

<b>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to</b>	<b>The Chair and Members of Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing</b>
<b>Report Subject</b>	<b>Planning Appeal Update: Former Llanhilleth Rugby Club (The Walpole), Commercial Road, Llanhilleth</b>
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<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Regeneration and Community Services</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> October 2020</b>

### **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise Members of the decision of the Planning Inspectorate in respect of two planning appeals against the refusal of planning applications Ref: C/2019/0312 and C/2019/0318. Both applications relate to the former Llanhilleth Rugby Club, Commercial Road, Llanhilleth.

1.2 Application C/2019/0312 related to the change of use from a sports club to a 17-bed HMO and 2-bed managers flat (unique use) with associated alterations to windows/doors and single storey extension. The application was refused under delegated powers on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

1.3 Application C/2019/0318 related to a change of use from a sports club to a 7-bed HMO associated storage and self-contained managers flat together with an A3 use and new shopfront to part of the ground floor. The application was refused under delegated powers on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The Inspector issued a joint decision letter dealing with both appeals.

## **2.0 Scope of the Report**

- 2.1 Both applications were refused on highway safety grounds. Specifically, the lack of on-site parking and the subsequent effects on highway safety and the free-flow of traffic along Commercial Road.
- 2.2 The Inspector confirmed that the site has limited space for off-road parking, with only 4 spaces safely being accommodated for. Whilst the Inspector advised that it would be reasonable to allow reduced numbers of parking spaces for HMO units (as the occupants are less likely to own cars), the Inspector confirmed that no specific evidence was provided by the applicant to justify any particular estimate of parking spaces required to serve either development. The Inspector considered that the parking requirement for both developments would likely be far more than 4 spaces, and therefore result in a significant amount of on-street parking.
- 2.3 The Inspector acknowledged that Commercial Road has cars parked along one side for a considerable length, thus leaving insufficient width for 2 vehicles to pass. The Inspector agreed with the Council that this can cause delays, inconvenience and reversing manoeuvres with associated safety implications for road users. He therefore considered that if the road was heavily parked-up the existing issues would become more severe.
- 2.4 In response to the applicant's transport survey, the Inspector confirmed that he could not accept that the survey provided useful, typical data.
- 2.5 The sustainable location of the site and the desirability of bringing an attractive building back into use were taken into account by the Inspector. However, he considered that the benefits did not outweigh the harmful effects on highway safety.
- 2.6 The Inspector also considered the applicant's proposal to control car ownership/use of future occupiers via tenancy agreements. However, the Inspector raised uncertainty as how this would be realistically enforced, acknowledging that the Council could not prevent cars from parking on the public highway.
- 2.7 In conclusion, the Inspector stated that the additional on-street parking likely to be generated by either of the proposed

developments would significantly add to the problems already experienced along Commercial Road to the detriment of highway safety and the free-flow of traffic contrary to Local Development Plan (LDP) Policy DM1.

2.8 The Inspector accordingly DISMISSED BOTH APPEALS.

### **3. Recommendation/s for Consideration**

3.1 That Members note for information the appeal decisions for planning application C/2019/0312 and C/2019/0318 as attached at **Appendix A**.