

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2017/0513

**LOCATION:** 131 Southampton Road

**DESCRIPTION:** Change of Use from Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for 4 occupants (part retrospective)

**WARD:** Delapre & Briar Ward

**APPLICANT:** Mr Michael Mitchell  
**AGENT:** Mr Michael Mitchell

**REFERRED BY:** Councillor V Culbard  
**REASON:** Parking and refuse concerns

**DEPARTURE:** No

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#### **APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

##### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle as it would not result in an over concentration of similar uses within the vicinity of the site, would provide adequate facilities for future occupants and would not be at risk from flooding. Notwithstanding existing parking conditions in the local area, the site is in a sustainable location close to a Local Centre, bus services and amenities and would provide adequate facilities for cycle storage and refuse storage. The proposal thereby complies with Policies H1, H5, BN7 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, saved Policies E20 and H30 of the Northampton Local Plan, the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim Planning Policy Statement (IPPS) and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

##### **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Permission is sought for a change of use from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a house in multiple occupation (HIMO) (Use Class C4) for 4 people. No external alterations are proposed to the property. Parking would be on-street.
- 2.2 The site lies within an Article 4 Direction area, which removes permitted development rights for change of use from a dwelling to a HIMO.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application site comprises a two storey, mid-terraced, three-bedroom property on Southampton Road, located in a residential area with similar terraced properties on both sides of the street.
- 3.2 The property has a kitchen, lounge, conservatory and a bathroom on the ground floor, three bedrooms on the first floor.
- 3.3 The site is in close proximity to St. Leonard's Road, which contains some retail units and access to bus routes.
- 3.4 The front part of the application site lies on the edge of Flood Zone 2.

### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 None.

### **5. PLANNING POLICY**

#### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies,

#### **5.2 National Policies**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

- 5.3 Paragraph 17 - Core Principles seeks to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and proposed occupiers.
- 5.4 Paragraph 49 - Housing applications should be considered with a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.5 Paragraph 50 - states that planning should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes; widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities; should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community.

#### **5.6 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

- 5.7 Policy H1 - Housing Density & Mix & Type of Dwellings - states that development should provide for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures to cater for different accommodation needs. Housing

developments will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the location and setting of the site, the existing character and density of the local area, accessibility to services and facilities, proximity to public transport routes, the implications of density for affordability and viability, the living conditions provided for future residents, and the impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

- 5.8 Policy H5 – Managing the existing housing stock - seeks to manage and safeguard existing housing stock, including through HIMOs, where they would not adversely impact upon the character and amenity of residential areas.
- 5.9 Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles - requires development to satisfy a range of sustainable development principles including through achieving the highest standards of sustainable design; maximising opportunities for reuse and recycling; and promoting walking and cycling and protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment and heritage assets and their settings.
- 5.10 Policy BN7 - Flood Risk – relates to flood risk as a consideration in the determination of this planning application.

5.11 **Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

- 5.12 Policy E20 – new development should adequately reflect the character of surroundings and ensure adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.
- 5.13 Policy H30 – requires HIMOs to be of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use and not result in an over concentration to the detriment of the character and amenity of the area or result in a substantial demand for on street parking in areas judged to be experiencing difficulties.

5.14 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)  
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

5.15 **Other Material Considerations**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMO) Interim Planning Policy Statement (IPPS) (November 2014)

Proposals for HIMOs should:

- Result in a balanced and mixed community and protect the physical character of the street and neighbourhood as a whole, by not resulting in a concentration of similar uses, a material change or adverse impact on the character of the area, or more than 15% of HIMOs within a 50metre radius.
- Secure the provision of adequate facilities, amenities and minimise flood risk;
- Promote use of public transport, cycling and walking and secure provision of adequate parking;
- Ensure provision of adequate storage for refuse and materials for recycling.

**6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **Councillor V. Culbard** - raises objection on the basis that application property is on a very busy street where parking and rubbish disposal are already an issue. The proposed development would only make a difficult situation worse. Called in the application for consideration by the Planning Committee.
- 6.2 **Highway Authority (NCC)** - has objected to the proposed change of use. Highway Engineer has advised that on the basis of information submitted the application and that there is no residual parking capacity on-street, the cumulative impact from the high concentration of HIMO's properties is contributing towards inappropriate parking in other areas. In the interest of highway safety Northamptonshire Highways must object to the application for the conversion of a residential dwelling to a house in multiple occupancy for 4 residents, as it would further exacerbate the existing parking problems in the area.
- 6.3 **Private Sector Housing (NBC)** - has advised that if all the letting rooms exceed 6.5 sq.m., the accommodation and facilities would meet the requirements for four occupants. The property is not currently licensable as a HIMO, the Council is currently undertaking a review which may result in the introduction of an additional licensing scheme affecting the area and would be likely to affect the subject property.
- 6.4 **Environment Agency** - no objection.
- 6.5 **Two neighbour objections** have been received. These objections are summarised as follows:
- Parking issues in the street and wider area.
  - Inadequate refuse storage and fly tipping, exacerbation of existing issues.
  - Noise related issues.
  - Not appropriate for the area, as the development would affect the mix of the houses and would result in high density of HIMOs in the area.
  - The proposal would result in anti-social behaviour.
  - Impact on community cohesion.

