

Application Number: DM/2021/01823

Proposal: Change of use from agricultural to One Planet development

Address: Land south of Trecastle Farm, Trecastle Road, Llangovan, Monmouthshire

Applicant: Mr Paul Trotter

Plans: A1A - , A1B - , A1C - , A1D - , B1A - , A2A - , A2B - , A2C - , A3 - , B1B - , B1C - , B1D - , B1E - , B1F - , B2 - , B3A - , B3B - , B3C - , B4 - , B4A - , B4B - , B5 - , ANNUAL MONITORING FORM - , NRW SURVEY DETAILS 4 - , CFSH MATERIALS REPORT - , LANDSCAPE-ARCHITECT-LETTER-OF-SUPPORT - , NRW SURVEY DETAILS 1 - , NRW SURVEY DETAILS 2 - , NRW SURVEY DETAILS 3 - , NRW SURVEY DETAILS 5 - , TRENDSPOTTING LETTER OF SUPPORT - , SOIL-ANALYSIS-SUMMARY - , ONE PLANET DEVELOPMENT ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT - , PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL - , RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to S106 agreement

Case Officer: Mr David Wong
Date Valid: 04.11.2021

The Ward members have requested this application to be determined by Planning Committee and there are five or more objections to the application

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 Proposal Description

1.1.1 Trecastle Wood, formerly part of New Trecastle Farm, is in the open countryside and is situated some 2.4 miles south-east of Raglan. The site in question is a total area of 14.1 acres, comprising two field parcels with an existing track which has recent planning permission to be upgraded to include a new stream crossing with associated planting. According to the Agricultural land classification: predictive map, the land is grade 2, which is good quality agricultural land.

1.1.2 There are no public rights of way or footpaths on the site and both the vehicular and pedestrian access to Trecastle Wood is via a shared access with two agricultural fields off a country lane to east of the site. The access track (DM/2020/01138), a culvert (DM/2020/01101) and a livestock shelter (DM/2020/01112) have been the subject of previous approved applications and have been constructed.

1.1.3 This application is seeking planning permission for a One Planet Development (hereafter referred to as OPD). The Welsh Assembly Government has created the OPD policy with the objective of adhering to global sustainable development targets. The OPD policy aims to encourage individuals, families and co-operatives alike to create residential developments that are either low impact, or do not significantly degrade the environment. Such developments are required to meet 65% of the residents' basic needs from the land within the first five years, including income, energy and food. The applicants have planned to start a family. It is useful to point out that this is a single household OPD, and the minimum needs appraisal and business planning was produced with this in mind.

1.1.4 Trecastle Wood will be zero carbon in construction. The overall zero carbon performance will be equivalent to the standards in the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and Part L of the Building Regulations. It is proposed to build a three-bedroom straw bale cottage and workshop

with a traditional timber frame; both would be single storey and have green roofs, which will be made with local natural materials, including timber sourced from approximately 1.5 miles from the site. The proposed dwelling measures 19m in width, 11.5m in depth and 6.5m in height, and the proposed workshop is measures 9.6m in width, 9.5m in depth and 6.5m to the ridge. The workshop is designed for running courses that is primarily for the willow working enterprise element of the site.

1.1.5 This application also proposes a root cellar (for long term food storage), a humanure, a sheep shelter, a barn (for storage of hay and tree fodder, harvested willow being prepared for weaving, commercial animal feed and agricultural tools and machinery), polytunnels, productive vegetable garden, ponds and native planting. Like the proposed dwelling and workshop, the barn is also single storey (5.7m to the ridge) and has an internal floor space of 77m² and will be timber clad; it is (including the overhang area) 18.6m in length and 8m wide. All structures will be recessed into the slope. The buildings are grouped in this site i.e. the root cellar is situated to the north of the dwelling, the barn to the north east, the workshop and sheep shelter to the west, the potting shed and the greenhouse and the polytunnels to the south, which are within close proximity of the dwelling.

1.1.6 The overall aim of this project to enable the applicants to generate efficient natural resources to sustain them living a low impact lifestyle in the open countryside. The site has been designed to provide for their minimum needs in terms of income, food energy and waste assimilation within five years of habitation. At least 65% of their food will be grown and reared at the site. There are currently no on-site services. A mains water pipe runs along the highway by which the site is accessed. In terms of energy, solar panels will be employed to serve the site. Heating will be met by biomass grown on site. The water needs and the water needs activities on the site will be provided for by capturing rainwater. Human waste will be thermophilically composted in the purpose built humanure unit. Greywater from the laundry, sink and shower will be treated by a reed bed system. In terms of surface water drainage, full details of the system along with sizing calculations will be detailed in the sustainable drainage systems plan for the development, which is a separate process.

1.1.7 The principal income-generating activity proposed from this site is producing animal products from a 'silvopasture' agroforestry system and willow products including adding value to willow from the site by basketry. Silvopasture will be the primary form of agroforestry at Trecastle Wood. It involves grazing livestock in pasture alleys between rows of trees i.e. the high-value tree component (timber, biomass, orchard) offers an overhead crop whilst continuing to produce forage for livestock. The income streams will be 1) Sheep, 2) Chicken eggs, 3) Pork and 4) Willow products and courses.

1.1.8 The applicants will be producing a range of livestock for sale which will provide meat and eggs and incidental surpluses for domestic use. Ducks will used to assist with pests within the vegetable production and their eggs will contribute to the domestic diet. Chickens will be kept commercially for eggs and as birds are replaced, they will be used as the main source of meat to feed the household. Pigs and sheep will also be kept as part of the business activities and to assist in managing the wider site and surplus pork and lamb would also be available occasionally to feed the household. Honey bees will provide honey, wax and propolis (bee glue). This will contribute towards the domestic food requirements.

A thousand willow trees will be planted to help increase biodiversity and for the production of willow basketry/products.

1.1.9 In terms of the business strategy, the produce is intended to be sold through a range of routes. The applicants intend to start with a stall at local farmer's markets and will practice innovative sales techniques like selling meat vouchers to pre sell meat looking to minimise costs of sales. They also hope to partner with a nearby Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to facilitate an offering of meat and eggs alongside its core vegetable box deliveries and they aim to develop a network of shops to which they can sell eggs. CSA is a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared. They are working with other small local producers and OPDs to create a local 'Our Food' network which will provide both an opportunity for low waste local food purchases for the household and a path to

reach other local people to buy the produce from the OPD. Willow products will be sold through craft fairs and online.

1.1.10 Establishing a sustainable ODP will reduce the need to travel. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan is presented within the application; this details the calculation of journey numbers and an indication of the breakdown of journey types anticipated including separate trips for domestic purposes, trips for business purposes and trips made by visitors to the site. The applicants are proposing to combine shopping trips with business deliveries, and the visitors and volunteers will lift share, and the course participants and tour attendants will be encouraged to car share and travel by public transport. This details how they will reduce the need to travel and when there is a need, e-bike, bikes, active travel (zero carbon) methods and public transport will be prioritised. The assessment notes the local public transport connections, bus routes and train stations.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2020/01101	The proposed farm culvert will allow safe livestock, pedestrian and vehicular across a small waterway. The provision of a culvert will support farm activities on 12.5 acres of land that is currently not safely accessible from the rest of the site or from public roads. It will reduce erosion and stock lameness caused from crossing the waterway without a managed crossing point. It will provide access to the field shelter and stock gathering system positioned in our largest field (see separate application). An improved track will lead from the adopted road to the east, over the culvert to the field shelter.	Acceptable	08.09.2020

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

Development Management Policies

DES1 LDP General Design Considerations
EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection
EP2 LDP Protection of Water Sources and the Water Environment
EP3 LDP Lighting
GI1 LDP Green Infrastructure
LC1 LDP New Built Development in the Open Countryside
LC5 LDP Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character
MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations

NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development
SD2 LDP Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency
SD4 LDP Sustainable Drainage

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Future Wales - the national plan 2040

Future Wales is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. Future Wales - the national plan 2040 is the national development framework and it is the highest tier plan, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a framework which will be built on by Strategic Development Plans at a regional level and Local Development Plans. Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11

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 of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.

A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places. PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities.

Technical Advice Notes

TAN 12 Design
TAN 22 Planning for Sustainable buildings

Supplementary Planning Guidance

MCC Green Infrastructure SPG 2015

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Consultation Replies

Mitchel Troy United Community Council: Refuse. The access to this site is a field access leading onto agricultural land not owned by the applicant, (the applicants have a right of way for agricultural purposes) The proposal will require a properly constructed track suitable for residential use and a bridge will need to be constructed over a stream. This level of construction seems inconsistent with TAN 6. The access opens onto a dangerous bend where the single track lane narrows and visibility is severely restricted (a tractor driver can see over the hedges). Any increase in traffic over the occasional tractor movement will create an increased risk for any road users. The adjacent hedges are not in the applicant's ownership and so improved visibility splays cannot be provided. Overall this proposal would require an unacceptably high level of construction work in the open countryside and given the lack of detail appears a calculated means of obtaining residential development where it would not usually be acceptable.

While 4 parking spaces are noted on the plans would this be sufficient for residents, staff, customers? What facilities are proposed re toilets and waste disposal? While the objectives of One Planet seem desirable the applicants fail to make a case (TAN 6). There is a lack of detail e.g. the Business Plan does not indicate what they intend to sell and so, in the absence of sufficient information.

MCC Highways: No objection.

The application proposes the creation of a One Planet Development, selling produce and craft, and the provision of various courses. The site is off a small rural road south of Penyclawdd at the national speed limit, however vehicle speeds will be lower due to the conditions and layout of the road. Whilst there will be a slight increase in vehicle movements to and from the application site it is accepted that the local highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic flows from the development. In addition, due to the nature of the development the traffic generated is very likely to fall outside peak time AM and PM traffic flows therefore is not considered to have any detrimental impact on highway safety. The applicant has provided detailed information in support of the application detailing the use of the small holding and anticipated usage following its implementation. The highway authority has no reason to challenge the projected vehicle movements to and from the proposed development. The travel assessment states there will be only 4 parking bays for visitors and expects most to car share or use sustainable transport to limit the amount of traffic generated by the site. The access has already been improved under DM/2019/01772, though on a site visit it is apparent that visibility to the south is still limited due to the hedge and verge, and the detail of the access does not match the previously approved layout. It's also evident that the current surface is not preventing debris and mud from entering the public highway and is therefore not suitable for purpose. Though we do not object to the principle of the development, we would request the applicant to provide a detailed engineering drawing for the access to include full dimensions and proposed hard surface material to in order to overcome the concerns raised in respect of debris being brought onto the highway.

