

Code No. and Date Received	Name and Address of Applicant	Description and Location of Proposed Development
20/0047/OUT 27.01.2020	Pobl Group E Cunliffe Exchange House The Old Post Office High Street Newport NP20 1AA	Redevelop the site for residential development (up to 125 units) and all associated works (all matters reserved) Land At Former Pontllanfraith House Blackwood Road Pontllanfraith NP12 2YW

APPLICATION TYPE: Outline Application

SITE AND DEVELOPMENT

Location: The 3.87 hectare site is located to the east of Blackwood Road in Pontllanfraith on the site of the former Council Offices (Ty Pontllanfraith).

Site description: The application site comprises the former Council Office building (now demolished) in the central part of the application site, together with the car parking area to the north and south, and areas of open space to the east and west. Most of the site is unallocated in the adopted LDP, but the eastern part of the site forms part of the Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park. The Memorial Park itself extends to the north and west of the application site, and a Medical Centre is located to the south. A Grade II listed war memorial is located to the west of the former Council Offices within the site. This will be retained as part of the proposal.

To the north of the site is a designated Local Nature Reserve, and to the North-West of the site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is also bounded extensively by protected Trees (TPOs) and a public right of way runs along the southern boundary.

Development: Outline application to redevelop the site of the Former Pontllanfraith House Council Offices for residential development (up to 125 units). The planning application is in outline form with layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved for future consideration.

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The proposal comprises of:

- 125 dwellings comprising of 42 social rented units, 41 Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) units and 42 units for market sale.
- Open space in the form of a natural play area on the eastern part of the application site.
- An area of drainage attenuation in the central part of the site that will also serve as an area of informal public open space.

The site will be served by the existing access off Blackwood Road that previously served the Council Offices and continues to serve the Health Centre.

The planning application and related plans were supported with the following documents:

- Planning Statement.
- PAC Report.
- Design and Access Statement.
- Drainage Strategy Report.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- Great Crested Newts Survey Report.
- National Vegetation Classification Survey.
- Transport Statement.
- Travel Plan.
- Tree Survey Report and Tree Constraints Plan.
- Landscape Strategy.
- Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report.

Dimensions: The site amounts to 3.87 hectares. The site is an irregular shape, but roughly triangular tapering from west to east to follow the existing field parcel pattern. The site has maximum dimensions of approximately 240 metres measured north to south, and 310 metres east to west.

Scale Parameters:

Width - Min: 4.0 metres, Max: 19.0 metres;
Depth - Min: 6.5 metres, Max: 10.0 metres;
Height - Min: 6.0 metres, Max: 9.0 metres.

Materials: Not applicable at outline stage.

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Ancillary development, e.g. parking: The submitted indicative site layout shows a large drainage basin area located roughly in the centre of the site which is associated with the required Sustainable Urban Drainage approval process (SAB). An area of formal open space is also shown at the eastern extent of the application site. It is understood that this area will act primarily as an area of natural play with associated natural play features, as well as a drainage feature during extreme rainfall events. The vast majority of the time this area would be dry and will function as formal open space provision. These details will be formalised and agreed at reserved matters stage should outline permission be granted.

PLANNING HISTORY 2010 TO PRESENT

12/0661/LA - Convert flat roof to pitched - Granted 01.11.2012.

POLICY

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Site Allocation: The site is within the settlement boundary and the eastern part of the site is allocated as Leisure land (Ref: LE1.9 - Harold Finch Memorial Park). The site has no ecological designation.

Policies:

Strategic Policies

Policy SP2 Development Strategy (NCC), Policy SP4 Settlement Strategy, Policy SP5 Settlement Boundaries, Policy SP6 Place Making, Policy SP7 Planning Obligations, Policy SP14 Total Housing Requirements, and Policy SP15 Affordable Housing Target.

Countywide Policies

Policy CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Policy CW2 Amenity, Policy CW3 Design considerations (Highways), Policy CW4 Natural Heritage protection, Policy CW5 Protection of the Water Environment, Policy CW6 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection, Policy CW10 Leisure and Open Space provision, Policy CW11 Affordable Housing Planning Obligation and Policy CW15 General locational constraints.

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Supplementary Planning Guidance

LDP1: Affordable Housing Obligations, LDP4: Trees and Development and LDP 6: Building Better Places to Live.

NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018).

Technical Advice Note 2: Planning & Affordable Housing (2006), Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009), Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016), Technical Advice Note 16: Sport Recreation and Open Space (2009) and Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Did the application have to be screened for an EIA? Yes.

Was an EIA required? No.

COAL MINING LEGACY

Is the site within an area where there are mining legacy issues? The application site is located in the high risk coal mining legacy area. On that basis the application was accompanied by a Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report prepared by Terra Firma (Wales) Limited. This Report has been informed by an appropriate range of sources including the results of intrusive ground investigations in the form of 5no. rotary boreholes drilled to a maximum depth of 47m. Borehole logs and a plan illustrating where the boreholes were drilled are appended to the report. Based on the findings of these ground investigations the report author concludes that the new development is at a very low risk from mining related ground instability however. This low risk can be mitigated by the use of suitable reinforcement within the foundations.

Based on this report, the Coal Authority considers that the content and conclusions of the Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report are sufficient for the purposes of the planning system in demonstrating that the application site is safe and stable for the proposed development. The Coal Authority therefore has no objection to the proposed development.

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CONSULTATION

Rights Of Way Officer - No objection subject to advice being relayed to the developer regarding public rights of way in the vicinity of the application site. Requests improvements to the existing right of way along the southern boundary of the site to be secured by way of condition.

