

The LDP Policy S1 does indeed define Llanfoist as a 'Rural Secondary Settlement'. However, Policy S1 also makes clear that Llanfoist is specifically excluded from new housing development.

The Secondary Rural Settlements of Usk and Llanfoist have made a disproportionate contribution to recent housing development in the County, which the new housing allocations seek to avoid.

Even though Llanfoist is now listed as a 'Rural Secondary Settlement' in the latest LDP, it should not be forgotten that Llanfoist is still in actuality a village and not a suburb of Abergavenny, and should be treated as such.

A density of eighteen residences here can be seen as indicative of the overdevelopment.

The building is high and overbearing.

Why is it considered desirable to have a 'statement building' in this village?

#### 6. Strain on existing community facilities:

There is already pressure on local services (health provision in particular) and this development will increase that pressure.

We already have facilities for our elderly residents and don't need any more.

An influx of so many residents will not be of any benefit to Llanfoist which is already overdeveloped

The development will add extra pressure on the local services of health care and social services.

#### 7. Affect local ecology:

To make room for the proposed development it would be necessary to cut down mature trees which would do nothing for the improvement of the environment.

Concerned by the environmental impact of this proposal, a green roof is no compensation for the inevitable destruction caused to mature trees and land.

What is the carbon footprint of the development?

This is one of the few areas where great crested newts are to be found.

#### 8. Other:

Need affordable houses for local families.

Why is the existing dwelling being knocked down? This would represent the loss of a significant property that is currently an asset to the village.

Increase in danger of flooding.

Not enough info given on application.

The inclusivity of the proposal mitigates against integration with the community and demonstrates a disregard for village culture and environment.

There is also a potential glut of like accommodation within a one mile radius of the proposed site.

There is no need for this type of housing and that the need for affordable housing for younger people and families is a much higher priority.

Likely to affect the value of my property and my ability to sell the property in the future because no one would choose to live next door to it.

Arguments of how 'useful' or appropriate the new design is should be looked at more closely, as in reality this is no more than an attempt to remove an existing dwelling and use the land to make as much money as possible.

This proposal is an unsustainable and anti-community in concept.

This proposal offers little in additional accommodation above the extant permission for new houses yet will be hugely more resource intensive and disruptive to the community to construct with a very extensive excavation of the site required.

It is a car based development which is shown the lack of pedestrian links to the site other than the main entrance. It is therefore against MCC's policy to challenge climate change.

Also plenty of retirement scheme properties are already in progress, with the capacity of some existing retirement properties also suggests we probably don't need any more at present.

Suggest that MCC Planning Committee undertake a site visit to the junction of Gypsy Lane and Merthyr Road in order to view the location, context and scale of this proposal.

Should consider solar panels instead of green roof.

The application should be rejected pending in-person consultation with residents of the Llanfoist community at scheduled meetings at the St. Faiths Parish Hall, the Llanfoist OAP Hall and the Llanfoist Village Hall among other locations.

More open space needed on development.

One representation in support:

I am greatly in favour of any development that provides accommodation, so badly needed, particularly in the Abergavenny area. The information supplied on the web site is small but what there is of it sounds good, being of excellent quality and I wish the application all the best in being accepted by the planning department.

### 5.3 Other Representations

Abergavenny & District Civic Society - No objections.

In July last year we recorded an objection based on highway grounds. Your Highways Section objected in August, but conditionally withdrew its objection in December. In view of that and the considerable design improvements achieved since the initial submission, I confirm that the Society now has no objection to the application. Our members may have divided opinion on the style and scale of the development but on balance we consider that it adequately satisfies LDP policies.

### 5.4 Local Member Representations

Cllr Howard - In the unlikely event that there are less than 5 objections, I would like to call this to committee, on the basis of scale, design and neighbour amenity. Should you decide to recommend refusal, then I would be happy for it to be delegated.

