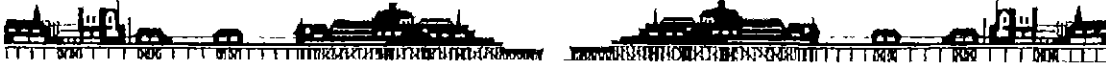


LLANDUDNO
& COLWYN BAY
HISTORY SOCIETY

CYMDEITHAS HANES
LLANDUDNO
A BAE COLWYN



To: Strategic Planning Policy Service.
Conwy County Borough Council (CBCC)

Spet. 19th 2019

Subject; Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2018 to 2033.
Preferred Strategy, Llanrhos Strategic Site.

Objection Document.

Under Development Framework. Policy GP2, in the RLDP plan Llanrhos does not exist. Neither under main villages nor minor settlements. Llanrhos is actually a very ancient settlement pre-dating, Llandudno, Deganwy and Llandudno Junction by many centuries. It had a church, a school, two public houses and a post office/village shop. It was and still is, quite a separate entity which should qualify it as a village as it is surrounded by an important green wedge of land which is used productively for farming.

The growth of the present village took place, first in the 1920's then in the 1960's with an infill several years ago. There is a mix of population, the largest retirees from England, also more recently self employed craftsmen and technicians with their families. There are a few holiday homes. It works as a community. The public houses have long gone as has the post office and shop, migrated, half a mile, up the road to Deganwy but still a focus of community life. There is still a church, well attended, and the school room used by the community for social events etc. There is also a children's play ground, the area cemetery, and parkland accessible by all on foot. It is more than well served by public transport.

The farmer of nearby Bryniau Farm is a tenant on about forty acres of the major two fields that are part of the proposals. He has a milking herd of about 90 cows, plus store - cattle and 600 sheep. His milk goes to cheese making. He opines that the loss of this prime farming land would have a serious impact on the viability of the farm.

Now we come to the stated aim of the plan. The headline figures are that the Conwy Council will, in their adopted plan, take responsibility for creating 1,800 new jobs and the building of 4,300 new houses.

According to their own figures, in the ten years from 2007 to 2017 the population of the county, in the 16-64 yrs group, declined by 2.2% while the group 64 plus increased by 24.5%. - highlighting that the area is a retirement hotspot. Indeed the prediction that the overall working population will decline by 3.8%. is a key issue. Out of the present 8,074 of this group only 400 are employed in traditional manufacturing, while 35% work part time. There is a net daily outflow of this workforce of about 5,000 to work out of the county. Indeed 2,000 of them are travelling to England for work.

The county has been almost completely de-industrialised in a relatively short time. The Hotpoint Factories in Llandudno Junction and the Dolgarrog Aluminium Corporation Factory have gone.

In the case of Dolgarrog the site is now a major tourist attraction, but not a major employer.

The site of the two Hotpoint factories, which were the mainstay of the local economy for many years, have been allowed a change of use by Conwy Council. The main site is now a giant car showroom and the rear site was let to the Welsh Assembly Government to build a multi-storey office block. The plan was that the WAG would re-locate a large number of their workers to North Wales. The workers in Cardiff did not agree, the building was only about half filled. Other lettings have increased but about a third of the block is still empty. It is ten years since it was completed. Three major housing developments at Marl, Albini House and Esgyrynside were built to accommodate these incomers.

In the LDP report, the only possible developments they cite which could provide employment are totally unrealistic. The Lagoon, to be built off Abergele, is dead in the water! The national government refused to fund a prototype in Swansea Bay. The sea bed off North Wales is shallow and the tide levels are much less than in the Bristol Channel, thus making Abergele a non starter. Even if it was built the prospect of local jobs would be very thin. The other one cited is the Brick Works site at Llandudno Junction, which a few years ago was given planning permission for a super store. The site is now an industrial estate with many small businesses which would be wiped out by the proposals. One of the businesses is involved in the metal re-cycling business and would be a serious loss of a local amenity. The prospect of another super retail outlet is now just a dream. The Junction now has four small supermarkets (Asda, Co-op, Iceland, & Tesco; with another (Lidl) just about to be built. They do suggest that a modest office block, built as part of the Esgyrynside development, would provide 80 jobs. inspection of the premises would suggest this is a gross exaggeration.

