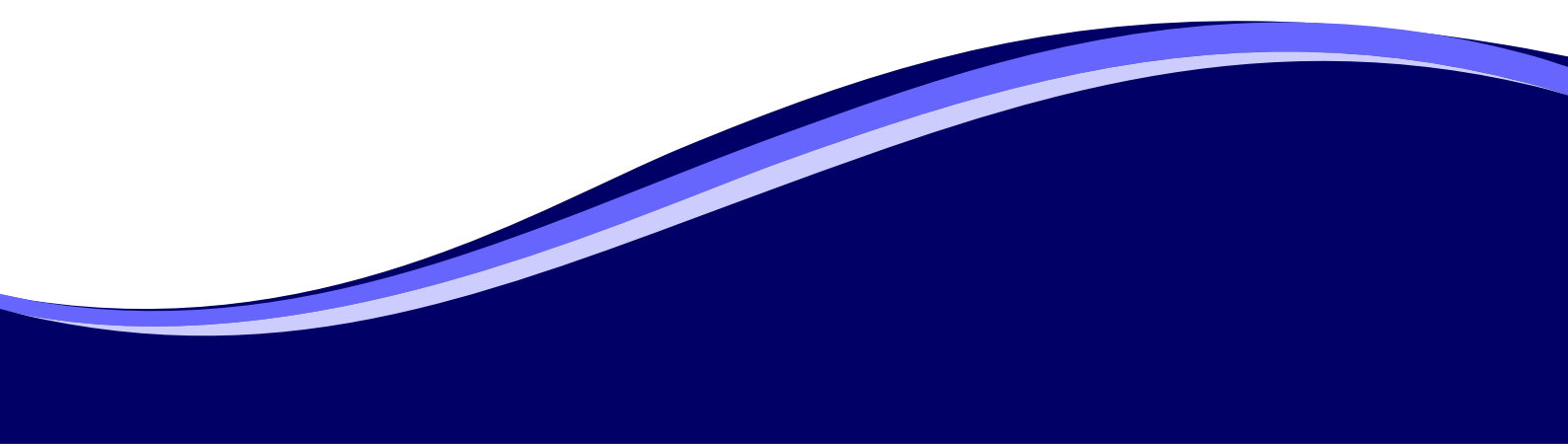


# Planning Statement

Ridge Farm,  
Grange Road,  
Bursledon,  
Southampton,  
SO31 8GD

Change of use of land to hardstanding

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# 1 Introduction

## Site Address:

Ridge Farm, Grange Road, Bursledon,  
Southampton SO31 8GD

## Client:

Mr D. Townsend

## Proposal:

Retrospective planning application for the change of use of former agricultural land to hardstanding ancillary to existing commercial premises on site.

