

Planning Application Response of Planning Policy

Application No:	APP/16/00142
Site Address:	23 The Tanneries, Brockhampton Lane
Development:	Change of Use from B1 (office) to A1 (retail) charity shop outlet.
Case Officer:	Mrs H Lealan
Comments by:	Gavin Stonham
Date of Comments:	24 th March 2016

Policy Status

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

Comments:

This is an application for a permanent change of use from a use class B1 office to a class A1 retail unit. The building is currently operating as an A1 retail unit under a flexible change of use which started on 24th April 2014 and which expires on 24th April 2014 (ref. GEN/14/00458).

The site falls outside of the boundary of Havant town centre and beyond 300m from the primary shopping area. Paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the following in regard to main town centre uses, of which a shop falls into the NPPF definition:

Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.

It is likely that there may be sequentially preferable sites within the town centre that could accommodate a shop of this type, which should be explored. To approve a permanent change of use from B1 to A1 use outside the town centre would also be in conflict with Local Plan (Allocations) policy AL3 and paragraph 2.12 which state that main town centre uses should be located in town, district and local centres.

In defence of the proposal, the unit was vacant prior to being occupied under the temporary change of use. The applicant has referred in a letter to the Council dated 18th February 2016 to marketing that has been carried out to ascertain potential interest in the unit for offices. This shows limited interest from potential business occupiers, indicating possible non-viability. However the applicant suggests that most marketing is done by word of mouth, which would have resulted in limited advertising exposure.

We would suggest that this is not a fair indication of the likelihood of the building being reoccupied by another B1 office in future. The Local Plan (Core Strategy) policy DM3 sets out marketing criteria that would need to be fulfilled to allow a change of use to a non-B class employment use at this site and this is considerably more detailed than the marketing that has been undertaken so far.

The business is a charity shop which has traded successfully throughout the flexible change of use period, employs a number of staff and has not caused amenity problems. A fair approach in this case might be to permit a temporary permission to A1, rather than a permanent one. I would recommend that this permission should be for a further 12-month period. If the applicant then reapplied for a permanent change of use after that point, this will have allowed sufficient time to amass the 12 months' worth of marketing evidence required under policy DM3 to enable the unit to change use on a permanent basis.

Recommendation: Grant a 12-month temporary permission to change use to A1.