

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING,  
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY)**

**SUBJECT:** **CHANGE OF USE OF DWELLING TO HOUSE IN  
MULTIPLE OCCUPATION AT WELLFIELD FARM,  
VILLAGE ROAD, NORTHOP HALL**

**APPLICATION  
NUMBER:** **057919**

**APPLICANT:** **THE OWEN JONES CHARITY**

**SITE:** **WELLFIELD FARM, VILLAGE ROAD, NORTHOP  
HALL, CH7 6HS**

**APPLICATION  
VALID DATE:** **2<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY 2018**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **CLLR SHARPS**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL:** **NORTHOP HALL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR  
COMMITTEE:** **CONCERN REGARDING INADEQUATE  
FACILITIES**

**SITE VISIT:** **YES**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

1.01 This is a full application for the change of use of a 3 bedroom dwelling house to a 4 bedroom house of multiple occupation. It is considered it is acceptable in policy terms and will not detrimentally affect the living conditions of neighbours in the locality or those of the future occupier.

**2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION,  
SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-**

- 2.01
1. Time limit on commencement
  2. In accordance with approved details
  3. Facilities shall be provided and retained within the site for the

- parking and turning of vehicles. Such facilities being completed prior to the proposed development being brought into use.
4. Maximum occupation to be 4 individuals.
  5. Scheme of bin and recycling storage to be agreed.

### **3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

#### 3.01 Local Member Councillor L A Sharps

Objects to the proposal due to the lack of both adequate facilities and the consultation between the applicant and social services.

#### Northop Hall Community Council

Does not object to the proposal but raises the following concerns:

- Proposal unsuitable for up to six people.
- Northop Hall does not have the required facilities.
- Lack of transport links
- No evidence that the Applicant has any experience in running such a facility
- No evidence such a facility is needed in the village
- Access to the building is on a busy road

#### Highways

No Objection subject to conditions

#### Head of Public Protection

Confirmed legal requirements which will be included as a note to any consent

### **4.00 PUBLICITY**

#### 4.01 Site Notice and Neighbour Notification

6 letters have been received in objection to the proposal raising the following points:

- Proposal unsuitable for up to six people.
- Northop Hall does not have the required facilities.
- Lack of transport links
- No evidence that the Applicant has any experience in running such a facility
- No evidence such a facility is needed in the village
- Access to the building is on a busy road
- Increase in crime rates
- Drop in property values

### **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

#### 5.0 None Relevant.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

### Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

STR1 – New Development

STR4 - Housing

GEN1 - General Requirements for Development

GEN2 - Development Inside Settlement Boundaries

AC18 - Parking Provision and New Development

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### 7.01 Proposal

The proposal seeks to convert an existing 3/4 bedroom residential property at Wellfield Farm, Village Road, Northop Hall to a 4 bedroom House of Multiple Occupation. There are no external changes proposed to the property. The internal changes include rearrangement of the internal rooms and use of a ground floor room, which appear to have served as a lounge area for a fourth bedroom.

### 7.02 Site

The site is within the settlement boundary of Northop Hall as shown in Flintshire's Unitary Development Plan.

### 7.03 The Principle of Development

The proposal is within the settlement boundary for Northop Hall and is for residential use of an existing dwelling. The principle of the proposal is therefore acceptable as it makes the most efficient and effective use of the existing housing stock in accordance with Policy STR4 and GEN 2 of FUDP.

### 7.04 Main Issues

The main issues are considered to be the impact of the development upon the character of the area with regard to living conditions for neighbours, future occupiers and parking.

### 7.05 **Impact on character and appearance with particular regard to conditions of neighbouring occupiers**

7.06 The lawful use of the property is a two storey detached dwelling which is typical of the area. As no external changes are proposed there would be no material change in the appearance of the building which would be harmful to the character of the area.

7.07 As there are no external changes to the existing dwelling house and the use of the downstairs room to be converted to a bedroom was a habitable rooms this change will not introduce any overlooking. The proposal will also retain amenity space to the rear for drying clothes

and storage. Also a large double garage will be retained.

- 7.08 The proposed use is a residential use which operates at a level of intensity only slightly increased to that which might reasonably be expected if it remained as a C3 dwelling house.
- 7.09 The proposal would not adversely affect the character of the area as it would physically harmonise with the site and surroundings as there will be no material change in its current appearance as a dwelling. It is therefore compliant with Policy GEN1. Furthermore, as there are no new windows proposed the overlooking of any neighbouring properties is unaltered. No greater increase in interface distances is created and no reduction in rear amenity space and so there is no impact on the character of the area with regard to the living conditions of neighbours.
- 7.10 Living conditions of future occupiers  
The living conditions of future occupiers can be considered a material planning consideration. It is important to note that there are currently no planning guidance on the size or layout of HMO's with regard to provision of acceptable living conditions for occupiers. The proposal retains a kitchen/dinner and a lounge which provides shared amenity space. The smallest bedroom is on the first floor and is 6.5m<sup>2</sup> which is acceptable in terms of housing standards where there is shared amenity space.
- 7.11 As the applicant has not advanced a limit on level of occupation in order to provide an acceptable level of living conditions for future occupiers a condition will be imposed to ensure each room is single occupancy only. All the bedrooms proposed are of a reasonable size to accommodate a single occupant.
- 7.12 Impact on the highway  
There is a concern that the increased residential use of the HMO, would lead to an increase in the parking requirements above what would reasonably expected of a private dwelling. At a recent appeal for a HMO in Buckley, the Inspector noted that:
- 7.13 "The appellant has, however, estimated that the HMO would generate a parking demand of 0.4 cars per flat, or less than 4 in total, based on the Residential Car Parking Research undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2007. Whilst this research was undertaken in an English context, it nonetheless provides an evidenced indication of the likely traffic generation of an HMO."
- 7.14 If the same rationale is applied to this application then there would be a requirement for 1.6 car parking spaces. The existing parking provision is provided for by the driveway which can accommodate in excess of 1.6 cars off-street. I recommend that a condition is imposed to ensure that the parking provision is provided and maintained on

site.

8.00 **Other Concerns**

A number of concerns have been raised in relation to the needs of the future occupants of the HMO. The proposal will be run by the Owen Jones Charity and it is their intention to use the property to house people who would otherwise be made homeless. They have confirmed that there will be no onsite care other than the pastoral advice provided by member of the charity. It is therefore considered that the proposal falls within the use class C4 as a HMO.

- 8.01 Objections raised in terms of the lack of the applicants experience in running the HMO or a potential drop in property prices are not material considerations to be given weight in the planning balance. The objection regarding potential increase in crime has not been evidenced in any way and therefore this matter would attract very little weight in the overall planning balance.

9.00 **CONCLUSION**

I consider that the proposal is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies, and having considered the objections received and all other matters I recommend that the application is approved.

8.01 **Other Considerations**

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

The Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning Application & Supporting Documents

National & Local Planning Policy  
Responses to Consultation  
Responses to Publicity

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