



## PLANNING COMMITTEE – 11TH MARCH 2015

**SUBJECT: SITE VISIT - CODE NO. 14/0818/FULL - FORMER BARGOED FIRE STATION, WILLIAM STREET, GILFACH, BARGOED, CF81 8ND**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

---

PRESENT:

Councillor W. H. David - Vice Chair

Councillors H. Davies, Mrs J. Gale, R. Gough and A. Lewis

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, L. Gardiner, A.G. Higgs, J. Bevan, N. George and Mrs J. Summers.
2. The Principal Solicitor confirmed that the Local Ward Members following advice from the Monitoring Officer had made the following declarations of interest and as such were not present at the site meeting.

Councillor H. Andrews declared an interest in that he lives in very close proximity to the proposed development, his home address would be directly affected by it.

Councillor D.G. Carter declared an interest in that he is on the same School Governing Body as two of the main objectors to the application.

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in that he is currently the Chairman of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Services, the SWFRS owns the land that will be sold to the applicant should planning permission be granted.

Councillor Mrs D. Price declared an interest as she is on the same School Governing Body as the main objectors to the application.

3. The Planning Committee deferred consideration of this application on 11th February 2015 for a site visit. Members and Officers met on site on Wednesday, 25th February 2015.
4. Details of the application to demolish the existing fire station and construct 8 No. 2-bedroom affordable dwellings (C3), 6 No. 1-bedroom affordable apartments (C3) and construct residential block (C2) comprising 8 apartments and associated office space to provide accommodation and support for independent living and mental health well-being, Former Bargoed Fire Station, William Street, Gilfach, Bargoed, CF81 8ND were noted.
5. Those present viewed the site and examined the plans submitted with the application to fully appreciate the proposals. The dimensions and position of the different types of accommodation were confirmed and would be made up of two distinct elements, general needs affordable housing and an independent living and mental health facility of 8 units.

Officers confirmed that this facility would be managed by Gofal, one of Wales' leading mental health charities, with over 22 years experience in managing a range of supported housing schemes and support services. It was noted that this would be a sister scheme to Ty Osborne in Caerphilly which has been operational since 2013 and successfully provides similar accommodation. The Principal Planning Officer encouraged Members and Residents to contact Gofal with any queries or concerns with regard to the proposed development or the scheme at Ty Osborne.

6. Members were asked to note that the ridge height of the 3-story block of flats at the rear of the site had been lowered so that the top floor becomes a room within the roof with velux windows to the rear in order to protect the privacy of residents in Hillside Park. The existing retaining wall also to the rear of the development would remain and the same high quality finish would apply to both the supported living accommodation and the affordable housing element of the proposed development. Privacy distances between the proposed development and existing dwellings meet the minimum distance criteria and 23 off road car parking spaces would be provided.
7. Members raised concerns in relation to the construction process and the impact this would have on residents in terms of deliveries to the site, operational vehicle movements and the dust and noise generated during construction. Officers confirmed that a traffic management plan, hours of operation and noise and dust mitigation would be suitable to condition and agreed to provide details at the next Planning Committee meeting.
8. Officers confirmed that following advertisement to 35 neighbouring properties, advertisement in the press and a site notice being posted, 8 letters and emails of objection and a petition had been received. Details of the objections are within the Officer's original report.
9. The initial planning report concluded that having given due regard to relevant planning policy and the comments from consultees and objectors, the application is considered to be acceptable and Officers recommended that permission be granted.
10. A copy of the report submitted to the Planning Committee on 11th February 2015 is attached. Members are now invited to determine the application.

Author: E. Sullivan, Democratic Services Officer, Ext. 4420  
Consultees: T. Stephens, Development Control Manager  
M. Davies, Principal Planning Officer  
M. Noakes, Senior Engineer (Highway Development Control)  
G. Mumford, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
J. Rogers, Principal Solicitor

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Report submitted to Planning Committee on 11th February 2015

Code No. and Date Received	Name and Address of Applicant	Description and Location of Proposed Development
14/0818/FULL 10.12.2014	United Welsh Housing Association C/O LRM Planning Mr M Rees Sophia House 28 Cathedral Road Cardiff CF11 9LJ	Demolish the existing fire station and construct 8 No. 2-bedroom affordable dwellings (C3), 6 No. 1-bedroom affordable apartments (C3) and construct a residential block (C2) comprising 8 apartments and associated office space to provide accommodation and support for independent living and mental health well being Former Bargoed Fire Station William Street Gilfach Bargoed CF81 8ND

**APPLICATION TYPE:** Full Application

#### SITE AND DEVELOPMENT

Location: Former Bargoed Fire Station, William Street, Bargoed. The site is located within the settlement boundary. In terms of surrounding context and boundaries, directly to the north is an access lane separating the site from the rear boundary of the terraced residential properties along Alfred Street. Further to the north lies the built up residential development and Bargoed Town Centre beyond. To the east of the site lies William Street and the backs of residential properties / rear access lane which are immediately adjacent to the site. The existing vehicular access to the site also lies to the east. In the immediate surrounding area lies 'Gilfach House' an office development occupied by Caerphilly County Borough Council. 'Gilfach House' is a combination of 1 and 2 storey building. To the southwest, at the end of William Street, is an enclosed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) comprising of goals and hoops. There is also a combination of converted and purpose built office/employment space currently utilised by PC Diagnostics and PC Mobility Services to the east and south east of the site at William Street. Further to the east lies Park Place, which forms the main route into Bargoed, which is set at a lower level than the site. Directly to the south of the site is a large grassed amenity area/informal open space called Church Field and to the west, set at a higher level, are the rear boundaries of detached/semi-detached properties along Hillside Park.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

Site description: The site is currently occupied by the redundant Bargoed Fire Station, hard standings, grassed area and fire tower. Boundary treatments consist of post and wire fencing. An existing retaining wall and grassed embankment run around the rear of the building to accommodate the difference in levels in this location. There are a few trees on the site namely, one Sycamore located on the eastern boundary of the site together with 6 Cherry trees located in the grassed area to the front of the fire station building near the eastern boundary. A vehicular lay-by exists to the front of the site.

