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Planning Statement

Proposed Leisure Development

at 698 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury

for Juicebox

March 2022

698 Wilmslow Road

Full planning application for change of use to wine and provisions shop (Use Class Sui Generis)

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Juicebox, to support an application seeking full planning consent for the change of use of 698 Wilmslow Road to a wine and provisions shop.

THE PROPOSALS AND CONTEXT

- 1.2 The site is 698 Wilmslow Road, a former estate agent's premises. It is located close to the junction of Barlow Moor Road and Wilmslow Road in Didsbury district centre. The area is characterised by shops, restaurants and other facilities, with residential dwellings close by.
- 1.3 The proposal involves the change of use of the existing building to a fresh concept focused on providing premium wines, craft beer and deli provisions. This will be a retail and 'sit in' space. The aim is to provide high end, modern styles, more typical of city centres, to a suburban market. There is an intention to collaborate with established Manchester brands. Masterclasses and events will provide further opportunities for patrons to familiarise themselves with the offer whilst providing appropriate activation for this central venue.
- 1.4 The applicant is an experienced operator with an excellent track record of delivering and managing similar leisure venues.
- 1.5 The description of development is as follows:

"Full planning application for change of use to a wine and provisions shop (Use Class Sui Generis)."

PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

- 1.6 This statement describes the proposals and examines the planning considerations which they raise. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Determination of the planning application must be made in

accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 1.7 This statement should be read in conjunction with the other documents submitted with the planning application.

CONTENT OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

- 1.8 This planning submission includes supporting documents which demonstrate how the scheme responds appropriately to best practice in design and sustainability, as well as planning policy objectives. The documents submitted as part of this application are:

- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Juicebox;
- Planning Statement, prepared by Zerum;
- Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Sharpes Redmore;
- Refuse Pro Forma; and
- Operational Management Strategy, prepared by Juicebox.

- 1.9 The application is supported by a full set of plans and elevations, prepared by the scheme architect, Paul Astill and Associates.

STATEMENT STRUCTURE

- 1.10 The remainder of this statement is as follows:

Section 2 – Provides context and describes the site and its surroundings alongside details of any relevant planning history and details of consultation;

Section 3 – Describes the development proposals in detail;

Section 4 – Outlines the development plan framework, relevant national policy guidance and any material considerations;

Section 5 - Sets out a detailed analysis of the relevant planning considerations; and

Section 6 – Concludes by summarising the main points raised in this document.

2. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.1 This section briefly describes the site, its surroundings and local setting, and outlines the relevant planning history of the site.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.2 The site is located in Didsbury district centre, close to the junction of Barlow Moor Road and Wilmslow Road. It is a former estate agent's premises. The area is characterised by shops, restaurants and other facilities, with residential dwellings close by. It is highly accessible, with a range of key bus routes along Wilmslow Road and Barlow Moor Road. There are good, continuous pavements and crossing points which enable pedestrians to navigate the local area safely.

HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.3 The site is located within the Blackburn Park Conservation Area and close to Grade II listed buildings (694 Wilmslow Road and Didsbury Public Library). However, the proposal concerns a change of use, which will have no impact on heritage assets. As such, they are not considered further.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.4 Planning history is limited to the following:
- Single storey rear extension to shop to form dispensary and alterations to front elevation (ref 028770), granted May 1987
 - Non-illuminated fascia name sign and illuminated double-sided projecting box sign (ref 028797), granted May 1987
 - One illuminated projecting sign (ref 038174), approved March 1991
 - Change of use from retail (Class A1) to offices (Class A2), ref 063619/FU/SOUTH2/01, approved December 2001

STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 2.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, local planning authorities must make the determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan relating to the site currently consists of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and the Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1995).

SITE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.6 The site is located within the Didsbury District Centre (Policy C6) and the South Manchester area (Policies EC9, H6). The scheme's response to these and other relevant policies is considered in Section 5.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning consent for the change of use of the existing premises to be used as a wine and provisions shop (Use Class Sui Generis). The vision is for a high quality venue which brings the craft food and drink offering of the city centre to the suburbs with knowledgeable, passionate staff. This is a retail and 'sit in' proposal with the emphasis being on appreciation of good food and drink. It is not a drinking establishment in the typical sense. Online retailing and local bicycle courier deliveries will be offered.

