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REPORT AUTHOR	Judith Jones
CASE OFFICER	Marlene Ferreira
COMMITTEE	Planning and Regulatory
COMMITTEE DATE	2nd July 2025

Application No.
P/25/0146

Date
15th May 2025

Determining Authority
MTCBC

Proposed Development

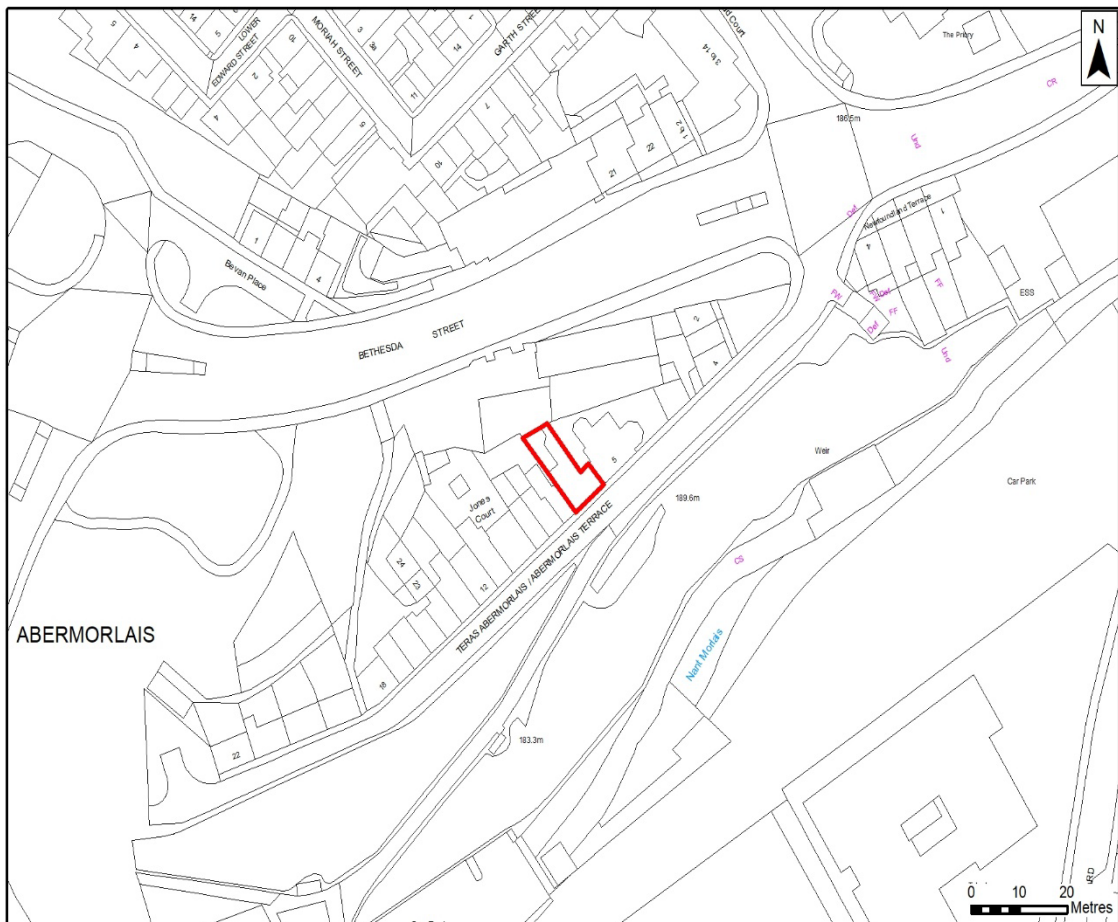
Location

Name & Address of Applicant/Agent

Change of use from a 3 bed residential property to a 6 bed HMO

6 Abermorlais Terrace
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8HU

Ms Linda Taylor
Taylor Holding
Investments Ltd
High Street
Royal Wootton Bassett
Swindon



Councillor Minett-Vokes has requested that the application be considered by the planning committee to deliberate on the concerns raised by local residents, which include the potential noise and general disturbance the use would have on adjoining occupiers and its impact upon parking availability, on-street congestion, highway and pedestrian safety.

