

Change of Use Justification – 61 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

This application proposes the change of use of 61 High Street Merthyr Tydfil from an existing shop (A1 use class) to a Pilates studio and Health Suite/Shop (sui generis/unique use). As this property is located within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) of Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre, Policy EcW5 of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP needs to be considered. Policy EcW5 deals with Town and Local Centre Development, and states the following:

Policy EcW5: Town and Local Centre Development

Development enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town and Local Centres will be supported.

Within the Town Centre Primary Shopping Area (PSA) the change of use of the ground floor from A1 to another 'A class' use will be permitted where;

- At least 75% of the commercial uses at street level within the PSA remain A1, and;***
- There are no more than two adjoining 'non-A1' units in any row of five units, provided there are not more than three 'non-A1' units in any 5 units.***

Within the PSA and local centres, the change of use of the ground floor to 'non-A' use classes will only be permitted where:-

- It is demonstrated through active and appropriate marketing that the existing use is no longer economically viable; and,***
- The proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses that would be detrimental to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the local centre; and,***
- The proposal would not result in the creation of a dead window frontage; and,***
- The proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity and viability of neighbouring uses, having regard to the 'agent of change principle'.***

As the application proposes a change of use to a 'non-A' use within the PSA, then the 3rd part of the policy applies.

- It is demonstrated through active and appropriate marketing that the existing use is no longer economically viable;***

The property has been marketed for its existing use for over 12 months and has received little realistic interest. Please see letter included with the application from a local estate agent confirming this.

- The proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses that would be detrimental to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the local centre; and,***
- The proposal would not result in the creation of a dead window frontage; and,***

The proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses as there are a number of A1 uses within close proximity. The proposal will help the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre by introducing a use that will encourage use throughout the regular shopping day and outside of those traditional hours. A part of the ground floor area will also operate in a manner akin to a shop, selling health and wellbeing products. The ground floor which fronts onto the high street will be open during the daytime, therefore avoiding a dead window frontage.

- The proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity and viability of neighbouring uses, having regard to the 'agent of change principle'.***

Again, the proposed use will operationally be similar to a shop in many respects and will not affect the amenity of neighbouring uses (e.g. the use does not include loud music, late hours/increased risk of ASB)