

Public Document Pack

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Bridgend County Borough Council

Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026

Dear Councillor,

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Development Control Committee will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 5 February 2026 at 10:00**.

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence from Members.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers including those who are also Town and Community Councillors, in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008. Members having such dual roles should declare a personal interest in respect of their membership of such Town/Community Council and a prejudicial interest if they have taken part in the consideration of an item at that Town/Community Council contained in the Officer's Reports below.

3 Site Visits

To confirm a date of Wednesday 18/03/2026 for proposed site inspections arising at the meeting, or identified in advance of the next Committee meeting by the Chairperson.

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £3.20 in printing costs

4	<u>Approval of Minutes</u>	5 – 10
	To receive for approval the minutes of the 18/12/2025	
5	<u>Public Speakers</u>	
	To advise Members of the names of the public speakers listed to speak at today's meeting (if any).	
6	<u>Amendment Sheet</u>	
	That the Chairperson accepts the Development Control Committee Amendment Sheet as an urgent item in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules, in order to allow for Committee to consider necessary modifications to the Committee Report, so as to take account of late representations and revisions that require to be accommodated.	
7	<u>Development Control Committee Guidance</u>	11 – 14
8	<u>P/25/758/FUL - 52 Coychurch Road, Bridgend CF31 2AP</u>	15 – 30
9	<u>Appeals</u>	31 – 54
10	<u>Houses In Multiple Occupation - Supplementary Planning Guidance</u>	55 – 118
11	<u>Audit Wales Report Bridgend County Borough Council - Planning and Development Service</u>	119 – 158
12	<u>Training Log</u>	159 – 160
13	<u>Urgent Items</u>	
	To consider any other item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.		
<p>Yours faithfully K Watson Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy</p>		

Councillors:

A R Berrow
RJ Collins
C L C Davies
RM Granville
H Griffiths
S J Griffiths
GC Haines
D T Harrison
M L Hughes
D M Hughes
M R John
W J Kendall
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
J E Pratt
Vacancy
A Wathan
I Williams
R Williams

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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025 AT 10:00Present

Councillor RM Granville – Chairperson

D T Harrison
R Williams

M R John

W J Kendall

I Williams

Present VirtuallyS J Griffiths
J E PrattM L Hughes
A Wathan

D M Hughes

J Llewellyn-Hopkins

Officers:

Rhodri Davies
Gillian Dawson
Craig Flower
Robert Morgan
Janine Nightingale
Louis Pannell
Jonathan Parsons
Michael Pitman
Adam Provoost
Oscar Roberts
Philip Thomas
Leigh Tuck

Development & Building Control Manager
Lawyer - Planning
Planning Support Team Leader
Senior Development Control Officer
Corporate Director - Communities
Senior Strategic Planning Policy Officer
Group Manager Development
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Senior Development Planning Officer
Business Administrative Apprentice - Democratic Services
Principal Planning Officer
Senior Development Control Officer

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025**193. Apologies for Absence**

Decision Made	Cllr RJ Collins, C L C Davies, H Griffiths, GC Haines and I M Spiller
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

194. Declarations of Interest

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

195. Site Visits

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u>	That a date of Wednesday 4th January 2026 be agreed for any site inspections arising at the meeting or identified in advance of the next Committee by the Chairperson.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025	

196. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u>	That the minutes of a meeting of the Development Control Committee dated 13 November 2025, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025	

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025**197. Public Speakers**

Decision Made	There were no public speakers.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

198. Amendment Sheet

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Chairperson accepted the Development Control Committee Amendment Sheet as an urgent item, in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules. This allows for Committee to consider any necessary modifications to the Committee Report, so as to take account of any late representations and revisions that require to be accommodated.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

199. Development Control Committee Guidance

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That Committee noted the Development Control Committee Guidance as shown in the report of the Corporate Director – Communities.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

200. P/23/771/FUL - Land off Princess Way Northern Roundabout North of
Cae Cenydd, Brackla CF31 2ES

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Proposal: Foodstore together with associated access, car parking, new Active Travel Route, drainage, landscaping, and other associated site works	That the above application be granted subject to the conditions contained in the Officer's report, including changes on the amendment sheet.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025	

201. Appeals

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the appeals received since the last meeting of the Committee as shown in the report of the Corporate Director – Communities, be noted.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

202. Training Log

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the report of the Corporate Director – Communities advising Members of up and coming training initiatives be noted.
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025

203. **Urgent Items**

Decision Made	There were no Urgent Items
Date Decision Made	18 December 2025

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 11:10

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I submit for your consideration the following report on Planning Applications and other Development Control matters based upon the information presently submitted to the Department. Should any additional information be submitted between the date of this report and 4.00pm on the day prior to the date of the meeting, relevant to the consideration of an item on the report, that additional information will be made available at the meeting.

For Members' assistance I have provided details on standard conditions on time limits, standard notes (attached to all consents for planning permission) and the reasons to justify site inspections.

STANDARD CONDITIONS

On some applications for planning permission reference is made in the recommendation to the permission granted being subject to standard conditions. These standard conditions set time limits in which the proposed development should be commenced, and are imposed by the Planning Act 1990. Members may find the following explanation helpful:-

Time-limits on full permission

Grants of planning permission (apart from outline permissions) must, under section 91 of the Act, be made subject to a condition imposing a time-limit within which the development authorised must be started. The section specifies a period of five years from the date of the permission. Where planning permission is granted without a condition limiting the duration of the planning permission, it is deemed to be granted subject to the condition that the development to which it relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the grant of permission.

Time-limits on outline permissions

Grants of outline planning permission must, under section 92 of the Act, be made subject to conditions imposing two types time-limit, one within which applications must be made for the approval of reserved matters and a second within which the development itself must be started. The periods specified in the section are three years from the grant of outline permission for the submission of applications for approval of reserved matters, and either five years from the grant of permission, or two years from the final approval of the last of the reserved matters, whichever is the longer, for starting the development.

Variation from standard time-limits

If the authority consider it appropriate on planning grounds they may use longer or shorter periods than those specified in the Act, but must give their reasons for so doing.

STANDARD NOTES

- a. Please note that this consent is specific to the plans and particulars approved as part of the application. Any departure from the approved plans will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action. You (or any subsequent developer) should advise the Council of any actual or proposed variations from the approved plans immediately so that you can be advised how to best resolve the matter.

In addition, any conditions that the Council has imposed on this consent will be listed above and should be read carefully. It is your (or any subsequent developer's) responsibility to ensure that the terms of all conditions are met in full at the appropriate time (as outlined in the specific condition).

The commencement of development without firstly meeting in full the terms of any conditions that require the submission of details prior to the commencement of development will constitute unauthorised development. This will necessitate the submission of a further application to retain the unauthorised development and may render you liable to enforcement action.

Failure on the part of the developer to observe the requirements of any other conditions could result in the Council pursuing formal enforcement action in the form of a Breach of Condition Notice.

- b. The enclosed notes which set out the rights of applicants who are aggrieved by the Council's decision.
- c. This planning permission does not convey any approval or consent required by Building Regulations or any other legislation or covenant nor permits you to build on, over or under your neighbour's land (trespass is a civil matter).

To determine whether your building work requires Building Regulation approval, or for other services

provided by the Council's Building Control Section, you should contact that Section on 01656 643408 or at:- <http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/buildingcontrol>

- d. Developers are advised to contact the statutory undertakers as to whether any of their apparatus would be affected by the development
- e. Attention is drawn to the provisions of the party wall etc. act 1996
- f. Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in particular to the need to not disturb nesting bird and protected species and their habitats.
- g. If your proposal relates to residential development requiring street naming you need to contact 01656 643136
- h. If you are participating in the DIY House Builders and Converters scheme the resultant VAT reclaim will be dealt with at the Chester VAT office (tel: 01244 684221)
 - i. Developers are advised to contact the Environment and Energy helpline (tel: 0800 585794) and/or the energy efficiency advice centre (tel: 0800 512012) for advice on the efficient use of resources. Developers are also referred to Welsh Government Practice Guidance: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in Buildings (July 2012):-
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/energyinbuildings/?lang=en>
 - j. Where appropriate, in order to make the development accessible for all those who might use the facility, the scheme must conform to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Your attention is also drawn to the Code of Practice relating to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part iii (Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities and Services)
 - k. If your development lies within a coal mining area, you should take account of any coal mining related hazards to stability in your proposals. Developers must also seek permission from the Coal Authority before undertaking any operations that involves entry into any coal or mines of coal, including coal mine shafts and adits and the implementation of site investigations or other works. Property specific summary information on any past, current and proposed surface and underground coal mining activity to affect the development can be obtained from the Coal Authority. The Coal Authority Mining Reports Service can be contacted on 0845 7626848 or www.coal.gov.uk
 - l. If your development lies within a limestone area you should take account of any limestone hazards to stability in your proposals. You are advised to engage a Consultant Engineer prior to commencing development in order to certify that proper site investigations have been carried out at the site sufficient to establish the ground precautions in relation to the proposed development and what precautions should be adopted in the design and construction of the proposed building(s) in order to minimise any damage which might arise as a result of the ground conditions.
 - m. The Local Planning Authority will only consider minor amendments to approved development by the submission of an application under section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The following amendments will require a fresh application:-
 - re-siting of building(s) nearer any existing building or more than 250mm in any other direction;
 - increase in the volume of a building;
 - increase in the height of a building;
 - changes to the site area;
 - changes which conflict with a condition;
 - additional or repositioned windows / doors / openings within 21m of an existing building;
 - changes which alter the nature or description of the development;
 - new works or elements not part of the original scheme;
 - new works or elements not considered by an environmental statement submitted with the application.
 - n. The developer shall notify the Planning Department on 01656 643155 / 643157 of the date of commencement of development or complete and return the Commencement Card (enclosed with this Notice).

- o. The presence of any significant unsuspected contamination, which becomes evident during the development of the site, should be brought to the attention of the Public Protection section of the Legal and Regulatory Services directorate. Developers may wish to refer to 'Land Contamination: A Guide for Developers' on the Public Protection Web Page.
- p. Any builder's debris/rubble must be disposed of in an authorised manner in accordance with the Duty of Care under the Waste Regulations.

THE SITE INSPECTION PROTOCOL

The Site Inspection Protocol is as follows:-

Purpose

Fact Finding

Development Control Committee site visits are not meetings where decisions are made and neither are they public meetings. They are essentially fact finding exercises, held for the benefit of Members, where a proposed development may be difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material. They may be necessary for careful consideration of relationships to adjoining property or the general vicinity of the proposal due to its scale or effect on a listed building or conservation area.

Request for a Site Visit

Ward Member request for Site Visit

Site visits can be costly and cause delays so it is important that they are only held where necessary normally on the day prior to Committee and where there is a material planning objection.

Site visits, whether Site Panel or Committee, are held pursuant to:-

1. a decision of the Chair of the Development Control Committee (or in his/her absence the Vice Chair) or
2. a request received within the prescribed consultation period from a local Ward Member or another Member consulted because the application significantly affects the other ward, and where a material planning objection has been received by the Development Department from a statutory consultee or local resident.

A request for a site visit made by the local Ward Member, or another Member in response to being consulted on the proposed development, must be submitted in writing, or electronically, within 21 days of the date they were notified of the application and shall clearly indicate the planning reasons for the visit.

Site visits cannot be undertaken for inappropriate reasons (see below).

The Development Control Committee can also decide to convene a Site Panel or Committee Site Visit.

Inappropriate Site Visit

Examples where a site visit would not normally be appropriate include where:-

- purely policy matters or issues of principle are an issue
- to consider boundary or neighbour disputes
- issues of competition
- loss of property values
- any other issues which are not material planning considerations
- where Councillors have already visited the site within the last 12 months, except in exceptional circumstances

Format and Conduct at the Site Visit

Attendance

Members of the Development Control Committee, the local Ward Member and the relevant Town or Community Council will be notified in advance of any visit. The applicant and/or the applicant's agent will also be informed as will the first person registering an intent to speak at Committee but it will be made clear that representations cannot be made during the course of the visit.

Officer Advice

The Chair will invite the Planning Officer to briefly outline the proposals and point out the key issues raised by the application and of any vantage points from which the site should be viewed. Members may ask questions and seek clarification and Officers will respond. The applicant or agent will be invited by the Chairman to clarify aspects of the development.

The local Ward Member(s), one objector who has registered a request to speak at Committee (whether a local resident or Town/Community Council representative) and a Town/Community Council representative will be allowed to clarify any points of objection, both only in respect of any features of the site, or its locality, which are relevant to the determination of the planning application.

Any statement or discussion concerning the principles and policies applicable to the development or to the merits of the proposal will not be allowed.

Code of Conduct

Although site visits are not part of the formal Committee consideration of the application, the Code of Conduct still applies to site visits and Councillors should have regard to the guidance on declarations of personal interests.

Record Keeping

A file record will be kept of those attending the site visit.

Site Visit Summary

In summary site visits are: -

- a fact finding exercise.
- not part of the formal Committee meeting and therefore public rights of attendance do not apply.
- to enable Officers to point out relevant features.
- to enable questions to be asked on site for clarification. However, discussions on the application will only take place at the subsequent Committee.

Frequently Used Planning Acronyms

AONB	Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty	PEDW	Planning & Environment Decisions Wales
APN	Agricultural Prior Notification	PPW	Planning Policy Wales
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	S.106	Section 106 Agreement
CA	Conservation Area	SA	Sustainability Appraisal
CAC	Conservation Area Consent	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
DAS	Design and Access Statement	SINC	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
DPN	Demolition Prior Notification	SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
ES	Environmental Statement	SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
FCA	Flood Consequences Assessment	TAN	Technical Advice Note
GPDO	General Permitted Development Order	TIA	Transport Impact Assessment
LB	Listed Building	TPN	Telecommunications Prior Notification
LBC	Listed Building Consent	TPO	Tree Preservation Order
LDP	Local Development Plan	UCO	Use Classes Order
LPA	Local Planning Authority	UDP	Unitary Development Plan
PINS	Planning Inspectorate		

Agenda Item 8

REFERENCE: P/25/758/FUL
APPLICANT: N Davies 52 Coychurch Road, Bridgend, CF31 2AP
LOCATION: 52 Coychurch Road, Bridgend, CF31 2AP
PROPOSAL: Retention of annexe and change of use from ancillary accommodation to holiday let
RECEIVED: 16 December 2025

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This Application is a re-submission of a previously refused scheme (P/25/395/FUL) which seeks to retain a previously consented residential annexe (P/19/752/FUL refers) as a holiday let so defined under Use Class C6 of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). No internal or external alterations are proposed with the floorspace defined as illustrated on the extract of the submitted plans below. A small amenity space (decking area) in the northwest corner of the site is shown on the submitted plans. Car parking for 1no. vehicle is provided on site.

The previous scheme was refused for the following reasons:

1. *The proposed development, by reason of its location, scale and proposed use, represents an excessive and inappropriate form of development tantamount to a new self-contained dwelling, resulting in overdevelopment of the site that will impact on the amenities of the neighbours and provide poor living conditions for future occupiers with a limited outlook and outdoor living space, contrary to the objectives of Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales, (Edition 12, 2024), Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 02 Householder Development.*
2. *Insufficient information within the Tourism Viability Needs Impact Assessment has been submitted to enable the LPA to assess the sustainability of the Tourism Operation and compliance with the requirements of Policy SP16 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033) and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales 12 (Feb. 2024)*

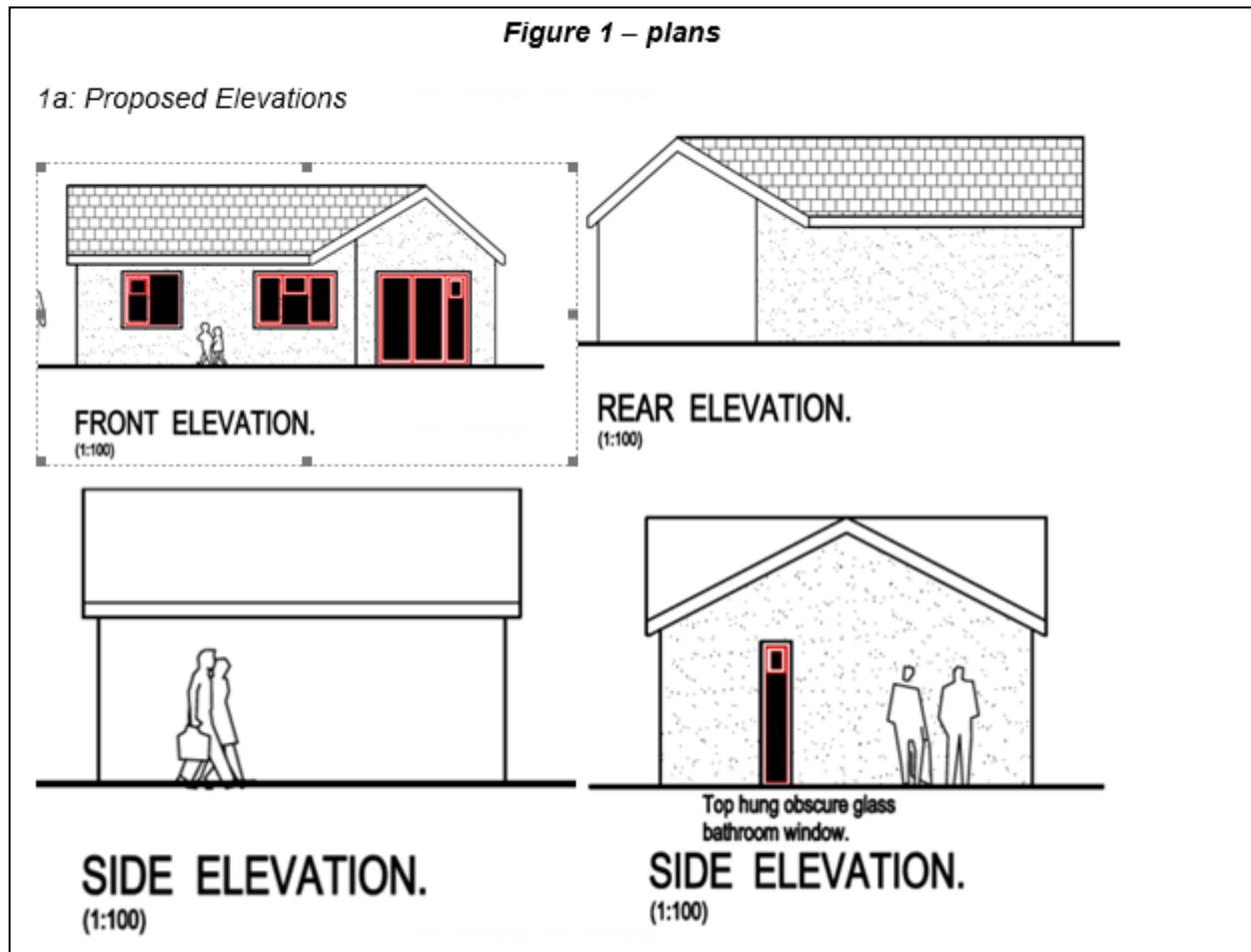
A Tourism Needs Viability Impact Assessment (TVNIA) has been submitted with this revised Application outlining the demand for the facility and the sustainability of the site to overcome refusal reason 2. A planning statement has also been submitted which seeks to outline the Applicant's rationale for the proposed development as summarised below.

In relation to reason 1 the following is suggested by the Applicant:

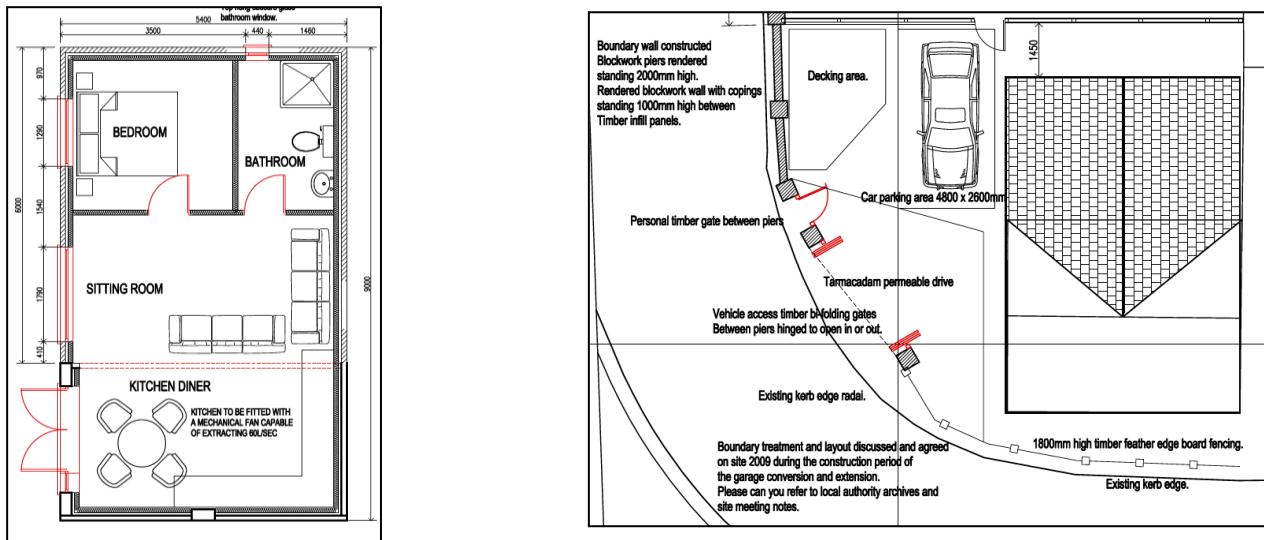
- The scheme does not represent overdevelopment of the site due to the main dwelling (52 Coychurch Road) having sufficient amenity space and a small, decked area for the holiday let.
- There would be no increased intensity of use and that a C3 use can have up to 8 visits a day.
- There is an acceptable level of parking provision.
- The development is in scale and form to the host dwelling

Whilst a general assessment of the merits of the Application will be set out in the relevant section of this report it is notable that, whilst the Applicant disagrees with the reasons for refusal, the supporting planning statement does not provide any specific evidence against the reasons for refusal.

Members should be aware that no formal appeal of the refused scheme has been lodged with Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (**PEDW**).



1b: Proposed Floor Plan and Block Plan



SITE DESCRIPTION

The Application site is situated within the Key Primary Settlement of Bridgend, as defined by Policy SF1 of the adopted Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) (**RLDP**). The site relates to a single storey former garage which has been converted and extended to provide an ancillary unit of accommodation. The building is sited at the southeast portion of the existing amenity space of the 52 Coychurch Road with access via a driveway serving Green Court to the west and small decked area in situ. The dwelling, which is proposed to be split off, known as number 52 Coychurch Road, is a two storey, semi-detached corner property with both a front and rear garden and with outbuildings in situ. Off street parking for the main dwelling is located to the front of the property accessed off the main highway known as Coychurch Road, via Green Court. The Application site is surrounded by a variety of different styles of properties including residential dwellings of similar design to the host dwelling, as well as bungalow style properties to the rear.

Figure 2 – Site Location Plan (and Site Location Plan supplied with P/19/752/FUL)

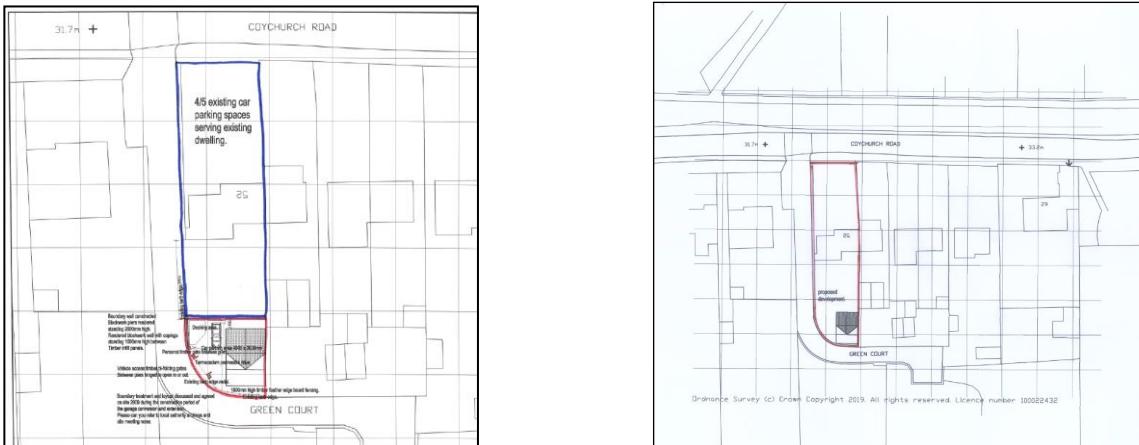


Figure 3 – Photos

3a/b: Views at towards front elevation



3c/d: Views up the street and number 52 Coychurch Road



3e: Aerial View (Red flag indicates 52 Coychurch Road)



3f: Photo of the site extracted from the Planning Statement



RELEVANT HISTORY

P/08/993/FUL Proposal: Double Storey Side Extension and New Single Garage to Rear Garden

Decision: Conditional Consent

Decision Date: 09 January 2009

P/19/752/FUL Proposal: Conversion and extension of existing garage into ancillary accommodation

Decision: Conditional Consent

Decision Date: 05 February 2020

P/20/178/DOC Proposal: Approval of details for condition 3 (drainage) of P/19/752/FUL

Decision: DOC not agreed

Decision Date: 15 May 2020

P/20/353/NMA Proposal: Non-material amendment to P/19/752/FUL to change internal layout and repositioned windows

Decision: NMA conditional consent

Decision Date: 09 June 2020

P/20/351/DOC Proposal: Approval of details for condition 3 of P/19/752/FUL

Decision: DOC not agreed

Decision Date: 11 April 2022

P/25/395/FUL Proposal: Proposed retention of annexe and its change of use from ancillary accommodation to holiday let

Decision: Refusal

Decision Date: 24 October 2025

PUBLICITY

Neighbours have been notified of the receipt of the Application.

