Planning Statement

SITE: 75 Upper Brighton Road, Sompting, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0JQ

DATE: June 2016

PROPOSAL: Change of Use from Car Sales Showroom (*Sui-Generis*) to Mobility and Care Products Showroom (*Sui-Generis*)

On behalf of CareCo (UK) Ltd

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Regulated by RICS

Site: 75 UPPER BRIGHTON ROAD, SOMPTING, LANCING, WEST SUSSEX BN15 0JQ

Client: **CareCo (UK) Limited**

Our Ref: **JO/RLD/mac/8418**

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SECTION 1:00: INTRODUCTION

1.01 The Applicant, CareCo (UK) Ltd, are seeking to occupy 75 Upper Brighton Road, Sompting, Lancing, West Sussex BN24 0JQ as a mobility and care products showroom (sui-generis) with ancillary storage area.

1.02 This Planning Statement forms part of the supporting documentation for an application for the above proposals.

1.03 CareCo are a leading independent distributor of mobility products with over 14 years' experience within the mobility market as a group. The Company has a range of over 5000 products designed for indoor and outdoor use to assist the user with improved mobility and quality of life. Products include mobility scooters, wheelchairs, walking frames, bath lifts, hoists, electric adjustable beds and rise recliner chairs. CareCo also trade in other 'living aids' such as kitchen gadgets (jar and bottle openers/large grip cutlery), talking alarm clocks, large face watches, amplified telephones, dressing aids (shoe horns and elastic shoe laces), and washing and hygiene products.

1.04 CareCo have 3 showrooms in Brentwood, Essex, Birmingham and Hayes, West London with the main business, including the distribution centre, run from the Brentwood premises. CareCo are seeking to expand the business and establish a showroom facility in the South East region.

1.05 The Company have a significant internet presence and orders are secured either on-line or via the call centre based at Brentwood where the orders are stored and distributed from that premises.

1.06 The number of customers visiting the showrooms is limited (approximately 10-15 a day) but a showroom presence remains an important aspect of the business. This site offers a good location where there is ease of access to the site for customers looking to view any products available on display before a purchase is made. Any larger bulkier items ordered will be distributed from the Brentwood premises.

SECTION 2:00: SITE DESCRIPTION

2.01 The unit at 75 Upper Brighton Road is two storey building that is operating as a car showroom (sui-generis). The unit provides a total of 482.44 sqm of floor space with a front profile and parking on the forecourt.

2.02 The site is located to the south side of the A27. The property occupies a corner position at the junction where Upper Brighton Road connects with Busticle Lane at Sompting.

2.03 The property is a two storey unit comprising a car showroom and workshop at ground floor and ancillary offices and residential use at first floor.

2.04 The unit would be accessed by the main entrance for customers while there is access available to the upper floor from within the showroom area and separate external access to the upper floors near the southern boundary. Access can be achieved to the garage/workshop area from two separate external access points and internally from the showroom.

2.05 Vehicular access is off Busticle Lane and there is space for up to 24 cars to park on the forecourt area. There is an existing drop kerb at the vehicular access point into the site.

SECTION 3:00: PLANNING HISTORY

3.01 The property has had several alterations, conversions and repairs works carried out since the early 1990's.

3.02 The most recent application LPA Reference: S/74/00/TP/18838 was for alterations to convert the first floor flat to offices, WC's and Wash Facilities incidental to car showroom and workshop in addition to new external fire escape staircase on the south west side. This was granted consent in December 2000.

3.03 In January 1995, planning permission was granted for 'Formation of pitched roofing, alterations, removal of canopy, replacement of workshop roofing and associated improvements' under LPA Reference: S/39/94/TP/15712.

3.04 Advertisement consent was given in December 1994 for internally – illuminated pole sign at front and non-illuminated signs on buildings and wall (existing canopy and signs to be removed) under LPA Reference: S/37/94/TP/15712.

3.05 An application for a certificate of lawfulness for display of vehicles for sale on forecourt and use of power-driven machinery for MOT testing and general workshop use was permitted on 29 September 1994 under LPA Reference: S/25/94/TP/15603.

3.06 An application for extensions (MOT bays) was refused on 13 February 1990 under S/1/90/TP/E120.

SECTION 4:00: THE PROPOSALS

4.01 The type of business seeking to operate from 75 Upper Brighton Road is for a Mobility and Care Products Showroom, which is a *sui generis* Use Class, i.e. a use on its own for which any change of use requires planning permission.

