Planning Application Response of Planning Policy

Application No:	APP/25/01029
Address:	Unit 2, 24 Palmers Road, Emsworth, PO10 7DL
Development:	Change of use from Class E to Class F to swim school. (Retrospective)
Case Officer:	JF
Comments by:	IE
Date of Comments:	23 July 2026

These comments are provided on the basis that the unit was previously occupied by a mixed Class E(g) (formerly use class B1(c)) and sui generis use comprising a mechanics garage and tattoo studio.

Development Plan

The Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the Local Plan (Allocations), together with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, provide the development plan for the Borough. The Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the development plan in this area.

Emerging Development Plan and updated Evidence Base

The Publication (Reg19) Local Plan is currently subject to public consultation until 5pm on 9 September 2026. This is supported by a number of evidence base studies which have updated the position on development requirements, land supply and constraints including the Employment Land Review Update.

Principle of Development

The site lies within the built-up area as defined by Policies CS17 and AL2 of the Adopted Local Plan. The educational use is generally supported:

- Policy CS1, criterion 14 supports development which 'supports improving the educational and life chances for young adults'
- Policy CS7, criterion 2, supports development which 'provides educational and training improvements'

The reuse of previously developed land is particularly encouraged. As such, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, subject to other material considerations.

Loss of Employment

The ground floor use of the unit was last in use as a mechanics garage falling within Class E(g) of the Use Classes Order (formerly B1(c)), whilst the upper floor was last in use as a tattoo studio (sui generis).

Core Strategy Policy DM3 (Protection of Existing Employment and Tourism Site) sets out that the change of use of a premises currently or last used for B use class employment services to non-B class use employment will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the premises is not fit for purpose and financially unviable for B use class purposes. It needs to be clearly demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for B use class. This is generally demonstrated by means of an active and realistic marketing exercise, but no information has been provided in this respect.

Policy W3 (Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan) states that any application to change the use of land from industrial to other uses will only be granted in exceptional circumstance and where it can be demonstrated that continuing provision cannot be made for industrial or other employment uses on a proportion of the site without harm to residential amenity. Currently no information has been submitted to demonstrate that the policy requirements have been met.

As such, a policy conflict would arise in the context of Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Policy W3 of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan. The occupation of the unit as a swim school has however, only resulted in the loss of the ground floor from an employment. In addition, it is noted that the swim school has retained the site in economic use which should be prioritised before other use. As such, any harm resulting from the loss of the ground floor in employment use must be weighed carefully against the benefits of the proposal.

Parking

DM14 (Car and Cycle Parking on Development (excluding residential)) states that development will only be permitted where it provides parking for cars, motorcycles and cycles in accordance with the relevant standards. Such parking must be appropriately located in relation to the development and be practical for its intended use. The applicant will need to demonstrate that the application is in line with Policy DM14 and the parking standards within the Council's Parking SPD.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposal seeks retrospective permission to retain the use of the site as a swim school (Class F). The retention of the use would result in the loss of the ground floor from employment use, and no information has been provided to demonstrate that it is no longer suitable for that use. As such, a policy objection would arise in the context Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Policy W3 of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan. However, the swim school would retain the site in economic use. As such, any harm resulting from the loss of the ground floor in employment use must be weighed carefully against the benefits of the proposal.