Transportation Engineering Manager - Based on the Transport Statement that accompanied the application raises no objection to the principle of the development.

Head Of Public Protection - No objection subject to conditions.

Conservation & Design Officer - Raises concerns about the potential impact of development on the Listed War Memorial to the west of the site. These comments will be forwarded to the developer to inform the reserved matters layout.

Senior Engineer (Land Drainage) - Provide advice to the developer and request that the application be deferred until such a time that the land drainage details have been agreed in accordance with the SAB approval process. As SAB approval is a separate legislative process that the developer will be required to satisfy it is not considered necessary or reasonable to delay the determination of the planning application for this reason.

CCBC Housing Enabling Officer - No objection subject to the securing of at least 25 percent of the development as affordable housing. Provides advice to the developer.

Ecologist - Based on the submitted ecology reports, no objection is raised at outline stage subject to a condition being attached to the permission.

Landscape Architect - Raises concern about the potential loss of mature trees within the development site, and provides advice regarding landscaping provision. This advice will be relayed to the developer and should inform the reserved matters layout.

Natural Resources Wales - Raise concerns regarding the potential impact of the development on access and management of the Memorial Park Meadows Pontllanfraith SSSI to the north west of the application site. However as this land is Local Authority owned and maintained these concerns can be appropriately controlled by way of conditions. Their concerns regarding potential impact on bats has also been addressed by way of relevant surveys.

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Head Of Public Protection - No objection subject to conditions.

Dwr Cymru - Confirm that the local sewer network has adequate capacity to accept foul drainage from the proposed development. Provide advice to the developer.

CADW - No comments.

Principal Valuer - No comments.

The Coal Authority - Raise no objection to the proposal based on the Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report (prepared by Terra Firma) that accompanied the application.

CCBC - 21st Century Schools - Confirm that there is adequate capacity for catchment children in local schools to accommodate the proposed development.

Parks And Open Spaces - No response.

Head Of Public Services - Provides advice to the developer regarding refuse collection. The developer should take this into account in relation to any reserved matters application.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer - No objection subject to advice being relayed to the applicant.

Western Power Distribution - Raise no objection and provide advice to the developer.

Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees) - Raises concern about the potential loss of protected trees within the site based on the indicative site layout plan that accompanied the application. However as the layout of the development is a reserved matter, the retention of high value trees should inform the layout. The comments of the Tree Officer are discussed in more detail in the analysis section of this report.

Strategic & Development Plans - Whilst concerns are raised relating to the loss of part of the Harold Finch Memorial Park, based on the contribution the development would make to housing and affordable housing need, on balance raise no objection to the proposal.

ADVERTISEMENT

Extent of advertisement: A total of twenty six nearby residential properties and commercial premises were consulted by way of letter and bi-lingual site notices were placed at the entrance to the site near Blackwood Road.

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Response: Two objections have been received.

A petition signed by 1308 signatories has also been received. The petition refers to saving Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park from housing development, but it does not contain the planning application reference number and it is not dated, and therefore it is not specific in regard to the current application. It has however been considered in relation to the current application.

Summary of observations:

1. Most appropriate use of the site is as parkland and the proposed development will alter the landscape forever;
2. Proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
3. Large amount of water runs through the site - drainage/flooding implications;
4. Disappointed that the large boundary stone at the entrance of the site is proposed to be moved;
5. Reference to the 2010 LDP only allocating 91 houses on the land;
6. Questions the affordable housing provision onsite;
7. States that NRW have serious concerns;
8. States that habitat loss compensation is unacceptable;
9. Wellbeing of future generations should also include well being of animals, ecosystems and biodiversity;
10. Development does not improve the environment or culture;
11. Pressure on existing facilities;
12. Concern that the development encroaches into the Harold Finch Memorial Park;
13. Noise from the nearby commercial uses to the east, and road noise from Blackwood Road to the west have not been considered;
14. Development will increase traffic flows on Blackwood Road, thereby also increasing noise and air pollution, to the detriment of the residents of Blackwood Road;
15. The future development of Pontllanfraith comprehensive school will have a cumulative impact associated with the current proposal in terms of traffic generation, air and noise pollution, and this cumulative impact should be considered as part of the current application;
16. Querying the accuracy of the Transport Statement;
17. Querying the Travel Plan on the basis that it refers to the 901 bus to train service that may be discontinued in accordance with the CCBC draft budget proposals 2020/21.

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SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT

What is the likely effect of the determination of this application on the need for the Local Planning Authority to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area?
Crime and disorder are not considered to be an issue for this application.

EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

Does the development affect any protected wildlife species? The planning application was accompanied by several ecology and biodiversity surveys and reports that included: Tree Retention/Removal Plan; a Landscape Strategy Plan; a Great Crested Newt Report; National Vegetation Classification Survey Report; and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report. Based on these reports no objection is raised by the Council's ecologist.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Is this development Community Infrastructure Levy liable? Yes, the application site is located in the Mid Viability CIL zone where the chargeable amount is £25 (plus indexation). It should be noted that affordable housing benefits from CIL exemption.

ANALYSIS

Policies:

Principle of Development.

The application site is in a sustainable location, within settlement limits, in proximity to the services and facilities of Blackwood and, therefore, its development is supported in accordance with strategic policies SP4 and SP5.

The application site is partially brownfield, being the former Council Offices, and flanked on to the east and west by greenfield land. Planning Policy Wales 10 supports the redevelopment of sustainable brownfield sites. Furthermore, Policy SP2 of the Local Development Plan supports the development of brownfield and greenfield sites in the Northern Connections Corridor providing they support the economic and social function, reduce car trips, protect natural heritage and are an efficient use of land. It will be demonstrated through this report how the proposal accords with the requirements of Policy SP2.

