



PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING : Tuesday, 3rd June 2014

PRESENT : Cllrs. Taylor (Chair), Lewis (Vice-Chair), McLellan, Hilton, Hobbs, Smith, Noakes, Ravenhill, Hanman, Dee, Brown and Toleman

Officers in Attendance

Julie King, Interim Development Services Manager

James Felton, Solicitor

Joann Meneaud, Principal Planning Officer

Caroline Townley, Principal Planning Officer

Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr. Bhaimia and Mozol

267. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made on this occasion.

268. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

269. APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION -14/00229/COU - 72, CHURCH ROAD, LONGLEVENS.

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which detailed an application for the change of use from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a sui generis use as a house to accommodate up to eight non-related individuals at 72, Church Road, Longlevens.

She referred to the late material which contained two further representations in support of the application and one objection.

She confirmed that a condition was recommended that would restrict operation of the property to Alabaré solely for the purpose of housing vulnerable ex-service

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veterans and should Alabaré vacate the premises, the property would revert to a Class C3 dwelling.

Mr Geoffrey Willis, Campaign Director of Alabaré, addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Mr Willis advised that he had addressed the public meeting held at Longlevens Library. He noted that the level of support for Alabaré in Gloucestershire was such that the charity had received £250,000 from 180 separate donors in the county.

He noted that the City Council was a signatory to the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant which supported the integration of ex-service personnel into civilian life and specifically supporting veterans in life in Gloucestershire. Alabaré had received a grant of £62,000 through the covenant fund to support its work in the County.

This home will be supporting veterans in their life in the City of Gloucester helping them make the transition from the military into civilian life; helping them retrain and find work; address health issues and enable them to take their place in the community.

The residents would have a stable home with expert care and advice including employment advice. They had to deal with a range of problems including breakdown of relationships, debt, drink, depression, anxiety and trauma following active service in conflicts as recent as Afghanistan and as long ago as the Falkland Isles.

He stated that Alabaré had 23 years experience of working with homeless people and 5 years experience specifically with homeless veterans. They provided 60 beds in 6 towns and to date had helped 250 veterans. Great care was taken to ensure that potential residents were suitable for the level of support that was provided. Strict house rules were imposed and all residents were on licence and potentially subject to eviction.

The veterans residing at the property would be residents of the City and would take part in the life of the community which had granted Freedom of the City to the First Battalion, The Rifles Regiment and had a proud record of supporting the military.

Mr Robert Cann on behalf of local residents addressed the Committee speaking against the application.

Mr Cann, as spokesman for local residents, advised that it was considered that the proposal would be detrimental to residential amenity and have an adverse impact on the residents' standard of living. Their concerns could be summarised in three areas:-

- Car Parking and Traffic – The proposal would generate up to 12 cars and exacerbate traffic problems and not improve the congestion at the west end of Church Road where many cars were parked on the road in the locality.

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- Social Implications – Not a suitable site for a rehabilitation centre. There was ready availability of alcohol from six nearby outlets and it was questioned whether such a location was suitable for residents suffering from the effects of psychological trauma. There were nursery, infants and junior schools in the vicinity which generated significant pedestrian traffic which was noisy and might affect the veterans.
- Noise and Disturbance – Considered that the use would cause noise and disturbance to local residents and that the possible mix of personalities would not be managed properly. Residents were concerned at the lack of 24 hour supervision. Noting the comments made in the committee report it was thought unlikely that the property would be occupied by a family of adults with the expected problems and potential noise of the proposed residents. There had also been problems with anti-social behaviour at another nearby property.

Mr Cann advised that the residents wished it to be known that they all supported the aims of the charity but that this location was not suitable. He asked that should the Committee be minded to grant consent, the following conditions be imposed:-

1. The property only to be used to house military veterans and no other rehabilitation use in future.
2. Limit to six vehicles at the property.
3. Prohibition of boundary signage.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the first issue had been addressed by the recommended condition 3 and a condition to limit the number of vehicles in the site would be unreasonable and unenforceable. She also noted that the applicants had advised that it was unlikely that many of the residents would have motor cars.

The Chair was in favour of the application, he believed that the property was large enough, six residents could be housed there without needing planning permission and the property could easily be occupied by a family of eight.