## **6.0 EVALUATION**

### **6.1 Strategic & Spatial Choices**

#### 6.1.1 Strategic Planning/ Development Plan context/ Principle of Development

The site is within the village of Llanfoist which is designated as a Rural Secondary Settlement under Strategic Policy S1 of the LDP. The principle of new residential development within the settlement is therefore acceptable under Development Management Policy H1 of the LDP subject to detailed planning considerations and other LDP policies. The relevant policies are listed above and are discussed below.

### 6.1.2 Good Design/ Place making

Policy DES1 of the LDP relates to design and states that:

All development should be of a high quality sustainable design and respect the local character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire's built, historic and natural environment. Development proposals will be required to:

- a) ensure a safe, secure, pleasant and convenient environment that is accessible to all members of the community, supports the principles of community safety and encourages walking and cycling;
- b) contribute towards sense of place whilst ensuring that the amount of development and its intensity is compatible with existing uses;
- c) respect the existing form, scale, siting, massing, materials and layout of its setting and any neighbouring quality buildings;
- d) maintain reasonable levels of privacy and amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, where applicable;
- e) respect built and natural views and panoramas where they include historical features and / or attractive or distinctive built environment or landscape;
- f) use building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting to enhance the appearance of the proposal having regard to texture, colour, pattern, durability and craftsmanship in the use of materials;
- g) incorporate and, where possible enhance existing features that are of historical, visual or nature conservation value and use the vernacular tradition where appropriate;
- h) include landscape proposals for new buildings and land uses in order that they integrate into their surroundings, taking into account the appearance of the existing landscape and its intrinsic character, as defined through the LANDMAP process. Landscaping should take into account, and where appropriate retain, existing trees and hedgerows;
- j) achieve a climate responsive and resource efficient design.  
Consideration should be given to location, orientation, density, layout, built form and landscaping and to energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, including materials and technology;
- k) foster inclusive design;
- l) ensure that existing residential areas characterised by high standards of privacy and spaciousness are protected from overdevelopment and insensitive or inappropriate infilling.

Concerns were raised at the time of the pre-application consultation and original planning application in relation to the scale of the proposed building and its impact on the surrounding area. To address these concerns, the amendments and improvements have been incorporated into the design as described in Paragraph 1.2 of this report.

The existing site is a mature garden laid to lawn with mature trees and shrubs and the majority of the planting will need to be removed to facilitate the development. The proposed landscape scheme looks to mitigate the loss of trees with new tree and shrub planting (including along the site frontage on Merthyr Road) intended to soften the building within the site context. The existing hedge will also be retained, regenerated and strengthened.

The proposed new building will be roughly 'L' shaped and be two stories in height with the addition of a lower ground floor level on the south eastern elevation that will be used for car parking. The majority of this element will be screened from view by the existing boundary hedge. The proposed design is for a partial two and three storey building with varying floor datum that respond to the existing landscape and context, and on that basis the building will not always be visible as three storeys.



The proposed new building has the following maximum heights:

Highest Ridge Height (Merthyr Road): 9.3m

Eaves Height (Merthyr Road) 6.8m

Highest Ridge Height (Gypsy Lane): 10.1m

Highest Eaves Height (Gypsy Lane): 9.7m

The site topography ranges from a high of +63.49 in the south east corner to a low of +57.04 in the north east of the site providing a maximum level change of 6.45m. The nature of this sloping ground could potentially cause issues for those with limited mobility making the site less accessible by virtue of the need for steps. However, this has been addressed in the design by levelling off the high part of the site to improve the accessibility of the building and also its relationship with its surroundings. The drawings provided by the applicant shows that the proposed building will be set down into the ground on the southeast. The proposed eaves height of the new building will be no higher than any of the neighbouring dwellings once the ground levels have been adjusted. The 3D views are plotted at eye level in relation to the existing road datum, so the 3D images provide an accurate impression from a pedestrian's perspective at each location.

One of the main architectural features of the proposed building is a green roof, designed to reflect the topography of The Bloreng to the south of the site. The roof slopes down towards the neighbouring boundary reducing the visual impact adjacent occupants, and improving the relationship to the surrounding street scape. The green roof has been introduced with the purpose of softening the appearance of the proposal into the surrounding landscape. The sustainable design feature also further boosts ecology and sustainable drainage on the site.

