



PLANNING

PLANNING STATEMENT

YR HADAU LTD (ON BEHALF OF
SERO HOMES)

PARC HADAU, WAUN STERW,
PONTARDAWE



PLANNING STATEMENT

On behalf of: Yr Hadau Ltd (on behalf of Sero Homes)

In respect of: Parc Hadau, Waun Sterw, Pontardawe

Date: September 2019

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application, submitted on behalf of Yr Hadau Ltd (on behalf of Sero Homes Ltd), for:

“Full planning permission for the proposed development of 35 zero carbon homes and community building (Use Class D1) along with associated works including landscaping, parking, access, engineering works and ecological mitigation.”

1.2 This Planning Statement outlines the context within which the application is made and provides a detailed examination of the main planning considerations raised by the proposals, together with reasoned justification in support of the proposed development.

1.3 The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides some background to Sero Homes and their ethos;
- Section 3 provides a description of the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, and details regarding the planning history associated with the site;
- Section 4 provides details of the development proposals;
- Section 5 outlines the relevant planning policy framework in relation to the site and the development;
- Section 6 assesses the proposals against relevant planning policy;
- Section 7 sets out our conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO SERO HOMES



2.0 Background to Sero Homes

2.1 The team behind Sero Homes combines national award-winning design and sustainability credentials with long-standing expertise in renewable energy development and operation. Between them, the core team have been building “net zero carbon” and “off-grid” homes for more than a decade and have hands-on experience of financing and delivering more than 300MW of renewable energy generation. Sero Homes may be comparatively new to the housing market, but they build from very strong foundations.



2.2 Sero believe that peoples’ homes should minimise the harm done to our planet and that they shouldn’t cost the earth to run. People’s homes should be healthy, light and welcoming; they should encourage community and active travel, as well as support the local flora and fauna.

2.3 They consider that the current housing market is failing to achieve this, so Sero Homes were created to build better homes for this generation and for future generations.

2.4 Sero builds primarily homes for the private rental market, which allows them to spend more on building them. This means that they can exceed current Building Regulations and include renewable energy generation and storage systems in their schemes. As they maintain their homes throughout their life, they also spend more to ensure that the construction quality is right, the designs are flexible and that the primary building materials are durable.

2.5 They still aim to build peoples’ “forever home” though, and their normal contracts allow residents to stay as long as they wish – a lifetime if they desire – with their rent simply being index-linked so there are no nasty surprises. Furthermore, as they build homes so well and use the latest renewable and storage technology, one of their three bedroom homes will typically cost less than £40/month to run – that’s less than half what a comparable house would cost.

2.6 In short, they build affordable, energy-efficient homes that are designed for people to really want to live in.

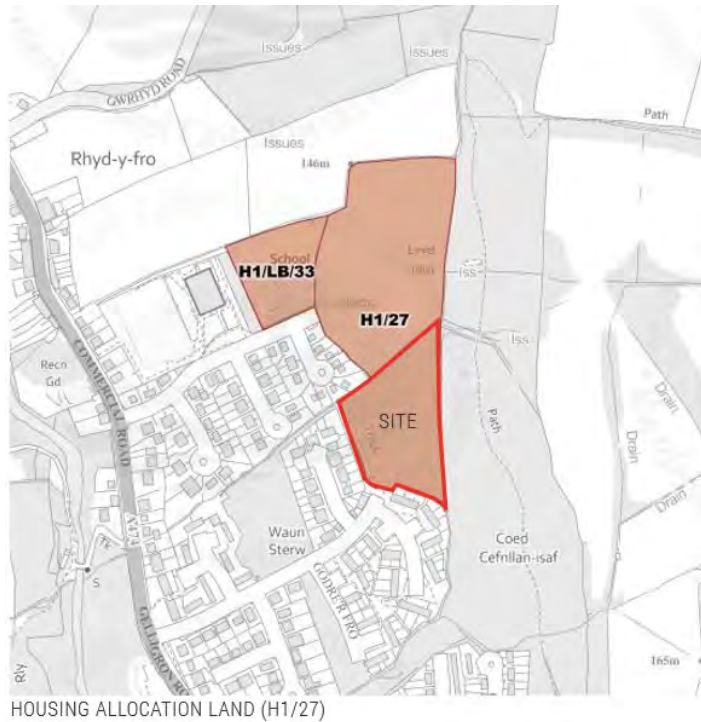
CHAPTER 2

SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT



3.0 Site and Surrounding Context

3.1 Parc Hadau is located to the north east of Pontardawe in the village of Rhydyfro. The site forms part of a wider allocation within the Neath port Talbot Local Development Plan for housing. The allocation totals an area of 3.9 hectares and proposes to deliver 115 homes. This application site consists of a 1.45ha piece of scrubland which is accessed from Waun Sterw.