## Architect:

JOLP Development Services

## Author:

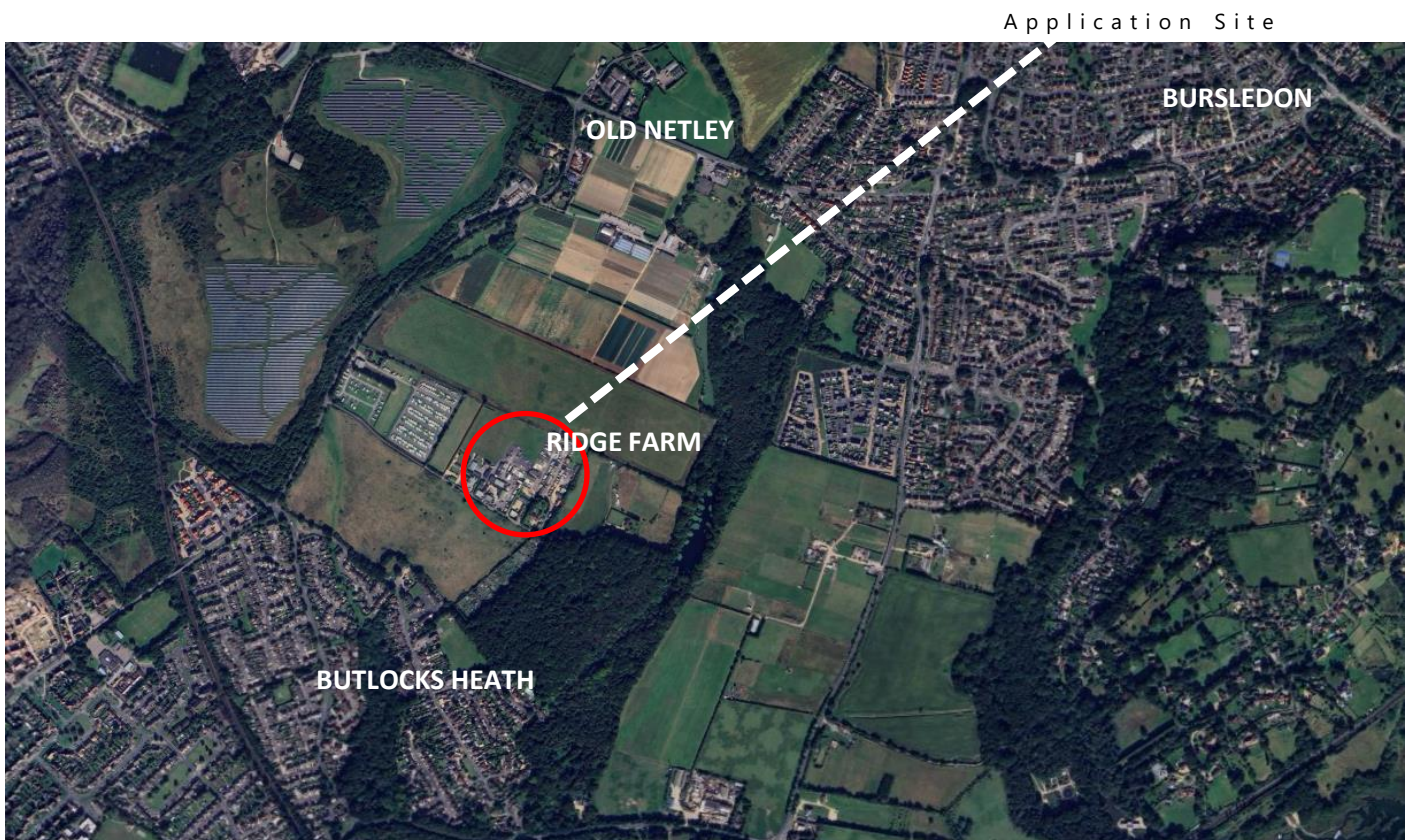
Mr N. McKeon BA, MA, MRUP, MRTPI

## Application type:

Full planning application

## Date:

November 2024



Aerial Context – Source: Google Earth

## 2 Background

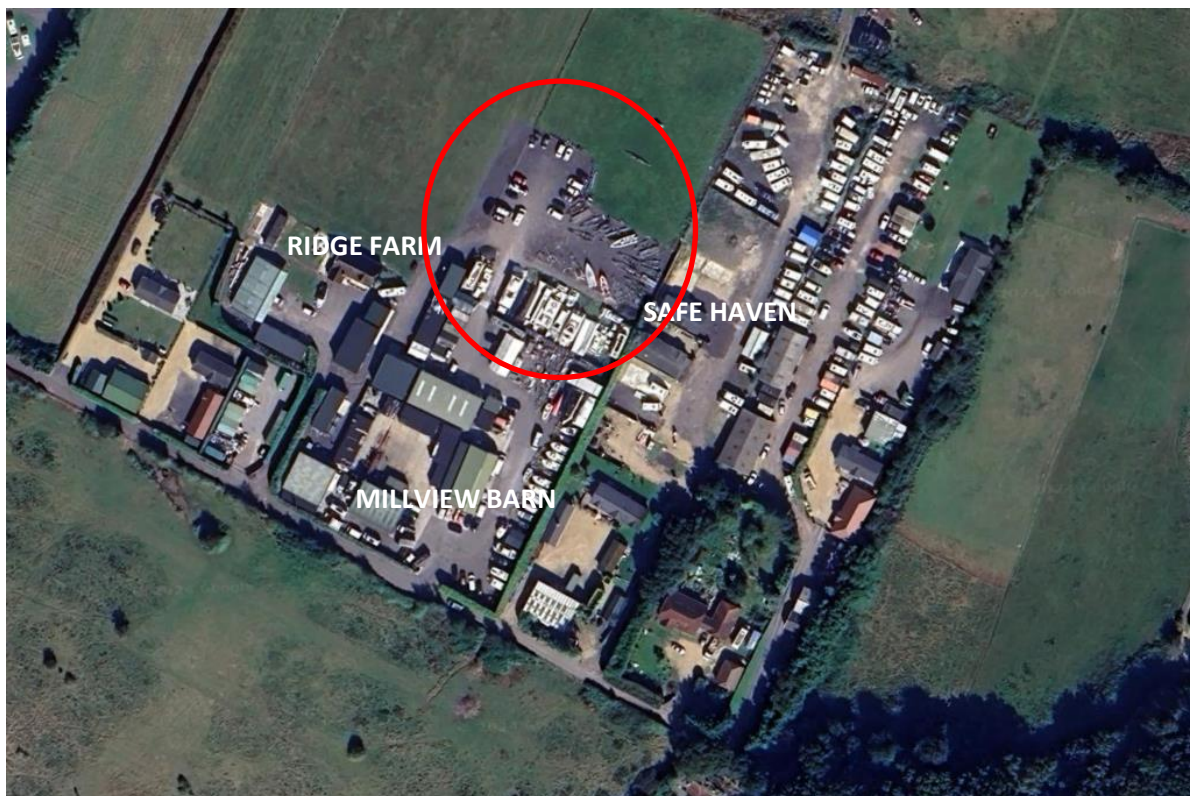
### The Site and Surroundings

#### Use

- Approximately 14 commercial units spread across Ridge Farm and Millview Barn ranging from individual units in Class E, B2 and B8.

#### Built form

- The combined properties house a variety of commercial/industrial businesses in the form of one and two storey structures. Some of these units have internal mezzanine floors.
- The more recently developed units share a similar design style and scale, creating consistency across the site in parts.
- Residential bungalow (Class C3) is positioned to north west of the site (Ridge Farm) with an expansive rear garden area.
- Boat storage is positioned to the eastern boundary of Millview Barn and to the application site at Ridge Farm to the rear of the site.
- Caravan storage is found to the adjacent property at Safe Haven to the eastern boundary.
- Hardstanding space to the rear of the rear of the site serving as parking/storage area ancillary to existing commercial/industrial units on site (circled red).



Aerial Context – Source: Google Earth

# The Site and Surroundings

## Landscape

- The commercial premises is predominantly set to hardstanding with either commercial units or access drive and parking areas. The sole exception to the land to the rear of the bungalow at Ridge Farm and the rear of the parking area and storage space to the northern edge of the application site.
- There is hedging to the front boundaries off the private access road. Hedging also lines the site boundaries. There is a stretch of tall hedging to the access drive to Ridge Farm and the commercial units to the south west of the main household.

## Access

- Access to Ridge Farm is from the southern boundary entrance drive to the main household. Millview Barn has a separate access drive to the south eastern corner of the site.
- Various parking areas are found throughout the site, with additional vehicle parking to the rear which is subject to a separate planning application.



