

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: X/25/99432

Site Address: UNIT H, GEORGE CURL WAY, EASTLEIGH, SO18 2RX

Case Officer: Gregg Chapman

Description: Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans) of application F/24/97188 (Creation of headquarters for Hampshire Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA) and other healthcare services to include offices; the creation of a helipad; change of use and minor alterations to existing building to form a mixed use comprising B2, B8, E(e) and E(g); and other associated works.) approved on 30th July 2024. The proposed changes are to the fenestration to the rear elevation.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Within Built-up Area Boundary • Existing employment sites • Adjacent to Southampton Airport		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Z/07535/012/00 - Outline: Business, Industrial and Warehouse Development (Use Classes B1, B2 And B8), Associated Shops, New Distributor Road, Junctions and Access to Airport and Development Areas – Grant Outline – Dec 1992 F/24/97188 (Creation of headquarters for Hampshire Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA) and other healthcare services to include offices; the creation of a helipad; change of use and minor alterations to existing building to form a mixed use comprising B2, B8, E(e) and E(g); and other associated works.) Approved, 30.07.2024		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☒
Representations:	9 letters – Support • Support endeavours and vital operations of the Air Ambulance		
Town Council:	No response received		
Environmental Health	No comments		
HCC Highways	No objection, subject to conditions		
Southampton Airport & Civil Aviation Authority	No response received		
Southern Water	No response received		
Southern Gas	No response received		
Hampshire Police	No objection		
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	No objection		
Sothern Central Ambulance	No response received		
Southampton City Council	No response received		
Ecology	No objection, subject to conditions		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 10.06.2025		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

Strategic policies:

- S1 (Delivering sustainable development)
- S2 (Approach to new development)
- S4 (Employment provision)

Development Management policies:

- DM1 (General criteria for new development)
- DM2 (Environmentally sustainable development)
- DM3 (Adaptation to climate change)
- DM6 (Sustainable surface water management and watercourse management)
- DM8 (Pollution)
- DM11 (Nature conservation)
- DM13 (General development criteria - transport)
- DM14 (Parking)
- DM15 (Safeguarding existing employment sites)

Assessment:

Principle of Development

The applications seeks to vary the conditions of application F/24/97188 in respect of fenestration on the rear elevation only.

The conclusions of application F/24/97188 in respect of the principle were that *“The proposal includes the addition of uses Class B2, B8 and E(e) to the existing Class E(g) use and the uses proposed are broadly supported within policy DM15.”* These conclusions, which confirm that the employment site would be safeguarded (not conflicting with policy DM14) established the principle of development, remain relevant, and are agreed.

Design and Appearance

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2025 is the general criteria for new development,

Previous application F/24/97188 considered that *“the physical alterations proposed are minor in nature”*, and went on to describe changes to fenestration, changes to fencing and ancillary changes (lining/lighting, etc) associated with the proposed occupation. It was found that the physical changes to the building created a character not uncommon within an industrial/retail setting, and were found to be acceptable.

The now proposed changes from the consented scheme are;

- Removal of a roller door and retention of an existing window
- Removal of roller door and retention of existing window with modification to provide a new escape door
- Insertion of new roller door and insertion of new window at first floor level
- Replacement of roller door with new set of doors and insertion of new window at first floor level
- Replacement of sliding hangar door with a new window at first floor level
- Insertion of new hangar door
- Insertion of new personnel pass door

These changes are considered to be minor material changes, to the minor changes that were originally proposed, in the context of the overall scheme, they are clear and obvious, but only to the elevation facing the runway. The changes to the are appropriate and meet Policy DM1 criteria.

Noise and Air Quality

Policy DM8 stipulates that development will not be permitted if it is likely to cause loss of amenity or impact on public health or other unacceptable environmental impacts through air pollution (including odours or particulate emissions); pollution of surface, underground, coastal waters or other watercourses; noise or vibration; light intrusion, both generally and with respect to the South Downs National Park's status as an International Dark Night Skies reserve; or land contamination.