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, a Planning statement, a Transport Note, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Tree Survey, and a copy of the details of the Exhibition Boards displayed at the public exhibition held on the 27 October 2014 by UWHA.

Development: Full planning permission is sought in respect of the demolition of the existing fire station and construct 8 No. 2 bedroom affordable dwellings (C3), 6 No. 1 bedroom affordable apartments (C3) and construct a residential block (C2) comprising 8 apartments and associated office space to provide accommodation and support for independent living and mental health well being. The Use Classes Order 1987 defines class C2 as residential institutions, and class C3 as dwellinghouses.

The Planning statement submitted with the application describes the development as follows: -

There are two distinct elements of the type of accommodation to be provided:

- General needs (C3) affordable housing, which will be open to local people that are presently on the local waiting list for housing. This element will comprise 8 no. 2 bedroom houses and 6 no. 1 bedroom apartments that will be managed by United Welsh Housing Association.
  
- Accommodation for independent living and mental health well being (C2) providing 8 units and a staff office. This will be managed by Gofal, one of Wales' leading mental health charities, with over 22 years of experience in managing a range of supported housing schemes and support services across Wales.

The scheme follows on from Ty Osborne in Caerphilly, which has been operational since 2013 and successfully provides similar accommodation. The objective is to provide high quality accommodation and support for people in need, promoting and developing independence and the skills to enable them to move on into full independent living.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

The planning application has been submitted in direct response to the significant level of need for affordable housing in the local area and the need to provide supported living accommodation both of which are identified as a priority by the Welsh Government.

Dimensions: House type A: 5.8m in width x 8.6m in depth x 8.35m high. The internal layout comprises a living room, kitchen/diner and wc/shower on the ground floor and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor.

House type B: 8.7m in width x 5.8m in depth x 7.7m in height. The internal layout comprises a living room, kitchen/diner and wc/shower on the ground floor and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor.

Two-storey apartment type C: 5.4m in width x 12.1m in depth x 9.5m in height. The internal layout of each flat comprises a lounge/kitchen/diner, bedroom and bathroom.

Two storey apartments type D: 5.7m in width x 11.1m in depth x 9.3m in height. The internal layout of each flat comprises a lounge/kitchen/diner, bedroom and bathroom.

Three-storey, C2 supported block: maximum footprint of 25m in width x 8.3m in depth x 10.3m in height. Each flat comprises a lounge/kitchen/dining room, bedroom and bathroom. The ground floor will also accommodate an office, staff room and communal room/kitchen with carers/staff flat.

Materials: Dark grey fibre cement tiles in the roof, dark grey/black pvc rainwater goods, a mix of timber effect cladding, reconstituted stone walling and off-white smooth render in the walls, grey upvc casement windows, composite front entrance doors with glazed panels and GRP door canopies.

Ancillary development, e.g. parking: 23 car parking spaces.

## PLANNING HISTORY

No previous planning history.

## POLICY

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Site Allocation: Policy SP5 - within the settlement boundary.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

Policies: Strategic Policies

SP1 - Development Strategy in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, SP6 - Place Making, SP7 - Planning Obligations, SP21 - Parking Standards

Countywide Policies

CW1 - Sustainable transport, accessibility and social inclusion, CW2 - Amenity, CW3 - Design considerations - Highways, CW11 - Affordable Housing, CW15 - General locational constraints, CW18 - Locational constraints - Housing for People in Need of Care, supplementary planning guidance contained in LDP1 - Affordable Housing Obligations, LDP5 - Parking Standards, LDP6 - Building Better Places to Live, LDP7 - Householder Development,

NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales, 7th edition July 2014, TAN 5 - Nature conservation and Planning, TAN 12 - Design, TAN 18 - Transport, and Welsh Government's Manual for Streets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Did the application have to be screened for an EIA? No.

Was an EIA required? Not applicable.

COAL MINING LEGACY

Is the site within an area where there are mining legacy issues? Not an issue in respect of this planning application.

CONSULTATION

Head Of Public Protection - No objection subject to standard contamination conditions.

CCBC Housing Enabling Officer - Confirms the development would comply with supplementary planning guidance on affordable housing. However, should the Housing Association sell on the site, the Council would require 10% affordable housing provision. This would equate to 2 units. The units would need to be transferred to the nominated Housing Association, UWHA at a transfer price of £44,849.

Senior Engineer (Land Drainage) - Requests a condition is attached to any consent requiring comprehensive proposals showing how surface water and land drainage flows from the site will be dealt with. He provides advice to be conveyed to the developer.

Outdoor Leisure Development Officer - No objection.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

Head Of Public Services - The Authority does provide kerbside collections for refuse, recycling and green waste, with the onus on the developer to provide suitable off road storage near the proposed public highway for one 240L refuse bin, one 240L recycling bin and one food caddy per property. In relation to the flats the compound needs to be large enough to accommodate the bins and should be near or open onto the proposed adopted highway as the tenants are responsible for putting their bins out for collection.