4.02 The proposals include the retention of residential accommodation on the first floor.

4.03 The site is currently in use as vehicle car sales showroom (Sui-Generis use) with garage/workshop element and ancillary offices and residential use at first floor level.

4.04 The proposed showroom will display a range of mobility and care products offered by CareCo (UK) Ltd and available for customers to view before deciding to make any purchase. The Company has a significant internet presence and purchases can be made on-line or via the call centre based at the Brentwood premises. The number of customers visiting their showrooms is limited (approximately 10-15 a day) and, therefore, the number of visitors anticipated at the premises at 75 Upper Brighton Road will be relatively low. A maximum of two staff are envisaged at any one time. Some stock will be stored at the premises and any large purchases made will be distributed from the warehouse at the Brentwood premises.

4.05 Deliveries to the premises would be made via small transit vans, utilising the existing access arrangements from Busticle Lane. Deliveries will be minimal; approximately 1 per week and this will be during trading hours.

SECTION 5:00: DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework

5.01 On the 27th March 2012, the Government published the NPPF. Its intention was to refocus planning policy on encouraging growth and includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.02 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development as having three dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. It advises that the weight to be given to each of these should be considered in each decision on a planning application. The NPPF advises that for decision making, this means (unless material considerations indicate otherwise): -

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless: -*
- *Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

5.03 Paragraph 21 of the NPPF sets out that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of panning policy expectations. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- *Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.*
- *Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit*

Local Development Framework

5.04 The current Development Plan consists of saved policies from the Adur District Local Plan 1996. The new draft Local Plan is currently being prepared and the Council have recently published 'Amendments to the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2016)' in order for representations to be made prior to the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of the State.

5.05 The site is located within a built up area and does not have any site specific designations. The use of the building has been in Sui-Generis use (Car Showroom) until recently providing employment on site.

Adopted Adur Local Plan (1996)

5.06 The adopted Adur Local Plan (1996) identifies in Policy AE1 the targets for providing floorspace for business, industry, and warehousing development.

> '*The Local Plan provides a minimum of 82,000 square metres of new floorspace for business, industry and warehousing development falling within Use Classes B1-B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. This will comprise:-*
>
> *A) The estimated floorspace resulting from extensions and alterations to existing premises or the redevelopment of sites in existing business use.*
>
> *B) The development of new sites, allocated in this Local Plan (Development Proposals DP.AE1-DP.AE11), to include the land between East Worthing Access Road and Worthing's built up area as shown in Development Proposal DP.AE3.*
>
> *C) A proportion of the floorspace resulting from development of Shoreham Cement Works. This provision will include a range of sizes and types of site including some suitable for small firms, offices, warehousing and high technology industry.'*

5.07 Policy AE16 Existing businesses in residential areas relates to existing businesses in residential areas and sets out that within the built-up area, the District Planning Authority will permit alterations or improvements of existing business premises which are required to improve the efficiency of the existing business, providing:

> *(a) On-site car parking arrangements and access to the public highway are acceptable under Policy AT12 and*
>
> *(b) There are no significant adverse effects on the amenity of nearby residents.*

Emerging Adur Local Plan – Amendments to the Proposed Submission (2016)

5.08 The emerging Local Plan outlines the Spatial Strategy for the District in Policy 2.

> *"Up to 2031 the delivery of new development in Adur will be managed as follows: Development within the Built Up Area Boundaries of Lancing, Sompting, Shoreham-by-Sea, Southwick and Fishersgate will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan".*

5.09 Policy 4: Planning for Economic Growth

> *"To facilitate regeneration and ensure a sustainable economy, a total of approximately 41,000 square metres of land will be allocated for appropriate employment generating uses in Adur up to 2031 at the following locations:*
>
> - *Shoreham Airport (approximately 15,000 sqm)*
> - *New Monks Farm (approximately 10,000sqm)*
> - *Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Area (approximately 16,000 sqm within Adur)*
>
> *These allocations will provide a range of employment sites in terms of locations and sizes, and provision will be made within these allocations for a range of accommodation types.*
>
> *Further economic development at the site to the north of the airport, currently occupied by Ricardo, will be supported subject to other policies in this Plan.*
>
> *In addition to the above provision, additional employment floorspace will also be achieved through redevelopment, intensification, change of use to employment, and provision of new employment sites. The majority of this floorspace will be provided within the town centres and the main existing employment areas.*
>
> *Outside of designated employment areas, where new development for, or extensions to B1, B2 and B8 uses is proposed, such applications will only be permitted where it is demonstrated they will not have an unacceptable impact on adjacent residential properties and they comply with other policies in this Plan.*
>
> *Criteria for the identification and provision of new employment floorspace will include the need to provide a variety of new business premises including small and medium sized premises; the need to meet the modern needs of businesses in terms of floorspace, security, quality of environment, good access and services, and ensuring there are no conflicts with neighbouring uses".*

