

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/26/101337

Site Address: 32-34 BOURNEMOUTH ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH,
SO53 3ZL

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Proposed GRP Substation, including localised fencing and landscape alterations, along the School Road boundary, together with proposed GRP Switchroom located within the existing site.

Relevant Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Within the Urban Edge Within Designated Employment Site		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
There is evidence of commercial/industrial activity having taken place on the application site dating back to the mid-20th century based on the planning records available, with this having first been in the north-eastern corner of the site with the use of a former school building for office purposes. Since then, there have been a number of applications (under the planning base number of 06345) for the expansion of the industrial uses to the west, including the construction of workshops and other buildings and ancillary works, as well as applications for advertisements and minor tree works. More recently, planning permission was granted in December 2025, under reference no. F/25/99876 for: <i>Re-development of site including demolition of existing office building and replacement with a three-storey headquarters office building, together with associated supporting infrastructure, including car parking and hard and soft landscaping (amended description).</i>		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations	None received.		
Chandlers Ford Parish Council	No comments received.		
HCC Highways	In regard to application F/26/101337, having reviewed the information contained within the application pack, there would be no objection to the proposals from a highway perspective. The proposed GRP Substation is located within the site, and its position does not affect any required visibility splays out onto the adjacent highway. Whilst there is a loss of two vehicle parking spaces to accommodate the unit, it would not be anticipated that this loss would be severe given the overall parking quantum available on the site.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was undertaken by the Case Officer to review the proposals in context.		

Policy:
Legislative Background: Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan:

The Development Plan comprises of the policies of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (EBLP) and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2013 (HMWP). The following policies of the EBLP are of relevance to the application: S1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), S2 (Approach to New Development), S4 (Employment Provision), DM1 (General Criteria for New Development), DM2 (Environmentally Sustainable Development), DM3 (Adaption to Climate Change), DM8 (Pollution), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (General Development Criteria – Transport), DM14 (Parking), DM15 (Safeguarding Existing Employment Sites). In addition, and as the site lies within a minerals and waste consultation area, Policy 16 (Safeguarding – Mineral Infrastructure) is also of relevance to the application.

Other material considerations:

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

The following SPDs and Background Papers are of relevance to the proposals:

- Environmentally Sustainable Development
- Parking Standards

National Planning Policy/Guidance:

The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF or Framework) was published in December 2024 and, as set out within paragraph 231, the policies contained within it are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides additional guidance in support of the policies within the Framework and is also a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Assessment:

Principle of development:

The application site lies within the urban edge and forms part of an established employment site within the Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy S2 sets a target of 103,500sqm of new employment development within the Borough across the Plan period (2016-2036), with Policy S4 setting out the strategy for how this will be sought to be achieved. This strategy includes retaining existing (and allocated) employment sites which have the potential to contribute towards future employment needs, and intensifying their use in accordance with the provisions of Policy DM15.

The application seeks permission for the provision of an electrical substation along the site's northern boundary with School Lane, as well as a separate switchroom which will be positioned further into the site to the south. The supporting information which accompanies the application explains that the development is required due to the need to upgrade the incoming power supply to overcome regular power disruptions, with the site already being at capacity. These works are ancillary to the existing employment use and are considered to be necessary to support the viability of the applicant's operations, as well as their continued improvement of the site (including the works recently approved under application F/25/99876 (see 'planning history' above)).

It is, therefore, considered that the principle of development is acceptable and in compliance with the requirements of Policy DM15 of the adopted Local Plan. Any planning approval is, however, subject to the proposals also according with the provisions of the other applicable Local Plan policies, with the relevant material considerations in this regard being covered below.

Assessment of proposals:

- In terms of layout and design, both of the proposed structures will be constructed out of GRP (glass reinforced plastic), with the substation to be green in colour and the switchroom to be grey. They will be located on existing areas of hardstanding, with the works associated with the substation additionally including the partial removal and making good of the existing chain link boundary fence and crash barrier, the replacement of a small section of soft verge to provide a concrete apron to the front of the substation, and its enclosure to the sides and rear with an open timber fence.

The structures are very much functional in terms of their form and appearance and whilst the substation will appear relatively prominent given its location immediately alongside the roadside boundary, it is not considered in this case that it would appear visually obtrusive or notably detract from the street scene when taking account of its fairly modest size and the industrial character of the surroundings. The switchroom is positioned further into the site against the backdrop of the larger buildings and associated industrial paraphernalia and, as such, raises no concerns in terms of its visual impact.

- Given the siting of the development relative to the nearest residential properties (which are along Bournemouth Road to the east) along with its modest scale, height and size, there will be no notable material impact on the amenity of their occupiers.
- Whilst the substation and associated works are located close to the edge of the highway, they do not encroach onto highway land or impede the adjacent pedestrian footway. They will also not affect access arrangements to the site or impinge on the required visibility splays. As noted by the highway authority, there will be the loss of two car parking spaces, however, it is not considered that this will have a notable impact in highway terms given the overall quantum of parking that is available across the site. Accordingly, no objection has been raised.
- The site lies within a minerals and waste safeguarding area as defined in the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP), with this being due to its proximity to the concrete plant operated by Heidelberg Materials which lies to the opposing side of School Lane. Taking account of the nature and very modest scale of the development proposed, it is not considered that it would have any material effect upon or undermine the operations of the safeguarded site. There is, therefore, no undue conflict with Policy 16 of the HMWP.
- As the area of grass verge that would be removed is below the 25sqm *de minimis* threshold and the development does not impact a priority habitat, the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement does not apply in this case.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF and the development

plan do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF supports economic growth and productivity with the aim of building a strong competitive economy, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 103,500sqm of new employment development to be provided within the borough over the plan period as noted earlier in this report. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and the Council's adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. Taking account of the nature of the proposals, the development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and to have limited impact on climate emissions.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