

Delegated Report

Planning Ref: 26/00045/FUL
Applicant: Oliver McLoughlin
Ward: Hinckley Castle



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Site: Post Office, Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1AW

Proposal: Conversion of existing post office to a 12 bedroom HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. Grant planning permission subject to:
- Planning conditions outlined at the end of this report

2. Planning application description

- 2.1. This application is a full application for a change of use from Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to use as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis). The conversion would result in the provision of a 12-bedroom, HMO. It would also include the provision of a common room (with kitchen), bin storage area, bike storage and a laundry room.
- 2.2. The total area of the site measures approximately 202sqm (0.02ha).
- 2.3. This proposal includes some alterations to the exterior of the existing post office building, including a new door, rear gate and dormers windows.
- 2.4. No car parking is proposed but cycle storage is to be provided as part of the proposal.
- 2.5. The application is accompanied by the following reports and documents:
- Application Form
 - Site Location Plan
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Existing Elevations
 - Proposed Elevations
 - Existing Floor Plans
 - Proposed Floor Plans
 - Parking Plan
 - Heritage Statement
 - Bat and Bird Survey

3. Description of the site and surrounding area

- 3.1. The Site is located within the town centre of Hinckley and is contained within its conservation area.
- 3.2. The Site is bound by the remainder of the existing post office and the sorting office to the north and west, otherwise defined by Station Road to the east and Lancaster Road to the south.
- 3.3. The Site is located in a sustainable location within the centre of Hinckley; shops, supermarkets, local businesses and amenity spaces are all within easy walking distance and supported by pedestrian infrastructure and public transport.

4. Relevant planning history

- 4.1. 89/01257/4 – Installation of post office suite – APPROVED

5. Publicity

- 5.1. A site notice was posted within the local newspaper in January 2026
- 5.2. No comments have been received from local residents or third parties.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. No objection has been received from the following consultees:
- HBBC Conservation Officer – subject to conditions
 - HBBC Drainage
 - LCC Highways – subject to conditions
- 6.2. HSBBC Private Sector Housing – Does not object against planning permission if sufficient amenities are provided within the kitchen.
- 6.3. LCC Ecology – Holding Objection. Further information required regarding a Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats and scoping for swifts.

Further response received June 2026 – No objection subject to a condition in respect of a swift enhancement scheme.

- 6.4. No comments have been received from National Grid or the Council's Waste Team.

7. Policy

- 7.1. Core Strategy (2009)
- Policy 1: Development in Hinckley
- 7.2. Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016)
- Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest
 - Policy DM7: Preventing Pollution and Flooding
 - Policy DM10: Development and Design
 - Policy DM11: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
 - Policy DM12: Heritage Assets
 - Policy DM17: Highways and Transportation
 - Policy DM18: Vehicle Parking Standards
- 7.3. National Planning Policies and Guidance
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)
 - Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
 - Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- 7.4. Other relevant guidance
- Good Design Guide (2020)
 - Landscape Character Assessment
 - Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG)

8. Appraisal

- 8.1. The following represent the key issues in this case:
- Principle of development

- Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area
- Impact upon highway safety
- Impact upon Residential Amenity
- Ecology
- Flooding and Drainage
- Planning balance

Principle of development

- 8.2. Paragraph 2 on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF... is a material consideration in all planning decisions.”*
- 8.3. Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states the Presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied in the instances that *“... the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date...”* Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's Core Strategy document exceeds the five-year threshold in which a Local Plan's policies should be considered with material weight. However, paragraph 12 confirms 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.”*
- 8.4. In conjunction with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, Policy DM1 of the Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (SADMP) establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy DM1 states that if relevant policies are out of date at the time of determination, the Council will consider the adverse impacts of granting permission against the benefits that the proposal would create. If the detrimental impacts do not demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits, planning permission should be granted.
- 8.5. The Council's current Development Plan consists of the adopted Core Strategy (2009) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (SADMP) (2016).
- 8.6. The Council is in the process of undertaking a Local Plan Review. The emerging Local Plan, 'Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2024-2045', has not presently proceeded beyond Regulation 18 stage and thus can only be given limited weight, as it has not yet undergone examination. The most recent Regulation 18 public consultation concluded in November 2025, with the publication of a Regulation 19 draft document projected for the summer of 2026. Therefore, the emerging Local Plan has very limited weight in respect of the determination of this application.
- 8.7. The Core Strategy establishes the key principles for development within the Borough, demonstrating how growth should be sustainably approached. Hinckley is described as a sub-regional centre. The application site is located on the street corner adjoining Station Road and Lancaster Road within the town centre of Hinckley. It is therefore considered to be a suitable and sustainable location and this type of accommodation is deemed suitable for town centre locations and also helps to meet identified housing needs for the Borough.
- 8.8. Though it is recognised that the application site is not a listed building, it is located within the Hinckley Town Centre conservation area. The proposal would seek to convert a disused building and as a result would bring the building back into use.
- 8.9. The Council cannot presently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing. Footnote 8 of the NPPF, which related to paragraph 11(d), states that the application of the presumption in

favour of sustainable development “includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites...”