On the front elevations there will be walkways to the apartments with projecting timber posts supporting the roof. These will cast shadows across the façade which should help to break up the massing and soften the impact of the building form. The use of these timber posts was drawn from the modern Llanfoist Fawr Primary School opened for use in 2008. It is intended that the communal walkways leading to individual apartments will include a series planter boxes integrated into the metal balustrades. The planters will allow boreal coniferous forest planting that can survive colder winters such as clematises and climbing roses etc. The plants will be encouraged to climb using a series of thin gauge stainless steel wires that span between timber columns. Irrigation will be managed so that planting will be maintained to a high standard throughout the year.

In terms of materials, a natural colour palette is proposed which aims to integrate the proposal into the landscape setting. The proposed buff brick proposed at the corner and base of the two wings is intended to visually hold the lighter timber elements together in the landscape. Brick is a material used throughout the existing residential developments of Llanfoist and the use of it reflects the domestic nature of the building's function as well as being in keeping with the existing dwellings in the area. Breaking up the volume using the different materials and recessed walkways together with the 'gap' created reduces the overall mass. Climbing plants over the brickwork are also proposed. The entire roof will be finished with a sedum roof which will further soften the impact of the building when viewed from the surrounding hills.

Although still clearly a building that is different in architectural character and size to that of the residential dwellings and some commercial units in Llanfoist, the proposed amendments, retained green roof with a well-considered and executed landscape scheme will result in a high quality designed building. It is therefore considered that the development would not significantly create an adverse visual impact the street scene or wider area, subject to the delivery of the proposed landscaping i.e. using hedging, semi mature tree planting and retention and protection of existing trees where proposed.

On balance therefore, it is considered that the proposed development complies with LDP Policy DES1.

### 6.1.3 Impact on Amenity/ Promoting Healthier Places

The building has been designed to orientate all balconies and external areas towards the Blorege in order to reduce any potential overlooking issues with neighbouring properties on Merthyr Road and Gypsy Lane. The line of trees to be planted along Merthyr Road will further manage overlooking of houses on the opposite side of Merthyr Road in the longer term.

There will be a distance of at least 18m from the front elevation of the building facing Merthyr Road to the boundaries of the existing houses opposite on Briardene and over 21m between building elevations. On Gypsy Lane there is a distance of approximately 31m between the elevation of the proposed new building and the existing property across the road (Springhill). In terms of overlooking, between the nearest balcony on the rear of the building and the side elevation of Orchard Lea there will be a distance of approximately 22m (14m to the boundary). There are no windows proposed on the other end of the proposed building on Merthyr Road except for a bathroom and here there will be 8m between the proposed building and the boundary. The distances are considered to be great enough to ensure that there will be no loss of privacy for any local residents. The new tree planting will further screen the boundaries of the site from views both in and out.

The application site is considered to be large enough to absorb the building without it having any overbearing impact on existing neighbouring occupiers and it is considered that the proposed development meets the requirements of LDP Policy EP1 in relation to local residential amenity.

#### 6.1.4 Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

The proposal has been designed to a high standard of sustainability in both the construction and end use of the building, minimising energy use and maximising efficiency. The building is proposed to be constructed using modular offsite timber manufacturing, thereby reducing on site construction time. Sufficient wall and roof depth has been designed for a very high performance thermal envelope with enhanced levels of thermal insulation maximising energy efficiency and providing sufficient thermal mass to mitigate overheating. Low impact materials (local, renewable, enduring) have been specified for the new building -brick, naturally durable timber and zinc. All of the timber will be FSC certified and treated with non-toxic wood treatments such as boron compound preservatives.

Spaces have been oriented for maximising passive solar gain. Windows provide natural cross ventilation wherever possible. In the internal courtyard it is proposed that horizontal planted trellises above the ground floor flats provide both privacy and shading to reduce solar gains in the summer months. The sustainability of the building over time has also been considered by designing to lifetime home standards with generous spaces which are adaptable to future change. The southern roof has the potential for future addition of photovoltaic panels if required in the face of climate change.