The period allowed for response to consultations/publicity expired on 13th January 2025.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways Officer: No objection.

Shared Regulatory Services: No comments received.

Brackla Community Council: No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Cllr Spanswick is supportive of the Application and called the Application in for consideration by the Council's Development Control Committee.

Five letters of objections from different addresses have been received. In summary, the objections are based on the following:

Material objections

- Highway Safety: Lack of parking provision leading to parking on the access for the nearby dwellings, increased vehicular traffic, insufficient access on a tight bend.
- The use is incompatible with the character and appearance of the area. i.e. a business use within a residential area is inappropriate.
- The original annexe had a condition restricting the use for family members only.
- Impact on the amenity of neighbours by loss of privacy and increased noise/disturbance.
- A condition relating to parking provision would be un-enforceable due to the previous instances of guests not parking appropriately.

Other matters

- a) Inability to contact the owner as they are moving home and therefore, they have lost the legal access rights for the annex.
- b) Green Court is a private driveway maintained by residents with no street lighting.
- c) The change of use will increase nuisance behaviour and there is no control over the clientele of the site leading to increased feelings of vulnerability.
- d) Concern regarding setting a precedent in the area.
- e) The Holiday Let is already an unauthorised use.
- f) Noise from a commercial premises.
- g) Safety and Security Concerns: Higher numbers of unknown visitors may pose

- safety risks and complicate neighbourhood security.
- h) Private damage to fencing has already occurred and clients have parked on neighbouring driveways.
- i) AirBNB reviews suggest that the parking arrangements are not appropriate.
- j) The neighbour consultee letters were received with limited time to make representations.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Material objections will be addressed in the relevant sections of the report. With regards to the other matters:

- a) The landowner's future primary address is not a material planning consideration. The specific rights or covenants over land would be a legal matter outside of the planning remit.
- b) Any private driveway or covenants on the land are a private matter outside of the land use planning system.
- c) Nuisance behaviour or similar issues are addressed under other legislation and can be a matter for Shared Regulatory Services or the Police. General residential amenity is addressed in the relevant section of the report. Specific feelings are not considered a material planning consideration.
- d) Each Application is addressed on its own merits. Precedent is not a material consideration.
- e) Whilst it is acknowledged the use operated prior to submission of a planning Application, the Applicant has the right to seek to attempt to regularise the unauthorised development.
- f) The proposed use class is classified as a residential use. Noise from a commercial use cannot therefore be considered. The intensity of a use will be addressed in the relevant section of the report.
- g) Safety and Security of potential users are not considered material in assessing the Application.
- h) Any damage caused to private residences cannot be considered a material planning consideration and would be a private matter.
- i) The Parking provision is assessed within the relevant section of the report.
- j) Neighbour consultation letters are sent via Royal Mail. Any relevant comments received after the initial 21-day period are taken into consideration at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority if the Application has not been determined.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance in the form of Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) (**PPW**) are of relevance to the determination of this Application.

Paragraph 1.30 of PPW confirms that... '*Development management is the positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals through the process of deciding planning Applications.*'

“All development decisions...should seek to contribute towards the making of sustainable places and improved well-being.” (Paragraph 2.2 of PPW refers) Para 2.3 states “The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.”

At Para 2.7, it states “Placemaking in development decisions happens at all levels and involves considerations at a global scale, including climate change, down to the very local level, such as considering the amenity impact on neighbouring properties and people.”

PPW states at paragraphs 2.22 and 2.23 that the Planning system should “ensure that a post-Covid world has people’s well-being at its heart and that Planners play a pivotal role...in shaping our society for the future, prioritising placemaking, decarbonisation and well-being.”

Technical Advice Notes:

The Welsh Government has provided additional guidance in the form of Technical Advice Notes. The following are of relevance:

- Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).
- Technical Advice Note 12 - Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note 13 – Tourism (1997)
- Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport (2007).

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with sustainable development principles to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Section 5).

The well-being goals identified in the Act are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The duty has been considered in the assessment of this Application.

The Socio-Economic Duty

The Socio-Economic Duty (under Part 1, Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010) which came into force on 31 March 2021, has the overall aim of delivering better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage and whilst this is not a strategic decision, the duty has been considered in the assessment of this Application.

Local Policies

The Development Plan for the area comprises of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 which was formally adopted by the Council in March 2024 and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Strategic Policy

- Policy SP1: Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy
- Policy SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking
- Policy SP4: Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change
- Policy SP5: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- Policy SP16: Tourism
- Policy SP17: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

Topic Based Policy

- Policy SF1: Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management
- Policy PLA11: Parking Standards
- Policy DNP6: Biodiversity, Ecological Networks, Habitats and Species
- Policy DNP7: Trees, Hedgerows and Development
- Policy DNP8: Green Infrastructure.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG02 - Householder Development
- SPG17 - Parking Standards
- SPG19 - Biodiversity

APPRAISAL

This Application has been called in by the Leader and is referred to the Development Control Committee for consideration. Cllr Spanswick has challenged the soundness of the original reasons for refusal suggesting that, in principle, there would be no material change in intensity between the former use as ancillary "Granny annexe" accommodation and the current use as a holiday let.

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this Application relate to the principle of development, the visual amenities of the area and amenities of residents, biodiversity, drainage and highway/pedestrian safety.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located within the Key Primary settlement of Bridgend as defined by **Policy SF1** Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (**RLDP**) adopted in 2024. Policy SF1 states that Development will be

permitted within settlement boundaries at a scale commensurate with the role and function of the settlement.

Policy SP16: Tourism states that appropriate sustainable tourism developments which promote high quality accommodation, upgrade facilities and foster activity based, business, events and cultural tourism will be permitted providing developments avoid unacceptable, adverse environmental or amenity impacts and are supported by adequate existing or new infrastructure provision.

A Tourism Needs Viability Impact Assessment (**TNVIA**) has accompanied the Application which has been reviewed by the development planning team and is considered appropriate in scale and scope to validate the viability of the business.

Policy SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Place Making of the RLDP states that all development must contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places that support active and healthy lives and enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment.

Criterion c) of SP3 states that development must: Use land efficiently by being of a density which maximises the development potential of the land whilst respecting that of the surrounding development.

Criterion k) of SP3 states that development must: Ensure that the viability and amenity of neighbouring uses and their users/occupiers will not be adversely affected.

The permission for the conversion and extension of the former garage into ancillary accommodation (which was implemented), was subject to the following condition:

'The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as 52, Coychurch Road, Bridgend and shall not be used for any commercial, letting or separate holiday accommodation purposes at any time.'

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the extent of the permission granted and to ensure that the Local Planning Authority retains effective control over the use of the building in the interests of protecting the amenities of the area and in the interest of highway safety.'

Typically, a family annexe is to provide living space for a relative of the homeowner; an arrangement which allows for independent living for both parties albeit ensuring that support can be provided where necessary. Whilst it is acknowledged by Officers that any change of use to a holiday let would require formal planning consent, the LPA considered it necessary to explicitly restrict (by the above referred condition), the use of the former garage and associated grounds for ancillary family semi-independent accommodation only in the interests of highway safety and residential amenity, and to enable the Local Planning Authority to retain effective control of the use.

The proposal would nullify the previous condition, resulting in the overdevelopment of the site and allowing, effectively, a fully independent dwelling unit which is separated off from the main dwelling so that it is no longer an annexe.

The frequency and turnover of guests, and the checking-in and out of the former converted garage together with the transient pattern of occupation and movement from the outbuilding, would be more concentrated than when it was occupied as 'part and parcel' of and in conjunction with the main dwelling house (The supporting information suggests 190-210 visits per annum). The building is domestic in design, with all the facilities to be independent and not re-integrated to the host dwelling; already being fenced off and is essentially an independent unit to the site. The proposal therefore raises concerns in that it takes the form of an independent separate planning unit, with an increased frequency of use (high turnover of occupants/visits by cleaners etc.), which would adversely impact the amenity of neighbours.

These factors signify that the site is akin to a new dwelling in design and practice. As such, this is considered to result in an overdevelopment of the site not allowing for a compatible use of the land and does not respect the surrounding development which consists of a private shared residential lane and associated dwellings impacting the general residential amenity of neighbours.

For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that, in principle, the development would not constitute an appropriate form of development at this location within the curtilage of a dwelling in terms of its scale and use, contrary to Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

DESIGN AND VISUAL IMPACT

Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) stipulates "*all development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places that support active and healthy lives and enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment*". Design should be of the highest quality possible and should be appropriate in scale, size and prominence.

PPW12 states at paragraph 3.9 that "*the special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important Planning considerations*".

The proposal does not propose any internal or external alterations to the building or its footprint and the boundary treatment is a continuation of the main dwelling and is acceptable in this regard. Comments have been received regarding a business use resulting in the loss of social cohesion. Whilst these are noted and that the operation of a holiday let is a commercial operation, the use class itself is residential. Therefore, overall, it is considered that the change of use would not have a significant impact upon

the visual amenities of the area.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) states at paragraph 2.7 that *“placemaking in development decisions happens at all levels and involves considerations at a global scale, including climate change, down to the very local level, such as considering the amenity impact on neighbouring properties and people”*.

Criterion (k) of Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) seeks to ensure that the viability and amenity of neighbouring uses and their users/occupiers will not be adversely affected and in addition, seeks to ensure that an appropriate level of amenity is afforded to future occupiers of a development.

Overbearing and overshadowing impact

In terms of overbearing and overshadowing impact, Note 1 of Supplementary Planning Guidance 02: Householder Development (SPG02) states that *No extension should unreasonably dominate the outlook of an adjoining property*. Further to this, Note 2 SPG02 states *“No extension should unreasonably overshadow adjoining property.”* Paragraph 4.2.1 of this Note 2 continues *“A poorly designed extension can reduce daylight and sunlight to an unreasonable extent. Neighbouring houses and their gardens can be made gloomy and unattractive in worst cases rights to light may be infringed.”*

The development is in effect a separate unit enclosed by a boundary treatment. There are no dwellings within the immediate vicinity that would be adversely impacted from an overshadowing or overbearing perspective in terms of the existing use or annex.

Overlooking/loss of privacy

In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, SPG02 refers at Note 6 to privacy and states that: *“extensions and outbuildings should respect the privacy of neighbouring houses.”*

Comments have been received in relation to loss of privacy. The building is an enclosed structure with no direct increase in the potential for overlooking or consequential loss of privacy to neighbours. It is acknowledged however that a transient population are likely to enter/exit the site frequently and may increase the perceived level of overlooking once outside of the enclosed site.

Residential Amenity Occupiers

The proposed change of use would create a separate planning unit akin to a dwelling. The proposed bedroom would have natural light but a very limited outlook consisting of a boundary treatment, driveway and a small amenity area. This is differentiated from the previous use as an annex as this would have been ancillary to the host dwelling with use of the wider amenity space which has now been fenced off.

As such, the living conditions of future occupiers is not considered to be appropriate and

is contrary to Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), and guidance contained within Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 02 Householder Development which relates specifically to residential amenity.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Policy SP5 Sustainable Transport and Accessibility of the RLDP states that new development must be located and designed in a way that minimises the need to travel, reduces dependency on the private car and enables sustainable access to local services. Development must be designed to provide safe and efficient access to the transport network, which includes the active travel, public transport and street networks. Active travel is to be encouraged and reliance on private car use should be reduced.

Policy PLA11 of the RLDP stipulates that all development will be required to provide appropriate levels of parking in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

Note 9 of SPG02 states that *off-street parking should be available to meet the County Borough Council's guidelines for a dwelling of the size after extension* and stipulates that the parking requirement for houses equates to 1 space per bedroom up to a maximum of 3 spaces. Each space must be 4.8m x 2.6m to accommodate a car parking space unless it is within a garage.

The Highways assessment is unchanged from the previous Application P/25/395/FUL and is as follows:

The Application relates to an existing one-bedroom annexe currently used for ancillary accommodation at 52 Cychurch Road, Bridgend. The annexe benefits from an existing off-street parking space, which meets the Council's layout and design standards (minimum dimensions of 4.8m x 2.6m). No alterations are proposed to the main dwelling or its associated parking provision.

The submitted plans confirm that the existing parking arrangement for the annexe will remain unchanged, with no loss of off-street parking. Furthermore, the proposal does not include an increase in the number of bedrooms.

In accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 17 – Parking Standards, one off-street parking space is required per bedroom for residential dwellings, up to a maximum of three spaces. Given that the annexe comprises a single bedroom and retains its compliant parking space, the Highway Authority has no concerns regarding potential impacts on on-street parking.

The Application sets out that an annexe exists with a parking space, the access for pedestrians and vehicles has been constructed and is in use. Whilst the vehicular access is located on a bend, there is an existing use associated with the consented garage and then for an annex. On balance there is no intensification of use expected to occur, and it can be accepted that the proposals are similar to the existing use and operation of the access.

I would advise that the observations of the Highway Authority are: -

No Objection

As such, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the Note 9 of SPG02 and Policy SP3 and PLA11 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) and is acceptable from a highway and pedestrian safety perspective.

BIODIVERSITY

In assessing a planning Application, the Local Planning Authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW12) states in Section 6.4.4: *"It is important that biodiversity and resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals."* It further states that: *"All reasonable steps must be taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems and these should be balanced with the wider economic and social needs of business and local communities. Where adverse effects on the environment cannot be avoided or mitigated, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission."*

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning states that: *"Biodiversity, conservation and enhancement is an integral part of planning for sustainable development. The planning system has an important part to play in nature conservation. The use and development of land can pose threats to the conservation of natural features and wildlife."*

Policy SP3 of the adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) requires development to Safeguard and enhance biodiversity and integrated multi-functional green infrastructure networks.

Policy DNP6 states: *"All development proposals must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improved ecosystem resilience, as demonstrated through planning Application submissions. Features and elements of biodiversity or green infrastructure value should be retained on site, and enhanced or created wherever possible, by adopting best practice site design and green infrastructure principles. Development proposals must maintain, protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks / services. Particular importance must be given to maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of ecological networks which enable the dispersal and functioning of protected and priority species"*

Policy DNP7 states: *"development that would adversely affect trees woodlands and hedgerows of public amenity or natural/cultural heritage value or provide important*

ecosystem will not be permitted". Policy DNP8 requires new development proposals to integrate, protect and maintain existing green infrastructure assets and to enhance the extent, quality, connectivity and multi functionality of the green infrastructure network.

The site is located outside of settlement limits and is within a residential use with limited biodiversity value. In this case a bird box would be considered sufficient to enhance biodiversity at the site and a condition would normally be imposed to ensure this is implemented. As such the Application does not raise any significant issues in relation to biodiversity and is compliant with Policies SP3 DNP6, 7 and 8 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

DRAINAGE

The Application form states that the proposed development is within a flood risk zone, is not within 20m of a watercourse and does not propose to increase flood risk elsewhere. A review of the OS database confirms the development is not located within a flood risk zone nor within 20 m of a watercourse and does not propose to increase flood risk.

The Application form states foul water will be disposed of via the main sewer. The Applicant shall contact DCWW should any new connections be required to the public sewer.

The Application form states surface water will be disposed to main sewer; however, the supporting information indicates the use of a soakaway drain and includes percolation tests. The Applicant should clarify which method is being used.

The increase in hard surfacing is less than 100m² therefore a SAB Application is not required.

No surface water is allowed to discharge to the public highway.

No land drainage run-off will be permitted to discharge (either directly or indirectly) into the public sewerage system.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend a refusal of permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that, in determining a planning Application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024)

Having regard to the above report, the objections raised and the unauthorised subdivision of the former garage building from the main host dwelling, the principle of creating a holiday let (Use Class C6) in this location is not accepted. The holiday let use would create fully independent living accommodation akin to a residential dwelling which use represents an overdevelopment of the site that would have a negative impact

on the amenities of neighbours and provide poor living conditions for future occupiers in terms of outlook and outdoor living space.

The Application does not accord with Policies SP3 and SP16 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033), Supplementary Guidance and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales 12 (February 2024).

RECOMMENDATION

(R30) That permission be REFUSED for the following reason(s): -

1. The proposed development, by reason of its location, scale and proposed use, represents an excessive and inappropriate form of development tantamount to a new self-contained dwelling, resulting in the overdevelopment of the site that will impact on the amenities of the neighbours and provide poor living conditions for future occupiers with a limited outlook and outdoor living space, contrary to the objectives of Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales 12 (February 2024), Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 02 Householder Development.

JANINE NIGHTINGALE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers

None

Appeals

The following appeals have been received since my last report to Committee:

APPEAL NO.	2043
APPLICATION NO.	P/25/228/FUL
APPELLANT	MR K PARRY
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	FRONT EXTENSION TO ENLARGE LOUNGE
LOCATION OF APPEAL	1 PRESWYLFA COURT MAIN ROAD COYCHURCH
PROCEDURE	HOUSEHOLDER
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER

The application was refused for the following reason:

1. The proposed development, by reason of its design and form, would unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings and would appear visually obtrusive and out of keeping in the street scene, failing to reflect the established character of the area to the detriment of the visual amenities of the area, contrary to policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033) and advice contained within SPG02: Householder Development and Planning Policy Wales 12 (Feb. 2024).

APPEAL NO.	2041
APPLICATION NO.	P/24/701/FUL
APPELLANT	CARHYS
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	ONE NEW SINGLE STOREY BUNGALOW WITH ONE BEDROOM
LOCATION OF APPEAL	LAND ADJACENT CWM Y COED 1 GER Y BONT BRIDGEND
PROCEDURE	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER

The application was refused for the following reason:

1. The proposed remote parking area located at No. 2 Ger y Bont would, in combination with the parking provision for that host property, constitute a poor design solution that fails to integrate with the existing housing, dominating the street scene and being contrary to Policies SP3 and DNP7 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), the principles contained within Supplementary Planning Guidance 02: Householder Development (2008) and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024).
2. The proposed remote parking area located at No. 2 Ger y Bont would demonstrate poor alignment with the principles of Good Design, particularly inclusivity and accessibility for all, and would be contrary to Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024).
3. The proposed remote parking area located at No. 2 Ger y Bont would by reason of its siting and design represent an inappropriate form of development, which would have a harmful impact on the outlook and amenity of the occupants of the host property, contrary to Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), the principles contained

within Supplementary Planning Guidance 02: Householder Development (2008) and advice contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024).

4. The proposed development, by reason of the importation of fill and raising of ground levels, would represent an inappropriate form of development which would result in overlooking and a loss of privacy for the occupants of No. 1 Ger y Bont, resulting in a significant loss of residential amenity contrary to Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 02 Householder Development and Paragraph 2.7 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 13, February 2024).
5. Insufficient details have been submitted with the planning application to enable the implications of the proposal to be properly evaluated by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the proposed importation of material to the site and the expected number of vehicles movements associated with this activity and its impact on the highway network in accordance with Policy SP5 of the Replacement Local Development Plan 2024.
6. The proposed private sewage treatment system is located within a publicly sewered area where private facilities are not considered environmentally acceptable due to the greater risk of failures leading to pollution of the water environment and would be contrary to Policies SP3(i) and DNP9 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) and Paragraph 6.6.21 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024).
7. Insufficient/outdated information has been submitted with the planning application to fully determine the impact(s) of the scheme on biodiversity and to demonstrate the proposal complies with Policies SP3, DNP6, DNP7 and DNP8 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024), and advice contained within Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) and Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning 2009.

The following appeals have been decided since my last report to Committee:

APPEAL NO.	2033
APPLICATION NO.	P/24/92/FUL
APPELLANT	S & B THOMAS
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	INCLUSION OF LAND INTO CURTILAGE WITH RETAINING WALLS AND TERRACE (RETROSPECTIVE)
LOCATION OF APPEAL	HEDDFAN FEDERATION LANE PONTYCYMMER
PROCEDURE	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER
DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE ALLOWED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS.

The Appeal decision is attached as APPENDIX A.

APPEAL NO.	2034
APPLICATION NO	P/24/1/OUT
APPELLANT	MR P EVANS
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ONE BLOCK OF 2

LOCATION OF APPEAL	BEDROOM APARTMENTS (WITH APPROVAL FOR ACCESS) AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT WORKS: PARCEL A LAND NORTH OF UNDERHILL COTTAGES TONDU ROAD BRIDGEND
PROCEDURE	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER

DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE DISMISSED.
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The application for Costs submitted by the Appellant was also refused.

The Appeal and costs decisions are attached as APPENDIX B

APPEAL NO.	2035
APPLICATION NO	P/25/181/FUL
APPELLANT	MR W FRANCIS
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DORMER BUNGALOW AND REPLACEMENT WITH TWO STOREY DWELLING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS:
LOCATION OF APPEAL	11 WEST ROAD PORTCAWL
PROCEDURE	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER
DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE DISMISSED.

The Appeal decision is attached as APPENDIX C

APPEAL NO.	2036
APPLICATION NO	P/25/26/FUL
APPELLANT	P J MORGAN MANAGEMENT LTD
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	RE-SUBMISSION & RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR EXTERNAL FIRE ESCAPE STAIRCASE AND LANDING (INCORPORATING 1.8M HIGH OPAQUE POLYCARBONATE INFILL), TO PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL ACCESS TO REAR SHARED GARDEN:
LOCATION OF APPEAL	TENBY VILLA18 COYCHURCH ROAD BRIDGEND
PROCEDURE	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER
DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE DISMISSED.

The Appeal decision is attached as APPENDIX D

APPEAL NO.	2044
APPLICATION NO.	P/25/438/FUL

APPELLANT	MR C EDMUNDS
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	REMOVAL OF EXISTING ROOF, CREATE A NEW PITCHED ROOF TO ACCOMMODATE FIRST FLOOR LIVING SPACE; FULL RECONFIGURATION OF GROUND FLOOR LAYOUTS; THERMALLY UPGRADE EXISTING ENVELOPE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS (RE-SUBMISSION FOLLOWING REFUSAL)
LOCATION OF APPEAL	215 WEST ROAD PORTCAWL
PROCEDURE	HOUSEHOLDER
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER
DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE ALLOWED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS.

The Appeal decision is attached as APPENDIX E.

APPEAL NO.	2046
APPLICATION NO.	P/25/525/FUL
APPELLANT	MR L JAMES
SUBJECT OF APPEAL	DETACHED TRIPLE GARAGE TO FRONT GARDEN
LOCATION OF APPEAL	1 HIGH ST LALESTON
PROCEDURE	HOUSEHOLDER
DECISION LEVEL	DELEGATED OFFICER
DECISION	THE INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE WELSH MINISTERS TO DETERMINE THIS APPEAL DIRECTED THAT THE APPEAL BE DISMISSED.

The Appeal decision is attached as APPENDIX F.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the Corporate Director Communities be noted.