Following communication with the applicant and the provision of further detail our concerns have been satisfied and we consider the extension of the geogrid to be acceptable in reducing debris being brought into the highway.

MCC Biodiversity and Ecology: No objection subject to conditions. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken on 27 July 2019 (with a follow up visit on 1 August 2021) by Aderyn Ecology identified three priority habitat types on site; semi-natural broadleaved woodland, hedgerow and ponds. The woodland and hedgerow provide suitable habitat for bats, hazel dormouse, and nesting bird species. There are several veteran trees within the site with potential roosting features for bats. It is understood that no trees will be removed as part of the works. The ponds were found to be in poor condition and unsuitable to support great crested newt. The majority of the site consisted of improved grassland managed previously for agriculture with rush species present. The survey found evidence of invasive Himalayan balsam at the watercourse at the east of the site and was destroyed. The grassland provides suitable foraging habitat for badger, barn owl and amphibians and reptiles. It is considered likely that lesser horseshoe bats use habitats within the site for foraging due to the proximity of Llangovan Church SSSI within 2km where a breeding colony of this species is present. This SSSI is part of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. We do not consider that there is a pathway to affect this unit of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC and therefore, we have not undertaken a Test of Likely Significant Effect in this case. The walkover survey followed standard survey guidelines as set out in Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (2010) Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey, A technique for environmental audit. This level of survey effort and assessment is considered proportionate to the nature and scale of the application, and I agree with the conclusions. As stated in the OPD Management Plan, a sensitive lighting scheme should be developed to avoid lighting spill onto woodland and hedgerow habitats, and the small watercourse located to the east of the site. This plan has not been provided with the current application; should you be minded to grant consent we will need to secure this via condition, a suitably worded condition is provided below. It is recommended that a construction environmental management plan is submitted to the LPA in order to reduce disturbance impacts to protected and priority species. Suitably worded conditions are requested.

MCC Drainage: No objection. The proposed site layout and drainage system will impact runoff from the site. The application includes no drainage information or ground testing. As the total construction area is above 100m² then SAB approval will be required prior to works commencing on site. During construction the applicant will need to ensure that there are no increases in runoff or silt washing into local watercourses. This can be managed by constructing the drainage system first and ensuring silt management measures are in place.

MCC GI Landscape Officer: Provisional holding objection – Further information or clarification is required. However, Should the application progress to be approved the appropriately worded conditions should apply if not satisfactorily provided during the application process prior to determination.

The application has been considered from a landscape and GI perspective and in the context of the valued landscape setting. There is a provisional holding objection from a landscape and GI perspective seeking clarifications and additional information. However it is noted that the OPD site plan is relatively comprehensive with a well-researched vision and analysis within the context of the application and has included the consideration of visual impact from receptor locations as identified in the LVIA. The application site is within two field parcels to be accessed via an existing track which has recent planning permission to be upgraded to include a new stream crossing with associated planting.

The site is located in the Llangovan landscape character area typified by open gently undulating lowland crossed and dissected by numerous streams and tributaries flowing into the Pitt and Olway brooks. This LCA contains the Minor Villages of Llangwm and Llansoy. The eastern extent of this LCA lies within the Wye Valley AONB however the site location sits to the west of the AONB boundary.

Large regular fields of improved pasture and arable crops are bounded by a mosaic of traditional field boundaries. In places intensive management has resulted in the breakdown of these field boundaries resulting in enlargement of fields and intrusive lines of post and wire fencing. Interspersed on these low pastures are fields of unimproved grasslands forming part of the Cobblers Plain Meadows. Although generally open, small pockets of woodland and groups of trees and parkland are scattered throughout this landscape, often found in low dips and valley bottoms enclosing scattered farmsteads and country estates.

An analysis of the relevant sensitivity appraisals from LANDMAP information indicates that the LCA has been evaluated as;

Visual and Sensory;

100% High Historic Landscape;

31% Outstanding,

69% High Geological Landscape;

7% Outstanding,

93% High Cultural;

100% Outstanding

The landscape setting and site is within a highly valued landscape character. LDP policy LC1 New Built Development in the Open Countryside and LC5 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character seek to ensure that the integrity and value of the Monmouthshire landscape character is maintained and enhanced wherever possible. The areas requiring additional clarification are summarised as follows:

-The LVIA is welcome and shows views from a range of localised receptors including PROW to the north and south of the site, nearby properties and points of public accessibility. The LVIA highlights those views from certain PROW viewpoints that will provide direct views of the proposed development. The layout and planting plan have included indications of planting but it is not fully clear if the planting is part of strategic interventions to help to integrate the development into the landscape. Further clarity would be welcome.

-An appropriately scaled green infrastructure assets and opportunities assessment to inform a green infrastructure masterplan would be welcome. This will highlight wider GI opportunities and inform future management of the site and boundaries to ensure GI habitat and connectivity are maintained and enhanced. For instance it is noted that the western boundary includes Ash trees which may require a short to medium management prescription to manage any decline due to disease and replacement in the context of GI connectivity.

-A landscape planting plan for the proposed site will be required inclusive of the means of protection, plan of new tree planting, specifications including species, size, density and number, cultivation and other operations associated with planting and seeding establishment. The application site includes the access link to Trecastle road. The plan should identify strategic

planting where reductions of visual impact and integration of structures into the landscape are afforded such as planting in association with barn and dwelling linking to LVIA assessment of views towards the site as well as boundary planting that help to reduce intervisibility from nearby PROW and dwellings.

-A landscape maintenance programme for 5 years should be provided to demonstrate how establishment and aftercare will be managed capable of being rolled over on an annual basis thereafter. The programme should also include landscaping associated with access from Trecastle road, access track, brook crossing and SUDs where green engineering may be proposed / incorporated.

-An appropriately scaled and informed green infrastructure management plan should be provided with the application or clearly shown as being incorporated through the OPD management plan. The GIMP will define how GI will be managed to maintain and enhance connectivity and habitat provision.

-To scale cross sections with spot height levels showing the relationship of structures with surrounding ground levels and nearby features would be welcome and to ensure RPZ of existing trees are unaffected.

-Further clarity regarding proposed lighting provision, above that mentioned would be welcome to include description of locations, function, product and light spill impacts and mitigation such as cowls and strategic landscape provision. -Further clarity with regard to the green roof design and management would be welcome to ensure establishment and aftercare is in place. The structures are designed to be set within a cut and fill with green roof assisting with visual integration therefore important to ensure resilience. The proposed change of use from agricultural to One Planet development and development based on the information provided to date and subject to further clarity may not from a Landscape and GI perspective have a significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the localised and more specifically the wider valued landscape, provisions of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) February 2021 and Policies S13, LC1 and LC5 of the Monmouthshire County Council Adopted Development Plan 2011-2021.

NRW: No objection to the proposed development as submitted. The application site is within the catchment of the River Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC). However, recognising the specific nature of the application submitted, a composting toilet to be used for foul waste, we are satisfied that it is unlikely to increase the amount of phosphorus entering the catchment. Therefore, we are satisfied that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the River Usk SAC. Also, noted the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Aderyn Ecology Ltd, along with the following:

- Suitable habitat for hazel dormouse and their presence is presumed. - Several natural roost sites for crevice roosting bats. - Removal of trees will be avoided. - No construction related impacts for hazel dormouse. - No predicted negative impacts on any protected or priority species. As there are no likely negative impacts on any protected species, plus a possible long-term benefit to habitats capable of supporting them, we have no adverse comments to make on the proposals.

5.2 Neighbour Notification

Objections from five households received:-

* Access to the road is extremely dangerous.

* The applicant has owned the land for two years but has no sheep or other livestock that he proposes.

* The applicant lives on a boat in Bristol but gives a Windsor address on the application

* The applicant has his own freelance web design business, and his wife works too. Will this continue, and how will the Council monitor this?

* Has an expert in the science of soil management and crop production been engaged to determine what can be grown on the land?

* 14 acres is probably not enough for the proposed operation; it will considerably affect the amount of livestock they can have on the land, and so potentially heavily affect the applicant's income and costs projections.

* The holding will need a suitable 4x4 vehicle or similar vehicle, as acknowledged by the applicant in the Management Plan, to transport livestock, using the track in bad weather to get out onto the public highway, and general use on the land.

* The second-hand solar panels may not work or generate as much energy as anticipated.

- * Are these projections in the Management Plan expertly checked independently?
- * The use of artificial lighting from the site i.e. the dwelling, composting toilet, workshop is visually damaging.
- * The site can be clearly seen from public vantage points. The proposal is incongruous and visually intrusive within the wider rural landscape.
- * Pre-application planning advice was given to the applicant prior to the land being sold to the applicant by MCC. In the interests of transparency, this application should be referred to the Planning Committee so an open debate can take place.
- * Allowing this residential development in the open countryside will potentially set a precedent.
- * The proposals can be seen from the nearby neighbouring properties and from the nearby footpath.
- * Has an independent Bat survey or a full Environmental Impact Assessment been commissioned?
- * The visibility of the current access is poor.
- * The existing track is not suitable for residential use and the workshop.
- * Had NRW been consulted on the foul proposal/phosphate issue?
- * This is a major development.
- * Business Plan needs to be stress tested by independent third party.
- * The overall plan contains a lot of good theoretical ideas but may not work in reality.
- * The site was sold to the applicant by MCC. Please can full disclosure be made as to what has been promised and what, if any, financial benefit will accrue to MCC if this approval goes ahead.
- * The site is not near public transport and will be highly reliant on a motor vehicle. Thus increasing carbon emissions.
- * The building design is not concentrated, but scattered across the site, which again has a visual impact within the open countryside.
- * To meet the minimum income needs, occupants specifically cannot include other income derived from the site or elsewhere unrelated to land-based activities. The proposer's wife will travel for work (working part time), which will have a negative impact on carbon emissions.
- * The proposed site is located between these two properties of significance i.e. Cadw Site at neighbouring Trecastle Farm Norman Motte & Bailey and also a listed building at Court St Lawrence.
- * The proposal is to sell surplus produce from the land to the local community, however this is already offered by local businesses providing such goods who are all closer to populated areas, and either within walking distance to the populous areas or prominent roadside locations.
- * As mentioned above, this proposal would negatively impact Square Farm Shop, Raglan Farm Shop, Dingestow Stores, Llanishen Village Stores and Neil James Butchers.
- * The soil within the area is heavy clay which holds water. Has a rigorous SuDS assessment been carried out?

