

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252317
Site Address:	57-59 Unit 3, Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3SZ
Expiry Date:	18 December 2025
Site Visit Date:	12 November 2025
Proposal: Full application for proposed change of use from Office (Class E) to Hot Food Take Away (Sui Generis).	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping CP15 – Employment Development
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB12 – Employment Skills Plan TB15 – Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre development TB16 – Development for Town Centre Uses
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242194	Prior approval submission for proposed change of use of the commercial premises on the first floor (Units 2 and 3) to 3 no. dwellings, with associated ground floor entrance.	PA Approval: October 2024
223566	Full application for the proposed removal of the existing roof and the erection of two additional storeys to provide 9 no. dwellings, together with associated external alterations, changes to fenestration and the erection of refuse and cycle stores.	Approved: April 2023

222868	Prior approval submission for the proposed addition of 1 no. additional storey to the existing terraced commercial building to provide 5 no. residential units.	PA Approval: October 2022
950011	Proposed Demolition Of Existing Retail Unit And Construction Of 3 No Retail Units	Approved: June 1996

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – Request further information
WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Highways – Request further information
WBC Growth & Delivery (Planning Policy) – No comments
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No comments
WBC Waste Services – No comments
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments
WBC Green Infrastructure – No comments

External

Office for Nuclear Regulation – No comments
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No objection
South East Water – No comments
AWE Burghfield – No comments

REPRESENTATIONS

Woodley Town Council	No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Context: The application site comprises a ground floor unit located on the southern side of Woodley Town Centre. The unit is currently vacant and is surrounded predominantly by commercial development. It lies beneath several residential flats.

The proposal seeks to convert the vacant unit into a hot food takeaway, operating as part of the MR. COD franchise.

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The application site forms part of Woodley Town Centre, as identified on the Council's policy map. The unit was previously in office use (Class E) but is currently vacant. The proposal seeks a change of use to a hot food takeaway, which falls under the Sui Generis use class. Accordingly, formal planning permission for a change of use is required.

Policy TB15 of the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan aims to ensure that development proposals maintain or enhance the role and function of Town Centres. While the policy prioritises A1 retail uses, it recognises that complementary uses, such as food and drink services, can be acceptable where they do not result in an over-concentration of non-retail uses that would harm the centre's retail character.

Similarly, Policy CP13 of the Core Strategy seeks to maintain a diverse range of activities within defined centres to ensure they remain at the heart of sustainable communities. Proposals that lead to the loss of town centre uses will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no deficiency within the catchment area.

Although the proposed use does not align with the primary retail function of this Town Centre location, it is considered that introducing a hot food takeaway would not undermine the overarching objectives of these policies, which are to promote vitality and viability. The proposal would not result in an over-concentration of similar uses, and the centre would retain a strong retail core. Instead, the change of use would diversify the centre, extend activity into the evening, and support the centre's economic prosperity. Hot food takeaways are recognised as typical town centre uses and can increase footfall, contributing to a vibrant and sustainable environment.

Overall, by bringing a vacant unit back into active use, the proposal would create a destination that complements existing businesses and enhances the viability of the wider area. On this basis, the development is considered to make a positive contribution to Woodley Town Centre and complies with the principles of Policies CP13 and TB15 of the Development Plan. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant policies and objectives.

Character of the Area: The proposed external alterations associated with the change of use are limited to the installation of a vertical extractor duct and the addition of a sign. Both features are typical within a town centre setting and would not appear out of character in this location. Therefore, there is no objection to these elements. It should be noted, however, that any signage will require separate consent through an advertisement consent application.

Overall, the proposal would have an acceptable visual impact and is considered to comply with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity: Given the nature of the proposed use, the key considerations in relation to neighbouring amenity are potential impacts from noise, odour, and waste. Although the application currently lacks detailed supporting information on these matters, it is considered that such impacts can be appropriately managed through planning conditions. These conditions will require the submission of further details prior to the occupation of the unit and will ensure that measures are in place to minimise noise and odour emissions.

The applicant proposes opening hours of 08:00 to midnight (Monday to Saturday) and 09:00 to 23:00 (Sundays and Bank Holidays). While extended hours are generally expected for Town Centre uses, it remains necessary to consider the impact on adjacent units and the residential flats above. For context, a comparable takeaway on the opposite side of the town centre was approved in 2014 (Ref: F/2014/0874) subject to a condition limiting its hours of operation to between 11:00 and 23:00. In line with this precedent, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition restricting the closing time of the proposed unit to no later than 23:00 in order to safeguard neighbouring residential amenity.

Subject to this restriction and other recommended conditions, the proposed development is considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residents.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: WBC Highways have raised no objection to the proposal, subject to the submission of further details regarding parking provision. The Officer noted that the proposed use is likely to generate a higher parking demand than the existing use and requested parking survey data to confirm existing and anticipated utilisation.

While this request is acknowledged, the site's Town Centre location means that conventional WBC Parking Standards are not directly applicable as they are primarily designed for out-of-centre or car-dependent locations. The subject unit is situated within a well-established commercial core with extensive public parking, high public transport accessibility, and significant pedestrian footfall, all of which substantially reduce reliance on on-site parking.

As the proposal replaces one commercial use with another typical town-centre use, it does not introduce an atypical or intensified demand compared to the established character of the locality. Given the sustainable setting, the abundance of accessible off-site parking, and policy objectives promoting reduced car dependency, the development is considered to operate satisfactorily without dedicated on-site parking. A formal parking survey is therefore unnecessary, as the site's parking requirements are inherently accommodated by existing town-centre infrastructure.

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable and the application is recommended for approval.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development.

Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	11 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	17 November 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	12 December 2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Major Development Location of Woodley*
- *Town Centre*