

From: Mark Waleczek
To: Adrian Dowd
cc: Colin Hirst
Ext: 4581
Date: 07/01/2022

Location: Unit 2, 75 Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3WH

Re: Consultation on planning application 3/2021/0999 Unit 2, 75 Berry Lane, Longridge PR3 3WH

Brief Description of Proposal

Change of Use from existing retail store (E Commercial) into a taxi office (Sui Generis).

Policy Response

A review of the site location shows that the address is within both the settlement boundary of Longridge and the identified town centre. In addition, the location where consent is sought is within Longridge Conservation Area. As a result of the application's intention and site location, the following policies are seen to be relevant in determining the policy context:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028

- Key Statement EC2 – Development of Retail, Shops and Community Facilities and Services
- Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets
- Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy
- Policy DMR2 – Shopping in Longridge and Whalley

Longridge Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2028

- Policy LNDP4 – Conserving and Enhancing Our Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy LNDP8 – Longridge Main Centre

Key Statement EC2 of the Core Strategy outlines the importance of development supporting and enhancing *'the vibrancy, consumer choice, vitality and unique character of the area's important retail and service centres'*. Despite application 3/2021/0999 proposing a change of use away from retail, the site has been vacant for a period and has not been able to contribute to the local economy or consumer choice. In this regard the application supports Key Statement EC2 of the Core Strategy and is also supported by policies DMB1 and DMR2 insofar as the change of use will see a currently vacant retail space brought into use within one of the borough's three main centres, generating both employment and investment. This is to be embraced especially given the characteristics of the site

itself, with a shared entrance and small window space which reduces the street presence of the business occupier which can be critical for retail functions.

LNDP8 of the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan states that for development within the main centre (which this site falls within), town centre uses will be supported. The policy goes on to list the range of 'supported' uses which were originally included in use classes A1-A5, in addition to development for community services, arts and culture, and other retail development which services the needs of the neighbourhood area. Taxi offices do not appear to fall within the uses stated within this policy, nor does this use appear in the definition of 'main town centre uses' as stated in the NPPF. However, it is my view that this policy does not preclude the introduction of other uses within the main centre where appropriate. Whilst LNDP8 advocates for certain town centre uses, I do not consider the policy to make them the exclusive purposes only through which development is to be allowed within the centre. The proposal is therefore not found to be contrary to this policy.

The proposal is also supported by national policy from the perspective of economic development by supporting growth and job creation as highlighted within Chapter 6 of the NPPF. Chapter 7 of the NPPF also states that local authorities should promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres by '*allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries*'. The application seeks to occupy a currently vacant retail unit in the heart of the town centre through a change of use and as a result can be seen to fulfil the aspiration of the NPPF for centres to respond to market demand for various town centre uses.

As highlighted the site also lies within a designated area of conservation and as a result the development must comply to policies DME4 of the Core Strategy and LNPD4 of the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan, reflecting the importance placed on conserving and enhancing the historic environment as found in the NPPF. The extent to which the application achieves this is outside the scope of this response and is a matter for Development Management consideration, as are all other matters of design, access and amenity as found within Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy and LNPD9 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

In summary this application raises no concerns from economic development or planning policy perspectives, so long as matters of detailed design are found to be in adherence with other policies found within the Core Strategy and Longridge Neighbourhood Plan.

Should you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mark Waleczek

Planning Policy Assistant