3.2 The site sits up on the eastern side of a valley and falls approximately 10m from its north-east corner to the entrance in the south-west. To the east of the site is an ancient woodland, to the north is an open field which forms the rest of the allocation. To the west and north west is residential development Cwrt Y Waun and Waun Penlan.



Access to the site from Waun Sterw

- 3.3 Biodiversity is one of the key features of the site; benefitting from a designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The associated NPT LDP policy identifies that *“The southern portion of the site meets the criteria to be designated a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), on-site mitigation or off-site compensation will be required; areas of Ancient Woodland (with appropriate buffer) to the site periphery will need to be excluded from developable area.”*



- 3.4 There are a number of habitats that surround the site, with wet woodland, scrub, grassland, rivers and streams offering excellent green corridors for wildlife.
- 3.5 In terms of accessibility, the site is served from Waun Sterw and the A474 which runs to the west: south to Neath (15 min) and Swansea (20 min). The bus service on Commercial Road is limited to two services (905 & X26) which are low frequency. The main local and regional bus services operate from the town (a 22 min walk or 10 min cycle). A bus service runs from the town of Pontardawe to Neath (30 mins) and Swansea (40 min).
- 3.6 There are a number of popular walking routes that thread around the site, the closest and most significant being St. Illtyd’s, a religious walk from Carmarthenshire to Neath, which runs through the ancient woodlands to the east of the site. National Cycle Route 46 runs from Swansea to Abercraf through Pontardawe.
- 3.7 The wider built context is varied. It is a predominantly residential area with existing houses grouped in typically cul-de-sac typologies with private back gardens, small private front gardens and shared greens, which promote a community-feel.
- 3.8 To the north is Rhydyfro Primary School, (although there is not a direct link from the site), and the site is 10 minutes walk to the post office and 20 minutes walk to the community centre.

Planning History

- 3.9 The site does not benefit from any relevant planning history.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



4.0 Development Proposal

4.1 This chapter provides a detailed description of the proposed development at ‘Parc Hadau, Waun Sterw, Pontardawe’

4.2 The description of the development proposed within this application is as follows:

“Full planning permission for the proposed development of 35 zero carbon homes along with associated works including landscaping, parking, access, engineering works and ecological mitigation.”

4.3 It is proposed to comprehensively develop the site for residential development consisting of zero-carbon homes alongside a communal open space, parking, access and associated infrastructure. The location of the site is indicated below:



Developable Area

4.4 The site measures 1.45Ha in total, however due to the various constraints within the site only 0.7 Ha is considered to be developable . The plan below, extracted from the Design & Access Statement, demonstrates the various constraints and how the developable area has been quantified:



Layout

- 4.5 The 35 homes proposed on the site will be set around a one-way private access with pedestrian priority, with a communal building located at the south eastern side of the access route. Frontages will face onto this access route with the rear of the dwellings facing a communal open space. Private rear gardens are provided between the homes and the communal areas to provide some space for residents to make their own.
- 4.6 The communal space will consist of pockets of water, through meadow, willow scrub and open areas of grass. The spaces are purposefully not ‘over-designed’ but instead provide play and seating opportunities and allow the community to curate and use the space as they wish.
- 4.7 The homes will be set out in three separate ‘stepped terraces’ – on the western, the north and east sides.
- 4.8 A connection is provided to the north of the site into the remainder of the allocation. It is currently envisaged that this connection is solely a pedestrian and cycle link which would enable a direct route from the site to Waun Penlan and, significantly, to Rhydyfro Primary School.

Housing Mix

- 4.9 In terms of the homes themselves, it is proposed to construct the following mix of dwellings:

- 4b6p - 2
- 3b5p - 22
- 2b4p - 10
- 2b3p flat – 1

4.10 The application proposal is for a housing scheme under Class C3 of the Use Classes Order 1997.

4.11 No affordable housing provision (as currently technically defined) is proposed as part of this scheme. Notwithstanding this, and as highlighted previously in this statement, the way in which the homes will be rented out, the whole life/living cost of someone living in the home will be lower than the comparable local market rent with utility bills added in. Accordingly, all 35 dwellings on the site are considered affordable in the whole cost of living definition. Further discussion of this is provided in the Planning Assessment section.

