

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

1 FEBRUARY 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

DEPARTURE FROM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PLANNING APPLICATION P/16/939/FUL - CONSTRUCT A SINGLE STOREY CAFE BUILDING WITH ANCILLARY SPACES FOR USE BY THE SOUTH WALES POLICE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 19th January, 2017, the Development Control Committee considered planning application reference P/16/939/FUL, which represented a departure from the Local Development Plan. The scheme related to the construction of a single storey cafe building with ancillary spaces for use by the South Wales Police.
- 1.2 The proposed building is to be centrally located within the Police Headquarters site, to the north-west of a new entrance block/headquarters building, to the north of the security lodge and to the south east of the “Ty Coffi” building and police operations and support offices which are due to be demolished.
- 1.3 The application site forms part of a wider residential allocation in the Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area for approximately 138 units (including 28 Affordable Housing Units) under Policy COM1 (5) of the Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013).
- 1.4 The Development Control Committee resolved not to refuse planning permission as the development forms part of the Police rationalisation strategy to invest in their Headquarters site at Cowbridge Road which will allow the early release of their land at Waterton Cross as part of the wider Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area. As such the application is referred to Council which is requested to approve the application subject to conditions.
- 1.5 A copy of the Development Control Committee report is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The delivery of the County Borough Council’s planning functions has direct links to two of the three corporate priorities as outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2020, namely Supporting a Successful Economy and Smarter Use of Resources.

3. Background

- 3.1 The application relates to the construction of a single storey replacement café facility on previously developed land within the South Wales Police Headquarters (HQ) site.

- 3.2 The proposed building is located within an allocated site in the Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area for approximately 138 residential units under Policy COM1 (5) of the Local Development Plan. South Wales Police are currently undertaking a large-scale rationalisation programme of their existing facilities and assets and, up until recently, their original rationalisation proposals involved the release of the entire northern part of their existing HQ facilities for alternative development.
- 3.3 South Wales Police (SWP), through their agent, have confirmed that they have re-assessed their assets as part of their ongoing rationalisation programme. They now propose to pursue an alternative strategy which entails carrying on with their programme of refurbishment and improvement works and retaining the whole of their existing HQ site at Cowbridge Road.
- 3.4 On the basis that the SWP rationalisation strategy has evolved since the adoption of the LDP in 2013, the fact that they have invested in the HQ site and their asset plan going forward is now to consolidate their activities and facilities at their existing site at Cowbridge Road, there is now no realistic prospect of the delivery of housing under Policy COM1(5) on this site.
- 3.5 Notwithstanding the loss of the housing allocation, the investment in the site and its comprehensive redevelopment is welcomed as the applicant has made a firm commitment to consolidate and retain its operations within the County Borough. The strategy will ensure that a highly prestigious HQ facility will be retained within Bridgend, thereby retaining and creating highly skilled employment opportunities as well as providing a valuable social and community service to the residents and communities of Bridgend.
- 3.6 Furthermore, the new facilities at the Cowbridge Road site (including the cafeteria) will facilitate an earlier than previously anticipated release of SWP's land holding assets at Waterton Cross, which also forms part of the larger mixed use allocation under Policy PLA3(4) Parc Afon Ewenni - including the delivery of an estimated 650 new dwellings. The concentration of the facilities at SWP's HQ at Cowbridge Road will now allow the entire Waterton Cross site to be released in a timely manner within the LDP plan period (2013-2021).
- 3.7 The development is, therefore, broadly in line with the LDP's Regeneration-Led Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policy SP1 of the LDP which aims to maximise regeneration benefits and particularly focus development within Strategic Regeneration Growth Areas. The current and wider proposals for the HQ site and the Waterton Cross site are inextricably linked and both are located within the Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area. The current proposal, as part of a wider strategy by SWP, is therefore maximising the regeneration benefits of both sites.
- 3.8 Given the wider regeneration, economic and social and community considerations as outlined above, there are no overriding objections to this proposal from a development planning perspective. Additionally, as the housing allocation under Policy COM1(5) is wholly within the demise of SWP's land holding at their Headquarters site, Cowbridge Road, the proposed rationalisation of their facilities and operations from Waterton Cross will not prejudice any third party land and future developments. In fact, it is expected that this change in direction will allow land in

and around the Waterton Cross site to be brought forward for development sooner than expected.

- 3.9 On this basis BCBC as the Local Planning Authority can grant permission for development which does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated under the provisions of Article 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 subject to ratification by Council.
- 3.10 Therefore, as the application lies within the allocated housing site as defined in the LDP, this application is required to be assessed as a departure to the LDP and, once considered by the Development Control Committee, referred to Council for approval.

4. Current Situation

- 4.1 The application site is located within an allocated site in the Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area for approximately 138 residential units under Policy COM1 (5) of the LDP. The LDP was adopted on 18th September 2013 and is a guide for development in the County Borough up to 2021.
- 4.2 Paragraph 3.1.3 of Planning Policy Wales (9th Edition November, 2016) states that "... applications for planning permission or for the renewal of planning permission, should be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise." Paragraph 3.1.5 goes on to advise that "the local planning authority should have good reasons if it approves a development which is a departure from the approved or adopted development plan or is contrary to the Welsh Government's stated planning policies, the advice of a statutory consultee or the written advice of its officers, and those reasons should be recorded in the Committee's minutes."

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 Whilst the application does not accord with the policies of the Bridgend Local Development Plan, South Wales Police have confirmed that they are not going to pursue the release of this land for residential development and the proposal forms part of the rationalisation strategy to concentrate their facilities and operations at their Headquarters, Cowbridge Road. Furthermore, the development does not represent a precedent and will not compromise the integrity of the development plan.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

- 6.1 A screening for Equality Impact has been undertaken and no negative issues have been identified.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That if Council is minded not to refuse the development then the Corporate Director Communities be given delegated powers to issue a decision notice in respect of this

proposal to include the standard 5 year time limit for implementation and the following conditions:

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

0812/91 Rev A
0812/100 Rev H
0812/120 Rev G

Reason: To avoid doubt and confusion as to the nature and extent of the approved development.

2. No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the comprehensive and integrated drainage of the site, showing how foul, road and roof/yard water will be dealt with, including future maintenance requirements, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the approved scheme must be implemented prior to beneficial use.

Reason: To ensure the effective drainage facilities are provided for the proposed development and that flood risk is not increased.

3. The approved use shall not commence until an adequate grease trap has been fitted in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the grease trap shall be maintained so as to prevent grease entering the public sewerage system.

Reason: To protect the integrity of the public sewerage system and ensure the free flow of sewerage.

4. Prior to the development being brought into beneficial use details of the extraction system to be installed, including odour abatement and noise levels generated by the external unit (sound power/pressure levels), a vertical section plan indicating the position and height of final openings of the exhaust ducts and details of an odour management plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details as agreed shall be implemented within 1 month of agreement and thereafter the equipment shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed programme and retained for the duration of the use.

Reason: To ensure that the amenities of adjoining and nearby occupiers are not prejudiced.

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Corporate Director Communities
1st February, 2017

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Background documents

Appendix 1: Development Control Committee Report