One general comment received:-

- * There are a substantial number of assumptions and figures quoted in the Management Plan. I assume that you are engaging independent experts to validate all of these?

Fifteen support letters received:-

- * I work as project manager of Our Food. The project is supported by Monmouthshire County Council, the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Welsh Government, and the Conservation Farming Trust. It demonstrates that it is possible for anyone with courage, imagination and determination to make a good living from producing food sustainably on a small scale for local people.
- * The application fits well with national and local food policies, which increasingly recognise the value of small scale sustainable producers. MCC's Food Development Action Plan has a guiding principle of 'improving diversity and usage of land for food production to improve self-sufficiency whilst conserving and enhancing our natural resources/ one of its initiatives is to create a Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised "Sustainable Food Place".
- * As a former small scale market gardener and organic No Dig growing expert myself, I have experience of selling organic produce locally in and around Monmouth (retired in 2021). I can confirm there is a huge appetite for local produce of all kinds, and such products command a handsome premium.

- * When organic matter and animal manures are well composted, these will feed the soil biodiversity and dramatically improve the site's biodiversity from the ground up. This indirectly produces excellent crop growth.
- * I am particularly impressed by the detailed active travel plan which takes advantage of our quiet rural, roads that will enable safe travel to local amenities in neighbouring villages and Monmouth town by bicycle.
- * As a Chartered Environmentalist sustainable projects like this are not only exciting but showcase modern methods for low impact living.
- * This type of low impact community involved living will become more and more essential over the next few decades.
- * I agree with the principles behind the development and its ecological aims.
- * The concept of one planet living is what we should all aspire to. The project should be granted planning consent; it will inspire others to improve their ecological footprint.
- * The submission is thorough and well researched.
- * This is exactly the type of project that needs to be encouraged to demonstrate how to reduce our carbon footprint and to live off the land in a sustainable way.
- * I am impressed by their commitment to this project.
- * The proposal will provide a demonstration of low impact living and sustainable agriculture that we need for the future.
- * It is vital that projects of low carbon impact, sustainable farming and biodiversity conservation are encouraged.
- * It is believed that the Trecastle Wood One Planet Development will help reduce carbon emissions, contributing towards achieving national climate change targets.
- * The sustainable agricultural systems proposed will improve biodiversity and conservation, with benefits to livestock and wildlife.
- * This application should be used as an exemplar scheme of MCC to follow and utilise to inform future planning policy.
- * The applicants are already active members of community groups, in particular dedicating their time to the Monmouth Town Council working group Action on Climate Emergency (ACE) Monmouth, working locally to respond to the climate emergency over the past two years.

5.3 Local Member Representations

Councillor Mckenna - I have received a number of complaints from local residents about the application (some of which have not raised a formal complaint due to the public nature of the planning portal). I would therefore request that the application is looked at by Mitchel Troy Community Council. Further to this, I would like the application to be considered by the Planning Committee. I visited the site this week and had a near-miss with a motor vehicle when pulling out from the driveway. As you look right there is no visibility because there is a blind bend. I notice on the planning portal that Highways originally objected due to the unsafe nature of pulling out onto the highway. The hedge either side of the driveway is not owned by the applicant and therefore 1) the hedge cannot be maintained by the applicant and 2) the hedge cannot be removed to solve the issue of non-visibility. I notice that Highways wrote their latest report during the Winter/Spring when there would not have been any foliage and the grass verge would have been short. Therefore, during the Summer months the visibility is worse. I would appreciate it if Highways could revisit the site and reassess the situation. I would be happy to meet them on site. Further to my near-miss, I also noticed that there were large skid marks on the road by the entrance. Again, highlighting that this is an unsafe stretch of road to pull out onto. I attach photos below [N.B not included in this officer report]. Residents have raised further concerns, to which I am happy to go into more detail if needed.

Councillor John - After speaking to local residents, as the Ward Member, I wish to raise the following points:

- 1) The access to the site is on a narrow country lane, which is located on a blind bend. It is a dangerous stretch of road (skid marks are visible on the bend) and therefore, there is a high chance of an accident occurring. Has the visibility assessment been done in person or remotely? Furthermore, substantial amounts of mud have been deposited on the road when the applicant has been accessing the site, further increasing the risk of an accident.

2) The applicant has stated that he has an agreement in place with the neighbouring landowner to trim the hedge, however he wishes to keep it confidential. I have learnt from residents that this is not a legally-binding contract; it is solely between the applicant, his wife and the landowner and therefore it is null and void if the land gets sold by either party; that the landowner has the right to terminate the contract with 7 days' notice; and that there is no detail regarding the distance or depth the hedge can be trimmed to. It is worth pointing out that hedges cannot be trimmed during bird-nesting season i.e. March 1st – September 1st. The hedge is in full bloom during this time, which further hinders visibility. Furthermore, what will happen when either party sells?

3) The applicant has told residents that extended family will live at the site. This, along with running a commercial business (increased visitors due to courses such as willow weaving, sheep shearing, selling produce etc) will increase traffic further and therefore increase the probability of an accident at the entrance/exit.

4) One Planet Development guidance says that the site should not be visible. OPD should conserve, and wherever possible, enhance the local environment. This includes biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape. Buildings, the drive and other structures are not located where they can be recessed into the landscape and stand out in views from public vantage points. The site is clearly visible from both the Lower Raglan Road and Trecastle Road. Furthermore, it can also be seen from the nearby footpath. It is even more visible when the leaves are off the trees for over six months of the year, between October-April. The applicant has carried out his own visibility access statement, which contains information that is not correct. Therefore, this needs to be carried out by an independent specialist. Please can you confirm that this will be done? The site will have a long driveway, polytunnels, solar panels and a dwelling, all of which are obtrusive on the landscape and have the potential to be common features across the beautiful Monmouthshire countryside, therefore, if this application gets approved it will set a precedent.

5) Is a legal agreement in place with the neighbouring landowner not to cut any trees and expose the site further?

6) Has a tree survey been done on both the trees on the applicant's land and also that of the adjoining land owner? The majority of trees that surround the site are owned by the adjoining landowner and therefore the applicant is not in control of them. The landowner could therefore cut them down at any time. These trees provide some screening during the Summer months when the leaves are in full bloom, however, some of these trees have Ash Dieback and will therefore need to be felled, exposing the site even further.

7) Has the business case been stress tested by an independent third party? If so, please can I see a copy of this? Inflation and the cost of building materials have both risen dramatically since the applicant submitted the application. By way of example, the Management Plan contains the following: Build costs: page 242: build costs of the house and infrastructure have been budgeted at £30,000 over 30 years.

8) The business needs to be viable if it is to be the main/sole income of the residents. There is no proof that the business is viable and the predictions appear to be unrealistic e.g. only £300 per year on vet's bills, charging £150 for someone to come and shear sheep when you can buy a fleece for £1.50, £1762 profit from three pigs etc. If the applicant was serious about making this a viable business, why hasn't he already started farming it and proving that it can be profitable? The applicant has owned the land for three years and yet he has not farmed it during this time. MCC needs to be very careful about granting permission to build a dwelling in the open countryside, as this can set a precedent. When applying for an agricultural or rural enterprise dwelling the process is rigorous and you have to prove the business is viable before permission is granted.

The reality is that the majority of new businesses fail, so it would seem highly speculative to grant planning permission off the back of a Management Plan for a business that has not even been created and been run by people who do not have an established and proven track record of running such a business. Of particular note is page 127 of the Management Plan where the applicant says, "If the products aren't selling as well as we'd like, the answer will be to focus on demonstrating the value we provide, not lowering prices...". This would not seem to be an economically sound approach to running a business.

The Management Plan contains a lot of good theoretical ideas but these need to be assessed in the light of the everyday (often harsh) realities of the proposed agricultural activities and the day-to-day challenges faced by agricultural workers (which can be anything from inclement weather conditions, outbreaks of diseases (both in animals and crops and vegetation) to fluctuations in demand and increased costs of production. The recent Amazon Series, Clarkson's Farm, is proof of this.

9) Planning permission was granted for a track towards the proposed site of the dwelling, however, the permission that was granted is for an agricultural track and is not a commercial or residential permission. Furthermore, the drive does not continue all the way to the dwelling and an extension to the drive would need to be sought. It would appear that both permissions need to be applied for. Please can you confirm this? The area is on the edge of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the residential track would need to be over half a kilometre long. This track is visible from the Lower Raglan Road and Trecastle Road, and therefore will have a permanent scar on the landscape. It is unclear from paragraph 3.8 of the Transport Plan what size of vehicles could safely get down the access track, nor if there are adequate passing spaces given its distance (the original permission was granted for agricultural use, which would of course be relatively infrequent use). One would assume that deliveries will be made on relatively large trucks/lorries.

10) Are the products to be sold on the roadside or from the premises? If from the roadside, this will have safety impact with visibility and has the applicant obtained a legal agreement with the owner of the shared access?

11) Has a SuDS drainage system been approved? SuDS approval is required if the total construction area of development is 100m² or more (including driveways, patios, parking area etc).

12) The applicant predicts that his average yearly spend will be £4600. Band G Council tax alone costs over £3000, therefore, these predictions, whilst taking into account public liability insurance, house insurance, farm insurance, car insurance, car maintenance, car MOT/tax, food, fuel, clothes, mortgage, energy bills, tax, national insurance etc are unrealistic. Since the applicant has submitted the application, energy/fuel costs have doubled and inflation is at 9.1% (the highest in 40 years). The Office of National Statistics states that for the financial year ending (FYE) 2019 (April 2018 to March 2019), average household spending in the UK was £592 per week (£30,784 per year). This would have increased considerably with the increase in inflation and increase in fuel/energy. Therefore, how are the applicant's expenditure predictions realistic? I believe that this needs to be assessed by an independent verifier. Has this been done? If so, please disclose a copy of the report. The applicant predicts that externally purchased food (page 51): that 65% of food will be grown on site yet they have estimated that the remaining 45% will cost £315. This sounds optimistic at best considering the high cost of living and inflation.

