

**North Northamptonshire Area Planning Committee  
(Thrapston)  
8th June 2021**

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>NE/21/00403/FUL</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Dean Wishart</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Enterprise Centre, Michael Way, Raunds, Northamptonshire</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Partial change of use of the Enterprise Centre to allow up to 6,750 sq ft of floor area to be used for a flexible Class E / Class F1 (training) use</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>East Northamptonshire District Council</b>
<b>Agent</b>	<b>DHA - Patrick Reedman</b>
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Raunds</b>
<b>Overall Expiry Date</b>	<b>18 May 2021</b>
<b>Agreed Extension of Time</b>	<b>11 June 2021</b>

**Scheme of Delegation**

This application is brought to committee because it falls outside of the Council's Scheme of Delegation because the Council is the applicant.

**1. Recommendation**

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- 1.1. That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

**2. The Proposal**

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- 2.1 This application seeks consent for a partial change of use, to allow for up to 25% of the permitted floor space to be used for a flexible Class E / Class F1 (training) use. No physical changes are proposed to the buildings or site layout.

### **3. Site Description**

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- 3.1 The application site is the Enterprise Centre, located at Warth Park, Raunds. To the north west of the site is the A45. To the north east, beyond a group of trees lies the A45/B663 roundabout. To the east is a KFC restaurant and beyond that the B663. To the south, on the opposite side of Michael Way is an Asda supermarket and petrol station. The main built up area of Raunds lies to the south east. The site is at a lower level than the A45 and B663.

### **4. Relevant Planning History**

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- 4.1 18/02081/FUL - Total of GIA of 36,850 sqft providing 27,000 sqft of managed business space which will provide a mix of lettable office (17,500sqft) and business starter units (9,500sqft) all within a B1 use class (a/b/c), available on flexible letting terms within a high quality managed environment with shared facilities - PERMITTED (16.01.19)
- 4.2 19/00963/ADV - Site development board promoting the proposed development on land to the north of Asda - PERMITTED (18.07.19)
- 4.3 19/01946/AMD - Non material amendment to amend the panel arrangement to the 8 no. sectional doors to the business units flanking the eastern boundary pursuant to application 18/02081/FUL - PERMITTED (10.01.20)
- 4.4 19/01918/ADV – Erection of 6 banners (3.5m wide by 2m high) on heras fencing – PERMITTED (03.02.2020)
- 4.5 19/02003/ADV – Building mounted branded signage – PERMITTED (27.03.2020)
- 4.6 NE/21/00117/FUL – Installation of 1 phone signal booster antenna to exterior of the Enterprise Centre – PERMITTED (18.03.2021)

### **5. Consultation Responses**

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A full copy of all comments received can be found on the Council's website [here](#)

- 5.1 Raunds Town Council  
Resolved that Raunds Town Council have no objections; however, members have reservations on the potential overspill of cars parking on Michael Way and Warth Park Way due to probable insufficient parking at the Enterprise Centre site.
- 5.2 Neighbours / Responses to Publicity  
No representations received
- 5.3 Economic Development Officer  
No representations received
- 5.4 Northamptonshire Police  
Thank you for consulting me on this application, on behalf of Northamptonshire Police I have no objection or concerns with this application as proposed.

5.5 Local Highway Authority (LHA)

No objection and refer to the parking standards document for Use Class B1, which states the following:

**Class B1: Business**

*Offices, research and development, and light industry*

Use	Vehicle	Cycle	Motorcycle/scooter	Disabled
B1	1 space per 30 sqm	1 space per 100 sqm for staff plus 1 space per 200 sqm for customers	1 space + 1 per 20 car spaces ( for 1 <sup>st</sup> 100 car spaces), then 1 space per 30 car spaces ( over 100 car spaces)	10% of the total car parking spaces

## 6. Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

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6.1 Statutory Duty

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)  
National Design Guide (NDG) 2019

6.3 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2016)

Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles  
Policy 22 – Delivering Economic Prosperity

6.4 Raunds Neighbourhood Plan (Made Version, 2017)

R2 - Promoting Good Design

## 7. Evaluation

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The key issues for consideration are:

- Principle of Development
- Site Layout / Proportions of Floor Space
- Highways

## 7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 Condition 14 of the original planning permission for the Enterprise Centre stated the following:

*The buildings hereby permitted shall only be used as described in the application (managed business space which will provide a mix of lettable office (17,500sqft) and business starter units (9,500sqft) all within a B1 use class (a/b/c)). No changes of use are permitted without planning permission.*

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and as the application has been assessed on this basis.*

The proposal to allow up to 25% of the floor space (6,750sq ft of the overall 36,850 sq ft) for Use Classes E and F therefore requires planning permission.