ACCOMMODATION

- 3.2 The proposal is for a change of use. There will be no physical changes to the building with the exception of replacement signage and installation of a retractable awning. The brickwork will be cleaned and treated if necessary and paintwork updated.
- 3.3 The ground floor will be the main shop floor with shelving for wines, beers, spirits and provisions. There will be guest seating for 9 people. The separate space to the rear will be used for preparation and storage with clear access through to the rear fire exit and bin store. The basement will be used primarily for storage. Minimal seating is envisaged for patrons wishing to sample tasters of the drinks that are stored in this area.
- 3.4 The first floor will be a fully seated area with a small service bar. It will be used as a tasting room, masterclass space and comfortable room to enjoy products inhouse. It will be fully table serviced.
- 3.5 The front curtilage to the property will be used for outdoor seating in much the same way as adjacent units, providing tables and seating for 16 people. A bespoke retractable canopy will be fitted. The area will be fully serviced by staff.
- 3.6 The maximum venue capacity is 120 persons, however, practically it will be limited to 95 in order to ensure guest enjoyment.
- 3.7 The proposed floor plans outline the arrangements for access, waste storage and the storage of outdoor furniture.

- 3.8 The refuse is stored in a communal bin store to the rear of the property. The premises benefits from access to three bins, of which one will be for general waste purposes and the remainder for recycling provision. Refuse vehicles will collect waste from the kerb on Barlow Moor Road. This mirrors existing arrangements and is considered to be the optimal solution for the site.
- 3.9 Regarding servicing, the character of the business involves dealing with smaller independent suppliers meaning that deliveries will be small therefore ensuring quick drop-off and limiting pedestrian or traffic interference.

MANAGEMENT

- 3.10 The submission includes a management plan and acoustic report which demonstrate the careful thought given to ensuring that the proposed scheme coexists alongside its neighbouring uses.
- 3.11 The operators have a good track record of managing premises which are located in busy locations and involve the sale of alcohol. Suitable operating policies and practices will be applied to this proposal, as set out in the submitted Operational Management Plan.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 This chapter therefore considers the relevant national planning policy and guidance which form a material consideration in the determination of this application, and the development plan which consists of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and the Saved Policies of the UDP (1995).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.4 The NPPF has a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development at its heart (para 11). Sustainable development means that the planning system pursues economic, social and environmental objectives (para 8), although they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged (para 9). Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, with decision-makers at every level required to seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (para 38).
- 4.5 The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that local planning authorities should, without delay, approve development plans that accord with an up-to-date development plan, and where the relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless other policies provide a clear reason for refusal or if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (para 11).
- 4.6 Section 6 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity with areas being allowed to build on their strengths and address challenges (para 81). Policy should proactively encourage sustainable economic growth

and be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, enabling a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (para 82).

- 4.7 Section 7 requires policies and decisions to take a positive approach to the growth, management and adaptation of town centres. A hierarchy of town centres should be identified and their long-term vitality and viability promoted by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries whilst reflecting their distinctive characters.
- 4.8 Section 8 promotes healthy and safe communities, aiming to create inclusive places which promote social interaction through a mix of uses and strong neighbourhood centres (para 92).
- 4.9 Section 9 of the NPPF seeks sustainable transport, with promotion of walking, cycling and public transport (para 104). Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable (para 105). The NPPF states that development should only be prevented on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe cumulative highway impacts (para 111).
- 4.10 Section 11 of the NPPF supports the effective reuse of land and buildings. Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving high quality design. It recognises that this is a key aspect of sustainable development, covering functionality as well as visual appearance (para 130).
- 4.11 The NPPF glossary identifies 'main town centre uses' among which are retail, leisure and entertainment including restaurants, bars and pubs.

MANCHESTER CORE STRATEGY (2012)

- 4.12 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and is the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). It replaces significant elements of the existing Unitary Development Plan as the document that sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and forms the framework against which planning applications will be assessed.

4.13 The following Core Strategy policies are considered relevant to this application:

- Policy SP1: Spatial Principles
- Policy EC2: Existing Employment Space
- Policy EC9: South Manchester
- Policy C1: Centre Hierarchy
- Policy C2: District centres
- Policy C6: South Manchester District Centres – Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Withington
- Policy C10: Leisure and the Evening Economy
- Policy T2: Accessible areas of opportunity and need
- Policy EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN19: Waste
- Policy DM1: Development Management

4.14 Relevant policy requirements will now be reviewed in detail.

4.15 Policy C1 states that development of town centre uses as defined in national planning policy, will be prioritised in the centres identified in the policy. To maintain centres' vitality and viability, services should be provided locally where possible. Didsbury is identified as a District Centre. As such, it has an essential role in providing key services including leisure. Development should respond primarily to the needs of the catchment and recognise the need to support the vitality and viability of other centres. Supporting paragraph 10.14 recognises the benefit of a range of complementary uses during the day and evening which make centres attractive to local residents and visitors. They can enhance the character and vibrancy of a centre and contribute to consumer choice.