13) OPD in the open countryside should not impact negatively on neighbouring communities. The applicant has chosen products which compete with the nearest businesses. How have they engaged with the local community and businesses? The applicant will take trade away from the neighbouring business which offer similar goods (Dingestow Village Stores, Llanishen Village Stores, Raglan Farm Park shop, Square Farm Shop, Neil James Butchers in Raglan, Humble by Nature, Wyldwood Willow etc.). These businesses have been through a tough economic time both during and post-covid. With household budgets being squeezed, this will have an impact on these businesses even further. Competing with them could have a detrimental impact on their profits and viability.

14) Local residents understand that the applicant lives on a house boat in Bath and owns a property in Berkshire. OPD guidance says that this should be their only residence. Are the applicants therefore selling these properties? If their extended family plan to live on the site are they also subjected to selling any property they may own? Otherwise, rental income is additional income which is not derived from the land.

15) OPD Guidance states that the main income should come from the land. Local residents understand that the applicant and his wife are a web designer and an adult education team manager, respectively. Are they therefore giving up these jobs?

16) Page 45 of the Management Plan says that the site will provide the applicants minimum needs in terms of income but the Transport Plan says that one of them will work 3 days a week. How does this fit with the OPD requirements? What visibility would MCC have over actual income e.g. bank statements? The applicant states that his wife will continue to work in Bristol, which is a 60 mile round trip. Travelling such a distance is not eco-friendly and will increase carbon emissions. There is no public transport in the area. The applicant should have a low ecological impact lifestyle according to the OPD footprinting framework, but travelling such a distance on a frequent basis increases carbon emissions which impacts on climate change and therefore ecology.

17) How will the applicant reduce the need to travel? I applaud the applicant for stating that he will use active travel and that he will walk his child(ren) to nursery every day, twice a day. However, is

it realistic to walk a 3-4 year old child a three mile round-trip every day (and the applicant 6 miles if there and back for drop-off and pick-up), especially during the wind, rain and Winter? Public transport cannot be prioritised in any form because there is no public transport in the rural community of Llangovan.

18) I was interested to learn that the proposed OPD site was actually sold to the applicant by MCC. The applicant indicates that he has been given positive messages regarding the likely approval for the OPD. Please can full disclosure be made so as to what has been promised and what, if any, financial benefit will accrue to MCC e.g. by way of overage/uplift clause if this approval goes ahead? I understand that the imposition of an overage is standard practice within MCC and is often around 30-40% over a 25 year period. Indeed, the neighbouring landowner who bought the remainder of the land at a similar time is subject to such a clause.

19) What will the Section 106 contributions be? This is to benefit the local community.

20) Should there have been a public consultation for a scheme of this size? It involves three applications – an agricultural track, a sheep shelter/bridge and a dwelling.

21) Residents have raised concerns that there has already been a large amount of rubbish on the site, ranging from a caravan to a 4x4 to plastic. Is this to continue and get progressively worse once the applicant starts farming? If so, this will have a visual impact on the landscape.

22) Have soil tests been done on the land? I understand that much of it is either heavy clay or reeds, neither of which are suitable for growing crops such as wheat, as the applicant proposes.

All of the production figures quoted and assumptions made in respect of yields etc in the Management Plan need to be benchmarked against what is achievable on this particular site, taking into account its soil characteristics and aspect. An agricultural land classification prediction for the site needs to be carried out.

23) There is a Cadw site next to the site and a listed building, both of which are visible from the site. Has Cadw been consulted on the impact the site will have on the setting of the Cadw site and the listed building?

24) There is no water on site. The applicant proposes to use rainwater and the stream. Will this have a detrimental impact on neighbouring farmers? The stream starts a few hundred metres from the site, so there will not be a large amount of water anyway. If this water is taken to water crops, feed animals and serve the dwelling then there will be little or no water for farmers further down the stream to feed their animals. What happens during dry spells when there is no rainfall and the stream runs dry and rainwater cannot be collected?

25) The applicant proposes to have chickens; however, these are known to produce high proportions of phosphates. With a watercourse on the site, how is this being protected?

26) Has a sewerage consultant/NRW been consulted on business waste, visitor waste, domestic waste and human waste?

27) The applicant wishes to use solar and includes some projections in his Management Plan. Has an independent expert done an assessment to determine whether the area is suitable for solar to generate sufficient capacity to service both a dwelling and outbuildings?

28) If permission is granted for this OPD, what resources do MCC have to monitor the milestones that need to be met to carefully assess whether or not it is successful over a 5 year period?

29) The nearby Llangovan church has a colony of rare bats. Has a bat survey been done and what impact will the OPD have on the rare bats and other ecology?

30) The site is positioned in an ecologically sensitive area, of high ecological value which is on the edge of the AONB. Bats, owls, dormice, red kites, newts, toads/frogs, badgers, deer and wild boar are all known to use the area as their habitat. Has a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) site survey been done and how will these species be protected?

31) Is the proposed dwelling to be tied to the land?

32) Whilst the Management Plan does contain an Exit Strategy in the event that the OPD fails, the reality is that significant excavation work would already have been undertaken in the open countryside which would be hard to remediate. The carbon footprint to create the infrastructure would be significant and no doubt unwind it too if that was necessary. What will happen to the site if the business fails? Will the applicant have the opportunity to apply for change of use or will the site be put back to its original state?

The essential characteristics of OPD Paragraph 1.9 of the Guidance that OPD's must:

- Have a light touch on the environment.
- Positively enhance the environment wherever possible through activities on the site.

- Be land-based – the development must provide for the minimum needs of residents in terms of food, income, environment and waste assimilation in no more than 5 years.
- Have a low ecological footprint.
- Be bound by a clear statement that the development will be the sole residence for the proposed occupants.

After engagement with local residents and reading through some of the information on the Planning Portal, I do not feel that this application meets the requirements of the OPD Guidance. Therefore, I cannot support this application for approval.

Cllr Jayne McKenna is on the Planning Committee and therefore wishes to express that she has to keep an 'open mind' on the application.

The submitted information can be read in full on the Council's website:

<https://planningonline.monmouthshire.gov.uk/online-applications/?lang=EN>

6.0 EVALUATION

6.1 Assessment of OPD Proposal

The essential characteristics of OPD are laid out in paragraph 1.9 of the Guidance, in that OPDs must:

- Have a light touch on the environment
- Positively enhance the environment wherever possible through activities on the site
- Be land-based - the development must provide for the minimum needs of residents in terms of food, income, energy and waste assimilation in no more than five years
- Have a low ecological footprint - the development must have an initial ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person, or less with a clear potential to move to 1.88 global hectares per person over time - these are the Ecological Footprint Analysis benchmarks for all One Planet Development (para 2.11)
- Have very low carbon buildings - these are stringent requirements, stipulating that buildings are low in carbon in both construction and use
- Be defined and controlled by a binding Management Plan (MP), which is reviewed and updated every five years
- Be bound by a clear statement that the development will be the sole residence for the proposed occupants.

As explained in Paragraph 1.10 of the Guidance, to meet these essential characteristics residents of OPDs have to live quite differently (much more sustainably) than what is considered normal in the 21st century. OPD therefore is not just describing a physical development. It is describing a way of living differently where there is a symbiotic relationship between people and land, making a reduction in environmental impacts possible. The management plan for a OPD, therefore, describes both the nature of development and the way of life that will be pursued in association with that development.

OPD is a unique application. Therefore, to ensure that this application has been thoroughly examined, Monmouthshire County Council commissioned an OPD specialist, TerraPermaGeo (TPG), to conduct an independent appraisal of this application, reviewing the applicants' Management Plan (MP) and additional information provided by the applicants.

There are a number of issues that apply directly to the consideration of this OPD and these are addressed in turn. The broader planning issues are addressed below this.

6.1.1 Minimum Needs and Land-based Activity

Planning Policy Wales PPW introduces the notion of provision of minimum needs for income, food, energy and waste assimilation:

A OPD located in the open countryside should provide for the minimum needs of the inhabitants in terms of income, food, energy and waste assimilation over a period of no more than five years from the commencement of work on the site. TAN6 repeats the requirement in PPW and then also requires that inhabitants' requirements in terms of income, food, energy and waste assimilation

can be obtained directly from the site, and land use activities proposed must be capable of supporting the needs of the occupants.

The independent OPD assessor advised that the matter of minimum needs is an important and complex part of OPD projects. There is ambiguity in the OPD Practice Guidance and variation in the handling of this matter in OPD Management Plans and appeal decisions. However, the OPD guidance recognises that it is not feasible for all the food needs of the occupants to be produced on sites in Wales but expects that realistically a OPD site should be able to produce at least 65% of basic food needs, either grown or reared on the site, or purchased or bartered using income or surplus from other produce grown or reared on the site. Also, from their 10 years of experience of working on OPD projects, across a sample of nine OPD Management Plans that the assessor has been involved with, it is noted that although the minimum requirement is for 30% of food to be directly grown and reared on site the average figure is actually 54%. This indicates that in any case there is a strong incentive to grow more food than the Guidance requires. Additional food being bought averaged 32% of the Ecological Footprint, showing that food is a major part of Footprint and so a very effective way to reduce this is to grow food on site. Also, all nine cases would have been able to provide enough income to meet the 100% interpretation even though some adopted the 65% interpretation. On-site income sources are favoured, probably because of the focus on the site OPD requires.

The other minimum needs which require funding from the productive capacity of the site are clothes, travel, IT / communications and Council Tax. The applicants have laid out the items that comprise their minimum financial needs are estimated as £4,612. Alcoholic drinks and eating out do not form part of the minimum food needs as they are luxury items. The applicants have also made allowance for the costs of feeds required for their domestic animals, which will require supplementary feeding. In addition to the domestic production the applicants plan to have a commercial chicken egg venture and to produce a small number of pigs for sale. The business plan was examined and concluded that under a plausible scenario the site should be able to generate an income exceeding the higher appraised minimum financial needs of the household. In addition, the total land-based income from the site including any ancillary income will exceed the £6,023 which would be required to meet all of the minimum financial needs laid out above and the remaining last 35% of food purchases, which is considered to be best practice for a robust management plan. They also confirmed that the financial minimum needs figure for the project once implemented will vary from year to year and be calculated from the information provided to the Local Planning Authority for monitoring purposes and compared to the income generated from the enterprise.