## 7. APPRAISAL

### Principle of the development

- 7.1 The conversion of the existing dwelling to a HIMO is considered to be in line with national policy requirements to deliver a wide choice of homes to create sustainable and mixed communities. Policy H5 of the JCS allows for HIMOs where the proposal would not adversely impact on the character of the area and amenity of residential areas.

### Area concentration

- 7.2 Council records evidence that there are no confirmed HIMOs on Southampton Road, Penrhyn Road and Euston Road within a 50m radius of the application site. The use of this property as a HIMO would equate to less than 1.06% concentration in the area. This would clearly fall within the 15% maximum threshold recommended by the Council's adopted Interim Planning Policy Statement in relation to HIMOs. Although there are other outstanding planning applications for a change to HIMOs in Southampton Road, they are not within the 50m radius of this application. It is considered therefore that there would still be a reasonable mixture of house types within the vicinity in order to meet the differing needs of residents.

### Size of property and facilities for future occupiers

- 7.3 Policy H30 of the Local Plan, although dated, is in line with the aims of NPPF in respect of the provision of adequate amenity for proposed occupiers and requires HIMOs to be of sufficient size

to accommodate the proposed use. The property is considered to be of sufficient size, providing room sizes in accordance with the Council's HIMO Facilities and Amenities Guidance and appropriate kitchen/dining, WC and wash facilities. A condition restricting the use of the property to a maximum of 4 people would ensure over-development does not occur. All bedrooms would be served by adequate outlook and light. Private Sector Housing has advised that they will be satisfied with the accommodation proposed meets the requirements.

- 7.4 No details have been submitted for cycle storage, but there is adequate space to the rear of the property that can be used for the storage of bins and cycles, the details of which would be required by conditions.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.5 In respect of flood risk, the application site lies on the edge of Flood Zone 2.
- 7.6 It is acknowledged that there would be one bedroom on the ground floor. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with this planning application, which outlines the mitigation measures to reduce the impact on the future occupants of this HIMO. The Environment Agency has raised no objection.

### **Highways/Parking**

- 7.7 The Interim Planning Policy Statement for HIMOs (IPPS) sets out clearly that where limited or no parking provision is proposed, the site must be either within 400m of a bus stop, or within walking distance of a district centre, local centre or neighbourhood parade. Only outside such locations is parking required to be provided.
- 7.8 The application property is located within easy walking distance to facilities along St. Leonards Road. It is considered that the application site is in a sustainable location within 160 metres of bus stops on St. Leonards Road and Towcester Road and within walking distance of local facilities on St. Leonards Road. In this regard, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of the IPPS in respect of parking considerations.
- 7.9 Within such areas, the IPPS recommends that storage space should be provided which is accessible to cycle users. Space is available to the rear of the house, and a condition is recommended requiring details to be submitted for approval for secure cycle storage.
- 7.10 The proposal is, therefore, in compliance with this principle of the IPPS. However, a further consideration in respect of parking is the Northamptonshire Parking Standards. This document was adopted in September 2016, after the IPPS.
- 7.11 The Northamptonshire Parking Standards state that Houses in Multiple Occupation shall provide on plot parking at the ratio of one parking space per bedroom. The proposed development will produce a demand for 4 parking spaces, which is an increase of 2 compared to the existing use, as parking requirement for a 3-bed dwelling is 2 spaces.
- 7.12 In this case, the Highway Authority object to the proposal because the potential impacts on highway safety are considered severe, and concern is raised regarding the potential negative impacts of an increase in parking demand on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 7.13 Notwithstanding the Highway Authority's objection, there is no evidence to support that all 4 residents would own cars. Given the number of occupants arising from the existing use and the sustainable location of the property, it is not considered that a refusal on highway grounds could be upheld at appeal.

- 7.14 Furthermore, regard must be paid to previous appeal decisions over the past few months where Planning Inspectors have consistently taken the view that where a site is close to local amenities and public transport, and no parking is provided, considerable weight has been given to the sustainable location of the site, and the appeals concerned have been allowed. Indeed, some Inspectors have taken the view that proposed occupiers in recognising the lack of parking provision and proximity to amenities, may choose the location for this purpose and not wish to have cars.
- 7.15 Notwithstanding the fact that there are outstanding applications for HIMOs within the vicinity of the site which may have the potential for cumulative impacts on parking within the locality, in view of the recent appeal decisions, and the weight the Inspectors have given to the sustainability of locations, and having regard to the sustainable location of the application site, the number of occupants proposed, and that there is sufficient room within the site to provide secure bicycle storage, in accordance with the requirements of the IPPS, it is not considered that a refusal on highway grounds could be upheld.

### **Refuse storage**

- 7.16 No details have been submitted for refuse storage or bin location. There is sufficient space to the rear of the property for bin storage, a condition is recommended to agree the details of refuse storage for the property to ensure it is of an appropriate size.

