

Planning Application Response of Planning Policy

Application No:	APP/17/01324
Site Address:	Dunsbury Park, Fitzwygram Way, Havant, PO9 4EE
Development:	Variation of Condition B6 of Planning Permission APP/15/00732 to remove restriction on proportion of B8 floorspace allowed within the Dunsbury Park development, and thus provide for a maximum mixed use floorspace of 61,779 sqm within Classes B1, B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 as amended
Case Officer:	Mrs D Haywood
Comments by:	Jade Ellis
Date of Comments:	4 th January 2018

Policy Status

The adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the Local Plan (Allocations) provide the development plan for the Borough.

The Draft Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 is also material in terms of setting out the Council's direction of travel for local planning policies. Following Cabinet's resolution to approve consultation on the Draft Local Plan 2036, the consultation will take place from Monday 8th January until Friday 16th February 2018.

Comment

Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy identifies Dunsbury Park as a key strategic employment site. The site is reaffirmed as a business gateway of local and sub-regional importance in the Draft Local Plan with the potential to deliver a substantial amount of new employment floorspace up to 2036 under Policy KS6. It is worth noting the new policy in the Draft Local Plan does not set a maximum proportion of B8 floorspace recognising increasing employment densities and trend towards more modern distribution facilities now comprising elements of B1, B2 and B8 uses as businesses seek to minimise costs.

The 2014 outline consent limited the proportion of B8 Storage and Distribution uses to no more than 20% of the total employment floorspace. The available evidence at the time indicated that B8 Storage and Distribution uses tend to generate less than half the job density of other employment floorspace (B1 and B2 uses). This has been subsequently varied by a section 73 planning permission APP/15/00732 to allow a greater proportion of B8 floorspace across the site (followed by Reserved Matters consent for the Fat Face distribution centre).

Paragraph 3.71 of the 2015 Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Employment Density Guide reports that in 2006 distribution activity employed one person per 95 sqm but had increased to one person per 77 sqm in 2010, and again to one person per 69 sqm in 2015. On this basis, Policy KS6 of the Draft Local Plan indicates that development will be permitted where the operations or use(s) will support an employment density of 70 sqm per person or less.

Paragraphs 6.17-6.18 of the applicant's Planning Statement outlines the anticipated employment densities for the forthcoming reserved matters applications for Plots 4a and 5 (although exact details of the occupiers cannot be released due to commercial confidentiality):

- Plot 4a would provide a mixed B1/B8 unit totalling 9,200 square metres, employing 180 staff rising to 250 as the company expands. This would equate to an employment density of one person per 37-51 sqm, providing proportionately more jobs than average employment densities for distribution uses in 2014.
- Plot 5 would provide a 92,000 sqm manufacturing building, employing 110 staff – equivalent to one person per 83 sqm. Whilst this would fall above the threshold of the employment density, these operations would fall under Class B2 of the Use Classes Order and an objection would not arise on this basis.

Conclusion

Given the strategic and local importance of the business park, the need to appeal to a wide range of business sectors and the change in nature of B8 job densities it is considered that the removal of the Class B8 restriction justified. This is particularly relevant given the FatFace distribution centre (plot 2) and plot 4a comprise a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 elements, and will support the delivery of this key site. On this basis, a policy objection would not arise.

In the delivery of future plots and phases, there will be however be a need to ensure that B8 storage and distribution operations either support an employment density of one person per 70 sqm or less; or that the development proposals will provide a range of employment opportunities with different skill levels which balance with the number of staff.