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Given the application site's sustainable location within the settlement boundary, the principle of development is established subject to the proposals being acceptable in regard to all material planning considerations.

The relevant material planning considerations in respect of this application are:

1. Housing Delivery.
2. Loss of the Leisure Facility.
3. Impact on Trees.
4. Ecological Considerations.
5. Highway Impact.
6. Impact of Air Quality.
7. Rights of Way.
8. Affordable Housing.
9. Residential Amenity.
10. Leisure and Open Space Provision.
11. Section 106 Legal Agreement requirements.

These matters are discussed in turn below.

Housing Delivery.

The development will provide up to 125 No. new dwellings of which 66% are proposed to be of an affordable tenure. The developer is an established Registered Social Landlord (hereafter referred to as RSL) with a proven track record of delivery within the County Borough.

The up to date Annual Monitoring Report (hereafter referred to as AMR) for the Local Development Plan (hereafter referred to as LDP) has indicated that housing has not been delivered at the levels required by the LDP. Policy SP14 requires 8,625 new dwellings to be constructed over the LDP period, which equates to 575 dwellings per year. At this point in the life of LDP it was expected that 7,475 dwellings would have been constructed, however, only a total 4,835 have been completed. Resulting in a requirement for a further 3,790 dwellings to be constructed by the end of 2021 (i.e. in circa. 19 months). The house building rate in the Authority has been consistently below the LDP target and in 2019 the lowest rate since 1996 was recorded at just 122 units per year.

There is, therefore, a clear need to bring suitable, sustainable housing development sites forward to meet the LDP housing target in accordance with Policy SP14.

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Furthermore, as mentioned above, the applicant is a RSL and they have promoted the application on the basis of 66% of the total development, so up to 83 dwellings, being offered of an affordable tenure. Policy SP15 which relates to the delivery of affordable housing requires development within the Northern Connections Corridor to provide 25% affordable housing. The proposed affordable housing contribution proposed seeks to provide over and above the minimum requirement which would represent a significant contribution towards the overall affordable housing target of the LDP which is 964 units. It is acknowledged that the Local Planning Authority can only secure 25% affordable housing via a planning condition or Section 106 Agreement since this is the policy requirement. The applicant is an RSL and there is strong evidence, given their previous developments in the County Borough, that they will deliver the level of affordable housing and it is reasonable to assume this provision will come forward.

The proposed development would provide a significant benefit to the housing delivery in the County Borough and supported in accordance with Policy SP14 and SP15. The delivery of housing would also support the economic and social function of local area, including Blackwood town centre, by increasing the local population which accords with Policy SP2.

Loss of Leisure Facility.

The application site is partially designated as a leisure allocation under Policy LE1 as formal open space (LDP reference LE1.9). This area of open space is part of a wider park known as the Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park (hereafter referred to as SHFMP). The application site also encompasses a children's play area to the north west which is not covered by the policy LE1 designation.

Policy CW8 of the Local Development Plan seeks to protect leisure facilities and, therefore, is relevant when assessing the development of the designated open space area within the SHFMP and the children's play area. Policy CW8 states:

Proposals that would result in the loss of a community and/or leisure facility will not be permitted except where:

- A. A comparable replacement facility can be provided by the developer either on or off site, and within easy and convenient access on foot or by bicycle, or
- B. It can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements.

The impact of the development in terms of the SHFMP and the children's play area will be discussed in turn below.

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Impact on the Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park.

The application site encompasses approximately 1.4ha of the SHFMP which represents 13.3% of the overall area of the memorial park. Whilst this area would be lost from the park itself, the overall development will be required to provide two areas of open space including a local area of play (hereafter referred to as a LAP) and a local area of equipped play (hereafter referred to as a LEAP) in accordance with the Fields in Trust Standards (Wales) which would equate to a minimum of 500m² in open space. One of these areas would have a dual purpose as a play area and as sustainable drainage. The indicative master plan demonstrates the potential size and location of each area of open space. Whilst it is acknowledged this layout is not set, since layout is a reserved matter, it clearly demonstrates the capacity of the site to deliver this level of open space at reserved matters stage.

The 13.3% loss of the SHFMP is, therefore, mitigated to an extent by the provision of these two formal areas of open space which will be open to the general public and easily accessible by foot and bicycle.

Despite the open space to be secured through the development, it is acknowledged that the proposal will result in the partial loss of the SHFMP for which a comparable replacement facility will not be provided as required under the provisions of Policy CW8. In this case it is necessary however to assess the lack of compliance with Policy CW8 against other material considerations which are pertinent to the determination of this application which, amongst other things, the contribution to housing delivery.

In this respect as discussed in detail under the 'Housing Delivery' section above, the development will provide up 125 No. new dwellings of which 66% will be an affordable tenure on a site within an established settlement boundary which is in a highly sustainable location (the sustainability of the site discussed in more detail under 'Highway Considerations' below). The site is partially brownfield and therefore, its re-use is regarded to be an efficient use of land, in accordance with Policy SP2.

What's more the sites sustainable location, its connectivity, access to the SHFMP and surrounding public right of way network together its capacity to accommodate formal areas of public open space and sustainable urban drainage will facilitate a well design development that at the reserved matters stage has the capacity to meet the placemaking objectives embedded within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10).

These housing delivery considerations are, in this case, considered to outweigh the loss of this part of the SHFMP. The significant level of housing that would be delivered would provide a substantial benefit to the local community which is considered to outweigh the moderate loss of open space.

