

DC/2013/00571

OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED, EXCEPT FOR ACCESS, FOR UP TO 200 DWELLINGS

LAND TO THE WEST OF A466 AND SOUTH OF MOUNTON ROAD, CHEPSTOW

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Case Officer: Kate Young

Date Registered: 25/07/13

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 This is an outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for residential development comprising up to 200 dwellings. The site, which measures approximately 10 ha, slopes down from the north-east corner towards the south-west; it has been designated as a Green Wedge. It appears that the land was once parkland as there is evidence of iron railings and stone walls throughout the site, but it is currently being used as agricultural land. On the northern boundary of the site is St Lawrence House, a Grade II Listed Building. A concept masterplan has been submitted with the application which shows a single vehicular access into the site from the A466 Wye Valley Link Road and includes offsite improvements to High Beech Roundabout. The indicative layout plan/ concept plan shows a large area of public open space to the west of the site and a small area to the north-east adjacent to the link road. There would be three play area (LAPs) included on the site. An attenuation area would be provided in the southern side of the site to provide for sustainable urban drainage.

1.2 An EIA screening opinion was carried out prior to the submission of the application which found that a full EIA was not required but that detailed studies were needed. The application had been advertised as being a departure to the UDP (as that was the extant plan at the time of submission) as it comprises new residential development outside of a designated development boundary.

1.3 The site is located on a Minerals Safeguarding Area and is adjacent to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

This was considered as an alternative site as part of the LDP Examination but was rejected at that time and the site was allocated as Green Wedge.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

- S1 Spatial Distribution of New housing Provision
- S2 Housing Provision
- S4 Affordable Housing Provision
- S5 Community and Recreation Facilities
- S7 Infrastructure Provision
- S12 Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk
- S13 Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment.
- S15 Minerals

S16 Transport
S17 Place Making and Design.

Development Management Policies

H1 Residential Development in Main Towns, Severnside Settlements
CRF2 Outdoor recreation/public Open space and Allotment Standards and Provision
LC4 Wye Valley AONB
LC5 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character
LC6 Green Wedges
NE1 Nature Conservation and Development
EP1 Amenity and Environmental Protection
M2 Minerals Safeguarding Areas
MV1 Proposed Development and Highway Considerations
MV2 Sustainable Transport Access
MV3 Public Rights of Way
DES1 General Design Considerations
SD2 Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency.
SD4 Sustainable Drainage

3.2 NATIONAL ADVICE

Planning Policy Wales Edition 9
Welsh Office Circulars 61/96

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultation Replies

Chepstow Town Council – Refuse

On a Greenfield site not designated for housing in the UDP
Blights the entrance to the AONB and the entrance to Chepstow
Scheme is of poor quality; no provision for the development or growth of the community
LAP is located in the wrong place, next to the A466
Affects the setting of St Lawrence House, which is listed.
Located on land that resembles parkland, around a Georgian Residence.
Reduces the Green Wedge separating Chepstow, Mouton and Pwllmeyric
Inadequate infrastructure in Chepstow i.e. hospitals, GP's, public transport and schools.
It will exacerbate traffic flow problems
There are other more suitable sites within Chepstow i.e. Fairfield Mabey

Shirenewton Community Council – Refuse

The A466 is the western edge of the Green Wedge between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric and should be retained. There are already serious delays and traffic issues at the St Lawrence roundabout at peak times and on race days. There needs to be a detailed transport assessment identifying highway improvements that would create acceptable traffic conditions. The impact on the Air Quality Management Area (nitrogen dioxide pollution) needs to be carefully assessed and the situation should not be exacerbated.

Mathern Community Council – Refuse

Chepstow is the Gateway to Wales
Detrimental visual impact for visitors to Wales and the Wye Valley
Increased traffic on St. Lawrence Roundabout
Impact on Air Quality Management Area on Hardwick Hill
Chepstow has had a huge increase in the amount of new dwellings
Inadequate infrastructure in Chepstow.

MCC Tree Officer- No objection.

The proposal has clearly been designed with a view to retaining the majority of trees on and around the site. The best trees on the site are mainly situated in the western section, which I am pleased to note has been designated as public open space. Many of the trees in this section are protected by tree preservation order (TPO) MCC 243; all of these, bar one are scheduled for retention. The tree constraints plan is accurate; tree categories allocated are appropriate and calculated root-areas have been established for all trees on the site. The report is thorough and the recommendations contained within it reflect good arboriculture practice. Recommendations for tree work are relatively minimal and, if implemented, would serve to preserve the good health, shape and long life of the trees concerned, and/or to address genuine safety concerns.

MCC Heritage Officer – Objects.

St Lawrence House is a Grade II Listed Building; it is a late 18th Century house retaining much of its character. The setting of St Lawrence House is extremely important to its character, which is defined by the land that is bounded by Mounton Road, the A466 and St Lawrence Lane. This importance is amplified by the fact that so many of the small country house estates have been encroached upon and developed, leaving only St Lawrence of this scale.

MCC Planning Policy

The site is located outside the Chepstow Town Development Boundary in an area considered as open countryside. Its development for a residential use would be contrary to Strategic Policy S1 of the LDP relating to the spatial distribution of new housing provision. The proposal is a departure from the adopted Local Development Plan and open countryside policies apply.

In relation to housing land supply Paragraph 6.2 of TAN1 states that 'Where the current study shows a land supply below the 5-year requirement or where the local planning authority has been unable to undertake a study, the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning applications provided that the development would otherwise comply with development plan and national planning policies'. In this respect the proposal does not comply with national and local planning policies with regard to green wedges and landscape impact which are discussed in further detail below.

In addition to this the shortfall in the Housing Land Supply is an issue that has been addressed in the LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) (September 2016). This is available on the Council's website and was formally endorsed for submission to the Welsh Government by Cabinet in October 2016. The AMR is recommending an early review of the LDP as a result of the need to address the shortfall in the Housing Land Supply and facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land. It also suggests that the adoption of a pragmatic approach to the determination of residential development sites will also assist in this context (as recognised in para 6.2 of TAN1). That is, where sites are a departure from the LDP but are otherwise acceptable in planning terms a recommendation for approval may be considered. In this respect any application would need to be assessed against the policies set out below. This site was put forward as an Alternative Site (ASN084) in the LDP process. It was concluded that there were compelling arguments regarding the adverse landscape impacts of the potential development of the site that made the proposal unacceptable. It was also noted that there was no guarantee that the necessary highways infrastructure improvements could be implemented to accommodate the development of the site. In addition, the LDP spatial strategy for Chepstow is based on the premise that the sustainability benefits of the existing brownfield sites adjacent to the town centre should be taken full advantage of, while at the same time protecting the sensitive landscape setting to the west of the town. This is in accordance with paragraph 4.4.9 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 9) which states that '...Previously developed (or brownfield) landshould, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites'.