### **Amenity**

- 7.17 The proposed use falls within Use Class C4, which in effect categorises this as a residential use. There is no evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would generate adverse amenity impacts such as noise or anti-social behaviour over and above those created by a more conventional C3 dwelling. Consequently, it is not considered that a refusal of planning permission, or the imposition of conditions in relation to amenity issues would be reasonable or sustainable at appeal.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposed development would not lead to an unacceptable concentration of HIMOs within the locality that would adversely affect upon the character of the local area, street scene, nor would the development have significant adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity or parking provision. The property is of sufficient size to accommodate the level of accommodation as proposed.
- 8.2 The proposed development would be in accordance with the requirements of Policies H1, H5, and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, saved Policies E20 and H30 of the Northampton Local Plan, the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim Planning Policy Statement and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 17-041-01, Block Plan, Site Location Plan.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be occupied by a maximum of four residents at any one time.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of the proposed occupiers and the surrounding area in accordance with Policies H1 and H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

3. Full details of facilities for the refuse storage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within one month of the date of the permission hereby granted. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and fully implemented within two months of the date of the permission hereby granted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Full details of facilities for the secure and covered parking of bicycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within one month of the date of the permission hereby granted. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and fully implemented within two months of the date of the permission hereby granted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

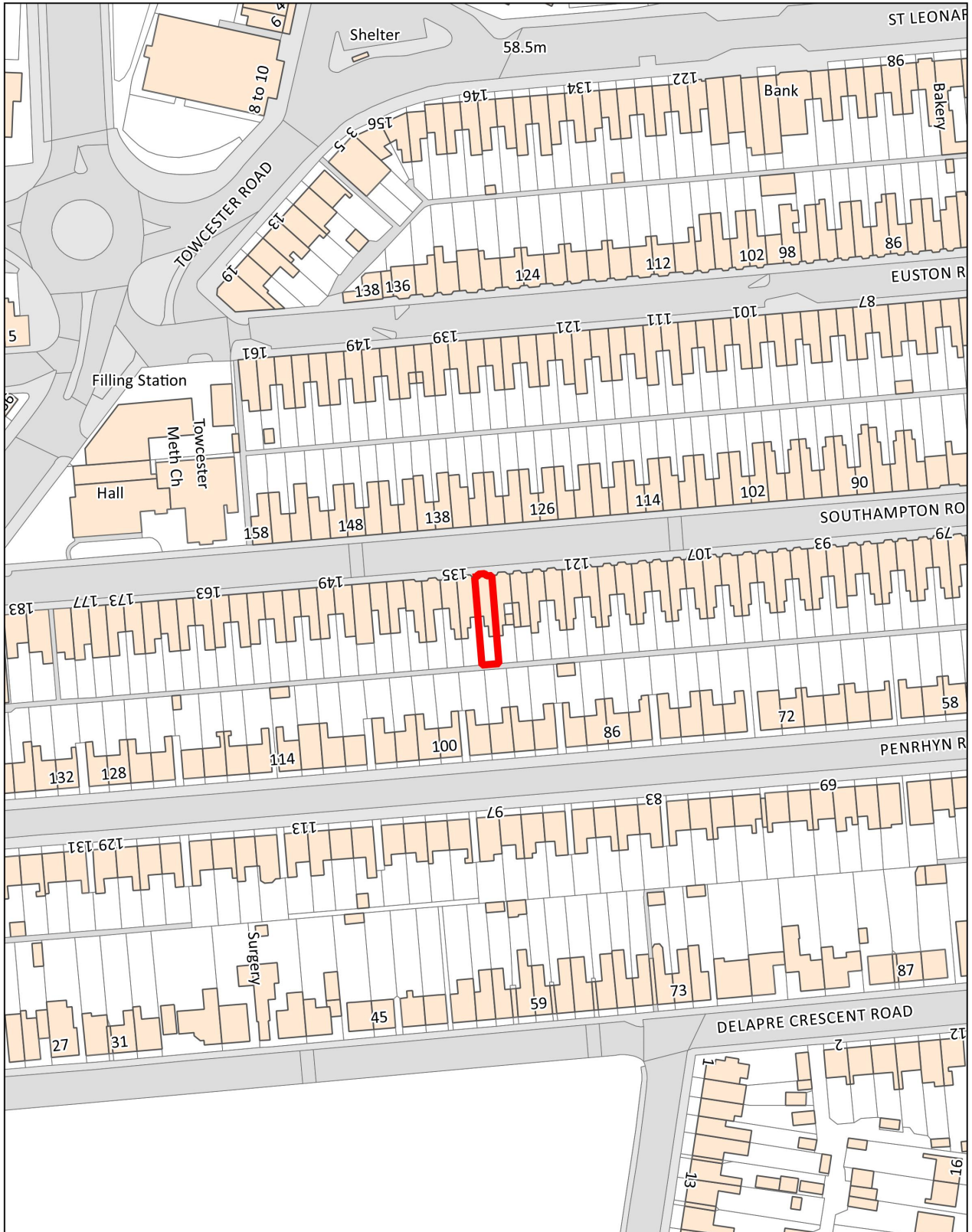
- 10.1 N/2017/0513.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The development is CIL not chargeable.

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



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