DA18169 – 14a MILNROW PRECINCT.
PLANNING STATEMENT

DATE	NOVEMBER 2018
APPLICANT	URBAN AND RURAL ESTATES
APPLICANT ADDRESS	C/o 72 BURY NEW ROAD, PRESTWICH. MANCHESTER M25 0JU
PROPOSAL	CHANGE OF USE FROM A1 TO A3
DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS	14a MILNROW PRECINCT, ROCHDALE

1. Introduction

1.1 The application is for the change-of-use of this address A1 retail to A3. This statement explains the context of the application and this statement addresses the pertinent Planning Policy considerations relating to the proposal. This application is also for an extract flue as indicated on the proposed plans.

2. Location Context

2.1 The subject premises are located in Milnrow which is approximately 4.7km East of Rochdale Town Centre. The premises occupies a prominent position on Newhey Road, providing a comprehensive parade of shops. Retailers resident in the parade include a Tesco Express, Ladbrokes, Rowlands Pharmacy and a Sayers Bakery amongst other independent retailers.
2.2 The building consists of ground floor retail and first floor. There are 8 ground floor units which consist of A1 retail shops and A3 Hot Food Takeaways and one Sui Generis betting shop with offices and residential units on the first floor.
2.3 This application relates to one of the units on the parade of units located centrally on the ground floor.
2.4 The parade offers free car parking for 24 cars and is very popular with the local community.

3. Retail shopping

3.1 Since the recession of 2008 there has been a steady decline in demand for retail shops due to the general economic environment and new retail habits. The new retail reality is that people use shopping parades much less for their shopping requirements. The main driver for this change is online shopping and the ever growing preference of people to shop in larger shopping malls and outlets.
3.2 This parade though has thankfully been remarkably resilient and there have been few vacant units over the years. However, tin the current economic climate, there can be no room for complacency. Already this unit has now been vacant for half a year with no interest from A1 retail users.
3.3 Historically it has been proven that empty shops create a snow ball effect of neighbouring shops also suffering from reduced footfall and the area further declines as a result of the break in active frontages. The above is true in a regular straight run of shops; in this parade type location the continued long term vacancy will reflect badly on the whole area and has the potential to have a disproportionately high impact on the rest of the area.

4. Proposal

4.1 Although there has been no interest from retail occupiers, the good news however that is there is interest from various A3 users. The names of the interested parties is commercially sensitive so cannot be disclosed but suffice to say that the users are high end national operators who will invest heavily in the area and offer a great leisure amenity for the local population.
4.2 It is quite obvious that a quality occupier would bring incidental stability to the adjoining commercial properties by attracting people back to the high street who in turn will patronise the other local stores.
4.3 It is therefore in the interest of all stakeholders of this parade that the unit is brought back into use as soon as possible.

5. Rochdale UDP (Jun 2006)

5.1 The Local Plan identifies this site as a District Centre, a Local Centre and Linear Commercial Areas.

5.2 S/6 states… 'the change of use to… food and drink outlets… will be permitted provided that:
   a. It will be of a scale and character appropriate to the size, role and function of the centre or area; and
   b. It will be compatible with surrounding land uses and will not harm local residential amenity.

5.3 The UDP further states,
- The local centres differ significantly in size, character and condition. A relatively small number are thriving with no vacant premises or sites but the majority are in need of regeneration, many with serious problems of vacant units and/or sites and poor environmental conditions.
- The overall objective is to sustain and support the local centre functions in these locations and secure regeneration where needed. The scale and character of development that will be appropriate will be dependent on the scale and character of the centre concerned and its surroundings. A small supermarket might be appropriate in some of the larger local centres where it would assist regeneration.

6. Rochdale SPD Hot food takeaway

6.1 A separate SPD was published in 2015 and updated in 2017. The aim of this document was to set out the parameters of where and when A3 and A5 uses could be established and the way in which these uses must be created to contribute to the local environment, community and economy. The document Policy 4 states:

- 4.4 It is not considered appropriate, at this time, to restrict hot food takeaways around primary schools as there is no comparable evidence which suggests that the location of hot food takeaways acts as an obstacle to primary school children eating healthily. It is thought that the majority of primary school children are not permitted out of the school grounds during the school day, and that they are more likely to be accompanied by an adult on their way to and from school.
- 4.5 In order to avoid harm to the vitality of the borough's town, district and local centres, no restriction will apply to hot food takeaways within those defined centres (see illustration 1).

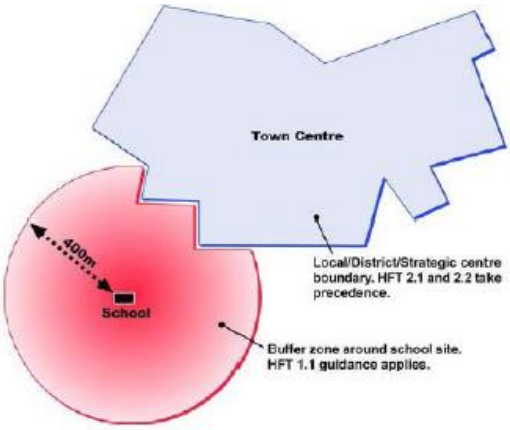


Illustration 1

7. Policy Assessment

7.1 Whilst the proposed scheme is just within 400m of a secondary school, the location is a District Centre and thus exempt from the exclusion. The proposal also complies with all other policy requirements.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Despite the downturn in the fortunes of retail generally, this parade has remained resilient. The aim of this application is to bring a new user into the vacant unit which will be a great service to the community, widen the appeal of the parade and breathe vitality into the parade.