

From:

Sent: 17 October 2025 17:15

To:

Subject: Comprehensive Critique of Submitted Sustainability Appraisal

Planning Objection to Application 25/0841

Proposed Conversion of 7 Conway Road, Newport to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Comprehensive Critique of Submitted Sustainability Appraisal

1. Overview and Contextual Deficiencies

The submitted Sustainability Appraisal is methodologically flawed, substantively deficient, and procedurally misleading. It fails to meet the evidentiary and policy thresholds required under Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, July 2024) and the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) framework adopted by Newport City Council for its Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

The document is not a full Sustainability Appraisal as defined under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, nor does it meet the standards set out in the Local Government Association's PAS Guide to Better Sustainability Appraisal. It is a rudimentary scoring exercise lacking strategic environmental, social, or economic analysis.

2. Local Facilities: Misleading Scoring and Omission of Critical Context

The appraisal claims a score of 12 points based on proximity to a convenience store and dentist within 200 metres. This is an oversimplification that ignores:

- **Nature of Services:** A convenience store does not equate to access to full retail, banking, or postal services. The Planning Inspectorate has held that proximity to limited services does not constitute sustainable accessibility (*Appeal Ref: APP/Z6950/A/21/3278912*, Penarth).
- **No Mention of Schools:** The site lies within walking distance of **two safeguarded educational facilities**:
 - **St Julian's Primary School** (approx. 300m)
 - **Eveswell Primary School** (approx. 500m) Both are protected under Policy CF1 of the Newport LDP. Increased occupancy and traffic from an HMO poses safeguarding risks, congestion, and noise disruption during peak hours. The cumulative impact on school access routes, pupil safety, and residential amenity is entirely unaddressed.

- **Proximity to Working Men’s Club:** The adjacent Working Men’s Club is a licensed premises with late operating hours. The juxtaposition of transient HMO occupancy with a nightlife venue raises concerns about antisocial behaviour, noise, and cumulative impact on residential amenity.
- **Fire Station Proximity:** The site is within 400 metres of Maindee Fire Station. Emergency vehicle movements, sirens, and operational noise are incompatible with high-density residential use, particularly for vulnerable tenants.
- **Railway Line and Nature Corridor:** The property is near the mainline railway and associated green corridor. This is a designated biodiversity asset under the Newport ISA (2023) and Wildlife SPG. The appraisal fails to assess noise, vibration, or ecological impact.

3. Public Transport: Inadequate Consideration of Modal Integration and Safety

The appraisal assigns 3 points for a bus stop within 300 metres. This is insufficient:

- **No Modal Integration:** There is no mention of rail access, despite proximity to Newport Station (approx. 1.2km). Planning Policy Wales requires integration of transport modes (PPW §4.1.11).
- **Safety and Accessibility:** No pedestrian audit or safety assessment is provided.
- **No Consideration of Night Services:** HMO tenants often work irregular hours. The absence of night bus services undermines the claim of sustainable transport access.

4. Frequency of Public Transport: Unsupported Assertion

The claim of “frequent services within 10 minutes” is unsubstantiated:

- **No Timetable Evidence:** No bus schedules or frequency data are provided. The Planning Inspectorate has previously dismissed similar claims lacking evidentiary support (*Appeal Ref: APP/G6930/A/20/3251123*).
- **No Peak vs Off-Peak Analysis:** Sustainability must consider peak-hour congestion and service reliability. The appraisal is silent on this.

5. Cycle Route: Absence of Infrastructure

The appraisal assigns 0 points for cycle routes but fails to elaborate:

- **No Mitigation or Enhancement Proposals:** There is no mention of cycle storage, route improvements, or modal shift incentives.
- **Contrary to Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013:** The Act requires local authorities to promote walking and cycling. The appraisal fails to engage with this statutory duty.

6. Procedural Misrepresentation: Misuse of SPG Scoring Framework

The appraisal relies on Appendix 5 of the Newport City Council SPG – Parking Standards:

- **Misapplication of Purpose:** Appendix 5 guides parking provision, not land use change. Using it to justify sustainability is procedurally inappropriate.
- **No Reference to TAN 18:** Technical Advice Note 18 (Transport) requires holistic transport sustainability assessment. The appraisal fails to engage with TAN 18.
- **No Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, significant land use changes should be screened for SEA. No such screening is referenced.

7. Absence of Baseline Data and Comparative Context

A robust sustainability appraisal must include:

- **Baseline Environmental Conditions:** Noise levels from the railway, air quality near Conway Road, and ecological sensitivity of the adjacent nature corridor are omitted.
- **Comparative Impact Analysis:** No comparison is made between existing C3 use and proposed C4/HMO use in terms of waste generation, or social cohesion.
- **No Reference to LDP Policy GP4:** This policy requires development to minimise environmental impact and protect amenity. The appraisal fails to demonstrate compliance.

8. Omission of Key National and Local Policy Tests

The appraisal fails to address:

| Policy / Guidance | Requirement | Appraisal Deficiency |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| PPW §2.27 | Development must contribute to placemaking and cohesive communities | No assessment of social cohesion or community impact |
| PPW §4.1.11 | Integration of transport modes | No mention of rail access or modal shift |
| TAN 12 (Design) | Contextual design and character | No analysis of impact on local character or built form |
| Newport LDP Policy H6 | Control of HMOs based on amenity and saturation | No saturation mapping or amenity impact assessment |
| Newport ISA 2023 | Protection of biodiversity corridors | No ecological assessment of railway-adjacent green corridor |

9. Failure to Address Cumulative Impact and Saturation

- **No Saturation Analysis:** The appraisal does not quantify existing HMOs in the vicinity. This breaches Policy H6 and undermines the Council's ability to manage cumulative impact.
- **No Reference to Licensing Scheme:** Newport's Additional Licensing Scheme imposes thresholds and management standards. The appraisal ignores these entirely.
- **No Community Consultation Evidence:** PPW and LDP policies require meaningful engagement. The appraisal provides no evidence of consultation with neighbours, school authorities, or local stakeholders.

10. Newport City Council HMO Survey: Strategic Context and Evidentiary Weight

In August 2025, Newport City Council commissioned a £20,800 survey on HMOs, conducted by RRR Consultancy. The survey aimed to:

- Quantify community resistance to HMO conversions
- Assess infrastructure strain, including parking and waste
- Evaluate social cohesion and antisocial behaviour risks

The proposed conversion at 7 Conway Road directly intersects with these concerns:

- **Proximity to St Julian's and Eveswell Primary Schools** raises safeguarding and congestion concerns
- **Adjacent Working Men's Club** introduces risks of noise and antisocial behaviour
- **Nearby Maindee Fire Station** contributes to ambient noise and emergency traffic
- **Proximity to railway line and nature corridor** introduces ecological sensitivity and noise/vibration impacts

The appraisal fails to engage with the findings or rationale of the Council's own commissioned survey. This omission undermines its credibility and relevance.

Conclusion

The submitted Sustainability Appraisal is not fit for purpose. It is procedurally flawed, substantively inadequate, and strategically misaligned with national and local planning policy. It fails to address baseline conditions, cumulative impact, modal integration, ecological sensitivity, and community infrastructure. It misuses scoring frameworks, omits key policy tests, and disregards the Council's own commissioned evidence base.

In light of these deficiencies, the appraisal cannot be relied upon to justify the proposed HMO conversion. Its inclusion in the planning application should be given negligible weight, and the application should be refused on grounds of unsustainable development, procedural misrepresentation, and failure to comply with Planning Policy Wales, the Newport LDP, and associated statutory guidance.