

## Planning Policy Comments

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| Application No   | APP/23/00996                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Address          | McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant, PO9 1BS                                                                                                                                                               |
| Development      | Change of use from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) and associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage, including provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and new fencing |
| Case Officer     | LW                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Comments By      | JB                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Date of Comments | 12 January 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### Policy Status

The [Local Plan \(Core Strategy\)](#) and the [Local Plan \(Allocations\)](#), together with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan form the development plan for the borough. The Council has also adopted a [Housing Delivery Position Statement](#), which is a material consideration in the determination of applications.

### Principle of the Change of Use from Class E Office to Class F1 Education Use

The site is located at the eastern edge of the designated Havant Town Centre, designated by Policy CS4 of the Local Plan, and supplemented by Policy AL3. Together, these policies seek to protect the vitality and viability of the town centre. The site lies outside of the primary and secondary frontage, so the policy is less restrictive here. Nevertheless main town centre uses are expected, and ones that bring activity to the centre.

The site itself is subject to a site specific allocation under Policy HB3 (site ref H72) for mixed use development of housing and main town centre uses. The loss of the employment use is therefore considered accepted in policy terms, and the applicant is therefore not required to demonstrate the acceptability of the loss as set out in Policy DM3.

As for the acceptability of the proposed use under the site allocation, the NPPF Annex 2 Glossary definition of 'Main Town Centre Uses' does not include education uses.

However, a number of local and national policy support educational uses more generally:

- Policy CS1, criterion 14 supports development which 'supports improving the educational and life chances for young adults'
- Policy CS7, criterion 2, supports development which 'provides educational and training improvements'
- Paragraph 99 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting school place requirements, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

Overall, while the proposal does not accord with the Local Plan allocation for the site, it is considered that nevertheless the proposed use is supported in principle.

Firstly, although not defined as a town centre use and therefore not in accordance with development plan policy for the site or the town centre, the education use taken on its merits is not considered inappropriate to the location at the extreme edge of a defined town centre, close to residential areas.

Further, the age of the Allocations Plan (2014) together with paragraph 126 of the NPPF has been taken into account. This states that *Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan: a) it should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and b) in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.*

### **Detailed Considerations**

This comment has focussed on the principle of the proposal; The overall acceptability will be determined in relation to a number of detailed considerations, including, but not limited to:

- Residential amenity (Policy CS16)
- Transport and parking (Policies DM11, 12 and 14 and Parking SPD)
- Heritage (Policy DM12) - The site lies in the St Faith's conservation area. The Council's Conservation Officer should be consulted on the proposal.

### **Conclusion**

The principle of the proposed F1 education use is considered acceptable in policy terms, while detailed considerations will have to determine the overall acceptability of the proposal.