

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Application Address	Bourne Valley Community Centre, 56 Herbert Avenue, Poole, BH12 4EE
Proposal	Erect 2 x 2 storey blocks of flats (24 in total) accessed from Herbert Avenue. To be used as temporary accommodation.
Application Number	APP/19/01444/F
Applicant	Poole Housing Partnership Ltd
Agent	Arcus Consulting
Date Application Valid	5 December, 2019
Decision Due Time	5 March, 2020
Extension of Time date (if applicable)	
Ward	Alderney & Bourne Valley
Recommendation	Grant With CIL Contribution
Reason for Referral to Planning Committee	This application is brought before committee because the site is owned by the Council and the scheme falls in the 'Major' category.
Case Officer	James Gilfillan

Description of Development

- 1.Planning consent is sought for the erection of two 2-storey blocks of flats (24 in total) accessed from Herbert Avenue, to be used as temporary accommodation.

Key Issues

- 2.The main considerations involved with this application are:
 - The principle of the use
 - Impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - Highway Safety
 - Bio-diversity
- 3.These points will be discussed as well as other material considerations below.

Planning Policies

- 4.National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 5.Poole Local Plan (Adopted 2018)

PP01 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

PP02	Amount and broad location of development
PP08	Type and mix of housing
PP26	Sports, recreation and community Facilities
PP27	Design
PP28	Flats and plot severance
PP32	Poole's important sites
PP33	Biodiversity and geodiversity
PP34	Transport strategy
PP35	A safe, connected and accessible transport network
PP37	Building sustainable homes and businesses
PP39	Delivering Poole's infrastructure

6. Supplementary Planning Document

SPD1	Parking & Highway Layout in Development
SPD3	Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework (2015-2020)
SPD4	Affordable Housing SPD (2011)
SPD5	Poole Harbour Recreation Interim Scheme (2019)
SPD6	Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour (2017)

Relevant Planning Applications and Appeals:

7. **2017:** Prior Notification of Proposed Demolition of redundant community centre.
Approved. (17/00009/PA)

Representations

8. Letters of representation have been received, in which the following concerns are raised;

- Over development of the site.
- Impact on the amenity, safety and wellbeing of local residents and children attending local schools.
- Lack of parking and impact on highway safety
- Increase in anti social behaviour
- Inappropriate location for needs of the occupants
- Loss of wildlife habitat and impact on species

9. A letter of representation has also been received supporting the scheme.

Consultations

10. BCP Highway Authority: Recognises that sufficient visibility and manoeuvring is provided to preserve highway safety, but objects to the shortfall of 6 parking spaces resulting in drivers trawling the streets looking for alternative parking compromising the amenity of occupiers of those streets.
11. BCP Waste Authority. Support the scheme as delivering sufficient and accessible waste storage.
12. BCP Lead Local Flood Risk Authority. Recognises that the site is not at risk of

flooding and subject to soakaway capacity is capable of preventing surface water flooding off site.

13. Environmental Services. Supports the findings and conclusion of the ecology survey and bio-diversity enhancement plans.

Constraints

14. None

Planning assessment

Site and Surroundings

15. The site is on the south side of Herbert Avenue, a busy local distributor road passing through a predominately residential area, dominated by detached houses and bungalows. The site is vacant, the original building having been recently demolished. That building was last used as a community centre by Bourne Valley Community Group.
16. The site is largely flat, but the ground to the south and east drops away steeply to residential properties on Connaught Crescent. There is a steep footpath and staircase across the sloping land providing pedestrian access between Connaught Crescent and Herbert Avenue. There is a wedge of mature trees and scrub undergrowth on the sloping ground separating the site from the residential properties to the south. Immediately adjacent to the west are playing fields associated with, but isolated from, a local school.
17. Vehicle access from Herbert Avenue exists and the site is largely hard surfaced for parking associated with its former use.
18. There are some trees and soft landscape on site, but no habitat designations or Tree Preservation Orders.

Key issues

19. The scheme proposes to erect twenty four, 1, 2 and 3-bed flats, in two two-storey blocks. The accommodation would be retained by the applicant (Poole Housing Partnership), for the purposes of providing temporary accommodation for existing homeless people in Poole.
20. The site falls within the Sustainable Transport Corridor, identified by PP02, where higher density development can rely on and support existing sustainable travel options, encourage their improvement and make use of local services and facilities. The character of the area is residential, predominantly detached houses and bungalows. The principle of residential development is acceptable.
21. The site was most recently used for community purposes, in accordance with PP26 the loss of such a facility will only be permitted where there is sufficient

community benefit to outweigh the loss; there would not be a substantial decline in the range of facilities available for local people; or the facility is no longer needed and it is not feasible to support its continued existence.