Transportation Engineering Manager - Has no objection to the development subject to conditions being attached to any consent relating to highway and parking provision and any retaining walls.

Dwr Cymru - Provides advice to be conveyed to the developer in respect of foul water and surface water discharges together with land drainage run-off.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer - Has no objection to the development.

Wales & West Utilities - Has no objection to the development but confirm the existence of their apparatus within the vicinity of the site and provide advice to be conveyed to the developer in respect of the same.

Countryside And Landscape Services - In terms of landscaping there is no objection to the principle of the residential development of the site, however the scheme may be improved by the introduction of soft landscaping and a change in the use of materials in respect of hard landscaping. The Council's Ecologist has considered the ecological appraisal submitted and requested conditions accordingly.

Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees) - Recommends the applicant incorporates the management recommendations of the tree survey (dated 02/10/14, by Treescene Arboricultural Consultants & Contractors) into the overall site management plan. That the applicant submits a detailed landscaping plan that will include details of planting plans (including schedules of plant species, sizes, numbers, and locations; and further details of planting - including a sustainable tree pit design within a hard standing setting, staking, mulching, protection, and after care methods) and an implementation programme for those works, and their monitoring by suitably qualified agents to ensure their successful establishment.

Social Services (Mental Health / Adult Services) - No objection. Social Services are in full support of this application and would confirm the need for this type of accommodation for people with mental health difficulties in this area. The development of this type of accommodation would support the recommendation of the Wales Audit Office Report which identified a shortage of suitable accommodation to meet this level of need.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Extent of advertisement: The application has been advertised in the press, on site and 35 neighbouring properties have been consulted.

Response: Eight letters and e-mails have been received and the objections are summarised below.

- misinformed by UWHA at the public exhibition held on the 27th October 2014 regarding the proposed use of the site
- concern that there were so many Council employees at the public exhibition, which gave the impression the planning application was a done deal
- not everyone has been informed of the application
- locally elected representatives have turned their back on the community, they either belong to Planning Committee, or Fire Brigade committee, which give them the ideal excuse to opt out or just refuse to get involved with any dialogue
- there are already several establishments within the locality that provide facilities for people with mental health problems at:-
  - Hillside Park;
  - Cardiff Road;
  - Gilfach Street;
  - Aeron Place,which are not supervised 24 hours a day, causing anti-social behaviour problems
- disturbances, drinking, setting bins on fire.
- the latest leaflet distributed from UWHA details some of the possible mental health problems that may be catered for. There is no guarantee that this will be the case in future and far more serious cases may be involved. People in Gilfach are only too aware of the problems experienced with the facility in Argoed. They also have the memory of the stabbing that happened in Gilfach Park several years ago.
- no details of hours of supervision have been given.
- concern regarding the tenure of the supported care unit, its close proximity to the MUGA in William Street and a local scout hall (adjacent to Park Place and Victoria Place) and the safety of local children.
- concern that it may be used for people who are not local.
- questions the praise given that other similar units are successful whereas ordinary people have a more critical view.
- concern over the type of boundary fence to be erected with Hillside Park and the protection it will afford to existing occupiers from inappropriate behaviour.
- the fire station ground and facilities should belong to the community either providing a safe place for children to play or to be used by the community for community activities or to re-house the current over-populated Welsh Medium School.

Cont'd....



Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- the design is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- the existing highway network is not adequate to serve the development and would lead to highway safety implications.
- the proposed tenure would discourage young families from locating in the area.
- loss of amenity.
- devaluation of properties.
- concern over the tenure of the accommodation particularly regarding the reference to Gofal working closely with Parc Prison, Bridgend.

Summary of observations:

### SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT

What is the likely effect of the determination of this application on the need for the Local Planning Authority to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area?  
Heddlu Gwent Police has raised no objection to the development.

### EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

Does the development affect any protected wildlife species? No.

The Bat Survey submitted was undertaken in October 2014 by Wildwood Ecology. A daytime initial assessment was undertaken on the above building by a competent ecologist at an appropriate time of year. No evidence of bats was found to suggest that bats are currently or have in the past used the building in any way. There was also no usage of the building by birds.

The building under survey has very few potential entry points for both bats and birds and all places where access was possible were checked for signs of bat use. However, none were found. Therefore, no further survey work is necessary and there is no reason to postpone the demolition of the building. However, since parts of the buildings were considered to be suitable for both bats and birds, their presence cannot entirely be ruled out. Therefore it is considered appropriate to provide a bat and bird advisory note on any planning permission.

As no bats were found to be using the site, the demolition and re-development of the site will not have a negative impact on the local bat population and works may proceed without a Welsh Government Derogation Licence.

The report states that the onsite habitats provide some areas that could suit basking reptile species, including slow-worms; however, there were no habitats that could offer accessible refugia to the reptiles. In this instance a reptile survey will not be required,

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

due to the size of the site. However, it is presumed that reptiles are present on site and in this respect a reptile mitigation statement is considered appropriate and may be attached as a condition to any permission granted.

Due to the above development site being located within close proximity to excellent bat and bird foraging habitat, and the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) planning data search showing records for bats and breeding birds within close proximity to the proposed development, the developer will be requested to make bat roosting and bird nesting provision within the new properties as a biodiversity enhancement. This may also be conditioned.