7.1.2 There were substantial changes to the Use Classes Order in 2020. New Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) replaced former Use Classes:

- A1 – Shops;
- A2 – Financial / professional services;
- A3 – Restaurants / cafes
- B1 a) – Offices
- B1 b) – Research and Development
- B1 c) – Any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area;
- D1 (part) – Non-residential institutions such as Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, and day centres; and
- D2 (part) – Assembly and leisure such as gymnasiums and indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms

7.1.3 New Use Class F (Local Community and Learning) replaced former Use Classes:

- D1 (part) – Non-residential institutions such as schools, non-residential education and training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship and law courts; and
- D2 (part) – Assembly and leisure such as indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms

Class F is split into two parts:

- F1 – Learning and non-residential institutions; and
- F2 – Local community

- 7.1.4 The proposal would be for up to 25% of the overall floor space of the Enterprise Centre to be used flexibly, either within Class E, or within Class F1 for training purposes. There is no contention that the Class E element is acceptable, as the 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order now allow for all those former uses to take place without the need for a change of use. For example a café would have been excluded from the original consent, but is now allowed by the 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order. The main consideration is whether the addition of Class F1 for training purposes is acceptable in this case.
- 7.1.5 Training centres are employment generating uses and there are considered to be no compatibility issues with the rest of the Enterprise Centre in terms of one use creating a nuisance for another; they can co-exist together. Other elements of Use Class F1 could create compatibility issues (for example a place of worship or exhibition hall would likely generate more traffic), but a condition can be worded to limit the flexibility to that required for training purposes.
- 7.1.6 JCS Policy 22 (Delivering Economic Prosperity) is supportive of the proposal in principle, as it seeks to prioritise the enhancement of existing employment sites and support proposals that encourage a co-ordinated approach to skills and training provision and promote sector specific training.
- 7.1.7 Raunds Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) Policy R13 – Protecting Local Employment Sites – is more cautious about changes of use. Relevant text from the policy is highlighted in **bold** below:

*“To maintain a full range of employment opportunities in the local area the following sites identified on Figure 7 and the Proposals Map **will be protected for employment use:***

- 1. Warth Park Strategic Site**
- 2. West End/North Dale End**
- 3. Enterprise Road**
- 4. New Barns Farm**
- 5. A45 roundabout at Brick Kiln Road**

***Development for office, business (B1), general industrial (B2) and warehousing uses (B8) will be encouraged in these areas.***

*Development for hotel/leisure use will be supported where it can be shown there is no suitable alternative site in or adjacent to Raunds Town Centre and an impact assessment examining the effect of the proposal on future investment in Raunds Town Centre and the effect on the town centre’s viability and vitality, has been undertaken for proposals over 2,500 sq. m.*

***Planning approval for uses outside of the above will only be permitted when:***

***a) The existing use is no longer considered suitable for continued employment use after an extended period of active marketing; and***

***b) The proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on adjacent uses and occupiers.”***

7.1.8 The critical word from the policy is the 'and' between criterion a) and b), as it requires compliance with both elements, as opposed to one or the other. The proposal does not comply with part a) as the originally permitted use is still considered suitable and there has been no marketing period, but it does comply with part b) as referred to above.

7.1.9 Overall and notwithstanding the partial conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan policy, there is scope within policy for a change of use. The Enterprise Centre would remain as an employment generating site with no known use conflicts, so although there is not full compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan policy, in the overall balance the principle is still considered to be acceptable. Other material planning considerations are discussed below.

## 7.2 Site Layout / Proportions of Floor Space

7.2.1 The proposal would not result in any changes to the site layout or to the appearance of the buildings. The floor space to be used for the Class F1 training element would not be fixed to a particular unit or building as the intention is that this can be flexible throughout the site, as required.

7.2.2 In terms of proportion, although up to 25% of the overall floor space could be used as a training facility, this does not mean that it always would be. There may be periods of time where a lower proportion (or indeed none of the floor space) is used for this purpose; it is a situation that will change dependent on the needs of specific tenants. This approach is considered to be acceptable as it gives greater flexibility to the operation of the Enterprise Centre.

