

SITE VISIT REPORT: MONDAY 25th April 2022

Committee Members: Alderman Baird (Chair), Boyle, Duddy, Finlay, S McKillop and McKeown; Councillors Anderson, Dallat O'Driscoll, Hunter, McGurk, MA McKillop, McLaughlin, McMullan, P McShane (Vice Chair), Nicholl and Scott

12:10pm

LA01/2020/0293/F – 10 Ballyquin Road, Limavady

App Type: Full Application
Proposal: Change of use from community hall to Class A1 retailing use for the sale and display of carpets (including an element of Class B4 storage) and the relocation of the access along Ballyquin Road

Present: Alderman Baird, Councillors Hunter, McGurk and Nicholl, Official JMcMath

Comments:

Viewed site from car park within curtilage of site, then viewed site from side and rear during visit. Officials commenced the meeting by showing the submitted location map, outlining the red line, the proposal description and by explaining that no changes were proposed to floor plans and elevations. Officials explained that the site was located within the development limit of Limavady but outside the town centre as provided for by the NAP and pointed out the character of the surrounding area. Officials explained that the SPPS was the primary policy consideration and outlined the town centre first approach to retail and main town centre uses. Officials explained that a sequential had not been submitted with the initial application but had been requested, the submitted sequential test was based on very specific selection criteria and all ten sites considered in the sequential test were ruled out due to insufficient floor space and no incurtilage servicing. Officials advised that the sequential test did not assess all available options such as;

- properties for sale,
- other properties which meet selection criteria within town centre have not been considered in assessment (showed members the details),
- having a separate showroom and store was ruled out on cost grounds but evidence to demonstrate this has not been provided,

- the original property located in town centre was vacated on grounds that the business had outgrown property and a lack of parking and servicing. It is currently still available for rent, is only 25sq m smaller than search criteria and parking is available in town centre,

- no edge of centre sites were considered in sequential test.

It has not been demonstrated that there are no suitable town centre or sequentially preferable site for this retail unit. Officials advised members of Nexus Retail Capacity Study which indicated oversupply to local need of comparison retail in Limavady and that comparison retail should be directed to town centre to uptake some of the deficit and direct expenditure to town centre. Regarding economic benefits, jobs, rates and trickle down into local economy were all achieved when business was in town centre.

Members asked about distance to town centre and officials advised that a map would be show in presentation to clarify.

J McMath 25/04/2022