

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held on 11 September 2024 at 2.15 pm

**Present**

**Councillors**

L J Cruwys (Chairman)  
G Cochran (Vice-Chair), F J Colthorpe,  
G Czapiewski, J M Downes, G Duchesne,  
C Harrower, B Holdman, N Letch,  
S Robinson and G Westcott

**Apologies**

**Councillor**

S Clist and M Jenkins

**Also Present**

**Councillor**

S Keable

**Also Present**

**Officer(s):**

Maria De Leburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place & Economy), John Millar (Area Team Leader), Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer)

**Councillor**

**Online**

J Buczkowski

**Officer Online**

Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager

**42 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00:04:23)**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Jenkins with Cllr G Westcott substituting and Cllr S Clist with Cllr J Downes substituting.

**43 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00:04:51)**

Roger Davey referred to Application No. 24/01034/FULL and asked the following questions:-

1. How much is the proposed conversion expected to cost?
2. Given that this was a family home, what is the Council's rationale for this conversion of the lounge of Wellclose, given the proximity of the War Memorial Hall with its function room/hall or the Town Hall, both of which are not fully used, either of these could be hired for the rare occasions on which this proposed room will be used at less cost to the Council taxpayers.

3. As this property is in need of renovation because of its use for 6 1/2 years, as an office, for the ill thought out St, Georges Court scheme and given the massive £9 million and growing debt left by the Council's development company - 3 Rivers. Why is the Council not selling it on the open market to try to recoup a little of the Council taxpayers money squandered by this Council on 3 Rivers and St. Georges Court.

The Chair advised that the question would be answered when the application was considered on the agenda

#### **44 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00:08:10)**

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests where appropriate.

There were no declarations made at this point in the meeting.

#### **45 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00:08:27)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 August 2024 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

#### **46 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00:08:52)**

The Chair had no announcements to make.

#### **47 WITHDRAWALS FROM THE AGENDA (00:09:35)**

There were no withdrawals from the Agenda.

#### **48 MEETING MANAGEMENT (AS PART OF CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS)**

The Chair made the following announcement:-

- The Performance Dashboard would be brought forward on the agenda due to the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager having another meeting to attend this afternoon.

#### **49 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 1 (00:09:44)**

The Group were presented with the \*Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1 2024/25. The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The Quarter 1 Dashboard had been reviewed and aligned to the new Policy Development Group structure and the new Corporate Plan.
- The overall performance was presented in the pie chart.
- There were 2 corporate risks that related to this Committee.
- Planning applications determined within 28 weeks were shown as amber in the RAG rating. Planning applications over 13 weeks without a decision were shown as red in the RAG rating. Undetermined applications were subject to an extension of time and there were no issues with being outside of target.
- Planning Fees Income was below budget due to a depressed housing market.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Annual targets and how the Council were performing against those targets. It was explained that the Council were performing better than Government targets.
- Congratulating the Development Management team on their success of being shortlisted for the Local Authority of the Year Award in this year's South West Planning Excellence Awards.
- How many applications have been refused outright within the period shown on the Dashboard? It was explained that there was no Government metric on this.
- Planning Fees income and whether the Council were on target at this point in the year. It was explained that whilst the annual target was presented, the RAG rating gave an objective view on performance in the year to date.
- For the 5 N/A annual targets – were those going to be populated in the fullness of time? It was explained that those were measures that would continue to be monitored rather than managed as such targets were not necessarily appropriate.

Note: \* Performance Dashboard previously circulated.

## 50 THE PLANS LIST (00:25:36)

The Committee considered the applications in the \*Plans List.

- a) 24/01034/FULL - Change of use of building to a mixed use of residential for a one-bedroom flat (Use Class C3) and a ground floor independent community room (Use Class F2) at Wellclose, Ham Place, Tiverton.

In response to the public question raised the Area Team Leader replied as follows:-

- A1. This was not a planning matter and therefore I am unable to answer the question.
- A2. The use was essentially for domestic use for Mid Devon tenants in the surrounding properties. The cost was not a planning matter and therefore I am unable to answer the question.
- A3. This was not a planning matter and therefore I am unable to answer this question.

The Area Team Leader outlined the contents of the report by way of a presentation and highlighted the following:-

- The proposed development related to a 2 storey former dwelling that had been used recently as an office and staff meeting/welfare facility for workers employed in the construction of the adjoining St. George's Court which was previously developed by 3 Rivers Ltd and had since come under Mid Devon District Council's Housing Team.
- The proposal was to now change the use of the building to a residential one-bedroom flat and a ground floor independent community room for residents over 55 and those who were less mobile.
- The main issues raised were the principle of development; design and impact on surroundings; residential amenity, highways and parking.

- The majority of works were internal other than the replacement of a ground floor window being replaced with a door.
- The proposed conditions restricted the use of the property and would not allow for it to be rented out. The Public Health Officer also proposed a time restriction of the community room being open from 7am-7pm so as not to have an adverse impact on residents.
- The application did not include the proposal for a car parking space. The previous use of the building did not have a car parking space and being close to the town centre it was considered justified as there were other car parking areas close by and there was access to shops and public transport. Highways had not raised any objections to this.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- Whether there had been an assessment to clarify if there was a need for a community room.
- Accessibility to the community room and whether toilet facilities were large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.
- The opening hours of the community room.
- Clarification as to whether there were parking arrangements when the building was a house, even if only informally.

**RESOLVED** that planning permission be granted subject to conditions, but with an alternative to condition 4 - requiring the submission and approval of a Management Plan to address the operation of the community room, which would include control of the opening hours, and agreement for the hours to be altered, if required to accommodate planned events. The final wording of the new condition 4 would be delegated to the Director of Place and Economy. To also suggest to the applicant that the toilet facilities were made large enough to accommodate a wheelchair to allow for disabled access.

(Proposed by Cllr J Downes and seconded by Cllr F J Colthorpe)

Reason for the Decision – as set out in the report.

Note: \*List and report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 51 **MAJOR APPLICATIONS WITH NO DECISION (01:02:45)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a list \*of major applications with no decision.

The Committee agreed the following:-

- 24/01107/MFUL - the application to remain delegated as per the report.
- 24/01208/MOUT – for a site visit to be arranged and for the Planning Committee to consider the application.

Note: \*List previously circulated, copy attached to the minutes.

52 **APPEAL DECISIONS (01:06:22)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a list of appeal decisions.

Note: \*List previously circulated, copy attached to the minutes.

(The meeting ended at 15:22pm)

**CHAIR**