

Planning Policy Comments

Application No	APP/23/00476
Address	Unit D, 44-54 West Street, Havant
Development	Change of use from Class E to <i>sui generis</i> betting shop
Case Officer	DS
Comments By	JB
Date of Comments	18 July 2023

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.

Change of Use

The site lies at the heart of Havant Town Centre, in the pedestrian precinct of West Street. It is in an area defined as primary shopping frontage. Policies CS4 and AL3 of the Local Plan apply. These policies seek to protect the vitality and viability of the town centre by supporting main town centre uses. The proposed use of betting shop is not listed specifically as a main town centre use in the NPPF definition, but it is considered to be a use appropriate to a town centre.

It is also noted that the proposed occupier already operates from a location near to the application site, which they propose to relocate from if this application is successful.

Policy AL3 indicates that at least 50% of the units in an unbroken run of primary frontage, where this unit is located, should be retained in retail use (formerly A1). The proposal site is a vacant shop with an A1 permission. Since Policy AL3 was written the Use Classes Order has been amended and now sees a number of former uses, including A1, combined uses into the new use class E. As such it is no longer possible to strictly implement policy AL3. In any case, the proposed *sui generis* use would not result in the permanent loss of a town centre commercial unit (when contrasted, for example to a residential conversion) and could revert to another retail or business use in the future. Overall, the change of use is considered acceptable in principle under this provision.

Policy DM2 of the Local Plan contains a marketing requirement for local shops and community facilities. Although benefitting from an A1 permission, it is not considered that a local shop is being lost in this case, and as such it is not suggested that the applicant needs to comply with the provisions of this policy. Nevertheless, it is noted that the applicant has stated that the unit has been marketed since 2020 and no retail occupier has been found.

Overall, the change of use is considered acceptable, the proposed use providing an occupier for a town centre retail unit, adding to footfall and activity in a key part of the town centre.

Shop Front

The application includes details of the proposed frontage. These should be judged against policy DM21.