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It is acknowledged that whilst from a planning perspective the policy deals with the loss of the open space, as discussed above, the loss of part of the park has a wider meaning to some local residents given the open space forms part of the memorial park for Sir Harold Finch and understandably this matter is an emotive one. It is regrettable that the development would encroach on the park. The determination of the application must, however, be based purely on material planning considerations. On that basis, it is considered that the substantial benefit to the housing target outweighs the loss open space as discussed above.

Loss of the Children's Play Area.

The existing children's play area on the site is also protected by Policy CW8. As mentioned above, Policy CW8 allows for the loss or such a play area the development if a comparable replacement facility can be provided either on or off site, and within easy and convenient access on foot or by bicycle. The Council, which currently owns the park, have secured planning permission for a replacement children's play area along Blackwood Road (application reference: 20/0200/LA). This replacement facility was proposed at this location since it was regarded as being more accessible by foot and bicycle by the wider community and had far better natural surveillance.

The loss of the children's park as part of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable since an equivalent facility has been provided in the local area in accordance with Policy CW8. Furthermore, formal public open space will be a requirement of the proposed layout at reserved matters stage.

To conclude on the loss of leisure facilities, the proposal will result in the loss of 13.3% of the SHFMP yet it will secure a LAP and LEAP which will also provide sustainable drainage benefits and a replacement children's play area has been granted planning permission elsewhere. The proposed development would therefore make a significant contribution towards the LDP housing target, which is much needed given the consistently low delivery of housing during the plan period to date. On balance, therefore, in the context of other material planning considerations, it is considered that the loss of leisure facilities are acceptable in this instance.

Impact on Trees.

The application site has a large number of trees located along the site boundary which are not within the application site but nonetheless are important to the setting of the proposed development. In some cases, the root protection areas of these trees encroach into the development area. Within the limits of the site there are clusters of trees to the north, individual trees located centrally and within the western portion of the site near the war memorial. The majority of the trees in and around the site are covered TPO (ref: 119/81/GCC).

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This assessment, therefore, relates to the trees inside the site limits and on the periphery to ensure a holistic assessment of the trees is carried out. It is important to note, however, that some of the trees covered by the Tree Preservation Order and identified in the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (hereafter referred to as the AIA) to be removed (discussed in more detail below) are outside of the development site. This application, if approved, will only permit the removal of trees within the development boundary and does not extend to trees beyond the site limits. To remove the TPO trees outside of the site boundary will require separate TPO consent. An informative will be added to the permission to advise the applicants of this.

As indicated above the application is supported by a Tree Survey and AIA which have assessed trees within the site limits and all trees along the site periphery. The Tree Survey identified the quality of all the trees on site and AIA provides a brief on the tree removal proposed to facilitate the development.

The AIA identified that the trees identified as T7, T11, T13, T18, T19, T20, T21, T24, T26, T46, T52, G55, G57, T59, G83, T84, G86 and T94 are of poor quality (category U) and are recommended for removal. The Tree Officer has agreed with these conclusions and to these trees being removed. The removal of these trees are recognised as necessary given their poor quality and is supported.

The AIA also identifies the removal of the following trees in order to facilitate the development T1, T2, T3, T6, T17, T85, G87, G88, T89, G90, T91 and T104, which are all C category trees (low quality) except for T4, T5, T6, T91 and T104 which are identified in the assessment as B category (moderate quality).

The loss of the category C trees is regarded as acceptable since they are of lower quality trees and it is considered that replacement planting through landscaping, which is a reserved matter, can be secured to mitigate for their loss. The tree officer supports the loss of the category C trees.

The Tree Officer has raised concerns in respect of the loss of T4, T5, T91, T104 and T105 since they are considered to be good quality and also that T4 and T5 should be regarded as category A trees, due to their combined quality. Category A and B trees are ordinarily required to be retained and represent a material planning consideration.

In this case, however, it is acknowledged that a large number of trees will be retained and the majority of trees to be removed are of poor quality and their removal is necessary for good management of the overall woodland. The retention of the trees identified by the Tree Officer requires a balanced consideration between the benefit the trees offer in terms of its landscape and amenity value and the potential impact they would have on the final layout of the development.

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Following a site visit, it was assessed that T104 and T105, whilst attractive trees, are isolated from wider existing landscaping and are of small stature. They are located centrally within the site and, therefore, their retention could be challenging to the overall development and potentially hinder the provision of good quality, cohesive layout.

T4, T5 and T91 were also viewed and it was concluded they have significant amenity value and landscape benefits given their size and quality, more so than T104 and T105, and should be retained.

On balance, T104 and T105 are considered not to be of such a high quality or positive visual amenity to warrant their retention and their loss is acceptable, however, suitable replacement planting will be requested at reserved matters as part of the landscaping details. T4, T5 and T91, however, are valuable in the overall landscape and should be retained and a planning condition requiring their retention will be imposed. Subject to the imposition of condition the proposed development is acceptable when assessed under the provisions of Policy CW6.

Ecological impact.

The application was supported by the following ecology documents:

Tree Retention/Removal Plan 10/2019.

Landscape Strategy Plan, 430.02 Rev A.

Great Crested Newt Report, Final; V2.0 August 2019 by JBA Consulting.

National Vegetation Classification Survey Report V1.0, August 2019; by JBA Consulting.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report V2.0 August 2019 by JBA Consulting.

Based on the findings of these report/surveys, the Councils Ecologist identifies the following issues of importance:

1. The loss of trees.

The arboriculture report identifies the proposed loss of 27 individual trees which includes 17 mature trees and 6 groups of trees. As the layout of the development is a Reserved Matter, it should aim to retain as many mature trees as possible, with additional planting for the loss of any trees lost. The scheme should aim for a ratio of 2:1 (planted to lost). This ratio is also recommended in the relevant surveys submitted by the applicant's ecologist.