Access Drive (Off Private Access Road) to Ridge Farm



Access Drive (Off Private Access Road) to Millview Barn

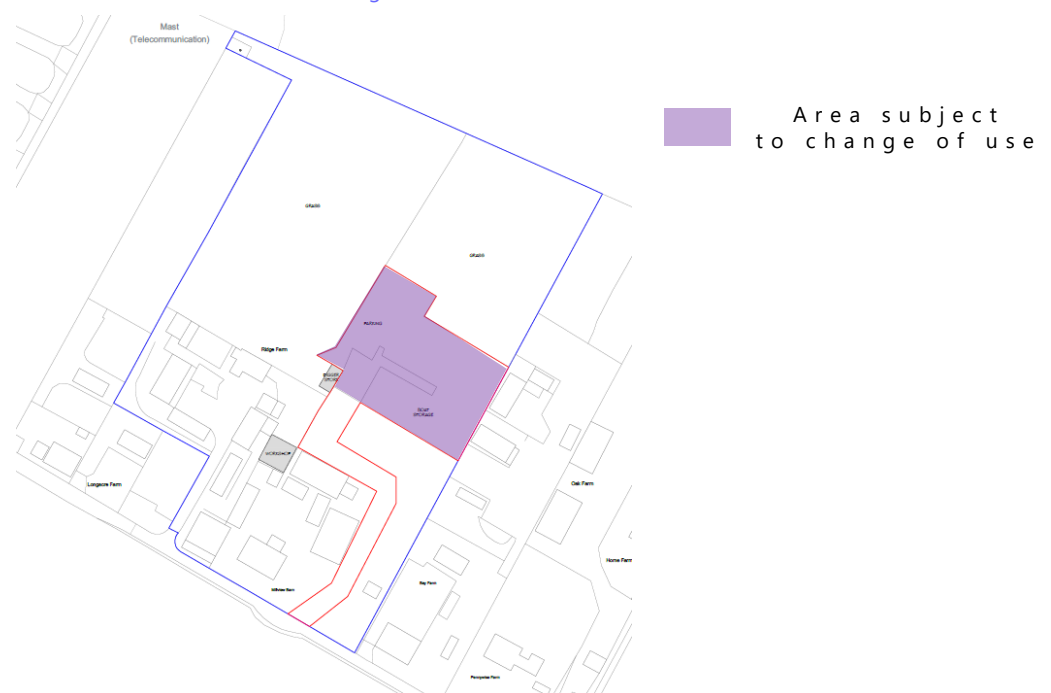
# The Site and Surroundings

## Character Overview

- The application site is positioned between Butlocks Heath and Bursledon and approximately 5.5km from Southampton City Centre. The site is located 2.3km from Sholing train station to the west.
- Shops and services throughout Newtown, Sholing and Woolston are within easy commuting distance of the application site.
- This stretch of commercial, holiday and residential properties are outside the settlement boundary but have been progressively evolving for almost two decades. In terms of character, this run of development off this private access road is particularly isolated from surrounding built-up residential housing estates. As such, the commercial uses have continued and grown over the years with no impact on the surrounding context.



## Surrounding Context



## Location Plan

# Planning Policy

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Including in particular the following:
- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Paragraph 11 – *Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*
- For **decision-taking** this means:
  - (c) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay;*  
or
  - (d) *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
    - (i) *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
    - (ii) *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole."*
- Paragraph 8 of the NPPF notes that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
  - An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirement, including the provision of infrastructure.
  - A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- The proposal therefore complies with the three dimensions of Paragraph 8 of the NPPF from an economic, social and environmental perspective.
- Paragraph 127 advises that local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

# Planning Policy

- Paragraph 128 advises that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
  - a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
  - b) Local market conditions and viability;
  - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
  - d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
  - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
  
- Chapter 12 is titled Achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 135 states Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
  - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
  - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
  - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
  - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
  - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
  - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

# Planning Policy

Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted April 2022)