Comment

5.10 The site is not within one of the defined areas for business and industrial purposes (Class B1 and B2) set out in Policy AE2. The surrounding land uses comprises residential dwellings with some industrial, retail and commercial businesses operating in the area. The proposed use is similar in nature to the existing use and is considered appropriate for this location. In principle, there should be no objection to the proposed use which complies with the relevant Local Plan policies.

SECTION 6:00: PLANNING ISSUES

6.01 The main planning issues for the LPA to consider are:

- Acceptability of proposal in principle; and
- Traffic generation, access, parking and servicing.
- Impact on the character of the area.

Acceptability of Proposal in Principle

6.02 The type of operation intended to operate at 75 Upper Brighton Road is considered similar to the previous occupier (car showroom – Sui-Generis) in terms of relatively low levels of employment and trip generation from customers visiting the site. It is considered that the employment function of the site would not be undermined by a change of use to this unit.

6.03 The showroom floorspace would be used for the display of mobility and care products. The garage area would be set aside for stock storage and this would remain ancillary to the showroom. Customers would view the products and be able to purchase small items. Any large orders placed would be directed by the Brentwood premises and products despatched from that depot.

6.04 The planning history demonstrates that this site has been deemed acceptable for Sui-Generis showroom type uses as evident from the lawful certificate issued.

Traffic Generation, Access, Parking and Servicing

6.05 The proposed use is not a high traffic generator where it is envisaged that there would be 3 staff (2 full time, 1 part time) and approximately 10-15 customers per day would visit the unit.

6.06 In relation to parking, the unit provides up to 24 spaces on the forecourt with an area for service vehicles to park and unload also. The number of spaces reflects the employment and visitor levels associated with a showroom business. This form of showroom provides good car parking and easy ground floor accessibility and is ideal for clientele of this type of showroom where, as expected, a large proportion of the client base are people with disabilities.

6.07 In addition, the site is easily accessible by public transport. There are two bus stops located on Busticle lane, adjacent to the property offering services to/from Lancing and High Salvington. The services run on an hourly basis throughout the day.

6.08 The level of car parking provision is considered appropriate and is justified by the particular use proposed for the building.

6.09 Deliveries would consist of a small number of trips by small transit vans dropping off product supplies. This would typically be wheelchair, scooters, walking sticks, incontinence pads and recliner seats. The Company use City Link and Parcel Force for any deliveries and it is anticipated that this would be approximately three vans per day. Off-loading times tend to be fairly quick where the products are not bulky goods and can be carried easily to the delivery entrance. Given that heavy goods vehicles will not be used and where the use proposed is a low traffic generator, there is unlikely to be conflict with customers visiting the premises.

Impact on the Character of the Area

6.10 The site is not in a designated employment area however there are a number of commercial buildings in the immediate context which provide both employment and services to local residents. There is a small neighbourhood parade to the north side of the A27 that consists of commercial/retail properties on the ground floor and residential units on the first floor. The units include a convenience store and D.I.Y. store.

6.11 The immediate area is primarily a residential area with a variety of dwelling styles to the east and south of the site.

6.12 The wider area is characterised by commercial/industrial uses located on Rectory Farm Road, off Busticle Lane. The proposed use for 75 Upper Brighton Road is not dissimilar in nature to the car showroom of business operating from the premises. As such, the proposed use will not harm the character of the area and will comply with saved local plan policy AE16.

SECTION 7:00: CONCLUSION

7.01 The type of operation that would operate from 75 Upper Brighton Road is where mobility and care products will be on display and will offer a destination for customers in the South East Region to view the full range of scooters and disability equipment for sale by CareCo (UK) Ltd. As the products provided tend to be of a larger size, customers would not generally take away items from the unit as the delivery service offered would enable products to be delivered from the storage and distribution warehouse based in Brentwood. Orders for the business are largely taken over the phone or on-line.

7.02 It is considered the proposed change of use would not result in any material harm to the area. The proposals would retain the employment opportunities on the site where there is policy support in the Local Plan, adding to the redevelopment opportunities within the district. In addition, the proposals would not significantly affect traffic and parking conditions in the locality. The proposed change of use is therefore in accordance with the saved policies from the adopted local plan (1996).