The applicant submitted a Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan (TCP). The survey is comprehensive and appropriate. It details the assessment of 7 trees within potential influencing range of the proposed development (6 trees - 5 Cherries and 1 Sycamore - are on-site, and 1 tree "T7" Oak - is off-site at the rear garden of the adjacent William Street property) and assigns to each a BS5837:2012 category rating of either A, B, C, or U.

The survey's preliminary management recommendations suggest that those trees rated "U" should be removed, and those rated "C" should be monitored for health. "T7" - the off-site Oak tree rated "C" in the survey which is to be retained, would have a nominal Root Protection Area (RPA) of 7.2m in radius from its trunk.

It would be appropriate that a new development such as this not retain those trees rated "U" as they will likely only have limited useful life expectancies. In the case of trees T2, T3, T4, and T6, the survey suggests that those trees are in fact unstable in their location, or suffering from dieback, and are therefore potentially quite hazardous. The opportunity should therefore be taken to incorporate a landscaping scheme that will detail the required tree removal and monitoring works (as applicable) by suitably qualified and insured arboricultural contractors or consultants, and includes planting details of new trees of sufficient amenity value and appropriate size/form/species to enhance the development without being unsuitable to the location (and falling foul of post-development pressure to have them removed or inappropriately maintained).

He recommends the applicant incorporate the management recommendations of the tree survey (dated 02/10/14, by Treescene Arboricultural Consultants & Contractors) into the overall site management plan. That the applicant submits a detailed landscaping plan that will include details of planting plans (including schedules of plant species, sizes, numbers, and locations; and further details of planting - including a sustainable tree pit design within a hard standing setting, staking, mulching, protection, and after care methods) and an implementation programme for those works, and their monitoring by suitably qualified agents to ensure their successful establishment.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Is this development Community Infrastructure Levy liable? Yes but the site is within a lower viability area where the charge would be £0.

## ANALYSIS

Policies: The application has been considered in accordance with local plan policies and national planning guidance.

The main issues in respect of the residential development of this site are considered to be the compatibility of the use with surrounding land uses, the effect of the development upon the character of the surrounding area and upon the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, design, and also in terms of highway safety.

Given that the site subject of this application is included within the settlement boundary for Bargoed as identified in the LDP and is also a Brownfield site, it is considered that in policy terms the development of the site would be consistent with Policy SP5 of the LDP i.e. it promotes the full and effective use of urban land and serves to concentrate development within the existing settlement.

Policy SP15 relates to affordable housing and in this respect the provision of 8 two-bedroom houses and 6 one-bedroom flats contributes to the 964 affordable dwellings sought by the Council between 2006 - 2021 in order to contribute to balanced and sustainable communities.

Policy CW18 of the LDP sets out criteria relating to the provision of housing for people in need of an element of care, either through change of use or new development. The proposed supported living accommodation meets the relevant criteria because it is located within the defined settlement boundary and there is safe and easy access to existing community facilities, local shops and services.

General development control considerations are set out in policies SP6 (Place making), CW2 (Amenity) and CW3 (Design consideration: Highways) of the LDP.

Strategic Policy SP6 sets out criteria relating to place making, notably that development should seek an appropriate mix in respect of the role and function of its settlement, seek a high standard of design, seek locations that make the most of sustainable transport and accessibility principles and realises the efficient use of land. The proposed development site lies to the west of the A469 within the settlement area of Bargoed and offers the opportunity to provide housing, which will be close to residential areas and local facilities.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

In terms of the site layout and notwithstanding the details submitted, the scheme may be improved by the introduction of soft landscaping and a variation in terms of the type and colour of the materials in respect of hard landscaping. This aspect of the development has been discussed with the developers. They have indicated their intention to provide variation and colour in terms of the use of materials in the hard landscaping. They also propose the introduction of street trees across the site and planting between car parking spaces, where feasible, in order to soften the development and add to the visual amenity of the area. This may be addressed by attaching an appropriate condition to any consent requiring hard and soft landscaping details to be submitted for consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

The boundaries of the site will comprise a close-boarded wooden fence except along the front of the site facing William Street, which will comprise a 900mm high-reconstituted stone wall. The existing retaining wall to the rear of the site and wrapping around plot 10 will be faced with materials to match the new dwellings. No specific details have been provided but this may be addressed by attaching an appropriate condition to any consent. UWHA have confirmed they will be responsible for the maintenance of boundaries and landscaped areas outside of any plot boundaries. The one-bedroom flats at the entrance to the site are dual aspect, which together with the stone wall provide a more interesting and quality entrance to the site adding to the visual amenity of the area. The site layout also allows a vista into the development and the use of different external materials in the buildings further enhances the visual quality of the development.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale, use, density, and layout and adequate off-street parking and amenity space is provided in respect of each unit. In consideration of policy SP6, referred to above, the proposal is considered acceptable.

Policy CW2 sets out criteria relating to amenity and contains the following criteria: -

- A There is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land.
- B The proposal would not result in over-development of the site and/or its surroundings.
- C The proposed use is compatible with surrounding land-uses and would not constrain the development of neighbouring sites for their identified land-use.
- D Where applicable, the viability of existing neighbouring land uses would not be compromised by virtue of their potential impact upon the amenity of proposed new residential development.

In response to Criterion A, the site layout submitted has evolved following pre-application discussions and a meeting on site with the developers. The original pre-application submission has been amended in terms of the ridge height of the 3-storey

Cont'd...