JANINE NIGHTINGALE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers (see application reference number)

Appeal Decision

by I Stevens BA (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 16.12.2025

Appeal reference: CAS-04295-J1V9Z2

Site address: Rear of Heddfan, Federation Lane, Pontycymer, Bridgend, CF32 8LQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a grant of planning permission subject to conditions.
- The appeal is made by Mr Stephen Thomas against the decision of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/24/92/FUL, dated 5 March 2024, was approved on 28 February 2025 and planning permission was granted subject to conditions.
- The development permitted is inclusion of land into curtilage with retaining walls and terrace (retrospective).
- The condition in dispute is No 2 which states that: Notwithstanding condition 1, within 3 months of the date of this approval, the existing boundary enclosures around the lower terraced area shall be removed and replaced with new 1.8m high metal hoop top panel fencing, to be finished in black. Temporary plastic leaf trellis screening can be affixed to the inside of this fence to protect the privacy of occupiers. The temporary plastic leaf trellis can remain in place and shall be removed once the privet hedging established on the inside of the fence reaches a height of 1.8m.
- The reason given for the condition is: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2018-2033).
- A site visit was made on 5 November 2025.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and the planning permission Ref: P/24/92/FUL for inclusion of land into curtilage with retaining walls and terrace (retrospective) at Rear of Heddfan, Federation Lane, Pontycymer, Bridgend, CF32 8LQ granted on 28 February 2025 by Bridgend County Borough Council is varied by deleting condition Nos 1, 2 and 4 and substituting condition No 4 for the following new condition:

Within 3 months of the date of this decision a scheme for landscaping and biodiversity enhancement shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include a timetable for its implementation. On approval by the Local Planning Authority the landscaping and biodiversity enhancement shall be carried out in accordance with the scheme. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from

planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policies SP3 and DNP6 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2018-2033), Policy 9 of Future Wales, and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).

Background and Main Issue

2. Planning permission has been granted retrospectively for the creation of an extended rear garden at the detached dwelling, Heddfan. The garden is set at 2 levels with connecting steps and is enclosed by fencing. Condition No 2 of the permission requires the 2m-high wooden fence on the lower patio area to be replaced with 1.8m high metal hoop top panel fencing. The fencing would be finished in black and privet hedging planted on the inside. Plastic leaf trellises could be temporarily affixed to the inside fence and removed once the privet hedging grows to a height of 1.8m.
3. The appellant seeks to remove condition No 2 in its entirety. The main issue therefore is whether the condition is necessary, having regard to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of the occupants of Belle-Vue.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to the lower patio area of the extended rear garden. The garden backs on to recreation space including an equipped play area adjacent to Meadow Street. It is located between a steep grassed bank and rear garden of the neighbouring property, Belle-Vue.
5. The lower patio area is a modest space positioned on top of a gabion terrace wall. The rear boundary fencing follows a similar line to that of Belle-Vue, albeit for a much shorter distance. Indeed, the enclosed lower patio area does not extend the full width of Heddfan's plot and narrows further towards the rear boundary.
6. The use of vertical timber panel fencing is a standard boundary enclosure for residential properties as seen at the upper patio boundary for Heddfan and elsewhere in the surrounding residential area. They include the rear fence of the adjacent property, No 1 Federation Lane, a long fence running along part of Meadow Street nearby, and a mix of timber fencing and block walls defining the rear boundaries of properties along Gwaun-Bant.
7. I recognise that stone walls are also present nearby, including along Belle-Vue's rear boundary. However, there is no single dominant boundary material and timber fencing is an established feature in the area. The Council recognise that the fresh appearance of the upper patio side fencing will weather over time and maintain an appearance similar to other boundary enclosures seen to the rear of properties on Federation Lane. Having visited the area, I consider such effects also apply to the lower patio fencing.
8. The equipped play area is enclosed by metal hoop top rail fencing with a blue finish. This may be a standard boundary for play areas, but it is not a defining feature of the wider area. Although the lower patio area is slightly closer to the metal fence than its neighbour, I fail to see why it should be maintained as an open landscaped garden with metal hoop top fencing when the timber fencing in place is like other permeable boundaries. It is not reasonable in the wider visual context for the lower patio area to follow such a prescriptive boundary treatment as that specified in condition No 2.

9. The fencing around the lower patio area is elevated above the adjacent play area. The combined effect of the supporting wall and fence make a tall permeable boundary which is visible from the play area and along Meadow Street. However, this does not mean it is at odds with its surroundings. Whilst taller than the fencing at Belle-Vue it encloses a relatively small area and does not extend for a significant length, being stepped down from the upper patio fencing and continuing the rear boundary line established by its neighbour. Similarly, in elevated views from the recreation ground at the top of the grassed bank, the fencing dimensions does not make it a conspicuous feature. The fence position, height and materials do not disrupt the pattern of development and do not appear out of place in the context I have described.
10. Belle-Vue benefits from a large garden which slopes down towards its rear boundary. Given the area topography, some form of permeable boundary treatment is inevitable around the appeal site to maintain privacy for the neighbouring occupants. The timber fencing enclosing the lower patio area runs along part of the side boundary and is positioned towards the far corner of the neighbouring garden. Whilst elevated above Belle-Vue's side boundary and therefore visible from within its garden, this is only one portion of the longer boundary and given the sloping nature of the garden and staggered height of the fencing along this boundary, it does not significantly dominate outlook from the property.
11. I therefore conclude that condition No 2 is not necessary or reasonable having regard to the character and appearance of the area. The condition does not therefore satisfy all 6 tests in Welsh Government Circular 016/2014 and should be removed. The removal of the condition would also cause no significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants. Its removal, and keeping the as-built fencing, would not conflict with the good design principles in Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018-2033, or advice on area character, design quality, and residential amenity in the Council's Householder Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Other Matters and Conditions

12. I note the concerns raised in representations with the fence height near the glass balustrade on the upper patio area. The Council did not raise this as a concern in its decision. Whilst I recognise that the neighbouring garden at Belle-Vue can be seen when stood in this position, views are largely confined to a small corner of the wider garden which includes a greenhouse and patio. Prolonged views are unlikely to be experienced given that it is a small corner section of the upper patio area.
13. Concerns have also been raised regarding the stability of the fence and supporting wall, along with neighbour notification of the works commencing. Such matters are normally covered under separate legal rights, and it is not for the planning system, including this appeal, to duplicate them.
14. Since I have deleted condition No 2, the cross reference to metal fencing in condition No 4 is no longer necessary. As I have the power to vary non-disputed conditions under the terms of this appeal, I have therefore removed the reference from condition No 4 and amended its wording to align with advice in Welsh Government Circular 016/2014. The condition retains its original aim to enhance biodiversity and details of any planting can be agreed by the Council.
15. Condition No 1 does not explain why future maintenance of the development based on the approved landscape plan is needed, particularly when landscaping details will be secured through condition No 4. The approved plan also specifies details for the metal hoop top fencing, as opposed to showing the as-built wooden fence. Except for this detail, the development has been completed in accordance with the plan details. Given

my findings on condition No 2, condition No 1 no longer serves a useful purpose. To avoid potential conflict between this and other conditions, I shall remove condition No 1.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed. I will vary planning permission Ref P/24/92/FUL by deleting condition No 2. Consequently, I will also delete conditions No 1 and No 4 and substitute condition No 4 for a new condition as set out in the decision.
17. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

I Stevens

INSPECTOR



Appeal Decision

by Mr Anthony Thickett BA(HONS) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 31/12/2025

Appeal reference: CAS-04393-J9P4N6

Site address: Parcel A, Land North of Underhill Cottages, Tondu Road, Bridgend, CF31 4JL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr P Evans against the decision of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/24/1/OUT, dated 30 December 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2024.
- The development proposed is highway improvement works and one block of 2 bedroom apartments. The application is in outline with all matters bar means of access reserved for subsequent approval.
- A site visit was made on 10 December 2025.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The site is part of a larger piece of land stretching along Tondu Road which has been the subject of a number of planning applications since 2019, all refused and dismissed at appeal. The appellant has split the area into Parcel A and Parcel B. An appeal against the non-determination of an outline planning application for Parcel B was dismissed in July 2025 (CAS-03855-D9G8D3).
3. The Council's decision to decline to determine the appeal application, following the dismissal of the last appeal for the larger area, was quashed by the High Court. The judgement makes clear it should not be read as an indication as to how the appeal application should be determined.
4. The appellant submits a Transport and Highway Rebuttal including revised drawings for highway works. Once an appeal is made, schemes may not be varied other than where the application contains a correctable error. The revised plans do not seek to correct drafting errors but propose material amendments to the works proposed to the highway. The revisions are not admissible under Article 26C of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended).

Application for costs

5. The application for costs made by Mr Evans against Bridgend County Borough Council is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area,
- the effect of the proposal on highway safety and whether the proposed development is sustainable in transport terms,
- the impact of the proposed development on biodiversity.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site comprises an irregular shaped piece of land adjoining a dual carriageway. The site slopes steeply up from the road and is heavily wooded. The other side of the dual carriageway is dominated by commercial uses, including a car dealership. The trees on the site are the predominant feature on the western side of Tondu Road. Siting and appearance are reserved for subsequent approval but, given the size and shape of the site, the submitted parameters indicate the siting and form of the apartments is likely to be as shown on the illustrative plans.
8. Even in winter, the woodland is a welcome and attractive feature in the street scene, particularly compared to the commercial buildings opposite. The appellant submits an arboricultural assessment which recommends 11 trees be felled because they are dead or allegedly in danger of toppling on to the highway. The proposed development would result in the loss of a significantly greater number of trees than identified as dead or potentially dangerous.
9. The woodland makes a positive contribution to this part of Tondu Road, recognised by it being subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). An appeal against a refusal to fell 33 trees was dismissed in 2022 insofar as it related to 29 trees but allowed in relation to 4 (CAS-01379-M4T9Y9), confirming the important contribution of the woodland to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Replacement planting on the northern, western (in part) and southern boundaries would not mitigate the loss of the woodland. Given the small area that would remain undeveloped on either end of proposed apartments, I am doubtful the proposed 4:1 replacement for felled trees is achievable. The adverse impact of the loss of the trees alone provides compelling grounds to dismiss the appeal.
11. The group of dwellings to the south of the site are two storey and traditional in appearance. The submitted parameters suggest a 3 storey flat roofed block which would pay no regard to the domestic architecture on this side of Tondu Road. The block would appear as an isolated, contrived development, offering little to the street scene and definitely not making up for the loss of trees. I conclude the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with Policies SP3 and DNP7 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018 – 2033, adopted 2024 (LDP).

Highway safety

12. Tondu Road is a busy dual carriageway subject to a 50mph speed limit as it passes the site. There is no footway on the western side from around 65m to the south of the appeal site. I inspected the site from the footway on the eastern side as I did not deem it safe to walk along the verge on the western side. The appellant's case is largely predicated on the revised plans and a reduction of the speed limit. The revised plans are not before me and the Highway Authority does not support reducing the speed limit.
13. The appellant proposes taking out the nearside lane on the western side of the dual carriageway to provide a footway and layby to serve the proposed flats. The Highway Authority point to flaws in the proposed highway design and the appellant's road safety audit. The margin between a new footway/cycleway would only be 0.5m wide when it should be a minimum 1.5m alongside a 50mph road, further the design of the proposed layby is for a road with a 30mph speed limit. The appellant does not dispute the road safety audit only relates to the proposed footway/cycleway and crossing and does not extend to any highway safety concerns resulting from other aspects of the proposed development.
14. The proposed apartments would be served by a layby only, no on site parking is proposed. The nearest bus stops to the site are not in use. The nearest public transport is Bridgend bus station, around 700m away. This is far in excess of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's recommended maximum walking distance to bus stops of 500m.
15. The Councils parking standards require a maximum of 1 space per bedroom unit plus one visitor space per 5 units which adds up to a requirement of at least 19 spaces. National policy seeks to reduce reliance on the private car and it is reasonable to reduce local standards in sustainable locations. Given the distance to the bus station and town centre and lack of footway, residents are likely to be reliant on the private car. It is unreasonable to expect prospective residents to brave the busy dual carriageway to reach cars parked on the residential streets off Tondu Road. In the absence of safe, convenient and feasible alternatives, I do not consider the site is suitable for a zero parking development.
16. In addition to being inadequate in terms of design, I share the Council's concerns the proposed layby would be inadequate to accommodate the number of vehicle movements likely to be generated by 9 apartments. The appellant assumes 8 two way trips per day but this feels too low for 9 apartments when you consider the lack of a feasible alternative for journeys to work, shops, schools etc. In the absence of parking on site, residents would be tempted to park in the layby to unload shopping and drop it into the apartment. Should there be no space in the layby, residents may be tempted to park in the road, to the detriment of highway safety and the free flow of traffic.
17. The dual carriageway has a grassed central reservation; it is a long way in either direction to a roundabout. Without measures to deter it, the proposal would increase the likelihood of hazardous U turns at the beginning of the dual carriageway to the south of the site, close to the junction with Mill Lane and at the gap in the reservation affording access to the Trews Field Industrial Estate. In addition to the works shown on the revised plan not before me, the measures proposed to deter U turns depend on a reduction in the speed limit which is not supported by the Highway Authority.
18. A draft unilateral undertaking proposes a contribution of £18,000 to fund the proposed pedestrian/cycle facilities, and layby and traffic regulation orders. This sum would be inadequate to cover the cost of the works proposed. Further, the unilateral undertaking is

in draft, not signed and I give it little weight. I conclude the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety and conflicts with Policies SP5 and PA11 of the LDP.

Biodiversity

19. The appeal site sits within the Cefn Glas Wood Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). It is designated for being semi-natural woodland with an assemblage of indicator species and also contains disused quarries with shaded rock exposures and scrub. In addition to the habitat created by the trees, the site currently benefits from a diverse ground flora of ecological value. This would be lost either through building or replaced by lawns or yards. In addition to being sceptical of achieving a 4:1 replacement of felled trees, given the, size and shape of the site and that the proposed apartments would have a considerable footprint, I do not see how there would be enough room to create wildflower meadows.
20. The provision of green roofs, sustainable drainage, bat and bird boxes does not outweigh the effective destruction of a significant part of the SINC, never mind provide enhancement as required by Policy 9 of Future Wales. The appellant argues the lack of objection from NRW overrides the concerns of the Council's ecologist but NRW make clear its decision not to comment does not rule out potential impact on environmental interests of local importance. I conclude the proposed development would have an adverse impact on biodiversity and conflicts with Policy DNP 5 of the LDP.

Other matters

21. The proposed rear amenity area would be dominated and overshadowed by trees, the impact exacerbated by the steep bank. The trees, due to their proximity and size would have an unacceptable visual impact on prospective occupiers, this adverse impact would be made worse by the proposed replacement planting. The apartments would sit cheek by jowl against the busy dual carriage way. The noise and emissions from vehicles is likely to mean residents would be reluctant to open windows. Whether the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for prospective residents is not a reason for refusal. However, my findings in this regard add weight to my conclusion the appeal should be dismissed. This, together with my findings on the main issues, leads me to question whether residential development here constitutes good placemaking.
22. The appellant proposes the units would be 100% affordable housing. The unilateral undertaking submitted with the appeal application is in draft and there is, therefore, no mechanism before me to secure the provision of affordable housing. Further, I have seen nothing indicating a Registered Social Landlord would be willing or able to take the proposed units (clause 2.4 of the unilateral undertaking).

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.
24. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This decision accords with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of making our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.

A Thickett

Inspector



Costs Decision

by Mr A Thickett BA (Hons) BTP Dip RSA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 31/12/2025

Costs application in relation to Appeal: CAS-04393-J9P4N6

Site address: Parcel A Land North of Underhill Cottages Tondu Road Bridgend CF31 4JL

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 78, 322C and Schedule 6.
- The application is made by Mr P Evans for a full award of costs against Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The appeal was made against the refusal of outline planning permission for highway improvement works and one block of 2 bedroom apartments.
- A site visit was made on 10 December 2025.

Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Section 12 Annex 'Award of Costs' of the Development Management Manual advises that, irrespective of the outcome of an appeal, costs may only be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably, thereby causing the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.
3. The High Court judgement made no comment on the merits of the proposed development. Neither the Council nor I were bound to grant planning permission because the Council's decision to decline to determine the appeal application was quashed.
4. Had the Council determined the application when it was first submitted, the outcome would have been the same. The Council produced evidence to substantiate its objections. I agreed with it on all counts and dismissed the appeal. I find unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary expense, as described in the Annex, is not demonstrated and the application for an award of costs fails.

A Thickett

Inspector



Appeal Decision

by Mr Anthony Thickett BA(HONS) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 23/12/2025

Appeal reference: CAS-04404-D5Q8C5

Site address: 11 West Road, Nottage, Porthcawl, CF36 3SN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr W Francis against the decision of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/25/181/FUL, dated 25 March 2025, was refused by notice dated 8 May 2025.
- The development proposed is a replacement dwelling.
- A site visit was made on 10 December 2025.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:

- the street scene in West Road,
- the living conditions of neighbouring residents by way of privacy, loss of light and visual impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. West Road is characterised by a mix of houses, bungalows and dormer bungalows of different shapes and sizes. The appeal site is a dormer bungalow in a row of 6, book ended by houses. All the bungalows have dormers bar one. The bungalows are modest in size; the upper floors being contained in the roof space reducing their mass and bulk.
4. The appellant seeks to replace the bungalow with a house with full height eaves at first floor. The proposed house would sit roughly in the middle of this row of modest properties. Due to its height, mass and bulk, it would stand out as an incongruous and dominating feature, significantly at odds with its smaller neighbours. It would pay no respect to the form of the dormer bungalows, including the property at the north western end of the row, which although larger than the others, respects their form. I conclude the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the street scene in West Road

and conflicts with Policy SP3 (a & b) of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan, adopted 2024.

Living conditions

5. No. 9 has a ground floor window in the rear elevation to a living room and a bathroom window in a rear offshoot facing the shared boundary. The submitted plan shows a 45° line from the centre of the living room window to No. 9. This is often used to assess the impact of a proposed building on light reaching a window, structures intruding into this line likely having an adverse impact. The two storey element of the proposed dwelling would not intrude into this line. Given the position and orientation of the existing and proposed buildings, I do not consider the proposed development would lead to an unacceptable loss of light to No.9. Nor, given the limited extent to which the proposed two storey element would extend beyond the rear elevation of No. 9, do I consider it would have an unacceptable visual impact on the enjoyment of its house and garden.
6. The proposed dining room includes a window facing the shared boundary with No.9. There is a substantial shrub and a 1.5m fence on this part of the boundary and overlooking could be avoided by a taller fence. The window to bedroom 1 facing No. 13 would be fitted with obscure glazing. I conclude the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents and complies with Policy SP3 (k) of the LDP.

Other matter

7. Whilst fitting the window to bedroom 1 with obscure glazing may prevent overlooking, it would be the only window to the bedroom other than a rooflight, neither of which would offer any outlook from that room. This does not constitute good design and adds weight to my conclusion the appeal should be dismissed.

Conclusion

8. My findings regarding the living conditions of neighbouring residents is outweighed by the harm identified to the street scene in West Road. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.
9. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of making our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.

A Thickett

Inspector



Appeal Decision

by G Hall BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 15/01/2025

Appeal reference: CAS-04436-B2Y4X1

Site address: Tenby Villa, 18 Coychurch Road, Bridgend, CF31 3AP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Philip Morgan (P.J. Morgan Management Limited) against the decision of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/25/26/FUL, dated 16 January 2025, was refused by notice dated 29 May 2025.
- The development is Re-submission & retrospective planning permission for external fire escape staircase and landing (incorporating 1.8m high opaque polycarbonate infill), to provide residential access to rear shared garden.
- A site visit was made on 8 January 2026.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice and the appeal form, as these provide a fuller description of the appeal scheme. As the development has commenced, I have considered the appeal as one seeking planning permission under section 73A(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mid-terraced, two-storey building comprising two flats, one at ground-floor level and one at first-floor level. Both the appeal property and its adjoining neighbours are relatively small, with compact rear gardens, creating a close-knit arrangement where relationships between properties are particularly sensitive.
5. An external staircase has been constructed at the rear of the property, providing the first-floor flat with access to the rear garden. At the top of the staircase is a small landing, onto which a door opens. Due to its small size, the appellant describes this area as a landing rather than a balcony. Notwithstanding its description or intended use, the key

considerations are its size, position, and potential for use, and the resulting effect on the privacy and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

6. The staircase and landing are positioned immediately adjacent to the shared boundaries with the adjoining properties on either side. Given the constrained size of the gardens and the close-knit layout of the properties, the elevated structure appears imposing and overbearing. It also gives rise to a pronounced and intrusive sense of overlooking, resulting in an unacceptable loss of privacy for both adjoining occupiers and the occupiers of the ground-floor flat when using their garden.
7. I accept that the landing is relatively small, which limits its potential for prolonged or intensive use. However, it is clearly capable of being stood on and, even with the door opening outwards, could accommodate periods of sitting or casual outdoor activity. As such, the landing could be used in a manner that goes beyond purely transitional access, with associated implications for overlooking and loss of privacy. I acknowledge that, as is typical in terraced settings, the proximity of dwellings and the presence of upper-floor windows mean there is an existing degree of mutual overlooking. In places, views into rear gardens along this part of Coychurch Road are also possible from the rear access lane. However, these existing relationships do not justify an external staircase and landing that materially increase overlooking to an unacceptable degree.
8. The appellant proposes the erection of 1.8-metre-high privacy screens to the sides of the landing, as shown on the submitted drawings. Whilst such screens would reduce some lateral views, they would not adequately mitigate harmful overlooking from the front of the landing or from the staircase itself. In these positions, clear and direct views into adjoining gardens would remain.
9. The appellant refers to fire-safety obligations on landlords that may necessitate a safe means of access or egress. However, no evidence has been provided as to the nature or extent of any such requirements, nor that the existing staircase is the only means of achieving compliance. In the absence of such evidence, this consideration does not outweigh the identified harm to living conditions.
10. I also recognise the appellant's wish to provide the first-floor flat with direct access to the rear garden, including for reasons of health and wellbeing, outdoor drying of clothes, and concerns about the alternative route being poor and unsafe. However, this is a flatted development, and occupiers of first-floor, self-contained accommodation would reasonably expect a different relationship with private garden space than that associated with a ground-floor flat or a single dwelling. Such arrangements typically involve a degree of separation from private garden areas, and this does not justify development that results in unacceptable harm to neighbouring occupiers.
11. The presence of a trampoline in a neighbouring garden is not comparable to an external staircase and landing, which materially increase opportunities for overlooking. I also observed a staircase to the first-floor of a property opposite the appeal site. However, I do not know whether that structure benefits from planning permission and, in any event, its relationship with neighbouring properties differs materially from the appeal scheme. These examples do not alter my findings, which are based on the particular circumstances of the appeal development.
12. I have noted the familial relationship between the occupiers of flats 18a and 18b, and their support for the scheme. However, personal circumstances are inherently changeable. While the current occupiers of the ground-floor flat may find the arrangement acceptable, there is no assurance that future occupiers would. In this case, the personal circumstances do not justify development that gives rise to long-term planning harm.

13. For these reasons, I conclude that the development causes unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. It conflicts with the amenity objectives of Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan, and with the guidance in the Householder Development Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to preventing or minimising overlooking.

Other Matters

14. I have taken into account the personal circumstances of the occupiers of flat 18a, in particular the requirement for the development to meet the family's needs. The Human Rights Act 1998 enshrines into UK law most of the fundamental rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights, including Article 8 which concerns the right to private and family life and the home to be respected, which encompasses the 'best interests of the child', together with Article 1 of the First Protocol relating to the protection of property. However, those rights are qualified rights and interference in them may be considered necessary if it relates to the regulation of land use through development control measures, which is recognised as an important function of Government.

15. While I understand the occupiers' situation, the staircase represents a permanent addition that causes long-term harm to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers. There is no substantial evidence before me that refusal of permission would prevent the family from continuing to occupy the property. Although the development may offer benefits to the occupiers, these do not outweigh the significant harm identified. I therefore find it proportionate and necessary to dismiss the appeal.

16. I have noted the appellant's concerns regarding the Council's handling of the planning application. However, such procedural matters fall outside the scope of this appeal, which must be determined solely on its planning merits.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

18. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

G Hall

INSPECTOR



Appeal Decision

By **A L McCooey BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 19/12/2025

Appeal references: CAS-04637-V8M2B5

Site address: 215 West Road, Nottage, Porthcawl, CF36 3RT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Chris Edmunds against the decision made by Bridgend County Borough Council (the LPA).
- The application Ref P/25/438/FUL, dated 15 July 2025, was refused by notice dated 17 September 2025.
- The development proposed is Removal of existing roof, create a new pitched roof to accommodate first floor living space; full reconfiguration of ground floor layouts; thermally upgrade existing envelope and associated works.
- A site visit was made by the Inspector on 16 December 2025

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out in the Annex below.