22. The site and building were previously leased to the Bourne Valley Community Group, who wound up their operation and returned the building to the Council in 2017. As part of that 'winding up' the Council explored whether other community groups would be willing to take over the community use of the site. With none forthcoming and a significant desire to see improvements to the facilities available at the nearby Bourne Valley Youth Club, where planning permission was granted in October 2018 for replacement facilities, it is clear that there would not be a substantial decline in the range of facilities and services available. Given the winding up of the community group, there is no demonstrated need for the site to be retained or redeveloped for community purposes.
23. The proposed accommodation would be residential in character but is intended for the specific purpose of being made available to house homeless people, mostly homeless families, in need of support by the Council to meet their housing needs. The flats would therefore be used to house people for short periods of time while their housing needs were properly assessed and appropriate permanent accommodation provided. This would be for a minimum of 28 days but could be for up to 2 years. It is however anticipated as being generally for up to 6 months.
24. At present many of these people and families are housed temporarily in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. This is an expensive solution and less than ideal for families, where amenity and wellbeing are often compromised. The proposed units are predominately 2 and 3-bed accommodation in order to provide accommodation for those family groups where the benefits would be greatest. Three of the flats would be large enough and designed to be accessible to those with reduced mobility.
25. The scheme would include an office; laundry; store; and meeting room, to provide services for residents. Staff would be present on site to monitor and support residents and provide a degree of management and security.
26. By reducing the revenue costs of placing homeless people in B&B accommodation, more money can be made available to provide better long term housing solutions.
27. There are significant social and community benefits arising from the proposed scheme, helping to support those in particular need and this would outweigh the loss of the community facility.
28. The character of the area is residential, dominated by detached houses and bungalows, however the pattern and form of development in the area is not as prevalent on and adjoining the application site as on the opposite side of the road or at other points along Herbert Avenue, owing to the presence of the playing fields to the west and the steep drop to Central Avenue/Connaught

Crescent to the east. However the open aspect of the site does not provide a positive feature for the character of the area or urban fabric of the streetscene either. Delivering detached dwellings, similar to those prevailing in the area, would not optimise the development potential of the site since the unique and individual form and arrangement of the site, within the sustainable transport corridor, presents the opportunity for a larger scheme with higher density than already exists locally.

29. The design; scale; size; and roof form of the two blocks would be very similar. The only significant difference would be the orientation of the two external staircases serving the first-floor flats. These similarities would not be detrimental to the wider character of the area. There is sufficient gap between the two buildings, together with their offset alignment, to ensure that the two blocks would not appear as a single large structure.
30. The existing prevailing consistency in the pattern of development would not be interrupted by the proposal and the houses and bungalows along Herbert Avenue would continue to be the prevailing pattern of development. The buildings would be visible in the streetscene and would be larger and more prominent than the previous community building, however due to the orientation placing the narrow width of the building closest to the front of the site; the separation back from the edge of the site; and their two-storey height being consistent with the residential character of the area, there would be no harmful consequence of this prominence on the character of the area.
31. The mono-pitch roof design and basic architecture is unremarkable but appropriate to the residential use and reflective of the shape; form; and function of the building and the project budget.
32. Due to the shape of the site, the orientation of the buildings and its design, the end elevation facing Herbert Avenue would not introduce the degree of interaction; passive surveillance; and active frontage normally considered to positively enhance the street. This in itself would not result in harm, especially given the lack of such features on site at present. However the two buildings would present positively on to the access and parking court within the site, as such those benefits would be secured within the scheme.
33. The combined plot coverage of the development is relatively high, leaving limited space around the building for setting and amenity space, however both are provided for. The density of approximately 80 dwellings per hectare is above the minimum indicative densities proposed by PP02 for different parts of the plan area, however the policy does encourage schemes to maximise the potential of the site.
34. The prevailing residential character of the area would be preserved by the development.
35. Due to its position, siting and orientation, the scheme would not give rise to shading, overlooking or loss of outlook of any nearby residential properties, preserving the amenity and privacy of the occupiers. Similarly the amenity and

privacy of the occupiers would be preserved. The size of the flats is below the national space standards, however those standards are not required by adopted policy and the flats all have dual aspect and provide a quality of accommodation, amenity and space likely to be significantly better than the B&B accommodation currently relied on to provide temporary accommodation. Furthermore there is no intention that these flats would be permanent or long term housing solutions.