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

block of apartments at the rear of the site. The scheme now submitted utilises existing ground levels and the roof lowered so that the top floor becomes a room in the roof with velux windows to the rear in order to protect the privacy of residents within this building being overlooked by the occupiers of those dwellings located at Hillside Park. It is noted that the internal layout of the supported living accommodation results in there being a lobby along the majority of the length of the rear building providing access to each flat and in this respect there are only two bedrooms on the second floor which have velux windows, the remaining 5 velux windows serve the second floor lobby. In terms of the look of the scheme, the developer has taken on board the comments of the planning officer and the proposed contemporary design draws on the architecture of the more modern housing at Hillside Park. However, the use of external materials in the final scheme draws from both Hillside Park and the traditional housing at Alfred Street and Park Place. Original concerns over a car-dominated streetscene during the pre-application submission have been addressed to some extent in the current submission. The developer considered the provision of rear parking as suggested but was constrained by the existing site levels, (particularly in relation to plots 1 -7) and the requirement to provide sufficient garden sizes, a turning head at the top of the site and the effective building line. The submitted scheme will introduce a variation of surface finishes throughout the scheme (such as different coloured pavements etc) as well as plenty of planting / greenery to try and break up the parking as much as possible. The design of the buildings will achieve the necessary privacy distances of 21 metres as set out in guidance contained in LDP7 - Householder Developments. It is therefore considered the proposed development does not adversely affect the amenity or privacy of residents of adjoining properties.

With regard to the issue of over-development (i.e. Criterion B), it is not considered the proposal would constitute over-development of the site. The amount of development can be adequately accommodated on the site with a reasonable level of external amenity space/parking provision/bin storage/drying areas/bicycle storage for each dwelling. The requirements of the Head of Public Services regarding kerbside collections for refuse, recycling and green waste has been forwarded to the developer.

Group Manager (Transportation Planning) is satisfied the development can meet highway requirements subject to conditions.

Criterion C seeks to ensure that the proposal does not constrain the authorised neighbouring land uses. In this regard the new use conforms to its mainly residential surroundings and it will not adversely impact on these activities. The requirements of this criterion would not appear to be compromised. However, the proposed supported living accommodation falls within Use Class C2, which as a group includes other uses such as: residential schools and colleges, convalescent and nursing homes, which are uses that are generally accepted as compatible within a predominantly residential

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

neighbourhood but may not be appropriate on this site. Therefore it is appropriate to restrict the grant of any permission to the proposed use and not to any other within the overall use class. This may be addressed by attaching a condition to any consent.

The final Criterion D is linked to the previous one in that it expands the wording to include not only the constraining of neighbouring activities but also their viability to continue due to their impact on the residential amenity of the new properties. Bearing in mind the nature of the surrounding development it is not considered that this will be the case in this instance. The criterion is therefore considered to be satisfied.

In terms of the provision of affordable housing, Policy SP15 of the LDP seeks to deliver through the planning system at least 964 affordable dwellings between 2006 - 2021, in order to contribute to balanced and sustainable communities.

The applicant's submission refers to the Wales Audit Office report, "Together for Mental Health" which sets out the Welsh Government's ambitions for improving mental health well being and their vision for 21st century services.

The Strategy reinforces the need to promote better mental wellbeing among the whole population. It addresses the needs of people, ensuring those vulnerable people in most need receive the appropriate priority. It focuses on how to improve the lives of service users and their families using a recovery and enablement approach.

The strategy requires that "people ... should have all possible support to ensure they live in a safe and secure environment". This is in line with the Welsh Government's overarching aims "to ensure that people have a high-quality, warm, secure and energy-efficient home to live in."

Indeed, the Welsh Government indicates "poor housing or homelessness can contribute to mental health problems, or make an episode of mental ill health more difficult to manage. A good, safe place to live provides an excellent foundation for all other aspects of a mentally healthy life. People who experience mental illness are particularly vulnerable if their housing is insecure."

The strategy requires that a full range of housing solutions with support should be available. Recognition must be given to the need to be close to services, facilities and support in order to stay well and maintain tenancies. The strategy indicates that Local Government housing services, Housing Associations and a number of Third Sector organisations already play a significant role in helping people with mental health needs, delivering a wide range of services and assistance. Some associations have developed specific health and care services for people with mental illness, including facilities dedicated to dementia care. Welsh Government considers that there is scope for them to do more, as not-for-profit organisations that can reinvest in their local communities.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

It is considered that the proposal accords with the policies contained in the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - Adopted November 2010.

With regard to the general thrust of the advice contained in Planning Policy Wales relating to sustainable development going beyond design to include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, it is considered that this proposal puts the needs of people it is to serve at the heart of the process, and seeks to provide for an inclusive design and physically integrated development. This also brings it in line with the advice contained in TAN12: Design.

Policy CW3 sets out criteria in terms of highway design considerations. Whilst objections have been received from local residents in respect of the adequacy of the existing highway network to serve the site, Transportation Engineering Manager has considered this matter and does not feel that the proposed development would be significantly worse than the existing use of the site as a fire station having considered the Technical Transport Note submitted with the application. He also considers the main junction with Park Place will be able to accommodate the development. Adequate off-street parking can be provided within the application site and as such it is not felt that the proposal would lead to parking issues elsewhere in the area. His requirements in respect of the provision of the highway, parking and the construction of any retaining walls referred to above may be addressed by attaching appropriate conditions to any consent.