Councillor Smith expressed her disappointment at the tone of some of the comments that had been made. She noted that we expect the military to fight for us and when they return to civilian life we leave them to it. There were many homeless ex-service personnel and she believed the property was in a good place for the proposed use.

She noted that the proposed residents had been damaged fighting for us. She also noted the comments of the Chair of the Church Road residents in the late material regarding possible bias of Members and stated that Councillors had a statutory duty to declare any such interest they may have in an application before them. She said that there were no planning reasons to refuse the application.

Councillor Hilton agreed with the comments made by Councillor Smith. He stated that there were similar properties in his ward which were well run and Alabaré provided excellent homes and support for veterans.

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Councillor McLellan referred to a similar use in Barnwood Road which had been the subject of similar concerns but the reality had been a minute number of problems. He believed that the concerns were exaggerated and that the recommended conditions were sensible. He would be supporting the application.

Councillor Lewis agreed with the Chair and three previous speakers. He believed the objections were based on nimbyism and if veterans could not be welcomed back there was something wrong with our society.

Councillor Brown advised that he had seen examples of the good work done by this charity during his mayoral year.

Councillor Toleman noted the strict house rules and believed that the service background of the proposed residents would lead to compliance.

Councillor Noakes agreed with the comments made by Members and hoped that the Council would be able to develop links with the charity in the future

RESOLVED that permission be granted subject to the conditions in the report.

270. APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION - 14/0342/REM - HUCCLECOTE CENTRE

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which detailed an application for the approval of reserved matters (scale, appearance and landscaping) for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 53 dwellings together with associated estate roads and public open space pursuant to planning permission 11/00742/OUT at Hucclecote Centre.

She referred to the late material which contained new information regarding amended plans, the views of the Highways Authority and a revised recommendation from the Development Control Manager. She advised Members that neighbours had been re-notified of the amended plans and the further consultation period would expire on 17 June 2014.

Councillor Lewis was in favour of the application and appreciated the revised position of the junior rugby pitch.

Councillor Hobbs believed that the proposal was well laid out and would be a welcome addition to the Hucclecote community. He expressed concern that the positioning of the rugby pitch was immediately adjacent to the boundaries of the houses which could suffer balls being kicked into the gardens. He called for a condition to ensure no goal posts were erected.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the pitch was intended for junior training. She had spoken to the Rugby Club and confirmed that no goal posts were envisaged. She also advised that the Landscape Architect had been in touch with the Rugby Club as there was funding available for a childrens play area.

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Councillor McLellan advised that the pitch was intended for 'touch rugby' and no kicking was involved.

The Chair believed the repositioning of the rugby pitch had improved the remaining public open space.

RESOLVED that approval of Reserved Matters be granted subject to there being no new material planning considerations raised, that have not been previously considered, in any new representations received by the Local Planning Authority before 18th June during the re-consultation period. The Approval would be subject to the conditions set out in Section 8.0 of the report together any conditions recommended by Severn Trent Water and the following additional conditions and note:

Condition

No posts / goal posts shall be erected on the playing field at any time.

Reason

In the interests of the residential amenity of the occupiers of the neighbouring houses in accordance with Policy BE.21 of the Second Deposit City of Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Condition

Notwithstanding that shown on the submitted plans, nothing shall be placed, erected or grown on the front gardens to Plots 39 and 40 (as shown on plan number BARR121137 SL01 REV R, received by the Local Planning Authority on 30th May 2014) exceeding a height of 600mm above the adjacent carriageway level.

Reason

To ensure that adequate forward visibility is maintained in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy TR.31 of the Second Deposit City of Gloucester Local Plan (2002).

Additional Note

For the avoidance of doubt a separate submission will be required to formally discharge the provisions of the Section 106 Agreement dated 9th December 2013 and a number of conditions on the outline planning permission (reference no. 11/00742/OUT).

271. DELEGATED DECISIONS

Consideration was given to a schedule of applications determined under delegated powers during the month of March 2014.

RESOLVED that the schedule be noted.

272. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 1 July 2014 at 6.00pm.

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The Chair noted that Annual Council would be held on 9 June 2014 and he thanked any Members who may not be appointed to the Committee for the next Civic Year for their service and contribution to the Committee.

Time of commencement: 18:00 hours

Time of conclusion: 18:50 hours

Chair