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2. Bat roosting potential of impacted trees.

The trees identified by the agent as having moderate potential for bats are not proposed to be removed. However, to ensure there is no impact on potential bat roosts a condition will be attached to secure appropriate felling methods for the trees identified as having low bat potential.

3. The importance of the grassland in the eastern part of the application site.

The grassland in the eastern part of the site has been identified as hay meadow type grassland supporting a population of Southern Marsh Orchids. On this basis the reserved matters application should include details for the preservation of this habitat, either in situ or through translocation.

4. Site boundaries/dark corridors.

The application is surrounded in large parts by mature trees and hedgerows. To ensure ongoing connectivity for biodiversity, vegetated dark movement corridors for wildlife must be secured around the site. At this outline stage, this plan can be indicative, however, for the Reserved Matters application, this information must be provided in detail. This will also require coordination with the lighting strategy.

5. Reptiles.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identified a prior record for Slow worms on site, and it has assumed presence of a population of reptiles and has recommended that a Reptile Strategy will be required in order to carry out the development. This information can be provided at Reserved Matters Stage.

6. Biodiversity Enhancement.

A biodiversity enhancement strategy will be required prior to construction, however, this can be submitted with the Reserved Matters application.

7. Priority Species: Hedgehog.

Ensure no impact on hedgehog by providing access into the curtilages of all the new properties. This can be achieved through gaps under fences and through walls. Hedgehog access can be either 130mm x 130mm hole, a continuous gap of 100mm high or a 150mm diameter pipe through a wall. This should be included on plans submitted with the reserved matters application.

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On the basis of the above considerations, the Council's Ecologist raises no objection and the proposal is regarded as acceptable subject to condition, and advice being forwarded to the applicant to inform the reserved matters application.

Highway Impact.

The application is made in outline with all matters reserved and, therefore, details of access and parking are reserved for later consideration. It is, however, required at this stage to assess whether there is a suitable access to serve the development and whether the impact of the development would have an acceptable impact on the local highway network in accordance with the requirements of Policy CW3.

The application site was occupied by Pontllanfraith House which was a former Council Offices which had 6,100sqm of office space within the three-storey building. The Pontllanfraith House was opened in 1975 and demolished in 2018.

The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) which has carried out a TRICS analysis to estimate the trip generation from the former Council Offices and the proposed 125 No. residential developments to enable a comparison to be made.

The TRICS data provided estimates that 1521 trips over a 12-hour period were likely in respect of the former office building. This equates to 214 trips in the morning peak period (08.00 - 9.00) and 196 trips in the evening peak period PM (17.00 - 18.00).

The proposed 125 No. residential development estimates 906 trips over a 12-hour period and for the peak period this equates to 102 trips in the morning peak period (08.00 - 9.00) and 92 trips in the evening peak period (17.00 - 18.00).

The data demonstrates that the former office use had significantly more trips over the 12-hour period and during the peak period than the proposed residential development. Indeed, the residential development results in an approximately 50% reduction rate in trips during the peak periods.

Whilst it is acknowledged the former offices are demolished, the TS submitted indicate that the access and local road network has previously accommodated significantly more vehicular movements than the proposed development. It is concluded, therefore, that the access and local highway network is capable of accommodating the proposed traffic associated with the proposed development. The Transportation Engineering Manager supports the findings of the TS.

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Whilst the TS demonstrate a significant reduction in vehicular trips, it includes an assessment of census data to understand current modes of transport for commuters. This data indicates that on average 78% of people would likely use a motor vehicle to travel to work. Applying this census data to the estimated trips during peak period for the proposed development, morning and evening peak trips would reduce further to 80 and PM 76, respectively. This would result in even less pressure on the local network in comparison to the previous use.

It is however, expected that the percentage use of the private motor vehicle could be reduced further since the site is in an extremely sustainable location. It is within 95m of the nearest bus stops along the B4251 which have frequent services throughout the day and on the weekends. The site is also 500m walking distance to independent shops such as a convenience store, which further boosts the sustainability credentials of the site.

Planning Policy Wales 10 requires new development to be assessed against the sustainable transport hierarchy which requires development to prioritise the following in order:

1. Walking and cycling;
2. Public transport;
3. Low emissions vehicles; and
4. Private motor vehicles.

Applying the sustainable transport hierarchy to the proposed development, the following conclusion can be drawn.

Based on the submitted TS and the assessment of the development against PPW10, it can be concluded that development will have an acceptable impact on the local highway network, sustainable modes of transport are easily accessible and a suitable access to the site can be achieved. The proposals, therefore, accord with Policy CW3 and are acceptable in regard to highway impact.

1. Walking and cycling.

The site is located in a sustainable location with local services within a 500m walking distance and which are accessible via existing foot paths.

The site is also adjacent to Footpath 88 which provides a footpath, providing a recreational walk. This footpath also links to Penmaen Industrial Estate to the north and Commercial Street in Pontllanfraith to the south.

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2. Public transport.

As discussed above, the site is within 95m of the nearest bus stops which are well served by existing bus services.

3. Low emissions vehicles.

Electronic vehicles charging point will be secured via planning condition for all on plot parking spaces. This will encourage low emissions vehicle ownership amongst future occupiers.

4. Private motor vehicles.

The sustainable location of the site and provision of charging points for electrical vehicles provides ample opportunity for future occupiers to not to have to rely on the private car as their main mode of transport.

