

Planning Application Response of Planning Policy

Application No:	APP/14/01105
Site Address:	37 Park Parade, Havant
Development:	Change of use of part ground floor from storage area to gymnasium (use class D2)
Case Officer:	Mrs T Pickup
Comments by:	Gavin Stonham
Date of Comments:	24 November 2014

Comments:

The Local Plan is now comprised of the Core Strategy (2011) and the recently adopted Allocations Plan (2014). It should be noted that Saved Policies are no longer relevant.

The site adjoins Park Parade and Tidworth Road at the western edge of the pedestrianised shopping parade. This parade is not part of a primary or secondary shopping frontage so Allocations Plan policy AL3 is not relevant.

Promoting Havant Borough's Economy:

The application site is located within Leigh Park District Centre. Core Strategy Policy CS4 (Town, District and Local Centres) (2) and (4) are supportive of proposals that enhance the evening economy of district centres and support small and independent businesses. A new gymnasium would provide an active daytime and evening use for the parade. Policy CS17 (Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas) aims to concentrate new leisure and other types of development in Leigh Park as one of the borough's five urban areas. The proposal would utilise previously developed land and buildings (CS17 criteria 2) and provide local employment (CS17 criteria 3).

Policy AL3 (1) of the emerging Plan (Town, District and Local Centres) supports proposals that provide main town centre uses in district centres, and thus contribute to their vitality and viability. The proposal is considered to be a main town centre use in this context with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework's definition. The site is not within a primary or secondary shopping frontage, so there is no need to apply a test to the proportion of remaining units in A1 use or of vacant units with permission for A1 use.

At the time of the latest survey of use classes in the area (October 2014) the commercial units within 37 Park Parade were all vacant, as was the ancillary storage unit which is the subject of the application. The high current proportion of vacancies in the shopping centre, particularly on the south side frontage of Park Parade, provides further justification in my view to allow conversion of part of the ground floor of this unit into an active use. The unit's occupation could improve public perception of the area visually in terms of its perceived safety. The new facility would also attract people to the area and is likely to increase local footfall and consumer spending at the site and potentially elsewhere in Park Parade and/or the rest of the district centre. The site's redevelopment could also attract further businesses to occupy the other vacant units in the parade, thereby assisting the area's regeneration.

Regeneration and Community Support:

The proposal would be in accordance with policy CS6 (Regeneration of the Borough), which indicates that development with a focus on Leigh Park will be favourably considered, particularly if it a) provides a sustainable mix of uses, supports c) healthy lifestyles and d)

community safety and f) provides training and employment opportunities. A new gymnasium in the district centre of Leigh Park would positively address all of these desirable criteria. The applicant has submitted a Planning Statement alongside his application which states that local residents would be the main target group for the new gym facility and that membership fees will be kept low to allow the unemployed or low paid the opportunity to join.

Tidworth Road adjoins a large public car park which would provide ample availability of car parking spaces for visitors to the new gymnasium. The site is also sustainably located to encourage access on foot or by public transport.

Health and Wellbeing:

Core Strategy policy CS1 (Health and Wellbeing) provides further support for the proposal. Criteria (10) of CS1 states that planning permission will be granted for development which *“protects and contributes to the availability of community facilities...which can be justified by needs which are evident in the local district.”*

In terms of needs evident, the national Indices of Deprivation 2010 identifies Leigh Park as having 17 sub-ward level areas (Lower Layer Super Output Areas) in the 20% most deprived areas in England (Hantsweb). It is clearly therefore an area in need of regeneration and a new leisure/community facility could have several possible benefits to its local residents. Improving health and access to services including opportunities for physical activity is Key Priority 1 in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy *Forward Together*. The Core Strategy indicates low use across the entire borough of health and fitness clubs, so the proposal could have benefit not only residents of Leigh Park but provide a wider benefit to Havant residents who live further away.

Principle of Development:

Support.