4.16 Policy C2 directly addresses district centres. It seeks a range of accessible key services including retail and leisure. Development should respect the network of centres and consider impact on the vitality and viability of other centres. Development in district centres should prioritise retail, food and drink. Subject to impact on overall character and amenity, the Council will support development which extends the time for which district centres are active. It should positively contribute to the reuse and regeneration of land and premises and promote a range of retailers and shop formats. Development should promote choice and competition particularly where it will support the independent sector.

- 4.17 Policy C6 sets out overall targets for additional retail floorspace and finds that moderate expansion of retailing and other services is appropriate in centres including Didsbury, where they are appropriate to the role and function of the centre. In Didsbury, redevelopment opportunities for new development within and on the edge of the centre will be supported, provided they will enhance the range and quality of retail and dining and complement the overall character of the centre.
- 4.18 Policy C10 states that development that supports the evening economy, contributes to vitality of district centres and supports a balanced evening economy will be permitted subject to consideration of cumulative impact (there should not be a concentration of bars, hot food takeaways and other night-time uses which are detrimental to local character); impact on residential amenity in terms of noise, traffic and disturbance; and balance, with new uses supporting the day and evening economies while not undermining the role of the primary shopping area.
- 4.19 When considering the impact of a new bar, regard will also be had to the existing number of similar establishments; the type and characteristics of other uses; the existence of vacant shop units; the importance of the location for local shopping and the number of shops that would remain; the character of the centre and its frontage and the nature of the use proposed; the potential impacts on the wider community; and any known unresolved amenity, traffic or safety issues.
- 4.20 Policy T2 seeks new proposals which are easily accessible by various transport modes. It signposts the adopted car parking standards whilst noting that the Council will take the circumstances of each proposal into account to establish what level of parking is appropriate.
- 4.21 Policy DM1 requires development to have regard to impact on the surrounding areas in terms of appearance and character; effects on amenity including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter and road safety; accessibility including sustainable transport; community safety; refuse storage and collection; vehicular access and parking.

SAVED POLICIES OF THE MANCHESTER UDP (1995)

- 4.22 The Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 1995 and some policies remain extant notwithstanding the adoption of the Manchester Core Strategy and the NPPF. The saved policies most relevant to this proposal are:

- Policy DC10: Food and Drink Uses
- Policy DC14: Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- Policy DC26: Development and Noise

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.23 Other material considerations include:

- National Planning Practice Guidance; and
- Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007).

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 This chapter considers the key issues that are relevant to the application:

- Principle of development;
- Amenity; and
- Appearance.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

5.2 The proposed use is a wine and provisions store which comprises retail and 'sit in' elements. These fall within the 'main town centre use' categories and as such are wholly appropriate in the Didsbury district centre. The scheme complies with Policy C1 which welcomes town centre uses in centres; Policy C6 which encourages their expansion in Didsbury; and Policy C2 which states that development in district centres should prioritise retail, food and drink.

5.3 The proposal is a unique new enterprise which responds to an increasing interest in craft food and drink. This responds directly to Policy C2 which promotes the delivery of a range of retailers and shop formats; choice and competition for consumers; and support for the independent sector. Policy C6 states that development will be supported in Didsbury where it enhances range and quality especially in relation to retail. The NPPF seeks to encourage diversification which responds to changes in the retail and leisure industries. Local Policy C1 similarly recognises that district centres have an essential role in the provision of key services including leisure. The proposal sits firmly within this category and is therefore to be supported.

5.4 The proposal is modest in scale and occupies an existing unit. It is wholly appropriate to the character of Didsbury. As such, it aligns with Policy C2 which requires development to respect the relevant centre within which it is located, and to consider impact on other centres. The limited scale of the proposal means that it will have no impact on other centres. It will provide a new retail and leisure facility which will be attractive to local people and will enhance the offer of Didsbury during the day and into the evening, in line with Policy C10.

5.5 The premises were most recently occupied by an estate agent, another main town centre use. There is no requirement to justify the loss of this use. It is wholly expected that businesses will

relocate as their needs change. In this case, the estate agent has been acquired by another local company and remains within the district centre.

