DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0169 **Valid 29/07/2022**	**24 FOUNTAIN STREET** **LEEK**	**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR VACANT OFFICE TO FLAT.** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Amenity of future occupier
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Highways

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is located within Leek and is sited outside of the town centre as defined by the Local Plan. The property is an end terrace on a row of residential dwellings on Fountain Street. The property was formerly an office for a mortgage advisors' business but is now vacant. The area is prominently residential but there are other business premises close to Fountain Street.

PROPOSAL

Consent is sought to change the use of the property from class E (office) to use class C3 (flat). The property will occupy the lower floor of the terrace property to provide a one bedroomed flat. The property will be accessed off Fountain Street. No external alterations are proposed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS 5 Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 20/10/22
Neighbour consultation period ends:22/08/2022
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None received within Consultation Period

Town / Parish Comments

None received within Consultation Period

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS 2 identifies the Settlement Hierarchy for the District. The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Leek. Leek is identified as one of the largest settlements in the district. The spatial strategy seeks to focus future growth in these settlements and to strengthen their role as service centres. For Leek the Leek Area Strategy seeks to consolidate the role of Leek as the principal service centre and a market town and support its regeneration. One of the actions is that development should continue to meet housing and community of Leek and its rural hinterland by increasing the range of available and affordable house types, including for first time buyers and older people. The proposed development provides a single level one bedroom unit that is considered to be located in a suitable location close to Leek town centre.

The application site is outside of the town centre boundary as defined by the Local Plan maps however the Retail Impact Assessment Thresholds - Review Staffordshire Moorlands District Council November 2017 states that Leek town centre was found to be vital and viable; whilst there were fewer convenience retailers present within the centre compared with the national average (principally comprising small-scale independents), both the number of units and quantum of floorspace for comparison retailing was significantly above that nationally. The vacancy level was tangibly below the national average. As such the loss of one office unit is not considered to have a significantly detriment impact on the vitality of Leek town centre.

As such the principle of the development is acceptable subject to an assessment on the impact of the design, amenity of future occupier, impact on neighbours and highways.

Design

No external alterations are proposed and therefore there are no design implications for this application.

Amenity of future occupier

The application proposes to provide a one bedroomed single level residential unit. The unit will have an internal floor space of 67m2 and therefore the property is considered to meet the national space standards required for a 1bed, 1 person unit (39m2) and a 1 bed, 2person unit (50m2).

To the rear the property will benefit from a rear yard that is suitable for storage refuse bins as well as providing a private outside space for the occupier. Though this area it modest in size it is like other neighbouring properties and is therefore considered acceptable.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The application site is in a residential area and therefore when compared to the office use the use of the property for residential would have negligible impact on the occupiers of neighbouring residential dwellings.

Highway Safety

The application site is located within a sustainable location with on street parking to the front and side of the property.

As such the development is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety, capacity and amenity.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers
Recommendation Date: 17.10.2022

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council