- Policy S1 is a strategic policy focusing on delivering sustainable development.
  1. To be sustainable, new development in the Borough should:
    - a. meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
    - b. enhance social equality by ensuring equal and easy access to a range of community facilities and services and by promoting the development of employment, education and skills training opportunities;
    - c. maintain and help to grow a high-performing local economy that benefits the Borough, south Hampshire and the wider economy, without adverse impact on south Hampshire's city, town and other centres, the quality of the local environment or local transport networks;
    - d. have regard to the potential impacts of climate change, and the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions including through carbon sequestration and by promoting measures to design buildings and spaces which are adaptable to predicted climate change, and restrict development in areas at risk from flooding, minimise energy use and encourage the generation of renewable energy, and by minimising emissions from motorised transport, industrial activity and domestic uses;
    - e. minimise the need to travel longer distances and, where travel is necessary, prioritise more sustainable forms of transport, such as active travel, other alternatives to car use, or a combination of active travel and other alternatives to car use;
    - f. avoid impacts on the Hamble and Itchen catchments and associated flora and fauna species by preserving water quality and flows from development and safeguarding potential yield of local water resources used for public water supplies having regard to the impacts of abstraction;
    - g. seek opportunities to optimise density of new development and redevelopments;
    - h. use resources wisely and minimise the generation of waste in the construction, occupation and use of buildings;
    - i. maintain local environmental quality, including avoiding damage to, and where possible enhancing, the existing valued urban and rural environments in the Borough and heritage assets;
    - j. have regard to the purposes<sup>12</sup> of the South Downs National Park, including regarding its status as an International Dark Night Skies reserve; and
    - k. maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain.

## Planning Policy

- Policy **DM1** is a general criteria based policy applicable to all new development which states *All new development should (as relevant):*
  - i. not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance:*
    - a. residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast;*
    - b. biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and*
    - c. the significance of heritage assets;*
  - ii. make efficient use of the site, maximise opportunities to increase density and have regard to potential development opportunities on adjoining land;*
  - iii. take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible with adjoining uses and be well integrated with these in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views. Where adjoining development is poor in urban design terms, new development should contribute to improving the character of the area;*
  - iv. not involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, priority habitats or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, for appearance or biodiversity unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value, (recognising that some species and habitats may be irreplaceable);*
  - v. include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space;*
  - vi. protect and enhance public rights of way and National Trails and provide fully connected green infrastructure that interlaces the development and connects into the wider network;*
  - vii. provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement;*
  - viii. incorporate provision for disabled people with disabilities and create accessible communities that cater for all;*
  - ix. incorporate design measures to inhibit criminal and anti-social behaviour;*
  - x. incorporate provision for on-site waste management; and*
  - xi. include provision for public art associated with new large scale development in accordance with the Council's adopted Public Art Strategy.*

# Planning Policy

- Policy **S2** deals with approach to new development. This states that eh Council will promote the delivery, over the plan period 2016-2036, of a minimum of 103, 500 sq.m (net) of new employment development (of which 56,800 sq.m to be E(g)(i)/(ii) development).
- Policy **S4** deals with employment provision to contribute towards sustainable economic growth through additional floorspace for uses in the B2, B8 and E9G) use classes.
- Policy **S5** deals with country side and settlement gaps stating the following:
  1. Planning permission will be granted for new development in the countryside provided it is related to:
    - a. The provision of employment through agricultural development (policy DM17), the extension and replacement of existing employment uses (policy DM18) and the re-use of existing buildings (policy DM19);
    - b. residential extensions and replacement buildings (policies DM18 and 26), limited residential conversions (policy DM19), rural workers' dwellings (policy DM27) and accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (policy DM31);
    - c. community, tourist, or visitor uses through the re-use of buildings including facilities for the interpretation of heritage assets (policies DM12);
    - d. outdoor recreation and open space (policies DM32 and DM33);
    - e. allotments and community farms (policy DM32);
    - f. cemeteries (policy DM37); and
    - g. essential public utilities (policy DM9).
  2. In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to:
    - a. avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, the significance of heritage assets and on the biodiversity of the area;
    - b. secure long-term beneficial management practices that will enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the countryside and coast;
    - c. avoid sterilisation of mineral resources, in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan;
    - d. safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land unless the benefit of the development clearly outweighs the loss; and
    - e. protect soils during construction wherever possible in line with the 'Defra code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'. will not be permitted unless it can be ascertained that the development will not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity (directly or indirectly), of the Dorset Heaths international designations.