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to an existing mid terraced dwelling, 6 Abermorlais Terrace, located in a no through road, near the town centre. The property fronts Abermorlais Terrace to the southwest and is served by a private rear garden area to the northwest. It adjoins the boundary with 5 Abermorlais Terrace to the northeast and the boundary with 7 Abermorlais Terrace to the southwest. The dwelling does not benefit from on-site parking provision, however, unrestricted on-street parking is provided along the front highway.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks full planning permission to change the use of the property from a 3 bedroom residential dwelling (C3 Use Class) to a 6 bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (C4 Use Class).

The property would be reconfigured internally in order to provide a HMO and would be served by a kitchen, lounge and 2 bedrooms at ground floor, and 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms at first floor. The kitchen, lounge and bathroom areas would be shared amongst its occupiers. The rear garden would also be shared by its occupiers. A cycle store/bays and bin/recycling area would be located within the rear garden area.

The submitted plans indicate that other than the installation of velux roof light (to serve the proposed 4th bedroom), no other alterations are proposed to the elevations of the property and as such, no new window openings and/or extensions would be undertaken in association with this proposal.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history which needs to be considered in the determination of this application.

CONSULTATION

The following bodies were consulted and their responses are presented below:

Head of Engineering & Highways	No objection, subject to conditions.
Planning Ecologist	No objection, subject to conditions.
Environmental Health Manager	No objection, subject to conditions.
NRW	No objections.
Dwr Cymru Welsh Water	No objection, subject to conditions.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring adjoining properties on the 21st May 2025 and 2 site notices were displayed, on the 29th May 2025, within the vicinity of the site.

Two letters of objection were received following the publicity exercise. A summary of the issues raised are outlined below:

- The no-through street is already saturated with parking and has very limited space for vehicles. On-street parking is used by 24 houses, residents of newfoundland and by 1 air bnb property. Town users also regularly park in the street;
- No information in the application regarding future occupiers, i.e. student housing, halfway housing or private renters;
- The street has suffered anti-social behaviour previously and adding more residents to the street could cause this to be the case once more, resulting in noise and disturbances to existing residents;
- The applicant is based in Swindon and is therefore unlikely to be able to deal with any problems/concerns which emanate from the property;
- It is unclear how the proposal will impact waste/recycling facilities, as now the property would be occupied by 6 separate occupants;
- There are no details in respect of access arrangements to and from the property, during renovation works.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) must be taken into consideration. Relevant sections are identified below:

- Paragraphs 3.3 refers to good design and states that “...*good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area.*” Paragraph 3.12

highlights that “...good design is about avoiding the creation of car-based developments. It contributes to minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys. Achieving these objectives requires the selection of sites which can be made easily accessible by sustainable modes as well as incorporating appropriate, safe and sustainable links (including active travel networks) within and between developments using legal agreements where appropriate...”.

- Paragraph 4.1.1 refers to sustainable development and states that “...the planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport. By influencing the location, scale, density, mix of uses and design of new development, the planning system can improve choice in transport and secure accessibility in a way which supports sustainable development, increases physical activity, improves health and helps to tackle the causes of climate change and airborne pollution...”
- Paragraph 4.1.37 notes that “...planning authorities must direct development to locations most accessible by public transport. They should ensure that development sites which are well served by public transport are used for travel intensive uses, such as housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services”. In respect to car parking provision, paragraph 4.1.50 notes that “parking provision should be informed by the local context, including public transport accessibility, urban design principles and the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport”.

