

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING,
REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING
COMMITTEE - 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2020**

REPORT OF:

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D. HANCOCK (CHAIR)

Councillors W. Hodgins (Vice-Chair)
D. Bevan
M. Day
S. Healy
C. Meredith
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Thomas
B. Willis
L. Winnett

WITH: Service Manager Development & Estates
Team Manager, Development Management
Team Leader, Development Management
Team Manager, Built Environment
Planning Officer
Solicitor
Press & Publicity Officer

Public Speakers

Peter Barnes, Architect

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillors G.L. Davies, J. Hill, G. Thomas and D. Wilkshire.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION - QUARTER 4 JANUARY – MARCH 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>The Service Manager outlined the Council's current performance as follows:</p> <p>Figure 1: the Council decided 100% of all applications in time. This compares to a Welsh average of 85%.</p> <p>Figure 2: on average it took 60 days from registration to decision for the Council to decide each planning application. The Wales average is 83 days.</p> <p>Figure 3: 29% of Planning Committee decisions were contrary to officer recommendation. The Wales average is 15%.</p> <p>Members congratulated the Planning Team on their performance for quarter 4 and enquired if under the current circumstances, this performance could be maintained. The Service Manager advised that it was unlikely that this performance could be maintained as some Planning Officers were still redeployed to Covid 19 duties.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information</p>	

	contained therein be noted.	
No. 5	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS - UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>The Service Manager explained that this was the standard report which provided details of the present caseload in respect of Appeals, Consultations and DNS. It was noted due to the Covid 19 situation that a number of decisions in relation to Appeals were awaited.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 14TH JULY 2020 AND 14TH AUGUST 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Business Support Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED, that the report be accepted and the list of applications decided under delegated powers between 14th July to 14th August, 2020 be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT</u></p> <p><u>Application No. C/2020/0109</u> <u>14 Eureka Place, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6LG</u> <u>Change of use from 3-bedroom dwelling to 6-bedroom HMO and proposed parking bays to rear garden</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Team Manager, Development Management outlined the application which related to the proposed change of use from 3-bedroom dwelling to 6-bedroom HMO and proposed parking bays to rear garden of 14 Eureka Place, Ebbw Vale.</p>	

At this juncture the Chair invited comments/observations from Members of the Committee.

A Member raised concerns in relation to fire safety and parking issues on a severely congested street. The Team Manager Development Management said that Building Control would ensure that fire safety regulations were implemented and adhered to. The Team Manager, Built Environment was mindful of parking congestion in the area, however, the SPG determined the amount of parking spaces required and the two proposed parking bays at the rear of the property complied with Statutory Parking Guidelines (SPG).

A Member commented that an increasing number of HMO's were being submitted for planning approval and enquired if a policy needed to be adopted to provide guidance. The Team Manager Development Management said that increasing numbers of HMO's were being approved as a form of residential occupancy and there may be a need to consider planning legislation on the form of HMO's. A number of concerns had been raised by Members but these were not all planning considerations and as such a HMO policy may not solve some of the issues raised i.e. noise nuisance etc.

A Member said there were a number of HMO's in his Ward and he welcomed a HMO policy to ensure consistency of approach across the borough.

The Service Manager informed Members that a briefing session regarding HMO's was being considered in the near future and the session would include other agencies i.e. Police, Health Board, Highways etc. He agreed with his colleague that there may be a need to adopt a policy as planning applications for HMO's were increasing.

Further concerns were raised in relation to the application and a Member proposed that the application be refused, this proposal was seconded and

A vote was thereupon taken

4 Members supported the proposal to refuse the application; and

5 Members supported approval of the application.

It was therefore

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Application No. C/2020/0043

Land East of Hill Crest View, Cwmtillery, Abertillery

Residential development and associated works

At the invitation of the Chair, the Planning Officer outlined the application which related to residential development and associated works on land east of Hill Crest View, Cwmtillery, Abertillery.

At the invitation of the Chair the Public Speaker Mr Peter Barnes (Architect) addressed the Committee.

Mr Barnes said that the project was relatively straight forward but with a number of economic and financial constraints. The developers had considered this and with construction of 28 houses the project could be financially viable. The site was within the area of the LDP which was designated for housing development. The developers were local to the area and were prepared to do minor changes to the project.

At this juncture the Chair invited comments/observations from Members of the Committee.

A Ward Member wished to support the application and said there was a demand for new houses in this area, the scheme would add 28 new homes to the area and replace social houses which had

been poorly built. The plans showed that better drainage would be installed and some trees removed, which had caused damage to the previous drainage system. He reiterated that this was a good development for the area, providing good quality housing to help attract young people to stay in the area.

Another Member raised serious concerns regarding stability issues at the site in relation to drainage and landslides and proposed that the application be refused. This proposal was not seconded.

A Member commented that he supported the scheme as redundant land would be brought back into use, however, he would have preferred if an element of social housing had been included.

In response to the Members concerns regarding stability issues, the Planning Officer said that a site investigation report had been submitted with the application and had assessed both ground stability and contamination and no issues had been identified.

A Member enquired if firm assurances could be given that culvert and landscaping issues at the site would be undertaken.

In relation to landscaping, the Planning Officer asked that delegated authority be granted to make minor amendments to landscaping conditions. Any drainage issues would need to be resolved to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Section.

It was therefore

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report. Delegated authority was also granted to make minor amendments to conditions.

No. 8

AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS/TRAINING

The Service Manager Development & Estates informed Members that a Briefing Session would be arranged regarding HMO's in the near future.