In terms of water, it is proposed that water usage be minimised by the specification of very efficient low water use fittings. Climate change adaptation has also been considered including solar shading, natural ventilation, consideration of drought resistant plant species, designing rainwater goods to cope with increased rainfall levels, and SuDS.

The provision of cycle storage and a proposed pedestrian connection to the local bus stop and further pavement networks will help to promote sustainable modes of transport. Where vehicle use is necessary all of the parking spaces will offer electric charging points to promote sustainable transportation.

All of the above measures are welcomed and meet the requirements of LDP Policies S12 and SD2.

## **6.2 Active and Social Places**

### 6.2.1 Transport / Housing - sustainable transport issues (Sustainable Transport Hierarchy)

The site is considered to be well positioned in relation to the sustainable transport options. Bus stops are located in what are considered reasonable walking distances from the site and the frequency and destinations of services available are reasonable and access by local bus to Abergavenny Town and the bus and rail stations. The site is also located approximately 2.6 km from the rail station providing access to Hereford, Cwmbran, Newport, Cardiff and beyond. The highway authority also consider that the site is reasonably well located to take advantage of existing walking and cycling infrastructure that although predominantly located on strategic traffic

routes does provide connectivity with existing attractors and destinations such as the Llanfoist Post Office, Waitrose supermarket, bus stops and Abergavenny town centre. The location of the proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of PPW10 in relation to the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.

### 6.2.2 Access / Highway Safety

The development proposal will involve closing off the existing vehicular access to/from Merthyr Road public highway with a new pedestrian and vehicular access being provided off Gypsy Lane. The overall width of the access has been reduced, the pedestrian and vehicular use has been separated and defined and the gates have been removed. The removal of the vehicle gate enables all vehicles requiring access and egress to do so without the need to open and close gates thus reducing the likelihood of vehicles obstructing the public highway.

21 car parking spaces are proposed and allocated as follows;

6 spaces allocated to residents

1 space for the House Warden/Manager

7 spaces for day to day servicing and external health providers, cleaners, etc.

7 visitor spaces

The House Warden/Manger will manage and control the day to day vehicle movements in and out of the facility, for instance tenant's deliveries will be restricted to one at any given time. A parking permit scheme will also be administered by the House Warden on an ongoing basis and each resident successfully applying for a permit will enter into an Agreement under which they will pay an annual permit fee. Permits will be made available to residents on a first come first served basis and therefore once permits have been issued for all spaces on a development a waiting list will be created, strictly in order of receipt of application.

The remainder of the spaces (15 spaces) will be available for Staff and Visitors. One of these car parking spaces will be reserved and clearly marked for the House Manager and must be kept clear at all times. As such, there will be 14 spaces remaining for staff and visitors. In terms of other staff visiting the site, this will be managed by the House Warden to ensure that there is not a conflict with all staff attending site at the same time. Visitors & Maintenance Staff need to sign in and give their vehicle registration number to the House Warden. Despite these management procedures, this management plan has assessed the maximum number of staff likely to be attending site at any one time in order to ascertain the likely number of spaces available for visitors. The staff attending the site will be as follows:

\* Emergency Care - The emergency carer will provide care for more than one individual, therefore it is unlikely that more than three carers will be present at any particular time. As such the maximum number of emergency care vehicles on site at the same time will be three.

\* Grounds Maintenance - Ground Maintenance will be advanced once a month and will require one car parking space. As such the maximum numbers of ground maintenance vehicles at the site will be one.

\* Cleaners - 2 Cleaners will visit site twice a week and will clean communal areas as well as residents dwellings as necessary. As such the maximum numbers of cleaners vehicles at the site will be two.

\* Deliveries - Deliveries will be managed by the House Warden and as such only one delivery vehicle will attend site at any one time. As such the maximum numbers of delivery vehicles at the site will be one.

It is therefore evident that the number of staff visiting the site at any one point will be fewer than 7 meaning that there will be at least 7 spaces available for visitors at all times. 7 visitor spaces is considered to be sufficient to serve the development.