Policy S4 relates to Affordable Housing Provision; as the site is located outside the Chepstow Town Development Boundary it is a departure from the LDP. The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance was adopted in March 2016 and contains a specific section relating to departure applications in the open countryside (Section 4.4 E). This states that there is a requirement for 35% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be affordable. The proposal relates to 190 dwellings, the affordable housing requirement would therefore be 67 units which is currently proposed. The planning statement in section 4.40 states it will provide 35% affordable housing however paragraph 5.6 and the DAS both state 'up to' 35%. Given that one of the stated justifications for this departure application is the opportunity to provide market and affordable dwellings to address the need for housing in the area, it is considered to be essential to be satisfied at this stage that the proposal is both deliverable and viable and can achieve an appropriate amount of affordable housing. It is suggested you contact Shirley Wiggam the Senior Strategy and Policy Officer for Housing in relation to the size and mix of the affordable units required.

Policy LC1 relates specifically to new built development in the open countryside, the policy contains a presumption against new build development although it does identify a number of exceptional circumstances involving new built development that might be permitted (subject to policies S10, RE3, RE4, RE5, RE6, T2 and T3). None of these exceptional circumstances apply and as a consequence the proposed development would be contrary to the policies contained in the Local Development Plan, most notably policies S1 and LC1.

In addition to this the site is located within an area designated as Green Wedge, Policy LC6 is subsequently of importance. Section 4.8 of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016, Edition 9) should also be considered in relation to development in Green Wedges. Paragraph 4.8.14 states 'when considering applications for planning permission in Green Belts or green wedges, a presumption against inappropriate development will apply'.

Strategic Policy S13 relating to Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment is of importance. The site is located in close proximity to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while Policy LC4 relates in the main to developments within the AONB it also states 'development proposals that area outside the AONB but would detract unacceptably from its setting will not be permitted'. Policy LC5 relating to the protection and enhancement of landscape character must also be considered, detailed comments from the Landscape team have been submitted in relation to this site and in response to the submitted LVIA . Additionally Policy GI1 should be referred to in relation to Green Infrastructure, the application does not include a masterplan, asset plan or opportunities plan; detailed comments from the GI team have been provided. Policy NE1 relating to Nature Conservation and Development must also be considered, it is noted a number of ecological surveys have been undertaken.

St Lawrence House a Grade II Listed Building is located within the site. As there is no specific local planning policy in relation to listed buildings it is important to ensure Policy DES1 in relation to General Design is considered along with Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) relating to Conserving the Historic Environment. Strategic Policy S17 relating to Place Making and Design should also be considered. Criterion i) of DES1 requires a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare in order to ensure the most efficient use of land. The net area of the site is not known, however it appears to be relatively high density.

Further to this while the proposal is not located within a designated Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity, it was assessed by Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) as part of the LDP process. GGAT found there to be a major restraint on the southern field and a fairly significant restraint on the rest of the site.

Policy EP1 relating to Amenity and Environmental Protection should also be considered.

Policy MV1 should be referred to with regard to access and car parking. Policy MV2 relating to highway considerations and sustainable transport access is also of relevance. Policy MV2 states that where deemed necessary financial requirements will be required towards improvements in transport infrastructure and services, in particular to support sustainable travel links / public transport, cycling and walking. This is a matter that will need to be considered in the planning obligation / heads of terms. It is noted a Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted and colleagues in the Highways section have commented in response to this.

Policy CRF2 should be considered relating to outdoor recreation/public open space/allotment standards and provision. The policy requires outdoor playing space at a standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population and 0.4 hectares of public open space per 1,000 population. It is noted that two areas of open space are included within the proposal and whilst the planning statement suggests it exceeds requirements the total hectareage is not known. It must be considered whether this meets the Council's basic space standard of 70 square metres per dwelling (as set out in the Recreation and Open Space Developer Contributions Charging Schedule) and whether the required mix is provided. The largest need relates to outdoor sport, of which 1.6ha should be provided per 1,000 population, it would need to be considered whether the requirement for this is being achieved within the public open space areas. If it is not then financial contributions may be needed in lieu of on-site provision of outdoor sport. The last paragraph of Policy CRF2 also states that any development exceeding 50 dwelling units per site, should make provision for allotments if required in accordance with the standards set out in the policy. Colleagues in the landscape/recreation team will no doubt provide comment in relation to these matters. Again, these are matters that will need to be considered in any planning obligation / heads of terms.

Policies SD2 and SD4 relating to Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Drainage respectively must also be considered. Policy S3, Strategic Housing Sites, requires that any detailed application for development shall include a feasibility assessment for suitable renewable energy and low or zero carbon technologies that could be incorporated into the development proposals. The application site is, obviously, not an allocated strategic site in the LDP but similar considerations would apply should planning permission be granted for the proposal.

The site is located in a minerals safeguarding area as designated in Policy M2. The application submission does not appear to have addressed the requirements of this policy, particularly criterion i) that 'the potential of the area for mineral extraction has been investigated and that it has been shown that such extraction would not be commercially viable now or in the future or that it would cause unacceptable harm to ecological or other interests'. There is no overriding need for the development as required by criterion iii). Criterion iv) is not applicable – the development is not infill or householder development within a built up area. Criterion ii) is complied with as there is a need to provide a buffer to protect existing residential dwellings in the locality from the impact of minerals working, as a consequence, minerals extraction would not be feasible, except on a very small portion of the site. The mineral, therefore, cannot be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place. Similarly, the location would not be suitable for mineral extraction in the longer term. The development, however, would sterilise land beyond the existing buffer zone site as the buffer zone itself would need adjusting to take account of any new housing on the site. M2, is not fully complied with, therefore, but this not considered to be a reason for refusal as the area left once buffers are provided to existing residential development would leave an isolated pocket of potential minerals extraction that would not appear to be feasible to develop from a technical or economic point of view. In addition, minerals extraction in this locality would likely be unacceptable from a landscape point of view, for similar reasons as the housing development itself, particularly as inappropriate development within a green wedge.

Section 5.6 of the Planning Statement sets out anticipated planning obligations in draft heads of terms. The Council is currently progressing the implementation of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). At present it is envisaged that CIL could be adopted in Summer 2017. If the planning application is successful and approved after the adoption of CIL then the development could be liable to the payment of a CIL charge, in this location the proposed CIL rate is £120 per square metre. Should planning permission be granted after the adoption of CIL then it is accepted that Section 106 contributions will need to be reconsidered.

