Consultations from Torfaen County Borough Council on Major Planning Applications for Residential and Leisure Developments

Purpose
To respond to Torfaen County Borough Council

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Wards affected
General

Summary

1. Consultations have been received from Torfaen County Borough Council which relate to 2 planning applications.

2. Planning Application 01/P/05525 involves the development of approximately 1200 housing units at South Sebastopol, west of Cwmbran Drive together with ancillary retail and community facilities. The site is within a General Development Area allocated in the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan.

3. Planning Application 01/P/05796 relates to the construction of a leisure complex including a multi screen cinema on the site of the former multi storey car park at Glyndwr Road, Cwmbran.

4. Both applications are compatible with policies within the Adopted Local Plan for the County Borough of Torfaen.

5. The large scale application for residential uses at South Sebastopol is in outline only, but has been accompanied by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Provisions within the EIA, including a Framework Plan, address potential concerns that may otherwise have had wider regional implications. Thus, a linear park will provide a ‘green wedge’ separating the urban areas of Cwmbran and Pontypool; the scale of retailing in the proposed ‘village centre’ will be small, serving local needs only; and, the Monmouthshire/Brecon Canal which runs through the site will be protected.
and enhanced as a recreational and amenity feature.

6 It is important, however that suitable conditions and legal agreements are attached to any consent in order to secure these provisions.

7 The proposed multi plex cinema development is within Cwmbran Town Centre and is therefore compatible with local and national policies favouring large scale leisure uses in established town centres.

Proposed Action by Planning Committee

To inform Torfaen County Borough Council that Newport County Borough Council has no objections in principle to the planning applications, reference numbers 01/P/05525 and 01/P/05796 subject to suitable conditions or agreements being attached to application no. 01/P/05525 which would seek to maintain an open green gap to prevent coalescence between Cwmbran and Pontypool; control the extent of new retail development to serve local needs only; and, which would assist in joint venture objectives to maximise the potential of the Brecon/Monmouthshire Canal.
Planning Application (Ref. 01/P/05525)
Residential development and ancillary retail and community development, landscaping and highways (1200 dwellings approximately) - land west of Cwmbran Drive, South Sebastopol, Torfaen.

1 The application site lies within an area designated as a General Development Area in the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (Policy S2/2 - South Sebastopol). Within such areas it is stated that:

‘...a comprehensive mixed use form of development will be permitted’.

2 South Sebastopol is the principal housing allocation in the Local Plan and makes provision for 1200 dwellings. It is acknowledged that only about half of these will be built within the Plan period (up to 2006) and thus the site will continue to serve as a major source of housing land supply when the Local Plan is eventually replaced by a future Unitary Development Plan.

3 The current application is in outline only but has been accompanied by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which as well as assessing potential environmental impacts, provides a Framework Plan giving details of the projected site layout.

4 The proposals thus appear to be compatible with Torfaen Local Plan Policies. Members will recall that Newport County Borough Council did not object to the South Sebastopol allocation when the Local Plan was placed on Deposit. In objecting to proposals at Llantarnam, however, the point was made that the development of land at both Llantarnam and South Sebastopol could result in a continuous, unbroken pattern of urban development extending from Newport to Pontypool. Following the Public Local Inquiry held to hear objections to the Local Plan, proposals at Brooklands Farm, Llantarnam were deleted as a result of the Inspector’s recommendations.

5 In terms of any impact on Newport the following aspects may thus be of relevance.

♦ The large scale of housing development and potential urban coalescence
♦ Potential impact of associated retail development
♦ The Brecon/Monmouthshire Canal which runs through the site and which is subject to joint venture initiatives.

These are discussed in turn below.

Residential Development

6 According to the Environmental Statement, the potential threat of coalescence between the settlements of Cwmbran and Pontypool will be addressed by an 11.3 hectare “linear park” which will run east/west through the site and provide an effective ‘green wedge’ separating the two urban areas.

7 It is anticipated that the development of 1200 dwellings may also have some beneficial effects by reducing pressure for the release of greenfield sites in Newport and by providing
construction jobs, a significant proportion of which may be drawn from the Newport workforce.

**Retail Development**

The Local Plan provides for Neighbourhood Shopping Provision only and this is echoed in the Project Description incorporated in the EIA. A ‘village centre’ is identified, located adjacent to the canal which will incorporate small scale retail units, a medical centre, community hall, business units, specialist housing and a public house. It is thus unlikely that proposed retail provision will impact on Newport Town Centre as it is intended to serve local needs only.

**The Brecon/Monmouthshire Canal**

The canal is navigable at this location and joint venture initiatives between Torfaen, Newport, Monmouthshire and the WDA aim eventually to bring the remaining sections of the canal into navigable use from Five Locks (Cwmbran) to Crindau (Newport).

The integrity of the canal corridor will be protected by appropriate open space and landscaping provision. Two new bridges are proposed which will be designed as solid structures with stone faced revetment walls. These will be located so as to minimise the amount of new embankment required and will be designed to ensure that navigation is not impeded. The only other structural works to the canal will involve the creation of a mooring basin adjacent to the proposed village centre.

**Conclusion**

It is thus concluded that the development is unlikely to have any adverse impact on Newport subject to the above provisions being incorporated. It is therefore important that appropriate conditions and agreements are attached to any decision to grant outline planning permission which will secure the incorporation of these provisions.
Planning Application (Ref 01/P/05796)
Construction of leisure complex including multi screen cinema and A3 (restaurant, cafe bar, public house, retail units). Former multi storey car park, Glyndwr Road, Cwmbran.

The application site lies within Cwmbran Shopping Centre as defined on the Town Centre Inset Plan on the Torfaen Local Plan Proposals Map. As such, therefore the proposal is compatible with local and national policies which encourage large scale leisure facilities in town centres.

Conclusion

As the proposals do not have any implications for planning policies in Newport are are unlikely to have a discernable impact on Newport Town Centre there can be no objections in principle.

Comments of Head of Finance and Scrutiny
None.

Comments of Head of Human Resources and Policy
None.

Comments of Head of Legal and Standards
None.

Comments of Head of Engineering and Transportation/Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transportation