It is acknowledged that the applicant actively promotes and encourages healthy lifestyles and will look to minimise the reliance on the domestic car by restricting the number of dedicated car parking spaces to six in total on a first come first served basis. This does not control or more importantly restrict tenant's vehicle ownership but just restricts the ability to park on site. Provided that the Management Plan is implemented and amendments to the parking layout, parking space dimensions and the distance between spaces it is considered that the parking is now in compliance with the Council's adopted standards.

No dedicated turning area has been indicated and the applicant has indicated in the supporting Management Plan that deliveries will be managed by the house Warden/Manager restricting only one delivery on site at any one time. The Management Plan also states that those residents requiring to move in or out will need to provide 72 hours' notice prior to moving so that the onsite management team are able to advise other residents and maintenance operations of likely short-term minor interference with the on-site car parking arrangements. All residents will be notified that moving into the development will be undertaken from the onsite access road and car parking bays and there will be a vehicle size restriction of 7.5t Box Van maximum. These restrictions for a development of 18 apartments (17 two bedroom and 1 three bedroom) is in the opinion of the highway authority unrealistic and service vehicles in excess of 7.5T are likely to require access on a fairly frequent basis. Officers are satisfied that there is space within the site to achieve this and therefore, should the application be approved, it is recommended that a suitably worded condition is used to ensure that the car park is laid out to accommodate the area required to enable service vehicles to turn around.

The applicant's ethos to create sustainable developments that encourage an active lifestyle promoting sustainable travel by walking and cycling and siting developments so that public transport is reasonably accessible to residents on foot is noted. The applicant has produced a management plan together with measures that will be implemented to reduce reliance on the private car. This would have to be suitably conditioned.

The impact on the proposal on traffic is detailed in Section 4.16 of the Transport Statement which states that "it is considered unlikely that the proposals would generate more than say 2 two way vehicle movements per apartment per day on average or 36 two way movements per day". In light of the parking and access restrictions that are to be implemented through the Management Plan, this predicted level of traffic is accepted and will not lead to a real deterioration in highway safety or capacity in the local area that would justify refusal of the application on highway grounds subject to the conditions suggested (below).

### **6.3 Productive and Enterprising Places**

Not applicable to this application due to the type of development proposed.

### **6.4 Distinctive & Natural Places**

#### **6.4.1 Landscape/ Green Infrastructure**

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact assessment GRE-002 Rev A Oct 2019 is relatively comprehensive and has highlighted that from elevated near distance receptor locations that the proposed built form set within the context of the urban development of Llanfoist is likely to have a relatively low impact on the landscape sensitivity of the canal corridor, elevated Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage site and associated public rights of way and national trails i.e. hills tramroad, NCN and the link to canal cottage.

From the accompanying elevations, photomontages and layout plans, it is apparent that the main impact of the proposed building will be upon the visual amenity of the Merthyr road and Gypsy Lane corridors as viewed from road and path users as well as adjacent and nearby residential dwellings. The amended designs as recently submitted have responded more effectively to concerns raised by reducing the overall appearance and mass of the building through reductions of units to create second floor set back, reduction in eastern elevation length, step back of northern elevation, re-configured roof alignment, a break in the eastern elevation aspect with a view 'through' the building, reduction in height as well as reducing expanse of stonework to the eastern and northern elevations with an increase in naturally durable timber and architectural textures on eastern and northern facing elevations as shown in plan ref 400-P-203-P5. Elevations have additional proposed vegetation in the form of climbers and support within the context of the ground and first floors.

The majority of the existing garden trees and shrubs will have to be removed to facilitate the development. Many of these are not native trees and include two large Douglas Firs and a Lawson Cypress tree (both native to North America). There will be extensive new planting of trees to replace those lost. The proposed new trees will be more domestic in scale and more appropriate to the wider landscape in terms of species including two larger Sycamore trees on the north east and north west corners of the building and new tree planting between the building and Merthyr Road. New tree planting to provide woodland areas are also proposed around the

periphery of the site to screen/soften the impact of the building on the street scene and also provide privacy for the future occupiers as well as the existing neighbouring dwellings. The proposed new communal garden is to include wildlife friendly perennial planting and species rich grass areas/lawns. The proposed new extensive planting would add to the biodiversity of the area as well as add to the visual amenity of the wider area.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the layout of the Llanfoist settlement in this location and complies with LDP Policies LC5 and GI1.

