

Application Number 19/01074/FUL

Proposal	Change of use from Training Centre (use class D1) to a Homeless Shelter (use class Sui Generis) providing 35 bed spaces with internal alterations.
Site	St Ann's Training and Development Centre, Newman Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne
Applicant	Tameside MBC
Recommendation	Approve
Reason for Report	A Speakers Panel decision is required because, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the application is made by the Council and is not of a routine nature.

1.0 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

1.1 The application seeks full planning permission to change the use of the former Training Centre (use class D1) to a Homeless Shelter (use class Sui Generis) to provide 35 bed spaces. Facilities to be provided would include also a wet room, showers, a kitchen and a canteen. The application relates primarily to the first-floor of the building with only a laundry room and interview room being located on the ground-floor. The proposal forms part of a wider scheme to provide a Community Hub with the Council working in partnership with Salford Diocese in the planning and implementation of the project, which is intended to including on the ground floor a café area, a food bank and a clothing bank that will be available for use by, and provide support to, all members of the local community who are in need. Other than internally, no physical changes are proposed to the building. The homeless shelter would be operational between 07.30pm and 09.00am every day. The last entry time to the shelter would be 10.00pm, except in exceptional circumstances and only when an assessment of an individual's needs have taken place through the Council's out-of-hours service.

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The Training Centre forms part of a group of buildings occupying a rectangular area of land bounded by Newman Street to the north, Bentinck Street to the east, Burlington Street to the south and Cavendish Street to the west. The buildings are situated at the very edge of Aston town centre, which is delineated along Cavendish Street.

2.2 Occupied and used previously by the Council for staff training and community education programmes, since April 2017 the property has been used for informal storage by the owners, the adjacent Church. The former Training Centre building occupies the central portion of the northern part of the site and abuts the footway in Newman Street. On its western side the Training Centre is attached to the St Ann's Social Centre. Both buildings rise to 2 storeys and are brick-built. The eastern portion of the site is occupied by St Ann's Church. An internal courtyard area separates the Training Centre from the Presbytery that fronts on to Burlington Street. Access to the Training Centre is taken from passageway between the Social Centre and the Presbytery from Burlington Street.

2.3 There is a car repair garage and car parks across Cavendish Street in the town centre. The Trinity Moss Millennium Green, including an all-weather sports pitch, is located across Bentinck Street, on the far side of the Social Centre. The assisted living, care home at Lomas Court is situated immediately across Newman Street to the north. Holy Trinity Primary School and the Community Centre are situated approximately 140m to the north

along Bentinck Street. A mix of uses, such as there is in the vicinity, is typical of the edge-of-centre location.

3.0. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Allocation Unallocated

3.2 Part 1 Policies

1.5: Following the Principles of Sustainable Development
1.12: Ensuring an Accessible, Safe and Healthy Environment.

3.3 Part 2 Policies

T10: Parking.

3.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2. Achieving sustainable development;
Section 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11. Making effective use of land

3.5 Other Policies

Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

It is not considered there are any local finance considerations that are material to the application.

3.6 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

3.7 This is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalising and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the PPG or other national advice in the Analysis section of the report, where appropriate.

4.0 PUBLICITY CARRIED OUT

4.1 As part of the planning application process 27 notification letters were sent out to neighbouring properties on 24 December 2019. Following amendments being made to the proposals 35 notification letters were sent out to neighbouring properties and to respondents to the initial publicity who were not notified directly at that stage.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 The Head of Environmental Services (Highways) has suggested that the proposals include provision for staff car parking and refuse bin storage.

5.2 The Head of Environmental Services (Public Protection) has raised no objection and suggested that conditions requiring the provision of refuse bin storage and restricting the hours of conversion work be attached to any permission.

6.0 SUMMARY OF THIRD PARTY RESPONSES RECEIVED

6.1 Objections have been received from 27 named individuals, from 17 households. Four individual objections have been received from 2 households, 3 from another, and 2 each from another 2. Eight of the households objecting are local, the others are more remote, including from a resident in Manchester, but reference, suggesting use of, the Holy Trinity Community Centre.

6.2 The reasons given for objecting are on the grounds:

- Of children's safeguarding issues, being close to the facilities at Trinity Moss Millennium Green;
- That the proposal will relocate the problems that are being experienced in relation to the current facility in Audenshaw to this part of Ashton;
- Of a likely increase in drug use, and discarded drug paraphernalia, and prostitution, close to the Primary School;
- Of a likely increase in crime in nearby residential areas, including Lomas Court where vulnerable people are housed;
- That all publicity has been in English, which is not the first language of many neighbours and users of the Community Centre; and,
- That the issues are such that a more thorough public consultation exercise is required.

7.0 ANALYSIS

7.1 The application being for the change of use only, with only internal alterations, the issues to be considered in the determination of the application are the appropriateness of the proposed use in this location, including the impacts on highway safety and the road network.