## 7.3 Highways

7.3.1 There has been no objection to the application from Highways, who refer to the adopted parking standards document. This document pre-dates the changes to the Use Classes Order and so does not take account of Class E, but it refers to the previous Use Class B1, which the Enterprise Centre was originally granted as.

7.3.2 Raunds Town Council's concerns about parking overspill are noted but Use Class B1 (now E) already has one of the more intensive per square metre parking requirements, so the proposed inclusion of Use Class F1 for training purposes, for a maximum of 25% of the overall floor space is unlikely to create wider parking issues. The site is located on the edge of Raunds and so is accessible by foot and public transport, as well as by cycle and car.

## 8. Other Matters

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8.1 East Northamptonshire Council's Name as Applicant: The application was made prior to North Northamptonshire Council commencing, so the information provided was correct at the time the application was made. Planning permission runs with the land rather than the applicant, so this does not create any procedural issues. The Council has instructed an agent to act on its behalf and the decision notice will be sent to them in the first instance, as is standard practice where an agent is used.

- 8.2 Conditions on the Original Planning Permission: Where restrictions or ongoing requirements were placed on the original permission for the Enterprise Centre, these will be re-imposed on the new consent. Where conditions have been discharged, there is no need to reimpose these as the centre is now completed and occupied and this application does not propose any physical changes to the site.
- 8.3 Equality Act 2010: It is not considered that the proposal raises any concerns in relation to the Equality Act (2010).

## **9. Conclusion / Planning Balance**

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- 9.1 Notwithstanding the partial non-compliance with RNP Policy R13 the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The site will retain its primary use within Use Class E (formerly B1) and the addition of Use Class F.1 is compatible with the primary use.

## **10. Recommendation**

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- 10.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

## **11. Conditions**

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- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The travel plan approved as part of East Northamptonshire Council condition reference 20/00217/CND shall continue to be monitored and undertaken annually for the lifetime of the development's Travel Plan (usually 5 years depending on size and build out rate for the development). The site's Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be expected to prepare a Monitoring Form outlining activities undertaken and travel data, collected from completed resident/employee surveys, indicating progress against targets and outlining mitigation measures should the targets not be met. Upon request this information should be provided to Northamptonshire Highways (North Northamptonshire Council) who are monitoring Travel Plans to ensure developments are achieving their specified target of reduction in single occupancy journeys.

Reason: In the interests of air quality and the promotion of sustainable modes of travel.

- 3 The boundary treatments approved as part of East Northamptonshire Council condition reference 19/01005/CND shall continue to be maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

- 4 The vehicle access and parking arrangements as previously approved under East Northamptonshire Council reference 18/02081/FUL (condition 10) shall continue to be permanently maintained and retained for those purposes.

Reason: In the interests of road/pedestrian safety and to ensure adequate parking facilities are available to serve the development.

- 5 The external lighting assessment previously approved under East Northamptonshire Council reference 18/02081/FUL (condition 13) shall continue to be maintained and retained in accordance with these agreed details.

Reason: To prevent unnecessary light pollution.

- 6 The buildings shall only be used for uses falling within Classes E and Class F1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (“the Order”). Any Class F1 element shall be used for non-residential training purposes only and for no other purpose falling within Class F of the Order. No more than 6,750sq ft of floor area shall be used for purposes falling within Class F1 at any time. No other changes of use are permitted.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and as the application has been assessed on this basis.

- 7 This approval relates to the following plans:

P0632 RHP XXXX DR A 1000 Rev P2 – Site Location Plan  
P0632-RHP-01XX-DR-A-1052 Rev P1 – Existing Site Block Plan  
P0632-RHP-XX-XX-DR-A-1120 Rev P1 – Existing Site Block Plan  
P0632-RHP-XX-XX-DR-A-2020 Rev P1 – Office Existing Ground and First Floor Plans  
P0632-RHP-XX-XX-DR-A-2021 Rev P1 – Office Existing Second Floor Plan  
P0632-RHP-XX-XX-DR-A-2030 Rev P1 – Business Units Existing Ground Floor Plan  
P0632-RHP-XX-XX-DR-A-2031 Rev P1 – Business Units Existing First Floor Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

## **12. Informatives**

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Not applicable