

Summary of Planning Application Documents

Planning, Economic Development and Retail Statement

The application is for the change of use of Unit 3 from D2 to A1 Retail Use, with the removal of the existing mezzanine to accommodate Retailer Home Bargains. The unit was originally in use for retail purposes and was first used for D2 use in 2001.

Existing membership levels and the sub-optimal retail park location (without other leisure anchors) means that investment in the unit by the current user is not financially viable. The current user is pursuing a strategy of locating within the Great London area.

The existing use employs 10 people. The proposed retail use will employ approximately 44 people of a range of levels from shop floor staff to management.

The proposed retail operator is TJ Morris Ltd trading as Home Bargains. Home Bargains is a value grocery and general merchandise retailer. They sell a range of goods including up to 30% of the gross internal floor area of the unit to be used for food. Food sales are generally limited to non-perishable goods, confectionary and snacks. Drinks are limited to soft drinks and beer, wine and ready mixed drinks. The range of fresh and perishable goods is extremely limited and choice within a particular range is also limited. No frozen food is sold from Home Bargains.

The sequential assessment contained within the Planning Economic Development and Retail Statement report assesses sites within and on the edge of Bognor Regis Town Centre. Home Bargains have demonstrated flexibility in their format by removing existing mezzanine and occupying the smallest unit from which it is possible to operate their business model.

The officer's report on the sequential assessment for planning permission reference BE/37/14/PL (granted July 2013) contained the Council's view that there were no sequentially preferable sites that could accommodate a unit of 966 sq m. This sequential assessment was therefore undertaken on the basis of a unit area almost identical to that of Unit 3 of Bognor Regis Retail Park.

There is no change in circumstances would mean the Council would come to an alternative view regarding the availability of suitable sites closer to the town centre.

The termination of the legal agreement between the Council and St Modwen to develop the Hothamton and Regis Centre sites means that the development of the sites is now considered to be a much longer term position.

In terms of the impact assessment, the planning application proposals fall beneath the NPPF and Arun District's emerging Local Plan threshold for development that requires an impact assessment.

An impact assessment is therefore not required with this planning application, and this has been confirmed by email by the Council's Strategic Development Manager.

Notwithstanding that a retail impact assessment is not required, the assessment contained within the report demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse effect on the town centre arising from the planning application proposals with only negligible trade diversion.

There are a number of substantial planning benefits arising from the application in terms of employment, traffic reduction and the substantial claw back of expenditure that is currently leaking from Bognor Regis to other more distant retail destinations.

There are no other material considerations which could prevent the Council determining the planning application and reaching a positive conclusion. Planning Permission should therefore be granted.

Transport Statement

TTP has been appointed to provide highways and transport advice associated with the proposals for Unit 3 at Bognor Regis Retail Park. In summary:

- The existing retail park offers approximately 7,630sqm of floor space with Unit 3 currently comprising a Fitness First, which contains 949sqm on the ground floor with a 753sqm mezzanine;
- The local area is characterised by the north-south corridor of the A29 Shripney Road with surrounding land uses including A1, B1, B2 and B8 uses which are located towards the south and the east of Bognor Regis Retail Park;
- The A29 Shripney Road is the road that bounds the retail park to the east and caters for 3 bus services with bus stops located within 600m (7-8 minute walk) of the retail park;
- The proposals associated with this planning application are for a change of use from D2 fitness and leisure to A1 non-food retail which includes the retention of the 949sqm ground floor and the removal of the mezzanine;
- The proposed change of use and decrease in floor area has been assessed with reference to the TRICS database and surveys of similar styles of development located in England. It is expected that there will be an overall reduction in traffic movements to and from the site during peak periods and that the development will have a positive impact on the operation of the local road network. Hence the proposals include no alteration in the number of parking spaces; and

- Vehicular access in to and out of the site is to remain as existing, via a junction from Rowan Way. The layout can accommodate deliveries by vehicles up to and including 16.5m articulated HGV with the servicing area located to the rear of the unit, as existing.

Conclusion

The proposals associated with this planning application would result in a beneficial change in conditions on the local highway and transport network and as such the proposals are considered to be acceptable in highway and transportation terms.