Policy CW11 of the LDP and supplementary planning guidance contained in LDP1 sets out criteria in respect of affordable housing obligations. The development complies with the Council's supplementary planning guidance LDP1 in terms of the provision of affordable housing but should the Housing Association sell on the site, then 10% affordable housing provision would be required. This would equate to 2 units. The units would need to be transferred to the nominated Housing Association, UWHA at a transfer price of £44,849. The developer entering into a Section 106 Agreement to secure this requirement may address this aspect of the development.

Comments from Consultees: The concerns of the statutory consultees referred to above may be addressed by attaching appropriate conditions to any consent.

Comments from public: The objections received have been summarised above and repeated below for ease of reading together with a response.

-misinformed by UWHA at the public exhibition held on the 27th October 2014 regarding the proposed use of the site.

Response. UWHA have responded stating "The exhibition boards clearly stated what was proposed in terms of land use (the boards were included within the

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

Planning Statement). Some minor tweaks and amendments have been made to the proposals based on comments received at the exhibition and the pre-application process. However, the principle of the proposed use has not changed since the exhibition." The information submitted with the planning application makes quite clear the proposed use of the site for 14 affordable housing units and 8 one bedroom apartments and associated staff unit providing accommodation and support for independent living and mental health well being.

- concern that there were so many Council employees at the public exhibition, which gave the impression the planning application was a done deal.

Response. The Council are partners in the delivery of the scheme. This was made clear at the exhibition and within the planning application documentation. Accordingly it was important to ensure that Housing Officers were present to answer any queries. There were no other officers of the Council at the meeting. The developer has previously paid for a pre-application enquiry (reference PE/14/0486) with the Local Planning Authority to seek its informal views regarding a proposed design and site layout. The current planning application has been submitted following that process and has been amended to address initial design concerns regarding the original scheme. The current planning application follows the statutory planning procedure in relation to the processing of planning applications.

- not everyone has been informed of the application.

Response. The application consultation process was carried out in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's consultation procedure. In this respect the application has been advertised in the Caerphilly Observer on 22nd January 2015, and a site notice was placed at the entrance to the site, on a lampost to the rear of Alfred Street adjacent to the site and on Hillside Park. In addition 39 residents have been consulted.

- locally elected representatives have turned their back on the community, they either belong to planning committee, or fire Brigade committee, which give them the ideal excuse to opt out or just refuse to get involved with any dialogue  
Response. The Council's constitution directs actions where there is a conflict of interest and what the action is in such cases.

- there are already several establishments within the locality that provide facilities for people with mental health problems which are not supervised 24 hours a day, causing anti-social behaviour problems - disturbances, drinking, setting bins on fire

Response. UWHA state, "The examples cited are in private ownership and therefore not comparable with the proposals. Indeed, accommodation that is in

Cont'd....



Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

private ownership is not regulated and managed in the same way that this scheme will be. This proposal will be reviewed by both the local authority and United Welsh.

"There is presently a significant lack of the type of C2 accommodation proposed within the County . This shortfall was highlighted in the Wales Audit Office report (2010)."

"Indeed, the Council's strategy "Planning for the Future" indicates:

- Caerphilly County Borough is not meeting targets in respect of the Mental Health National Service Framework.
- Comparison figures with adjacent local authorities for supported accommodation for people with mental health needs evidences a lack of sufficient accommodation.
- Number of contacts and assessments with people with mental health needs is increasing (Caerphilly Social Services).
- Waiting list for floating support services for people with mental health needs is increasing.

"It is a strategic policy of Caerphilly County Borough Council to address these shortcomings and the proposed scheme will provide an important contribution towards achieving this."

"Indeed, due specifically to the lack of this type of facility, many local people are forced to move out of the County, thereby losing family and social networks leading to isolation in unfamiliar communities. It is important to ensure that local people can receive the support that they need as close to their friends and family as possible."

- the latest leaflet distributed from UWHA details some of the possible mental health problems that may be catered for. There is no guarantee that this will be the case in future and far more serious cases may be involved. People in Gilfach are only too aware of the problems experienced with the facility in Argoed. They also have the memory of the stabbing that happened in Gilfach Park several years

Response. UWHA state "As noted in the letter that was sent out, the future tenants of the supported housing scheme will be local to the Caerphilly County Borough area and are likely to have low level mental health needs. This means that typically they may suffer, or have suffered from, depression, stress and anxiety, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress or similar issues that mean they

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

will benefit from living in housing with support that meets their needs, in close proximity to their friends and families. The scheme will serve as accommodation for those who will then move on into independent living in the local community after a period of up to 2 years support.

"Tenants will come from a range of backgrounds that are unknown at this time, but every referral into the scheme will be assessed by a panel comprising Gofal and their partners in the Local Authority Supporting People and Social Services teams. If it is felt that the needs of any potential tenant are too high for them to be accommodated in the scheme, then they have the right to refuse any referral. Indeed all residents will be risk assessed and have adequate skills to perform the majority of domestic tasks associated with living independently."

- no details of hours of supervision has been given

Response. UWHA state "The C2 block will be staffed throughout the day and into the evenings, with access to 24-hour support being available every day."

- concern regarding the tenure of the supported care unit, its close proximity to the MUGA in William Street and a local scout hall and the safety of local children

Response. It is class C2 residential development. It is entirely appropriate within an area that is predominantly residential.

- concern that it may be used for people who are not local

Response. Caerphilly County Borough Council have significant evidence of need for both affordable housing and supported accommodation within the ward and it is expected that residents will come from the local area. There are over 300 local people on the waiting list for affordable housing - this includes a wide range of needs including families and single persons (of all ages) in need of the 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation that is proposed.