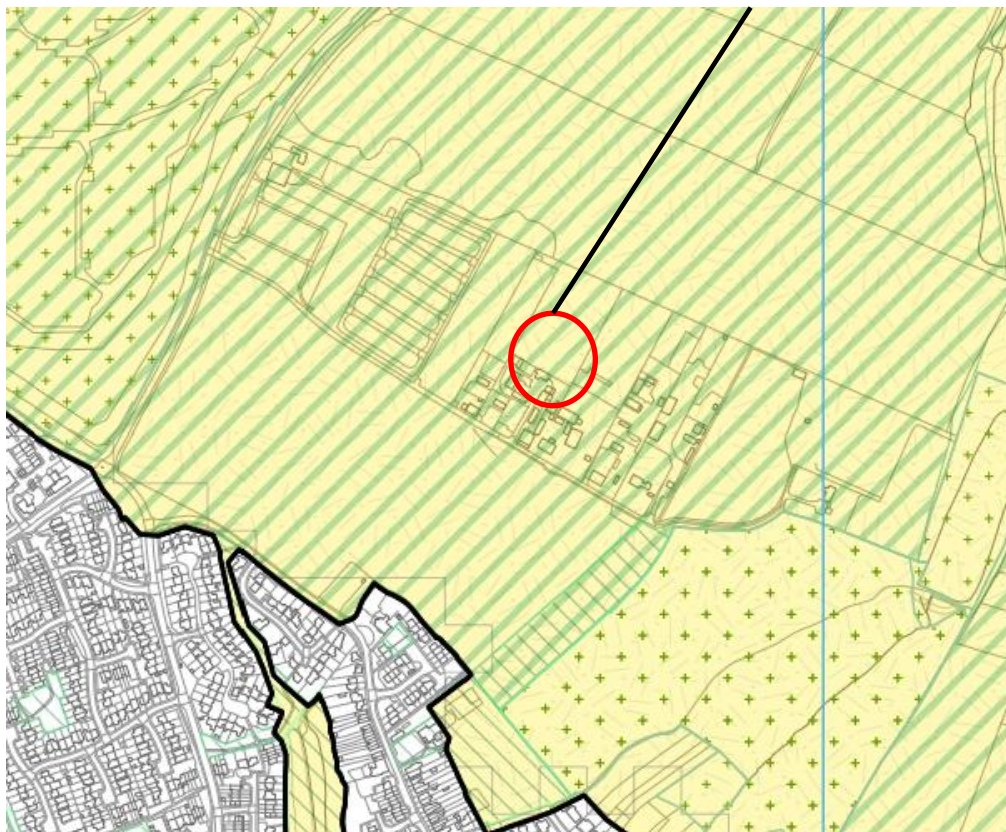
# Planning Policy

- Policy **S6** deals with protection of settlement gaps and states:
  1. Development within a Settlement Gap set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:
    - a. It would not undermine the physical extent and / or visual separation of settlements; and
    - b. It would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:
      - i. the character of the countryside; or
      - ii. the separate identity of the adjoining settlements.
  