Background and Procedural Matters

2. The appellant's name is Mr Edmunds on the planning application form and so I have used that spelling. I note that the east and west elevations on the existing and proposed plans have been labelled the wrong way round. The west elevation is the front of the property (labelled east on the plans) and the rear should be labelled east elevation not west. As it is clear which elevation is which I have assessed the proposal on this basis.
3. The officer's report refers to conflict with Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (the LDP) in relation to Policy SP3 criterion (k) and Policy SP5. It is clear from the context that these are typographical errors. The Council relies on Policy SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking and Supplementary Planning Guidance 02: Householder Development (SPG02) in its refusal of the proposal.

Reasons

4. The site is within the settlement limits of Porthcawl. The property is a bungalow and garage, set back behind a mature hedgerow. The extension would increase the height of the bungalow by around 2.4m thereby providing an additional storey on the existing footprint. All existing walls are proposed to be re-clad to match the extension. There is a variety of different designs of dwellings nearby and in the wider area. The dwellings close to the appeal site consist of detached houses and there are several dwellings of a modern design. Most dwellings are also set back in their plots with walls or hedges in front.

5. The bungalow is unremarkable with no design features of note. The front elevation is dominated by poor quality glazing. The walls are finished in a pebble dash or spa render. The dwelling appears dilapidated with no existing features worthy of retention or replication. In applying the advice in SPG02 that the design and materials of extensions should match the existing dwelling, the nature of the development should be taken into account. The proposal involves a complete re-modelling of the dwelling including replacing the existing finishes with new so that they all match. I do not consider that the proposed materials would be too conspicuous. The colours of the external finishes to be used can be controlled by condition. I note the benefits in terms of modernising the dwelling and improvements to energy efficiency as a result of the proposed cladding.
6. A recessed balcony with a large area of glazing behind at first floor level is proposed to the front elevation. The use of areas of glazing and balconies is widespread in Porthcawl. There are several dwellings with similar balconies to that proposed in close proximity to the appeal property. There are two large existing chimneys to be replaced by one on the side of the dwelling. I consider the use of these design features to be acceptable in the context of the design of the existing dwelling and the presence of similar features in the area.
7. The LPA considers that the proposal would not reflect the character of the surrounding residential area or the host property. All that is referred to by way of criticism are the above features. I noted during my site visit that there is considerable variety in the design of dwellings along West Road, which ranges from the modern with the use of glazing and balconies and some older style properties. Gables facing the road (some with balconies), dormers and large windows are common. There is a modern style dwelling two doors down from the appeal site and an ultra-modern bungalow opposite the site, that is set back from the road. The latter was approved in 2015 as a large extension to a modest bungalow. The prevailing character is of a wide variety of architectural styles typical of a coastal town. In this context, the design of the appeal proposal and the proposed materials are acceptable and would not have an adverse effect on the character of the area.
8. There are no concerns in relation to impacts on adjoining residents as a result of the proposal. Given the scale of the development and limited biodiversity value of the site, the provision of a birdbox would constitute a reasonable biodiversity enhancement.

Conclusion

9. A proposal must be assessed on its merits. The attempt to portray the existing dwelling as exhibiting traditional character worthy of protection is not warranted in this case. Having taken all the evidence into account, I conclude, for the reasons given, that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area. It would therefore comply with Policy SP3 and the placemaking principles in Planning Policy Wales. Having considered all the evidence, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed for the reasons given above.
10. In reaching my decisions, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that the decisions are in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

A L McCooey

INSPECTOR

Conditions

- 1) The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.
Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: Location Plan, Drawing No. PL-01, Revision PO and Drawing No. PL-02, Revision P2
Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans submitted with the application.
- 3) Prior to the construction of the extension hereby approved details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: In the interests of good design and to accord with Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).
- 4) Prior to the first beneficial use of the development hereby permitted, an artificial nesting site for birds shall be erected on the dwelling to one of the following specifications and retained as such thereafter.
Nest Box Specifications for House Sparrow Terrace: Wooden (or woodcrete) nest box with 3 sub-divisions to support 3 nesting pairs. To be placed under the eaves of buildings. Entrance holes: 32mm diameter Dimensions: H310 x W370 x D185mm or Swift Nest Box Specification: Wide box with small slit shaped entrance hole. Must be placed under or close to roofs, at least 5m from the ground. Dimensions: H150 x W340 x D150mm.
Reason: In the interest of enhancing biodiversity and to accord with Policies SP3 and DPN6 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

Appeal Decision

by G Hall BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 16.01.2026

Appeal reference: CAS-04660-T5L2J8

Site address: 1 High Street, Laleston, Bridgend, CF32 0LD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Leighton James against the decision of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/25/525/FUL, dated 28 August 2025, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2025.
- The development proposed is Detached triple garage to front garden.
- A site visit was made on 8 January 2026.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of development set out in the decision notice and appeal form, as these more accurately describe the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a large, detached dwelling with a large front garden on the main road through Laleston, within a predominantly residential area. A well-established front boundary hedge sits above a low wall, and neighbouring properties, including the dwelling to the west, similarly feature mature boundary hedging. This part of Laleston is characterised by a spacious layout, with dwellings set well back from the highway and front gardens that contribute to an open streetscape and a clearly defined building line.
5. The proposal is for a triple garage positioned forward of the principal elevation, close to the front boundary wall and hedge, with a mono-pitched roof. A previous appeal at the site (ref. CAS-02346-D9Y3L9) was dismissed in 2023, when the Inspector found that the proposed double garage's height, expansive roof and bulky proportions would dominate the part of the site and relate poorly to surrounding garden spaces. The appellant has sought to address these concerns by reorienting the proposed garage to run parallel with

the front boundary hedge, amending the roof design and substantially reducing the proposed maximum height.

6. Policy SP3 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) requires, amongst other things, that all development be appropriate to its local context. The Council's Householder Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) says that garages and outbuildings should not normally be in front of, or detrimentally affect the space about, the original house.
7. The revised scheme would likely reduce some of the visual impact compared with the previously dismissed proposal, due to its lower height, altered orientation and the potential for screening by the established boundary hedging. However, partial views of the garage would still be possible from certain vantage points, particularly to the east, and the proposed building would be of considerable visual bulk within the front garden, which currently contributes to the open and spacious character of the site and street. In addition, the mono-pitched roof would appear incongruous in this context, contrasting with the pitched roofs of the host and neighbouring dwellings, and would introduce an uncharacteristic feature in this prominent location.
8. Owing to its size and forward siting, the garage would disrupt the prevailing building line and erode the attractive open setting that characterises this part of the road. The introduction of a substantial outbuilding within the front garden would undermine the established pattern of development, in which open garden spaces form an important component of the streetscape, to the detriment of the area's character and appearance.
9. There is a small substation on the opposite side of the road from the appeal site. While clearly visible in the street scene, its modest scale and simple design mean it makes no meaningful contribution to the established character or appearance of the area. I am not persuaded that its presence provides material support for the appeal proposal, and I therefore attach little weight to it.
10. The appellant refers to an appeal allowing the retention of a shed at 19 Cuckoo Close, Broadlands (ref. CAS-04238-M6W3R9). Based on the information provided, the building in that case was sited to the side of the host dwelling, was significantly smaller, and was situated in a less prominent location. Appeals must be considered on their own merits, and the differences in scale, siting and context limit any direct comparison with the current proposal.
11. I conclude that, by reason of its scale, siting and design, the development would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with LDP Policy SP3 and the objectives of the SPG.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
13. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

G Hall

INSPECTOR

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Agenda Item 10

Meeting of:	DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	5 FEBRUARY 2026
Report Title:	HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
Report Owner: Cabinet Member / Responsible Chief Officer	CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	JACK DANGERFIELD SENIOR STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY OFFICER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to report back to Development Control Committee on the results of the 6-week public consultation exercise on the Houses in Multiple Occupation draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), the comments and issues raised, the Local Planning Authority's response and how those comments have influenced the final version of the SPG. Adoption of this SPG will enable effective implementation of the policy on Houses in Multiple Occupation within the adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), the Council's statutory land-use planning document.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report back to the Development Control Committee (DCC) the results of the 6-week public consultation exercise on the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), the comments received and issues raised, the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) response, and how those have influenced the final version of the SPG.

2. Background

2.1 The adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (“**RLDP**”, March 2024) plays a key role in enabling sustainable, mixed and balanced communities, including the development of HMOs. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (**Use Classes Order 1987**) distinguishes between two types of HMO:

- **‘Small HMOs’ (Use Class C4):** properties occupied by **3 to 6 unrelated people** sharing basic amenities; and
- **‘Large HMOs’ (Unique Use or ‘*Sui Generis*’):** properties with **more than 6 unrelated people** sharing basic amenities.

2.2 Prior to February 2016, planning permission was only required for Large HMOs. Since that date, all HMOs require planning permission whether they accommodate 3-6 people (C4) or 7+ people (*Sui Generis*), as long as the occupants do not form a single household.

2.3 The definition of a ‘*Small HMO*’ under Use Class ‘C4’ aligns with the definition of an HMO in Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004 (**HA 2004**). Likewise, the definition of a single household in Use Class C3(a) (dwellinghouses) of the Use Classes Order 1987 aligns with Section 258 of the HA 2004, which explains when people are or are not considered to be part of the same household or family.

2.4 Section 258 also applies when determining whether a property meets the definition of an HMO under Section 254 – this includes both ‘*Small HMOs*’ (C4) and ‘*Large HMOs*’ (*Sui Generis*). These legislative changes have increased awareness of HMOs within the planning system.

2.5 HMOs can play an important role in the County Borough’s housing mix by providing a broader range of accommodation options, particularly for students, young professionals and those on lower incomes. However, they also raise specific planning challenges. HMOs are often characterised by shorter than average tenancies leading to higher population turnover, and their occupation by multiple independent adults can increase the intensity of residential use. This, in turn, can lead to increased activity in and around a property, more noise, greater demand for parking and additional pressures on waste management.

2.6 Whilst not every HMO will result in adverse impacts, and in some cases the level of activity may be comparable to that of a large family household, the cumulative effect of high concentrations of HMOs can be significant. These cumulative impacts can include harm to residential amenity, erosion of local character and loss of community cohesion. There is a need to strike a careful balance between supporting housing choice and preventing the over-concentration of HMOs in any given locality. RLDP Policy COM7 specifies criteria to assess the appropriateness of proposals to convert dwellings into HMOs, aiming to avoid over-intensification of the use as an HMO within any given locality.

2.7 The SPG relating to HMOs (**Appendix 1**) aims to provide additional detail and guidance on how adopted Policy COM7 should be interpreted and applied in practice. It is intended to assist planning applicants, officers and Members by clarifying the requirements of Policy COM7 and how proposals will be assessed. The HMO SPG also explains the relationship between Planning and other regulatory regimes relevant to HMOs, such as Licensing and Building Regulations, highlighting how these other statutory regimes operate alongside, but separately from, the planning system. In doing so, the SPG aims to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to managing HMO development, supporting the creation of sustainable, balanced communities throughout the County Borough. This HMO SPG provides specific guidance on:

- How HMOs are defined in planning terms and when planning permission is required for HMOs;
- The roles of Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations in respect of HMOs;
- Application of the radius test (ensuring that no more than 10% of properties are HMOs within a 50m radius in any given area);
- How the character and appearance of the locality is considered when major extensions or alterations are proposed;
- How the scale and intensity of HMOs will be considered in relation to HMO applications;
- How local parking provision will be considered in relation to HMO applications;
- Amenity considerations (of both future HMO occupants and neighbours); and,
- Submission requirements for applicants.

2.8 At its meeting on 8th August 2024, the Development Control Committee requested development of a specific SPG on HMOs to provide additional planning guidance to support adopted Policy COM7. Councillor Simon Griffiths volunteered to champion the production of the HMO SPG on behalf of Development Control Committee and work alongside the Senior Strategic Planning Policy Officer to progress it.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 On 23rd September 2025, Cabinet approved a six-week public consultation on the draft SPG – Houses in Multiple Occupation. The consultation was subsequently launched on 6th October 2025 and closed on 16th November 2025, and was promoted through a variety of channels to ensure wide engagement. The consultation was hosted on the Council's consultation portal, supported by a social media campaign and standalone message to Citizen Panel subscribers. It was also included twice in the Council's residents' bulletin and in the regular news bulletin for Councillors to maximise public awareness. In addition, targeted emails were issued to well over 100 stakeholders, including all elected Members, town and community Councils, planning consultants/agents, neighbouring local authorities, estate agents, landlord representative groups, local community/non-profit groups, local further

education (**FE**) providers and Registered Social Landlords (**RSLs**). This ensured that a broad range of community and development sector representatives were directly invited to comment, providing a robust and inclusive approach to the public consultation. The social media campaign, in particular, generated meaningful engagement, with several comments received in response to consultation posts. This indicates that the consultation was effectively publicised and prompted discussion.

3.2 A total of four representations were received on the draft SPG – Houses in Multiple Occupation during the consultation period. This low number reflects the fact that there were no fundamental objections to the draft SPG. All representations, together with the Local Planning Authority's response to each one, and the reasoning for not incorporating some suggestions, are set out in the 'Consultation Report' attached as **Appendix 2** to this DCC report. The comments submitted related to relatively minor points, resulting in three changes being made to the draft SPG document:

1. Insert a bullet point under paragraph 5.5 clarifying that hotel premises used for temporary accommodation are generally not considered as HMOs, unless in specific circumstances. This paragraph sits underneath a sub-heading titled '*Exclusions*' and specifically sets out which types of residential arrangements that are not typically considered HMOs for planning purposes. Such proposals will not be considered against Policy COM7. The inserted wording (amendment) now reads as follows:

'Hotel premises used for short-term temporary accommodation – A hotel building used to provide temporary accommodation for non-holiday residents, such as homeless households, which does not operate as a hotel in the conventional sense, is typically regarded as a 'sui generis' use.'

2. Alter the wording of the fourth sentence of paragraph 5.6, an insertion to require the consultation of Shared Regulatory Services (who manage HMO Licensing) on all HMO planning applications. This now reads as follows (newly inserted words shown in bold):

*'However, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who oversee the licensing and management of HMOs in Bridgend County Borough, **should will** be consulted on **all** planning applications for HMOs to ensure alignment between planning and housing enforcement considerations.'*

3. Insert a new headed section under the heading, 'Policy COM7: Criterion 6' of the SPG, titled 'HMOs and Security' after paragraph 6.46, as paragraph 6.47, to read as follows:

'HMOs and Security'

Applicants are encouraged to design HMOs in accordance with Secured by Design (SBD) principles and are advised to aim to achieve the SBD 'Gold' award (an award that acknowledges crime and anti-social behaviour

reduction measures relating to layout, environmental design and the use of Police Preferred Specification products), where practicable.'

- 3.3 Furthermore, some of the comments received in response to the public consultation indicated the need for clearer guidance on the differences between each of the three regulatory regimes relating to the management of HMOs: Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations. Each of these regimes play a distinct role in the management of HMOs' potential impacts, so it is important to be aware of the issues that each regime covers. Therefore, a two-page guidance note, '*A Guide to Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations for Houses in Multiple Occupation*' has been produced to accompany the SPG. This is attached at **Appendix 3** to this report.
- 3.4 There were no other changes considered necessary to the draft SPG following the public consultation. On 3rd February 2026, the final form SPG – Houses in Multiple Occupation was presented to Cabinet to seek approval to present the SPG for adoption at Council. Subject to adoption, the SPG will add weight to the interpretation and application of RLDP Policy COM7, provide more detailed advice and guidance to planning applicants, and be a '*material consideration*' in the determination of planning applications.

4. Equality implications (including socio-economic duty and Welsh language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (**EIA**) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being objectives

- 5.1 The HMO SPG provides additional guidance and material weight to support adopted RLDP Policy COM7. The HMO SPG aims to enable the development of HMOs while safeguarding residential amenity, community cohesion and the character of existing neighbourhoods. This is a key contributory factor to delivering Local Well-being Objective One - '*A prosperous place with thriving communities*'.
- 5.2 The HMO SPG also contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities* - Seeks to prevent the over-concentration of HMOs and promote balanced communities.
 - *A more equal Wales* - Supports access to affordable and flexible accommodation for individuals and enables housing options that meet diverse needs.

6. Climate change and nature implications

6.1 There are no direct climate change or nature implications from this report, although the HMO SPG provides additional guidance to enable the development of sustainable HMOs that promote active travel opportunities.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent implications from this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

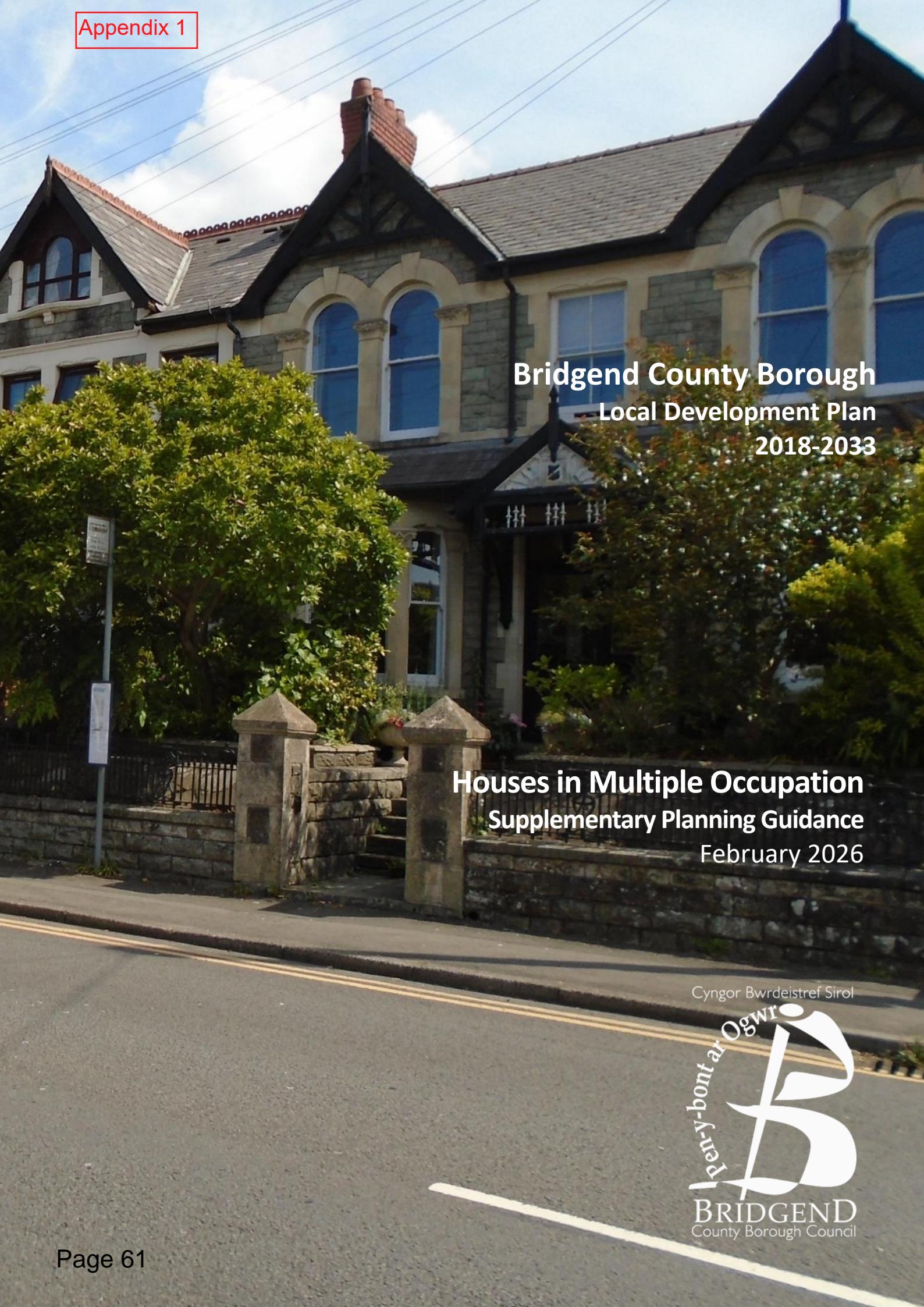
9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Development Control Committee:

- (a) Note the contents of this report and the consultation responses received on the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation SPG (**Appendix 1**), together with the resultant amendments attached as **Appendix 2**.
- (b) Note the contents of the two-page guidance note titled '*A Guide to HMO Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations*' attached as **Appendix 3**.

Background documents

None.



**Bridgend County Borough
Local Development Plan
2018-2033**

**Houses in Multiple Occupation
Supplementary Planning Guidance
February 2026**

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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Chapel Street, Bridgend

Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018-2033
Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Guidance

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are generally defined as properties occupied by three or more unrelated individuals, forming more than two households (Welsh Government, Law Wales: Houses in Multiple Occupation). The Local Planning Authority (LPA) recognises the important role HMOs play in contributing to Bridgend County Borough's housing supply by providing flexible and often more affordable accommodation options for a diverse range of residents.
- 1.2 HMOs can indeed provide accommodation for small households who may otherwise be unable to meet their needs in the market and/or require flexibility to move home. They are typically occupied by students, young professionals and those on short-term work contracts.
- 1.3 However, residents of HMOs can often remain in situ for relatively less time than residents of other dwelling houses, meaning areas with significant concentrations of HMOs can witness greater population turnover. Equally, multiple occupation of a house can involve intensification of its residential use, due to a greater number of independent adults residing within the property. In certain instances, this can lead to increased levels of activity in and around the house, greater noise levels, additional demand for car parking spaces and waste disposal issues. Nevertheless, conversion of a single dwelling house into an HMO may not necessarily constitute intensification. For example, a single dwelling house could accommodate an adult couple plus several additional adult children who are set to remain in the parental home for an unspecified period. On this basis, it is normally difficult to demonstrate the degree of impact that an individual property converted to an HMO may have on the character and amenity of its surroundings. However, a high proportion of HMOs can have a much more significant cumulative impact on the character of an area, its residential amenity and also local community cohesion.

1.4 Common perceptions associated with HMOs include:

- Negative changes to the character of an area
- Negative impacts on the amenity of occupants and neighbours through the intensification of uses
- Increased pressure on parking provision
- Waste storage and litter issues
- Anti-social behaviour/crime issues
- The provision of inadequate living conditions for occupiers
- Negative impacts on the physical environment and streetscape.

1.5 While not all of these issues (should they arise) are under the direct control of the LPA, the adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) includes Policy *COM7: Houses in Multiple Occupation*. This aims to ensure that proposals to convert dwellings into HMOs are assessed as to their appropriateness in order to avoid over intensification of the use within the locality. This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides planning applicants and officials with additional information on how to interpret and apply Policy COM7. This SPG will be taken into account as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications for HMOs.



2.0 National Policy Context

- 2.1 **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040** – While HMOs are not explicitly referenced within *Future Wales*, it includes high-level planning goals that support their management through local policy, especially in terms of creating sustainable, well-connected, and balanced communities. It includes several *Placemaking Principles* which promote high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable places. LPAs are expected to support mixed and balanced communities, which aligns with the goal of managing concentrations of HMOs to avoid harmful social and/or environmental impacts.
- 2.2 *Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration* of Future Wales encourages urban intensification in a way that supports well-being and community cohesion. HMOs, which can increase intensification in urban areas, must be managed carefully to align with this policy.
- 2.3 *Policy 7 – Delivering Affordable Homes* of Future Wales supports diverse housing provision, particularly for those on lower incomes. While privately run HMOs are not classed as 'Affordable Housing' for the purposes of the land use planning system, HMOs can provide an affordable market housing option for those otherwise unable to meet their needs in the housing market.
- 2.4 *Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure* indirectly supports the management of the intensification of HMOs, as they can lead to an increase in population densities which can place more pressure on services and green spaces. By managing their distribution, LPAs can support the resilience of ecological networks.
- 2.5 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12)** sets out the overarching national planning policy for Wales and should be used to guide planning and placemaking at the local level. These policies underpin local planning policies used to guide development.
- 2.6 PPW emphasises the need to promote sustainable development and support the well-being of people and communities across Wales, such as by ensuring that a range of housing types are delivered to support a diverse population

and a range of housing needs. PPW also promotes the creation of cohesive and balanced communities.

2.7 While HMOs are not specifically referred to within PPW, it underscores the need for LPAs to ensure that housing developments contribute to balanced communities and meet the diverse needs of the population. This includes providing a range of housing types and tenures to accommodate different household sizes and compositions.



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3.0 Background

3.1 The preparation of this SPG is driven by several interrelated factors. These include the projected rise in single-person households and persistent housing affordability issues, both of which are increasing demand for shared housing across many parts of the UK. While Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations each serve distinct legal purposes, they all contribute to the regulation of HMOs and work best when aligned. Applicants often face challenges in navigating the interplay between these regimes. This SPG aims to provide local interpretation, clarification, and practical guidance on the implementation of HMO-related planning policy – specifically Policy COM7 of the RLDP. It is intended to support both applicants and planning officers in applying this policy consistently and transparently, while reinforcing the LPA's wider housing and placemaking objectives.