Materials

4.12 A simple pallet of materials has been chosen for the exterior of the buildings. These materials have also been chosen to give the building a hierarchy. The base is solid and made of masonry (stone or brick). Above that a timber clad lightweight mono pitch pod rests. The top of this mono pitch is fully clad in solar panels.

4.13 The materials have also been chosen for their embodied energy. Stone is a natural product with low embodied energy. It is also easy to reuse and recycle at the end of the buildings life. Timber has a low embodied energy and it also has the ability so sequester and store carbon that it has absorbed during its life.

Parking

4.14 In recognition of the location of the site and the difficulties with accessing alternative modes of transport for future residents, two parking spaces are provided for each dwelling. Notwithstanding this, Sero Homes' intention would be to reduce the number of spaces over time through encouraging residents to use more active means of travel, provision of a car sharing scheme, and as public transport links improve over time.

Landscaping

4.15 In terms of the landscaping and ecological proposals, the proposal is sensitively embedded into the surroundings. The design will encourage neighbourliness and a sense of community – both with each other and with the environment. People, nature and water can pass through the site without obstacles or hard barriers. Solid lines of fencing do not sever the spaces, rather planting is able to flourish, and water is not directed below ground in drains but rather brought to surface and celebrated. Planting is inspired from the natural setting to promote ecology and create an attractive low maintenance environment. Materials are to be from a robust, fuss-free and refined palette.

Ecology

4.16 Significant to the development of this site, is its ecological characteristics. Accordingly, the site's development has been influenced by its surroundings and seeks to incorporate some key principles:

- Green Corridors: The design will protect and enhance these ecologically rich boundaries. There is opportunity to improve these by diversifying the habitats within the buffer zones and encourage overlooking for passive surveillance and to deter flytipping. The design will incorporate typical native hedgerow species such as birch, hawthorn, blackthorn and field maple within the boundary and as part of the buffers between buildings.
- Trees: A 15m buffer zone will be established to protect the ancient woodland, with opportunity to enhance the habitats within this zone. The design will be mindful of the impact of the development on the buffer, especially with regards to lighting and access. Wherever possible, the landscape will reinstate the existing tree species that may be lost.
- Water: The design will utilise the natural topography of the site to support water flow and attenuation, integrating SuDS and retaining and maximising diverse and appropriate planting to ensure effective drainage and enhanced ecology.
- Flora: Native mixes for meadow, wetlands, woodlands and pond edges will be used throughout the landscape to provide for wildlife, especially pollinators, and to compensate for loss of habitat.
- Wildlife: Habitat interventions for wildlife on site will be integrated throughout the landscape.

CHAPTER 4

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT



5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by both in the form of national policy and more locally through the statutory Development Plan.

National Policy

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 5.2 The well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development to improve the way in which we achieve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The LPA must act in accordance with the sustainable development principle and seek to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As part of this duty public bodies must set and publish objectives which are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals.
- 5.3 The primary objective of Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (2018) 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 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 5.4 The 7 Wellbeing Goals can be defined as follows:

‘A Prosperous Wales’ - “An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment & uses resources efficiently and proportionately, and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities.”

This will be achieved by: Creating attractive homes with employment opportunities in the area;

‘A Resilient Wales’ - “A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.”

This will be achieved by: Meeting current and future housing demand, but by also seeking to integrate with the biodiversity on the site and surrounds;

‘A Healthier Wales’ - “A society in which people’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood”

This will be achieved by: Using better construction techniques for healthier living – in particular encouraging social interaction within the scheme;

‘A more equal Wales’ - “A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances “

This will be achieved by: Providing better quality affordable rented homes which covers whole life costs;

‘A Wales of cohesive communities’ - “Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities”