The planners have only managed to earmark a one hectare site on the Llanrhos development for industry or commerce, with hardly any others throughout the County. We are left completely in the dark about where the 1,800 jobs are going to come from and be housed.

It has just recently appeared in the press that the County Council have admitted that at any one moment, there are 1,600 empty houses in the county. Add to that the number of houses up for sale - which can be viewed on-line or at estate agents offices, so there must be hundreds more houses available.

Without jobs there will be no need for housing, unless we are talking about affluent retirees coming to this part of the world, or well heeled persons who are willing to commute.

The Llanrhos development is not likely to be aimed at the lower end of the market. In Llanrhos the average price of a detached house is £257K, so we can reasonably expect the proposed new houses to be well in excess of that. The reality is, as statistics show, that retirement housing is the only growth area in the county - so bungalows are the only real need. The money is in detached houses with two or more bedrooms. House prices are now eight times the average National income, compared with 4.5 times in the 1990's while the cost of building has not gone up proportionally.

The reality is: for 'affordable housing' read 'token rented social housing'. No evidence has been provided that the local housing association would want to, or be able to provide funding for them.


Other issues remain unaddressed. Welsh Water, which will be required to provide sewerage facilities, may find itself in difficulty. They have already dug up roads to increase the capacity of the drains for the approved Marl Lane development, which is just about to be built. The effluent and surface water from the Llanrhos site will also have to be catered for. After the flooding of sewage in Llandudno Junction recently, they have admitted that they have technical problems. All the sewage and surface water from the 3 main estates - all recently built, has to pass through and under Llandudno Junction. It would have been wise to have found out from Welsh Water whether or not they would be able to cope with the increase another new estate would produce.

There is one other factor that would need consideration. The National Government has decreed that all new houses built from 2025 onwards would not be able to use gas - only electricity for cooking and heating; as well as a supply for charging electric cars. The local provider of electricity does not seem to have been consulted as they would have to provide a much upgraded infra-structure for this demand. Just as an aside, Kilowatt hour per Killowatt hour, electricity is over three times the cost of gas. One can envisage, as we did in the post war years, clustering around a two-bar electric fire to try to keep warm! Will the owners of the affordable housing have affordable heating bills?

Another major issue, not addressed, the existing primary school in Deganwy is reported to be over capacity but additional buildings are being erected as I write! In the future one can see that the proposed new school at Llanrhos would take over from the Deganwy school, but at a price, a further mile away. Finally health: the only medical practice in Deganwy comprises 2 doctors with a 6,000 plus list. People report that it is nearly impossible to get an appointment. Meanwhile at Llandudno Hospital the Health Authority is engaged in closing down wards and clinics.

As to the presentation of the document with its spurious childish graphics we consider that it is an insult to adult intelligence, that might be suitable for primary school children.

A document has just come to hand. It is a planning application, dated August this year, for the siting of 8 holiday cottages at Tyn-y-Coed farm which is in the centre of the Llanrhos development and adjacent to Tyn-y-Coed hall which is a significant listed building. The reasons given for rejection are essentially that "The site is within a Special Landscape Area, Historical Landscape and Green Wedge". It goes on to cite TAN 6, then NTE/4, DP/1, DP/3, DP/4, and DP/6 which seek to conserve the landscape character of the area and ecological interests. Also PPW, TAN6, DP6, NTE/1, which seek to protect the best quality agricultural land. What more can one say!

We are totally opposed  land.

Signature.

John Lawson-Reay,
Chairman, The Llandudno and Colwyn Bay, History Society

Contact,  

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