

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/25/99014

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

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Installation of a three storey modular building for use as office facilities for a temporary period of 104 weeks

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 January 2020, under reference no. F/19/85400 for: <i>Site redevelopment to include demolition of buildings (goods out / dispatch building, repair centre, plant admin, training building, and head office), refurbishment of pump branch building and extension to and refurbishment of production building to include relocation of test pond, and construction of new plant branch building and replacement office premises, with associated levels alterations, yard reconfiguration, landscaping, parking, access and other general works.</i> With a subsequent permission (F/21/92095) granted in February 2022 for: <i>Refurbishment of the existing Headquarters Office Building, including external alterations, associated landscaping and parking areas</i>		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations	None received.		
Chandlers Ford Parish Council	No comments received.		
HCC Highways	In regard to application F/25/99014, having reviewed the information contained within the application pack, there would be no objection to the 2- year temporary proposals from a highway perspective. Access in and out of the current site will be unchanged by the proposals, as is access to the adjacent leased car park which also has an existing separate access from School Lane. In terms of trip rates, whilst the additional staff employed on site will increase trip rates, this will not increase vehicle trip rates in the local highway network, given that proposals include the usage of the adjacent site (for parking) which was formally utilised as a retail unit. As such, there could actually be a trip reduction overall.		

	Finally, it is noted that the positioning of the proposed modular building will result in a loss of 5 vehicle parking spaces, whilst attracting an additional 34 members off staff to site (average daily use). However, it is proposed that the parking on the adjacent vacant retail site will be utilised (secured under a lease) and this will add 31 vehicle parking spaces to the overall parking quantum. Whilst it is for EBC to assess parking provision in line with the local parking standards, this would appear to be an acceptable provision, with sustainable travel options also available through the nearby train station and bus services.
Southampton Airport	The proposed development has been examined from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective and does not conflict with safeguarding criteria. We, therefore, have no objection to this proposal.
Ecology	There are records of bats and hedgehogs in this area but they are not likely to be using this site. I have reviewed the Planning Statement by Portakabin. The proposed modular building would be located on hard standing. No impact on habitat is expected. Surface water drainage will use downpipes and rainwater butts. The de minimus exemption for 10% biodiversity net gain applies to this application however biodiversity enhancements will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192b. Any green areas of the site can be enhanced by planting flowering shrubs for pollinators or enhancing the grassland and managing it as a wildflower meadow. A maintenance plan would be required to ensure that they are kept watered and replaced if necessary. This can be conditioned in a biodiversity enhancement and maintenance plan.
HCC Minerals and Waste	The proposed development lies within the mineral and waste consultation area (MWCA) – Sites section. It lies adjacent to the safeguarded site at School Lane, Chandler's Ford operated by Heidelberg Materials. This area is informed by the safeguarded sites list as defined through Policy 16: Safeguarding – mineral infrastructure of the adopted Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013) (HMWP). The purpose of this policy is to protect current and potential mineral sites from pressures to be replaced by other forms of development, including through 'encroachment' where nearby land-uses impact their ability to continue operating. It is often the case that appropriate buffers and mitigation measures can make potential nearby development compatible. Any mitigation measures would need to be undertaken by the proposed non-minerals or waste development and reduce potential impacts to and from the safeguarded site to levels that would ensure the safeguarded site could continue its intended minerals or waste use. Usually the mitigation measures would need to focus on impacts such as noise, dust, visual impact, odour and traffic movements. They can take a variety of forms, including landscape design, tree planting, barriers, building design and orientation and use of different building materials (such as double glazing for windows). The appropriate mitigation measures are best informed through direct discussions with the operator of the safeguarded site as they will be

	most aware of operational requirements. However HCC is also available for further discussions, as well as facilitation, if required. In order to discharge the requirements of the safeguarding policy, HCC would expect to see how the nearby safeguarded site was considered, how operator comments were taken into account and what impacts that had on the proposed development design. If the details of mitigation are to follow in a future application, HCC would expect to see a condition requiring such details. In the unlikely event that it is not possible to agree appropriate mitigation measures, HCC would be seeking evidence that the minerals or waste management capacity can be relocated or provided elsewhere and delivered. Further information on safeguarding and Hampshire County Council's approach to it is available in the adopted Minerals and Waste Safeguarding in Hampshire Supplementary Planning Document, which can be found on our website: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste/planning-policy-home/hmwp-spds.htm
--	--

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: <u>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):</u> The following SPDs and Background Papers are of relevance to the proposals: • Environmentally Sustainable Development (Adopted March 2009) • Draft Parking Standards (Not yet adopted) <u>National Planning Policy/Guidance:</u> 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 siting of a three-storey high modular building to provide for office accommodation for a temporary period of 2 years (104 weeks). The building provides for 693 sqm of floorspace and, on the date of the Case Officer's site visit, it had already been installed in the position as shown on the site layout plan. As such, the application is retrospective.