- Policy **DM14** deals with parking and states:
  4. Proposals to provide new car parks, extend existing car parks or provide workplace park and ride facilities will be permitted if:
    - a. it can be demonstrated that this is the only way the transport requirements driving the proposals for car parking provision can be met;
    - b. the proposals form part of a strategy aimed at managing use of the private car, such as a workplace travel plan; and
    - c. transport and other environmental assessments demonstrate that the benefits of the proposal (e.g. reduction of on-street parking pressures, reduction of traffic congestion) outweigh any adverse effects; and
    - d. the design, layout, planting and landscaping and lighting provision addresses visual and landscape impacts, noise, lighting and impacts on residential amenity; and
    - e. the developer pays for any off-site highway improvements necessary from traffic generated by the proposal, and any additional works necessitated by an inability to meet workplace travel plan targets; and
    - f. for sites outside the urban edge and in accordance with other policies in the Plan, they are subject to a sequential approach prioritising sites within the urban edge. Proposals in settlement gaps will only be acceptable in exceptional cases (see strategic policy S6).
  
- Policy **DM18** deals with the extension and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside and states:
  1. The extension or replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside will be permitted, subject to the general development criteria and transport policies of this Local Plan and provided that:

# Planning Policy

- a. the existing building is in lawful use and is not subject to a temporary permission;
- b. the extension or replacement building is for a non-residential use;
- c. the extension or replacement building would not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of its density, scale, massing, layout and height;
- d. access, car parking, landscaping and services can be provided without having a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside;
- e. so far as possible the property is sustainably located in terms of accessibility by means of transport other than the private car;
- f. the extended building or its replacement would be located within the existing curtilage unless its relocation or extension would contribute to improving the character and quality of the local area;
- g. in the case of a replacement building, the proposal also includes the demolition of the building to be replaced; and
- h. the development would not by itself or cumulatively with other recently permitted schemes undermine the Council's strategy for the development of employment-related floorspace (see strategic policy S4).

