

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

10 March 2016

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P1468.15 – 36 High Street, Romford –
Change of use from drop in support
facility for the elderly to Class D1 adult
substance misuse centre (received
7/10/15)

Ward

Romford Town

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

Local Development Framework
The London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

- Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for [X]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community [X]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering [X]

SUMMARY

This matter is brought before committee as the application site is Council owned.
This proposal relates to a change of use from a drop in support facility for the elderly

to an adult misuse centre. In all respects, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and The London Plan. Approval of the application is therefore recommended, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit - The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with plans - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Restriction of use - Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) the use hereby permitted shall be an adult substance misuse centre only and shall be used for no other purpose(s) whatsoever including any other use in Class D1 of the Order, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To restrict the use of the premises to one compatible with the surrounding area and to enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over any future use not forming part of this application and in order that the development accords with LDF Romford Area Action Plan DPD Policy ROM11 and the LDF Development Control Policies DPD Policy DC61.

4. Hours of use - The premises shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 09.00 and 19.30 Monday to Friday and 09.00 to 13.00 on Saturday without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies DPD Policy DC61.

INFORMATIVES

1. Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

REPORT DETAIL

1. **Site Description:**

- 1.1 The application site is located on the northern side of the High Street. The site comprises of a single ground floor unit, which is presently used as a drop in support facility for the elderly. The application premises is located within a four storey terraced building with commercial uses at ground floor, offices at the first floor level and flats on the second and third floors. The application site is located within the retail fringe area of Romford town centre and is within the Romford Conservation Area.

2. **Description of development:**

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for a change of use from a drop in support facility for the elderly to an adult substance misuse centre (Class D1) for the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse. The property would be used as a centre, specialising in recovery, education, training and employment. The centre would be used as a 'Reintegration Hub', which means that it would be used by service users who are further along in their treatment journey and are more stable. The service users would be attending the centre for training (e.g. IT training), group work and one to one support, an internet café for service users and other activity for those in recovery - all of which would be by appointment only. The aim for the site is to re-integrate the service users back into the community, by helping them to recover and get back into work. There will be no drop-in facilities and no clinical facilities on site. The centre would be open between 09.00 and 19.30 Monday to Friday and 09.00 to 13.00 on Saturday. It is proposed that there will be ten full time employees.

3. **Relevant History:**

- 3.1 P1448.11 - Change of use from Class A1 (retail) to form a drop in support facility for the elderly - Approved.

P2039.08 - Temporary change of use of shop unit for storage purposes during and in connection with the Havering Museum Building Works Project - Approved.

4. Consultations/Representations:

- 4.1 The occupiers of 89 neighbouring properties were notified of this proposal. One letter of objection was received with detailed comments that have been summarised as follows:
- In the past, a drug centre was established below the flats in Angel Way, which brought problems to the area and increased crime. This comment is not a material planning consideration and further impact on amenity has been given careful consideration at paragraph 9.
- 4.2 The Highways Authority has no objection to the proposals.

5. Relevant policies:

- 5.1 Policies CP4 (Town Centres), CP17 (Design), CP18 (Heritage), DC33 (Car parking), DC61 (Urban Design), DC63 (Delivering Safer Places) and DC68 (Conservation Areas) of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are considered material. Policies ROM6 (Respecting the historic environment), ROM11 (Retail fringe), ROM20 (Urban design) and ROMSSA4 (18-46 High Street) of the Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document.
- 5.2 Policies 3.17 (Health and social care facilities), 4.7 (Retail and town centre development), 6.13 (Parking), 7.4 (Local Character) and 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology) of the London Plan are relevant.
- 5.3 Chapters 2 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres), 8 (Promoting healthy communities), 7 (Requiring good design) and 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

6. Staff Comments

- 6.1 The change of use from a drop in support facility for the elderly to an adult substance misuse centre requires planning permission as condition 3 of planning application P1448.11 restricted the use to an advice and information centre only.
- 6.2 This proposal is put before the Committee owing to the site being Council owned and an objection being received. The issues arising in respect of this application are the principle of development, the impact on amenity and parking and highways implications.

7. Principle of development

- 7.1 The application site is located within the retail fringe area of Romford town centre where Policy ROM11 of the Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document advises that retail uses (Use Class A1) will be permitted throughout the retail fringe. Planning permission for non-retail uses will be granted at ground floor level provided that the use: complements the retail function; has an active frontage; is open during core retailing hours and does

not significantly harm the character, function and vitality and viability of the centre.

7.2 Staff are of the view that the proposal would give rise to a general level of activity, as there would be pre-arranged appointments for attendees of the centre. The proposed adult substance misuse centre will be open during normal shopping hours, albeit with reduced hours on a Saturday and closure on a Sunday. Staff are of the view that the proposed centre would provide an appropriate use within this retail fringe location in accordance with Policy ROM11.

7.3 Government guidance on promoting healthy communities states that Local Authorities should plan positively for the provision and use of services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Staff are of the view that the proposed use is appropriate to a shopping area and would meet with the objectives of Chapter 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. **Design/impact on street/Garden scene**

8.1 The proposal does not involve any external changes to the building.

9. **Impact on amenity**

9.1 When reviewing the merits of this application, consideration was given to the following factors. The agent has advised that the applicant, Westminster Drug Project, is experienced at running these specialised services over a number of years and in lots of locations. The service users would be attending the centre for training, group work and one to one support and other activity for those in recovery, all of which would be by prior appointment. In addition, the property is accessed via a single front door with an entry system. The centre would be used by service users who are further along their treatment journey. There are no drop-in facilities or clinical facilities on site. As such, it is considered that the services offered would not result in a significant degree of noise and disturbance within the building or from service users accessing the application site given the appointment system. The centre would be open between 09.00 and 19.30 Monday to Friday and 09.00 to 13.00 on Saturday. Staff consider that these hours of operation are acceptable and would not be unduly harmful to residential amenity taking into account the general levels of activity, noise and pedestrian and vehicular movement within Romford town centre. The hours of operation can be secured by condition if minded to grant planning permission.

10. **Highway/parking issues**

10.1 Access to the property will normally be on foot, with staff and visitors either using local public transport (bus and rail). Alternatively, staff and visitors can park in the Angel Way car park, which is in close proximity to the site. The Council's Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal.

11. **Mayoral CIL**

11.1 The application is not liable for Mayoral CIL.

12. **Conclusion**

12.1 Having regard to all relevant factors, Staff are of the view that this proposal would be acceptable. Staff consider that the change of use would not result in a significant loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. It is considered that the proposal would not create any adverse highway or parking issues. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

This application is considered on its merits independently of the Council's interest as applicant and owner of the site.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity. The proposals will provide a variety of services to help to re-integrate the service users back into the community.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application forms and plans received 7/10/2015.