

ATISN 20778 - ITEM 013

**Iles, Nicholas (LGHCCRA - Planning - Planning)**

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**From:** Iles, Nicholas (ESNR-Planning)  
**Sent:** 16 June 2021 13:59  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: 76/2021 Request for call-in - Planning Application A200773, Ceredigion

Dear Ms [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 June to the Planning Directorate, Welsh Government. You have asked Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change to call in the application for the Welsh Ministers own determination. I am replying on behalf of the Minister.

The Welsh Government has a very clear policy on calling in planning applications. It considers Local Planning Authorities, as elected bodies, should be left to make decisions about development proposals wherever possible. The Welsh Ministers call in very few applications and only those which raise issues of more than local importance.

Every call-in request is considered on its own merits. Our policy sets out six examples of issues which might persuade the Welsh Ministers to call in a planning application. These are applications which:

- are in conflict with national planning policies;
- could have wide effects beyond their immediate locality;
- may give rise to substantial controversy beyond the immediate locality;
- are likely significantly to affect sites of scientific, nature conservation or historic interest, or areas of landscape importance;
- raise issues of national security; or
- raise novel planning issues.

A fuller explanation of our approach to call-in requests can be found on the Welsh Government website at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/called-in-planning-applications-guidance.pdf>.

Consideration of your call-in request is being undertaken. Consideration is confined to planning issues and whether it is more appropriate for the Welsh Ministers to determine the application. In considering a call-in request the merits of the proposed development are not taken into account.

An Article 18 'Holding Direction' was issued on 21 May 2021 which prevents Ceredigion County Council from issuing a planning decision until the call-in process is concluded. The Direction does not prevent the Council from processing or considering the application, nor does it prevent the Council from refusing consent.

A decision on whether to call in the application will be made in due course. You will be notified of this decision.

You should be aware a call-in request may itself be subject to a freedom of information request. Our response to requests will be in accordance with the duties placed on the Welsh Ministers by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Iles  
Cangen Benderfyniadau - Decisions Branch  
Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gynllunio - Planning Directorate  
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 June 2021 16:36  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** 76/2021 Request for call-in - Planning Application A200773, Ceredigion

**Re: Planning Application A200773, Ceredigion**

Dear Minister,

I wish to request that you call in the above planning application.

Having witnessed the committee meeting (19<sup>th</sup> May '21) I'm extremely confused. The councillors showed little regard for policy, and there was no discussion whatsoever about the misleading and missing elements of the application. Several neighbours were listed as supportive without consultation. There was no environmental impact assessment even though the proposed site is in an area of land, a large proportion of which is or recently has been under environmental management schemes. Most pointedly, it is in open countryside. Paragraph 4.2.34 of PPW Edition 10 and paragraph 10.13 of TAN 2 reiterate that rural exception sites for affordable housing (the measurements for which the proposed house does not conform to) should be on land within or adjoining existing rural settlements.

In the meeting, the councillors repeatedly took it upon themselves to define "settlement" on their own terms and kept adding houses in around the site (from, wrongly, 9, to 12 at one point. It would require a very large catchment indeed to gather that many houses in this area.) There is at least a field and / or road between all of the dwellings here. It doesn't even conform to the definition of a cluster, let alone a settlement.

Even so, [REDACTED] stated the application had only two objections and 'many letters of support'. This is another absolute untruth and shocking to hear stated so blatantly. Despite some of us being misleadingly listed as so, none of the people in the vicinity of the proposed site support the application other than [REDACTED] (- a fact the planning department were informed of as soon as we were [REDACTED] At the deadline for representations, there were 5 objections and 1 short note of support from the applicant's [REDACTED] The planning report states there are now three letters of support, but all from [REDACTED] It is disappointing there is no way of interjecting in these meetings to correct these falsehoods.

It is also disappointing there is no way to draw the councillor's attention to other misleading elements of the case. For example, the agent's statement that the applicants are unable to find a suitable house in the locality. The application is for a 3-bedroom house, and it has already been admitted they intend to make it into a 5-bedroom house. However, the agent's claim there are no suitable houses on the market was based on figures for 4-bedroom houses.

This sleight of hand on the agent's part is characteristic of the application. Given he is a professional, these cannot be put down as oversights. Listing neighbours as supportive when we were given no chance to know what was being proposed; [REDACTED] and his clients as to the size and placement of the house; implying the property will be on the site of a previous dwelling which was actually not in this location nor has been in any way visible for generations. The [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This was his attempt to dismiss concerns over access, which, if Highways recommendations stand, will not only require the gifting of council land, but also the removal of some of my mother-in-law's property. However, more worryingly, they explicitly state (in writing) that they will get round this by ignoring the Highways recommendation. As a final ridiculous argument, the agent's claim that approving the application would 'halve mileage' for the family, and that they would be able to walk in and out of Aberaeron is patent nonsense. I live here. I know how much we have to rely on vehicles.

The argument that the house becomes affordable because the [REDACTED] will not have to pay for the plot does not make the house affordable for subsequent occupiers. As per Paragraph 4.2.25 of PPW (IR 58), it is my understanding that developments proposing affordable housing are required to provide sufficient information to determine the value of the unit at completion (IR 57). It is also of note that there are somewhere in the region of 900 stamped permissions locally, within or adjacent to settlements, so there are ample opportunities for someone to obtain a plot and build the house they need, particularly a couple in secure employment with the council.

The [REDACTED] was unequivocal that the only real option the committee had was to refuse permission and yet they dismissed policy and redefined key terms so they could approve it. The guidelines make it clear that statements submitted for consideration during the committee meeting must be based on policy and not personal and emotive, however, the applicants' statement was entirely designed to tug heartstrings and the councillors' decision seemed made on a purely personal basis. This is clearly shown by the fact they had to discuss finding a technical reason to approve the application *after* voting it through.

I believe that allowing councillors to abuse the system in this way, favouring specific individuals' personal circumstances over and above policy which is designed to protect the *wider* community, not only undermines national policy but might also lead to an eventual removal of local committees from decision making. Therefore, this case has considerable impact beyond the locality.

[REDACTED] might want to establish themselves on [REDACTED] land even if they have been away from it for many years. However, this cannot be done by abusing the application process and policies so blatantly. Areas of tyddyn or dispersed homesteads are an important part of the cultural landscape across Wales which surely need to be preserved and protected and not seen simply as opportunities for 'infill'. To build on family land is a current topic but the simple fact you own land should not mean you can build any house anywhere. The applicants have other options. They state they are a very close-knit family. The [REDACTED] and there is surely a more valid opportunity for them to develop on this brownfield site. Supporting *this* sort of building on family land *would* benefit the rural community as rather than allowing family farms to fall into disrepair they could be

regenerated in a positive way for future generations. Building would also happen where there was *already* building, without impacting open countryside.

I understand that decisions have to be based on policy and hope therefore you will agree to call in this application. If you should do so I would encourage you to look into this case in detail so that existing residents here can be sure, should an exception ultimately be made, that it will not be based on the untruths and misleading statements that have dominated this application and process throughout, and have greatly affected us all who already cherish this place.

Thank you in advance for your time on this matter,