- questions the praise given that other similar units are successful whereas ordinary people have a more critical view

Response. There is significant evidence of the successes at Ty Osborne. The planning officer has visited the project at Ty Osborne and met with officers from Gofal, CCBC Housing Strategy, CCBC Supporting People, CCBC Project Co-ordinator and an on-going service user.

Ty Osborne has eight flats of supported accommodation, and an office and communal room next to the office. Each flat is furnished and residents have their own key access. Residents are allowed visitors but visitors have to leave by 11pm.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

The project provides support to develop residents' greater independence as well as promote individual mental health and well being. The project is sustainable because it is used by local people who would otherwise have had to leave the local area and move away from their families, friends and support workers. Being able to keep close contact with relatives and friends and living in their own community is important in the individuals' recovery.

The residents receive support to give them the confidence to live independently in their own accommodation again. They will be referred to the scheme by CCBC and support will be provided by Gofal, one of Wales' leading health charities with over 24 years experience of managing a range of supported housing schemes and supported services across Wales.

Gofal will work with and support residents to equip them with the skills to move onto full independent living, with support focused on skills to enable them to live independently, emotional support to improve confidence and self esteem, practical support around budgets and financing, help with training, education and pathways to employment. Support is provided 24 hours if needed.

Residents generally live in the accommodation for two years before 'moving on' to independent living and integration into the community. This timescale may be different according to each individual and dependent upon the availability of accommodation within the borough.

The circumstances of each individual is private and there may be issues of criminality and/or drug use but it was stressed that the public should have confidence in the project because each resident has to go through a referral process to ensure the individual is suited to the project, which is well managed through a partnership approach between -

- Social services
- Community mental health teams
- Health and Social Care
- Supporting People
- Housing Strategy
- Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr

Each resident has a support plan and risk management plan to aid his or her progression, which is reviewed and monitored accordingly. Continuity of support is also important once they have left Ty Osborne.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

A past resident of the scheme explained how important it was that he lived within his own community. He considered Ty Osborne to be his home at the time and not clinical in anyway. He has made friends there and apparently visits quite often. He now lives on his own but could not praise the project enough for giving him the necessary emotional and practical support that he needed at that time and it would appear continues.

When Ty Osborne first opened Gofal ensured that neighbouring residents were able to contact them at any time with any issues and this continues but apart from the original concerns during the application stage, there have been no issues.

- concern over the type of boundary fence to be erected with Hillside Park and the protection it will afford to existing occupiers from inappropriate behaviour  
Response. The fence will be a typical wooden close - boarded boundary fence, which will be entirely appropriate in a residential area.

- the fire station ground and facilities should belong to the community either providing a safe place for children to play or to be used by the community for community activities or to re-house the current over-populated Welsh Medium School

Response. The fire station site is in private ownership and there is no public access.

- the design is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding area  
Response. The design is based on a context appraisal; the local built environment comprises a range of different uses (including both residential and commercial) and styles (high density terraces, lower density bungalows and semi detached 1970s dwellings and commercial buildings). Accordingly, the design is considered to be a contemporary and high quality addition local built development. The proposed design of the scheme has also been the subject of pre-application discussions with the planning department.

- the existing highway network is not adequate to serve the development and would lead to highway safety implications

Response. A technical note was submitted in support of the application. It is considered that the proposed development will have no detrimental impacts on the local highway. It is identified within this Technical Note that the net traffic changes of the proposed development will be negligible and can be accommodated by the local highway. It is also noted that the main junction with Park Place will be able to accommodate the development. The Group Manager (Highways and Transportation) has considered the submitted scheme and technical note provided and has raised no objection to the development subject to conditions requiring details of the construction of the road and parking provision.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- the proposed tenure would discourage young families from locating in the area  
Response. UWHA state "Contrary to this view, it is anticipated that the affordable housing units to be provided would be suitable for young families." It should be noted that the tenure of proposed housing is not a planning matter, but there is no evidence that the development would discourage people from moving to the area.

- devaluation of properties  
Response. There is no evidence of this and in any event the perceived value of properties is not a planning consideration.

- loss of amenity  
Response. There is no evidence that there will be any loss of amenity as a result of the proposals. Policy CW2 of the LDP considers amenity and has been discussed fully above.

- concern over the tenure of the accommodation particularly regarding the reference to Gofal working closely with Parc Prison, Bridgend  
Response. Please see previous comment in relation to residents.

Reference has been made to a 700 - 750 signed petition in objection to the scheme in a couple of the letters but the planning department has not received this.

In addition UWHA have been asked to confirm the extent of security in respect of the supported care accommodation, and whether residents are subject to a curfew?  
Response. UWHA state "Tenants will come from a range of backgrounds that are unknown at this time, but every referral into the scheme will be assessed by a panel comprising Gofal and their partners in the Local Authority Supporting People and Social Services teams. If it is felt that the needs of any potential tenant are too high for them to be accommodated in the scheme, then they have the right to refuse any referral. Indeed all residents will be risk assessed and have adequate skills to perform the majority of domestic tasks associated with living independently.

Security is provided at the main entrance, which will be restricted to residents and staff. No further security measures are required. In this regard the arrangements will be the same as Ty Osborne.

As with the C3 residential development there is no curfew neither imposed nor considered necessary. This is the case also at Ty Osborne.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

Also UWHA were asked who is responsible for ensuring residents take their medication, where relevant.