The supporting information which accompanies the application explains that the necessity for the accommodation has arisen from the growth of the business (Workdry International who are part of the same company as Selwood) and an associated increase in the number of employees joining the company, all of which cannot be accommodated on site at this current time. Whilst a more comprehensive and permanent solution is sought, the building would serve as an interim measure to meet the immediate need for additional office space. As the proposals are to support the existing employment use of the site and the facilitation of further economic growth, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM15 of the adopted Local Plan.

Any planning approval is, however, subject to the development being considered to be appropriate in other respects, which includes in terms of its layout, design and impact on the character of the area, as well as with regards to residential amenity, ecology, minerals safeguarding, and highway safety.

Assessment of proposals:

- In terms of layout and design, the building is very much a case of function over form with it comprising of a number of pre-fabricated grey portacabins stacked on top and aside one another, with external metal staircasing affixed to the northern side of the structure. Whilst the building is not insignificant in size, is visible within the School Lane street scene, and is not of a design or appearance which is considered to be suitable for permanent retention, it is deemed to be acceptable on a temporary basis taking account of the industrial backdrop of both the site itself as well as its immediate surroundings. A time limiting condition will therefore be imposed on the consent in this regard.
- Given the siting of the modular building relative to the nearest residential properties (which are along Bournemouth Road to the east) as well as its proposed usage for office purposes, it is not considered that the development would unduly affect the amenity of their occupiers by way of overbearing impact or loss of light or outlook, with the topography and the reasonable separation distance between them also serving to prevent any undue loss of privacy / overlooking. The building is also proposed to be used only between 0800 and 1800 hours Monday to Friday which will further limit its impacts, albeit it is not considered reasonable in this case to impose a specific conditional restriction in this regard given that there are no such limitations on either the main office premises or the wider industrial uses at

the Selwood site.

- Access to the site will remain unchanged, with this being from School Lane to the north and being considered suitable for the development. Whilst 5 on-site vehicular parking spaces will be lost as part of the proposals, an additional 31 spaces have been secured for the use of the occupants of the building on the adjacent retail unit under a lease arrangement. The retention of this parking for the duration of the 2 year period for which permission is sought will be secured by condition. On this basis, the Highway Authority have raised no objection to the application on parking grounds, nor in terms of the impacts of the proposals on the highway network, with an anticipated reduction in trips likely to occur overall when considered in conjunction with the now vacant retail unit. The site is also considered to be sited within a sustainable location with good access to local sustainable transport links.
- 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. Hampshire County Council have requested additional information in respect of the measures undertaken to reduce potential impacts to and from the safeguarded site to levels that would ensure the safeguarded site could continue its intended minerals or waste use.

Whilst no details have been provided in this regard as part of the submission, it was noted from the Case Officer's site visit that the development is no closer to the concrete plant than the existing office facilities at the application site and that the structure has also been orientated such that its windows, which are double glazed, do not directly face towards it, thereby reducing the potential for adverse impacts upon its users (for example, noise and visual effects).

Taking account of this, the presence of School Lane as a notable intervening feature and one which is subject to HGV and larger vehicle movements on a daily basis, and the surrounding industrial context within which the site falls, as well as that consent is only being sought for a temporary period of 2 years, it is not considered that the proposals would undermine the operations of the safeguarded site or unduly conflict with Policy 16 of the HMWP.

- As the building for which permission is sought is sited entirely on an area of existing hardstanding and would not, therefore, impact a priority habitat or more than 25m² of non-priority onsite and linear habitats, the development qualifies for the *de minimus* exemption from the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement.

There, however, remains a local and national planning policy requirement for a net gain to still be achieved as highlighted by the Council's Ecologist. Whilst this is noted, it is acknowledged in this case that there are limited areas available for enhancement given that the site is overwhelmingly laid to hardstanding. Taking account of this, that the development will not adversely affect existing ecological features (and therefore there will be no biodiversity net loss) and, most notably and significantly, that the consent would be for a temporary period only, on balance it is not considered that the application could reasonably be refused on the grounds of the absence of a proposal for ecological enhancement.

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 as a result of the development and the change of use.

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 ☐