

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/24/0041
Site Address:	Former Betting Office Poplar Way Gurnos CF47 9SF
Development:	Change of use from betting office to storage unit to be used in association with Premier store (at 23 Chestnut Way).
Case Officer:	Marlene Ferreira
Site Visit:	7th March 2024
Application Expiry Date:	26th April 2024
Consultation reply date expired:	25th March 2024

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to a single storey flat roof premises, William Hill Bookmakers in Alder Grove, Gurnos. It adjoins Gurnos Social Club to the north, 23 Chestnut Way to the south, a car parking area/access to the east and Alder Grove road to the west. It lies within the designated Gurnos Local Centre.

The property was formerly used as a betting shop/bookmakers, but due to a decline in visiting customers, the premises has been vacant for almost 2 years following its closure in August 2022. The premises has been left unoccupied since this time and appears tired and unmaintained.

Parking provision is not provided on-site, however, the property, like others in the immediate vicinity, is served by a large communal car park area located to its rear (west).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to change the use of the premises from a betting shop/bookmakers into a storage unit to be used in association with the Premier Shop at 23 Chestnut Way. Thus, the use of the premises will be for storage only, in association with the operation of the existing retail shop and would not be open to the public. Furthermore, the proposal would not include any external alterations.

PLANNING HISTORY

The council's records do not indicate any other planning history for this site.

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering & Highways	No objection.
Planning Policy Officer	No objection.
Planning Ecology Officer	No objection.
Environmental Health Manager	No response.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to nearby occupiers and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site. No letters of representation were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

- Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 6 – Town Centre First

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valley

National Planning Policy

- Planning Policy Wales (edition 12, February 2024)

Paragraph 4.3.1 states that ‘...retail and commercial centres are hubs of social and economic activity and the focal point for a diverse range of services which support the needs of local communities. They are highly accessible to different modes of transport and are the most sustainable locations for new development...’

Paragraph 4.3.30, 4.3.31 and 4.3.32 refers to mixed uses in centres and explains that ‘...although retailing (A1) uses should underpin retail and commercial centres, it is only one of the factors which contribute towards their vibrancy....Primary areas are typically characterised by a high proportion of A1 retail uses...Secondary areas typically contain mixed uses, for example shops, cafes and restaurants, financial establishments and other services and community facilities...Policies should encourage a diversity of uses in centres...’

Paragraph 4.3.33 talks about the vibrancy and viability of centres and states that these ‘...are distinguished by a diversity of activity and uses which should contribute towards a centre’s well-being and success, whilst also reducing the need to travel...’

Paragraph 6.4.3 discusses biodiversity and states that ‘...the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of

ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement...'

- Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

Technical Advice Note 4: Retail and Commercial Development (November, 2016)

Section 2.3 refers to the variety of uses in the centre and states that '...a wide range of uses are located in retail and commercial centres including retail, office, residential, leisure, tourism and community functions...'

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

Paragraph 4.3.4 states that '...the information submitted with the planning application should be proportional to the likelihood of effects on nature conservation interests and to their potential significance...'

Local Planning Policies

- The Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031

SW4: Settlement Boundaries

SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking

SW13: Protecting and Improving Community Facilities

EnW4: Environmental Protection

EcW3: Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retail Provision

EcW5: Town and Local Centre Retailing Areas

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider under the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposed change of use, from a betting shop/bookmakers (A2 use) to a storage unit (B8 use) to be used in association with the retail store (A1 use), would be acceptable in this location. The acceptability of the proposal with regards to its impact upon the character and appearance of the premises and wider area, residential amenity, ecology, parking provision and highway safety are also primary considerations.

Principle of Development

The premises lies within the settlement boundary – Primary Growth Area. LDP Policy SW4 states that development in this location is considered acceptable in principle, provided it is compatible with other relevant LDP Policies and material planning considerations. The proposal would therefore comply with this policy.

The premises also lies within the Gurnos Local Centre and LDP Policies EcW3 and EcW5 are therefore relevant. LDP Policy EcW3 relates to retail hierarchy, with the town centre being the favoured location for retail and other complementary uses, followed by local centres, provided they improve the vitality and viability of the centre. A complementary commercial use, including storage uses, are therefore acceptable within the local centre. Indeed, as discussed above, the storage unit would be used in association with the operation of the retail store and as such, since it would be supporting the existing retail use, it would be considered to contribute to the vitality and viability of the local centre.

LDP Policy EcW5 is supportive of development that enhances the vitality and viability of town and local centres. In this instance, as previously mentioned, the proposal would indeed enhance the vitality and viability of the centre since it would be occupying a premises which has been vacant for almost two years and which would be brought back into use, in support of an existing retail store. The proposed change of use would therefore comply with LDP Policies EcW3 and EcW5.

The proposal would result in the loss of a betting shop/bookmakers and since this is classified as a community facility, LDP Policy SW13, which seeks to protect and improve such facilities, is relevant. This policy states that, development proposals that would result in the loss of an existing community facility, would only be permitted, where there is evidence that alternative provision of at least equivalent value to the local community can be provided nearby; or it can be demonstrated that existing provision is inappropriate or surplus to the needs of the community and is no longer required; or it can be demonstrated there is no longer a viable community use for the facility. In this instance it is noted that the betting shop/bookmakers has closed due to a decline in visiting customers, as a result of this service now being offered online. As such, numerous betting shops/bookmakers in the county borough, including the application site, have permanently closed. It is therefore considered that the existing betting shop/bookmakers would be deemed surplus to the needs of the community and is therefore no longer required. Furthermore, since the proposal would be used in association with the existing retail store, the premises would continue to be used in association with the operation of a commercial use, also a designated community facility. The proposed development would therefore accord with LDP Policy SW13.

Character and Appearance

The proposed change of use would not include any external alterations to the premises, and as such, the proposal would not have any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the property or the wider area. Thus, the proposed development would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

Residential Amenity

The premises, as referred to above, adjoins two other properties, the Alder Grove Social Club to the north and the Premier Store (at Chestnut Way) to the south. As such, the premises would be surrounded by commercial properties only. Furthermore, given the nature of the proposed use, as a storage facility, this would be considered to have less of an impact on the local area when compared to the former use as a betting shop/bookmakers.

The proposed storage unit, within this context, would not be considered to have a detrimental impact upon the privacy or amenities of nearby residential occupiers and thus no letters of objection have been received in respect of this proposal. As such, it would therefore comply with LDP Policies SW11 and EnW4.

Ecology

In respect of ecology, no survey work would be required with regards to this proposal. However, in accordance with the Environmental Wales Act (2016), Welsh Government Circular 'Securing Biodiversity Enhancements' (2019) and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy

Wales 12, enhancement measures and the submission of a Green Infrastructure Statement would normally be requested. However, given that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon protected species and relates to a change of use only without any external alterations, it would not be considered reasonable, in this instance, to request that these works be undertaken as part of this application.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

The premises is served by car parking provision to the rear, by means of a communal parking area. Therefore, the Head of Engineering and Highways has not raised any objections to the proposed development. Thus, the proposal would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

CONCLUSION

The development, due to the reasons discussed above, is therefore considered acceptable and in compliance with the relevant policies and guidance.

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:

- Drawing no: TAL24/07/01, received: 1st March 2024

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

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 19.04.2024