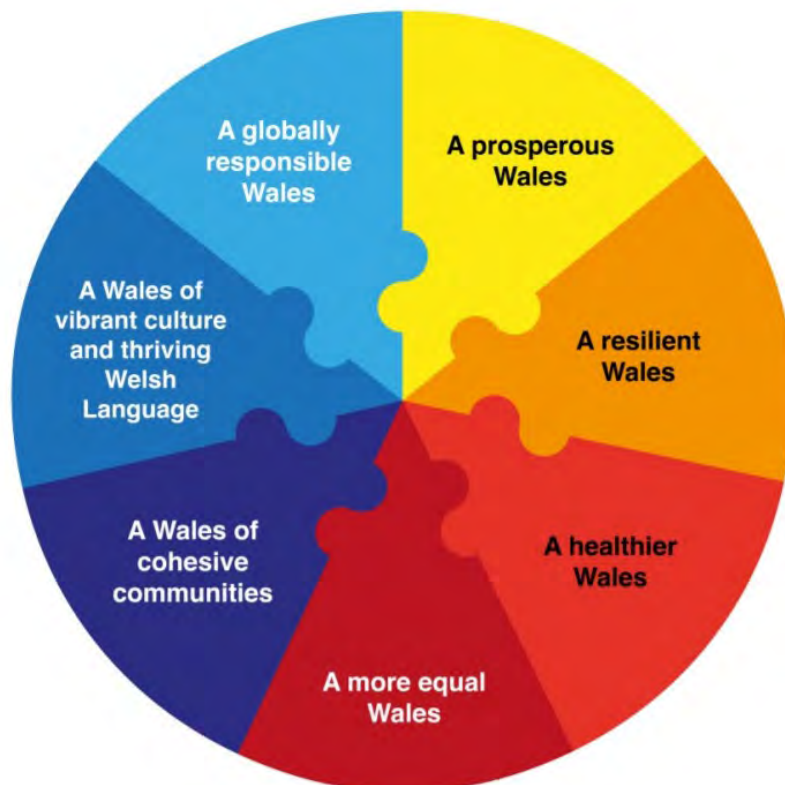
This will be achieved by: Re-defining a sense of place, creating a high-quality environment and stronger sense of community;

‘A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language’ - “A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and recreation”

This will be achieved by: Putting the Welsh language at the heart of the scheme, identifying connections with historic walking routes in the area, and close collaboration with the Rhydyfro Primary school;

‘A globally responsible Wales’ - “A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being”

This will be achieved by: developing zero-carbon homes with the community and ecology at the heart of the ethos.



