



**CARMARTHENSHIRE REPLACEMENT LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC STAGE**

**STATEMENT OF OBJECTION**

**POLICY HOM3 – HOMES IN RURAL VILLAGES**

On behalf of  
Evans Banks Planning Ltd

**Our Ref:** HOM3/EBP  
**Representation No.:** 5467  
**Representor ID:** 4967  
**Date:** September 2024  
**Prepared by:** JDE

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Evans Banks Planning Ltd on behalf of its numerous Clients as a continued objection to the application of *Policy HOM3 – Homes in Rural Villages* of the *Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan* (LDP) as it is currently presented. This Statement has been prepared in advance of our attendance of the relevant session of the Examination in Public and has been prepared in response to the Inspector's issued '*Matters, Issues and Questions*' document. The contents of this Statement should also be read in conjunction with the originally made points of objection submitted at the Revised Deposit stage with respect to all of our respective Clients and their land in relation to this Policy, which still stand.
- 1.2 In addition to providing, where relevant, updated information since the originally made objection, this Statement also seeks to address the following question raised by the Inspector:
- Are the requirements of Policy HOM3, in particular the 10% cap, clearly expressed, based on robust evidence consistent with national planning policy?

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## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.1.1 In terms of all aspects of Development Plans, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out at Paragraph 1.22 that they must “... *provide **certainty** for developers and the public about the type of development that will be permitted at a particular location.*”. Paragraph 1.26 then goes on to provide more specific guidance in relation to Local Development Plans, setting out that they should “... *set out a vision for how places are expected to change in land use terms to accommodate development needs over the plan period. This provides **certainty** for developers and the public about the type of development that will be permitted at a particular location.*”.
- 2.1.2 National policy at various levels advises that growth and in turn development is advised to be distributed in a sustainable manner, with guidance provided from a city to village level. In terms of the latter, *Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (TAN6)* advises at paragraph 2.2.4 that “*In smaller settlements, planning authorities should consider including criteria based policy against which planning applications can be assessed, rather than identifying settlement boundaries.*”. This then in turn supports the objective set out at paragraph 2.2.1 that encourages planning authorities to “... *achieve a better balance between housing and employment, encouraging people to live and work in the same locality.*”.
- 2.1.3 There is therefore clear support at national planning policy level to ensure that smaller villages in rural communities are accommodated in terms of being able to see growth under the provisions of a development plan, with such growth accommodated by means of a criteria based policy rather than the use of settlement boundaries/development limits. However, as with all policies within a development plan, such policies must ensure certainty and consistency in terms of their wording and application.

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2.1.4 In contrast, if the application of such policies is inconsistent, this results in an absence in the required level of certainty of their projection as part of a development plan, which in turns results in a conflict with the requirements of national planning policy. As a result, a failure to follow this path, will result in a development plan being deemed ‘unsound’ in terms of the relevant Tests set out in the Development Plans Manual.

## 2.2 LOCAL POLICY

2.2.1 As is illustrated within the Revised LDP, Policy HOM3 is a criteria based policy that provides a series of criteria and guidance where the Council will consider small scale residential developments will be acceptable within the defined Tier 4 (Rural Villages) settlements.

2.2.2 In the 1<sup>st</sup> Deposit LDP, Policy HOM3 included a ‘cap’ of 20% on all further development within the defined Rural Villages, based on the existing number of dwellings within any specific settlement at the beginning of the Plan period (2018). This figure was revised in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Deposit LDP to 10%. However, at the admission of the Council in its *Housing Topic Paper* (February 2023), the Council advises at paragraph 2.41 that “ ... *this 10% is not evidenced* ...”.

2.2.3 No further evidence or explanation of the approach adopted by the Council with respect to the above cap – at any level – has been provided.

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## 3.0 PRESENTATION OF POLICY HOM3 BY THE COUNCIL

- 3.1.1 As detailed in our original submissions, the principle and overall objectives of Policy HOM3 are fully supported. Due to the inappropriate and restricted application of Development Limits in previous Development Plans for the County, the growth of rural communities has been severely hampered, or even prevented, which has resulted in the housing and wider needs of such communities not being met. This inability to grow and meet a community's needs has had a devastating impact on the continuation and viability of a range of local services and community facilities once found within them and we welcome the Council's attempts to redress these historic policy failures.
- 3.1.2 Notwithstanding the above, as stated in our previous submissions, we are significantly concerned with regards to the use of and level of cap proposed by the Council as part of Policy HOM3. By its own admission, the Council's proposed 10% cap is not based on an evidenced approach, as required by the Development Plan Manual. On this basis alone, the policy as it stands lacks clarity and so conflicts with national planning policy. This is further the case when the guidance of TAN6 is considered, which does not propose the use of a cap at all with regards to the growth of smaller settlements.
- 3.1.3 In practical terms, the use of a 10% cap is flawed. Having reviewed all Rural Villages proposed by the Revised LDP, their size in terms of unit numbers at the Plan base date (2018) and the number of extant/implemented consents at the present day (based on current Development Limits), it is clear that a number of those Rural Villages (including Hermon, Blaenycloed, Croesyceiliog, Nebo, Pontarsais, Maesybont, Milo, Pantllyn, Rhosaman and Llansadwrn). will see no further development at all once the Plan is adopted – questioning the purpose of Policy HOM3 for such settlements.

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- 3.1.4 The application of the 10% cap – or indeed any cap – is also considered to be too rigid and unsustainable, contrary to the claim of the Council in its aforementioned Topic Paper in that the 10% cap “... *provides an opportunity for rural villages to develop at a pace which would be conducive to its character, environment and function, whilst providing a clear limit in terms of what could be considered as acceptable growth.*”.
- 3.1.5 If the 10% cap is to be applied in the adopted Revised LDP, this would mean that Rural Villages such as Crwbin and Temple Bar with no community facilities or local services would be permitted to grow by 6 new residential units from the adoption date, whereas the a Rural Village such as Llansadwrn with a public house, village hall and church would not be permitted to see any further growth, despite its clear sustainable attributes.
- 3.1.6 The above are not isolated examples of how the stringent 10% provides inconsistencies in the Council’s application of its strategic objectives, but also provides a complete lack of clarity on the purpose of the cap and the justification of its level.
- 3.1.7 As a result of the above, the inclusion of the ‘cap’ as part of Policy HOM3 introduces a lack of clarity to the Revised LDP. As detailed above, this lack of clarity fails to adhere to the requirements of national planning policy and so in turns fails two of the Tests of Soundness for the reasons submitted.

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## 4.0 TESTS OF SOUNDNESS

4.1.1 In summary, on the basis of the evidence submitted in and with this Statement, as well as that already submitted to the Authority, it is clear that the definition of Development Limits under the provisions of Policy HOM3, in numerous instances, fails to adhere to the following Tests of Soundness, as required by the *Development Plan Manual*:

- Does the Plan fit?
- Is the Plan appropriate?

4.1.2 It is quite clear that the use of the 'cap' has been done in a manner that lacks clarity and in turn consistency. This then creates a confusing document for use by all parties that lacks transparency and in turn is not consistent with the guidance and requirements of national planning policy (particularly *Planning Policy Wales*).

4.1.3 As a result, the current format of HOM3 would result in the *Carmarthenshire Revised Local Development Plan* being unsound and it should be reviewed, or the composition of Policy HOM3 should be redrafted to secure greater clarity and consistency, in the manner suggested in these and our original submissions.