

Report to Full Council

25 July 2023

Subject:	Proposed departure from the development plan - Lower High Street, Rowley Regis
Director:	Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Alison Bishop Alison_bishop@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to an exception to the Development Plan in respect of planning application DC/23/67785 - Proposed 3 storey community skills hub building with 2 No. detached outbuildings for storage, substation, plant room, new vehicular access and gates to front, car parking, cycle storage, enclosed skip/refuse bays, boundary fencing, landscaping and associated works – Lower High Street, Rowley Regis.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Whilst the site is allocated for residential development, the site itself is situated on the edge of the centre sandwiched between the Lidl Store and a commercial builder's yard on Lower High Street, Cradley Heath. Given these factors, it is considered that a commercial use is better suited to this location than a housing site.



Sandwell College has identified, largely through the Town Funding process, that there is a need for an education facility to serve the residents of Cradley Heath and Rowley Regis to provide them with skills to support them into employment. On balance, it is considered that, on this occasion, the policy should be set aside given the location of the site and the need for such a facility within Rowley Regis.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people - provides a new education facility within Sandwell specifically for residents within Cradley Heath and Rowley Regis.
	Strong resilient communities - – provides opportunities for additional training to assist with future employment for young people.
	A strong and inclusive economy – provides an opportunity for apprenticeship during construction and work thereafter through training.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 At the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 28th June 2023 consideration was given to planning application DC/22/67785 which sought approval for a new education skills hub on Lower High Street, Rowley Regis.
- 4.2 Planning Committee approved the planning application with conditions, and to the application being referred to Council as a departure from the Development Plan.
- 4.3 The site is currently allocated for residential development under the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Policies Map. It is necessary for the Council to consider whether or not to grant an exception to adopted policy to allow the application to proceed.
- 4.4 The purpose of this report is to discuss the departure from the Development Plan only. It is not the role of Council to reconsider the wider planning merits of the application which have already been considered by Planning Committee.



4.5 The application has been publicised by neighbour notification letter, and site and press notice, without response. The Council’s Highways, Planning Policy, Environmental Health teams have also been consulted on the proposal. No overall objections have been received from consultees which cannot be overcome by condition.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Refusal of the departure from the development plan is an option.

6 Implications

Resources:	There are no implications.
Legal and Governance:	The proposal is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act.
Risk:	There are no implications.
Equality:	There are no implications.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no implications.
Social Value	The development will afford opportunities for apprenticeships/training during the construction process and as part of the new skills hub.
Climate Change	Appropriate planning conditions are attached to the recommended decision to mitigate for climate change

7. Appendices

Report

8. Background Papers

Planning application DC/22/67785