36. Many of the representations received, including the Head Teacher of St. Joseph's School, raise concerns about the safeguarding of school children using the playing field adjacent to the site. However, it would be inappropriate to attach substantial weight to this concern since up to 90% of the proposed units are intended for occupation by families, potentially including children who would attend the adjacent schools, including St Joseph's. Furthermore, there are already many houses overlooking the playing fields and school playgrounds. The situation being created by this proposal is no different to that already found at many schools within the area and across the country.
37. Other concerns about anti-social behaviour occurring in surrounding streets being exacerbated by this development are equally unfounded and are a matter for other authorities to manage and not something that could be meaningfully attributed to the proposed development.
38. Residential amenity would be preserved and there is no evidence to suggest the safeguarding of pupils in the area would be any more compromised than currently.
39. Access to the site exists from Herbert Avenue, and served the former Community Centre. The access is sufficient to meet the needs of the development and pedestrian visibility splays would be provided.
40. 15 parking spaces would be provided and turning for small vans and lorries likely to service the site would be incorporated. Due to the nature of the accommodation being provided there is limited evidence of the likely parking demands. The flats would not be 'owner occupied', therefore the unallocated standard of 21 spaces is not appropriate. The adopted parking SPD includes standards for permanently rented accommodation which more closely matches the proposed accommodation. Given the likelihood of residents staying for short periods; the peaks and troughs in car ownership or usage by those residents, unallocated parking is an appropriate approach. Based on the size of the units the scheme would require 16 parking spaces.
41. There is no explanation by the Highway Authority why the 'Owner Occupier' parking standard has been applied, resulting in their objection to a '6 space shortfall'. On-street parking would not be possible on Herbert Avenue and relying on on-street parking in other nearby residential roads is not encouraged due to the potential impact on the amenity of those areas, it would however provide options to accommodate parking to meet the peaks of car ownership that may occur as different residents move in and out of the site.

42. Sufficient and accessible bike and bin storage would be provided to meet the needs of the development. Bin collection could occur from Herbert Avenue to the satisfaction of the waste collection regime in this area.
43. There are trees on the site and evidence of important species in the area, most notably the wooded area across the sloping ground to the south of the site. The development would result in the loss of trees and open mown grass, but nothing of significant ecological value, nor would it result in the loss of any of the habitat on the adjoining land. Measures should be taken to prevent harm to species that stray on to the site during construction and also to allow continued passage across the site thereafter. The scheme is supported by an ecological survey and management/mitigation plan to address the presence of protected and important species in the area. Replacement and additional tree planting is indicated and can be secured by condition to secure a net bio-diversity enhancement and improve the setting for the site.
44. The site is not at risk of flooding. The topography around the site and increased impermeable surfaces could cause off site flooding by accelerating surface water run off. Permeable surfaces should therefore be secured and ground conditions could accommodate soakaways.
45. A generic sustainability statement has been provided in support of the application, indicating the construction of the fabric of the building would take the lead in reducing energy needs, however no detail has been provided to demonstrate this. Due to the nature of the occupation of the building, influencing behaviour would be difficult, therefore the fabric and form of the building would be the mechanism for achieving an energy efficient and sustainable development. The dual aspect and orientation would achieve good passive solar gain for lighting and heating. There is no reference to PP37 or how the scheme would deliver on site renewable sources of energy, however a condition could be used to ensure 20% of the schemes energy needs are met by on-site renewable sources.