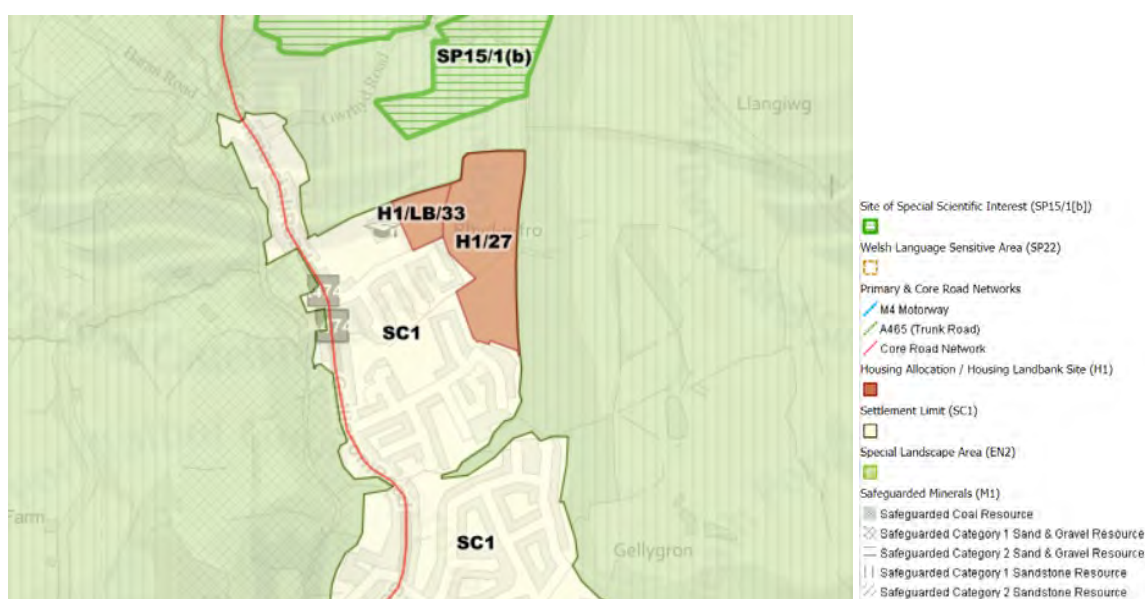
Planning Policy Wales

- 5.5 National Planning Policy is contained within the tenth edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), published by the Welsh Government in December 2018.
- 5.6 PPW is supported by 21 topics-based Technical Advice Notes (TANs), which are also relevant.
- 5.7 PPW is the principal planning policy document of Welsh Government that should be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and in the determination of planning applications and appeals. The main thrust of PPW is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the planning system provides for an adequate and continuous supply of land available and suitable for development.
- 5.8 It dictates that available land must meet society's needs in a way that is consistent with overall sustainability principles. Sustainable development is defined as: "Sustainable development" means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.
- 5.9 Paragraph 1.21 confirms that *"plans at all levels of the development plan hierarchy must be prepared in accordance with national planning policies. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise"*
- 5.10 Paragraph 4.2.29 advises that, where development plan policies make clear that an element of affordable housing or other developer contributions are required on specific sites, this will be a material consideration in determining relevant applications.
- 5.11 Paragraph 5.8.1 requires that *"The planning system should support new development that has very high energy performance, supports decarbonisation, tackles the causes of climate change, and adapts to the current and future effects of climate change through the incorporation of effective mitigation and adaptation measures."*
- 5.12 This theme continues in para. 5.8.2 stating that *"The Welsh Government's policy is to secure zero carbon buildings while continuing to promote a range of low and zero carbon technologies as a means to achieve this."*
- 5.13 Technical Advice Notes (TANs) The following Technical Advice Notes are considered to be relevant to this application:
- TAN 2 (Planning and Affordable Housing) 2006 ;
 - TAN 11 (Noise) 1997;
 - TAN 12 (Design) 2016;
 - TAN 18 (Transport) 2007.

Local Planning Policy

5.14 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for this site is provided by Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) which was adopted by the Council in January 2016. As identified in the LDP proposals map the application site is allocated for residential development, forming H1/27 which totals an allocation of 115 units.

5.15 Below is an extract from the LDP proposals map which identifies the main designations around the application site:



5.16 In light of the above and in reviewing the policies of the LDP, the policies listed below are considered relevant to the application proposal:

Policy	Policy Wording
SP1	Climate Change <i>Seeks to reduce encourage measures which reduce green house gases through energy efficiency, reducing dependency on road transport and the private car, and encouraging renewable energy production.</i>
SP2	Health <i>Seeks to address the high levels of poor long-term health and sickness in Neath Port Talbot through encouraging access to employment, healthy and sustainable communities; encourage active travel; and access to services and facilities.</i>
SP3	Sustainable Communities <i>Seeks to deliver sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities and the conservation of the countryside by locating development within existing settlements, close to existing services and facilities.</i>

Policy	Policy Wording
SP7	Housing Requirement <i>Identifies the need to deliver 8,760 new homes within the County Borough during the plan period.</i>
SP8	Affordable Housing <i>Sets out the Council's target for delivery of affordable housing over the plan period.</i>
SP10	Open Space Provision <i>Seeks to ensure that residents have adequate access to open space provision.</i>
SP15	Biodiversity & Geodiversity <i>Seeks to protect, conserve, enhance and manage important habitats, species and sites of geological interest through varying measures.</i>
SP16	Environmental Protection <i>Air, water and ground quality and the environment generally will be protected and where feasible improved through the identified measures.</i>
SP18	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy <i>Seeks to promote energy efficiency in new development</i>
SP20	Transport Network <i>Seeks to ensure that new development integrates successfully with the existing transport network by promoting active travel measures, reducing car dependency, promoting connectivity etc.</i>
SP21	Built Environment and Historic Heritage Seeks to promote high quality design within new developments
SP22	Welsh Language Seeks to promote the Welsh language in certain areas within the Borough.
I1	Infrastructure Requirements <i>Seeks to ensure that funding may be required to ensure that, where appropriate, the impact of new development is mitigated, for example affordable housing, open space provision, or community facilities.</i>
H1/27	Housing Sites See below.
OS1	Open Space Provision <i>Identifies the level of open space required to be provided by new development proposals of 3 dwellings or more.</i>
EN6	Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites <i>Seeks to protect the more important ecological sites but confirms that such sites can be developed subject to relevant criteria.</i>
EN7	Important Natural Features Again, this policy seeks to protect other ecological features, most significant in this application site's case is the ancient woodland.
TR2	Design and Access of New Development

