

The Councils policy regarding Change of Use of Existing Business Land and Premises requires applicants to prove that the "The continuation of the land or premises in industrial or business use is constrained to the extent that it is no longer suitable or commercially viable for industrial or business use as demonstrated by marketing evidence commensurate with the size and scale of development " .

We note that the site has been vacant for a number of years, but currently the applicant has not submitted any evidence with the application for change of use to show that this has been tested. It is not sufficient for the applicant just to state that it is "a vacant out of date site" page 6 of planning statement without evidence. There are many kinds of business, some which do not require vehicular access other than employee cars and others which require low cost options with external secure yards. It should be noted that there are business grants available to support refurbishment of sites available to individual businesses, so the applicant should not assume that it would be unviable for business use (if a business were to buy and refit themselves) even if these grants are not available to a developer to access on a speculative basis. Unless the applicant has advertised the site and can evidence that there was no on-going interest/demand for its use as B1/B2/B8 purposes, the regeneration team has no option other than to oppose this application until such evidence of marketing has been supplied and can be assessed.

For clarity, we would normally expect as a minimum to see a letter from an agent detailing:

- when/for how long the property was advertised for commercial use;
- advertised asking price (in public domain or supplied as POA)
- details of this marketing (listings on line property platforms such as EGi, Co-star, rightmove commercial, zoopla, etc), agents website, a copy of property brochure and photograph of site with agents board)
- Details of all enquires and offers
- Any statement or agents conclusion

Please note that we would expect the advertising normally to be for at least 6 months for a smaller site such as this and that marketing must be clear that it was being offered as freehold as a commercial hotel opportunity, at a price commensurate with this use/condition, and that this marketing must have included display on online property platforms for this duration, as well as any other methods such as local advertising.

If the above information is available but not submitted, we would be happy to comment further once received.

Helen Pakpahan
Senior Regeneration Officer
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