

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

54 CHAPEL ROAD, WORTHING, BN11 1BE

**CHANGE OF USE FROM CLASS E(b) FOOD & DRINK RETAIL TO
CLASS F1(a) PROVISION OF EDUCATION**



PLANNING STATEMENT v1

23 February 2026

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	The Application Site	3
3.	Proposed Development	4
4.	Planning Policy Context	7
5.	Consideration of Planning Policies	8
5.1	Principle of the Development	8
5.3	Heritage	11
5.4	Transport and Highways	12
5.5	Amenity	12
6.	Summary and Conclusions	13

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The applicant, EducateU Futures, is a specialist school providing high quality, full-time education for 40 children and young people aged 5 to 16 with a wide range of complex needs. All the students at EducateU have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) plan, a legally binding document for children and young people up to age 25 with special educational needs or disabilities.
- 1.2 The main school is based at 58 Chapel Road, which located 130 metres to the north on Chapel Road. The school has recently expanded into 19 Liverpool Gardens (ref: AWDM/1088/24, approved 29 January 2025) and 52 Chapel Road (ref: AWDM/0222/24, approved 27 June 2024). An application is currently lodged with Worthing Borough Council for the change of use of 17 Liverpool Gardens to education (ref: AWDM/1533/25), creating a science lab and classroom space for students. The grant of permission is expected shortly for 17 Liverpool Gardens.
- 1.3 The ground floor of 54 Chapel Road was last occupied by Split Milk Coffee Shop, and is currently vacant. The opportunity has arisen for Educate U West Sussex to acquire the lease on the ground floor of no. 54, which adjoins no. 52. EducateU propose to use 54 Chapel Road for post-16 educational provision for young people aged 16-18 who are not ready to access local colleges due to their additional needs.
- 1.4 The proposed change of use will retain a retail area at the front of the unit, with teaching space behind.
- 1.5 The planning application comprises the following documents and plans by Krona Design:

Application Form

Planning Statement v.1 by DJM Town Planning Ltd, 23rd February 2026

Plans by Krona Design:

KD.1778_A.001 Site Plan

KD.1778_A.100 Existing Plans

KD.1773_A.101 Proposed Plans

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 54 Chapel Road is located in a parade of shops on the east side of Chapel Road in Worthing town centre. To the north is the Three Fishes Weatherspoons pub, and to the south is 52 Chapel Road that is occupied by EducateU Futures.
- 2.2 The three upper storeys are in residential use and form a separate planning unit to the ground floor, with its own dedicated entrance separate from the ground floor.
- 2.3 The ground floor extends back by 22.5 metres, and comprises a 63sqm retail space at the front with two offices and WCs at the rear. Internally, the unit extends to 102sqm GIA.
- 2.4 A rear door opens out onto a hard surfaced courtyard, shared with no. 52. High metal gates separate the courtyard from a surface level NCP car park to the west.
- 2.5 The premises was last in use as Use Class E(b) 'sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises', by Split Milk Coffee Club. Prior to this, it was occupied by Jacobs Steel estate agents for many years.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the premises from Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to Use Class F1(a) (Education). EducateU Futures will provide specialist post-16 education for young people with additional needs.
- 3.2 No physical alterations are necessary to facilitate the change of use.
- 3.3 A 14sqm retail area will be retained at the Chapel Road frontage, consistent with the approach approved at No. 52. The remainder of the ground floor will provide teaching space, including a main classroom area, a staff office and two smaller teaching rooms.
- 3.4 The proposed use will operate as an extension to the educational activities already established at No. 52. A key component of the proposal is the creation of a supervised hair and beauty salon, providing structured vocational training for students. Hair and beauty treatments will be offered to members of the public on a pre-booked basis.
- 3.5 In addition to the salon use, the premises will accommodate:
- Supervised community fund-raising events
 - Pop-up retail activities
 - A retail area selling hair and beauty products to the public
- 3.6 The proposal has been carefully designed to maintain an active, outward-facing frontage consistent with the character and function of the secondary shopping frontage, while delivering significant community and educational benefits.



Figure 1: 54 Chapel Road, looking towards shop front



Figure 2: Retail floor at 54 Chapel Road



Figure 3: The shared rear yard



Figure 4: Metal gates separating shared yard from NCP car park

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The development plan for the area comprises the Worthing Local Plan 2020 – 2036 (adopted March 2023).