Response. It is expected that residents will be responsible with support from Gofal when and if required. "We would note that if needs are such that residents are reliant upon others to control their medication then it is unlikely that they would be considered for the proposed site."

Other material considerations: Following the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy, a Planning Obligation must meet all of the following tests.

(a) It is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

A Section 106 Agreement will be sought because this development would require the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy CW11 of the LDP if it were the case that the site was sold on and not developed entirely for affordable housing. Whilst the development would comply with our SPG on affordable housing, should the Housing Association sell on the site, we would require 10% affordable housing provision.

This would equate to 2 units. The units would need to be transferred to the nominated Housing Association, UWHA at a transfer price of £44,849.

(b) It is directly related to the development.

The need to provide affordable housing is in accordance with Policy CW11 of the LDP.

(c) It is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The total contribution is based on the number of dwellings to be erected.

RECOMMENDATION: that (A) the applicant enters into a Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act the terms of which are set out above.

(B) that following the completion of the Agreement Officers be authorised to GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions.

This permission is subject to the following condition(s)

01) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- 02) The development shall not be occupied until the area indicated for the parking of vehicles has been laid out in accordance with the submitted plans and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.  
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 03) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority indicating full engineering details of the road layout with sections, street-lighting and surface water drainage and a detailed programme for the provision of the proposed highways. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.  
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 04) Unless an endorsed Agreement under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 has been completed a detailed programme for the provision of the proposed highways and highway alterations including all stages in the statutory process for approval thereof together with a similarly detailed programme for the construction, completion and future maintenance of the proposed highways shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any works of construction are commenced on site.  
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 05) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, prior to the commencement of any work involving the construction of retaining walls on site full engineering details and structural calculations for the proposed retaining walls, together with certification from an independent chartered civil or structural engineer that the proposals are structurally adequate and fit for their intended purpose shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Following construction of the agreed retaining walls additional certification from an independent chartered civil or structural engineer confirming that the works have been constructed in an appropriate manner and that they are physically fit for their intended purpose shall be supplied to the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the approved development.  
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 06) The development hereby approved relates to the details received on 26.1.15, drawing no:S.7310-06A by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt as to the details hereby approved.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- 07) Prior to the commencement of works on site a scheme of land drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works that form part of the agreed scheme shall be carried out before any part of the development to which they relate is occupied.  
REASON: To ensure the development is served by an appropriate means of drainage.
- 08) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme depicting hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed details shall be carried out in the first planting and/or seeding season following the occupation of the development. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die or are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.  
REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.
- 09) Prior to the commencement of the development, details of the materials to be used in the facing of the existing retaining wall to the rear of plots 10 - 19, shall be submitted for consideration and approval in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby approved.  
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.
- 10) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority to deal with the contamination of the site. That scheme shall include a ground investigation and a risk assessment to identify the extent of the contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk to the occupants of the development when the site is developed. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.  
REASON: In the interests of public health.
- 11) No building approved by this permission shall be occupied or approved uses commence until a report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which verifies that the required works have been undertaken in accordance with the remediation strategy.  
REASON: To protect public health.

Cont'd....



Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- 12) Before any soils or hardcore that do not fall within the green category set out in Table 2 of the WLGA document 'Requirements for the Chemical Testing of Imported Materials for Various End Uses and Validation of Cover Systems 2013' are brought on to site, a scheme for their importation and testing for contamination shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.  
REASON: To prevent contamination of the application site in the interests of public health.
- 13) The apartments (plots 11-19) shall be used for residential apartments and associated office space and staff accommodation to provide accommodation and support for independent living and mental health well being and for no other purpose, including any other purpose in class C2 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning (Use classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification, without the approval of the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: In order to retain effective control over the use of the premises.
- 14) The demolition or site/vegetation clearance associated with the development hereby approved shall not take place during the breeding season for birds, from March to August inclusive in any given year, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: To ensure that breeding birds are protected. All British birds, their nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by law under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 15) No development or site/vegetation clearance shall take place until a detailed reptile mitigation strategy has been prepared by a competent ecologist and submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. The approved measures shall be strictly complied with.  
REASON: To ensure that reptiles are protected.

Cont'd....

Application Number 14/0818/FULL Continued.

- 16) Prior to the commencement of any works associated with the development hereby approved, a plan showing details of the provision of roosts and a means of access for bats shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before the development hereby approved is first occupied.  
REASON: To provide additional roosting for bats as a biodiversity enhancement, in accordance with Section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and policy contained in Welsh Assembly Government's Planning Policy Wales (2010) and TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).
- 17) Prior to the commencement of any works associated with the development hereby approved, a plan showing details of the provision of nesting sites for birds shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before the development hereby approved is first occupied.  
REASON: To provide additional nesting opportunities for birds as a biodiversity enhancement, in accordance with Section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Planning Policy Wales (2012) and paragraph 1.4.3 of Tan 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).
- 18) The development hereby approved and the details required by condition 8 of this consent shall be carried out in accordance with the management recommendations of the tree survey dated 02/10/14, by Treescene Arboricultural Consultants & Contractors.  
REASON: To ensure that the landscaping proposals are carried out in a satisfactory manner.

Advisory Note(s)

The following policy(ies) of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - Adopted November 2010 is/are relevant to the conditions of this permission: CW2, CW3.

The applicant is advised of the comments of the Senior Engineer (Land Drainage), Head of Public Services, Wales and West Utilities, Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water, Council Ecologist and Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees).