The following Technical Advice Notes are also relevant:

- TAN 12: Design
- TAN 18: Transport

Local Planning Policies

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

- SW1 Provision of New Homes
- SW3 Sustainably Distributing New Homes
- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW4 Environmental Protection

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 4 - Sustainable Design.
- Note 5 - Nature and Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the assessment of this application relate to whether the principle of the development is acceptable in this location and whether it would be an appropriate proposal in respect of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, ecology, parking provision and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The proposed development seeks to change the use of a 3 bedroom residential dwelling into a 6 bedroom HMO. Given that the property lies within the settlement boundary and the proposal seeks to continue to provide a residential use (albeit of a different nature), it would be acceptable provided it complies with other relevant policies. The proposed development, would therefore be acceptable in principle and would accord with LDP Policy SW4.

Character and Appearance

The proposed change of use would not involve any alterations to the exterior of the dwelling, other than the installation of a new velux roof window to serve the proposed 4th bedroom. Therefore, this proposal would not have an adverse visual impact on the appearance of the property or the character of the wider street scene.

It is acknowledged that properties occupied by non-family households can sometimes have the potential to change the character of an area (i.e. damage social cohesion with higher levels of transient residents). However, in this instance it is not evident that the proposed 6 bedroom HMO along Abermorlais Terrace would result to an over-concentration of HMO's resulting in significant harm to the street's residential character. As such, the proposal would comply with LDP Policy SW11.

Residential Amenity

In terms of the impact on residential amenity (i.e. noise and disturbance, overlooking from the existing windows, the management of additional waste, etc) it is not considered that the proposed 6 bedroom HMO would be significantly different to the existing use, as a 3 bedroom residential dwelling. Indeed, the proposed internal alterations could be undertaken at any time without the need for planning permission by an existing family to accommodate 6 bedrooms. Likewise, a new velux roof light could be installed without planning permission. Whilst there is some potential for additional noise and disturbance resulting from the proposal, which may have an impact upon the amenities currently enjoyed by surrounding residents, this would not be considered significantly more harmful than the noise and activities associated with a residential dwelling to warrant the refusal of the application. In this regard, no objections have been received from the Environmental Health Manager.

In respect of overlooking and loss of privacy, no additional overlooking would result from the proposed development, since no new windows/openings other than the installation of a velux roof light (which, as explained earlier in the report, could be installed without planning permission) would be created in association with this

application. As such, the privacy of nearby residents would not be adversely affected as a result of this proposal.

With regards to the waste facilities available to serve the 6 bedroom HMO, it has been clarified by the applicant that a bin/recycling area would be provided to the rear of the property. This facility, subject to details of the bin store being provided and controlled by condition, would be deemed suitable to deal with the waste generated by the proposed 6 occupiers. Indeed, this would appear to be a similar arrangement to the existing property and other properties in the street, i.e. waste bins/area provided at the rear of the property and waste bins are placed at the front of the property, on the pavement, once a week in readiness for collection. It should also be noted that no concerns or objections have been raised by the Environmental Health section in this respect.

It is acknowledged, as a result of the publicity exercise, that representations have been submitted by local residents raising concerns in respect of noise and anti-social behaviour. It is also recognised that there are concerns surrounding the type of occupiers that would reside at the HMO property. It is important to note that the responsibility for dealing with issues, such as noise and anti-social behaviour, which are not necessarily uniquely associated with HMO developments and can also occur within any family home, would be shared between a number of agencies, particularly the Police, Environmental Health and the landlord. It is also important to note that planning controls are concerned with the use of the land, rather than the user of the land. As such, concerns related to the potential future occupiers of the HMO property is not a matter which can be considered in the assessment of the planning application or controlled by the local planning authority. Whilst the concerns of residents are acknowledged, there is no clear evidence in this instance, which demonstrates that the proposal would increase anti-social behaviour, noise and disturbance, or cause a risk to the safety of surrounding residents. The proposed development would therefore be considered to comply with LDP Policy SW11.

Ecology

The proposed development largely involves works to the internal layout of the property and the installation of new velux roof light. It does not incorporate any external alterations, including works/repairs to the roof, fascias, etc. As such, the Council's Ecologist has not requested the submission of any survey work in support of this application. However, in accordance with the Environmental Wales Act (2016) and the Welsh Government Circular Securing Biodiversity Enhancements (2019), enhancement works would be required in support of the proposal. This can be secured as a condition of any planning permission granted.