4.2 The site is in the town centre and in a Secondary Shopping Frontage, within the Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB), and the Chapel Road Conservation Area.

4.3 Relevant policies in the Local Plan:

SS1 Spatial strategy

SP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DM5 Quality of the built environment

DM8 Planning for sustainable communities and community facilities

DM13 Retail and town centre uses

DM15 Sustainable travel

DM22 Pollution

DM23 Strategic approach to the historic environment

DM24 Historic environment

5. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 Principle of the Development

- 5.1.1 The site is within the BUAB, where the spatial strategy SS1 permits new development, subject to compliance with other Plan policies.
- 5.1.2 Local Plan policy DM8 supports improvements to health, education, social, community and cultural facilities to ensure they meet the needs of local communities where it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties. It adds that the Council will work with service providers to deliver appropriate facilities in accessible locations. Proposals by service providers for the delivery of facilities in appropriate locations, to meet the needs generated by new development and existing communities, will be supported in principle.
- 5.1.3 Policy DM13 states that changes of use and redevelopments within town, district and local centres will be carefully controlled to ensure that they support, rather than detract from, the successful functioning of the centres and their ability to meet local needs. When considering new uses, regard is had to eleven criteria, the first six of which area,
- i) Make a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre;
 - ii) Not unacceptably impact on daytime footfall;
 - iii) Maintain a strong role for the centre in providing a varied range of convenience goods and meeting other day-to-day needs;
 - iv) Positively restore and/or enhance the character and appearance of the frontage;
 - v) Maintain the continuity of active frontages;
 - vi) Be of a scale and type of use appropriate to the size and function of the centre, or part of the centre concerned;
- 5.1.4 The site is within a secondary shopping frontage. In secondary shopping frontages a wider range of uses will be supported, provided they are active uses with active shop fronts that will enhance the vitality and viability and complement existing uses (policy DM13).

- 5.1.5 EducateU has been operating out of 52 Chapel Road for over six months, in which time the organisation has maintained a strong retail element within the premises. They have organised coffee mornings, cake sales, plant sales and a craft Christmas fair, selling a range of items made by students. These events have raised £689.90, with all proceeds going to charity. The organisation will continue to hold these events into the future.
- 5.1.6 Maintaining public access and community engagement is embedded into the operation of 52 Chapel Road. The retail element provides students with invaluable experience of interacting with members of the public, developing key skills for adult life.
- 5.1.7 54 Chapel Road will copy this model and build it further, creating a hair and beauty salon. The salon will provide a structured, real-world vocational learning opportunity for students, while offering a service to the local community.
- 5.1.8 The salon will have an advanced booking system for public clients. Clients will enter through the main entrance off Chapel Road and be escorted to the salon. This system will ensure public access is appropriately managed, with a clear distinction between public areas and student learning spaces, while maintaining a safe and professional experience for visitors.
- 5.1.9 A range of hair and beauty products will be on sale to the public at all times, and a retail display of items for sale will be maintained in the shop window.
- 5.1.10 The premises will therefore continue to be accessible to members of the public through a combination of scheduled community events and bookable clinic appointments. It is anticipated that public access will typically be available:
- At least 1–2 days per week, through hair and beauty clinic appointments
 - On additional dates throughout the year for pop-up shops, coffee mornings, cake sales, and seasonal community events
- 5.1.11 Exact days and times may vary depending on the planned programme of events and student learning timetables; however, EducateU Futures is committed to ensuring regular public access is maintained throughout the year.

5.1.12 Based on this anticipated pattern of usage, the proposed use will support the functioning of the town centre in accordance with DM13:

- i. The hair and beauty salon, and the pop-up shops and other activities organised by EducateU will contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre;
- ii. It will increase footfall compared to the vacant unit;
- iii. It will create an attractive window display, enhancing the frontage and maintaining frontage continuity;
- iv. It will be of scale, type and function suitable for the town centre.

5.1.13 The retail function can be secured by condition to maintain an active frontage, as was the case for 52 Chapel Road.

5.1.14 In addition to maintaining the retail function of the premises and secondary shopping frontage, the change of use will provide educational provision for young adults in a highly accessible location. The NPPF makes it abundantly clear that LPAs must ensure there is sufficient education provision to meet the needs of its community:

" 100: It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
- b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted." (NPPF, para. 100)

5.1.15 Furthermore, the proposed use will bring additional footfall into the town centre as EducateU will in time need to employ more teaching staff, who will buy day to day provisions in local convenience shops.

