

Re: Post Office site Ealand PA/2022/1008.

Mark Simmonds

Mon 04/09/2023 18:13

To: Paul Skelton

 1 attachments (16 KB)

Ealand Post office policy CS22 note Sept 2023.docx;

Dear Paul,

please see attached Policy note on Policy CS22.

We look forward to a positive decision, having provided all amendments and additional information requested.

Kind Regards

Mark

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Policy CS22 seeks to provide new and improve existing community facilities across the district.

The policy states the following:

The loss of community facilities or land allocated for such purposes will be resisted, unless there is no longer a need for the land or building in any form of community use, or there is an acceptable alternative means of meeting such need.

The policy therefore requires applicants to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for a community facility or there is acceptable alternative means of replacement.

The applicant submits the following as an addendum to the previously submitted Planning Statement:

Addendum

Sadly, the recent trend has been the closure of the smaller post office sites over recent years; this is largely due to the change in shopping habits and consumer demands which have made the smaller shops and post offices financially unviable. The previous application had sought to retain the Post Office in a purpose built building and reinstate the service to the village, however what became clear from the previous case officer was that there were a number of material planning considerations which made this provision harmful in planning terms.

The case officer raised concerns with the location of the PO/shop unit, the restricted parking and highway issues. Where the retail unit can be accommodated within the development is restricted and its previous location within the small building on the terraced street was not fit for purpose and had no allotted parking. The previous proposal created a purpose-built unit to the rear of the terraces with some parking, however the Council, as mentioned previously did not support the new post office unit in this location.

Therefore, the applicant is left with an end of terrace retail use which is not fit for purpose and largely unviable and a previous proposal for a purpose built retail post office which was found to be unacceptable to the case officer in planning terms.

What also became apparent during the consultation for the previous application is that there does not seem to be any support or demand for reinstating the post office from either the Parish Council or local residents.

This has led the applicant to believe that since the closure of the Post Office, there has been little demand and the service perhaps has not been missed by local residents to any great extent.

The retail use in this location was rather restricted due to its small size and although there is some on street parking, the accessibility is perhaps not attractive and picks up little by means of passing trade. We believe that the post office was advertised for a long period of time as a going concern however there was no interest in the sale until the applicant purchased with a view to redevelop.

It is likely that the facilities at the larger post offices at Keadby and Gunness and even at the smaller facilities at Eastoft and Belton are easily utilised by local Ealand residents especially when combined

with shopping trips which can only really be achieved in the larger market towns and indeed Scunthorpe itself.

As above, the trend has been the closure of the smaller post office units in villages as they are deemed to be no longer viable. Shopping habits have changed with the creation of the larger supermarket retailers and online deliveries; without the regular trade in grocery sales, the small local village shop and post office have not been able to survive in the current retail market. The applicant had wanted to provide a village facility but what has become apparent is that the location is no longer suitable in current planning terms and the demand does not appear to be there any longer in order to sustain a viable business. The postal service itself has been challenged by the likes of Amazon and other delivery services. The Post office itself has had to reinvent itself so as to provide 'parcel pick up' services so as to compete with the delivery market forerunners.

On this basis the Council is asked to consider the current market trends and the failure of a number of small shop/post offices in the smaller rural villages. The original post office was small, not fit for purpose and on this basis unviable. The replacement was assessed as being a negative addition in planning terms and did in fact appear not to generate any interest and support which again questions whether it is needed or wanted by residents.

It is considered that this, on balance demonstrates that there is no longer a need for a small village post office in this very restrictive location and that in any event such a venture is not actually viable in the long term. On this basis Policy CS22 has been met and the redevelopment makes best use of the site in providing homes which are very much needed in the villages.