

## Section 73 Application for the Continued Use of Retail Outlet without Conditions 3 and 4 Attached to Application No.02/00970/CU and Change of Use of Part Ground Floor of Warehouse to Create a Larger 200 sq metre Bulky Goods Retail Outlet at Anchor Buildings Westgate

### Summary of Case- to be attached to Committee Report

Two applications have recently been refused for the use of this building for a retail unit and diary business. It has now been agreed that the diary business does not need planning permission and this latest application is therefore only for a larger bulky goods retail outlet at the front of the premises. The most recent application, 11/00444/CU, was refused for the following reasons:

Reasons 1 and 2 Policy (Summary) - Retail use is inappropriate, out of centre and within a protected employment area. Retail development in this location will prejudice the regeneration of Morecambe town centre

Response - The bulk of the building remains in employment use including 60% of the ground floor and all of the upper floor offices.

The new application clearly demonstrates that the local plan policy (S1) has been overtaken by events and is effectively out of date. A plan has been submitted showing the location of other retail units (12 in total - copy attached) both on Westgate and within White Lund trading Estate Trading Estate. The Committee recognized that the area serves other than immediate local needs with the recently granted permission for a Lidl supermarket further along Westgate. Recent government policy announcements make it clear that were policy is clearly out of date, as it is here, there should be a presumption in favour of consent

A very large retail unit immediately adjacent (Focus) has recently become vacant. The permission is unrestricted rendering concerns regarding the impact of the proposed small retail unit somewhat irrelevant.

A comprehensive survey has been undertaken to demonstrate that no suitable premises are available within Morecambe town centre to accommodate the proposed sofa outlet of this type or size. It cannot, therefore, be reasonably argued that the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the regeneration of Morcambe town centre

Reason 3 - Highway issues (Summary). Inadequate parking provision to serve existing and proposed uses

Response - Comprehensive comparison figures have previously been produced to demonstrate that the new uses will produce significantly less traffic than the current approved uses both in terms of employee and service vehicles. The County Surveyor does not object to the principle of the development and does

not consider a refusal could be justified with regard to the proposed servicing arrangements having regard to the previous uses and the safeguards offered by the applicant

With respect to parking the site has more generous on site parking available than most businesses on the Westgate frontage. Photographs of similar businesses have been included. Individual car parking provision for both proposed and existing uses have now been provided although sharing of car parking will still be available if required.

Parking provision is below the maximum permitted by the Highway Authority but is entirely adequate given the nature of the proposed use and the highly sustainable location. It is situated within walking distance of a large part of the population of Morecambe for both customers and workforce. It is served by a regular 30 minute bus service and has immediate access to the Council's comprehensive cycle way network. Reducing on site parking provision and encouraging alternatives to reliance on the private motor car is entirely in accordance with government and City council objectives.

The applicant has indicated willingness to accept conditions to cover:-

- a) Limit uses of building to that applied for with controls over operating times
- b) Management Plan for whole site to control delivery times for service vehicles
- c) Travel plan to be agreed before 1st floor occupied