3.2 Although the number of planning applications for HMOs in Bridgend County Borough has remained relatively low over the past five years – averaging approximately 5 per year – the issue has gained greater prominence following legislative change in February 2016. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2016 (“**Wales Order 2016**”) created a new C4 Class covering HMOs occupied by 3-6 unrelated persons. Therefore, the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (**Use Classes Order 1987**) now contains a clearer distinction between small HMOs (Use Class C4) and large HMOs (Unique Use), with implications for when planning permission is required. Prior to February 2016, planning permission was only required for large HMOs. However, since this date planning permission is required for all HMOs whether housing 3-6 or 7 or more unrelated persons. As a result, and in anticipation of potential future growth in HMOs, it is considered timely and appropriate to provide SPG to guide decision-making. This guidance will ensure that any new HMO development supports well-balanced, inclusive communities, avoids harmful over-concentrations, and contributes positively to the County Borough's long-term placemaking aspirations.

4.0 Planning Framework

4.1 The RLDP sets the framework to provide an appropriate and sustainable supply of housing land to deliver inter-connected, balanced communities that form the basis for individuals and families to prosper in all aspects of their lives. The strategic planning framework is set out within Strategic Policy 6: Sustainable Housing Strategy (SP6), which is supported by Development Management Policies COM1 – COM7:

SP6: Sustainable Housing Strategy

- COM1: Housing Allocations
- COM2: Affordable Housing
- COM3: On-Site Provision of Affordable Housing
- COM4: Off-Site Provision of Affordable Housing
- COM5: Affordable Housing Exception Sites
- COM6: Residential Density
- COM7: Houses in Multiple Occupation

4.2 Policy COM7 provides specific policy criteria to assess HMO proposals throughout Bridgend County Borough. It considers whether the cumulative concentration, scale and intensity of such proposals may have a net impact upon the broader locality's existing residential amenity, character and appearance. The aim of the policy is to enable HMOs to be developed in a manner that enables cohesive communities, while protecting local character and amenity.

4.3 This SPG will be used as a material consideration to support the application of Policy COM7. It will assist in the determination of any planning application for the conversion of a single dwelling (Use Class C3) or a non-residential property to an HMO, or the intensification of use of a 'C4' property (small HMO with 3-6 unrelated residents) to a 'Unique Use' (more than 6 unrelated persons sharing basic amenities) large HMO.

5.0 HMO Definitions and Regulatory Context

5.1 This section provides an overview of how HMOs are defined and regulated, setting out the distinctions between planning definitions, licensing requirements, and building regulations, while clarifying how these different regimes interact.

HMOs in Planning Terms

5.2 HMOs can be defined as residential dwellings with three or more people from two or more different families living together (i.e. not a '*single household*') and sharing one or more basic amenity (i.e. kitchen, bathroom, or toilet). The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by the Wales Order 2016) classifies HMOs into two types:

- **A small HMO:** Use Class C4 – small HMOs are shared houses or flats occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom; or
- **A large HMO:** 'Unique Use' – large HMOs are buildings occupied by more than six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom. These are unclassified by the Use Classes Order and are therefore considered to be a Unique Use (a use of its own kind or '*sui generis*').

5.3 For planning purposes of determining whether occupants of a property form a '*single household*' or an '*HMO*', the relevant meanings in the Use Classes Order 1987 and the Housing Act 2004 (**HA 2004**), apply. The meaning of '*small HMO*' under Class C4 as a 'house in multiple occupation' (but not a converted block of flats), in the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), aligns with and refers to the meaning of "*HMO*" in section 254 of the HA 2004. The meaning of '*single household*' under Class C3 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) aligns with section 258 of the HA 2004 which sets out when persons are to be regarded as not forming a single household for the purposes of s254 HA 2004 ('house in multiple occupation'), and when a

person is considered to be a member of the '*same family*', or fall within a description specified by regulations made by the appropriate national authority. For these purposes, section 258 (3) HA 2004 provides that a person is a member of the '*same family*' as another person if:

- a. those persons are married to, or civil partners of, each other or live together as if they were a married couple or civil partners;
- b. one of them is a relative of the other; or
- c. one of them is, or is a relative of, one member of a couple and the other is a relative of the other member of the couple.

5.4 As mentioned above (paragraph 3.2), Use Class C4 was introduced in Wales in 2016. A change of use from Use Class C4 to Class C3 (dwellinghouses) is permissible without obtaining planning permission. However, planning permission is required in each of the following scenarios:

- A change of use of any building (including from Use Class C3) to either a small (Use Class C4) or large (Unique Use) HMO.
- An increase in the size of an HMO from a small HMO (C4) to a large HMO (Unique Use). For example, if a small HMO containing 6 people was to increase in size for the occupation of one additional resident. The same applies in reverse - the change of use of a large HMO (Unique Use) to either a small HMO (C4) or a dwelling (C3) will require planning permission.
- External alterations or extensions to existing HMOs which are not permitted development.

Exclusions

5.5 While the definition of an HMO generally relates to properties occupied by three or more unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities, there are several types of residential arrangements that are typically not considered HMOs for planning purposes. These include:

- Owner-occupied properties with up to two lodgers – Where a resident landlord lives in the property and rents out rooms to no more than two lodgers, this is usually considered a single household and not an HMO.
- Children's homes or supported accommodation for children – Properties where children live under care arrangements (often registered children's homes), which fall under Use Class C2.
- Residential care homes or supported housing for people in need of care – Also within Use Class C2, these include homes for elderly people, disabled people, or others receiving care.
- Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) – Self-contained developments designed specifically for students are not usually classed as HMOs.
- Hotel premises used for short-term temporary accommodation – A hotel building used to provide temporary accommodation for non-holiday residents, such as homeless households, which does not operate as a hotel in the conventional sense, is typically regarded as a 'sui generis' use.
- Properties occupied by a single household – A group of people who live together as a single household (e.g. A family) are not considered to live in an HMO.

Mandatory Licensing for HMOs

5.6 The planning system is one of several regulatory regimes applying to HMOs. Properties may also require a mandatory licence under the Housing Act 2004 and need to comply with building regulations. These regimes are separate, with distinct criteria – approval under one does not imply approval under another. However, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who oversee the licensing and management of HMOs in Bridgend County Borough, will be consulted on all planning applications for HMOs to ensure alignment between planning and housing enforcement considerations.

5.7 The Housing Act 2004 mandates licensing for certain types of HMO to ensure they meet certain health and safety standards. In Wales, mandatory licensing applies to HMOs that:

- Are occupied by five or more individuals forming two or more households;
- Comprise three or more storeys; and
- Share basic amenities like kitchens or bathrooms.

5.8 Licences usually last five years, though shorter terms may be issued if concerns exist about management. Licensing ensures the property meets standards for safety (e.g. fire precautions), has appropriate occupancy levels, and is adequately managed. Conditions may be attached to reduce negative impacts on the wider area. Beyond mandatory licensing, there is no additional or selective licensing in place for HMOs across Bridgend Country Borough.

5.9 A two-and-a-half storey property with a dormer extension would typically be regarded as a three-storey building for the purposes of mandatory HMO licensing.

Fit and Proper Persons Test

5.10 Licence holders and managers must be deemed 'fit and proper persons', with no relevant convictions (e.g. fraud, violence, sexual offences, housing law breaches), and must demonstrate competency to manage an HMO.

Management Regulations

5.11 Managers must comply with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Wales) Regulations 2006, and, where applicable, the 2007 Additional Provisions Regulations. These impose duties including:

- Providing information to occupiers;
- Taking fire and general safety measures;
- Maintaining water, gas, electricity supplies;
- Keeping common parts, fittings, and appliances in good order;
- Maintaining living accommodation; and
- Providing proper waste disposal.

5.12 Failure to comply is a criminal offence, with fines of up to £20,000 on conviction.



Pant Hirwaun, Heol y Cyw

Inspections and Health & Safety

5.13 Before issuing a licence, SRS inspect the property to assess licence conditions and housing standards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This assesses 29 hazards, each weighted to determine whether a property has:

- **Category 1** (serious hazards); or
- **Category 2** (less serious hazards).

5.14 Local authorities must act where Category 1 hazards are found, and landlords are required to address all identified risks.

Operating Without a Licence

5.15 Running a **licensable HMO** without a licence is a criminal offence, as is failing to comply with licence conditions, both subject to significant penalties. The application process is managed by SRS (for further information refer to the [Licensing of HMOs Guidance Note](#)).

Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015

5.16 Shared accommodation provided to homeless households in priority need must meet the standards set out in the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015. Under Article 2 of the Order, where the accommodation is an HMO, it must be licensed where required and meet relevant HMO standards. This ensures that individuals are not placed in unsuitable or substandard housing.

Building Regulations

5.17 An existing house converted to an HMO can still be a 'dwellinghouse' and would not require separate Building Regulations approval if it is to be occupied by people who share a tenancy, share the bills and where the property does not have any locks on the bedroom doors.

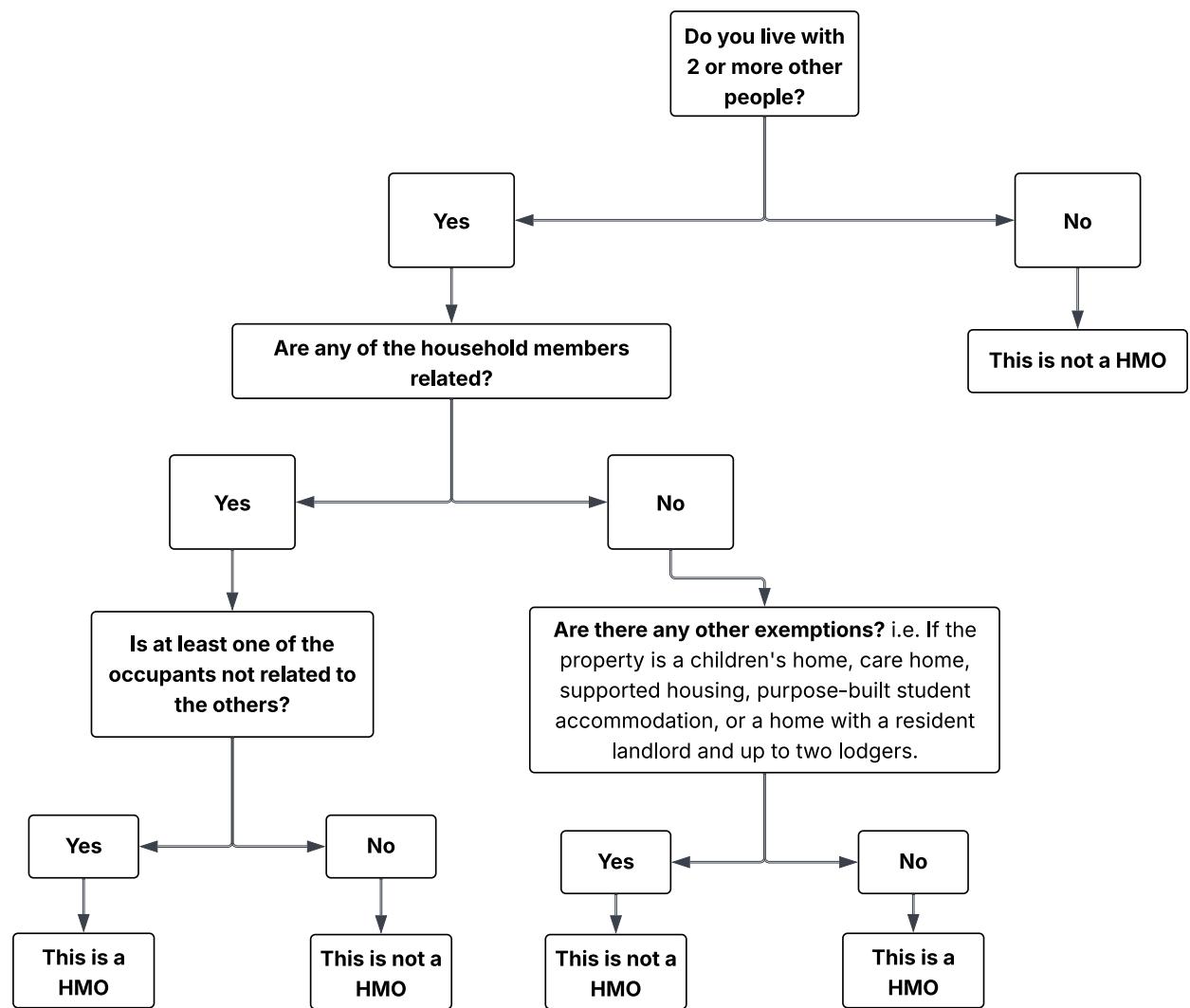
5.18 However, where the HMO is occupied by people with separate tenancies and proposes to have locks on doors, this would then be classed as 'rooms for residential purposes'. This would constitute a material change and require building regulations approval.

5.19 Any other type of change of use to an HMO would require a Full Plans Building Regulation application, and be expected to install the following before occupation:

- Emergency lighting
- Fire safety signage
- Fire doors throughout (self-closing where applicable)
- Fire detection throughout building
- Protected corridor to final exit.

5.20 A statutory consultation with South Wales Fire Service will also be required. The application process is managed by Building Control (for further information see the [Building Control section of the Council's website](#)).

Figure 1: Do I Live in an HMO?



6.0 Planning Requirements

6.1 This section provides further guidance on each of the criteria set out in Policy COM7 of the RLDP. It is intended to support applicants and decision-makers by clarifying how the policy should be interpreted in the context of proposals for HMOs, and by outlining key considerations to be addressed through the planning process. A list of documents the LPA would typically expect to be submitted when making a planning application for an HMO can be found in Appendix A.

Policy COM7: Criterion 1

'It would not lead to more than 10% of all residential properties within a 50m radius of the proposal being HMOs.'

6.2 All proposals for a change of use from a single dwelling to an HMO will be subject to the 'radius test'. The Welsh Government's Housing in Multiple Occupation: Review & Evidence Gathering report found that local concerns regarding the number of HMOs increases once concentrations of HMO households rise above 10%. Such concentrations have the potential to cause negative amenity impacts upon existing residents including the potential for increased levels of disturbance associated with multiple households within a property. These factors combined with a reduction in the number of family homes within an area can inhibit the maintenance of sustainable, mixed and balanced communities.

6.3 Any proposal that would lead to more than 10% of all residential dwellings being HMOs within a 50m radius would be contrary to Policy COM7 and deemed unacceptable, unless overriding material considerations demonstrably outweigh concerns over concentration.

6.4 To ascertain whether a proposal complies with this policy criterion, a circle with a 50m radius should be drawn around the central point within the property's red line boundary to show all properties falling within this area. Only those properties whose centre point (that is the most central point within a property's red line boundary) falls within the circle should be included within

the calculation. A calculation of the proportion of HMOs as a percentage of all residential units within the 50-metre radius should then be made as detailed in paragraph 6.2.5. For subdivided properties or purpose-built apartment blocks, each individual self-contained unit (whether resulting from a subdivision or located within an apartment block) will be counted as a single dwelling.

- 6.5 In order to identify existing properties in HMO use, the LPA will utilise data held on the number of existing HMOs within the proposal's vicinity. This will include any previous planning consents combined with any current HMO licenses. The applicant or any objectors may supplement or challenge such data held by the LPA. However, satisfactory evidence must be provided to support any such claims.
- 6.6 To calculate the percentage of HMOs within a specific area, the following formula should be used:

HMO concentration = Number of HMOs within 50m radius

X 100

**Number of residential properties
within 50m radius**

The answer to this equation should be rounded to the closest integer i.e. 9.5% should be rounded up to 10%, or 9.4% should be rounded down to 9%.

- 6.7 To determine the appropriate denominator, all residential dwellings that fall within a 50m radius that are categorised as either Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse), C4 (small HMO) or 'Unique Use' (large HMO), must be included within the calculation. Figure 2 shows an example of how the radius test should be applied to an application for an HMO to ascertain whether it complies with Policy COM7.

Figure 2: Application of 50m Radius Test



Policy COM7: Criterion 2

'Conversion is possible without major extensions or alterations to the building which would significantly alter the character and appearance of the street scene and the broader locality.'

- 6.8 It is recognised that the majority of conversions to HMOs will require minimal alterations to their external appearance. However, any alterations should be well integrated with the existing street patterns, historic context, urban layout and landscape features of the surrounding area, while having regard to the size and character of the property and wider street scene.
- 6.9 Extensions to an HMO to create additional bedrooms would not constitute creation of a new HMO or add to the concentration of HMOs in a locality. However, any increase in the number of residents can have an impact on the character of an area and amenity of neighbouring occupiers. These types of planning applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In such cases, careful consideration will be given to the proposal's impact upon the locality's amenity, character and appearance. Impact on adjoining properties and public spaces, such as by way of loss of light, privacy or proposals being visually overbearing, will be duly considered. Proposals should also consider how the building interacts with pavements or other public spaces.
- 6.10 If floor levels are altered, the impact on the appearance of the property from street level should be considered. When larger rooms are split into two separate rooms, the applicant should ensure that any new windows align with the divided room. A new dividing wall that intersects the middle of a traditional bay window will not usually be acceptable.
- 6.11 The entrance and approach to an HMO is an important part of how it functions in relation to its surroundings. When HMOs are accessed from side or rear entrances, this can cause amenity issues for neighbouring residents, as well as have an impact on the visual appearance of the street scene. Entrances designed to be visible from the street are considered optimal.

6.12 The provision of on-site car parking or secure cycle storage, where required to support an HMO conversion, will not generally be considered to constitute a major extension or alteration to the building. Such works are typically modest in scale and, where appropriately designed, do not significantly alter the character or appearance of the street scene or wider locality. Each case will be assessed on its individual merits, but this SPG assumes that proposals of this nature can ordinarily be accommodated within the scope of the policy criterion.

Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) and HMOs

6.13 Once planning permission has been granted for a property to operate as a HMO, some PDRs may still apply, depending on the type of HMO. In Wales, small HMOs (Use Class C4) are generally treated as “dwellinghouses” for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (GPDO). This means that most householder PDRs, such as certain extensions, loft conversions, and outbuildings, can still apply, subject to the usual limitations and conditions.

6.14 However, larger HMOs (Unique Use) and are not considered dwellinghouses under the GPDO. As a result, PDRs that apply to dwellinghouses do not usually extend to large (Unique Use) HMOs.

6.15 When granting planning permission, the LPA may apply a planning condition that requires the HMO to be limited to a maximum number of occupants at any one time. This will typically relate to the number of bedrooms in accordance with the internal layout indicated on the approved floor plans. A further planning condition may be applied to remove the owner’s PDR for an HMO on a case-by-case basis.

Converting Non-Residential Buildings to HMOs

6.16 Proposals to convert non-residential buildings to HMOs that include extensions and/or external alterations will be considered on their own merits against the policies in the RLDP. Such proposals should, however, be in

keeping with the existing form and character of the building and preserve the character of the wider street scene.

HMOs, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

6.17 Owners of listed buildings converted to HMOs are required to gain listed building consent for any alterations or extensions (internal or external) that may affect its character. The LPA recommends that applicants seek guidance from the Historic Buildings Conservation Officer before submitting an application for such a scheme. The LPA, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building, has a statutory duty to “have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest that the building possesses” (Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). PPW (Edition 12, p.130) sets a ‘general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage’.

6.18 Proposals for HMOs located within or affecting the setting of conservation areas should demonstrate how they will preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area. As conservation areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest, development proposals must be informed by a heritage impact assessment in accordance with Policy *SP18: Conservation of the Historic Environment* of the RLDP. Any physical alterations, intensification of use, or changes to the character of a property arising from HMO conversion should be sensitive to the historic and architectural context. The LPA will resist proposals that fail to respect the distinctive character, appearance, and setting of the conservation area, in line with national best practice and relevant legislation, including the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

6.19 Careful consideration should be given to retrofitting insulation and installing solar photovoltaics in/on HMO buildings in addressing energy consumption. Traditional buildings require the ability for moisture evaporation off surfaces and insulation can be damaging to the building fabric. Advice from the

Council's Conservation and Design Team can highlight practices that avoid harmful installations and that damage architectural character.

6.20 The LPA recommends obtaining pre-application conservation advice for proposals relating to Listed Buildings / buildings in Conservation Areas as well as key historic buildings that form part of the historic landscape. These may include former chapels / welfare halls / vacant traditional buildings, etc. Guidance on managing change and energy efficiency measures relating to the historic environment is also available and should be used to inform proposals relating to buildings of traditional construction. When preparing proposals, developers are encouraged to seek advice from a heritage specialist with experience of working on historic buildings.

Policy COM7: Criterion 3

'The scale and intensity of use would be compatible with the existing building and adjoining and nearby uses'.

6.21 While it is important to manage the number of HMOs within a particular area, intensification of individual HMOs can adversely impact the existing building and adjoining and nearby uses. Planning permission will need to be sought to increase the size of an HMO from between three to six people (Use Class C4) to seven or more people (Unique Use). All planning applications for HMOs must not only be assessed against Policy COM7 and this SPG, but also against *Policy SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking*. Policy SP3 sets out broader requirements relating to design quality and the character of development in relation to its surroundings.

Intensification of Use and Impact on a Neighbourhood's Character

6.22 Proposals for new, or the intensification of existing HMOs, should have regard to the size and character of the property, as well as of the wider street scene (opposite and adjacent uses, in particular). Each proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but the net gain in the number of occupants should not be unduly excessive in nature.

6.23 The proposal's impact on the amenity of local residents, the character and appearance of the street scene, and highway safety will be assessed at the

point of application. To enable the LPA to fully assess the HMO's compatibility with the existing building and neighbouring uses, the applicant is required to submit floor plans which provide a clear indication of the proposed room uses, including bedrooms, communal spaces and location of any opening windows. Plans for bedrooms must also indicate the maximum number of occupants. Potential impacts on residential amenity will be assessed by considering elements such as visual impact, loss of light, overlooking, privacy, disturbance and likely traffic movements.

6.24 When assessing planning applications for changes of use to HMOs, it is important to distinguish between perceived impacts based on the previous occupants and the lawful planning use of the property. The planning system does not control who occupies a dwelling, but rather how it is used. For example, a property lawfully used as a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) may be occupied by a couple or by a large family of adults without requiring planning permission. As such, assessments of impact must be based on the potential lawful use under current planning controls, not the specific nature of past occupants. Proposals for HMOs should therefore be judged against a baseline of the established planning use and whether the proposal would result in a material change in the character or impact of the use in planning terms, rather than who previously lived at the property.

Compatibility of Uses

6.25 HMOs must be compatible with nearby uses. For example, an HMO would not be deemed acceptable if located in the middle of an industrial estate, as this would be contrary to other policies in the RLDP. In particular, applications for the conversion of commercial buildings to HMOs should consider the nature of adjacent and nearby uses and the degree to which they are compatible with a residential property. For example, a proposal for a new HMO adjoining a commercial premises should be able to provide outdoor amenity space without adversely impacting upon the servicing and security of the neighbouring business.

6.26 Typically, planning permission is not required for internal alterations to an HMO, unless the building is listed, the alterations significantly impact the building's external appearance or involve structural changes affecting fire safety, escape routes, or load-bearing walls. Proposals to convert communal areas (i.e. a sitting room into an additional bedroom) may require planning permission if they result in a material change of use. This could be due to the resulting change in character, impact on residential amenity, increase in the number of occupiers, and/or parking pressures.

HMOs in Flood Risk Areas

6.27 In areas at risk of flooding, the potential intensification of residential use associated with HMO development may exacerbate local flood risk or pose risks to future occupants. Proposals for HMOs in flood risk areas should demonstrate that flood risk is adequately addressed in accordance with national guidance (e.g. Technical Advice Note 15). Applicants may be required to submit a Flood Consequences Assessment. The LPA may resist intensification of use through HMO development where it would lead to unacceptable environmental pressures.

Policy COM7: Criterion 4

'The proposal incorporates on-site parking provision or demonstrates that it will not have an adverse effect on local parking provision'.

6.28 Parking is a frequently raised concern in relation to HMOs. However, the nature of car ownership and demand for parking spaces can vary depending on location, resident profile, and site-specific factors. Importantly, the conversion of a property to an HMO does not automatically result in increased parking demand; in many cases, HMOs can have lower levels of car ownership than traditional family homes.

