

Report of Alan Woodman

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

GOWER AONB – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy EV26 of the Unitary Development Plan states:-

‘Within the Gower AONB, the primary objective is the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty.’ (Page 40, Policy EV26)

Further,

‘Government guidance requires decisions affecting AONB’s to favour conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape, whilst having regard to the social and economic well being of the area.’ (Page 40, point 1.7.20)

If the Gower AONB is required to contribute to the future housing needs, then that housing must facilitate the conservation and enhancement of the AONB by providing affordable housing for rural workers who contribute to these objectives. Executive housing for people who make life style choices to live on Gower, whilst daily commuting off the AONB for work, education etc, does not contribute or conserve the area and must be resisted. Further, national planning policy recognises the detrimental impact that commuting has on the environment.

Traditionally people employed in the rural economy are amongst the lowest wage earners. It is critical for the future protection, conservation and well being of Gower AONB that sufficient affordable housing – suitably located - for rural workers is provided. For these reasons it is critical that sufficient affordable housing for local workers is a central objective of future planning policy.

The forthcoming Local Development Plan should resist residential development within the AONB except for affordable housing needed for those workers employed within the AONB rural sector. Furthermore, affordable housing away from existing settlements should be considered favourably where such development would support an established, existing rural business site.

Alan Woodman