

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: David Cross - Development Control Case Officer

Reference: P/24/0140

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section

Ask for: David James

Extension: 7053

Date: 28th June 2024

Summary

No objection raised. The development meets the relevant Replacement LDP policies (SW1, SW2, SW3, & SW4).

If minded to approve in principle, particular consideration should be given to the impact of the development on the character of the area, the impact on surrounding area and occupiers in terms of scale, massing, loss of light and privacy, noise and disturbance, traffic generation and parking provision, and the impact on heritage assets, biodiversity and landscape (Policies SW11, SW12, EnW1, EnW4 & EnW5).

The requirements of Policy SW9 (Planning Obligations) should also be noted.

Observations in respect of the above proposal

1. Proposed Development

Application for the redevelopment of the site, involving the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings to accommodate 40 No. residential flats, parking, landscaping, sub-station, bin store, air source heat pump, engineering works, drainage, roof top solar provision and associated works, at Cefn Isaf Flats, Pontycapel Road, Cefn Coed.

2. Development Plan Framework

The existing development plan framework in Merthyr Tydfil is provided by:-

The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (2016 - 2031)

The relevant LDP Objectives are:-

- *LDP Objective 1 Sustainable Population Growth: To encourage a sustainable level and distribution of population growth.*
- *LDP Objective 2 Welsh Language and Culture: To protect and enhance Welsh language and culture.*

- *LDP Objective 3 To ensure the sufficient provision of land for the delivery of a range and choice of housing and affordable housing to address local housing needs.*
- *LDP Objective 4 Regeneration: To promote the suitable reuse of previously developed land and the continued regeneration of local communities.*
- *LDP Objective 6 Sustainable Design: To promote high quality, sustainable and inclusive design and support measures which mitigate the predicted effects of climate change.*
- *LDP Objective 7 Transport: To support an integrated transport system, promote active travel and ensure new developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport links.*
- *LDP Objective 9 Heritage and Cultural Assets: To protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.*
- *LDP Objective 10 Biodiversity: To improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which support habitats and species of principle importance.*
- *LDP Objective 11 Countryside and Landscape: To protect and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape and the countryside.*

The following development plan policies would apply:-

- *Policy SW1: Provision of New Homes*
- *Policy SW2: Provision of Affordable Housing*
- *Policy SW3: Sustainably Distributing New Homes*
- *Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries*
- *Policy SW9: Planning Obligations*
- *Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking*
- *Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network*
- *Policy CW1: Historic Environment*
- *Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience*
- *Policy EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species*
- *Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection*
- *Policy EnW5: Landscape Protection*
- *Policy EcW8: Renewable Energy*

The following supplementary planning guidance is applicable:-

- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1: Affordable Housing (March 2012)*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Planning Obligations (March 2012)*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)*

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Planning Policy Wales provide guidance on matters relevant to this application, namely:

- **Placemaking in Action: Good Design Making Better Places**
- **Strategic Placemaking: Previously Developed Land**

- Activities in Places: Living in a Place
- Distinctive and Natural Places: Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places
- Distinctive and Natural Places: Recognising the Environmental Qualities of Places

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

Future Wales provides guidance on matters relevant to this application, including, but not limited to:

- Policy 1: Where Wales will grow
- Policy 2: Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking
- Policy 7: Delivering Affordable Homes
- Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

3. Policy Considerations

The site of the proposal is located within the 'Primary Growth Area, as defined by the LDP, and within the settlement boundary where development will be allowed subject to the proposals compatibility with other plan policies and material considerations (Policies SW3 and SW4). The proposal – the demolition of the existing flats , and a new residential development comprising 40 units and associated works - would be supported in principal as an acceptable use in this location.

Policy SW1 states that 2250 additional homes are required to sustainably grow our population. The proposal comprises 40 new units (currently comprising 25 1 bed flats and 15 2 bed flats), which would represent a contribution to the 2250 units that are required during the plan period. Furthermore, Policy SW3 states that new homes will be concentrated within the main settlement of Merthyr Tydfil (Primary Growth Area). As such, the proposal complies with policies SW1 and SW3.

