

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

ITEM NO. 12

Ward: Whitley

App No: 181059/FUL

Address: Unit 1, Arena Business Park, Acre Road

Proposal: Change of use from storage and distribution to (Class B8) to a flexible Class B2/B8 use

Applicant: South Yorkshire Pensions Authority

Date validated: 03/07/18

Target Date: 21/08/18

Extension agreed to: 07/12/18

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Approved plans
3. Vehicle parking
4. Bicycle parking

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Need for building regulations
3. Encroachment
4. Construction and Demolition subject to Environmental Health
5. Highways
6. Positive and proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site is located in an established area of industrial, office and commercial uses and is within the defined South of Basingstoke Road Core Employment Area. The closest residential dwellings are located approximately 300m east of the site at Basingstoke Road. The site extends to 1.29ha, south of Acre Road. Acre Business Park is located to the east, with large warehouse buildings located to the north, south and west.

1.2 The site comprises a large warehouse unit (gross internal floor space 6,183 square metres) with a service yard to the west, and extensive parking to the east. Dual access is achieved to Acre Road. The northward and eastward site boundaries are lined by trees subject to preservation orders. At the time of the application the unit is vacant, most recently in use in November 2017 by Booker Cash & Carry (Class B8). The site has recently undergone extensive refurbishment, internally and externally, following the grant of planning permission 172301/FUL.



Site Location Plan

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the unit from storage and distribution (Class B8) to a flexible Class B2/B8 use. No internal or external changes are proposed to facilitate the change of use. Changes of this nature have recently taken place after the grant of planning permission 172301/FUL in February 2018.
- 2.2 The planning application has been made as the history of the site is unclear, and the determination of the application provides certainty, and to assist in putting a currently vacant unit back into active use. The proposal originally included the option of a Class B1(c) use, though this has been removed from the description of development during the course of the application on the advice of officers.
- 2.3 Following the advice of officers, the bicycle storage approved under application 172301/FUL has been altered, with a further five stands now being proposed. This takes the total on site bicycle parking provision to 18 spaces.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 890234/ADV - Display of signage - Permitted 02/01/90
- 3.2 920197/FUL - Erection of first floor fire exit and two roller shutter doors - Permitted 02/06/92
- 3.3 021490/ADV - Display of signage - Permitted 24/12/02

3.4 172301/FUL - Various external alterations including replacement of front façade, installation of condenser and ventilation grilles, and alterations to parking layout - Permitted 27/02/18

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory Consultation

4.1 None.

(ii) Non Statutory Consultation

4.2 Transport Development Control

4.3 To the original proposal, Transport Development Control objected to the proposal on the grounds of insufficient information being supplied to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. It was considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network. Additionally, the proposed vehicle and bicycle parking failed to demonstrate that they comply with the LPA's standards.

4.4 Following discussions, the description of development was amended to remove the proposed B1(c) use given the increased level of trips that would have been generated. Accordingly, an amended Transport Statement was provided to reflect this change and Transport Development Control provided the following response:

4.5 The applicant has been unable to count the number of trips generated by the existing use of the site given that this has now closed. It has therefore been agreed through the discussions that a survey from an alternative comparable Booker Warehouse would be acceptable and the site was accepted prior to the survey commencing. It has however been identified that the PM Peak assessment is for the hours of 4pm and 5pm but this is not the PM Peak hour and this should be assessed between the hours of 5pm and 6pm. I have therefore reviewed the survey data for the Booker site and this identifies the following:

	Thursday	Friday
AM Peak 2-way	46	47
PM Peak 2-way	42	21
Total daily flow 2-way	543	501

Table 1 - Surveyed Booker Site in Birmingham

4.6 The survey data therefore identifies an element of flexibility between the trip generation for the site within the PM Peak period, following a review of the opening times for Booker Warehouses these are typical 7am to 5pm with the exception of a Thursday which is until 7pm. Given this the Friday trip rate would be the most likely to assess weekday trips and therefore this should be used.

4.7 The surveyed site has a floor area of 5,500m² while the application site has a floor area of 6,183m², I am therefore happy to factor up the trip rates from the survey data to represent an actual trip rate. This is identified within the table below:

	Thursday	Friday
AM Peak 2-way	52	53
PM Peak 2-way	47	24

Total daily flow 2-way	610	563
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Table 2 - Surveyed data factored up to 6,183m² for application site

- 4.8 The applicant has stated that the trip rates associated with the proposed uses have been calculated using TRICS which in principle has been deemed acceptable. The TRICS data has been analysed and I note that the following sites are not comparable for the reasons listed below:
 Site ES-02-D-06 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site LC-02-D-07 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site WO-02-D-01 - This site is not comparable given that it is classified as a B1 use
 Site WO-02-D-02 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site WY-02-D-06 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site

- 4.9 I have therefore removed these sites from the selection and as a result the assessment I have undertaken results in fewer trips to that specified by the applicant. The outcome of my assessment as well as a comparison to the current use is as follows:

	AM Peak	PM Peak	Daily
Trips from Current Booker Site	53	24	563
Proposed B2 Use	52	48	457
Difference	-1	+24	-106