6.1.2 Minimum Food Needs

There is a reasonable indication of the applicants' existing food needs in the ecological footprint analysis (EFA) data at first habitation. The figures stated in the EFA appear reasonable and plausible based upon comparison with Office of National Statistics average household spend on food categories and allowing for adjustments and considerations to account for differing diets and the quality of food purchased. The applicants have trialled vegetable growing on the site and shown a broad range of vegetable foodstuffs. The applicants will be producing a range of livestock for sale which will provide meat and eggs and incidental surpluses for domestic use. It is considered that the scale of the domestic horticultural system proposed would be capable of providing fruit and vegetables for a family of four based on the assessor's experience of similar systems and published data (WHO and DEFRA). The applicants have described their proposed systems for preserving foods through different times. According to the figures from the submitted EFA, the food purchase requirements of the household are likely to be around £1,410 in addition to the production on site. The value of food to be produced is estimated to be £2,951 (67% of total) which is acceptable.

6.1.3 Domestic Horticulture

The applicants' aim is to produce vegetables and fruit to meet their domestic need. They propose 250m² of outdoor beds and 134m² of sheltered cropping in two polytunnels and two lean to greenhouses. In addition to this, longer term there will be substantial areas of orchard and perennial crops and various other field crops and grains produced as part of the silvopasture system though much of this production will be beyond the first five years of the project. They have

not relied upon this perennial production to meet their needs in the first five years. It is accepted that yields vary across different systems and different crops and different crops contribute differently to overall nutrition. As a guide, sheltered cropping can often have higher yields than these averages. To conclude, the production proposed would, in all probability, have the potential to generate sufficient vegetables, herbs and fruit for the household. The applicants recognise that production is seasonal and yields can vary and crops fail and have described in depth how they will preserve and store foodstuffs to allow them to be used at times of lower production i.e. suitably stored unsold animal products in freezers such that sales can be spread through the year increasing the likelihood of maximising the income per animal.

6.1.4 Livestock and Poultry

Ducks will be used to assist with pests within the vegetable production and their eggs will contribute to the domestic diet. Chickens will be kept commercially for eggs and as birds are replaced they will be used as the main source of meat to feed the household. Pigs and sheep will also be kept as part of the business activities and to assist in managing the wider site and surplus pork and lamb would also be available occasionally to feed the household.

6.1.5 Other production

Honey bees will provide honey, wax and propolis. This will contribute towards the domestic food requirements. Although not as part of the food needs contribution, experimental small-scale oats growing will take place within the agro-forestry system, principally to provide additional feeds for the animals.

6.1.6 The Business Plan

The principal income-generating activity proposed from this site is producing animal products from a silvopasture agroforestry system and willow products including adding value to willow from the site by basketry. A silvocultural agroforestry system if well implemented this system will produce increased incomes and better livestock yields over time. The income streams will be sheep, chicken eggs, pork and willow products. Further income streams will be generated by courses based upon sharing the experience of the land management systems on the site; the suggested figures have been analysed i.e. the worst and mid case scenarios for their projections. It is considered that due to the mixture of activities proposed which gives greater resilience to the overall income as many income strands would have to fail simultaneously to make this project unsound. The expert assessor concludes that based on the land-based enterprises proposed, it can plausibly support their minimum financial needs and that it is likely that the income from all activities will exceed this.

6.1.7 Markets and Market Research

Produce is intended to be sold through a range of routes. The applicants intend to start with a stall at local farmer's markets and will practice innovative sales techniques like selling meat vouchers to pre sell meat looking to minimise costs of sales. The sales projections are supported by a survey which the applicants have circulated to local sustainability groups and people who have expressed an interest in the project as well as their 'Farming Connect' mentor who has run a similar business for fifteen years. Also, by partnering with a nearby Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to facilitate an offering of meat and eggs alongside its core vegetable box deliveries and they aim to develop a network of shops which they can sell eggs to. These are as yet aspirational routes to market but demonstrate that the applicants are seeking to add diversity into their markets for increased resilience.

CSA, referred to earlier, is a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared. In addition, the applicant is working with other small local producers and One Planet Developments to create a local 'Our Food' network which will provide both an opportunity for low waste local food purchases for the household and a path to reach other local people to buy the produce from the OPD. This aspect has the support from the project manager for the 'Our Food' project which is supported by MCC, the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Welsh Government and the Conservation Farming Trust attests to the local demand for food from small scale local producers. It is considered that the applicants have reasonably explored the potential for marketing their animal products. Therefore, the projections are considered to be plausible.

Different varieties of willow will be planted on the site and the withies harvested from these will be used to make basketry and other willow products by year five. The applicants have training in weaving but have no record of production to base sales predictions on. Willow products will be sold through craft fairs and online. Independent research shows that the sales volumes and likely prices could be achieved. Further income streams will be generated by educational courses based upon sharing the experience of the land management systems on the site and teaching weaving, linked to the willow production. The assessors have the experience of dealing with other OPD projects and have confirmed that there is a demand for this sort of hands-on training based on the lived experiences of OPD practitioners.

6.1.8 Requirement for Occupants

The essential criterion for occupants is that: The number of occupants is directly related to the ability of the site to support their minimum food and income needs and the number of people needed to run the site effectively. This is a single household proposal. The minimum needs appraisal and business planning suggests that the plot is of sufficient size to support both the domestic production and the requirements of the OPD business proposed. The applicants state their intention to start a family and this has been considered this within their assessment of the OPD. The Council's independent assessor has concluded that the labour input to successfully manage this project will be in excess of one person's full-time input. The criterion is therefore satisfied.

6.1.9 Sole Residence

The applicants confirm that the site will be their sole residence. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

6.1.10 Habitats

In tandem with living mainly from the land it is also required that the OPD should conserve, and wherever possible, enhance the local environment. This includes biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape.

Overall, the conservation and enhancement of habitats has been addressed in the Management Plan and in the preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) report. The PEA report produced by Aderyn Ecology states that,

'There will be no loss of priority habitats due to the proposed development.

There are no predicted negative impacts on any protected or priority species, and further species surveys prior to the proposed construction are not considered necessary. There are no predicted negative impacts on nearby SSSI/ SAC sites. There is no predicted risk of harm or injury to nesting birds during construction. It is predicted that the overall biodiversity of this site will be increased in the long term, with benefits to a wide range of species groups including breeding birds, pollinating insects, amphibians, hazel dormouse, bats and plants.'

Appropriately worded conditions will be imposed to safeguard foraging/commuting habitat of Species of Conservation Concern. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

6.1.11 Landscape

A OPD is expected to have a positive landscape impact. The applicants have submitted an informal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment document accompanying the Management Plan. The LVIA was prepared by the applicant but noted that it was approved by Bronwen Thomas a registered landscape architect. The Council's Landscape Officer finds the development proposal acceptable subject to further information i.e. additional clarification around the specifics of the proposals and longer term maintenance, which can be secured via appropriately worded conditions. The assessor considered that the LVIA provides suitable photographs of views into the site from key viewpoints which form the baseline information for future assessments of landscape impact – these were assessed on site and would broadly concur with this assessment. Also, it is noted that the traditional features such as hedges and woodlands and veteran trees will be conserved and the existing dew ponds will be restored. A 300m of native hedgerow has been created in 2020 and lines of trees will be introduced following the contours of the land creating a wood pasture which will include orchard trees. The planting is laid out within the LVIA and will

have the effect of introducing what will appear to be an increased area of woodland across much of the site. A mosaic of woodland and pasture is the characteristic of the local area.

It is acknowledged that part of the site is visible from the wider area, the proposed buildings i.e. the dwelling house, the workshop, the cruck barn, the greenhouse, the polytunnels and the root cellar have been located where they are screened from most views, and they will be cut into the slope to minimise their impact. For OPD, the essential criteria for landscape are: the landscape of the site is enhanced by the addition and traditional management of characteristic or once characteristic local landscape features that, amongst other things, may be used to screen and filter views to built elements of the proposals and to provide shelter and screening to horticultural areas. Buildings and other structures and access tracks are located where they can be recessed into the landscape and do not stand out in views from public vantage points. Therefore, these criteria are considered to be satisfied.

6.1.12 Cultural Heritage

To the north of the site (some 300m), there is the Old Trecastle Farmhouse (a listed building) and the Trecastle Motte and Bailey (a scheduled monument). There are nine other Listed Buildings within 1500m of the site. However, due to topography all of these assets have no direct interaction with the site. Also, there are no historic assets identified directly in relation to the proposed development, nor within the site. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

6.1.13 Energy

It is an essential characteristic of a OPD that use of energy and water is minimised, and that renewable sources are used. The applicant proposes to build a dwelling that complies with Building Regulations. The applicant has not presented a SAP calculation for their proposed home. They make an assessment of energy need based upon the performance of a 130 m² A-rated house under the Irish Building Energy Rating system. The rating system covers energy use for space heating, water heating, ventilation and lighting. However this assessment is based upon the assumption that the building will be constructed to this level of efficiency and does not provide proof that the design proposed will do so. It is intended that the dwelling will meet Building Regulations and having reviewed the existing mature woodland on the site, along with additional planting of trees by the applicants in relation to the OPD, it is plausible for the site to provide sufficient firewood to meet the heating and hot water energy needs of the applicants. The barn and workshop will have their own independent small PV systems for lighting and charging and they have allowed for additional chest freezer space for the storage of farm produce prior to sale.

A 4.5 kW PV array is proposed. The European Commission's Photovoltaic Geographical Information System off grid PV simulation tool has been used to demonstrate the performance of the array through the year. The simulation shows that the array should generate adequate energy. The applicants have provided a simple assessment of the energy needs for agricultural equipment that will require to be met with fossil fuels. They also note that they will utilise battery powered tools where possible and reclaimed vegetable oil will make up a proportion of the fuel use for the site vehicle. The essential criteria for energy are that: the energy needs of the site will be minimised through suitable design and use of technology, including that which enables re-use. All the energy needs of all activities shall be met from sources of renewable energy on site, with the exception of small amounts of non-renewable fuel for particular uses for which they are best suited and justifiable.

