

Member Questions for Planning and Licensing Committee – 7 February 2024

Question	Response
<p>Councillor Dilys Neill</p> <p>At the December 2023 planning committee, I raised some questions about the number of empty properties in developments which are exclusively for older people which are within Cotswold District. I am still awaiting a written response. I can provide the full text of the questions of needed. I have two further questions.</p> <p>1. What is the council’s position on empty properties in general? There is a property in the centre of Stow, the Old Funeral Directors, & the adjacent Shepherds Cottage which have been empty for many years, probably ten. They have fallen into a state of disrepair & have been vandalised. The owner was required to make them safe, which was done, but they have been broken into again & there are beer cans etc inside. I have reported this on numerous occasions to the empty properties team but nothing further has been done.</p> <p>2. Two applications in my ward were submitted to me with a request to permit. They are both within 50 metres of a listed building & objectors questioned why a heritage statement had not been provided. In both cases, the application was declared invalid & a heritage statement requested. It seems that officers are not aware of their requirement & I would like some clarification about when a heritage statement is required.</p>	<p>Question 1: Empty homes are monitored by the Revenues Team. There are premiums applied to those properties which has been empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more. Legislation has recently been changed to reduce this period down to 1 year. A report is due in Cabinet on 7 March outlining this change with proposals for the Council to implement the new legislation. Officers liaise with owners of empty properties and give advice where possible to encourage the properties be brought back. The Council used to have a shared dedicated resource specifically to manage and monitor long term empty properties, but this was a grant funded post, and the funding is no longer available. Officers are aware of the individual property referred to by Cllr Neil and considering what action, if any can be taken.</p> <p>Question 2: In considering the need for a heritage statement, Officers have regard to Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states:</p> <p><i>‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.’</i></p> <p>The need to undertake a heritage statement is considered on a case by case basis. The size, scale, nature of the proposed development and its relationship</p>

with heritage assets will differ for each proposal and site. It is not therefore simply a case of a heritage statement being requested if a proposed development is located within 50m of a listed building. For example, the erection of a building within the historic parkland setting of a listed building may have an impact on the setting of the heritage asset despite the proposed building being 200-300m from the listed building. Equally, an extension to a property located within 50m of a listed building may not affect the setting of the heritage asset because other larger modern development lies between the application site and the listed building.

It is therefore necessary to assess each proposal on its individual merits and it will not always be possible to pick up whether a heritage statement is required at the validation stage. Depending on the site context and the nature of the proposal, it may then be necessary to request a heritage statement during the course of the application process.

For clarification, a heritage statement is different to a Design and Access Statement. The latter is required in the following circumstances:

- (a) Development which is major development, or
- (b) Where any part of the development is in a designated area, development consisting of –
 - (i) the provision of one or more dwellinghouses; or
 - (ii) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more.

In some instances, applicants will include a heritage assessment within a Design and Access Statement.

Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF states: *Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

--	--