Policy	Policy Wording
	<i>Seeks to ensure that new development does not lead to highway safety issues; ensures that new development provide adequate level of parking; and requires submission of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans with relevant applications.</i>
BE1	Design <i>All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places; and set out a number of criteria to meet.</i>
WL1	Development in Language Sensitive Areas <i>Requires development of 10 homes or more within sensitive areas to undertake measures to promote the Welsh language.</i>

5.17 Policy H1/27 allocated this site for housing. As identified previously the wider site is allocated for 115 homes. This application site makes up a 1.45ha of this wider site and is proposed to construct 35 homes. The LDp sets out the following in respect of the wider site:

Site	Site Description	Site Characteristics - Opportunities & Constraints
H1/27 Waun Sterw / Waun Penlan, Rhydyfro	<p>The greenfield site is located at the northern end of Rhydyfro, adjoining an established residential area.</p> <p>The site lies adjacent to the allocation H1/LB/33 (Waun Penlan). The site slopes in a northerly direction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highways - a right turn access off the A474 will be required with links created to Heol Penlan and Waun Sterw. ● Biodiversity - the southern portion of the site meets the criteria to be designated a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), on-site mitigation or off-site compensation will be required; areas of Ancient Woodland (with appropriate buffer) to the site periphery will need to be excluded from developable area. ● Affordable Housing Provision - 10% on-site requirement. ● Utilities - potential requirement for off-site water mains and associated infrastructure. ● Environment - appropriate buffer to watercourse will be required; due to the proximity of the site to the Frondeg SSSI, care will need to be taken to ensure associated drains, ditches and watercourses are not affected by development; greenfield run-off rates / SuDS will be required. ● Open Space Provision - on-site requirement. ● Education Provision - potential financial contribution required. ● Welsh Language - a Language Action Plan will be required in accordance with Policy WL1. ● Waste - a Site Waste Management Plan will be required in accordance with Policy W3. ● Energy - an Energy Assessment will be required in accordance with Policy RE2.

5.18 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance is also considered relevant:

- Planning Obligations (October 2016)
- Parking Standards (October 2016)
- Affordable Housing (October 2016)
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)
- Pollution (October 2016)
- Open Space & Greenspace (July 2017)
- Design (July 2017)
- Development and the Welsh Language (July 2017)

Policy Summary

5.19 From a review of the planning policy context for the site and the scheme proposed, a number of clear conclusions can be made:

- PPW sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for proposals which are supported by the development plan;
- NPT has to deliver a significant number of homes to meet measured and established needs and requirements and this site is allocated by the Council to aid in achieving this target;
- The subject site is one of the strategic sites identified in Policy H1 of the plan;
- The LDP supports the principle of residential development at the site and acknowledges the difficulties of surrounding ecological constraints within the site; and
- A series of other policies guide how development should take place and the strategies they should adopt or follow.

CHAPTER 5

PLANNING ASSESSMENT



6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 This section identifies the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assesses the scheme against the relevant planning policy framework. These matters are considered to be as follows:

- The principle of development;
- The acceptability of the development in terms of biodiversity and protected species
- The design of the development in relation to its location;
- The acceptability of the development in terms of highway capacity and safety;
- The drainage capacity of the site.

Principle of Development

6.2 The principle of residential development on the site has been established through its allocation within the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan under policy H1/27.

6.3 As highlighted previously in this report, Policy H1/27 identifies a parcel of land measuring 3.9Ha to deliver 115 homes towards the overall housing requirement of 8,760 homes across the administrative area. This application seeks to deliver 35 of the 115 dwellings on a section of the allocation measuring 1.45Ha.

6.4 The proposal equates to a density of around 24 dwellings per hectare (dph), however, only 0.7 of this 1.45Ha is developable and, therefore, the density would increase to above 30dph. The site's constraints restrict the ability to deliver a higher density scheme, however, the development proposed seeks to turn the constraint into an opportunity by integrating the development into the surrounding biodiversity.

6.5 As this report outlines in earlier chapters, Sero will deliver homes that are considered to be affordable in the 'whole cost of living' sense i.e. that the rental paid by the occupants will cover all utility bills and rent, and there will not be any 'hidden extras' unless specifically requested by the Occupants. The principle being that the combined rent and utilities will be lower than comparable local market rent and separate utility bills.

6.6 The recent Welsh Government Affordable Housing Review identifies that the sector needs to review how affordable housing is defined and rents managed. This identifies whole life cost as one way of ensuring that affordable housing is indeed affordable.