It is considered that the information provided demonstrates that this criterion is satisfied.

6.1.14 Water

The essential criteria for water are that: The water needs of the site will be minimised through suitable design and use of technology, including that which enables re-use. Rainwater harvesting from buildings and structures must be maximised. All of the water needs of all activities should be met from water available on site, unless there is a more environmentally sustainable alternative. Abstraction from water bodies (including groundwater sources) must be at levels that do not cause environmental harm. Harm would result from the lowering of surface and ground water levels.

Water is available at the site as it is bounded by two streams. However, to minimise water needs, roof water will be collected from the roof of the barn and channelled to a 10,000 litre harvesting

tank for storage for the OPD. The submission includes good assessments of the demand for water against the likely rainfall and the storage available to ensure there will be sufficient supply. The assessor agrees that there is sufficient rainfall to potentially supply the water needs of all activities on the site, provided that sufficient storage is in place. The submitted Management Plan shows how sufficient storage will be provided and is considered to be realistic. These criteria are therefore satisfied.

6.1.15 Waste

It is required that a OPD assimilates its wastes on site in sustainable ways, unless they are small amounts of unavoidable non-biodegradable and hazardous wastes. The essential criteria for waste are that: All biodegradable waste produced on site is assimilated on site in environmentally sustainable ways. The only exception to this is occasional off-site disposal of small non-biodegradable amounts of waste, which cannot be assimilated on site which arise from things used on site wearing out or breaking irreparably. All waste handling and assimilation on site must comply with Environment Agency (in Wales - Natural Resources Wales) guidelines.

The applicants would repair and reuse damaged items. All these practices reduce the wastes to be managed to a minimum. All organic business waste, domestic food waste and human waste are all able to be processed on site via a number of composting systems. Human waste will be composted in a purpose unit which will separate urine from faeces and meet the criteria for an acceptable system under the current NRW position statement on composting toilets. Wastes not able to be dealt with on site, will, if appropriate, enter the local municipal recycling and disposal stream. The monitoring section of the Management Plan states that they will report on whether all waste handling and assimilation on site has complied with NRW guidelines. Given the above, the criteria are satisfied.

6.1.16 Zero Carbon Buildings

The applicant has followed the approach set out in the Guidance by demonstrating that the dwelling will meet the requirement of zero carbon in construction as described by the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH), Category 3, which examines the materials utilised for five key building elements; roofs, external walls, internal walls, floors and windows. The applicants have submitted a CfSH Materials Report prepared by Sureline Design Services which demonstrates that the proposed dwelling meets this requirement. A preliminary SAP assessment has been submitted detailing the energy demand of the building and demonstrating the predicted CO₂ emissions are negative demonstrating the proposals will be zero carbon in use. The proposed dwelling will require Building Regulations approval prior to commencement.

There are seven ancillary buildings proposed. These small buildings would be agricultural or be constructed from locally sourced and reclaimed materials and all except the workshop, which is constructed with similar materials to the house, will be unheated. These are considered to meet the zero-carbon requirement of policy. The essential criterion for 'zero-carbon' in construction and use is that: domestic and ancillary buildings will be 'zero carbon' in construction and use, as explained in this guidance and using the up to date Welsh definition of zero carbon. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

It is acknowledged that the applicants intend to construct the dwelling, workshop and barn with reclaimed roof materials, flues, windows and doors and therefore the exact appearance of these structures may vary from that presented in the application drawings. They have requested that a condition be drafted to allow for this variation. This thrust of this development is to provide a building that is natural and rustic in appearance; it is understood that the buildings will be built by the applicant, who is not a professional builder. A modest deviation from the drawings can be accepted in this instance.

6.1.17 Capable of Removal with Low Environmental Impacts

The essential criterion for buildings being capable of removal with low environmental impacts is that: all structures identified for removal in the Exit Strategy are capable of removal with low environmental impact. Every OPD has to have an acceptable exit strategy where all structures identified for removal in the Exit Strategy are capable of removal with low environmental impact. The applicant proposes that all the structures including the house could remain on the site and be

reused as agricultural buildings subject to the agreement of the Local Planning Authority. To facilitate this all domestic fittings would be removed and internal walls would be removed as required. The applicants have presented a sketch drawing demonstrating how this would be achieved. If the re-use on site is not agreed by the LPA the applicants also lay out how the structure can be removed either to be re-used as a building elsewhere or with various materials being made available for re-use. Paragraph 5.13 of the Guidance states that... new agricultural buildings and tracks may benefit the land if restored to its previous use and therefore may be suitable for retention. Thus, this criterion is therefore satisfied.

6.1.18 Community Impact

OPD in the open countryside should not impact negatively on neighbouring communities. Positive impacts should be encouraged and negative impacts mitigated. The applicant will provide ethical low carbon food and products (which is different from products that are currently being sold by the nearby farm businesses and shops) to the local community and support the local economy as producers and consumers. They intend to work cooperatively with other local producers via the "Our Food network". The applicant has already engaged with the Action on Climate Emergency Monmouth working group and helped organise the Monmouth Climate Future Festival 2021. They will contribute to educational activities aimed at inspiring people to reduce their impacts to address carbon reductions. They are also contributing to the Monmouth Green Spaces group. Also, they plan to offer one free annual event to the local community on the OPD project and work with local schools and organisations such as the brownies. The applicant intends to assist in Research, information gathering and sharing as One Planet living and many of the agricultural techniques proposed to be used on this OPD are areas of active research within the scientific and agricultural community. Therefore, this criterion is satisfied.

6.1.19 Transport

A simple Transport Assessment and Travel Plan is submitted for consideration, it gives the detail of the calculation of journey numbers and an indication of the breakdown of journey types anticipated. In addition, a 'trips calculation' spreadsheet for the appraisal shows modal split and details of sharing, and includes an assessment of the mileage likely under each trip. The OPD assessor acknowledges that it is not a formal independent assessment but it is transparent. The essential criteria for transport are that: the management plan must be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan (which may be combined).

Overall the development should achieve a significant reduction in transport impacts from all activities on site (residents, enterprises and visitors) in comparison to what would be the 'norm' for such activities. There should be detailed monitoring of all trips to and from the site in terms of purposes, distances, modes, and any transport sharing. Also, the guidance states: There should be detailed monitoring of all trips to and from the site in terms of purposes, distances, modes, and any transport sharing. It is noted that car travel by the applicants for both domestic and business purposes is estimated to be a maximum of 7,027 miles (2,342 miles per capita for the predicted family of three) per year. This information is compared to various sources such as the DfT statistics 2019 state that residents of rural town fringes travelled an average of 7,353 miles each per year by car as drivers and passengers. Nationally registered cars travelled an average of 7,400 miles per year per vehicle in 2019. This compares to the ONS average reported mileage per year in Wales (2016) of 4,044 miles driven per person, or residents of rural town fringes who travelled 4,863 miles per year per person in a car. Given the above, it is probable that the proposals will generate significantly lower than average transport Impacts.

The Management Plan states that there will be monitoring of trip numbers and mileage for the family's domestic travel. The applicant states that the monitoring statement will include travel to and from the site for all purposes including business and any visitors and include the distance travelled, modes and detail any car sharing. This criteria is therefore satisfied.

6.1.20 Ecological Footprint Analysis

The household has utilised the OPD EFA tool to examine their probable ecological footprint upon first habitation on the site. The OPD assessors utilised an updated version of the OPD EFA tool11 to analyse the figures provided by the applicants in their application. The applicants have included an allowance for the costs of animal feeds for the production of eggs for domestic use. The OPD

assessors advised that the current per capita Ecological Footprint of the household on first habitation to be 3.41 global hectares per person (gha). This is slightly lower than average for a UK household utilising this tool. The estimated footprint at year five is likely to be between 1.71 to 2.38 gha depending upon the growth of the family i.e. this has the effect of dividing the impacts of the household by the number of members in the household. The per capita impact would increase over time as the child gets older. The assessment was based on the OPD as a two-person household at year five but it is still likely to meet the target in the guidance. The OPD assessor advised that the submitted information appears to be fair and reasonable. Therefore, it is plausible the project will result in a per capita Ecological footprint of less than 2.4 gha as required. The accounting for other footprints also appears fair and reasonable. Impacts from social visitors, volunteers and impacts from the business activities have been identified. Business travel is considered and is low. The provision of local produce and products is a valid benefit. The criteria are therefore satisfied.

6.1.21 Implementation

A programme for implementing the OPD on the site is provided. It shows the OPD will be fully established' by year 5 with the buildings and infrastructure complete providing the applicants food needs from the site and generating sufficient income to meet the applicants' minimum financial needs. The requirements of the Guidance are therefore satisfied.

6.1.22 Monitoring

The Management Plan contains sufficient baseline data and information which should aid on-going monitoring. The outline time line for implementation of the project is sufficiently clear. Transport monitoring will meet the criteria laid out in the OPD practice guidance. This will include the distance (mileage) travelled for domestic and business travel for any vehicles including public transport. The monitoring form shows that the purchases of any foods not produced on the site will be recorded which in conjunction with the expenditure figures presented in the EFA will enable a calculation of the minimum financial needs of the household to be assessed. The monitoring proposed is considered satisfactory.

6.1.23 Exit Strategy

Non-fulfilment of one or more of the essential characteristics of OPD the open countryside (par.1.9 of the Practice Guidance) over a period of two years without instituting clear and effective measures to address the identified problems would constitute a 'failure of the site as a whole'. In this scenario the exit strategy would be enacted. The submitted exit strategy is clear. Details of how the dwelling could be removed is provided. The applicants undertake to remove the dwelling structure if a suitable alternative use for it cannot be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Agricultural buildings would remain on the site for re-use. The OPD assessor has advised that the site would be in better condition than before the development in that the site would be likely to contain increased tree cover with restored ponds. Access will also have been improved. Therefore, the exit strategy is in line with the Guidance and is considered acceptable.