MCC Housing Officer

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| Site: Mounton Road Chepstow | DC/2016/00571 |
| Evidence of Housing Need | There are 625 households on Monmouthshire's Common Housing Register waiting for a house in this area. |
| | The price of housing in Monmouthshire has risen to a level beyond that which many local people can afford. In 1999 the price of an average property in Monmouthshire was 4.6 times the average earnings of someone working in the County. This has now risen to over 9:1 times the average earnings (Source: Hometrack LQ Date 12/12/16). |
| Policy compliant percentage of affordable housing | 35% |
| Standard required | Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements (DQR) - a copy of this document can be obtained from the Welsh Government website. |
| DQR Website Link | http://gov.wales/desh/publications/housing/devquality/guide.pdf |
| Tenure of affordable housing | Neutral Tenure. This is where tenure of housing is not predetermined but can vary according to needs, means and preferences of households to whom it is offered. |
| Mix required (based on 64 units being 35% affordable) 2 person 1 bed flats 4 person 2 bed houses 5 person 3 bed houses 6 person 4 bed houses 3 person 2 bed bungalows | Number of units 12 (blocks of 4 walk-up) (4 designated OAP) 33 12 3 4 (OAP) |
| Price to be paid by RSL for affordable units | 42% of Welsh Government Acceptable Cost Guidance |
| ACG Figures for the Area 2p1b flat 4p2b house 5p3b house | Band 5 108,000 175,500 194,200 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6p4b house 3p2b bungalow | 226,000 174,700 |
| Affordable Housing SPG Link | http://gov.wales/desh/publications/housing/devquality/guide.pdf |

NRW - Drainage

The application site lies within Zone A, as defined by the Development Advice Map (DAM) referred to in Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (TAN15). TAN15 indicates that flooding is unlikely to constrain development in this zone. Our Flood Map information, which is updated on a quarterly basis, also confirms the site to be outside the flood zones. We have reviewed the Flood Consequences Assessment Level 2, produced by C&A Consulting Engineers Ltd, dated June 2013, Project No. 13-002, submitted in support of this application and comment as follows:

Surface water drainage from new development can, if not properly controlled, significantly increase the frequency and size of floods in drainage systems that receive the surface water drainage. Section 8 of the FCA considers Surface Water Management at the site and identifies a number of options for the management of surface water runoff using sustainable drainage techniques. However, we note that a detailed drainage design has not been submitted at the outline planning stage. We recommend that a strategic drainage scheme for the whole site be developed, not a piecemeal approach.

We recommend that the Local Planning Authority impose an appropriately worded condition in respect of surface water drainage, on any planning permission granted, to ensure that the surface water is assessed and dealt with appropriately.

A Preliminary Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application which demonstrates that the site has not previously been developed and therefore is unlikely to have been affected by contamination.

We support the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for new discharges. Where infiltration SuDS are to be used for surface run-off from roads, car parking and public or amenity areas, they should have a suitable series of treatment steps to prevent the pollution of groundwater. This is of particular relevance at this location as the site is underlain by Carboniferous Limestone which is classed as a Principal Aquifer.

NRW - Ecology

We have reconsidered the ecology report, Supplementary Information Notes: Further Dormice Mitigation and Enhancement Measures produced by EDP. We no longer have an objection provided a condition can be imposed to address the implications of the mitigation measures. Dormice are a European Protected Species. The development may only proceed under licence from NRW, having first satisfied the three tests. The LPA should take these tests into account when determining the application. We do not consider the development will result in a detriment to the favourable conservation status of the species.

MCC Landscape Officer

No type of development has been allocated for this site (MCC LDP 2011-2021). The site sits outside the settlement area of Chepstow. (LC1) The site sits within the green wedge between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric / Mathern (LC6). The site abuts The Wye Valley AONB (LC3). The site is situated within an area noted for its high quality landscape and picturesque qualities; noted characteristics are ancient woodland and long views over the Severn Estuary. LANDMAP evaluation scores of high. The area is also noted for a number of post medieval landscapes and gardens. Mounton House, of arts and craft style with designed gardens has significantly influenced the local landscape character and contributes towards

the area's strong sense of place. The pronounced topography and gateway location adds to the significance of this important landscape.

The Monmouthshire Landscape and Sensitivity Capacity Study indicated that this site is medium sensitivity & medium/low capacity for residential development... Due to the positive approach from the west, the intrinsic qualities of the pastoral landscape and the setting of St Lawrence House... Development should be confined to the eastern side of the site to avoid an adverse impact on the setting and view of St Lawrence House and the Wyelands Conservation Area to the south.

A fundamental element of the LDP Vision is to protect and enhance the distinctive character of Monmouthshire's countryside and environmental assets. To highlight the sensitivity and likely impacts of the proposal within the existing landscape and to inform and support the character of development, the applicant has submitted an LVIA. The findings from the LVIA question the Council's own assessment of both landscape character and of its sensitivity to development; these have been re-assessed by Simon White (on behalf of MCC). Simon White concluded that development should be rejected based on landscape and visual grounds.

Landscape and visual effects.

The site lies within LLCA C05 and more specifically CS/0214. The site is characterised by a gently indented hillside rising from south west to north east. The hillside is a significant 'green gap' between Chepstow and Mownton and Pwllmeyric. The north eastern section of the hillside provides an established landscape setting for St Lawrence House and established vegetation integrates the settlement edge into the landscape. Given the intrinsic quality of Monmouthshire's landscape, high priority is given to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the County's landscape character. EDP have argued that the adverse effects of development should not be an obstacle for development (LVIA 8.40). I feel that the obstacles for development on this site are the design and design process of the applicant's proposal. How has the development strategy been prioritised? This is a historic landscape with a strong sense of place. All development should be of high quality sustainable design and respect the local character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire's built, historic and natural environment. Development proposals should be driven by cultural, visual and landscape (sensitivity) constraints... Proposals for development should demonstrate how they enhance the character, through both inclusive planning and through the design process. The outcome should be a high standard of environment... integrated in to the landscape and allowed to permeate into the existing urban fabric.

The current scheme for 200 residential is inappropriate development. The development strategy (for 200 residential units) has not appraised fundamental issues in this sensitive area with noticeable cultural, landscape and visual constraints (and the design standards set out in our LDP). Any type of development in this area will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the historic, cultural, landscape and visual character of Chepstow and the surrounding settlements; and also of its landscape designation (Green wedge). There is a fundamental issue of respecting distinctiveness through place making and good design, this concept has not been addressed within the applicant's development strategy. It is my opinion that any form of development on this site can neither protect nor conserve the landscape character or landscape designation. It is therefore essential that proposals communicate (from a cultural, landscape and visual perspective) how development here can enhance the immediate and surrounding landscape character and the visual amenity of the site.

Other comments

Green Infrastructure (GI) Monmouthshire County Council have policies in place (specifically S13, LC5 and GI1) which require a different approach towards new development. Of

particular significance is the adoption of the Council's Green Infrastructure Policy which requires applications to be considered more holistically – it seeks to embrace a range of multidisciplinary aspects including landscape, biodiversity accessibility, health wellbeing , community engagement and climate change, through a coherent, resilient and connected network of high quality green and blue spaces.