- 4.10 The proposal for a B2 use results in similar flows in the AM Peak, an increase of 24 movements in the PM Peak and a reduction of 106 movements across the whole day. This is not a material increase in the PM Peak and within the daily fluctuations on the network and given paragraph 109 of the NPPF which states proposals should only be refused on transport grounds if the residual cumulative impacts are severe, a refusal on traffic generation grounds would be hard to defend at an appeal.
- 4.11 The current building has a use class as B8 so this could change to another B8 user without planning permission as a result I have not reviewed any Trip Rates within the B8 use class.
- 4.12 The proposed addition of a B2 use will result in an increased demand for car parking. The Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD requires a provision of 1 space per 150m² for B8 uses but a provision of 1 space per 100m² for the proposed B2 use. Based on the floor area provided this would equate to an additional 20 spaces being required or a provision of 62 spaces, however a drawing has been submitted that illustrates the provision of 59 spaces. Given that the Councils standards are maximums the parking provision illustrated is deemed acceptable.
- 4.13 Additional cycle parking is also required in accordance with the Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD, and would need to be in the form of 4 additional cycle spaces. The submitted drawing has identified the provision of 4 Sheffield type stands equating to 8 cycle spaces and this is deemed acceptable in principle. However there does not appear to be sufficient space between the existing and proposed row of stands so that all cycle spaces are therefore accessible, in addition the proposed cycle parking does not appear to be covered. A revised drawing

should therefore be submitted to address the above but given there is sufficient space to accommodate this provision I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

- 4.14 In the circumstances there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to conditions.
- 4.15 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at Units C1-C13, Acre Business Park, Acre Road; Units 6, 8 and 10 Worton Drive; Unit 2 Arena Business Park, Acre Road; 4 Acre Road; and Whitbread, Acre Road were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

5.4 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) (altered 2015)

Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CS5: Inclusive Access

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

Policy CS10: Location of Employment Development

Policy CS11: Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

Policy CS12: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

Policy CS13: Impact of Employment Development

Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy

Policy CS22: Transport Assessments

Policy CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

Policy CS35: Flooding

Policy CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (altered 2015)

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy SA12: Core Employment Areas

5.6 Reading Borough Proposals Map

5.7 Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

5.8 Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

6. APPRAISAL

(i) **Principle of change of use**

6.1 The application site is located within Core Employment Area SA12c: South of Basingstoke Road. Policy SA12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document defines the boundaries of Core Employment Areas to allow policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy to be applied. These areas will be the main location for industrial and warehouse uses and there is a general presumption against the loss of employment land in these areas.

6.2 The proposed use is consistent with the range of uses within the Core Employment Area. Additionally, the proposal allows a previously vacant unit to be placed into an active use. On this basis it is considered that the proposal would not result in a loss of employment land and is therefore in accordance with policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy.

(ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

6.3 The proposal does not include any internal or external alterations. Extensive refurbishment of the site has recently taken place with the works approved by planning permission 172301/FUL. The proposed change of use would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy.

(iii) Impact on neighbours

6.4 The application site is located within an area of established industrial and commercial activity. The closest residential dwellings are located approximately 300m east of the site at Basingstoke Road. At the time of the application, the unit is currently vacant and the future occupiers are unknown. Noise from plant equipment that has recently been installed on the building is controlled by condition under application 172301/FUL. Any residual noise problems that might occur from any future occupier could be reasonably controlled under separate Environmental Health legislation. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(iv) Transport

6.5 Transport Development Control have assessed the proposal and concluded that the proposal is acceptable. The amended TRICS data supplied establishes that a B2 use in this location would result in 106 fewer trips across the day than the current B8 use. The LPA's parking standard requires a maximum of 62 spaces for the use proposed. 59 vehicle parking spaces have been provided on site, secured by condition to permission 172301/FUL. 18 secure bicycle storage spaces, across two locations, have also been provided on site. This accords with the LPA's standard for a use of this size and is therefore considered to be acceptable. Drawing No: BS-01 Rev. P1 (received 22/11/18) addresses the outstanding information that Transport Development Control required, so no pre-commencement condition is required. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(v) Flooding

6.6 The site is not located within a flood zone and the proposal does not include any physical alterations to the building or external areas. Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy.

(vi) Equality

6.7 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics including age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

(vii) Employment, Skills and Training

6.8 The Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the obligations that will be sought from developers at the construction and end user phases of development, contributing towards a range of employment, skills and training measures. Generally, the SPD is applied to all developments. However, more discretion is applied to changes of use where there is no net increase in floor space and/or where some or all of the floor space has been in continuous use for at least 6 months in the 12 months leading up to the submission of the planning application.

6.9 The application is for the change of use of the unit, with no additional floor space proposed. The unit was most recently in use in November 2017 by Booker Cash & Carry. The proposed development does not include any construction phase and the end user is unknown. Based on this information, officers have discussed the requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan with Reading UK CIC. Reading UK CIC advised that in the circumstance, there would not be a requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan. This is due the proposed development relating the change of use of the unit only, there being no known end user and that the unit was in continuous use in the 12 months leading up to the submission of the application. As such, there is no requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan and the proposed development is in accordance with the Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed change of use is considered acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy, as set out in this report. The application is recommended for approval on this basis.

8. PLANS

Planning Statement (received 18/06/18)

Site Location (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: PL-02 Rev. B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: PL-03 Rev. A - Proposed First Floor Plan (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: BS-01 Rev. P1 - Proposed Bicycle Storage and Car Park Layout (received 22/11/18)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