6. 2 Design

The buildings have been grouped together on the site as advised in planning policy, and functionally linked. The site is surrounded by planting and coppicing that is to be maintained in accordance with the submitted Management Plan, as well as delivering a yield required for the OPD this also softens the development enabling it to assimilate into the local landscape. This will be complemented by additional landscaping secured by conditions as advised by MCC's Landscape and Green Infrastructure Officer. The form and design of the buildings are simple and functional, reflecting the need to meet the OPD carbon objectives, and would be built with sustainable natural materials that result in a bespoke appearance. It is acknowledged that this site is partly visible within the local landscape and vantage points but the resulting visual impact upon this part of the open countryside is considered small, a view that was shared by the both the Council's Landscape and Green Infrastructure Officer and the independent OPD assessor. It is considered that the development is a clear reflection of good sustainable design and complies with planning policy i.e. LDP policies DES1, LC1 and LC5.

6.3 Green Infrastructure and landscape

The Council's Landscape and Green Infrastructure Officer has no objection to the application subject to suitably worded conditions being imposed. It is considered that the site would be in better condition than before the development as the site would be likely to contain increased tree cover, restored ponds and access will have been improved. Therefore, LDP Policy G1 is satisfied.

6.4 Energy

This element has been assessed in full detail as it is an intrinsic requirement of a OPD. The assessment has demonstrated that it is land-based and can provide for the minimum needs of residents in terms of food, income, energy and waste assimilation in no more than five years. It has also demonstrated that there is clear potential to move to 1.88 global hectares per person over time, which is the Ecological Footprint Analysis benchmarks for all OPD.

6.5 Historic Environment

The site is not within a Conservation Area or the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are no historic assets identified directly in relation to the proposed development, nor within the site. It is acknowledged that there are historic sites nearby i.e. some 300m away but these (or their setting) would not be harmed by the proposed OPD.

6.6 Biodiversity

NRW have concluded there is no likely adverse effect on the SAC as a result of the proposed works and the OPD would provide biodiversity net gain. Appropriately worded conditions are proposed i.e. a construction environmental management plan and lighting, to be agreed. Therefore, the proposal complies with relevant planning policy (LDP Policy NE1).

6.7 Impact on Amenity

There are no neighbouring properties within close proximity of the site. Therefore, no significant impact on amenity is anticipated.

6.8 Highways

There is no objection from the Council's Highways Department. They acknowledged that the site is off a small rural road at the national speed limit, however vehicle speeds will be lower due to the conditions and layout of the road. Whilst there will be a slight increase in vehicle movements to and from the application site it is accepted that the local highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic flows from the development. In addition, due to the nature of the development the traffic generated is very likely to fall outside peak time AM and PM traffic flows, and therefore the proposal is not considered to have any detrimental impact on highway safety.

The Highways Department had highlighted that the current surface by the access point is not preventing debris from entering the public highway. Although it is not objectionable, they would like to see a scheme that would overcome the concerns. The access is shared with the owners of the adjacent fields. The applicant has liaised with the adjoining farmer and it is proposed to extend the area of permeable 'Ecogrid' surfacing to the north of the entrance point, which is acceptable.

There are neighbour concerns over the lack of visibility at the access. The applicant has confirmed that a private agreement is in place between themselves and the adjoining land owner that the applicant can trim the hedgerow and vegetation close to the shared accessway at the entrance to allow visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the shared accessway to be improved as required.

6.9 Planning Obligations

This is an OPD application; it is unique and is tailored specifically for the applicants. Therefore, a legal agreement is required prior to issuing a planning decision, ensuring that the dwelling shall at all times be the sole residence of the applicants in relation to this OPD application.

6.10 A response to objections

The objections and/or the concerns received from the consultation have been addressed in the relevant sections this report. Below are further clarifications of the objections/concerns raised.

Access and visibility – the initial concerns raised by Highways have subsequently been addressed; the applicant shares the current access with the farmer who owns the adjoining fields. The applicant was not responsible for the mud that was being brought into the highway from the shared accessway as the access is shared with a working farm. However, it is in the interests of the applicant and the neighbouring farmer to minimise debris entering the highway, and the applicant has agreed to extend the area of permeable 'Ecogrid' surfacing to the north of the entrance point, which is accepted by the Council's Highways Department.

Hedge and visibility – a private agreement is in place between the applicant and the adjoining land owner that the applicant is able to trim the hedgerow and vegetation close to the shared accessway at the entrance to allow visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the shared accessway to be improved as required. This agreement to trim the hedgerow benefits both the applicant and the owner of the hedge with whom the accessway is shared. However, this agreement to trim the hedgerow is not the only way to improve visibility. The owner of the hedge has a duty to maintain the hedgerow for the safety of traffic. Also, there is no objection from the Council's Highways Department in relation to the (lack of) visibility at the access.

Traffic movements increased - the OPD application includes provision in the calculations for the two applicants starting a family. The applicant's assessment considers all travel to and from the site including guests. The OPD application makes no provision for extended family living on site, and this is not the intention of the applicants. This element was also assessed by the Council's Highways Department and they advised that whilst there will be a slight increase in vehicle movements to and from the application site it is accepted that the local highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic flows from the development.

Visibility of the development – The OPD practice guidance does not state that 'the site should not be visible', it states that dwellings and structures should 'not stand out in views from public vantage points'. The fact that the site is visible, per se, from the wider landscape is not a basis on which to refuse the proposal. The submitted LVIA was produced by the applicant but was independently assessed i.e. by the Council's Landscape and GI Officer and by the OPD assessor, and the conclusion is that the proposal is acceptable in landscape terms.

Trees - The trees on site were assessed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal/ Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken by Aderyn Ecology Ltd. MCC's Ecologist conducted a site visit and confirmed that the level of survey and assessment (by Aderyn Ecology Ltd) is considered proportionate to the nature and scale of the application and that there is no objection to the proposed development, subject to planning conditions. The most significant areas of established trees are on the banks of the streams. The streams define some of the boundaries of the application site and trees on the opposite banks belong to a local farmer. The applicant has specified that the trees for which they are responsible will be responsibly managed, preserving screening value and biodiversity benefits. Significant numbers of new trees will be planted as part of the proposal and their management will be agreed with MCC in the Green Infrastructure Management Plan (GI MP); this will form part of the condition. There is no legal agreement in place regarding neighbouring farmers cutting trees on their own property, and no indication that such an agreement is required. The GI MP will safeguard the visual integrity of the tree lined boundary in the event the neighbour does cut trees in the future.

Business stress testing – this application has been independently stress-tested, under a range of scenarios, by a specialist firm, who have significant working experience in the OPD sector. The OPD practice guidance (3.29) explains that the Management Plan should contain 'projections of the anticipated income'. It is neither stated nor implied that applicants should already be running the land-based activities. The OPD practice guidance does not stipulate that the land-based business must be the main/sole income of the residents. The independent OPD assessor has considered product pricing and the marketing strategy and has no concerns about the approach proposed.

Agricultural track not suitable for a commercial or residential use – the proposals will utilise an existing agricultural track (previously approved) and there is no objection from the Council's Highways Department.

Location of sales – The applicants will be selling at farmers markets, shops, working collaboratively with local CSAs to share delivery routes and finding alternative markets through the Sustainable Food Places partnership. It contains no plans to sell by the roadside or have a shop on site.

SuDS – the Lead Local Flood Authority and SuDS Approval Body were consulted on the application. They have specified no objection to the proposed development. The proposal will require SuDS approval. The applicant is aware of the SuDS requirements and this is a separate process from that of a planning application. The applicant is aware that they will require a SAB consent before construction of any of the proposed structures begin.

Minimum needs of the OPD – The minimum needs have been assessed by the independent OPD assessor who confirms that the income derived from purely land-based businesses, based on the productive capacity of the land, is likely to exceed the minimum income needs of the applicant.

Mitigation of negative impacts on neighbouring communities – If the OPD did not go ahead the land would likely continue to produce animal products for sale, so it is not reasonable to assume that all business enterprises on the land represent new competition with existing businesses. Selling food and other produce locally is a contributory criterion of the OPD policy. The OPD policy does not prohibit creating similar products as local businesses, but does warn that direct competition may create a negative impact that should be mitigated. The scale of this OPD is small when compared to Square Farm, which has around 180 acres (13 times the size of the proposed OPD). Humble by Nature runs around 40 different course types plus weddings, holiday accommodation and an on-site restaurant. The £4,612 that the applicants are required to make through land-based businesses to cover the OPD minimum needs criteria is considered to be very small in the context of the turnover of these larger companies. Also, the agro-forestry based sheep, egg and pig rearing will provide the community with specialist product choices that contribute to carbon sequestration, enhancing biodiversity and promoting low impact living. There are fundamental differences between these products and the pork, eggs and lamb typically available locally. The project manager for Our Food has written a letter of support for the project and does not express concerns about negative impacts on existing businesses. It should be noted that the requirement for the applicant to meet the modest income requirements of the policy from land-based business (£4,612) is applicable five years after first habitation on the site. The economic situation of local businesses at that time is likely to be different from current circumstances. Furthermore, the OPD assessor advised that the essential criteria for community impacts for OPD are satisfied.

Sole residence – The applicant's extended family does not plan to live on site. The applicant has explicitly confirmed that the site will be their sole residence and a legal agreement will be in place to ensure this. Also, owning other properties/assets does not prevent the submission of the OPD. However, the applicant has advised that their boat is currently being advertised for sale.

Part time work – The OPD practice guidance does not state that the main income should come from the land. The OPD practice guidance does not restrict additional forms of work if they can be sustained while meeting the Ecological Footprint Calculation and other requirements of the policy. Therefore the applicant's employment is not relevant to determination of the application. The applicant has demonstrated that through careful management, the transport criterion of the OPD policy can be more than satisfied, even if part time work in Bristol is undertaken.

Travel – Using multiple modes of transport for a single journey is a standard way of maximising the use of public transport for rural residents. For instance, using a bike or car to reach a train station for onward travel is likely to have a lower transport impact than making a longer trip solely by car. The OPD practice guidance requires the residents to achieve a significant reduction in transport impacts from the average. The OPD assessor advised that this OPD is likely to generate 55% of the average number of car trips.