To conclude, on the basis of the data set out in the submitted Transport Statement (which is summarised above), which indicates that the proposed use will generate approx. 50% less traffic than the former employment use of the site, coupled with the sites sustainable location and easy access to public transport, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a traffic generation and highway safety perspective. On this basis the Transportation Engineering Manager raises no objection to the proposal.

Air Quality.

Air quality is an emerging, high profile issue relating to development, and it is important that proposals pay due regard to this issue in accordance with national and local planning policy. Based on the discussion above in the Highway Impact section, it is estimated that the proposed use will generate approx. 50% less traffic movements than the former employment use of the site, which represents an improvement in air quality terms.

However, it is important to identify opportunities to integrate new infrastructure that will contribute to further improving air quality as a result of development. On this basis and as detailed above, the developer has agreed to install EV (electric) charging points as part of the development. Such EV charging points are most suitably provided at properties with off-street parking space (as opposed to properties that will have parking courtyard arrangements). As layout is a reserved matter, the percentage of EV charging points will be secured at reserved matters stage.

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Rights of Way.

Public footpath (footpath reference: 88) runs along the outside of the southern boundary of the site, albeit immediately adjacent to it. The footpath has two access points, a stepped access just outside the site boundary and a footpath access within the site limits. The Rights of Way officer has requested that improvements to the footpath are secured via a Section 106 including the replacement of the stepped access to an accessible gradient and the length of the footpath to be resurfaced.

It is considered that the requests of the Rights of Way officer are not necessary to mitigate the impact of the development in relation to the footpath since there is a footpath access to the right of way approximately 73m from the stepped access point which is accessible via public land. It is considered unreasonable to provide a second ramped access in such proximity to an existing similar access point. In terms of resurfacing, the existing right of way is good condition along the length of the site and this request is considered to be unreasonable in this instance.

The proposed development is considered to have an acceptable impact on the existing right of way and contributions to its improvement are not required.

Affordable Housing.

CW11 (Affordable Housing Planning Obligation) states:

"Legal agreements will be required to ensure that there is provision of an element of affordable housing, in accordance with an assessment of local need, for all allocated and windfall housing sites that:

- A. Accommodate 5 or more dwellings or
- B. Exceed 0.15ha in gross area."

The application site is located within the area defined as the Northern Connections Corridor which has an affordable housing target of 25%.

As detailed above, the application proposes 66% of the total dwelling to be affordable. Policy SP14 requires a contribution of 25% of the total development to be affordable and this will be secured via a Section 106 Legal Agreement. The proposal accords with Policy SP14.

Residential Amenity.

Policy CW2 of the Adopted Caerphilly LDP states that development proposals should have no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land; should not result in over-development of the site; and should be compatible with surrounding land uses.

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In terms of impact on existing nearby properties, it is noted that the nearest existing residential properties are located approximately 50 metres to the north west and south west of the western boundary of the application site. On this basis the proposal will have limited impact on existing levels of residential amenity, but this matter will be considered further at reserved matters stage. Furthermore, given the indicative site layout that shows a moderate density of housing with ample green infrastructure running throughout the site, it is not considered that up to 125 dwellings represents over-development of the application site.

In terms of compatibility with surrounding land-uses, the site is bounded to the west by existing residential development, to the south by a Health Centre, and to the north and east by open space. On this basis the proposed use is considered to be compatible with its setting.

Leisure and Open Space Provision.

Policy CW10 of the adopted Caerphilly LDP requires all new housing sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings to make adequate provision for well design usable open space as an integral part of the development; and appropriate formal children's play facilities either on or off site. The indicative site layout plan submitted with the application shows two significant areas of open space within the application site. The first is a large basin in the centre of the site that forms part of the drainage strategy. This area will also serve an important focal point to the development providing visual relief for the properties surrounding it. An area of public open space is shown at the eastern extent of the site measuring approximately 1,000 square metres. The applicant has indicated that this will be an area of natural play to serve the proposed development site. As noted above, the existing children's playground provision onsite is to be moved approximately 150 metres to the north west of the site, on land adjacent to Blackwood Road (planning permission 20/0200/LA) and this facility will also serve the proposed development. The provision of appropriate levels of public open space to serve the proposed development in accordance with the Fields in Trust (FIT) standards will be secured by way of condition.

Section 106 Legal Agreement requirements.

A Section 106 Agreement will be required to secure the provision, maintenance and management of the LEAP and the provision of 25% affordable housing onsite (which equates to 31 dwellings), and must meet the following tests:

- (a) It is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

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Application No. 20/0047/OUT Continued

Policy CW11 requires the provision of affordable housing and that can only be secured through a S106 Agreement. Policy CW10 requires the provision of formal play facilities that should be secured by way of legal agreement.

(b) It is directly related to the development.

The affordable housing and LEAP can only be secured as part of a housing development.

(c) It is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The amount of affordable housing is based on the requirements set out in the LDP which has been through an examination and been adopted. The size of the LEAP is consistent with the standards set out in the Fields in Trust guidance.

Conclusion.

The recommendation therefore is that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions and the applicant entering into a Section 106 legal agreement to provide affordable housing and formal public open space onsite. If members are minded to support the recommendation, in accordance with Circular 001/2020 - Guidance on the Town and Country Planning (Major Residential Development) (Notification) (Wales) Direction 2020 (January 2020), this application has to be referred to Welsh Government because it is over 10 dwellings, and is not in accordance with one or more provisions of the development plan in force.

Comments from Consultees: No objection subject to conditions and advice.