- 5.6 The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity and requires decisions to take a positive approach to the growth of centres, which promotes their vitality and viability. It also recognises that strong neighbourhood centres assist in maintaining healthy and safe communities. It should therefore be viewed positively that the new proposal has come forward to occupy the vacant unit.
- 5.7 Reuse of an existing building has support from the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy C2. They promote the reuse of previously developed land and buildings particularly in sustainable locations. The principle of the development therefore accords with the NPPF and Policies C1, C2, C6 and C10.

AMENITY

- 5.8 Core Strategy Policy C2 welcomes proposals which extend the time for which district centres are active, subject to impact on amenity. Similarly, Policy C10 seeks development that supports a balanced evening economy and contributes to vitality and viability where its impacts are carefully considered. This exercise is carried out here.

Mix of uses

- 5.9 Policy C10 requires there to be no concentration of bars or other night time uses which would be detrimental to local character. The proposed use comprises a mixed retail and 'sit in' space. It is not a bar in the traditional sense. It is primarily focused on the discovery and appreciation of new food and beverage. As such, its presence will not lead to the overconcentration of night time uses, as it is a particular, individual type of use. It aligns well with the character of the centre.
- 5.10 It is also relevant to note that Didsbury benefits from a rich mix of uses including bars, pubs, specialist retail and services. There is no risk that this proposal would lead to an over-concentration of night-time uses. The proposal will have a positive impact on Didsbury.

Management

- 5.11 The application includes an Operational Management Plan prepared by Juicebox. It reflects the operators' excellent track record of managing premises which are located in busy locations and involve the sale of alcohol.
- 5.12 The Plan confirms a range of measures to ensure that amenity is upheld, including:
- Close monitoring of smoking area;
 - Trained staff to encourage customers to leave the premises respectfully;
 - Provision of information inside the venue regarding travel options;
 - Installation of CCTV;
 - Glass handling to be limited to between 9am and 10.30pm; and
 - Installation of sound limiters on the audio system and acoustic treatment of venue.
- 5.13 The proposal will be suitably managed in order to coexist suitably alongside neighbouring uses. It thereby complies with Policy C10 and DM1.

Noise

- 3.12 The application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment carried out by Sharpes Redmore. This demonstrates that the proposal is capable of coexisting alongside its neighbouring uses, and that amenity for all is upheld.
- 5.14 The proposal thereby complies with Policy C10.

Highways

- 5.15 The site is well located in relation to various transport modes, in line with the NPPF and Policy T2. There are regular bus services nearby on Wilmslow Road and Barlow Moor Road. Various car parks serve the centre. The modest proposal will therefore have no impact on highway safety as a result of patronage.
- 5.16 The character of the business is focused on small, independent providers and suppliers. As such, deliveries will be small enabling quick drop-off and limiting pedestrian or traffic impact. There is a loading bay directly adjacent to the premises.

- 5.17 The proposal thereby complies with Policy C10 and DM1 as it will have no significant highway impacts.

Refuse

- 5.18 The unit benefits from the use of a communal refuse store to the rear of the premises. Refuse is collected from Barlow Moor Road. This mirrors the existing arrangements. The submitted pro forma demonstrates that suitable provision is made for general and recyclable waste. The proposed arrangements are the optimum solution for the site.
- 5.19 The proposal thereby aligns with Policy DM1.

APPEARANCE

- 5.20 The proposal is a change of use. Physical changes are minimal. They are limited to installation of a retractable awning and replacement of signage. New signage will be installed on the existing fascia board. As such, there will be no greater impact than the present signage. There will be no impact on the Conservation Area or the character of the local area. As such, the proposal complies with the NPPF and all relevant policy in this regard.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This statement has described the proposal and set out the planning policy framework against which it will be assessed. The application has been considered against the policies of the current development plan and national government policies and guidance.
- 6.2 The proposal will bring the following benefits:
- Delivers a town centre use within a district centre;
 - Constitutes suitable reuse of a vacant unit;
 - Is sustainably located;
 - Responds to the identified policy aspirations for the prioritisation of the retail, food and drink offer in district centres; the promotion of independent businesses; and enhancement of consumer choice;
 - Will contribute to urban vitality and activity while upholding local character and high standards of amenity; and
 - Provides financial investment in the site and area.
- 6.3 This report clearly demonstrates that the proposed development has policy support and is aligned with national policy. Overall, the principle of development is acceptable.
- 6.4 The NPPF makes it clear that there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' running through the decision-taking process. The proposed development is consistent with the NPPF's core principles. The scheme has been designed to a high standard and is submitted by an experienced operator with a detailed operational management plan.
- 6.5 The proposal is entirely suitable and will generate economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 6.6 Statute requires that this application be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. This proposal satisfies all relevant national and local policy considerations.