Uplift/overage – the applicant advised that MCC will not benefit financially from approving the OPD by means of an overage.

Section 106 for local community benefits – this is a OPD for a single household, and wider community benefits via a s106 agreement would not be required.

Major development consultation – this is a OPD for a single household dwelling (and related farm buildings) and not a major development.

Materials on site – The application includes appropriate provision for storage in the barn and workshop. It is unreasonable to assume that the site will get progressively worse once the applicant starts farming. The site will be opened to visitors and it is in the applicant's interest to keep the site tidy.

Soil testing – Soil test data and land classification information are provided in the baseline section of the Management Plan, and the OPD assessor advised that the information provided in the baseline section is of sufficient depth and quality and has expressed no concerns that the land was incompatible with the management proposed. Also, according to the Agricultural land classification: predictive map, the land in question is identified as grade 2, which is defined as good quality agricultural land.

Water – The water section of the management plan p181-191, provides significant detail regarding the applicant's intentions of water capture, storage and use. It is intended for the applicant to meet all their household water requirements through rainwater harvesting. Harvesting rainwater will meet the needs of all activities on site, including irrigation.

Chicken/phosphate – NRW have been consulted on the proposals and they have no objection and confirmed that they are satisfied that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the River Usk SAC.

Solar – the OPD assessor ran a simulation of the proposed PV system and has confirmed that it is adequate to serve the proposals.

Monitoring/Exit Strategy – this is considered in par. 6.1.23 above.

Ecological assessment – NRW have been consulted on the proposals and have reviewed the Ecology Report by Aderyn Ecology, confirming they have no adverse comments to make on the proposals. This application was also assessed by the Council's Ecologist who also has no objection. Relevant conditions will be imposed accordingly.

Tied to the land – The proposed dwelling would be tied to the land via a legal agreement.

Precedent – The Welsh Assembly Government has created the OPD policy with the objective of adhering to global sustainable development targets. The OPD policy aims to encourage individuals, families and co-operatives alike to create residential developments that are either low impact, or do not significantly degrade the environment. Such developments are required to meet 65% of the residents' basic needs from the land within the first five years, including income, energy and food. Each application will be treated on its own merits. Therefore, no precedent is set.

6.11 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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.

6.12 Conclusion

It has been concluded by the OPD assessor that the applicants can meet their minimum food needs from the site.

The proposals would, in all probability, produce the income that the applicant predicts, and that all of the essential criteria as set out in the Guidance are satisfied.

The proposals have no significant wider planning implications and subject to the imposition of relevant planning conditions are LDP policy compliant.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Subject to a Legal Agreement requiring the following:

S106 Heads of Terms

"The owner covenants to the Council

*That the Dwelling shall at all times be the sole residence of the person(s) in Occupation of the Dwelling.

*That the Dwelling shall at all times be tied to the Land for the intent and purpose that neither the Land or any buildings and or Dwelling situated thereon shall be Disposed of separately.

*That the Dwelling shall be Occupied only by the person(s) currently or last employed in the carrying out of agricultural, horticultural, forestry, woodcraft and / or other associated activities relating to the Development, and their household."

If the legal 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 Prior to the commencement of development full details of hard and soft landscape works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:

- o Detailed scaled plans, showing existing and proposed levels.
- o Proposed and existing utilities/services above and below ground.
- o Soft landscape details for planting shall include: means of protection, planting plan of new and existing, specifications including species, size, density and number, cultivation and other operations associated with planting and seeding establishment i.e. Hard landscaping detailing for surfaces, retention structures and access,
- o Minor artefacts and structures (e.g. Refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting).

REASON: In the interests of visual and landscape amenity; in accordance with Policies DES1 & LC1/5 of the Local Development Plan.

4 All soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and to a reasonable standard in accordance with the relevant recommendations of appropriate British Standards or other recognised Codes of Good Practice. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the timetable agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of species, size and

number as originally approved, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

REASON: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs and ensure the provision afforded by appropriate Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure LC5, DES 1, S13, and GI1 and NE1.

5 A schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of five years shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing and shall include details of the arrangements for its implementation. 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 building(s) 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 ensure the provision of amenity afforded by the proper maintenance of existing and / or new landscape features.

6 An appropriately scaled 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 as a stand alone document or as incorporated and identified within the OPD 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 including woodland, hedge and copse
- b. Green corridors including those within the site
- c. Grassland areas including mown grass, wildflower areas and understorey interfaces

b) Opportunities for enhancement to be incorporated

- a. Management of treed and planted boundaries for GI and biodiversity including interfaces with GI corridors connection the wider landscape

b. Maintain habitat connectivity through the site for species

c. Assessment of ash die back, opportunities for replacement planting and a programme for implementation

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 shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

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

7 No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- 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.

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. NOTE

See BS 42020:2013, Clause 10, for a comprehensive list of issues and activities that may be considered and included within a CEMP.

REASON: Safeguarding of protected and priority species during construction works LDP policy NE1 and the Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016.

8 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 plan which includes low level PIR lighting, provides detail of lighting type, positioning and specification, and ensures that roosting and foraging/commuting habitat for bats is protected from light spill, has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

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.

9 Prior to commencement of any construction works a detailed plan of proposed biodiversity enhancement illustrating "net benefit features" to include bat and bird roosting provision as detailed in "Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - For an OPD on Land at Trecastle Wood, by Aderyn Ecology dated August 2021" identifying location, positioning and specification shall be provided. The scheme shall provide for the future management and an implementation timetable and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only proceed in accordance with the approved plans and shall be retained as such thereafter.

REASON: To provide biodiversity net benefit and ensure compliance with PPW 11, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and LDP policy NE1.

10 The use of the site hereby approved shall operate in accordance with the aims, objectives and methodology set out in the Trecastle Wood One Planet Development Management Plan October 2021 and any successive Management Plan as approved by the Local Planning Authority including the phasing and monitoring requirements and exit strategy provisions should the One Planet Development objectives not be achieved.

REASON: This application is for a new dwelling in the open countryside, it is justified on the grounds that this is a One Planet Development, it is essential that this development is implemented in full compliance with this approved document in accordance with Technical Advice Note 6.

11 The occupation of this dwelling shall be limited to the person(s) identified in the Trecastle Wood One Planet Development Management Plan October 2021 and any successive Management Plan as approved by the Local Planning Authority as undertaking the land-based activities within the plot associated with that dwelling and to any resident dependants. The dwelling shall be the sole residence of its occupants.

REASON: This application is for a new dwelling in the open countryside, it is justified on the grounds that this is a One Planet Development, it is essential that the site is the sole residence of the applicant(s) in accordance with Technical Advice Note 6.

12 Not later than 1 April of each year, commencing 1 April following the initial occupation of the dwelling on the site, the occupiers of the site shall submit to the local planning authority an Annual Monitoring Report giving details of the activities carried out during the previous calendar year and setting out performance against the One Planet Development essential criteria for the plot and the site as a whole. Where the report identifies that adequate performance against any of the essential criteria has not been met, the report shall also set out corrective or mitigating measures sufficient to address the identified deficiencies in performance. These measures shall be implemented, in full and within the timescales stated, as set out in the report.

REASON: This application is for a new dwelling in the open countryside, it is justified on the grounds that this is a One Planet Development. This condition sets out the requirement for an Annual Monitoring report which is an essential requirement of One Planet Development in accordance with Technical Advice Note 6.

13 Samples of the proposed external finishes shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing before works commence and the development shall be carried out in accordance with those agreed finishes which shall remain in situ in perpetuity unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The samples shall be presented on site for the agreement of the Local Planning Authority and those approved shall be retained on site for the duration of the construction works.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory form of development takes place and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy DES1.

14 Before the approved development is first occupied the access shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plan.

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

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 Please note that Bats are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This protection includes bats and places used as bat roosts, whether a bat is present at the time or not. If bats are found during the course of works, all works must cease and Natural Resources Wales contacted immediately. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (0300 065 3000).

3 All birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The protection also covers their nests and eggs. To avoid breaking the law, do not carry out work on trees, hedgerows or buildings where birds are nesting. The nesting season for most birds is between March and September.

4 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust's record is not definitive in the area of the proposal and features may be disturbed during the course of the work. In this event, please contact the Trust on 01792 655208.

5 SAB - From the plans submitted the total construction area potentially above 100m² (building footprint, yard area, hardstanding and parking bays) then SAB approval will be required prior to any works commencing on site. Please attach the following SAB informative to the decision notice and draw the applicant's attention to this requirement.

SAB INFORMATIVE: Following the implementation of the Sustainable Drainage (Approval and Adoption) Order 2018 the applicant will require a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) designed in accordance with the Welsh Government Standards. The total construction area for this site appears to be in excess of the 100 m² threshold. Total construction area includes existing buildings that are being replaced, removed or patio/driveway areas. The SuDS scheme will require approval by the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) prior to any construction work commencing on site. It is recommended that the applicant approach the SAB for Pre App discussion prior to formal submissions to the LPA as the SAB process can affect site layout. Details and application forms can be found at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/sab>. The SAB is granted a period of at least seven weeks to determine applications. If for any reason you believe your works are exempt from the requirement for SAB approval, I would be grateful if you would inform us on SAB@monmouthshire.gov.uk so we can update our records accordingly.

6 Policy NE1 - Nature Conservation and Development seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of wildlife and landscape resources by appropriate building design, site layouts, landscaping techniques and choice of plant species.

BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction to provide further guidance on tree protection

Planning Policy Wales - Net Benefit for Biodiversity

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 11 sets out that "planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity" (para 6.4.5 refers). This policy and subsequent policies in Chapter 6 of PPW 11 respond to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Policy S17 - Place Making and Design

Development shall contribute to creating high quality, attractive and sustainable places. All development proposals must include and promote high quality, sustainable inclusive design which respects local distinctiveness, respects the character of the site and its surrounding in order to protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environments and to create attractive, safe and accessible places.

7 There is a small watercourse along the eastern boundary of the site. During the construction phase you should take any precaution to prevent contamination of surface water drains and local watercourses. Oils and chemicals should be stored in bunded areas and spill kits should be readily available in case of accidental spillages.

For further guidance please refer to GPP 5 and PPG 6 at the following link:

<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacementseries/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>