We would expect a GI approach to be adopted, should this application be progressed. The applicant has not provided a Green Infrastructure Assets and Opportunities plan. I am unable to determine the extent of GI assets around the site and potential opportunities linked to them. To manage the application with policy GI1 we would also require a detailed plan showing how GI connectivity works through the various scales of their GI assets ...to include buildings; green roofs and walls; grey water collection; the curtilage of the unit/s. Access roads/car parking; surface treatments, managing surface run off, filtration.

2. Without the submission of site development sketches and plans, regarding buildings and the landscape assessment, it is difficult to properly manage the application.

3. We do not encourage mitigating the impact of development through the use of 'landscaping' - Softening views is not appropriate. Integrating the scheme into the landscape through good design is appropriate.

4. Topography is another major feature of the site. Existing and proposed levels have not been addressed within the application.

5. Other relevant policies: SD2/SD4/MV3/MV4

Additional information for your consideration.

It is our duty under The Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill to ensure the needs of future generations are taken into account; through the principles of sustainable development. If it is the duty of the LSB to provide appropriate and affordable housing and commercial units for business to thrive in, can we be sure that a long term, integrated, consultative and collaborative approach for this site has been employed? One way forward could be the production of a Neighbourhood-level integrated plan – managed by the applicant. The benefits of embracing a sustainable form of development to the applicant are improved (better) sales; better transport connections; reduced liability and costs – using SUDs; Planning for wildlife is good for marketing etc.

Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water - Our assessments have concluded that if the development can connect to specific points of the network we have identified adequate capacity exists. Conditions are requested if permission is granted.

Green Infrastructure, Countryside, Tourism, Leisure and Culture

Ecological Considerations

The application for the proposal is informed by the following ecological assessments:

Land at Mounon Road, Chepstow, Ecological Appraisal Report, ref C_EDP1518_12a (June 2013);

Land at Mounon Road, Chepstow, Ecological Survey Addendum Report, ref C_EDP1518_13a (January 2014); and

Land at Mounon Road, Chepstow, Supplementary Information Note: Further Dormouse Mitigation and Enhancement Measures, ref C_EDP1518_15a_130614_KH_jm (June 2014), all prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership

While the scheme submitted seeks to mitigate impacts upon priority species including Dormouse and several species of bat and nesting birds, I recommend that you give consideration to the wording of LDP policy NE1 Nature Conservation and Development. The policy states that mitigating and compensating impacts of development is only acceptable subject to the development satisfying criteria a) and b) as follows

- Development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse effect on a locally designated site of biodiversity ..., or on the continued viability of priority habitats and

species, as identified in the National or Local Biodiversity Action Plans, will only be permitted where:

- a) the need for the development clearly outweighs the nature conservation or geological importance of the site;
- b) it can be demonstrated that the development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.

Therefore please consider whether the planning argument is made that there is a need for the development and that other sites would not better provide residential development of this scale while presumably presenting a lower overall impact on biodiversity.

Beyond the above consideration, I find the design to be of a suitable quality with respect to biodiversity and the approach to protected species mitigation measures and compensation are generally well considered. In particular I welcome the scheme revisions to protect Dormouse habitat on site.

If you do consider the development meets the requirements of policy NE1 and are minded to approve the application, I would suggest recommend conditions are included with the decision.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – No objections; identifies conditions requesting a programme of archaeological works, the fencing off of the Roman road and interpretation boards.

Welsh Government Transport Division – we are yet to receive confirmation that the WG's holding direction has been removed and therefore this matter remains a reason for refusal at present.

MCC Highways - No objection, subject to conditions

Initial detailed comments are available to view on our website, however in response to those comments the applicant undertook a further analysis of the capacity constraints on the A466 Wye Valley Link Road (northern arm) of the High Beech Roundabout.

Highways comments 17/08/2015

Having considered the additional data it is noted that the analysis is solely reliant upon improvements to the A466/A48 High Beech Roundabout (Welsh Government Trunk Road) as detailed in The transport Assessment dated June 2013, Section 8.13 – 8.29 and Fig 8.1. Subject to delivery of those improvements we as Highway Authority we would offer no adverse comments regarding the suitability of the proposed means of access onto the A466 via a simple T junction and right turn ghost island. It is considered that development will not have a significant impact on the local network subject to the mitigation measures proposed on High Beech Roundabout being implemented prior to commencement of development. It is accepted that the proposed mitigation measures proposed on High Beech Roundabout are not in the control or remit of Monmouthshire Highways therefore the developer will be required to liaise with Welsh Government for its delivery.

MCC Transport policy – Final Weltag Report; 2011 Chepstow Station Interchange Study; 2013 Chepstow Station. In addition to the measures set out in Chapter 6 of the Framework Travel Plan, we would suggest that the development provides via a section 106 agreement a contribution to public and sustainable transport improvement to the site and key destinations in Chepstow, such as Chepstow Rail station. Based on the trip forecasts and proposed ratio between modes of transport, we would propose a contribution of a minimum of £1500 per dwelling to contribute towards improvements to the local bus network, and proposed improvements to Chepstow Rail station – namely increased car parking and bus interchange as set out in the 2011 Chepstow Rail Corridor Option Development and Appraisal: Park and

Ride Design Report and 2013 Chepstow Railway Station Park and Ride: Consultation Report.

MCC Public Rights Of Way – There are no public right of ways shown on the definitive map for this site.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

Objection letters received from 46 addresses.

Increase in traffic adding to existing problems
Geometry of High Beech roundabout needs to be improved.
Lack of information on the public meeting
Loss of greenfield site
Existing new housing sites in Chepstow are not selling
Entrance to Chepstow should be kept green
Bungalows would be less obtrusive.
This is a green wedge with the stated intension of preserving the countryside.
Green gateway to Wales
Overloading and damage to sewer pipe leading to flooding
Violation of the landscape bordering the approach to Chepstow
Damaging to the parkland setting of St Lawrence House and its touristic potential
Require an overall traffic strategy for Chepstow including a bypass
Too far from the town centre to expect people to walk
Greater pressure on local services
Chepstow cannot sustain such extra volume
Loss of views across the 'distinctive' landscape
Destruction of a significant visual resource
Need to protect the AONB and the 'Gateway to the Wye Valley'.
Insufficient shopping in the area especially in the supermarkets
No need for additional housing, housing targets have been met in the LDP
Fairfield Mabey is unlikely to fail to deliver and if it does there are other sites in Monmouthshire that could deliver the governments housing targets.
Views from the A466 leading to the Wye Valley would be severely compromised and destroyed
Traffic flows at High Beech roundabout would be further compromised if both this site and Fairfield Mabey goes ahead
Removal of green wedge between settlements.
There are other more suitable site around Chepstow.
Unacceptable harm to the character and appearance to the Gateway to Wales
Lack of school places in Chepstow
Roads around Chepstow are already at capacity and exhaust fumes exceed EU regulations on Hardwick Hill
Developers need to contribute to infrastructure development
The proposed site floods every winter
Loss of the character of St Lawrence Lane and Mounon Lane
Contrary to Development Plan policy to ensure no coalescence of settlements.
The historic value of the town should be preserved
The Traffic Survey submitted with the application is not far reaching enough.
Will lead to more speculative housing.
Will lead to greater flooding further down the hill.
No detailed information on parking.
The green fields should be maintained so that the heritage and tourist values of Chepstow can be sustained.