6.29 All applications for HMO proposals must include details of the proposed parking provision. The appropriate level of provision will be assessed by the LPA based on the following considerations:

- The availability and suitability of parking within the curtilage of the property;
- The sustainability of the site in relation to proximity to services and amenities;
- Access to public transport, bus stops and active travel routes (e.g. walking and cycling infrastructure);
- The availability of existing on-street parking in the surrounding locality; and
- A comparison of the likely parking demand of the proposed HMO with that of the existing use.

6.30 Proposals in localities with good access to commercial centres, public transport and active travel routes could negate the need for any additional parking generated by a net increase in people.

Methodology for Assessing Parking Impact

6.31 Applicants are required to assess the potential impact on local parking provision using the methodology set out in Appendix C. This methodology enables a proportionate, consistent approach to assessing whether additional parking demand would result in adverse impacts on the surrounding area. A

summary checklist is also included in Appendix C to guide applicants through the assessment process.

Design Requirements for On-Site Parking

6.32 Where on-site parking is proposed, the following principles apply:

- Provision within the curtilage of the property is preferred, where feasible.
- Parking layouts should:
 - Complement the residential character of the area; and
 - Avoid dominating the frontage or detracting from the building's entrance and approach.
- Tandem parking is not acceptable for HMOs.
- Each parking space should be independently accessible – vehicles should be able to enter and leave each space without needing to move others.
- Parking provision should comply with the latest Bridgend Parking Standards SPG.
- As Policy *PLA11: Parking Standards* of the RLDP states, consideration must be given to electric and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.
- Schemes that provide on-site parking by sacrificing amenity space are unlikely to be acceptable.
- Where front gardens are converted into parking, paving materials used should be permeable or porous.

6.33 It is noted that off-street parking for existing dwellings may relieve existing on street parking pressures and better enable residents to charge an electric vehicle.



Newcastle Hill, Bridgend

Policy COM7: Criterion 5

'The proposal includes adequate storage for recycling/refuse, cycles and a clothes drying area'

Bicycle Storage

6.34 HMOs should provide secure, covered and accessible bicycle storage within the curtilage of the property and on the ground floor. As a general rule, a minimum of one bicycle parking space per bedroom will be required, reflecting the likelihood that each occupant is an independent adult with their own transport needs. This standard supports active travel, aligns with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, and can help reduce pressure on car parking provision. The LPA may consider a reduced standard in exceptional circumstances. These include where it can be robustly demonstrated that demand will be lower, or where storage can be provided outside the curtilage of, yet in close proximity to the property. However, lack of bicycle storage may result in refusal of planning permission due to amenity, accessibility or sustainability concerns.

6.35 Plans submitted with the planning application should clearly identify where proposed bicycle storage is located. Corridors and landings should not be used for storing bicycles and storage areas will need to be sensitively designed to ensure their regular use does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of residents.

6.36 The LPA may use planning conditions to ensure the provision of secure cycle storage for residents of HMOs.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

6.37 All proposals will be required to incorporate adequate provision for the secure storage of refuse and recycling materials. This should be separate to any amenity space or clothes drying areas provided for residents, and away from view from street level, wherever possible. The location, design and size of external bin storage areas should be suitable for such as use and should not detract from the character of the locality. Where possible, bins should be

stored to the side or rear of the property. Unimpeded access should be provided to these facilities in a manner that enables occupants to freely move refuse and recycling to the front of the property ready for collection. If the only option is to store refuse and recycling at the front of the property, suitable screening should be provided. All waste and recycling storage areas should be clearly identified on plans submitted with the planning application.

6.38 Provision for waste facilities in new build HMOs must comply with Policy ENT15: Waste Movement in New Development in the RLDP.

Clothes Drying Area

6.39 A dedicated external area (containing either a rotary or washing line) for clothes drying is recommended in order to reduce the risk of damp and mould forming indoors. Where only internal drying provision is possible, the space provided should be well and securely ventilated, adequately sized for the number of occupants and separate from communal living areas, such as kitchens, bathrooms, or sitting rooms. It should be capable of being heated and enclosed (e.g. with a closable internal door) to prevent condensation spreading to other parts of the property. The clothes drying area must be clearly defined on the submitted plans. Consideration should be given to providing a dryer/washer-dryer for tenants to use.



Amenity space with rotary washing line, Pencoed



Covered bin storage unit, Bridgend

Policy COM7: Criterion 6

'The proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity.'

6.40 In assessing whether a proposed HMO would have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity, consideration should be given to the potential effects on both the occupants of the HMO and neighbouring properties.

Residential amenity includes factors such as:

- Noise and disturbance;
- Privacy;
- Access to natural light and outlook; and
- Adequacy of internal and external amenity space.

6.41 In the context of HMOs, where accommodation is often intensified and shared, it is particularly important to take a wider view of residential amenity that includes the health, safety and well-being of occupants. RLDP Policies *SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking* and *SP8: Health and Well-*

being set out key criteria for ensuring that development supports people's health and well-being.

6.42 Internal floor dimensions of living spaces are considered an important element of maintaining appropriate amenity standards and providing for healthy and attractive environments. This applies to both new buildings and conversions. For example, the conversion of existing buildings to HMOs should not result in over-intensive residential use that would give rise to cramped living conditions and/or rooms with insufficient windows. To ensure proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity, applicants should seek to ensure appropriate room sizes, and the SRS licensing standards attached at Appendix B can be used as a guide in these respects.

6.43 SRS also require a readily accessible bathroom/shower room be not more than one floor away from each bedroom, and that the number provided supports the number of occupants. Minimum standards are also provided for Water Closets (WCs). The LPA regards these standards as best practice and therefore applicants are encouraged to apply the same standards for all HMOs, regardless of size. Refer to Appendix B.

Outdoor Amenity Space

6.44 HMOs should provide outdoor amenity space in which residents can relax. Amenity spaces provided should be an appropriate size for the number of occupants and accessible to all residents at all times. They should be separate to space used for activities such as clothes drying and storing refuse/recycling and bicycles. The retention of existing gardens is recommended to support biodiversity, for amenity value and to help reduce surface water flooding.

Protecting the Amenity of Neighbouring Uses

6.45 In line with Policy SP3 of the RLDP, HMOs must be designed to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Proposals should prevent overlooking, overshadowing, and the creation of adverse microclimatic conditions through careful site layout and design.

HMOs Above/Adjoining Commercial Premises

6.46 If a proposal for an HMO adjoins a commercial premises, amenity space should be provided to minimise disturbance due to noise. HMOs above shops or other commercial premises should have their own separate entrance to the street frontage.

HMOs and Security

6.47 Applicants are encouraged to design HMOs in accordance with Secured by Design (SBD) principles and are advised to aim to achieve the SBD 'Gold' award (an award that acknowledges crime and anti-social behaviour reduction measures relating to layout, environmental design and the use of Police Preferred Specification products), where practicable.

Material Considerations

6.48 Planning decisions must be based on land use impacts and material planning considerations, not the identity or personal characteristics of future occupants. It is not appropriate, or lawful, to refuse planning permission for an HMO on the basis of assumptions about who may live there, including concerns about perceived behaviour, lifestyle, or potential for criminal activity. For example, it would not be acceptable to oppose an HMO application on the grounds that:

- The property may be occupied by students, young people, or the unemployed, and that this could lead to anti-social behaviour;
- There is a belief that future residents may not 'fit in' with the surrounding community; or
- There are generalised fears that HMOs lead to crime without evidence of a land-use impact.

Appendix A – Submission Requirements for Applicants

- Application form
- Site location plan
- Block plan of the site
- Existing and proposed floor plan, including internal floor areas for each room
 - floor plans should clearly identify proposed room uses, including bedrooms, communal spaces and the location of any opening windows. It should be indicated what each room will be used for and how many people in each room. For bedrooms, the plans must also indicate the maximum number of occupants. Also, the location of bedrooms in relation to communal areas must be clear.
- Details of waste and recycling
- Details of bicycle parking
- Details of external amenity space
- Details of drying space
- Elevation plans where any extensions or new openings such as windows and doors are proposed
- Supporting statement including details of proposed parking provision (car and bicycle)
- Any supporting evidence; for example, parking surveys, information about local parking provision, etc.

Appendix B – HMO Licensing Standards

While these standards are not planning standards and cannot be imposed or enforced as such, the LPA recommends use of these licensing standards as a 'best practice' guide to ensure appropriate room sizes and amenity standards in HMOs.

Part One: HMO Space Standards

Space Requirements for Shared Accommodation with Shared Facilities

(includes the kitchen, lounge, bathroom, and toilet)

Table 1: Bedroom Space Standards

Room	Size	Configuration	Space Requirements
Bedroom(s)	Single	With separate lounge	6.5m ²
		Without separate lounge	10m ²
	Double	With separate lounge	10m ²
		Without separate lounge	15m ²

Table 2: Kitchen Space Standards

Room	Number of Occupants	Space Requirements
Kitchen	1-2 person/s	5.5m ²
	3-6 persons	7m ²
	7-10 persons	10.5m ²

Space Requirements for Self-Contained Accommodation

(exclusive use of own facilities)

Table 3: Self-Contained Accommodation Space Standards

Accommodation Type	Number of Rooms	Configuration	Space Requirements
Single Bedsit/Flat	One room	Lounge/Kitchen/Bedroom	13m ²
Double Bedsit/Flat			15m ²
Single Bedsit/Flat	Two rooms	Lounge/Kitchen	10m ²
		With separate bedroom	6.5m ²
Double Bedsit/Flat		Lounge/Kitchen	13m ²
		With separate bedroom	11m ²
Single Bedsit/Flat	Two rooms	Lounge/Bedroom	10m ²
		With separate kitchen	5.5m ²
Double Bedsit/Flat		Lounge/Bedroom	15m ²
		With separate kitchen	5.5m ²

Part Two: HMO Amenity Standards

Bathroom and Toilet Amenities within Shared Accommodation

Table 4: Bathroom/WC Facility Standards

*Toilets (WCs):	Number of Occupants	Quantity	Configuration
	Up to 4 occupants	1 WC	May be in bathroom/shower room
	5 occupants	1 WC	In a separate compartment
	6 occupants	2 WC	May be in bathroom/shower room
	Between 7-10 occupants	2 WC	1 WC to be in a separate compartment to the room containing bath/shower
	Between 11 – 15 occupants	3 WC	1 WC to be in a separate compartment to the rooms containing baths/showers

*Each WC to include a wash hand basin with an adequate supply of cold water and constant hot water.

Table 5: Bathroom Requirements

	Number of occupants	Quantity
*Bathroom:	Every 5 occupants	1 bathroom

* Each bathroom to contain a bath or shower with an adequate supply of cold water and constant hot water, but not necessarily a toilet or wash hand basin.

Toilets and bathrooms to be provided in an enclosed and adequately laid out and ventilated room, either:

- Within the living accommodation; or
- Within reasonable proximity to the living accommodation.

Bathroom and Toilet Amenities within Self-Contained Accommodation

Where bathroom facilities are for the exclusive use of an individual household, i.e. in self-contained flats or individual bedsits, they are to include:

- A toilet
- A bath or shower with an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.
- A wash hand basin.

Toilets and bathrooms to be provided in an enclosed and adequately laid out and ventilated room, either:

- Within the living accommodation; or
- Within reasonable proximity to the living accommodation.

Kitchen Amenities within Shared Accommodation

It is recommended that at least 2 double electrical sockets are provided in addition to the cooker socket.

Table 6: Kitchen Amenities Requirements

Amenity	Number of Occupants	Configuration
Cooker	Up to 5 occupants	1 full cooker - (1 oven and 4 hobs)
	Up to 7 occupants	1 full cooker – (1 oven and 4 hobs) <u>AND</u> at least one alternative cooking option (e.g. air fryer/microwave, etc.)
Sink	Up to 5 occupants	1 sink - (With hot and cold water and draining board)
	Up to 7 occupants	1 sink – (With hot and cold water and a draining board) <u>AND</u> a dishwasher.
Work Surface	Up to 5 occupants	2.0 linear metres Note – (a work surface of at least 500m must be sited adjacent to each cooker).
	Each occupant thereafter	An additional 0.5 linear metres per occupant
Dry Goods Storage	Per occupant	1 base unit (500mm) OR 1 wall unit (1,000mm) Note – (space under sink unit & drainer not

		allowable for food storage).
Refrigerated Storage	Per occupant	1 shelf in a refrigerator AND 1 shelf in a freezer, per person.

Kitchen Amenities within Self-Contained Accommodation

Where kitchen facilities are for the exclusive use of an individual household. i.e. in a self-contained flat, or individual bedsit, the following is to be provided:

- A cooker of adequate size to include 2 – 4 ring hobs with oven or a microwave.
- A sink unit (with drainer) with adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.
- A work top for food preparation, of minimum size 1m x 0.6m
- A work surface of at least 500mm must be sited adjacent to each cooker.
- A standard under-counter size fridge as a minimum AND a freezer to be provided (*in addition to the fridge*) OR one standard fridge/freezer would meet this requirement.
- A cupboard for food and utensil storage, of minimum size 500mm standard base OR wall unit (1,000mm).
- Sufficient electrical sockets. It is recommended that at least 2 double sockets are provided in addition to the cooker socket.

Appendix C – Methodology for Assessing Parking Impact

The following methodology should be used to assess whether a proposal will have an effect on parking provision.

Step 1: Site Accessibility and Context

Applicants must provide an assessment of the site's accessibility, including:

- Distance to bus stops, railway stations and frequency of services;
- Quality and connectivity of walking and cycling routes;
- Access to local amenities (i.e. shops, schools, employment hubs, etc.); and
- Presence of car clubs or shared mobility options.

This will provide context for car dependency and potential vehicle ownership for both the existing and proposed use.

Step 2: Calculate Parking Demand – Existing Use

Calculate the likely parking demand of the existing use by considering:

- Household size and composition;
- Local car ownership data (e.g. latest census or local surveys);
- The number of bedrooms and available off-street parking.

Step 3: Calculate Parking Demand – Proposed HMO

Calculate parking demand generated by the proposed HMO, taking into account:

- Expected number of residents and their typical car ownership profile;
- Accessibility data from Step 1; and
- Comparable data from existing HMOs in similar locations.

Step 4: Net Impact Assessment

Compare the calculated parking demand of the existing and proposed use:

- If there is no net increase in likely vehicle demand, the proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact.

- If there is a net increase, further evidence is required to demonstrate this can be accommodated (proceed to step 5).

Step 5: Assess Local Capacity and Parking Stress

If additional demand for parking is expected, the applicant must demonstrate that the local area can accommodate the net increase. This may involve:

- Providing evidence of available off-street parking provision; and
- Undertaking a parking survey of the surrounding streets to assess existing parking stress and capacity. In all cases, the survey should:
 - Follow a methodology agreed with the Highways Authority (e.g. Overnight surveys);
 - Include weekday and weekend data;
 - Cover a reasonable radius (typically 100-200m walking distance); and
 - Present clear data on the number and occupancy of on-street spaces.

Table 7: Parking Capacity vs Demand Checklist

Step	Requirement	What to Submit
1. Site Accessibility and Context	Demonstrate the site's accessibility by sustainable travel modes and proximity to services.	<p>Map or written statement showing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance to bus stops and frequency of services • Proximity to railway stations • Walking and cycling routes • Nearby services and amenities • Any car clubs or shared mobility schemes.
2. Parking Demand – Existing Use	Calculate typical car ownership for current (C3) use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of current/former use – including plans • Household size or composition • Estimated car ownership level (with data source) • Existing off-street parking availability.
3. Parking Demand – Proposed HMO	Calculate parking demand for the proposed HMO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected number of occupants – including proposed plans • Car ownership assumptions based on

		<p>local evidence or comparable HMOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to accessibility factors from Step 1.
4. Net Impact Assessment	Compare existing and proposed parking demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table or written summary comparing both scenarios • Clear statement on whether there is a net increase in demand.
5. Local Parking Capacity / Parking Survey	If net demand increases, assess whether this can be accommodated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of any proposed on-site parking provision • If relying on on-street parking: a parking *survey following an agreed methodology <p>* Survey must include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Map of surveyed area (100m-200m radius) which includes any traffic restrictions ○ Weekday and weekend overnight occupancy ○ Number and type of available spaces ○ Summary of capacity vs demand.



Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Consultation Representations, Responses and Resultant Actions

Do you have any comments on the proposed additional guidance for criterion 1 of adopted Policy COM7, which requires HMO proposals to ' <i>not lead to more than 10% of all residential properties within a 50m radius of the proposal being HMOs</i> '?	
Organisation	Bridgend County Borough Council (Elected Member)
Representation	This might be further qualified by also taking into account the proximity of non-HMO residential properties such as Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs). There might also be a case for including hotel premises used for the provision of temporary housing.
Local Planning Authority response	<p>The SPG has been prepared to provide additional guidance on the application of adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) policies. It does not introduce new policy and cannot depart from, override, or amend the policies of the RLDP. As criterion 1 of Policy COM7 states that proposals for HMOs should '<i>not lead to more than 10% of all residential properties within a 50m radius of the proposal being HMOs</i>', the SPG is limited to the consideration of properties that fall under the definition of an HMO in planning terms.</p> <p>PBSAs generally fall under the 'Sui Generis' use class, not use class C4 (HMOs), as stated under paragraph 5.5 of the SPG. Hotel premises used for the provision of temporary housing does not automatically become an HMO in planning terms unless its use fundamentally shifts to long-term residential occupation. The Welsh Government's 'Houses in Multiple Occupation: Practice Guidance' (March, 2017) states that, '<i>to fall within the 'house in multiple occupation' definition a property must be occupied as the main residence</i>'. If the occupancy is short-term, it is considered under the 'Sui Generis' use class. However, if the hotel becomes used predominantly as long-term shared living accommodation for unrelated adults, where the residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live there as their main residence • Share cooking or washing facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And live broadly like an HMO... <p>...then the use could be considered to have changed to an HMO and a planning application would be required. If such a change of use occurs, it will be considered against criterion 1 for each new HMO planning application within a 50m radius thereafter.</p>
Resultant action	Add a sentence stating under paragraph 5.5 clarifying that hotel premises used for temporary accommodation are generally not considered as HMOs. This will help to clarify when a building of this kind should be considered against criterion 1 of Policy COM7.
Do you have any other comments to make on the proposed Houses in Multiple Occupation SPG?	
Organisation	Bridgend County Borough Council (Elected Member)
Representation	<p>The reference to space standards in Appendix B is welcomed, so to align planning and housing enforcement considerations.</p> <p>I suggest that the term "should" on Page 13 5.6 be substituted with "will" so to read as follows:-</p> <p><i>However, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who oversee the licensing and management HMOs in Bridgend County Borough, should will be consulted on planning applications for HMOs to ensure alignment between planning and housing enforcement considerations.</i></p> <p>This is to ensure that SRS is consulted on each occasion.</p> <p>Further guidance might be required to deal with situations where an objection is received from SRS on the grounds of insufficient room sizes.</p>
Local Planning Authority response	The respondent's support for the SPG's reference to space standards in Appendix B is noted. Their suggestion to alter the wording in paragraph 5.6 is agreeable as this would help to strengthen the alignment between licensing standards and planning requirements, as suggested. It should be

	<p>noted, however that the SPG is not able to enforce licensing standards for planning proposals for HMOs.</p> <p>Regarding the point made about guidance for SRS objections on the grounds of insufficient room sizes, the RLDP does not contain an adopted policy on minimum room sizes for HMOs and it is beyond the scope of an SPG to specify new policy requirements in this manner. However, any objections raised by SRS in relation to specific planning applications would be considered accordingly through the development management process.</p>
Resultant action	<p>Alter the wording in paragraph 5.6 so it reads: '<i>However, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who oversee the licensing and management of HMOs in Bridgend County Borough, should will be consulted on all planning applications for HMOs to ensure alignment between planning and housing enforcement considerations</i>'.</p>
General comments	
Organisation	South Wales Police
Representation	<p>Secured by Design (SBD) is the official police security initiative to encourage the adoption of crime prevention methods and standards in new and existing housing. It aims to achieve a good standard of security for both the home and the surrounding environment:</p> <p>Welsh Government have been supportive of Designing out Crime and Secured by Design as shown by the following statements in documents:</p> <p>Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note (TAN)12.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.17.3 of TAN 12 states "The Safer Places and Secured by Design Initiative provide recognised standards, that have been shown to reduce crime (particularly residential burglary) and the impact of crime upon neighbourhoods. It is desirable for the security of all housing</p>

developments, public buildings, and all buildings funded by public bodies, to achieve similar measurable standards.”

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 2024:

PPW Wales states under 3.11 “Local authorities are under a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions that they take. Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations to which regard should be given in the preparation of development plans and taking planning decisions. The aim should be to produce safe environments that do not compromise on design quality in accordance with the cohesive communities well-being goal.”

As can be seen from the above Welsh Government have addressed community safety and crime prevention in guides and legislation, and been supportive of Secured by Design.

UK Government Policy places a duty on local authorities through Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires local authorities to consider crime and disorder implications in all their authorities and functions and do all that they reasonably can do all they can do to reduce these problems.

In respect of social housing in Wales, Welsh Government recognises the importance of having homes that are safe and secure for our communities, homes that house some of our most vulnerable people in society and are supportive and realise the value of Secured by Design. This is shown by Welsh Government requirements in the following:

Welsh Development Quality Requirements (DQR) 2021 Creating Beautiful Homes and Places

In the DQR all Welsh Government grant funded social housing in Wales must meet the Secured by Design Gold Standard to meet the Development Quality Requirements (DQR) set out in Beautiful Homes and Spaces.

Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) 2023.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standards aim to improve the quality of social housing in Wales, ensuring that all social homes meet specific criteria for safety, comfort and environmental sustainability. The following security standards are specified in WHQS:

“External doors and windows must provide a reasonable level of physical security. A home has a ‘reasonable level of security’ if it is capable of complying with ‘Secured by Design’ (SBD), although it may not necessarily have an SBD certificate.

When fitting new external doors and windows: the replacements must comply with the product specifications for external doors and windows stated within the most recent edition of ‘Secured by Design’ and be independently certified as such.

When retaining existing doors or windows: delivering a reasonable level of security can be achieved by modification of existing installations to comply with SBD. Components, hardware and glazing used in modifications must comply with the product and material specifications stated within the most recent edition of ‘Secured by Design’ and be independently certified as such.”

Houses in multiple occupation provide accommodation for some of the most vulnerable people in society. Quite often HMO's house people who are not known to each other in shared accommodation. Women and girls also live in HMO's and violence against women and girls is high on the agenda of everyone.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The harm caused to victims and society by violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all its forms, including but not limited to, harassment, stalking, rape, sexual assault, murder, honour-based abuse and coercive control is incalculable. While men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women.

In spring 2023, the Home Secretary announced Violence Against Women and Girls as a national threat and included it within the 9 Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) alongside terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse.

Secured by Design can assist with ensuring that the built environment in all its forms, is designed to reduce the opportunity of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and contribute to such places feeling safe, to live.

In the consultation document security is not mentioned. Therefore I would ask that there be a heading in the SPG called Security of HMO's. Under this heading I would ask that the SPG states the following:

HMO's that are new builds, must meet the standards specified in the Welsh Government's Welsh Development Quality Requirements (DQR) 2021 Creating Beautiful Homes and Places and must meet Secured by Design Gold standard.

In respect of existing properties that are converted to HMO's I would ask that they meet the security standards specified in WHQS.