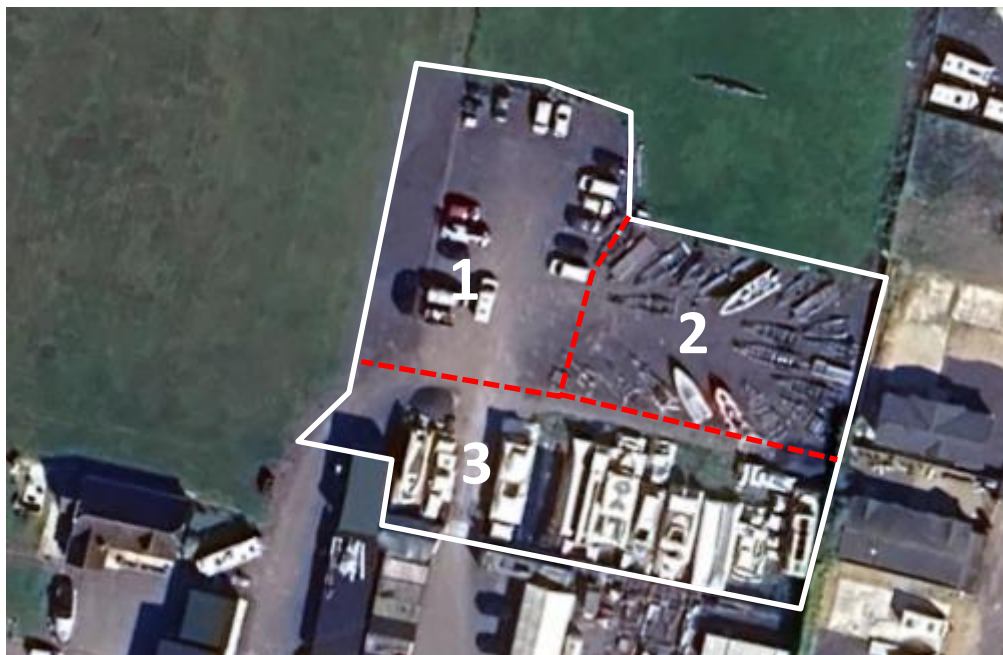
Application Site



Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Proposals Map

# 3 The Proposal

- The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for the partial change of use of land to the rear of the commercial/industrial site to hardstanding/gravel to service existing commercial use/storage.
- The site photos and aerial image show that this area to the rear of the commercial site serves three purposes. No. 1 is a hardstanding/gravel area which provide approximately 14 vehicle spaces. The majority of these spaces serve the employees of A Plus Cleaning Services. This parking area has been in situ since 2021 (as evident by the backdated aerial images).
- The cleaning service has a number of company vans which are left on site overnight. Employees access the site in the morning and leave their personal cars on site during the day whilst using the trade vehicles throughout the week. The business operates 5 days a week Monday to Friday between 7am and 4.30pm.
- The aerial images (2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024) show that this original parking area has been extended and provides parking facilities for other businesses on the commercial site (of which there are 14 in total). The parking area is not sufficiently sized or located to cater for all commercial units, so the parking spaces remain at 14 to serve the cleaning company and ancillary overflow parking when needed.
- This gravel parking area is necessary to accommodate the growing nature and success of the commercial site as a whole. As the commercial units have expanded, parking provision requirements have seen the extension of this gravel area to allow suitable and a suitable positions and secure parking area which does not detrimentally impact the field to the rear.



2024 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



Rear of Site Parking & Rear Boundary Grassland

- No. 2 on the site represents the boat trailer storage area. Since 2014, these trailers have been on site. Originally, these trailers were left on the grassland to the rear of the site but given the soft grass land throughout the rear and accessibility, this area was gravelled over 18 months. This allowed for improved storage and access to the trailers regardless of the season. The supporting ariel images show this transition to the gravelled area for improved storage conditions.



Aerial Image 2019 – Boat Trailer Storage



2024 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



2023 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



2021 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



2020 – Aerial View (Google Earth)

- The aerial image from 2019 shows that the boat trailer area was originally across the width of the rear of the site. This trailer storage space (No. 2) was subsequently shifted further to the east to create the expanded car parking area (No. 1). This is evident when comparing the aerial images between 2020 and 2024.
- The proposal seeks the retrospective change from grassland (countryside) to gravel boat trailer storage space. As shown on the supporting images, this storage area is well established on site and has been in operation for many years. The change from grassland to gravel finish does not impact or detract from the surrounding countryside in a significant manner.



Boat Trailer Storage



2017 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



2015 – Aerial View (Google Earth)



View of Boat Mould Storage Area (On Grass)

- The third element to the retrospective application is in respect to the boat mould storage space to the rear of the site (No. 3). This storage area dates back to 2015, as shown on the aerial images. This space has expanded over the years but this remains on grassland and not hardstanding.
- The aerial images show that this storage area for boat moulds has not changed since 2019 in terms of overall grassland site coverage. This storage area utilises the internal access leading to the private access drive to the southern boundary of the site.

- There's been substantial expansive development on nearby sites into this countryside space over the past 15-20 years. Whilst those instances are not subject to the current retrospective application, it demonstrates that comparatively, the proposed gravelled spaces to accommodate ancillary car parking area and an improved boat trailer storage does not detrimentally encroach upon this grassland to a substantial degree.
- The character of the countryside and settlement gap is not detrimentally impacted. The modest expansion of this gravelled space allows the growing commercial businesses to prosper with improved facilities and continues the contribution made to the local economy. Whilst this does not take precedent over planning policy, it is nonetheless important to highlight the driving force behind the changes to the rear of the site.
- For the reasons detailed, the retrospective proposal will not create harm to the residential amenity of any surrounding properties to the private access road and is compliant with policies S1, S2, S4, S5, S6 and DM14 of the Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted April 2022).

## Conclusion

- As the proposal complies with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that it should be determined otherwise, the applicant looks forward to receiving the support of Eastleigh Borough Council for this retrospective application.