Comments from public:

1. Most appropriate use of the site is as parkland and the proposed development will alter the landscape forever - This issue has been discussed in detail above.
2. Proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - This issue has been discussed in detail above.
3. Large amount of water runs through the site with drainage/flooding implications - The developer will require separate SAB approval. That process will ensure the development is fully acceptable from a land drainage perspective.
4. Disappointed that the large boundary stone at the entrance of the site is proposed to be moved - This is a matter between the landowner and the relevant parties. As the layout of the development is a reserved matter, such relocation of the stone has not been considered as part of this application.

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Application No. 20/0047/OUT Continued

5. Reference to the 2010 LDP only allocating 91 houses on the land - The application site was not allocated as a housing site in the adopted LDP.
6. Questions the affordable housing provision onsite - The applicant is proposing 66% affordable housing provision in an area where the requirement is 25%.
7. States that NRW have serious concerns - The concerns of NRW have been addressed above and relevant conditions will be attached to the permission in that regard. The land to the north of the site will remain in the ownership and control of the Local Authority.
8. States that habitat loss compensation is unacceptable - The proposal has been considered by the Council's Ecologist who raises no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.
9. Well-being of future generations should also include well being of animals, ecosystems and biodiversity - Biodiversity has been fully considered as part of this application.
10. Development does not improve the environment or culture - The application proposes much needed affordable and private housing to meet the identified need.
11. Pressure on existing facilities - The Education department has confirmed that adequate capacity is present in local schools to serve the future occupiers of the development.
12. Concern that the development encroaches into the Harold Finch Memorial Park - This matter has been discussed in detail above.
13. Noise from the nearby commercial uses to the east, and road noise from Blackwood Road to the west have not been considered - The Head of Public Protection raises no objection to the proposed development.
14. Development will increase traffic flows on Blackwood Road, thereby also increasing noise and air pollution, to the detriment of the residents of Blackwood Road - The Transportation Engineering Manager raises no objection based on the submitted Transport Statement. Based on the information contained in the Transport Statement, the volume of traffic generated by the proposed development should be significantly lower than the former use of the site, i.e. the Council Offices.
15. The future development of Pontllanfraith comprehensive school will have a cumulative impact associated with the current proposal in terms of traffic generation, air and noise pollution, and this cumulative impact should be considered as part of the current application - To date no application has been made to redevelop the former school site. As and when such an application is made it will be considered on its own merits.
16. Querying the accuracy of the Transport Statement - The Transportation Engineering Manager is satisfied with the Transport Statement as submitted and raises no objection to the proposed development.

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Application No. 20/0047/OUT Continued

17. Querying the Travel Plan on the basis that it refers to the 901 bus to train service that may be discontinued in accordance with the CCBC draft budget proposals 2020/21 - At present the draft budget proposals for 2020/21 have not been agreed and therefore it is reasonable of the developer to make reference to the bus to train service that currently stops in close proximity to the site. Notwithstanding this specific bus service, the application site is in close walking distance of Blackwood Bus Station that serves a multitude of locations with regular bus services.

Other material considerations: The proposed development will make a significant contribution to the current shortfall of housing, and in particular affordable housing, within the LDP defined settlement boundary, thereby reducing the pressure for development outside the settlement boundary elsewhere in the County Borough.

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, has been considered in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In reaching the recommendation below, the ways of working set out at section 5 of that Act have been taken into account, and it is considered that the recommendation is consistent with the sustainable development principle as required by section 8 of that Act.

RECOMMENDATION: That (A) if Members are minded to GRANT planning permission that the application is first REFERRED to the Welsh Minister; in the event that no objections are raised by the Minister, that the application is DEFERRED to allow the applicants to enter into a Section 106 obligation as set out above; and on completion of satisfactory obligations that planning permission is GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

This permission is subject to the following condition(s)

- 01) Approval of the details of the access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before development is commenced and shall be carried out as approved.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 02) Plans and particulars of the reserved matters referred to in Condition 01) above, relating to the access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development, shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority and shall be carried out as approved.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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Application No. 20/0047/OUT Continued

- 03) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 04) The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 05) In addition to the trees identified for retention in the Tree Survey (prepared by Treescene dated 30.03.2020) the following trees shall be retained as part of the layout of the reserved matters submission: T4, T5 & T91.
REASON: To protect trees of importance in accordance with Policy CW6 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - Adopted November 2010.
- 06) No operations of any description (including all forms of development, tree felling, tree pruning) shall commence on site until a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement, which shall include a Tree Protection Plan and detailed schedule of works, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in full compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement.
REASON: To protect important landscape features within the site and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy CW6 of the Caerphilly County borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - adopted November 2010.
- 07) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority to deal with the contamination of the site. That scheme shall include a ground investigation and a risk assessment to identify the extent of the contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk to the occupants of the development when the site is developed. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.
REASON: In the interests of public health.

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Application No. 20/0047/OUT Continued

- 08) No building approved by this permission shall be occupied or approved uses commence until a report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which verifies that the required works have been undertaken in accordance with the remediation strategy.
REASON: To protect public health and in accordance with Policy CW2 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 09) Before any soils or hardcore that do not fall within the green category set out in Table 2 of the WLGA document 'Requirements for the Chemical Testing of Imported Materials for Various End Uses and Validation of Cover Systems 2013' are brought on to site, a scheme for their importation and testing for contamination shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.
REASON: In the interests of public health and in accordance with Policy CW2 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 10) Prior to the development commencing on the construction of any roads, drainage, or buildings hereby approved a scheme for dust mitigation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the agreed scheme shall be employed as necessary to deal with dust arising from construction works.
REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with policy CW2 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.
- 11) Prior to the development commencing on the construction of any roads, drainage, or buildings hereby approved a scheme for noise mitigation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the agreed scheme shall be employed as necessary to deal with noise arising from construction works.
REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with policy CW2 of the adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.