#### 6.4.2 Historic Environment

The application site is visible from the canal corridor, elevated Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage site and associated public rights of way and national trails i.e. hills tramroad, NCN and the link to canal cottage. However, views from these points are limited and the proposed green roof will further reduce the visual impact of the building when viewed from these areas. As such it is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the World Heritage Site and therefore accords with the requirements of Policy LC2 of the LDP.

#### 6.4.3 Biodiversity

Further to requests for additional information, an updated ecology submission has been received that was informed by a further inspection of the site on the 17th January 2020. The council's Biodiversity Officer is now satisfied that the ecological justification and further update inspection addresses previous concerns.

Further details in respect of the bat roost mitigation building and the ecological mitigation were received 10.09.2020. These revisions are considered to be acceptable pending the inclusion of conditions to secure implementation, management, and appropriate controls on restricted access to the bat mitigation building. It will also be necessary to ensure the retention of dark corridors around the curtilage of the site protecting existing and new planting at the boundaries of the site. This is to ensure the ecological functionality of the mitigation and enhancement features to be installed, particularly on the western side of the development boundary. It is suggested that a condition is included requiring a lighting scheme is submitted to the LPA for approval to ensure sensitive lighting solutions are utilised and light spill impacts minimised.

The updated ecology submission also addresses previous concerns in respect of Great Crested Newts, it is considered that subject to securing a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) via condition, successful implementation of the ecological mitigation plan and provision of a GI Management Plan, that Great Crested Newts can be appropriately protected during construction and enhancements for this species secured by the planning consent.

In terms of enhancement, the concepts provided within the document "Concept Landscape Proposals 4.1a Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure - Habitat Creation" are positive. The landscape details will be secured by appropriate planning condition.

#### 6.4.4 Flooding

The site is not within a flood zone and there is no known flooding of the site.

#### 6.4.5 Water (including foul drainage / SuDS), Air, Soundscape & Light

Infiltration testing has not yet been carried out, so two drainage strategies have been produced; one assuming infiltration rates are suitable for the use of soakaways on site, the other assuming they are not. If infiltration is suitable, permeable paving can be used on site as both storage and infiltration device. A volume of 170m<sup>3</sup> is required and is available below the car parking areas. This has been calculated based on low infiltration rates so could be reduced if testing shows higher rates on site. If infiltration is not suitable, controlled discharge to an existing surface water sewer to the east of the site is available with 115m<sup>3</sup> attenuation within permeable paving preventing flooding onsite. Permeable paving will offer filtration of surface water runoff to aid water quality leaving the site. A condition requiring surface water drainage details to be submitted and agreed, then implemented should be included on any consent.

As the scheme was submitted post 7th January 2019, the scheme will require also SAB approval from Monmouthshire's SAB authority.

## **6.5 Response to the Representations of Third Parties and/or Community/Town Council**

6.5.1 Llanfoist Fawr Community Council have commented that their Members remain disappointed that there have been minimal attempts to consult directly with the Community Council during the planning process to date. In this respect a Pre-application Consultation exercise was undertaken which is designed to engage the local community prior to the formal application being submitted.

6.5.2 The Community Council and local residents also consider the scale, height and composition of the proposed design unacceptable and/or sensitive for a development at the centre of Llanfoist. The issue of design including the massing of the building is addressed in section 6.2.1 of this report.

