



PLANNING COMMITTEE – 4TH NOVEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: SITE VISIT - CODE NO. 15/0252/OUT – LAND AT CWMGELLI,
BLACKWOOD, NP12 1BZ.**

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

PRESENT:

Councillor D.G. Carter – Chair

Councillors M. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, Mrs P. Cook, N. Dix, Ms. J. Gale, L. Gardiner, A. Lewis and Mrs J. Summers

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, D. Bolter, W. David, J.E. Fussell, D. Rees and J. Simmonds.
2. The Planning Committee deferred consideration of this application on 7th October 2015 for a site visit. Members and Officers met on site on Monday, 26th October 2015.
3. Details of the application to erect a residential development, public open space, landscaping, highway improvements and associated engineering works with all matters reserved except access on Land at Cwmgelli, Blackwood were noted.
4. Those present viewed the site from various vantage points, walked the boundary, roadway and examined the plans submitted with the application to fully appreciate the proposals.
5. Members were asked to note the application site is adjacent to the settlement boundary of Blackwood on a 'Greenfield site' comprising of a number of agricultural fields and adjacent to two Grade II listed residential properties to the south, with the Grade II listed Maes Manor Hotel and Historic Gardens to the north of the site. The site is bounded by residential properties to the west at Cwm Gelli Villas, Cwm Gelli and Coed Gelli Parc. Outline planning permission is sought at this stage for up to 115 new homes with all other matters apart from access reserved for subsequent approval. An indicative master plan has been submitted which illustrated a range of sizes, types and tenures of properties in order to meet local need. The Officer confirmed that the finishes of the proposed development would be reflective of the character and culture of the Blackwood area and the density profile of the development would give it a 'rural feel' with 30 dwellings designated per hectare. The development would also require outdoor play provision based upon the number of dwellings proposed. In this respect a Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and Local Area of Play (LAP) is indicated on the masterplan. The officer advised that the developer has following discussion indicated finishes of the LEAP would have a rural/rustic feel. The Officer acknowledged that the site is outside the settlement boundary and within an identified green wedge. However, this may be balanced against consideration of residential land supply and is a material consideration. Members attention was also drawn to Policy SP2 of the LDP, which promotes sustainable

development in the Northern Connections Corridor, which amongst other things focuses development on both brownfield and greenfield sites.

6. Members raised concerns with regard to access to the proposed development in terms of highway safety and increased traffic movements on to an already busy section of road. The Senior Highways Engineer confirmed that a 'ghost island' would be introduced in order to facilitate a safe right-hand turn into the development and its position on the current roadway was indicated using existing road markings as a guide. It was accepted that this would narrow the road somewhat, however the Officer was confident that the proposed layout would provide safe and adequate access and egress for the development and that visibility splay requirements had been met, giving a 120m splay in both directions.

Concerns were also expressed at the loss of the 'green wedge' and the impact of the development on the ecology of the area. The Officer confirmed that the application was supported by an extended habitat survey, tree survey, landscape and visual appraisal, cultural heritage assessment and advised that there had been no objections from statutory consultees or from the Councils' Ecologist.

7. Officers confirmed that following advertisement to 32 neighbouring properties, advertisement in the press and a site notice being posted, 13 letters of objection and a petition of 27 signatures had been received. Details of the objections are within the Officer's original report.
8. 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.
9. A copy of the report submitted to the Planning Committee on 7th October 2015 is attached. Members are now invited to determine the application.

Author:	E. Sullivan	Democratic Services Officer, Ext. 4420
Consultees:	M. Davies	Principal Planner
	M. Noakes	Senior Engineer (Highway Development Control)

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Report submitted to Planning Committee on 7th October 2015