In addition security standards for bedroom doors are not specified in the Secured by Design Residential Guide. Therefore I would ask that in addition to the advice given in the SBD Guide, the

	<p>SPG states that in houses of multiple occupancy, bedroom doors should meet Secured by Design standards i.e. PAS 24 2022 or equivalent.</p> <p>Further information in respect of Secured by Design can be found on the website www.securedbydesign.com.</p>
Local Planning Authority response	<p>The LPA agrees that ensuring the security of HMOs and the people living within them and nearby is of the utmost importance. The respondent's suggestion to include a separate heading within the SPG titled 'HMOs and Security' is therefore accepted.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that Planning Policy Wales only refers to the application of the WDQR standards to affordable housing (as defined by Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2). They are not applicable to private new build HMOs and therefore it is beyond the scope of an SPG to necessitate this standard to be applied to all HMOs. Similarly, the Welsh Housing Quality Standards are national minimum standards for social housing owned or managed by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). It would be beyond the scope of this SPG to require application of these standards to all HMOs, including those privately owned and managed.</p> <p>The specification of internal security features, including Secured by Design standards for individual bedroom doors, is a matter for HMO licensing and building regulations rather than planning*. These detailed measures fall outside the scope of planning control and therefore cannot be referred to in the SPG.</p> <p>The SPG is able to <i>encourage</i> applicants to design proposals to that of Secured by Design 'Gold' standard. However, it cannot require them to adopt such standards as these are not specified in either local or national planning policy.</p>

Resultant action	<p>Insert a new headed section under the heading, 'Policy COM7: Criterion 6' of the SPG, titled 'HMOs and Security':</p> <p><u>HMOs and Security</u></p> <p><i>Applicants are encouraged to design HMOs in accordance with Secured by Design (SBD) principles and are advised to aim to achieve the SBD 'Gold' award (an award that acknowledges crime and anti-social behaviour reduction measures relating to layout, environmental design and the use of Police Preferred Specification products), where practicable.</i></p> <p><u>Guidance note</u></p> <p>*For clarity, we have produced a 2-page document titled 'A Simple Guide to Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations for Houses in Multiple Occupation', which is attached as an additional Appendix (Appendix 3) alongside this report. Its purpose is to clearly and simply set out what each regulatory regime – Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations – can achieve in relation to the management of HMOs.</p>
Member of the public	No. 01
Representation	<p>Is this hmo for Bridgend homeless, if it for the permanent holiday makers. How dare you put these men in our community. House prices will drop, crime, rape thefts. They looking for one of these men after an incident in Maesteg. How about protecting the people who live here & pay taxes so they can stay I and have everything free. We are in a cost of living crisis and homeless. I am appalled that you want to turn us into a third word. You should go around bridgend and ask the people who live if they approve for hmo for local homeless or for immigrants. I say no and so would all of Maesteg and Bridgend. We did not invite them we don't want them send them back to France it safe there.</p>
Local Planning Authority response	<p>The draft HMO SPG provides additional planning guidance for HMO planning applications, but does not propose any specific HMOs across the County Borough. The occupation of HMOs is beyond the scope of the land use planning system.</p>

Resultant action	None required.
Member of the public	No. 02
Representation	I cannot find your consultation document on Houses of Multiple Occupancy. However, I would like to say I certainly wouldn't not like one anywhere near where I live. If there was one it would make me feel very unsafe and would mean I wouldn't go out alone day or night.
Local Planning Authority response	The draft HMO SPG provides additional planning guidance for HMO planning applications, but does not propose any specific HMOs across the County Borough. The occupation of HMOs is beyond the scope of the land use planning system
Resultant action	None required.

Proposed SPG changes as a result of the consultation

The paragraphs proposed for amendment following the consultation are detailed below, for the reasons explained in the previous table. Strikethrough text is used to indicate proposed deletions from the SPG, whereas blue text is used to indicate proposed additions to the SPG. Only paragraphs proposed for amendment are included below, there are no proposed changes to the remainder of the draft SPG following consultation. The final draft version of the SPG (**Appendix 1**) incorporates the proposed amendments below.

1. Insert a bullet point under paragraph 5.5 clarifying that hotel premises used for temporary accommodation are generally not considered as HMOs, unless in specific circumstances. This paragraph sits underneath a sub-heading titled 'Exclusions', and specifically sets out which types of residential arrangements that are not typically considered HMOs for planning purposes. Such proposals will not be considered against Policy COM7. The inserted wording (amendment) will read as follows:

'Hotel premises used for short-term temporary accommodation – A hotel building used to provide temporary accommodation for non-holiday residents, such as homeless households, which does not operate as a hotel in the conventional sense, is typically regarded as a 'sui generis' use.'

2. Alter the wording of the fourth sentence of paragraph 5.6, an insertion to require the consultation of Shared Regulatory Services (who manage HMO Licensing) on all HMO planning applications. This will now read as follows:

'However, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who oversee the licensing and management of HMOs in Bridgend County Borough, ~~should~~ will be consulted on all planning applications for HMOs to ensure alignment between planning and housing enforcement considerations.'

3. Insert a new headed section under the heading, 'Policy COM7: Criterion 6' of the SPG, titled 'HMOs and Security' after paragraph 6.46, as paragraph 6.47, to read as follows:

HMOs and Security

Applicants are encouraged to design HMOs in accordance with Secured by Design (SBD) principles and are advised to aim to achieve the SBD 'Gold' award (an award that acknowledges crime and anti-social behaviour reduction measures relating to layout, environmental design and the use of Police Preferred Specification products), where practicable.'

A Guide to Planning, Licensing and Building Regulations for Houses in Multiple Occupation

1. Introduction

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are regulated through three separate regimes: **planning, licensing, and building regulations**. These regimes often overlap but each deal with different aspects of HMOs. It is common for applicants, landlords, and residents to be unsure which rules apply to which issues.

This short guide sets out, in clear terms, the role of each regulatory regime and the issues they cover, supported by a summary table of responsibilities.

2. Planning

Planning regulates land use, development, and the impact of HMOs on their surroundings. It focuses on the *impacts* of an HMO, not its day-to-day management or specifics regarding the identity of occupiers (only the use of land/property and its *nature of occupation*).

Planning covers:

- **Change of use** to an HMO (e.g., C3 (dwellinghouse) → C4 (House in multiple occupation), large HMO sui generis (uses that do not fall within any other use class)).
- **Planning applications for new-build HMOs.**
- **Impact on local character:** avoiding over-concentrations of HMOs, amenity, community balance, intensity of use.
- **Impact on neighbours (residential amenity):** including the potential for noise and disturbance (*not* noise complaint management).
- **Physical extensions or alterations** requiring planning permission.
- **External design and appearance.**
- **Amenity standards** (planning level): room sizes, communal spaces, bin storage, clothes drying area, etc. (if specified in Local Development Plan policy).
- **Location-related issues:** i.e. access, parking pressure, cycle storage.

3. Licensing

Licensing focuses on the safe and proper management of HMOs and the suitability of landlords and agents. It is concerned with health, safety and the welfare of occupiers. While issued by Shared Regulatory Services' (SRS) Licensing team, licensing standards are enforced by Environmental Health.

Licensing covers:

- **Mandatory HMO licensing:** properties with 5 or more residents forming more than one household; comprising three or more storeys; and sharing basic amenities.

- **Additional or selective licensing schemes** for smaller HMOs (not applied by Bridgend County Borough Council).
- **Sets minimum room sizes and ensures there are sufficient facilities**
- **Suitability of the landlord/agent**
- **Management standards**, including:
 - Providing information to occupiers;
 - Taking fire and general safety measures;
 - Maintaining water, gas, electricity supplies;
 - Keeping common parts, fittings, and appliances in good order;
 - Maintaining living accommodation; and
 - Providing proper waste disposal.
- **Assesses housing standards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System**
- **Overcrowding and maximum occupancy**
- **Conditions requiring ongoing compliance**

4. Building Regulations

Building Regulations ensure HMO development meets minimum safety / quality standards.

Building regulations cover:

- Ensure compliance with standards relating to:
 - Fire safety (means of escape, fire doors, protected corridors, signage, etc.);
 - Emergency lighting;
 - Structural safety;
 - Sound performance standards;
 - Drainage, sanitation, ventilation; and
 - Thermal performance and energy efficiency.
- Apply when a property is converted, extended, or altered for use as an HMO.
Houses/Flats converted to HMOs that are occupied by people who share a tenancy, share bills and where the property does not have individual locks on doors would *not* be required to apply for building regulations approval.

5. Summary: Who covers what?

Issue/Requirement	Planning	Licensing	Building Regs
Change of use to an HMO	✓	✗	✗
Neighbour/Amenity impacts*	✓	✗	✗
Parking, access, waste storage	✓	✗	✗
Room sizes	If specified in policy	✓	✗
Occupancy levels	✗	✓	✗
Fire safety systems	✗	✓	✓
Thermal performance	✗	✗	✓
Gas/Electrical safety checks	✗	✓	Partial coverage
Condition & management	✗	✓	✗

*Planning considers only potential amenity impacts, not noise-complaint enforcement.

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Agenda Item 11

Meeting of:	DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	5 FEBRUARY 2026
Report Title:	AUDIT WALES REPORT BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	JONATHAN PARSONS – GROUP MANAGER PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In July and August 2025 Audit Wales undertook a study of the Planning and Development Service at Bridgend and examined whether the Council supports the service to deliver value for money in the use of its resources.• The audit focused on the Development Control team and the Strategic Planning Policy Team within the Council's Planning and Development Service.• Building Control, Strategic Transportation, Highway Development Control and Highway Estate Development are also functions within the wider Planning and Development service but were not included within this audit.• Audit Wales noted the Service's performance but did not examine the reasons for its performance or make judgements on it.• Audit Wales did not look at the decisions of individual planning applications.• This report provides a summary of the findings of the Audit Wales report and the proposed management response

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report to the Development Control Committee on the Audit Wales report on the Planning & Development Service at Bridgend CBC, together with the subsequent Management Response.

2. Background

2.1 Audit Wales (**AW**) undertakes a programme of work during the year to help the Auditor General discharge his duties under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. The Auditor General's functions include auditing accounts and undertaking local performance audit work at a broad range of public bodies, alongside conducting a programme of national *value for money* examinations and studies. The Auditor General also assesses the extent to which public bodies are complying with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.

2.2 Audit Wales carried out its audit of the Council's Planning & Development Service (the "**Service**"), in Bridgend during July and August 2025, and published their report, '*Planning Development Service – Bridgend County Borough Council*' in December 2025. The AW audit report noted the Service's performance but did not examine the reasons for its performance or make judgements on it, nor did it look at the decisions of individual planning applications.

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 The Planning & Development Service's Group comprises teams reflecting the statutory town & country planning functions: development control & strategic planning as well as building control, strategic transportation, highway development control and highway estate development. However, the AW audit focused upon the development control and strategic planning functions as part of its study.

3.2 The AW report indicated that Planning Services can play a key role in supporting councils in the delivery of their well-being objectives. The Council's Service is responsible for the Local Development Plan (**LDP**) which provides the land use policy framework that sets out what kind of development is suitable in different parts of the County Borough. The LDP together with national planning policy informs other Council services, developers, communities, and residents what development can happen and where. The AW report highlights that the Service together with the Council's Development Control Committee decide individual planning applications and that these vary from major developments, such as new school buildings, housing and industrial estates to house extensions or changes of use of buildings. As part of the determination process the Service must balance the need for new development with the importance of protecting the environment and local amenities. The Service also works to maintain the natural and built heritage and the environment. The Service also has enforcement powers to act against any development that takes place without the required permission.

3.3 The main issues identified in the report are summarised as follows (then outlined below in more detail):

- The Council has limited recognition and understanding of the important role the Planning & Development Service has in supporting the Council's priorities.
- The AW report identified weaknesses in the management of resources and risk to support the Service.
- The Service lacks a *service plan* and there is limited understanding and oversight of the Service's performance.
- The Council has comprehensive arrangements in place that supports its Development Control Committee.

3.4 It was indicated in the AW report that the Service is represented on various different Council programme boards, which helps to ensure that major projects receive the necessary professional planning advice. However, it would appear that other Council services often engage with the Service too late, which means that proposals may be at an advanced stage before consulting the Service. If the Service subsequently finds that planning developments are not in line with planning guidelines or the Replacement LDP (**RLDP**), it can delay progress or impact on meeting funding deadlines and may mean resources have been allocated to projects that do not meet land use planning policies or requirements. This may be due to a lack of understanding as to the role of the Service.

3.5 The AW report identified that following changes to the Council's Corporate Plan in April 2025, there is no reference to the Service in the Corporate Plan. Given the major planning developments underway within the County Borough, Audit Wales queried why the Service does not have a higher profile in the Corporate Plan particularly as many of the aims within the Council's Well-being Objectives and its RLDP overlap. These include redevelopment, new developments, regeneration and placemaking. These key principles cannot be achieved without the Service, yet the important role it plays in the overall objectives of the Council is completely absent.

3.6 With regards to resourcing, the AW report highlighted that the Service is facing a range of challenges which pose a risk to its resilience in meeting its demands. Also, the Service has not met its income targets for the last two years. The current funding arrangement for the Service is based on 70% of fee income (mainly from planning applications), and 30% of base budget funding. The AW report commented that this formula does not appear to be based on robust modelling and financial planning making the Service reliant on fluctuating planning fee income impacted by external factors outside of the Council's control. This arrangement does not provide stability for the Service and makes it difficult for it to plan for the medium to long term.

3.7 It was acknowledged that the Service has submitted reports setting out its challenges, workloads and resourcing needs to the Corporate and Cabinet Management Board (**CCMB**) in October 2020, December 2022, November 2024,

and April 2025. These reports clearly stated the potential impact on the Service's ability to support delivery of the Council's major projects and its competing demands. In 2022, the Service presented CCMB with a proposed new staff structure with an increased budget requirement of £646,000. The Service did not receive a permanent budget increase but instead received a one-off amount of £365,000 from earmarked reserves (**EMR**). The use of EMR is a short-term funding solution and does not support the Service in the medium to long term and at the time of the AW audit the reserves had run out.

- 3.8 The AW report acknowledged that the Service's annual budget does not provide a true reflection of the costs of delivering the Service. The budget does not include the costs of using agency staff, even though the Service has used agency staff for at least three years. The total amount spent on agency staff between 2022-23 to 2024-25 is £208,311. At the end of June 2025, the Service had spent £35,104. At the time of audit, no value for money assessment had been undertaken on the use of agency staff.
- 3.9 The AW report also referred to the Council's proposal to set up a S106 and infrastructure delivery team. It is estimated that the RLDP could generate approximately £116 million in Section 106 (S106) monies over its term. S106 income can help fund community infrastructure projects, such as parks and community facilities. Having a dedicated infrastructure delivery team demonstrates that the Council recognises the importance of overseeing this s106 income and the need to mitigate the potential for any underspending. Officers have since been appointed and the Service has now progressed proposals for a cross- directorate Infrastructure Management Board to produce an '*Infrastructure Management Plan*'.
- 3.10 The AW report highlighted that the Service does not have a risk register setting out its current and future risks and how it manages and mitigates these risks. There are no arrangements for the recording and oversight of Service risks; on such significant and long-standing risk is the capacity to support delivery of the Council's regeneration programme and its statutory responsibilities. For example, the RLDP is expected to attract more developers to the Borough with an anticipated increase in major planning applications which can help the Council achieve wider social and economic benefits. However, there is no risk management arrangement for the Council to assure itself it has capacity within the Service to respond to this demand and consequent increase in workload.
- 3.11 At a corporate level, the AW report identified an overall lack of awareness of the requirement for a Service plan as set out in its Performance Management Framework (**PMF**). Service plans should inform Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan and, whilst there is a high-level annual Communities Business Plan, there is a complete lack of Service planning. In the absence of a Service plan, there is no clarity on service priorities, performance, and risks. There is no plan as to how the Service will set out how it will deliver its responsibilities. Furthermore, there is a corresponding lack of evidence as to how the Council monitors compliance with its Service planning in its PMF.
- 3.12 In terms of performance there is limited awareness of the Service's performance. Whilst data is submitted every quarter to the Welsh Government for inclusion into national performance indicators, the Service does not analyse this data nor is there oversight outside of the Service to understand its performance. The AW report

indicated that the Service focuses on making the right decisions rather than the timeliness of making decisions. The AW report highlighted that for the two-year period between April 2023 to March 2025, the Service consistently performed well below the Wales average for the percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales. However, aside from quarter 1 2024-25 (April to June 2024) and quarter 4 2024-25 (January to March 2025), the Service performed significantly better than the Wales average over the two-year period for the *average time in days* to determine planning applications. In this area, the Service is performing better than many other Local Planning Authorities (**LPAs**) in the time taken to make decisions.

3.13 In its report, Audit Wales has made four recommendations to the Council which focus on resource management, Service planning, risk and performance management as outlined below.

- **Recommendation 1 Resource management**

The Council should demonstrate it understands the resource requirements of the Planning and Development Service based on its demands and capacity to help inform resourcing decisions.

- **Recommendation 2 Risk management**

The Council should ensure the Service identifies, manages, and monitors its risks to help the Council understand how Service risks may impact delivery of the Service's responsibilities and the Council's priorities set out in its Corporate Plan.

- **Recommendation 3 Service planning arrangements**

The Council should comply with its Performance Management Framework and ensure the Planning and Development Service has a Service plan.

- **Recommendation 4 Performance monitoring and reporting**

The Council should ensure it manages, monitors and reports the activity and performance of the Planning and Development Service. This should be supported with up-to-date performance information to help improve the Council's understanding of the Service's performance.

3.14 Following the feedback from Wales Audit, Cabinet has agreed a further EMR in order to provide a short-term resourcing solution. This will allow recruitment of vacant posts and develop a revised structure including additional back office and technical roles to support the planning function and free up other officers. It is also proposed to set up an '*equalisation*' fund to ensure that any income surplus is ring-fenced to the Service. Whilst the EMR provides only a temporary funding solution, in the longer-term income will be re-modelled and realistic fee targets agreed to establish a sustainable funding model for the Service going forward. This will require some uplift to the current core funding. The Service will also be supported to maximise its use of resources through business process re-engineering and the emerging use of artificial intelligence.

3.15 The Service also proposes to set up and maintain a Service risk register outlining current and predicted work streams, together with resource requirements cross-referenced to the Council's wider aims. A *Service Plan* will be developed outlining the functions, responsibilities, aims and targets for the Service. The Service Plan will also incorporate the risk register and will be updated annually and reported to the Development Control Committee and the Corporate Management Board, to

ensure that the risks are identified and shared with senior management, members and other services. Such report will include statistical data as well as commentary and updates on the risk register and targets set in the Service Plan.

- 3.16 A full copy of the Audit Wales Report together with the completed Management Response Form is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.17 The Audit Wales report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on the 29th January 2026, and will also be reported to the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd February 2026.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, socio-economic duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report and it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 That the Development Control Committee note the report.

Background documents

None



Planning and Development service

Bridgend County Borough Council

November 2025

About us

We have prepared and published this report under Section 17(2)(d) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015.

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Audit Wales follows the international performance audit standards issued by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

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Audit snapshot

What we looked at

- 1 We looked at whether Bridgend County Borough Council (the Council) supports the Planning and Development Service (the service) to deliver value for money in the use of its resources.
- 2 This audit focussed on the Development Control team and the Strategic Planning Policy Team in the Council's Planning and Development Service. Building Control, Strategic Transportation and Highway Development Control are services within the Planning and Development service, but we did not include these within this audit.
- 3 We note the Service's performance but did not examine the reasons for its performance or make judgements on it.
- 4 We did not look at the decisions of individual planning applications.
- 5 We undertook this audit between July and August 2025.
- 6 In January 2025, the Welsh Government closed its consultation on 'promoting a resilient and high performing planning service'. In summary, the Welsh Government consulted on:
 - increasing planning application fees;
 - changing the performance management framework;
 - Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) skills retention, bursaries, and apprenticeships; and
 - improving resilience and resources with Corporate Joint Committees including extending the Local Development Plan Review period.
- 7 At the time of this audit, the Welsh Government had not formally introduced changes following this consultation. This audit, therefore, reflects the service's arrangements before any Welsh Government changes.

Why this is important

- 8 A Planning Service can play a key role in supporting councils to deliver their well-being objectives. The service writes a Local Development Plan (LDP) and policies that set out what kind of development is suitable in different parts of the Borough. The LDP lets other Council services as well as developers, communities, and residents know what kind of development can happen and where.
- 9 The service and the Council's Development Control Committee (the Committee) decide individual planning applications. These applications vary from major developments, such as new school buildings, housing and industrial estates, to house extensions, or changes of use to buildings. When deciding whether to approve them, they balance the need for new housing, businesses, and infrastructure with the importance of protecting the environment and local amenities.
- 10 The service works to maintain the natural and built heritage and the environment. It also has enforcement powers to act against any development that takes place without the required permission.

What we have found

- 11 The Council has limited recognition and understanding of the important role the service has in supporting its priorities. There are weaknesses in the management of resources and risk to support the service. The service lacks a service plan and there is limited understanding and oversight of the service's performance. The Council has comprehensive arrangements supporting its Development Control committee.

What we recommend

12 We made four recommendations to the Council which focus on resource management, service planning, risk and performance management.

Key facts and figures

- During 2024-25, the Service received 707 planning applications. It determined 594 with 58 applications withdrawn.
- In April 2025, the Service had a backlog of 279 planning applications. This increased from a backlog of 224 planning applications from the previous year.
- At the time of this audit, the Development Control (planning) officers and agency staff had a combined total of 400 planning applications to determine. This averaged 50 planning applications each.
- The Development Control Team Leaders, Building and Development Control Manager and Group Manager also have planning applications to determine.

The Service has an income target from planning application fees:

- The 2023-24 income target was £832,092. The service achieved £408,028.
- The 2024-25 income target was £760,266. The service achieved £481,450.
- The 2025-26 income target is £952,060. At the end of June 2025, the service had received £353,448.

The Service has spent the following on agency staff:

- £28,366 in 2022-23
- £88,431 in 2023-24
- £91,514 in 2024-25

The Council is the first Local Planning Authority (LPA) since the COVID-19 pandemic to approve a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

Our findings

The Council has limited recognition and understanding of the important role the Planning and Development service has in supporting its priorities

- 14 Senior officers from the service are involved in different programme boards, which helps ensure that major projects receive professional planning advice early. However, we were often told that Council services engage with the service too late. This means that planning developments may be at an advanced stage before consulting the service. If the service finds that planning developments are not in line with planning guidelines or the RLDP, it can delay progress. It could impact on meeting funding deadlines and may mean resources have been allocated to projects that do not meet planning policies. Delays cause frustration and may be due to a lack of understanding as to the role of the service and why early engagement is important.
- 15 The Council's Corporate Plan does not refer to the service following changes to the plan in April 2025. Considering there are major planning developments underway in the Borough, it is surprising the service does not have a higher profile in the Corporate Plan. Many of the aims within the Council's Wellbeing Objectives and its RLDP, for example, include redeveloping sites, building new ones, regeneration and placemaking. These cannot be achieved without the service, yet their important role is absent.

There are weaknesses in the management of resource and risk to support the Planning and Development service

Resource management

- 16 The service is facing a range of resourcing challenges, which poses a risk to its resilience to meet all its demands. The service has not met its income targets in the last two years. The service submitted reports setting out its challenges, workloads and resourcing needs to the Corporate and Cabinet Management Board (CCMB) in October 2020, December 2022, November 2024, and April 2025. These reports clearly state the potential impact on the service's ability to support delivery of the Council's major projects and its competing demands.
- 17 The current funding arrangement for the service is based on 70% of fee income from planning applications and 30% of base budget funding. We have not seen that this is based on robust modelling and financial planning. This makes the service reliant on planning fee income which fluctuates and can be impacted by external factors outside of the Council's control. This arrangement does not provide stability for the service and makes it difficult for it to plan over the medium and long term.
- 18 In 2022, the service presented the CCMB with a proposed new staff structure with an increased budget of £646,000. The service did not receive a permanent budget increase but instead received a one-off amount of £365,000 from ear marked reserves. The use of ear marked reserves is a short-term solution and does not support the service in the medium to long term. These reserves have now run out. At the time of this audit, the service was preparing to submit a growth bid to increase the base budget for 2026-27 as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

- 19 The service's annual budget does not provide a true reflection of the costs of delivering the service. It does not include the cost of using agency staff, even though the service has used agency staff for at least three years. The total amount spent on agency staff between 2022-23 to 2024-25 is £208,311. At the end of June 2025, the service had spent £35,104. At the time of this audit, no value for money assessment had been undertaken on the use of agency staff.
- 20 The Council estimates it could generate approximately £116 million in Section 106 (S106) monies over the term of its RLDP.¹ This money can help fund community infrastructure projects, such as parks and community facilities. To manage and monitor the allocation of S106 monies, in early 2025, the Council approved setting up a S106 and Infrastructure Delivery team. This shows the Council recognises the importance of having a dedicated resource to oversee this money and mitigate the potential for any underspends of S106 money.

Risk management

- 21 The service does not have a service risk register setting out its current and future risks and how it manages and mitigates these. As a result, there are no arrangements for the recording and oversight of service risks and no way to assess risk scores or escalate relevant risks to the Directorate Risk Register.
- 22 We were told a significant and long-standing risk for the service is its capacity to support delivery of the Council's regeneration programme and its statutory responsibilities. For example, the Council's RLDP is expected to attract more developers to the Borough with an anticipated increase in major planning applications. These planning applications can help the Council achieve wider social and economic benefits. However, there is no risk management arrangement for the Council to assure itself it has capacity in the service to respond to this increase in interest.

¹ An S106 agreement (S106) is a legally binding private contract between a developer (or a number of interested parties) and a Local Planning Authority (LPA) that operates alongside a statutory planning permission.