Development will destroy panoramic views of the Channel from Mounton Road and St. Lawrence Road.
Devalue property prices especially due to the amount of affordable housing.
An emergency access is not needed for 200 dwellings.
Road improvements will be an eyesore
Inadequate screening of the site. There may be Roman archaeology on the site.
Detract from the natural beauty of the area.
Exacerbate the flooding in Mounton.
Light pollution to Chepstow.
Development on the skyline.
The LDP is allocating sufficient housing, this site is not needed.
This development will not help Chepstow Town Centre it will become a 'dormitory settlement'
Loss of wildlife habitat.
Increase in volume of traffic.
Loss of views across the Severn Valley.
Insufficient jobs in Chepstow.
To get to the town centre by walking or by bike involves going up and down very steep hills.
The visual impact would completely change visitor's initial impression of the area.
Local water supply would need upgrading
The green wedge should be maintained.
The application is 'premature' as this site is being considered in the LDP
Outside the development boundary for Chepstow.
There are other more acceptable sites within Chepstow.
The methodology in the Landscape Study is flawed.
Sets a precedent for more development west of the Link Road.
Adverse impact on the surrounding landscape.
Destroy the long parkland views to Mounton House
This is not a sustainable location
The additional cost of building on a brownfield site at Fairfield Mabey should not be a reason for allowing this unsustainable development.
Lead to further commuting out of the town.
Damaging to the Gateway to Wales, visitors will not be impressed with all this new housing
Lack of pedestrian crossings
Chepstow Hospital Minor Injuries Unit needs to be re-opened
Need a new supermarket in Chepstow
No more speculative housing, it should be plan-led.

One Letter of support received.

Chepstow needs more suitable housing. An increase in population will help increase the vibrancy of the town centre.

4.3 Other Representations

Gwent Wildlife Trust

The woodland plantation on the south west side of the site is important for wildlife and housing should not be too close to it. Pleased to see that the buffer zone to protect this area. Trees on the site should be retained and the planting of additional parkland trees would be beneficial. Any gaps in retained hedging should be filled. An ecological management plan will be needed.

The Chepstow Society Strongly oppose the development

This is a greenfield site, brownfield sites should be developed first like Fairfield Mabey;
Outside the development boundary;
Affects the setting of a Listed Building, parkland around a Georgian residence;
Add to traffic problems in the area;

Urbanises the approach to the Wye Valley;
Coalescence of Mownton, Pwllmeyric and Chepstow;
Add pressure to local services;
LAPs should be in the centre of the site not close to a busy road.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 Principle of residential development

5.1.1 LDP Policies

Policy S1 of the adopted LDP refers to the spatial distribution of new housing provision and says that the main focus will be within or adjoining the main towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth. Policy S2 makes provision to meet a requirement for 4,500 residential units over the plan period, 2011 to 2021 and of these approximately 675 would be within Chepstow. Policy S3 then identifies seven Strategic Housing Sites throughout the County. In Chepstow the land at Fairfield Mabey is identified as a strategic housing site for around 350 new dwellings during the LDP period (approximately 600 in total in the longer term). In addition to this development boundaries have been drawn around the main towns, including Chepstow. Inside the development boundaries there is a presumption in favour of new residential development and outside the boundaries open countryside policies will apply which only allow for new residential properties if they are conversions, subdivisions or rural enterprise dwellings. The site to which this application relates is outside the Chepstow development boundary and therefore contrary to the objectives of Policy S1 of the LDP and contrary to the housing strategy for the County. Policy S1 clearly states that outside development boundaries planning permission for new residential development will not be allowed (except for infill in Minor Villages). This application is clearly a departure to Policy S1 which underpins the whole housing strategy for the County. Accordingly the application has been advertised as being a departure to the policies of the LDP. This site was promoted by the applicants as an Alternative Site through the LDP process during the preparation of the Plan. The site was not included in the Adopted LDP as it was not considered suitable. The Report of Consultation following the Deposit and Alternative Sites stages concluded that 'there are compelling arguments regarding adverse landscape impacts of the potential development of the site that make the proposal unacceptable. There is also no guarantee that the necessary highway infrastructure improvements can be implemented to accommodate the development of the site'. This site was therefore considered and subsequently rejected at the LDP stage. The main reasons why the candidate site was rejected was its visual impact, highway considerations and the fact that it was contrary to the spatial strategy for housing in Chepstow.

5.1.2 Housing Land Supply

TAN1 states at its paragraph 5.1 that 'where the current study shows a land supply below the 5 year requirement, the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning applications, provided that the development would otherwise comply with national planning policies'. It is acknowledged that the most recent Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2016) shows Monmouthshire as having a land supply of 4.1 years which is below the 5 year requirement. Recent appeal decisions in South East Wales confirm that the lack of a five year housing land supply is an important material consideration. Although the application is in outline, there is a developer on board (Taylor Wimpey) and therefore there would be potential for this site to make a meaningful contribution to the five year housing land supply if it is otherwise considered to be acceptable, or if this benefit is considered to outweigh any other harm.

5.1.3 Housing Commitments in Chepstow.

Paragraph 6.2 of TAN1 states that 'Where the current study shows a land supply below the 5-year requirement or where the local planning authority has been unable to undertake a study, the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning

applications provided that the development would otherwise comply with development plan and national planning policies'. In addition to this the shortfall in the Housing Land Supply is an issue that has been addressed in the LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) (September 2016). This is available on the Council's website and was formally endorsed for submission to the Welsh Government by Cabinet in October 2016. The AMR is recommending an early review of the LDP as a result of the need to address the shortfall in the Housing Land Supply and facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land. It also suggests that the adoption of a pragmatic approach to the determination of residential development sites will also assist in this context (as recognised in para 6.2 of TAN1). That is, where sites are a departure from the LDP but are otherwise acceptable in planning terms a recommendation for approval may be considered. In this respect the proposal does not comply with national and local planning policies with regard to green wedges and landscape impact which are discussed in further detail below.

