

Sustainability in Newport – consultation for Neighbourhood Planning

These notes are from a Newport 21 ‘Green Drinks’ meeting on Wednesday 19th February regarding the Newport Neighbourhood Development Plan. They have been written up by different members of the group.

1. Housing and energy

In the future we must be resilient to the high prices of oil, gas and electricity; this will not only affect our energy bills but the price of every aspect of how we currently live our lives. Local food and jobs will be essential. Electricity generation, heating and transport must not add pollution and CO₂ to the atmosphere.

- Houses to be built to a high standard – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or 5 (but no lower than 3 – which is current best practice) would be desirable.
- New estates above 10 three-bedroom dwellings (i.e. assuming 40 occupants) to have their own sewage treatment - preferably with reed beds or septic tanks to take additional load off the existing Newport sewage works.
- The requirement for 35% of new housing to be “affordable” should be mandatory for all but the smallest of developments (<10 dwellings). Builders’ should not be permitted to abrogate this requirement by pleading financial profitability
- Future-proofed broadband provision to all new homes to enable people to work from home and thus reduce their carbon footprint.

Whilst the following may already be included in the Code for Sustainable Homes they were specifically discussed:

1. Build houses to a courtyard plan – to give children safe, car-free areas to play
2. Flats/apartments to have safe storage provisions
3. Cycle lanes should be provided from new developments into the town centre and to schools

All new housing should include a range of the following:

4. Renewable heating and e.g. ground source heat pump, air source heating, district heating using waste biomass, geothermal, biogas.
5. Renewable energy generation e.g. solar PV, small community owned wind turbine.
6. Renewable water heating e.g. solar thermal, solar PV diverter, geothermal.
7. Sustainable water management e.g. Grey water harvesting, and/or
8. Rainwater collection and reuse.
9. Heat recovery ventilation
10. Triple glazing
11. 300mm of insulation to external wall cavities
12. Large south facing windows and small north facing windows
13. Built with materials with large thermal capacity.
14. All new housing should have electric outlets for recharging electric cars.
15. There should be provision of community allotments and orchards
16. British, sustainably sourced e.g. FSC wood, building materials should be used in construction

It was felt that planning permission should be withheld unless a minimum of 10-12 of the above 16 requirements were met.

As a general statement we would like to state that “Newport supports wind, solar, small hydro, geothermal, anaerobic digestion but not fracking.”

Telford and Wrekin Council in their document “A Climate for Change – a first climate change strategy for the community of Telford and Wrekin 2008 - 2026” stated that they should consider introduction of the “Merton Rule”. This was a laudable aspiration but it does not appear to have been acted upon. Brief details of the Merton Rule are below:

The 'Merton Rule' is the ground-breaking planning policy, developed by Merton Council, which requires the use of renewable energy onsite to reduce annual carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the built environment.

Merton developed the rule and adopted it in 2003, its impact was so great that the Mayor of London and many councils have also implemented it; it has also become part of national planning guidance.

Over the past few years, Merton has been working closely with other authorities, professions and industry to embed the Merton Rule. This work is not only leading to big CO2 reductions, but it is helping to create an industry that can respond to the needs for affordable renewable energy

The definition of what is referred to, as the 'Merton Rule' is a prescriptive planning policy that requires new developments to generate at least 10% of their energy needs from on-site renewable energy equipment. The most commonly accepted threshold is 10 homes or 1,000m2 of non-residential development - though this is sometimes lower. This is the accepted definition by local (and regional) planning authorities, academic institutions, trade and professional bodies, and the development, construction and engineering industries.

Around half of UK's local authorities introduced the Merton rule, however, each one applies it to a different degree – for example, some might “expect” a developer to enforce a 10% rule, some will “require” 20% or more.

The adoption of the Merton Rule in Newport with at least a 20% requirement would demonstrate that Newport really cares about its environmental obligations.

Peter Barlow

2. Re-use/Refurbish

Promote effective re-use/ refurbishment

Swishing

Swap Shops - or similar

Chairs/ Furniture/ Cycles

Charity Shops + Collection Policies

Repair Café www.aljazeera.com/programmes/earthrise/2013/07/20137281181568146.html

Architectural reclamation centres

Provide facilities for:

Re-use/ refurbishment

Collection locations for neighbouring provision

Require major developments to provide facilities for re-use/ refurbishment space or funding

Recycling

Need a facility: e.g. North Devon CRC www.devon.gov.uk/seven_brethren_barnstaple
T&W!!!!

Major Developers

Promote a widening of recycling culture

Plastic bag bag

Promote Streetbank website : <http://www.streetbank.com/>

Susanne Bearblock

3. **Flooding** (this consultation was not done during the meeting)

Due to climate change future weather is predicted to be wetter winters and drier summers. With this in mind flooding should be avoided by storing water in a safe way that can allow use at times of drought

The source of flooding threats in Newport is due to mismanagement of surface water and foul water, with certain areas with high groundwater levels.

Having consulted with an expert in the field of water management here are my suggestions:

- All the sewage treated at the treatment works flows into the Strine, this must be kept clear and free flowing all the way to the River Tern.
- On new development balancing ponds must be constructed where they will not threaten current properties.
- Before construction, water movement, with a view to implementing Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS), must be *properly* researched.
- Before construction of any SUDS it must be determined who is responsible for maintenance, what is a satisfactory maintenance schedule and who will pay for this?
- Do not allow building on land that locally is known to flood.
- Properties built on land that locally is known to flood must be built with resilience to flooding e.g. ground floor solely for parking.
- New developments to use reed beds to slow surface water runoff and treat sewage.
- New developments must harvest rainwater and reuse
- New developments must collect grey water and allowed to soak away.
- Hedges, trees and fields are essential for absorbing excess water and slowing water flow through the environment. Every endeavour should be made for the existing trees, hedges and fields to remain *in situ* with more trees and hedges added.

Cath Edwards