6.7 Policy H1/27 identifies that an on-site affordable housing contribution should be made at a level of 10%. Whilst the application submission does not provide affordable housing as currently technically defined, the principles behind the scheme is to provide an affordable whole cost of living rent to occupiers of the dwellings which makes living in the home affordable.

- 6.8 In addition, and in light of a) some of the technologies used; b) the ground-breaking way the development is being brought forward; and c) the site constraints, the viability of the scheme is such that it would not facilitate an affordable housing contribution either on-site or off.
- 6.9 Notwithstanding the fact that technically the development does not meet the current definition of affordable housing, the proposals are considered affordable in the ‘whole cost of living’ sense. It represents a small extension to the east of Rhydyfro that otherwise meets all other planning policy requirements set out in the allocation of the site. Moreover, the technical assessments which accompany the application demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable in all respects.

Biodiversity and Protected Species

- 6.10 The biodiversity of the site is a key consideration in the acceptability and design of the scheme. The policy underpinning the allocation of the site states with regard to biodiversity:

“The southern portion of the site meets the criteria to be designated a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), on-site mitigation or off-site compensation will be required; areas of Ancient Woodland (with appropriate buffer) to the site periphery will need to be excluded from developable area.”

- 6.11 It is this southern portion of the allocation area that Sero Homes are looking to take forward.

- 6.12 It is noteworthy that Policy EN6 of the LDP states:

“Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites Development proposals that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or S42(6) habitats or species will only be permitted where:

- 1. They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site;*
- 2. The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere, and the benefits of the development outweighs the natural heritage importance of the site.*

Mitigation and/or compensation measures will need to be agreed where adverse effects are unavoidable.”

- 6.13 With regard to Policy EN6, if the site is to be developed for housing it is unlikely to be compatible with part one of SPG policy EN6. However, as this is part of an allocation within the NPT LDP, consideration will need to be given to whether it is reasonable to assume that appropriately designed development passes the second test of the policy.
- 6.14 A walk-over survey was completed by BSG Ecology on 28 September 2018. This established the baseline ecological interest of the site. From here, early discussions were had with NPT Council’s Ecologist to discuss the scope and range of surveys to be carried out as part of the scheme. The supporting ecological reports outline the surveys undertaken and their results.

- 6.15 It is evident from the surveys that some mitigation and compensation is required to address the impact the development is likely to have the biodiversity of the site. Sero Homes' see the benefits of developing a bio-diverse site both to its residents but also the wider environment. Accordingly, they will, wherever practicable, ensure that the design of the site incorporates as many features and mitigation measures as possible to minimise the impact of the development.
- 6.16 Notwithstanding this, some off-site compensation will be required to fully address the loss. Such measures are outlined in greater detail within the accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment, but they include green corridors, tree planting, water features incorporated into the SuDS design, native planting, and habitat interventions.
- 6.17 In light of the above, and notwithstanding the site's designation as a SINC, the mitigation and compensation measures put in place to address the impact of the development means that the whilst there will be a short term loss, in the long terms the impact of the scheme can be successfully addressed in accordance with Policy EN6 of the NPT LDP.

Design Principles

- 6.18 Another of Sero Homes' key principles is to deliver good design. The Architects, Loyn & Co, were instructed for their track record in delivering high quality design within the residential sector. They were tasked with designing a scheme of between 35 and 40 homes that provided a social an inclusive design, integrated (or provided for) net zero carbon, and which took into account the rich ecological interest of the site.
- 6.19 The accompanying Design and Access Statement outlines in greater detail how the submitted scheme accomplishes this brief. In summary, however, the design is based around a central communal garden which incorporates areas of informal play, wildlife and biodiversity, and which also incorporate drainage features. Beyond this to the east, west and north are the residential dwellings which have dual aspect onto the communal area and the external street.
- 6.20 The Street itself is designed to be shared surface with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists with the car seen as the 'alien'. The single carriageway meanders from its access off Waun Sterw and around the site in a clockwise direction returning to the southern point where it again meets Waun Sterw.
- 6.21 In terms of the architectural design of the homes, they are two storeys in height with a mono-pitch roof design. The use of a mono-pitch has, to some degree, been dictated by the use of PV panels, but it also provides the site with a consistent language and distinctive roof profile.
- 6.22 A simple pallet of two materials has been chosen for the exterior of the building. These materials have also been chosen to give the building a hierarchy. The base is solid and made of masonry. Above that a timber clad lightweight mono pitch pod rests.
- 6.23 Imperative to the success of the scheme is its ability to incorporate Sero's key principles i.e. sustainability, biodiversity, and community focus. The scheme's overall design delivers on these

key principles. They have also been scrutinised and influenced by key discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the Design Commission for Wales.