Through the LDP process the main focus of new housing in Chepstow is on the sustainable brownfield site in the centre of Chepstow that was the former Mabey Bridge site. In December 2014 an outline application was submitted which sought approval for up to 600 dwellings on that site. That application has been the subject to unforeseen delay with the Welsh Government Transport Division (WGTD) serving a holding objection until agreement could be reached on the necessary improvements to the A48. Those improvements have now been agreed and the WGTD has now removed its holding objection. Officers propose to present that application to Committee in the early part of 2017. In September 2011, full planning permission was granted for 169 dwellings on the former Osbourne Site, a sustainable brownfield site in the centre of Chepstow; on that site some units have been completed but the development stalled due to financial considerations but in recent months development of this site has recommenced with significant progress on Phase 2 now being made. In addition to this the 32 dwellings on the former Forensic Science Laboratory site in Chepstow have also recently been completed. The LDP spatial strategy for Chepstow is based on the premise that the sustainability benefits of the existing brownfield sites adjacent to the town centre should be taken full advantage of, while at the same time protecting the sensitive landscape setting to the west of the town. This is in accordance with paragraph 4.4.9 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9) which states that... 'Previously developed (or brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites'.

5.1.4 Conclusions on the principle of development

Housing development in this location outside the defined development boundary is contrary to policy S1 of the LDP and the Housing Strategy for the County. Although the Housing Land Availability may have slipped below its 5 year target, all indications are that the town of Chepstow will deliver the housing numbers in the LDP although it may but take slightly longer than initially anticipated. The site that is the subject of this application is not compliant with the housing strategy of the Plan as it is a greenfield site on the outside the town so it not considered sustainable in terms of public transport or access to facilities. The application site is a major site in the context of Chepstow and its development would seriously undermine both the LDP strategy and deliverability of the allocated strategic site in Chepstow at Fairfield Mabey. The spatial strategy for Chepstow is based on the premise that the sustainability benefits of the existing brownfield site adjacent to the town centre should be taken full advantage of, while at the same time protecting the sensitive landscape setting to the west. There is a risk that the application proposal, involving an easier to develop greenfield site, could be more attractive to developers than the strategic site and result in the provision of typical suburban development with no corresponding benefits arising from developing a brownfield site in a sustainable location, contrary to the LDP spatial strategy objectives for Chepstow. If this site is to be considered for housing development it must be evaluated against the other policies within the LDP and national planning policies.

5.2 Green Wedge

5.2.1 In order to prevent the coalescence of settlements Policy LC6 of the LDP has identified several areas within Monmouthshire as 'green wedges'. The land which is the subject of this application has been allocated as a green wedge. Edition 9 of Planning Policy Wales refers to green wedges in paragraph 4.8 and states "When considering applications for planning permission in Green Belts or green wedges, a presumption against inappropriate development will apply. Local planning authorities should attach substantial weight to any harmful impact which a development would have on a Green Belt or green wedge". A large scale development such as the one being proposed here, would clearly prejudice the open character of the land and would lead to the growth of Chepstow towards the villages of Pwllmeyric and Mounton. It is a principle objective of planning to resist the coalescence of settlements. If this development was to be allowed it would compromise the separate identity of the settlements of Pwllmeyric and Mounton from that of Chepstow as it would encroach towards them. This open area of former parkland containing many mature parkland trees form an important green open space viewed when approaching Chepstow from the west and from the south. It also forms an important gateway into Wales when arriving from England. The A466 is an important route for tourists visiting the Wye Valley. Housing development on this site would result in the loss of this visually important green space which contributes to the setting of Chepstow. PPW continues in paragraph 4.8.15 by saying "Inappropriate development should not be granted planning permission except in very exceptional circumstances where other considerations clearly outweigh the harm which such development would do to the Green Belt or green wedge. Green Belt and green wedge policies in development plans should ensure that any applications for inappropriate development would not be in accord with the plan and would be considered a departure to the development plan." The very exceptional circumstances do not apply in this case as they refer to small scale rural enterprise, limited extension, limited infilling and small scale diversification. This proposal for up to 200 dwellings within a green wedge is inappropriate and contrary to the advice given in PPW.

5.2.2 There has been a number of recent appeal decisions in Wales relating to housing land supply cases. One of similarity to the circumstances surrounding this Mounton Road site was at Pantlasau in Swansea (appeal reference APP/B6855/A/15/3137926). In that appeal decision (for 13 houses on a green wedge site), the Inspector concluded that "*In view of the PPW advice that substantial weight should be attached to any harmful impact on a green wedge, my overall conclusion is that the shortfall in housing land supply in this case does not amount to very exceptional circumstances sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the green wedge.*"

5.3 Affordable Housing

5.3.1 The Council's adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, March 2016, contains a specific section relating to departure applications in the open countryside (Section 4.4 E). This states that there is a requirement for 35% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be affordable. This is subject to a viability assessment but as this is a greenfield site, 35% should be easily achievable. The application is proposing 35% affordable units spread throughout the site and this is policy compliant. This would have to be delivered through a 106 legal agreement. There is evidence of a significant need for affordable housing within the Chepstow area. The Housing Officer has requested that the mix comprise: 12 one bed flats, 33 two bed houses, 12 three bed houses, 3 four bed houses and 4 OAP two bed bungalows; all of these should be Neutral Tenure.

5.3.2 The applicant has agreed to this level of affordable housing provision, and it is acknowledged that this would be a welcomed contribution to meeting affordable housing need in the Chepstow area. However, this benefit is not considered to outweigh the visual impact and Green Wedge policy.

5.4 Highway Considerations

5.4.1 At present there is a holding objection from Welsh Government Transport Division relating to traffic capacity on High Beech Roundabout. WG commissioned a study looking at traffic flows along the A48 Trunk Road and its impact on the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This has now been published and the applicants have submitted details of improvements to High Beech roundabout. WG have been re-consulted and we await their updated response.

5.4.2 Although this is an outline application, access is to be considered at this stage. The proposal shows a single point of vehicular access into the site off the A466 Valley Link Road, with an additional emergency access closer to High Beech Roundabout and a pedestrian access off Mounton Road. A Transport Assessment (TA) was submitted as part of the application. The Council is aware of current problems with the traffic flows along the A466 with queuing occurring at High Beech Roundabout. The submitted TA demonstrates that current peak period queuing is modest except for the eastern arm in the am peak. However in reality the queuing during this am peak is known to extend beyond the proposed junction. The applicants have undertaken further analysis of the capacity constraints on the A466 Wye Valley Link Road (northern arm) of the High Beech Roundabout. This is solely reliant upon improvements to the A466/ A48 High Beech Roundabout (these are administered by the Welsh Government as they form part of the trunk road network) as detailed in the TA dated June 2013, Section 8.13 – 8.29 and Fig 8.1. Subject to delivery of those improvements the Highway Authority offers no adverse comments regarding the suitability of the proposed means of access onto the A466 via a simple T junction and right turn ghost island. It is considered that development will not have a significant impact on the local network subject to the mitigation measures proposed on High Beech Roundabout being implemented prior to commencement of development.

5.4.3 It is accepted that the proposed mitigation measures proposed on High Beech Roundabout are not in the control or remit of Monmouthshire Highways and therefore the developer will be required to liaise with Welsh Government for its delivery. As Welsh Government has not budgeted for this it is presumed that the applicants would fund this and this may have implications for the viability of the site and its ability to provide for affordable housing.

