



PLANNING COMMITTEE – 9TH SEPTEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: SITE VISIT - CODE NO.15/0038/OUT – LAND NORTH OF PANDY ROAD, BEDWAS, CAERPHILLY.

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

PRESENT:

Councillor D.G. Carter – Chair
Councillor W.H. David - Vice Chair

Councillors Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, Mrs P. Cook, Mrs J. Gale, D. Havard, A. Lewis and Mrs J. Summers.

At the start of the site meeting, Local Ward Members wished to formally record their thanks to the late Councillor Ray Davies in appreciation for his work within the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen ward and wider borough.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, H. Davies, L. Gardiner, A.G. Higgs, Mrs G. Oliver and J. Taylor.
2. The Planning Committee deferred consideration of this application on 5th August 2015 for a site visit. Members and Officers met on site on Thursday, 27th August 2015.
3. Details of the outline planning application to erect a residential development with associated public open space, landscaping and highways infrastructure including a new highway access from Pandy Road and footpaths and requiring the installation of new services and infrastructure and other ancillary works and activities, on Land North of Pandy Road, Bedwas, Caerphilly were noted. The dimensions of the site were confirmed as 8.3 hectares with an indicative housing layout for 300 houses.
4. Those present viewed the site and examined the plans submitted with the application to fully appreciate the proposals.
5. As an outline application Members were asked to consider the principal of the development, with detailed matters subject to subsequent approvals. It was noted that the site is located in the open countryside adjacent to, but outside the settlement limit contained in the current Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) and lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). The Officer advised that the application had been submitted in advance of the site's consideration within the revised LDP, which is currently under review and confirmed that the Council had fallen short in its residential land provision and was under increasing pressure from Welsh Government to increase its housing land supply.

6. Members raised concerns in relation to the accessibility of the access onto Pandy Road and the impact an additional 300-600 cars would make to area already suffering from severe traffic congestion. The Highways Officer confirmed that the front access from the site onto Pandy Road would be widened with increased vision splays. A traffic impact assessment conducted by the applicant and independently verified by the Local Planning Authority had identified two key areas where improvement works would be required, namely traffic signal improvements to A468/B4600 Bedwas Road junction and the Bedwas roundabout. Highway improvements would be subject to the submission of an agreed Travel Plan and would be secured under a Section 106 agreement with the applicant should be application be granted. Members noted the improvements to the south bound route and expressed concern that there would be no such improvements to the north bound route.
7. Members also expressed concern with regard to car-parking spaces for an additional 300 dwellings and the Officer confirmed that transport arrangements and parking requirements would be assessed at the reserve matters stage of the application and would need to meet statutory guidance. It was also noted that other sustainability considerations would included within the Travel Plan including travel vouchers for residents.
8. Clarification was sought in relation to the position of the proposed zebra crossing, the provision of a footpath and that this would narrow the roadway even further and finally whether the new development would be given a priority junction. The Highways Officer confirmed that the zebra crossing siting was purely indicative and all local considerations would be taken into account when determining its final positioning. A 2m footway would run to the front access of the proposed development and would be in essence another pavement. In terms of the junction this would not be a priority but would operate in a similar way to that at 'Manor Park'.
9. A Member expressed the opinion that the application before Members was premature, particularly given the ongoing review of the LDP and its identification of candidate sites. Given the tremendous pressure on the Caerphilly Basin with regard to land availability he felt that all candidate sites should be considered together following the completion of the LDP review and to take an individual application at this point in time would set an unnecessary precedent.
10. Concerns were also raised in relation to the loss of the Special Landscape Area and the Officer confirmed that the Landscape Architects had initially opposed the application however it was felt that there were sufficient material considerations in existence which, on this occasion, outweighed the policy position.
11. Officers confirmed that following advertisement to 99 neighbouring properties and a site notice being posted, 80 individual letters of objection including one from the Local Assembly Member and 3 petitions totally 607 signatures and one letter of support had been received. Details of the objections are within the Officer's original report.
12. The initial planning report concluded that having given due regard to relevant planning policy and the comments from consultees and objectors, the application is considered to be acceptable and Officers recommended that permission be granted.
13. A copy of the report submitted to the Planning Committee on 5th August 2015 is attached. Members are now invited to determine the application.

Author:	E. Sullivan	Democratic Services Officer, Ext. 4420
Consultees:	G. Lewis	Principal Planner
	C. Davis	Environmental Health Officer
	M. Noakes	Senior Engineer (Highway Development Control)
	L. Cooper	Engineer (Highway Development Control)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report submitted to Planning Committee on 5th August 2015