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- 12) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
- Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report (prepared by Terra Firma) received 27.01.2020;
 - Drawing No. LP-01 - Site Location Plan, received 27.01.2020;
 - Amended Design and Access Statement, received 02.03.2020;
 - Amended Planning Statement, received 11.03.2020.
- REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 13) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority.
- (a) stating the date on which the development is to begin;
 - (b) giving details of the planning permission and of such other matters as is required by Schedule 5A to The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 as amended ("the Order").
- Any person carrying out the development to which this planning permission relates must display at or near the place where the development is being carried out, at all times when it is being carried out, a copy of any notice of the decision to grant it. That decision notice shall be in the form specified by, and must be displayed in accordance with, Schedule 5B of the Order.
- REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 71ZB of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 34 of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.
- 14) Prior to the commencement of any works on site, details of the method of clearance/felling provision shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved details will be strictly complied with.
- REASON: To prevent accidental killing or injuring of protected species, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 15) Details submitted in relation to Condition 1 of this permission shall include details of the proposed public open space (a LEAP and a LAP) designed in accordance with the standards set out in Fields in Trust guidance, and the timing of their provision, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.
- REASON: To ensure the adequate provision of public open space.

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- 16) Details submitted in accordance with Condition 1 of this permission shall include the provision of EV (electric vehicle) charging points for all properties benefitting with off road parking provision within their curtilage. The Ev charging provision shall be installed prior to occupation of each of the relevant dwellings.
REASON: In the interests of promoting clean energy and in the interests of air quality.
- 17) Prior to commencement on site a residential travel plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter implemented in accordance with any timescales contained therein.
REASON: in the interest of highway safety and to promote sustainable modes of travel in accordance with Policies SP2, SP7, and CW1 of the Caerphilly County borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - adopted November 2010.
- 18) Prior to the commencement of the development details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority detailing proposed improvement works to Public footpath (footpath reference: 88) that runs along the southern boundary of the site. The agreed improvement works shall be completed prior to first occupation of any of the dwellings approved.
REASON: To encourage walking in accordance with Policies SP2, CP7 and CW1 of the Caerphilly County borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - adopted November 2010.

Advisory Note(s)

The proposed development lies within an area that has been defined by the Coal Authority as containing potential hazards arising from former coal mining activity. These hazards can include: mine entries (shafts and adits); shallow coal workings; geological features (fissures and break lines); mine gas and previous surface mining sites. Although such hazards are seldom readily visible, they can often be present and problems can occur in the future, particularly as a result of development taking place.

It is recommended that information outlining how the former mining activities affect the proposed development, along with any mitigation measures required (for example the need for gas protection measures within the foundations), be submitted alongside any subsequent application for Building Regulations approval (if relevant). Any form of development over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry can be dangerous and raises significant safety and engineering risks and exposes all parties to potential financial liabilities. As a general precautionary principle, the Coal Authority considers that the building over or within the influencing distance of a mine entry should wherever possible be avoided.

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In exceptional circumstance where this is unavoidable, expert advice must be sought to ensure that a suitable engineering design is developed and agreed with regulatory bodies which takes into account of all the relevant safety and environmental risk factors, including gas and mine-water. Your attention is drawn to the Coal Authority Policy in relation to new development and mine entries available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-on-or-within-the-influencing-distance-of-mine-entries>

Any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) requires a Coal Authority Permit. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, digging of foundations, piling activities, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Failure to obtain a Coal Authority Permit for such activities is trespass, with the potential for court action.

Property specific summary information on past, current and future coal mining activity can be obtained from: www.groundstability.com or a similar service provider.

If any of the coal mining features are unexpectedly encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848. Further information is available on the Coal Authority website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority.

WARNING:

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

Please note from the 7th January 2019, Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 commenced in Wales requiring all new developments of more than one house or where the construction area is of 100m² or more to implement sustainable drainage to manage on-site surface water. Surface water drainage systems must be designed and built in accordance with mandatory standards for sustainable drainage published by Welsh Ministers.

The Sustainable Drainage Approval process is a technical approval independent of the need to obtain planning permission, and as such you are advised to contact the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body. Their details are provided below:

Phone: 01443 866511

Email: drainage@caerphilly.gov.uk

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/sab

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Notification of initiation of development and display of notice:

You must comply with your duties in section 71ZB (notification of initiation of development and display of notice: Wales) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The duties include:

Notice of initiation of development:

Before beginning any development to which this planning permission relates, notice must be given to the local planning authority in the form set out in Schedule 5A to the town and Country Planning (development Management procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 or in a form substantially to the like effect. The form sets out the details which must be given to the local planning authority to comply with this duty.

Display of Notice:

The person carrying out the development to which this planning permission relates must display at or near the place where the development is being carried out, at all times when it is being carried out, a notice of this planning permission in the form set out in Schedule 5B to the Town and country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 or in a form substantially to the like effect.

The form sets out the details the person carrying out development must display to comply with this duty.

The person carrying out the development must ensure the notice is:

- (a) Firmly affixed and displayed in a prominent place at or near the place where the development is being carried out;
- (b) legible and easily visible to the public without having to enter the site; and
- (c) printed on durable material. The person carrying out development should take reasonable steps to protect the notice (against it being removed, obscured or defaced) and, if need be, replace it.

Please find attached the comments of Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water, Western Power Distribution, Senior Engineer (Land Drainage), Council's Ecologist, Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees), Landscape Architect, Transportation Engineering Manager, Head of Public Protection, Rights of Way Officer, The Coal Authority and National Resources Wales that are brought to the applicant's attention.