5.4.4 MCC Highways are not in favour of the proposed emergency access in that such accesses are difficult to maintain and are often subject to abuse by motorists. Highways consider that this point of access should be for pedestrians and cyclists only. The layout inside the site is a detailed issue to be considered as part of the reserved matters but the roads should be to adoptable standards and comply with the adopted Monmouthshire Parking Guidelines.

5.4.5 The TA refers to existing pedestrian infrastructure north and south of the site. Highway Officers would like to see additional pedestrian crossings on the A466 to assist residents of the new development connect with the rest of the town via Newport Road and Mounton Road. In addition it would be desirable to have pedestrian links from the public open space on the western side of the site linking onto Mounton Road and onto St Lawrence Lane.

5.5 Active Travel Act

5.5.1 There would be a requirement for a financial contribution to green transport infrastructure in the form of enhancements to the rail station and local bus services.

5.6 Impact on the Historical Environment

5.6.1 The primary historical assets that would be affected by the proposed development are St Lawrence House. This is a late 18th Century house, retaining much of its character and is Grade II listed. There is also parkland, which is associated with Wyelands House and Mounton House with its II* registered garden. These houses would have been a number amongst the many historic houses that were developed on the outskirts of the bustling historic port of Chepstow. Whilst the land surrounding most of these historic houses has been encroached upon by more modern development the parkland surrounding St Lawrence House and Wyelands has not, so that the relationship between the house and the land can be clearly seen and is easily read within the landscape. For this reason, to allow new residential development would irreparably damage the relationship between the farmland and the historic dwelling. Views from the south and east towards St Lawrence House are very important and would be lost if this proposed housing development were to proceed. Similarly wide open views from St Lawrence House across the landscape, with long distance views over the Severn Estuary which are fundamental to the Listed Building would be lost. The Council's Heritage Officer is opposed to this development and considers that the setting of St Lawrence House is very important to the character of the house. This importance is amplified by the fact that many of the small country house estates in the area have been encroached upon and developed. It is important therefore that St Lawrence House and its setting are maintained and that its views from public vantage points are retained. The proposed housing development would have a significant detrimental impact upon the setting of St Lawrence House which is a Grade II Listed Building and therefore would be contrary to the advice given in Welsh Office Circular 61/96 and The Planning (& Listed Building & Conservation Areas Act) 1990. Although the land immediately to the south of the Listed Building will not be developed by housing, the character of the parkland setting will be lost.

5.6.2 A Heritage Assessment was submitted with the application and the agents have responded to the comments above. The applicants accept that development on the site will have some impact but they believe that a balance needs to be struck between harm to the landscape and delivering new housing. The developers maintain that the proposal has "*an indirect effect on the perception of the house and its estate and there is no direct loss to the fabric or character*". Officers disagree with this interpretation and consider that the setting of the Listed Building is important and that St Lawrence House and its setting make a significant contribution to the landscape character of this area.

5.7 Landscape

5.7.1 The Rebuttal statement for this site used in the LDP Examination, prepared by White Consultants concluded that "The site is of rural character in a noticeable and sensitive rural location. The development would significantly close the gap between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric within a Green Wedge/ proposed Green Belt, including part of a Conservation Area and directly adjacent to a registered park and garden with similar landscape characteristics. It would be overlooked by a Grade II listed building and close off or adversely affect attractive views across the Severn Estuary from a tourist route, the A466. The indicative development layout indicates a marked lack of response to the landscape sensitivity of the site facilitating further development rather than forming a new defensible edge. Taking all of the above considerations into account I suggest that the alternative allocation of housing on this site should be rejected on landscape and visual grounds"

5.7.2 The current proposed layout does differ slightly from the submission used at the LDP in that the land in front of St Lawrence House has been left undeveloped as public open space (POS). Whilst this will protect limited views of the Listed Building from the A48 to the south it will obscure views of the House and parkland when viewed from the A466, the gateway to the Wye Valley. The proposal is therefore contrary to criterion (e) of Policy DES1 of the LDP as it would not respect built and natural views and panoramas where they include historical features and attractive and distinctive landscape. Rather, development of this scale on the site

would be detrimental to this important landscape at the approach to Chepstow and the Wye Valley. The application site lies wholly within a designated Green Wedge. Green Wedges are identified in the LDP in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements. The proposed development would extend the boundary of the town of Chepstow in a westerly direction towards the village of Pwllmeyric eroding this important part of the Green Wedge, this is clearly contrary to the objectives of Policy LC6 of the LDP and would have a detrimental impact on the open character of the landscape in this important area on the edge of Chepstow. The applicants maintain that the development of this site represents rounding off of the settlement between the modern development at St Lawrence and High Beech. The Council does not concur with this view given that the only existing development to the south of this site is the converted farm buildings at High Beech Farm, which are rural in nature and two recently renovated properties adjacent to the roundabout.

5.7.3 Many of the existing high quality trees on the north-western part of the site would be retained and incorporated into the POS space on the site. While this will help to screen the development when viewed from the north-west, it will not overcome the fact that the development will extend the built form of Chepstow towards the village of Pwllmeyric and will obscure views from the link road towards the Estuary.

5.7.4 The Monmouthshire Landscape and Sensitivity Capacity Study (commissioned for the LDP) indicated that this site is medium sensitivity and medium/low capacity for residential development... Due to the positive approach from the west, the intrinsic qualities of the pastoral landscape and the setting of St Lawrence House...Development should be confined to the eastern side of the site to avoid an adverse impact on the setting and view of St Lawrence House and the Wyelands Conservation Area to the south.

5.7.5 A fundamental element of the LDP Vision is to protect and enhance the distinctive character of Monmouthshire's countryside and environmental assets. To highlight the sensitivity and likely impacts of the proposal within the existing landscape and to inform and support the character of development, the applicant has submitted an LVIA. The findings from the LVIA question the Council's own assessment of both landscape character and of its sensitivity to development; these have been re-assessed by Simon White (on behalf of MCC). Simon White concluded that development should be rejected based on landscape and visual grounds.

5.7.6 The application site forms part of a Historic Landscape which has a strong sense of place. The MCC Urban Design Landscape Architect, considers that the obstacle for development on this site is the design / design process of the proposal which should demonstrate how the proposal enhances the character of the area. No GI assets and opportunities plan was provided. The Officer considers that the current scheme is inappropriate development in landscape and design terms. The proposed development strategy has not appraised the design standards set out in the LDP. Any type of development in this sensitive area would have a significant impact on the historic landscape, and no development on this site could protect or preserve the landscape character.