- 6.24 Accordingly, the development is in line with policy SP21 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Impact on Highways, Access and Transport

- 6.25 The site is reasonably well placed in terms of access to nearby local facilities and services such as schools, medical services, restaurants and public transport provision. There are also local villages near the site, Ynysmeudwy, Trebanos and Alltwen which are predominantly residential.
- 6.26 A new shared footpath/cycle path connection will be provided at the northern end of the site to provide a link through to the land to the north of the site onto Waun Penlan and to the local primary school. To the east of the site, a new footpath link will be provided to gain access to the wooded area and the existing PRow. This opens the opportunity to connect to the area to the south of the site and to the north via a quiet recreational route. These will also benefit the community. These connections add to the permeability of the site and provides an opportunity to enhance and improve the current access in the area and encourage better integration of sustainable modes of travel.
- 6.27 There are opportunities to make improvements to the accessibility of the site which will be discussed during the application process.
- 6.28 The traffic effect from 35 homes is forecast to be +16 / +15 two-way trips during an AM / PM peak respectively which is not considered to be material or detrimental to highway capacity or highway safety.
- 6.29 Policy H1/27 identifies the potential need to make improvements to the junction with the A474. Following liaison with NPT's highway Officers, it is considered that the junction has sufficient capacity to accommodate the addition traffic and no such improvements are required.
- 6.30 In light of the above, the site is well located in accessibility terms, and the additional movements can be accommodated without harm to highway safety.

Drainage

- 6.31 Under schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the surface water discharge from the site will be subject to SAB approval, however, the principles of the drainage of site is outlined as part of this application.
- 6.32 Following infiltration tests undertaken on site it is not deemed viable to infiltrate the proposed surface water into the ground. Given the nature of the site and the watercourses on the site, any discharge from the proposal would introduce additional flow over the existing rates.

- 6.33 Flows will be restricted through various measures, including blue roofs and porous paving. Roof, highway and car park catchments will be collected into a piped network and discharged along a series of ponds and swales running through the site. The ponds and swales will offer storage facilities for limited discharge and help improve the water quality. These features will also provide an attractive community space while allowing a rich and biodiverse habitat for wildlife.
- 6.34 In terms of foul water, appropriate sewer pipes will be provided within the site and out onto Waun Sterw where they will be offered for adoption through a section 104 agreement with Welsh Water.
- 6.35 Accordingly, it is considered that the site can be appropriately drained in accordance with the relevant legislation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION



7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 This application, submitted on behalf of Yr Hadau Ltd (on behalf of Sero Homes), proposes to build 35 zero carbon residential homes.
- 7.2 The application proposals are consistent with the allocation within policy H1/27 of NPT's Local Development Plan in that the site will deliver the 35 of the 115 homes allocated within the wider site, and will make a healthy contribution towards delivering on NPT's housing requirement for the plan period.
- 7.3 The application proposal helps ensure the provision of a range and choice of housing options to fully support the delivery of the wider Economic Strategy as new homes and supporting community facilities can help attract new investment to the area and stimulate more movement in the housing market. Associated construction jobs will also provide an additional benefit to the local economy.
- 7.4 Whilst the site's designation as a SINC might normally be seen as a constraint, one of Sero Homes' main objectives is to capitalise on the diversity of the site and wherever possible incorporate them into the scheme. With the appropriate management and mitigation in place, it is considered that the ecological richness of the site can be preserved, if not enhanced in the longer term.
- 7.5 We contend that the application proposals represent an appropriate solution to delivering the allocated use in a way which also addresses the SINC designation. Moreover, we assert that a more 'traditional' housing proposal at the site would not be able to provide the required 'balance' between meeting the housing need identified in allocating the site, with the ecological sensitivity of the site.
- 7.6 The application proposal is consistent with the vast majority of the policy requirements of the NPT Local Plan. They represent a considered application of the guiding principles set out in the Plan, which will ensure the delivery of a high-quality extension to the existing community. The accompanying technical reports demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable in all respects. As such, it is clear that the planning balance is in favour of the proposals.