Section 106 Agreement/CIL compliance

Contributions Required			Dorset Heathland SAMM	Poole Harbour Recreation SAMM
Flats	Existing	0	@ £264	@ £95
	Proposed	24		
	Net	24	£6,336.00	£2,280.00

	increase			
Total Contributions		£6,336.00 (plus admin fee)	£2,280.00 (plus admin fee)	
CIL	Zone C	@ £115sq m		

46. Mitigation of the impact of the proposed development on recreational facilities; Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour Special Protection Areas; and strategic transport infrastructure is provided for by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule adopted by the Council in February 2019. In accordance with CIL Regulation 28 (1) this confirms that dwellings are CIL liable development and are required to pay CIL in accordance with the rates set out in the Council's Charging Schedule.
47. The site is within 5km (but not within 400m) of Heathland SSSI and the proposed net increase in dwellings would not be acceptable without appropriate mitigation of their impact upon the Heathland. As part of the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework a contribution is required from all qualifying residential development to fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) in respect of the internationally important Dorset Heathlands. This proposal requires such a contribution, without which it would not satisfy the appropriate assessment required by the Habitat Regulations
48. In addition, the proposed net increase in dwellings would not be acceptable without appropriate mitigation of their recreational impact upon the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar site. A contribution is required from all qualifying residential development in Poole to fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) in respect of the internationally important Poole Harbour. This proposal requires such a contribution, without which it would not satisfy the appropriate assessment required by the Habitat Regulations.
49. The applicant has submitted a Section 111 form and paid the relevant contributions towards Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour Recreation SAMM.

Summary

- The loss of the Community facility is acceptable
- The scheme preserves the residential character and appearance of the area
- The scheme makes a significant contribution to the provision of affordable

- housing in Poole
- Highway safety would be preserved
- Residential amenity would be preserved

Planning balance

50. The scheme seeks to optimise the potential of the site given the acute need for accommodation of the type being proposed. Significant weight is given to the provision of this temporary residential accommodation and when considered against the alternatives, the minor shortfall in external amenity space and internal room sizes is readily outweighed. The benefits of the scheme as the first step for homeless families towards having their urgent housing needs met and the number of such families accommodated, would readily outweigh the potential for harm to the wider area arising from the small calculated shortfall in on site car parking provision.

Background Documents

51. None

RECOMMENDATION

52. It is therefore recommended that this application be Granted With CIL Contribution and subject to the following conditions:

1. GN150 (Time Expiry 3 Years (Standard))

2. PL01 (Plans Listing)

3. AA01 (Non standard Condition)

The accommodation hereby approved shall only be used as temporary accommodation for those people qualifying for Affordable Housing and on the Councils Housing Register and for no other form of residential accommodation.

Reason:

Due to the importance applied to this form of tenure, the limited internal and external space and the low numbers of parking spaces provided and in accordance with Policies PP11, PP27 and PP35 of the Poole Local Plan 2018.

4. HW100 (Parking/Turning Provision)

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the access, turning space and vehicle parking shown on the approved plan have been constructed, and these shall thereafter be retained and kept available for those purposes at all times. The car park spaces on the approved plan shall be available for residents and visitors to the residential units. The parking shall therefore remain as unallocated parking at all times with no parking space allocated to any individual resident or residential unit, except for any parking bay demarcated as Disabled Parking which may be allocated to Registered Disabled Users only. No parking barrier shall be placed to restrict access to the car parking area. The 'Turning Area' as indicated on the approved plan, shall

remain available for the use as a vehicle turning area at all times. To this end no walls, fences, landscaping, vehicles or structures that would obstruct these vehicle turning movements shall be placed within this turning area.

Reason -

In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policies PP27, PP34, PP35 and PP36 of the Poole Local Plan 2018.

5. AA01 (Non standard Condition)

The bin and bike stores as shown on the approved plans shall be provided and available for use prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter retained as such.

Reason:

In the interests of promoting alternative forms of transport to the private car and in the interests of the appearance of the site, preserve highway safety and ensure efficient waste collection is possible and in accordance with Policies PP27, PP34 & PP35 of the Poole Local Plan 2018

6. HW200 (Provision of Visibility Splays)

7. GN162 (Renewable Energy - Residential) (20%)

8. HW230 (Permeable surfacing condition)

9. AA01 (Non standard Condition)

The recommendations and mitigation measures proposed by the ecology report received 02/03/20 and Badger survey received 04/02/20 shall be followed and complied with during construction and implemented/installed prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter retained.

Reason:

In the interests of protecting and supporting important and protected species close to the site and in accordance with Policy PP33 of the Poole Local Plan adopted 2018

10. LS020 (Landscaping Scheme to be Submitted)

Informative Notes

1. IN72 (Working with applicants: Approval)

2. IN74 (Community Infrastructure Levy - Approval)

3. IN81 (SMM Approval)

4. IN84 (AA passed)