

Planning Committee

Minutes of the special meeting held remotely on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 6.00pm, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

Present: Councillor Boad (Chairman); Councillors Ashford, R. Dickson, Heath, Jacques, Kennedy, Leigh-Hunt, Morris, Murphy, Tangri and Weber

Also Present: Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer – Mr Leach; Legal Advisor – Mrs Amphlett; Development Services Manager – Mr Fisher; Planning Officer – Ms Compton;

27. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) There were no apologies for absence; and
- (b) There were no substitutes.

28. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair clarified that application W/20/0346 was made by Warwick District Council, being brought forward by the Executive. The Chair confirmed that none of the Committee Members were on the Executive and as a result, this did not place any restrictions on the Committee in considering the application.

29. **W/20/0346 – William Wallsgrove House, 26 Lillington Road, Royal Leamington Spa**

The Committee considered a retrospective change of use from an 11-bed hostel (use class sui-generis) to a hostel for up to 22 people at any time and up to 30 people during severe weather conditions (use class sui-generis). The associated works included the relocation of the smoking shelter to the rear garden and the retention of a close boarded bin store to the front of the site (re-submission of W/19/1310).

The application was presented to Committee because of the number of objections having been received, including one from the Leamington Town Council.

In the officer's opinion, in considering this application, it was necessary to balance the risk of increased anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the hostel against the significant social benefits that the hostel brought to the District and in particular to homeless, rough sleepers.

As set out in the report, there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour and noise complaints since the opening of the hostel in 2018, it was also acknowledged in the Homeless Link report that there concerns had been raised at this time about the service delivery and performance of the hostel.

Since that time, revised practices had been introduced, including the introduction of the 'quiet room', and the most recent crime data also

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showed a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area. The management plan that had been submitted with the application provided clear, effective and enforceable measures, such as the 'use and occupation agreement', warnings and exclusions policy to handle behaviours that did not comply with the hostel rules, strict no drugs/alcohol policy, which would significantly reduce the risk of ongoing impacts on amenity.

Noting that the applicant had undertaken an assessment of alternative sites which had shown that this was the only available, suitable site that could meet the need for a hostel of this type, it was the view of officers that the wider benefits the proposal would bring by providing 22 bedspaces for rough sleepers significantly outweighed the risk of future impacts on amenity, particularly as there were mechanisms proposed to enable the management of those impacts.

The planning statement submitted by the applicants explained the benefits, noting that the facility "plays a major part of Warwick District Council's (WDC) proactive approach to tackling rough sleeping and operates in line with the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy agenda of eradicating homelessness".

The Planning Statement further explained that rough sleepers were often amongst the most vulnerable in our society and that hostel facilities were an important part of the approach to reducing rough sleeping in the District's towns and thereby providing an opportunity to support vulnerable people to improve their wellbeing and quality of life. This included those who might need relief from rough sleeping in harsh weather conditions, or those who had experienced mental health issues, forced marriage or domestic violence.

Taking all these factors in to account, and noting that neither the police nor environmental health objected to the application, officers were of the view that the planning balance clearly weighed in favour of granting planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the report.

The following people addressed the Committee:

- Councillor Julija Boulton, Town Councillor, objecting;
- Dr Charmaine Leech, objecting;
- Councillor Matecki, on behalf of the applicant; and
- Councillor Nicholls, District Councillor, objecting.

Councillor Morris raised a point of order during the debate regarding the consideration of the application. The Legal Advisor confirmed that the temporary application had previously been granted by the Committee, subject to the management plan being implemented immediately and revised so that the oversight group included a local Councillor, and the inclusion of a note to the applicant that any future application should include greater detail of crime records from the police. Therefore, these were the key points that had to be considered by Committee Members and new grounds for refusal away from these would be hard to defend if the application was refused and an appeal brought forward.

Following consideration of the report, presentation and representations made at the meeting, it was proposed by Councillor Kennedy and seconded

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by Councillor Morris that the application should be granted, subject to the addition of a note to the applicant, the wording of which was delegated to Planning Officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee regarding the oversight group and its role.

The Committee therefore

Resolved that W/20/0346 be granted, subject to the conditions below, and the addition of a note to the applicant, the wording of which was delegated to Planning Officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee regarding the oversight group and its role.

- (1) the development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this permission. **REASON:** To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
- (2) the development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and approved drawing(s) AT/WWH/03 - Proposed basement & ground floors, AT/WWH/03 - Proposed first & second floors, AT/WWH/05, and specification contained therein, submitted on 03rd March 2020. **REASON:** For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies BE1 and BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029;
- (3) the development hereby permitted shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved Management Plan submitted on 04th March 2020. **REASON:** To secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policy BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029; and
- (4) the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied by more than 22 residents at any time, with the exception of during severe weather conditions whereby the number of residents shall not exceed 30 at any one time. **REASON:** To protect the amenity of users and occupiers of nearby properties and to satisfy the requirements of Policy BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.

(The meeting ended at 7.46pm)

CHAIRMAN
11 August 2020