6.5.3 Issues relating to car parking and access are also addressed in section 6.2.2 of this report and it is worth reiterating that the council's Highway Engineers have no objection to the proposal following the submission of further information relating to the management of parking and deliveries. In terms of the amount of parking spaces provided, there are a number of important material considerations that justify the reduced number of spaces proposed for the scheme compared with normal standards for residential development. One must give weight to the nature of the accommodation for elderly persons, not all residents would have a private motor vehicle and would be even more unlikely to have two vehicles. It is acknowledged that the Greenfields site is not in a town centre location, however, its non-car accessibility has been identified as being good/reasonable with the associated potential to reduce the use of the private car. A slightly greater parking provision for the Greenfields site (1 space per 0.9 apartments compared to 1 space per 1.2 apartments at the recently approved McCarthy and Stone development on Tudor Road) addresses this locational issue. Taking all of the above into account, it is maintained that the provision of 20 parking spaces for the 18 retirement living apartments proposed for the Greenfields site is appropriate.

6.5.4 Disruption during the construction phase would not be a reasonable reason for refusal. However, this can be minimised through a well-considered Construction Traffic Plan which is suggested as a condition on any consent.

6.5.5 In terms of loss of privacy, distances between balconies/windows and any neighbouring dwellings are considered to be acceptable to avoid overlooking (see section 6.1.3).

6.5.6 Objections were also received on the basis that Llanfoist has already reached a development saturation point and this proposal constitutes over development. Whilst the current LDP has not allocated any land for large scale new houses, Llanfoist is designated as a Rural Secondary Settlement due to it being sustainable in terms of public transport links and services. Strategic Policy S1 sets out those settlements that will be the primary focus for new housing developments in the County. Town and Village Development Boundaries have been drawn around these settlements of which Llanfoist is one. There will be a presumption in favour of new residential development within these boundaries, subject to detailed planning considerations. A development of 18 one and two bedroom apartments is considered to be small scale and will have a limited impact on the area in terms of additional pressure on local services.

## **6.6 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

6.6.1 The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales has been considered, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act). In reaching this recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been taken into account and it is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

6.7.1 It is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the layout of the Llanfoist settlement in this location. The development is of high standard of design and it would not have an unacceptable visual appearance on the area. The development would not cause any loss of amenity for local residents. Access, parking and traffic generation have also been considered and deemed to be acceptable by the council's Highway Officers. Sufficient

information has also been provided for the Local Planning Authority to consider the 'Three Tests' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and appropriately fulfil the wider duties under that same legislation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 & Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

Subject to a 106 Legal Agreement requiring the following:

### S106 Heads of Terms

A contribution of £107,184 towards the provision of affordable housing in the local area.

If the S106 Agreement is not signed within 6 months of the Planning Committee's resolution then delegated powers be granted to officers to refuse the application.

### **Conditions:**

1 This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.

REASON: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings, for the avoidance of doubt.

3 No development shall take place (including ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Contractor's Construction Environmental Management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall include the following as a minimum:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of "protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.
- i) General site management: details of the construction programme including site clearance, method statements, surface water management and measures, site waste management and disposal, sustainable drainage (pre- and post-construction), maintenance and monitoring programmes;
- j) Pollution prevention: demonstrate how relevant Guidelines for Pollution Prevention and best practice will be implemented, including details of emergency spill procedures and an incident response plan;
- k) Details of the persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details;

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority

REASON: To safeguard species protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

4 A Green Infrastructure Management Plan shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. The content of the Management Plan shall include the following;

- a) Description and evaluation of Green Infrastructure assets to be identified, protected and managed in the GI management plan.
  - a. Boundary buffers
  - b. Retained and new hedgerows
  - c. Green corridors
  - d. Water bodies and any SUDS related features and green engineering
  - e. Grassland
  - f. Bat roosting and Bird nesting provision
- b) Opportunities for enhancement to be incorporated
  - a. Management of Grassland and any waterbodies / SUDS habitats for botanical species diversity and protected species including great crested newts and reptiles
  - b. Management of hedge boundary buffer strips and new planting to increase and maintain diversity and screening
  - c. Management and monitoring of the Bat roosting provision
  - d. Management of retained and new trees for good arboricultural practice
  - e. Maintain habitat connectivity through the site for protected species
  - f. Management of the green roofscape
- c) Trends and constraints on site that might influence management of above features.
- d) Aims and objectives of management.
- e) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- f) Prescriptions for management actions.
- g) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a twenty-year period).
- h) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- i) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The Management Plan shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery as appropriate. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Management Plan are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning Green Infrastructure objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To maintain and enhance Green Infrastructure Assets in accordance with LDP policies, DES1, S13, GI1, NE1, EP1 and SD4. (Legislative background - Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015, Planning (Wales) Act 2015 Environment (Wales) Act 2016)

