

By email

16/03/2021

RE: Proposal to build on a Greenfield Site in Danescourt

Dear Simon Field,

Thank you for getting in touch about the proposal to build 36 houses on a greenfield site in Danescourt. We have received other correspondence about this, and I am sending you similar information.

Protecting and enhancing green space is crucial to addressing the climate and nature crisis, and to ensure the physical and mental well-being of our current and future generations. This has been highlighted even more strongly by the COVID-19 pandemic and aligns, in particular, with the national goals of *A Resilient Wales* and *A Healthier Wales*. Green spaces have been a "lifeline" for many during lockdowns and are vital for physical and mental health.

The Future Generations Commissioner does not have the powers or capacity to review specific complaints or intervene in individual decisions. In addition, with around 25,000 planning applications made in Wales every year, it would be impossible for her to weigh in on every one of these even if the legislation provided her with a case-work function. The Commissioner's role is to promote the sustainable development principle, and to help public bodies change their behaviours and follow the new requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. You can read more about her powers [here](#).

Our work in relation to planning has been directed at ensuring that national policies like [Planning Policy Wales](#), the [Local Development Plan Manual](#), and the [National Development Framework, Future Wales](#) are aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We have also provided high level advice and recommendations to Welsh Government and public bodies in relation to planning.

Last year we published our first [Future Generations Report](#), which sets out the Commissioner's findings, vision and advice to Welsh Government and public bodies listed in the Act. This report includes a section on [Land Use Planning and Placemaking](#) and we have developed tailored products of this section, which are available [here](#). There is a [version for Local Authorities](#), as well as a [version for communities and the public](#). This includes a recommendation for public bodies to:

- *Refuse developments which are not fully aligned with Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and those that do not enhance or maintain biodiversity.*

The importance of access to green space is also highlighted in our Section on [A Wales of Cohesive Communities](#), which includes a recommendation to *ensure people can access biodiverse green spaces within 300 metres of their home*. This same recommendation is repeated in our [Manifesto for the Future](#).

Under the Act public bodies, including Cardiff Council, must set and publish well-being objectives, which maximise contribution to the [well-being goals](#). They must then take all reasonable steps to meet these objectives. The Commissioner has a duty to monitor and assess the extent to which public bodies are meeting their well-being objectives, and we take into account the issues raised in correspondence in that assessment and monitoring. Cardiff Council's well-being objectives and steps are available [here](#). One of their well-being objectives is *Cardiff grows in a resilient way*.

It is for the Council, therefore, to justify through both the planning process, and in terms of the steps they are taking to meet their well-being objectives, how they are ensuring that their actions amount to reasonable steps towards their objectives, including *Cardiff grows in a resilient way*.

While she cannot get involved in individual decisions, the Commissioner is keen to empower people and communities to use the Well-being of Future Generations Act directly in their conversations with public bodies. Our [Future Generations Framework for projects](#) and [Future Generations Framework for scrutiny](#) provide prompts and questions that you can ask Cardiff Council in order to see how they are considering the Act and its elements in their decision.

In relation to the impact on the environment and biodiversity, the Welsh Government's Chief Planner, Neil Hemington, sent a letter to local planning authorities in Wales in October 2019 (attached). In this letter, he brings attention to the Environment (Wales) Act **Section 6 biodiversity duty** and notes that the protection and enhancement of nature and biodiversity is a material consideration for every planning application. Therefore, any planning decision should clearly set out how this has been considered and this may be judicially reviewed.

Finally, I would also suggest contacting Planning Aid Wales as they offer free planning advice and may be able to assist you with this. You can contact them on (02920) 625 004 or through their website form [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



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