The proposed changes from application F/24/97188 relate only to the fenestration to the rear of the building, which faces the runway at Southampton Airport. The changes in the noise environment can, therefore, only be considered in so far as they relate to the altered arrangements of windows and doors.

The assessment of application F/24/97188, as set out within the Committee Report was that;

"HLOWAA fly a helicopter model called Airbus EC135 T3. The agent states that this is a popular aircraft among air ambulance charities due to its reliability and efficiency. Moreover, this model benefits urban areas due to its low downwash, compact body and shrouded tail rotor which allows the aircraft to land almost anywhere. Importantly, the agent states that the helicopter has a low acoustic footprint, making it one of the quietest aircraft of its type. HLOWAA state that they have no intention of changing its aircraft soon. The helicopter model will be conditioned; requiring written consent in the event this helicopter type is changed.

Back-up helicopters are sometimes required when the primary aircraft is in for repairs. This includes the EC135 T2+ and H145 D2 models and the submitted figures demonstrates that they have similar noise outputs.

The helicopter will inevitably fly over residential properties on their various routes at different times throughout the day and night as there are no defined flight paths due to the emergency nature of the activity. It is considered that this could have a disturbing affect with a predicted sound pressure level of 63.5dB(A) for a cruising helicopter at 450m but would only last for seconds and so would not cause significant detriment to residents. During airport operating hours this would be lower than that experienced by aeroplanes (ranging from LAeq 65dB to 82dB and the Lmax range from 75dB to 88dB). While it is expected the frequency of these overflights would increase from existing, it is also noted that any emergency helicopter could fly over residential dwellings currently when needed.

As stated, there is no defined flight path due to the nature of the helicopter flights, however flights will fly out to the east towards the airport. As such, the closest noise-sensitive residential receptors to the helipad are located on Allington Lane to the east, Campbell Road the north and Walnut Avenue to the south. The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the helicopter movements at the helipad changes the ambient noise level to +2.9dB and so there is no requirement to consider noise mitigation measures. The predicted level of noise is sufficiently low enough at the closest residential dwellings to accord with the 'No Observed Adverse Effect Level' as detailed in the Planning practice guidance (PPG) and The Air Navigation Guidance 2017.

The NPPF paragraph 193 states "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community. Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable

restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed".

No evidence has been raised from neighbouring businesses through the consultation process that would raise concern that these businesses would be detrimentally impacted through this proposed change of use. In fact, some neighbouring businesses have given their support for the application. It is also worth noting, there are existing location factors that would affect the existing ambient noise environment of these businesses throughout the day such as the neighbouring motorway (M27) and Southampton International Airport. Moreover, at sensitive hours throughout the night, it is likely these businesses will not be operational.

An updated Noise Impact Assessment elaborated on the potential impact to neighbouring commercial units. The findings show that internal noise level at the closest office space can be achieved based on the criteria presented in BS8233. It is also worth noting that the contours from SOU Annual Noise Report 2023 range between 57dB – 60dB LAeq16hr, which are significantly higher than the proposed 16-hour noise level from the operations at the proposed helipad.

Concerns were raised by the environmental health team regarding the maintenance of the helicopter. The submitted Noise Impact Assessment states that maintenance noise is not to the same level as take-off volumes. The 15min engine wash and system check ground run every day and is normally done at the start of the shift between 0700hrs and 0800hrs. This would result in most maintenance being conducted outside of nearby operational hours. In addition, the agent advises that any significant engineering work required on the aircraft takes place at Babcock's maintenance facilities in Staverton, Gloucestershire.

To conclude on noise, the overall principle of the proposal accords with policy DM8, and it is anticipated the noise will not be significantly detrimental to nearby receptors."

This assessment remains relevant. The noise impacts of the development would not be materially more impactful than with the arrangement of fenestration from application F/24/97188, as is confirmed by the Council Environmental Health Officer.

Access, Parking and Transport Matters

As with the original application access to and from the site from the highway is proposed as unchanged with suitable access already in place on-site. The site is well located near to the M27 and wider road network and is one of the key reasons the HIOWAA have chosen this site.