- 5.1.16 Policy DM8 encourages collaborative working between the Council and service providers such as EducateU Futures to deliver facilities for education. The policy states that facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs of existing communities will be supported in principle. The application site is suitably located for education provision. The site is highly accessible, within walking distance of public transport and town centre shops and services.
- 5.1.17 The proposal will make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The unit is currently vacant, and the proposed use will reintroduce activity and footfall. The retained retail frontage, bookable salon appointments, public events and product sales will ensure continued public engagement and an active shopfront, consistent with the objectives of Policy DM13.
- 5.1.18 Furthermore, the proposal delivers specialist post-16 educational provision in a highly sustainable town centre location. Policy DM8 supports improvements to education and community facilities where they meet identified needs and do not result in unacceptable impacts. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to give “great weight” to the need to create or expand school and post-16 facilities.
- 5.1.19 The proposal therefore accords with Policies SS1, SP1, DM8 and DM13 of the Worthing Local Plan and paragraph 100 of the NPPF. The principle of development is acceptable.

5.2 Heritage

- 5.2.1 The site is in the Chapel Road Conservation Area. No physical alterations are required to the building to enable the change of use. The proposal will therefore have no impact on the visual amenity of the Conservation Area .
- 5.2.2 Changes in activity can affect the character of heritage assets, for example an increase in noise can affect the ability to appreciate the historic and architectural interest of an area. However in this instance, the proposed use would not result in an increased level of activity or noise compared to the established retail use of the premises.
- 5.2.3 It is concluded that the proposed change of use would respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Chapel Road CA, in accordance with DM24 of the Local Plan.

5.3 Transport and Highways

- 5.3.1 EducateU Futures' students are in the 16-18 years age range, and as such they make their own way to college each day. Students come to the town centre by train or bus. Frequent bus and train services also make public transport the most convenient option for teaching staff.
- 5.3.2 The town centre location will encourage sustainable and active travel, in accordance with DM15 of the Local Plan. The proposal is acceptable from a highways perspective.

5.4 Amenity

- 5.4.1 The site is in a town centre location surrounded by commercial development. The normal school hours are 8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Friday.
- 5.4.2 There are residential flats on the upper floors of no. 54, and the adjacent premises. The proposed use will not result in any change to activity levels that could adversely affect residential amenity. The rear yard is already used by the school as outdoor recreational space, as it is shared with no. 52. The intensity of use of the rear yard will not materially change.
- 5.4.3 The proposed use will not have a harmful impact on residential amenity.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has assessed the proposed change of use of 54 Chapel Road from Use Class E(b) to Use Class F1(a) (Education), to provide specialist post-16 educational provision operated by EducateU Futures.
- 6.2 The site lies within the Built-Up Area Boundary, Worthing Town Centre, a Secondary Shopping Frontage, and the Chapel Road Conservation Area. The proposal has been assessed against the policies of the Worthing Local Plan 2020–2036 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.3 The assessment demonstrates that:
- The proposal is acceptable in principle within the Built-Up Area Boundary and town centre location (Policies SS1 and SP1).
 - The development accords with Policy DM8 by delivering specialist education provision that meets an identified community need in a highly accessible location.
 - The retained retail frontage, supervised salon use, pop-up events and product sales will maintain an active shopfront and contribute positively to the vitality, viability and diversity of the secondary shopping frontage, in accordance with Policy DM13.
 - No external alterations are proposed, and the character and appearance of the Chapel Road Conservation Area will be preserved, consistent with Policies DM23 and DM24.
 - The town centre location promotes sustainable travel patterns in accordance with Policy DM15.
 - The proposal will not result in harm to residential amenity.
- 6.4 The unit is currently vacant. The proposal will reintroduce active use, increase footfall, and deliver clear educational and social benefits, while maintaining public engagement at ground floor level.
- 6.5 The development accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole and aligns with national policy, including paragraph 100 of the NPPF, which requires local planning authorities

54 Chapel Road, Worthing, BN11 1EG

Change of Use from Class E(b) to Class F1(a) Education



to give great weight to the need to create and expand post-16 education provision.

Accordingly, planning permission should be granted.