It is also noted, under chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12) that applications should be supported by Green Infrastructure Statements (GIS). However, due to the nature of the development, which primarily includes internal alterations, the submission of a GIS would be deemed disproportionate and unreasonable. Notwithstanding this, ecological enhancements would be provided (secured by condition) which would contribute to the wider green infrastructure objectives. Thus, the proposed development would therefore be considered acceptable and accord with LDP Policy EnW1.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

With regards to the impact of the proposal upon highway safety, it is noted that the application site does not benefit from any dedicated on-site parking provision to serve the existing 3 bedroom dwelling or the proposed 6 bedroom HMO. It is also recognised that Abermorlais Terrace is a narrow road and as such, only allows for on-street parking provision along one side of the road. However, despite the proposed increase in the number of bedrooms, the parking requirements associated with a 6 bedroom HMO would not differ to that associated with the existing 3 bedroom dwelling. As such, the Head of Engineering and Highways has not raised any concerns or objections to the change of use, as the deficit in parking continues to be a maximum of 3 parking spaces, whether it is used as a 3 bedroom residential property or a 6 bedroom HMO.

It is also noted that the site lies within a very short walk from the designated Town Centre, which offers shops, services and public transport (i.e. bus and train) to its residents, and where the use of more sustainable modes of transport can be encouraged. Indeed, the property would also be served by a cycle store, as explained earlier, and details of this would be requested by condition. Thus, given the property's sustainable location, the parking requirements associated with a 3 bedroom property and a 6 bedroom HMO, it is not considered that the lack of on-site parking would give rise to any significant highway or pedestrian safety concerns.

It is acknowledged that local residents have raised concerns in respect of the potential disruption the works to the property would have on the vehicular and pedestrian access along this street and the lack of details submitted with the application in this respect. However, it should be recognised that any development carried out will always cause a temporary period of disruption to surrounding residents. In this instance, the works are primarily internal alterations, and it is therefore considered that any disruptions to nearby residents would not be significant or lengthy. In the event that the highway/pavement is obstructed in association with this proposal, this would be a matter that lies outside the planning remit, and instead, would be addressed by the Council's Engineering and Highways Section.

It is acknowledged that local residents have raised concerns with regards to existing on-street congestion and the additional parking pressures that this proposed use could place upon the existing street. However, the merits of the development should also take into account that a dwelling can normally accommodate up to 6 persons living together as a single household without the need for planning permission. Thus, in this instance, the impact of the proposed development upon highway and pedestrian safety, would not warrant the refusal of the application and the proposal is deemed to accord with LDP Policy SW11.

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the above considerations, concerns raised by local residents and consultee responses, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the relevant LDP policies.

Finally, the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3

of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“the WBFG Act”) has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITIONS**:

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

- Proposed Ground Floor Plan, received: 13th June 2025;
- Proposed First Floor Plan, received: 13th June 2025;
- Proposed Roof Plan, received: 13th June 2025.

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. **Prior to the beneficial occupation of the building as a House of Multiple Occupation**, a plan indicating the positions, height, design, materials and type of bicycle store/bays to be provided, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The bicycle store/bays shall be provided in accordance with the approved details, prior to the beneficial use of the HMO.

Reason - To ensure that the new development will be visually acceptable and to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, in accordance with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

4. **Prior to the beneficial occupation of the building as a House of Multiple Occupation**, a plan indicating the position, height, design, materials and type of bin store/recycling area to be provided, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The bin store/recycling area shall be completed as approved, prior to the beneficial use of the HMO.

Reason - To ensure that the new development will be served by appropriate bin store/recycling areas, in the interests of residential amenity to accord with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

5. **Prior to the beneficial occupation of the building as a House of Multiple Occupation**, a scheme for biodiversity enhancement, including a timescale for implementation, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason - Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) requires all development to maintain and enhance biodiversity and to accord with Policy EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.