5.8 Biodiversity

5.8.1 The submitted scheme does seek to mitigate the impacts upon priority species including Dormouse and several species of bat and nesting birds. However Policy NE1 considers that mitigating and compensating impacts of development would only be acceptable if the justification for the development clearly outweighs the nature conservation or geological importance of the site; and it can be demonstrated that the development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere. In this case there is no overriding justification for allowing new housing development in this undesignated location. In the interests of ecology it has not been demonstrated that the development could not be reasonably be located elsewhere. It is

considered that new residential development could be provided in a more suitable location which would have a lower overall impact on biodiversity interests. In this case housing development of this scale and in this location would be contrary to the objectives of Policy NE1 of the LDP.

5.9 Archaeology

5.9.1 The supporting information with this application includes assessments regarding the archaeological resource, heritage assets and visual impact. These meet current professional standards and enable recommendations for mitigation to be made by GGAT. As part of the archaeological assessment, a geophysical magnetometer survey was also included to inform the mitigation process. The site is located to the west of Chepstow and the only known archaeological feature in the site is a stretch of the Roman road that linked Chepstow with Caerleon; this is located in the southern part of the site and is a visible feature in the landscape. Other finds and features of pre-historic, Roman and Medieval date are noted outside the boundary of the area and have informed the likely potential for as yet unidentified remains in the site. The results of the geophysical survey showed mainly evidence of previous field boundaries, although noting the potential for archaeological features associated with the Roman road. Whilst the potential for encountering significant archaeological features is considered to be low, and low to moderate, the impact of the development on the archaeological resource will require mitigation and taking into account the evidence and assessment, this could be achieved by the attachment of conditions to any consent. The conditions requested by GGAT include a programme of archaeological works, the fencing off of all features associated with the Roman road and an interpretation board to be placed on the site.

5.10 Drainage

5.10.1 A Flood Consequences Assessment was submitted as part of the application, which found that the proposed residential development lies within Flood Zone 1, the risk of flooding from all sources is assessed to be low and the safety of people is considered acceptable in all foreseeable flooding events. No specific flood management measures are considered to be necessary. The outline drainage strategy set out in this assessment identifies a number of options for the management of surface water runoff using sustainable drainage techniques. The proposed development will not increase the flood risk elsewhere. Owing to the positive outcome of this Level 2 Flood Consequence Assessment there is no reason why the site should not be granted planning permission for development in respect of flood consequence or risk.

5.10.2 NRW has reviewed the submitted FCA and notes that it identifies that several options for the management of surface water using sustainable drainage techniques have been suggested but that no detailed drainage system has been submitted. While the Council welcomes the use of sustainable drainage techniques it would be necessary to impose a condition that a detailed strategic scheme for the whole site be submitted to and approved by the LPA if the development was approved.

5.10.3 Foul sewerage will be connected to the mains drainage system. Welsh Water have confirmed there is capacity in the local drainage network to accommodate the increase in flows attributed to the proposed development. Their formal response is anticipated shortly and will be reported as late correspondence to Committee.

5.11 Recreational Provision

5.11.1 Policy CRF2 of the LDP requires new residential development to provide appropriate amounts of outdoor recreation and public open space in accordance with the standards set

out in the policy. The provision should be well related to the housing development that it is intending to serve. Proposals for new residential development of more than 50 dwellings should also make provision for allotments. The current application is in outline only, with the layout being considered as a reserved matter. The indicative layout plan however indicated a large area of public open space on the western side of the site as well as two areas of open space within the site. The plan indicates that there would be three play areas within the site. This proposed level of recreational provision would meet with the Council's adopted standards, although there is no mention of allotments on the scheme.

5.12 Minerals Safe Guarding Area

5.12.1 All of this site has been allocated under LDP Policy M2 as a Minerals Safeguarding Area. Part a) of that policy says that proposals for permanent development uses within the safeguarding areas will not be approved unless the potential of the area for mineral extraction has been investigated and it has been shown that such extraction would not be commercially viable now or in the future or that it would cause unacceptable harm to ecological or other interests. In this case the applicants have not indicated that they have undergone any such investigation and no evidence has been put forward that the mineral, in this case limestone could be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place. Criterion iii) of part a) of the policy says that in safeguarding areas development could be considered if there was an overriding need for the development. In this case the proposal is contrary to housing policies as it is proposing housing development outside a settlement boundary and there is no overriding need for this development in this location. If mineral extraction was to take place on this site there would be a need to provide a buffer to protect existing residential dwellings in the locality from the impact of minerals working. As a consequence, minerals extraction would not be feasible, except for on a very small portion of the site and this in turn would sterilise land beyond the existing buffer zone site as the buffer zone itself would need adjusting to take account of any new housing on the site. The proposed housing development which is the subject of this application would be contrary to the objectives of Policy M2 of the LDP as the implications for mineral extraction on the site have not been fully investigated.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Reasons for Refusal

1. The application site is outside the Chepstow Development Boundary and therefore contrary to the objectives of Policy S1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (MLDP) and contrary to the housing strategy for the County. Policy S1 states that outside development boundaries planning permission for new residential development will not be allowed. The proposed site is not compliant with the housing strategy of the MLDP as it is a greenfield site outside the town, and is not a sustainable location in relation to accessibility to public transport or by way of access to public amenities, including shops and public services. The proposed site is located within a designated Green Wedge. The proposed residential development, of up to 200 dwellings in this green wedge will prejudice the open character of the historic landscape and will lead to the growth of Chepstow towards the villages of Pwllmeyric and Mounton. If this development was to be allowed it would compromise the separate identity of the settlements of Pwllmeyric and Mounton from that of Chepstow as it would encroach towards them. The application site currently forms a significant open green space with a specific historic context, on this important approach into Chepstow. Development of this scale on this site would be contrary to the objectives of Policy LC6 of the MLDP and also the advice given in paragraph 4.8 of Planning Policy Wales as it would result in the loss of this important green space which is a strategically important view when approaching the town of Chepstow and the Wye Valley. The shortfall in housing land supply in this case does not amount to very exceptional circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Wedge.

2. The application site is a major site in the context of Chepstow and its development could seriously undermine both the MLDP strategy and deliverability of the allocated strategic housing site in Chepstow at Fairfield Mabey. The spatial strategy for Chepstow is based on the premise that the sustainability benefits of the existing brownfield site adjacent to the town centre should be taken full advantage of, while at the same time protecting the sensitive landscape setting to the west. The proposal is contrary to the housing strategy which underpins the LDP.

3. St Lawrence House is a Grade II Listed Building; it is a late 18th Century house retaining much of its character. The setting of St Lawrence House is extremely important to its character, which is defined by the land that is bounded by Mounton Road, the A466 and St Lawrence Lane. This importance is amplified by the fact that so many of the small country house estates have been encroached upon and developed, leaving only St Lawrence of this scale. The development of this prominent site would fail to preserve the setting of this important Listed Building which makes a significant contribution to the landscape character of this area.

4. The proposed housing development which is the subject of this application would be contrary to the objectives of Policy M2 of the LDP as the implications for mineral extraction on the site have not been fully investigated.