5 Before any works commence on site, details of earthworks shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform.

REASON: To ensure the provision afforded by appropriate landscape design and Green Infrastructure LC5, DES 1 S13, and GI 1 and NE1

6 Prior to any works commencing on site a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, the CTMP shall take into account the specific environmental and physical constraints of the adjoining highway network. The CTMP shall include traffic management measures, hours of working, measures to control dust, noise and related nuisances, measures to protect adjoining users from construction works, provision for the unloading and loading of construction materials and waste within the curtilage of the site, the parking of all associated construction vehicles. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CTMP.

REASON: To ensure the access is constructed in the interests of highway safety and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy MV1.

IN

7 No development may commence until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority indicating an area set aside for the turning of service vehicles



and an area laid out in front of the building to enable emergency vehicles to have direct access to the buildings main entrance.

REASON: To ensure the access is constructed in the interests of highway safety and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy MV1.

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8 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development.

REASON: To safeguard the landscape amenities of the area and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy GI1.

9 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

REASON: To safeguard the landscape amenities of the area and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy GI1.

10 Prior to occupation of the building, a schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of five years shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and shall include details of the arrangements for its implementation.

REASON: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by the proper maintenance of existing and / or new landscape features.

11 Bat mitigation building as specified "400 - P - 003 - P7-DEVELOPED - Site Plan, 400 - P - 211 - P1-DEVELOPED - Lesser Horseshoe Bat Roost Details dated 10.09.2020 by Casa Architects and Ecological Mitigation Plan\_Sept 2020 and Proposed bat roost\_Greenfields Sept 2020 dated 9.09.2020 by Crossman Associates" to be maintained in perpetuity, accessible only by licensed bat ecologists for monitoring and maintenance purposes in accordance with agreed GI Management Plan. The door shall be of steel frame and timber clad construction and fitted with a mortice deadlock.

REASON: To safeguard species protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

12 The Ecological Mitigation plan dated 9.09.2020 by Crossman Associates shall be implemented in full and shall be retained as such in perpetuity. Evidence of compliance with the plan in the form of georeferenced photographs must be provided to the LPA no more than three months later than the first beneficial use of the building.

REASON: To provide biodiversity net benefit and ensure compliance with PPW 10, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and LDP policy NE1

13 Notwithstanding the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no lighting or lighting fixtures shall be installed on the building or in the curtilage until an appropriate lighting scheme has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The strategy shall include:

- a) lighting type, positioning and specification
- b) measures to minimise light spill from glazed areas
- c) drawings setting out light spillage in key areas for bats based on technical specifications

The strategy must demonstrate that bat mitigation entrances are not illuminated and allows dark corridors for bats. The scheme shall be agreed in writing with the LPA and implemented in full.

REASON: To safeguard foraging/commuting habitat of Species of Conservation Concern in accordance with Section 6 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 and LDP policies EP3 and NE1.

14 The site shall be managed in accordance with the details provided in 'Ikaria Lifestyles - Management Plan (16 October 2019) only.

REASON: To ensure the site is managed in the interests of highway safety and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy MV1.

15 No development shall take place until a scheme of surface water drainage has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority and the approved scheme shall be completed before the building(s) is/are first occupied.

REASON: To ensure satisfactory facilities are available for disposal of foul and surface water and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy EP5.

#### INFORMATIVES

1 Due to the minor nature of the proposed development (including any demolition) and the location of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposals did not need to be screened under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

2 Any person carrying out the development to which this planning permission relates must display at or near the place where the development is being carried out, at all times when it is being carried out, a copy of any notice of the decision to grant it, in accordance with Schedule 5B to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 as amended and Section 71ZB of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 34 of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

