

APPLICATION NO: 26/00080/COU

CASE OFFICER: Kate Pickles

WARD: Halewood South

PARISH: Halewood Town Council

LOCATION: 12 The Halewood Shopping Centre, Leathers Lane, Halewood, Knowsley, L26 0AD

PROPOSAL: CHANGE OF USE FROM A CAFE (USE CLASS E) TO A LAUNDRETTE (USE CLASS SUI GENERIS).

Site description

The application site is a single storey ground floor retail unit within Halewood Shopping Centre. The unit is formed of predominantly glazed panels with a modest signage panel above and was previously occupied by Keely's Café. The retail unit is situated within Halewood Town and District Centre in the Local Plan Policies Map.

Proposal

This application seeks permission for a change of use from a Café (Use Class E) to a Laundrette (Use Class sui generis). This application does not seek to change the existing shop front and works to facilitate the change of use are limited to the internal fit out of the unit with no works proposed that would materially change the external appearance. Hot air extraction from the dryers will be via a small duct to be installed on the roof of the building.

Consultations

Environmental Health: - No objections

Representations

This application was publicised by way of site notice and through letters sent to 14 neighbours. One representation that neither supported nor objected the proposal was received in response to this publicity. This representation is addressed in the 'Assessment' section of this report.

Planning history

22/00451/FUL: - Change of use of shop (Use Class E(b)) to form mixed use restaurant and hot food takeaway (Use Class E(b) / sui generis) with primary use as a restaurant together with extraction and ventilation equipment.

Permission Granted 05/04/2023

22/00452/ADV: - Installation of 2 no. internally illuminated fascia signs to front and side elevations

Permission Granted 05/04/2023

Relevant policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 – Development Principles

CS6 – Town Centres and Retail Strategy

CS19 – Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

S2 – Diversification of uses within existing centres

S7 – Local Centres and Parades

S9 – Shop Fronts and Security Shutters

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Town Centre Uses SPD

Article 35 statement

The local planning authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

The proposed use is considered acceptable as it is appropriate for town centre use and is in keeping with the wider area. Policy S2 of the Replacement UDP requires that there would not be a grouping of uses that would negatively impact the character of the centre. The change from a cafe to a dry cleaners would not result in a harmful concentration of non-retail uses, as the surrounding units are predominantly Class E retail, and the proposed use falls within the scope of town centre-appropriate activities. Policy S2 also states that change of use within retail centres may be permitted provided that they would not cause visual intrusion or general disturbance to neighbouring residents. The proposed change of use complies with this guidance given that it is within a retail centre making it compatible with the scale and role of the existing centre.

Policy S2 further advises that diversification of uses will be supported where the proposal does not exacerbate on-street parking, traffic or amenity issues. The proposal complies with this requirement due to its location within Halewood Shopping Centre, which benefits from an existing off-street car park with sufficient capacity to serve customers. In addition, the proposed dry cleaners would operate on a drop-off and collection basis, resulting in short-duration visits. The change of use is therefore not expected to result in an increased demand for parking or give rise to any associated highway or amenity concerns.

The Town Centre Uses SPD states that *It is vital that Knowsley's retail centres offer a suitable range of uses including community facilities*. The proposed change of use to allow for a laundrette is considered acceptable and compliant with SPD guidance due to being a necessary community facility. The Town Centre Uses SPD also advises that *an over proliferation of hot food takeaways could potentially have an adverse impact on the centre's vitality and viability due to them often being closes in the daytime leading to the appearance of "dead" frontages*. The former occupier of the application unit was a mixed-use restaurant and hot food takeaway (Use Class E(b) / sui generis). The proposed change of use would be compliant with the SPD guidance that aims to discourage an over-concentration of hot food takeaways. The introduction of a laundrette would also positively contribute to diversification of uses within the retail centre, as no comparable service currently operates on site.

A representation from a Parish councillor raised questions regarding security measures for the proposed laundrette, demand, staffing, community benefit and how anti-social behaviour will be discouraged. These queries were passed on to the agent representing

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The laundrette operator who clarified that the opening hours would be 07:00 – 22:00, the laundrette would be self-service and customers can access the service using contactless payments. Despite being unmanned during operating hours employment opportunities would be created in the form of cleaning contractors, engineers and customer service and operation teams that monitor the laundrette.

The Parish Councillor responded via an email in which they expressed the view that anti-social behaviour may increase should the unit be changed to a laundrette. Further information was provided by the agent regarding security measures for the proposed laundrette which include community engagement as a deterrent i.e. sponsoring school sport teams. Also Alarm Activated CCTV Monitoring, Alarm Activated Intruder Alarm Monitoring, Alarm Activated Fire Alarm Monitoring are proposed.

The representation made is not considered to impact the acceptability of the proposed change of use. The proposal complies with the relevant policies and will positively contribute to the diversification of uses within the retail centre.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered appropriate and in keeping with the site's location within an existing Town Centre. The proposed change of use is also considered to contribute to the diversification of uses within the retail centre and would have minimal visual impact due to no external material changes proposed. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable and recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1) The development must be begun no later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt

Schedule 1

Date received	Drawing. No	Revision	Drawing/Document Title
26/02/2026	FEB26 – LP – 001		Location Plan

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26/02/2026	FEB26 – SU – 001		Existing/Proposed Floor Plans
26/02/2026			Planning Statement

Signed Case Officer: Kate Pickles

Signed Authorising Officer: Jo Sheridan

Date: 16/04/2026

Informative

1. Need for Advertisement consent

The proposed change of use will require a separate Express Consent to Display Advertisements. Please contact the Council's Development Control Section (Tel: 0151 443 2381) for further advice.

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

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