8.0 APPROPRIATENESS OF THE PROPOSED USE IN THIS LOCATION

8.1 Where the development plan is relevant when determining a planning application the first step is to consider is whether the proposal is in accordance with the plan, in this case the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and then to take into account any other material considerations. The proposed scheme is a sui generis use; that is, it does not fall within any of the use classes, or it is in a class of its own. Beyond promoting sustainable development by giving priority to the re-use of empty or underused buildings in the most efficient way (policy 1.5), the UDP does not directly address proposals to provide night shelters for homeless people. In these circumstances, the NPPF, which represents up-to-date government planning policy, is a material consideration that must be taken into account. This includes the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework. If decisions are taken that do not follow the NPPF, where it is a material consideration, clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed.

8.2 According to the NPPF, achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. One of these is the social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that there are accessible services that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

8.3 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF requires that planning decisions should:

- a) Plan positively for the provision and use of local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and,

b) Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

8.4 The proposed development would provide Tameside with a service that targets specific users within the local area and would contribute to the health and wellbeing, social, educational, and cultural needs of the community. An appropriate facility plays an important part in contributing to the sustainability of communities and the proposal would not conflict with the aspiration of the Ashton Town Centre Strategy SPD that recognises the potential for the Delamere area, in which St Ann's is located, to become an urban area characterised by a wide ranging use mix.

8.5 The proposed use is thereby considered an appropriate use in this location and, constituting the reuse of an existing, under-utilised building, one that would comply with the SPD, policy 1.5 of the UDP and Sections 2, 8 and 11 of the NPPF.

9.0 HIGHWAY SAFETY AND THE ROAD NETWORK

9.1 Despite the proposal not including any off-street parking provision, the location at the very edge of the town centre close to bus routes and Metrolink is considered to be highly accessible. Moreover, given the close proximity of town centre car parks and that the proposed use is unlikely to generate more traffic or increase the completion for on-street parking than did the previous use, as a training centre, it is accepted that the impacts on highway safety and the road network, being no greater than those of the former use, would not be so severe as to result in the proposal being unacceptable. The proposal is thereby considered compliant with Section 9 of the NPPF.

10.0 OTHER ISSUES

10.1 Fear of crime can be, in certain circumstances, a material consideration in the determination of a planning application where that fear is based on past events and not on an assumption of the characteristics of the future occupiers or users of a development where this assumption is not supported by evidence, other than anecdotal. Nevertheless, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the perceived fear of crime, and that this perception can be addressed through a controlling condition. This condition requires the implementation and operation of the homeless shelter in accordance with a Management Plan that accompanies the application and details:

- A management structure, headed by Council's Head of the Community Safety & Homelessness (CS&H) Service, supported by two managers within the CS&H service who in turn will have support from two Rough Sleepers Initiative Officers and staff and volunteers from Salford Diocese;
- A security structure, which includes security personnel will be on site on a 24 hours, 7 days a week basis to provide support for the safe operation of the facility;
- Search, and a drugs and alcohol policies, which will be implemented and a Behaviour Contract in to which users will have to enter;
- That Police checks will be conducted on each individual accessing the shelter; and,
- A complaints procedure.

10.2 It is also the Council's intention install an external CCTV camera at the junction of Burlington Street and Cavendish Street to provide monitoring of the site & surrounding area.

10.3 It is considered that the location of the homeless shelter would not necessarily cause a threat to the safety of children, the fear of which is again based on assumption of the characteristics of the service users. Despite the relative proximity of the Holy Trinity

Primary School users of the shelter would be contained within one site and monitored and vetted by the Council. The controlling condition it is recommended be attached to any permission would ensure clarity is provided in the operations management of the site as well as behavioural guidelines and a disciplinary procedures for users.

- 10.4 The application was publicised in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which is more wide ranging than is required by the nationally prescribed requirements given by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The building has been vacant for a number of years and has not contributed to the community during this time. The proposed alternative use would bring a vacant building back into a positive use and secure its maintenance whilst making a positive contribution towards providing a necessary facility for local homeless people in a highly sustainable location. Protocols would be implemented once the development is operational in order to ameliorate any adverse impacts on the residential amenity of neighbours. The proposed homeless shelter would help to address the issue of homelessness in Tameside by providing a bed and personal support for anyone who is sleeping rough or at imminent risk of sleeping rough and, on balance, it is considered that these benefits outweigh any harm to local amenity and is so the recommendation is for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby approved must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following approved drawings:

The Location Plan, received on 31.01.20;
The Existing Ground and First Floor Plans, ref. A1007, received on 12.12.19;
The Proposed Floor Plans, ref. BCC-THS-A02-002, received on 12.12.19; and,
The Proposed Plans, ref. BCC-THS-A02-002, received on 30.01.20.

3. The development hereby approved shall be operated in accordance the Management Plan - St. Ann's – Community Hub and Hostel Accommodation, received on 27.02.20.
4. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved the refuse bin storage facility, indicated on the approved plan ref. BCC-THS-A02-002, shall be provided and thereafter maintained for the intended purpose at all times.