There are no changes to the on-site parking from application F/24/97188 which approved a reduction of the number of spaces on site from 151 to 111 spaces as it was agreed that the levels would be sufficient for the operational requirements as overall staffing is expected to reduce from the existing levels.

As previously, Hampshire Highways suggested that the provision of sheltered and secure cycle parking to aid the promotion of sustainable travel to and from the site which was previously conditioned, and will be re-imposed. Details were subsequently provided (proposing the amendment of the existing provision) and agreed as acceptable by HCC Highways, the condition is therefore revised to require compliance with this.

The access and parking on site are appropriate, in accordance with policy DM13 and DM14.

Ecology

Legislation requires major sites to provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) under statutory framework introduced by [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(inserted by the Environment Act 2021\)](#). In addition, the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016-2036) requires a biodiversity net gain under policy DM11.

There are specific biodiversity net gain provisions for applications to vary conditions to existing permissions under section 73 to reflect the fact, while a section 73 permission is a new permission, it is linked to an earlier planning permission.

National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that, *"If a planning permission granted under section 73 does not affect the post development value of the onsite habitat...specified in an approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for planning permission to which the section 73 permission relates, the earlier plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of the new permission granted under section 73. In this circumstance, a new Biodiversity Gain Plan is not required to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development subject to the section 73 permission."*

The changes to fenestration do not change the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan. A new plan is not therefore required. Compliance with the previously approved plan will again be secured.

A Landscape Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), to include BNG management, will again be conditioned to ensure enhancements are suitably provided and maintained. The applicant has requested that this condition be amended so that occupation can occur prior to approval of the LEMP, given the operational importance of the users. Such an amendment does not change the thrust of the condition, which is amended to require a schedule for implementation and a backstop for work being carried out, and does not go to the heart of the scheme.

Overall, the application will have improved ecological and biodiversity status of the site and as such is in accordance with policy DM11 and wider national legislation.

Details to address the bird strike condition were subsequently provided to address condition 4. One of these documents relates to Bournemouth Airport, but the principals can be applied to the site. The Ecologist has no objection, and the condition is therefore amended.

BREEAM

Policy DM2, requires all other development that is above 500 sq.m of floor space measured externally (including extensions and conversions to existing buildings) to achieve BREEAM 'excellent' (or equivalent) or BREEAM 'very good' plus 'passivhaus' certification including a 15% improvement in predicted carbon emissions, compared with the building regulations current at the time, through low or zero carbon energy generation on site or in a Borough location agreed by the Council.

The applicant submitted a BREEAM Pre-Assessment with application F/24/97188 which showed that a 'Very Good' rating of 60.40% can be achieved which therefore failed to accord with the required 'Excellent' (or equivalent) or BREEAM 'very good' plus 'passivhaus' target in Policy DM2. The Council deemed in determining application F/24/97188 that suitable justification had been provided, and this was secured through condition. This will be re-imposed.

Other Matters

- As with previous application F/24/97188, in order to manage any future potential changes to the unit and to minimise future potential impacts upon factors such as

upon highway safety and local amenity, a condition which would restrict any future changes of the unit to those use classes proposed with this application will be applied.

- There are no likely significant impacts on the SPA.
- Because this is a Section 73 application it would effectively be granting a further permission. Conditions from the previously approved application will be reimposed where applicable, and amended where necessary and relevant, including in respect of the sought change.

Sustainability Measures and 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, development plan and adopted local plan policy 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.

Other Material Considerations

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:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- 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.

Conclusion

As previously concluded, the scheme provides a life-saving service to the Borough and beyond in a far superior location than its existing HQ north of the County. This is a great planning benefit that weighs heavily in favour of permission. The proposal accords with local plan policy and provides a suitable use for an existing employment site in terms of its character, ecological matters, noise, and access. The proposed alterations to the fenestration on the façade facing the runway do not change the assessments of application F/24/97188, and are acceptable in their own respect.

Conclusion:		
Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
Comments ...		