The service lacks a service plan and there is limited understanding and oversight of the service's performance

Service planning

- 23 There is a lack of awareness of the corporate requirement to have a service plan. The Council clearly sets out in its Performance Management Framework (PMF) that services should have a service plan. These should inform Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan. While there is a high-level annual Communities Business Plan, there is a complete lack of service planning within the service.
- 24 Without a service plan, the service is not providing clarity on its priorities, performance, and risks. Nor does the service set out how it will deliver its responsibilities. The Council does not support services to meet this corporate requirement by providing a service plan template. We found no evidence the Council monitors compliance with its service planning requirements in its PMF. We set out in **Appendix 3** some of the significant advantages of having a service plan.

Oversight of performance

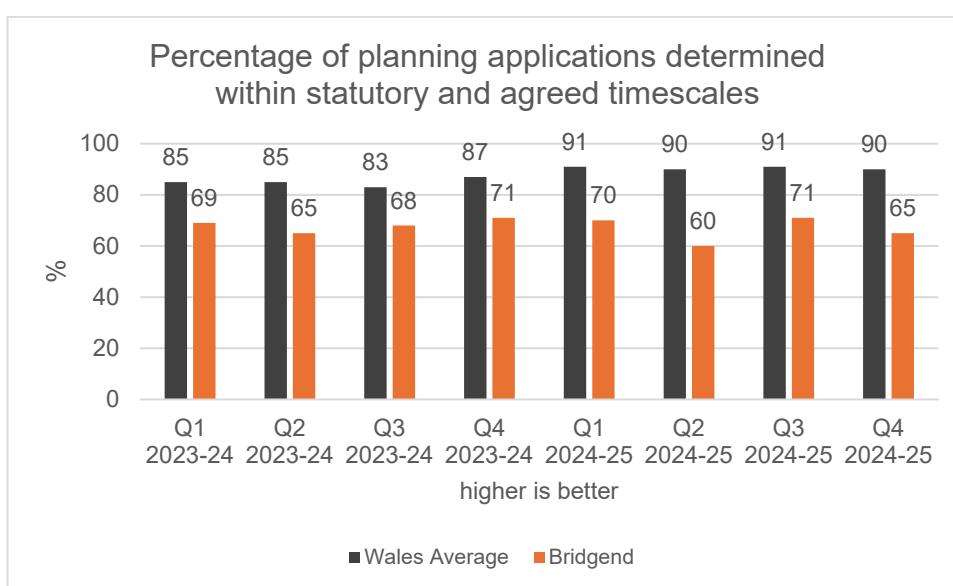
- 25 There is limited awareness of the service's performance. Every quarter, the service sends the Welsh Government its performance for several national indicators.² However, the service does not analyse this data nor is there oversight outside of the service to understand its performance.
- 26 We consistently heard the narrative that the service focuses on making the right decisions rather than the timeliness of making decisions. We were told the service is underperforming on timeliness of decision making, however, not all the performance data supports this.
- 27 There are two main national indicators set by the Welsh Government for monitoring the timeliness of decision making:

² [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#)

- percentage of planning applications determined in statutory and agreed timescales; and
- the average time taken to determine all applications in days.

28 As shown in **Exhibit 1**, for the two-year period between April 2023 to March 2025, the service consistently performed well below the Wales average for the percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales.

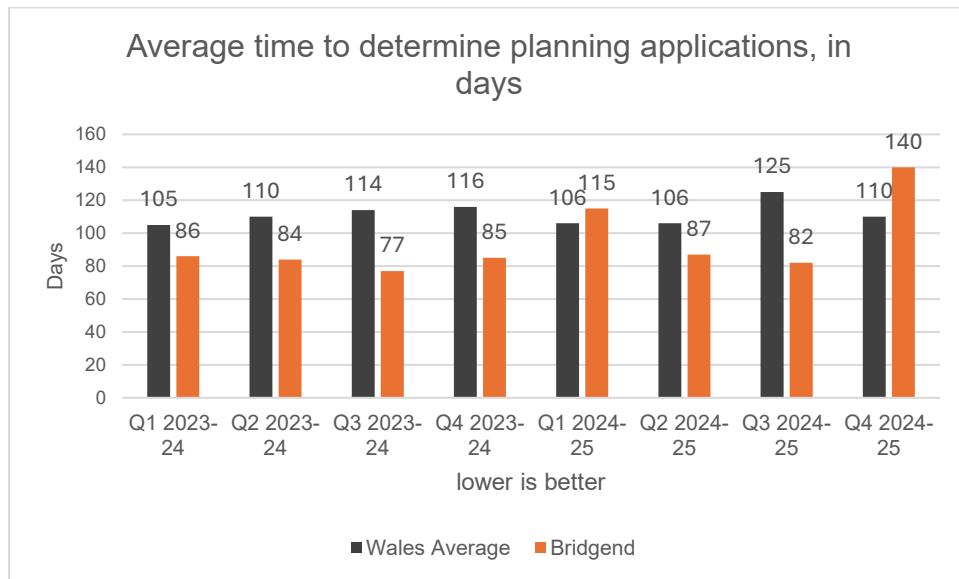
Exhibit 1: percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales



Source: Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#), July 2025

29 However, as shown in **Exhibit 2**, aside from quarter 1 2024-25 (April to June 2024) and quarter 4 2024-25 (January to March 2025), the service performed significantly better than the Wales average over the two-year period for the average time in days to determine planning applications. Therefore, the service is performing better than a lot of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the time taken to make decisions.

Exhibit 2: average time to determine planning applications, in days.



Source: Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#), July 2025

30 We found limited evidence of any public committee receiving information on the service's performance, risks, and activity in at least the last two years. As a result, there is insufficient awareness, oversight and scrutiny of the service even though it is an essential enabler for the delivery of the Council's ambitions.

The Council has comprehensive arrangements supporting its Development Control committee

31 The Council has a comprehensive Planning Code of Practice which guides members on the Development Control Committee procedures and arrangements. It last reviewed this document in May 2022, and is in the process of reviewing it again to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

32 Development Control Committee members receive regular support to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, and changes to planning policies. There is a good induction into the Committee and the service holds regular briefings and training for all members. This constant support can help all members understand the role of a committee member, the role and purpose of the committee as well as changes to local and national planning policies.

Recommendations

R1 Resource management

The Council should demonstrate it understands the resource requirements of the Planning and Development service based on its demands and capacity to help inform resourcing decisions. **(Paragraph 16)**

R2 Risk management

The Council should ensure the service identifies, manages, and monitors its risks to help the Council understand how service risks may impact delivery of the service's responsibilities and the Council's priorities set out in its Corporate Plan. **(Paragraph 21)**

R3 Service planning arrangements

The Council should comply with its Performance Management Framework and ensure the Planning and Development service has a service plan. **(Paragraph 22)**

R4 Performance monitoring and reporting

The Council should ensure it manages, monitors, and reports the activity and performance of the Planning and Development Service. This should be supported with up-to-date performance information to help improve the Council's understanding of the service's performance. **(Paragraph 31)**

Appendices

1 About our work

Scope of the audit

This audit focussed on the Development Control team and the Strategic Planning Policy Team in the Council's Planning and Development Service.

We looked at:

- whether the Council can demonstrate the service is a key enabler to support delivery of its well-being objectives;
- the planning and management of the resourcing of the service;
- whether there are clear roles and responsibilities in the service; and
- whether the Council manages the performance of the service.

We note the service's performance (**Appendix 2**) but did not examine the reasons for its performance or make judgements on it.

We did not look at the decisions of individual planning applications.

We undertook this audit between July and August 2025.

Audit questions and criteria

Questions

This audit sought to answer the following questions:

- Can the Council demonstrate the Planning and Development Service is a key enabler to support delivery of its well-being objectives?
- Does the Council have arrangements to plan and manage the resources of its Planning and Development Service?
- Does the Planning and Development Service have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to underpin operational delivery?

- Does the Council manage the performance of the Planning and Development Service?

Criteria

We assessed whether:

- the Council is clear on the role and function of the service;
- the Council has aims and objectives for the service;
- it is clear how the service contributes towards delivering the Council's priorities;
- officers from the service attend corporate or strategic groups for Council major developments and are well connected to other Council services to provide support and advice;
- the service has a business plan (or equivalent);
- the Council understands the service's risks, challenges, resource (finance and staff) requirements including demand and capacity;
- the Council has assessed its capacity and resource needs to deliver its commitments in its current Local Development Plan 2018-2033 and next iteration of this Plan;
- the Council has committee procedural arrangements for its Development Control Committee and regularly reviews these;
- the Development Control Committee members and the staff in the service staff receive appropriate induction, training and support;
- the Council has arrangements for the reporting and scrutinising of the service's performance;
- the Council can demonstrate how it responds to service challenges and opportunities; and
- the Council benchmarks the performance of the service to compare it to other planning services.

The development of the audit questions and criteria has been informed by our cumulative knowledge of our reviews at other Local Planning Authorities.

Methods

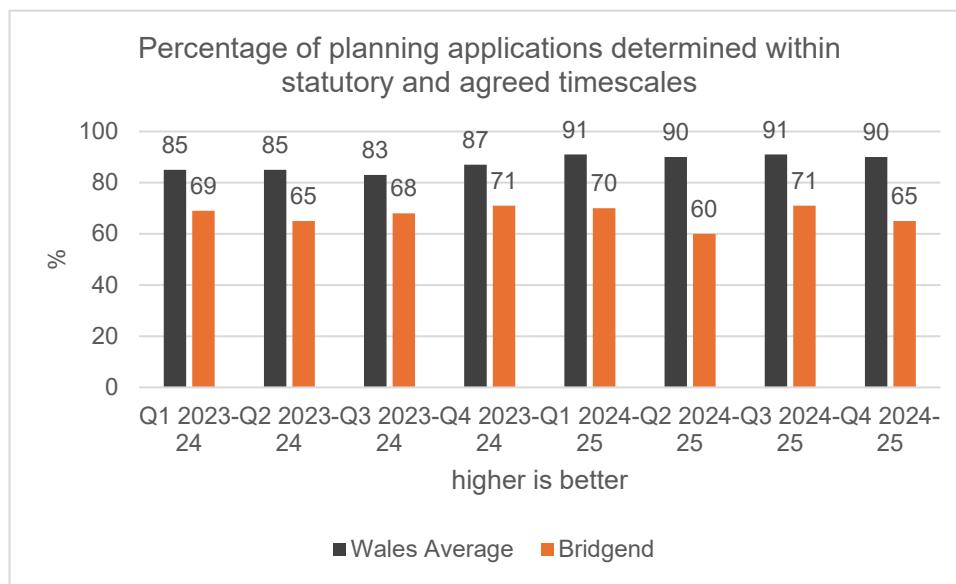
We read documents, watched Development Control Committee meetings, and interviewed officers and members.

2 Planning and Development Service Performance

Every quarter, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) report performance data to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government publicly reports three performance indicators. Publication of this information allows for comparisons of the performance of the service. We reviewed the data published by the Welsh Government from the period April 2023 to March 2025. At the time of this audit, the Welsh Government had not published performance data from April 2025 onwards.

Below is the performance of the service compared to the other LPAs.

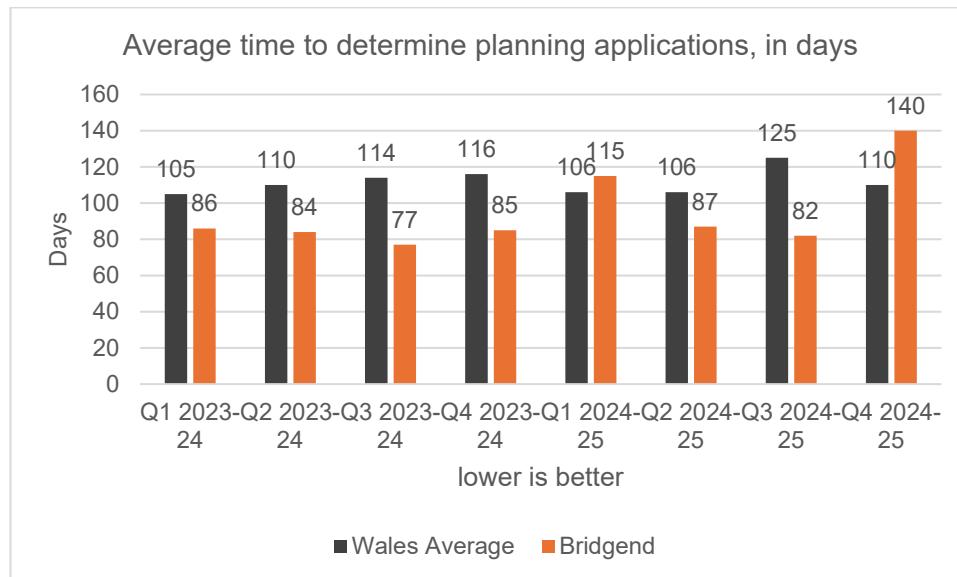
Exhibit 1: percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales



Source: Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#), July 2025

For the two-year period between April 2023 to March 2025, the service consistently performed well below the Wales average for the percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales.

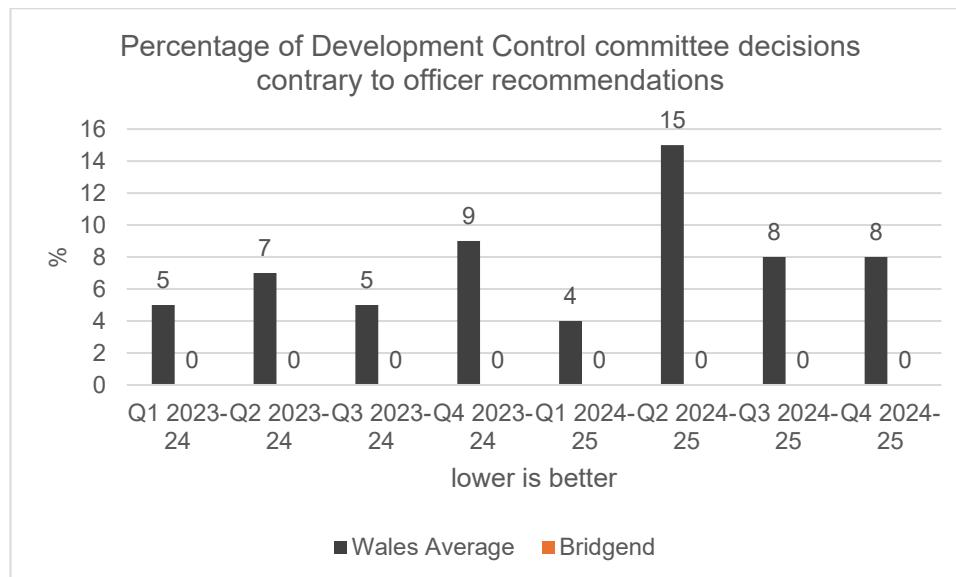
Exhibit 2: average time to determine planning applications, in days



Source: Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#), July 2025

Aside from quarter 1 2024-25 (April to June 2024) and quarter 4 2024-25 (January to March 2025), the service performed significantly better than the Wales average over the two-year period for the average time in days to determine planning applications.

Exhibit 3: percentage of Planning Committee decisions contrary to officer recommendations

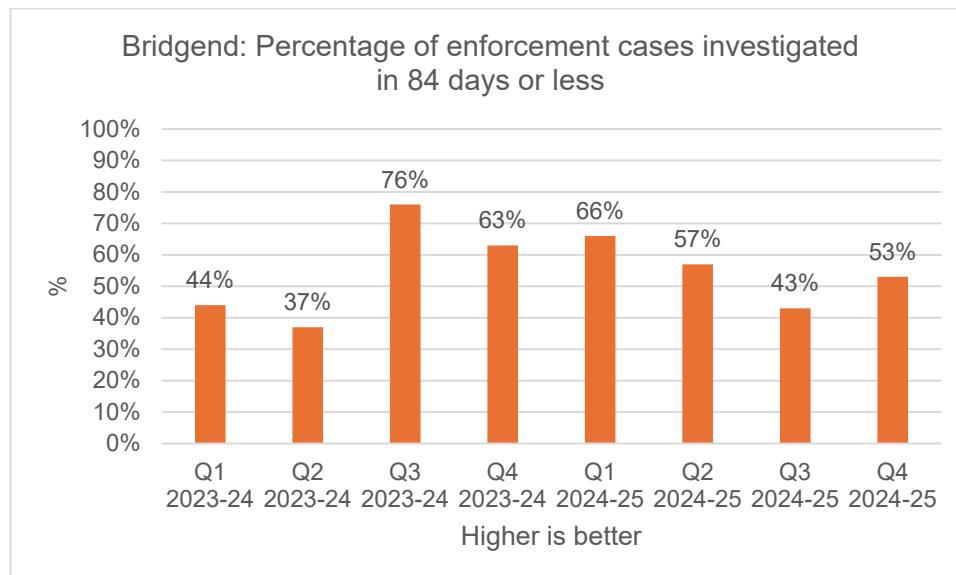


Source: Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys | GOV.WALES](#), July 2025

For the two-year period between April 2023 to March 2025, the Development Control committee did not make any decisions contrary to officer recommendations.

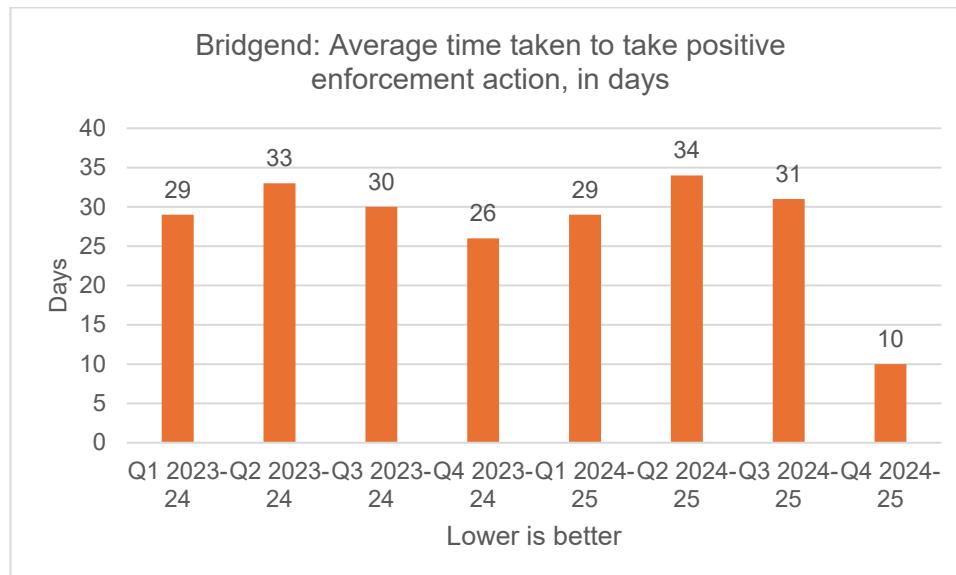
We also reviewed the Council's quarterly performance returns to the Welsh Government for the period April 2023 to March 2025. While the service reports this information to the Welsh Government, the Welsh Government does not publicly report this information. Therefore, we are unable to present comparable performance information for **Exhibits 4 to 6** with other LPAs.

Exhibit 4: percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days or less

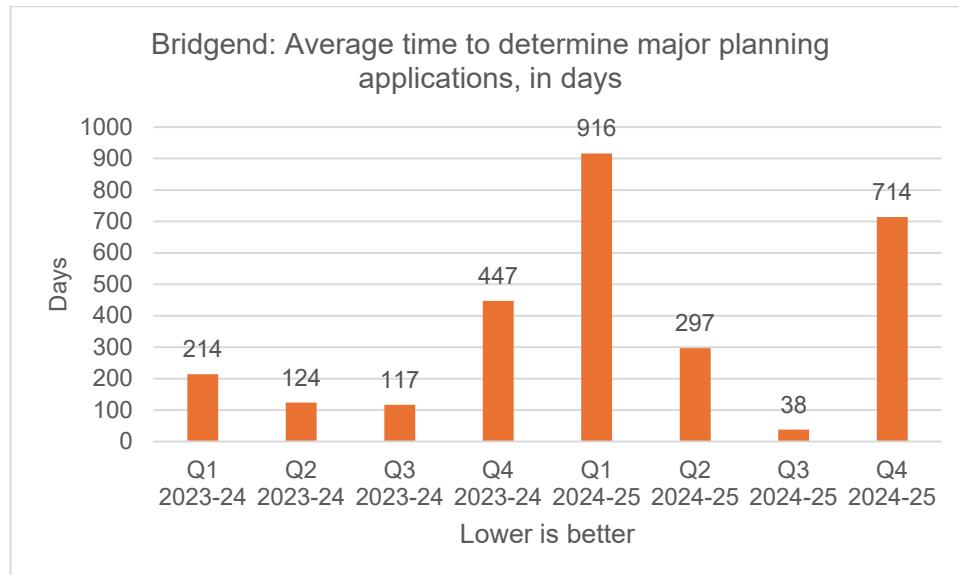


Source: Bridgend County Borough Council, **Development Management Quarterly Surveys**

Exhibit 5: average time taken to take positive enforcement action, in days



Source: Bridgend County Borough Council, **Development Management Quarterly Surveys**

Exhibit 6: average time to determine major planning applications, in days

Source: Bridgend County Borough Council, **Development Management Quarterly Surveys**

3 Service Plan benefits

There are several advantages to having a service plan. It can:

- reflect the range of the service's activity and contributions to the Council;
- help the Director and Cabinet Member identify actions and performance measures that support the Communities Business Plan and corporate priorities;
- state the service's performance aspirations;
- include the service's improvement actions;
- include key challenges, priorities and actions;
- identify service risks and mitigating actions;
- provide a structure for an induction into the service;
- inform future staffing resource needs; and
- provide a structure for performance monitoring and reporting.

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Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

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Management response form



Audit Wales use only	
Audited body	Bridgend County Borough Council
Audit name	Planning and Development service
Issue date	November 2025

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
R1	<p>Resource management</p> <p>The Council should demonstrate it understands the resource requirements of the Planning and Development service based on its demands and capacity to help inform resourcing decisions.</p>	<p>A Ear Marked Reservice fund (EMR) is proposed to provide a short term resourcing solution to allow recruitment of vacant posts and develop a revised structure including additional back office and technical roles to support the planning function and free up other officers.</p>	<p>Mid-January 2026 for EMR Qtr 4 25/26 for equalisation fund and agree fee targets for 26/27</p>	<p>Group Manager Planning & Development Services in association with Finance Team</p>	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
		<p>Introduce an equalisation fund to ensure that any income surplus is ring fenced to the Planning & Development Service.</p> <p>Model fee income and agree targets to establish a long-term funding model for the service</p> <p>The service will also be supported to maximise its use of resources through business process reengineering and through the emerging use of AI.</p>			
R2	<p>Risk management The Council should ensure the service identifies, manages, and</p>	Set up and maintain a service risk register outlining current and predicted work streams together with resource	January – March 2026	Group Manager Planning &	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
	monitors its risks to help the Council understand how service risks may impact delivery of the service's responsibilities and the Council's priorities set out in its Corporate Plan.	<p>requirements cross refer to the Council's wider aims.</p> <p>The risk register will form part of a wider service plan (see below) to be updated annually and reported to the Development Control Committee and Corporate Management Board to ensure that the risks are identified and shared with senior management, members and other services.</p>		Development Services	
R3	<p>Service planning arrangements</p> <p>The Council should comply with its Performance Management Framework and ensure the</p>	A Service Plan will be developed outlining the functions, responsibilities, aims and targets for the Service. The plan will also incorporate a risk register	January – March 2026	Group Manager Planning & Development Services	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
	Planning and Development service has a service plan.	and will be informed by an annual self-evaluation.			
R4	<p>Performance monitoring and reporting</p> <p>The Council should ensure it manages, monitors, and reports the activity and performance of the Planning and Development Service. This should be supported with up-to-date performance information to help improve the Council's understanding of the service's performance.</p>	<p>Re-introduce the planning performance framework and report annually to the Development Control Committee. The report will be prepared alongside the RLDP Annual Monitoring Report and Annual Performance Report.</p> <p>The report will include statistical data as well as commentary and updates on the risk register and targets set in the Service Plan</p>	Report to be compiled and complete by Autumn 2026	Group Manager Planning & Development Services	

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TRAINING LOG

All training sessions will be held in the Council Chamber but can also be accessed remotely via Microsoft Teams.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>
Education SPG briefing	5 February 2026 at 12.30pm
Tree Policy - Green infrastructure	To be arranged.

(Members are reminded that the Planning Code of Practice, at paragraph 3.4, advises that you should attend a minimum of 75% of the training arranged).

Recommendation:

That the report of the Corporate Director Communities be noted.

**JANINE NIGHTINGALE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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