

Planning Policy Comments

Application No	APP/19/00173
Address	57 London Road, Cowplain, PO8 8UJ
Development	Change of use from A1 to A3/A5
Case Officer	BC
Comments By	JB
Date of Comments	2 April 2019

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 [Pre-submission Havant Borough Local Plan 2036](#) (HBLP 2036) was approved by the Council on 30 January 2019 and can be afforded limited weight.

The following policies in the adopted Local Plan are of particular relevance:

- CS4 and AL3 - Town, District and Local Centres
- DM5 - Control of Class A3, A4 and A5 Food, Drink and Entertainment Uses

In the Pre-submission Plan the following policies are of particular relevance:

- C3 - Cowplain District Centre
- C8 - Food, Drink and Entertainment uses

Principle of Development

This site falls within the Cowplain District Centre as defined by Policies CS4 and AL3 of the adopted local plan. These policies seek to promote main town centre uses, in particular A1 retail shops, in order to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the borough's town, district and local centres.

The application site lies within the secondary frontage of the district centre. The proposed change of use is from an A1 shop to an A3/A5 café/restaurant. Therefore, criterion 4 of Policy AL3 is of particular relevance, as it seeks to retain at least 25% of the units in an unbroken run of secondary frontage in A1 retail use. A site visit would be needed to establish whether this criterion is met.

It is not considered that a marketing exercise as set out under policy DM2 is required in this case, as the use to be lost is not considered an important community facility, and because under the equivalent emerging policy (policy C7 HBLP2036) this requirement would not apply.

The Pre-Submission Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 (HBLP2036) is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Under the emerging Local Plan, the site remains within the Cowplain District Centre as defined by policy C3. That policy introduces greater flexibility regarding the loss of A1 units outside of the primary area, with main town centre uses (which include A3/A5 uses) which enhance the evening economy and have active frontage supported.

However, policy C8 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan 2036 would also apply, which seeks to restrict A5 uses across the borough to below the current levels in order to meet public health objectives. The A5 element would therefore not be supported under emerging policy.

Noise and Odours

I note the application includes provision of an extraction duct. Policies

- DM5 Control of Class A3, A4 and A5 Food, Drink and Entertainment Uses (Core Strategy) and
- C8 Food, Drink and Entertainment Uses (HBLP 2036)

include provisions regarding the management of noise and odour from food and drink uses, which will have to be met. Design policies (see below) will also be relevant to the consideration of any such equipment.

Shopfront and Signage

I can see no information in the application indicating changes to the shopfront or signage, but if these are proposed, policies

- CS16 High Quality Design (Core Strategy)
- DM21 Shopfronts, Signs, Security Shutters and Advertisements (Site Allocations)
- E1 High Quality Design (HBLP2036)

will be relevant considerations.

Conclusion

In policy terms, the key consideration is whether the proposal supports and enhances the vitality and viability of Cowplain District Centre.

It is considered appropriate in this case to take into account emerging policy. Overall, the direction of travel in the emerging Local Plan is towards greater flexibility in the range of uses that are acceptable in town centres. On that basis, there is no in principle objection to the loss of the A1 use at this site, or the A3 element of the proposal. However, the emerging plan also clearly seeks to restrict, even reduce, A5 uses in the borough. This element would therefore not be supported by emerging policy. It is suggested that this should be communicated to the applicant in order to explore whether a pure A3 uses would meet their requirements. If the detailed aspects of the application are acceptable, in particular those regarding mitigation of the impacts of a food and drink use on neighbouring properties, and if the A5 element can be removed, there would be no objection in principle to the application.