Policy SW2 states that development proposals will be expected to deliver a number of affordable dwellings across the County Borough, during the plan period, in order to contribute to the identified level of housing need. The proposal comprises 40 new residential units, all of which will be affordable units. This would represent a significant contribution to the 253 affordable units that are required during the plan period. As such, the proposal complies with Policy SW2.

Policy SW9 relates to planning obligations. The application proposes 100% affordable housing on-site, and requires a significant amount of grant funding to do so. Given the nature of the proposals, and the potential to affect the economic viability of the development, no additional obligations will be sought. CIL is chargeable in this part of the County Borough, however the development may be exempt from this.

Policy SW11 requires new development to, among other things:

1. be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
2. integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;

3. not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design;
4. contribute to the provision of green infrastructure, including open space in accordance with the Council's standards, sustainable drainage systems where appropriate, and ensure that the County Borough's network of green infrastructure is accessible and connected;
5. allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards;
6. incorporate a range of inclusive/adaptable design specifications, a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to meet identified local needs;
7. incorporate resource efficient/adaptable buildings and layouts using sustainable design and construction techniques;
8. incorporate measures to improve ground and surface water quality wherever possible;
9. provide adequate facilities and space for waste collections and recycling.

Considering the location of the application site, in close proximity to existing dwellings careful consideration should be given to these issues, particularly the scale and massing of the proposal, and any potential loss of light or privacy. The submitted plans indicate that the development would have off-street parking provision, equating to 0.75 spaces per unit. As such, the proposed parking provision should be checked against the Council's current parking standards, and the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW12 supports development that encourages a modal shift towards sustainable transport, including the enhancement of pedestrian, cycle, rail and bus facilities, in addition to any necessary road improvements. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy CW1 advises that the integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets. Development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, locally listed buildings or structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas (UCA) and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance.

The site lies adjacent to the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area, and within the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. The impact of the development on the surrounding heritage assets should therefore be particularly considered. As such, the views of the appropriate Council Officer, or Heritage body, should be sought as required.

Policy EnW1 states that Development proposals will be required to promote the resilience of ecosystems. In particular, proposals will be required to maintain and enhance biodiversity interests unless it can be demonstrated that:

1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the biodiversity value of the site; and
2. The impacts of the development can be satisfactorily mitigated and acceptably managed through future management regimes.

Policy EnW3 states that development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, or Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the conservation value of the site;
2. Adverse impacts on nature conservation features or geological features can be avoided;
3. Appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation measures can be provided; and
4. The development maintains and where possible enhances biodiversity and geodiversity interests.

The view of the Council's Ecologist should be sought in this respect.

Policy EnW4 advises that development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:

- Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;
- Land contamination;
- Hazardous substances;
- Land stability;
- Noise, vibration, dust, odour nuisance and light pollution; or
- Any other identified risk to public health and safety.

Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been incorporated to reduce, or minimise the impact identified to the lowest possible acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes. With regard to flood risk, new developments will be expected to avoid unnecessary flood risk and meet the requirements of TAN 15. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

EnW5 states that development proposals will be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- a) It would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape setting of the County Borough;
- b) Development within Special Landscape Areas are sensitive to their special characteristics;
- c) Development respects the local distinctiveness and historic character of the landscape;

- d) Development will safeguard local landscape character and landscape features, including views, which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of the locality;
- e) Development secures the enhancement of the character, appearance and quality of the landscape, through restoration, management or enhancement where possible;
- f) There is no satisfactory alternative and the benefits associated with the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm; and
- g) Where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided appropriate mitigation has been secured.

The application site is in close proximity to Special Landscape Area (SLA) 1: Nant Morlais & Cwm Taf Fechan. As such, the requirements of the above policy should be carefully considered, and the Council Officer consulted, as appropriate.