- 8.10. This proposal is, therefore, acceptable in principle subject to other material considerations determined below.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 8.11. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 8.12. Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraphs 212-215 of the NPPF require great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposed development on its significance, for any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to have clear and convincing justification, and for that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
- 8.13. Policy 1 of the Core Strategy requires that new developments respect the character and appearance of the Hinckley conservation areas by incorporating locally distinct features into the proposal.
- 8.14. Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) DPD seek to protect and enhance the historic environment. Development proposals should ensure the significance of a conservation area is preserved and enhanced. Proposals which seek to improve neutral and negative areas, which also lead to the overall enhancement of the conservation area, will be supported and encouraged.
- 8.15. The Post Office on Station Road is located within the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area. It comprises a building erected in 1902 which spans the corner of Lancaster Road and Station Road and includes a mid-20th century sorting office extension and a further additional ancillary building on Lancaster Road.
- 8.16. The original building is identified as an important local building within the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (HTCCAA) (2013).
- 8.17. The original post office building consists of a red brick construction with stone ashlar dressings, cornice bands, decorative corner elements and mullions over timber framed windows. The original building has been subject to some unsympathetic alterations in modern times, including the blocking up of the original corner entrance door and the insertion of a new wider entrance further along the Station Road frontage comprising of a functional door and flanking timber panelling. Despite this incongruous alteration, the integrity of the original architectural composition remains and this can be fully appreciated when viewing the building from its landmark position at the southern entrance into the conservation area from Station Road.
- 8.18. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on this application and notes that due to its architectural and historic interest, the original building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance and thus heritage significance of the conservation area.
- 8.19. Works that affect the external appearance of the building consist of:
- A new front door on the Station Road frontage for main access to the HMO

- Replacement of two roof lights on the Station Road elevation with dormer windows
- Replacing the door within the mid-20th century extension on Lancaster Road with a gate to provide a fire escape and access to a bin storage area

- 8.20. Initially the Conservation Officer sought some additional information and revised plans were submitted confirming that the existing timber framed windows are to be retained and repainted as needed. The proposed front door to Station Road would be inserted in an enlarged window opening, retaining its proportions and header detailing as well as incorporating the top section as a fan light detail. The door would be a four panelled design of traditional character. These changes are considered by the Conservation Officer to be positive measures that will retain key elements of the heritage significance of the building. Subject to a condition in respect of providing details of the colour, finish and material of the door prior to its installation, this application is considered to be acceptable with respect to impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.21. The two proposed dormer windows on the Station Road elevation would be positioned in line with the fenestration below and be of a moderate and proportionate scale with all other fenestration on the building. The windows themselves would be a simple two light casement which is reflective of the appearance of the fenestration across the building as a whole. The dormers would have a pedimented gable, which while not matching the shallow curved profile of the existing dormer windows on the building does still reflect an appropriate form of gable typical of Edwardian era architecture. Additional details have been provided confirming the dormers would be constructed of a brick façade with lead sheeting for the dormer cheeks and the timber pediment painted white. Due to the need for the brick for the dormers to appropriately match and tie in with the existing front elevation it is requested that a sample of the proposed brick is provided prior to installation, by means of a suitably worded planning condition. Similarly, it is important to ensure, by condition, that the dormer's windows are wood to match the existing windows that will be retained.
- 8.22. The current door and flanking panel set within the mid-20th century extension on Lancaster Road are considered to be of no historic or architectural significance. The proposal would replace the door with a gate to a similar appearance as existing so this is considered to be a very minor alteration that would result in a neutral effect upon the character and appearance of the building.
- 8.23. In design terms, the proposal seeks to bring a disused building on a key corner in a town centre location back into use which will inevitably improve the aesthetics of the immediate area, increase footfall and surveillance and enhance the overall look of the exterior of the building. In design terms therefore, the application is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with development plan policy.
- 8.24. Overall, it is considered that the proposal would result in a development of an appropriate layout, scale and form, detailing and use of traditional materials that would preserve the character and appearance of the Post Office and maintain the positive contribution it makes to the heritage significance of the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area. Consequently, the proposal would comply with Policies DM1, DM10, DM11 and DM12 of the SADMP, Section 16 of the NPPF and the statutory duty of Section 72 of the of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Impact upon highway safety

- 8.25. Policy DM17 of the SADMP encourages new proposals to integrate and support sustainable movement opportunities, making the best use of public transport infrastructure, ensuring the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists, while having a

limited impact on highway safety. It is also highlighted that all new developments and changes of use should be reflective of highways design standards set out in the most recent guidance adopted by the local highway authority.

- 8.26. Table 27 of the LHGD requires cycle storage to be provided for residential dwellings to encourage sustainable alternatives to vehicular travel. The guide requires proposals for HMOs to accommodate one cycle parking space per resident – provided a under covered and secure space. The application details show 12 cycle spaces as required by guidance.
- 8.27. Paragraph 115(a) outlines that, in the assessment of recommended sites, sustainable transport modes have been prioritised. The encouragement of sustainable transport modes should be considered in lieu of the Site's characteristics, the type of development proposed and the location of the Site within its context. Paragraph 117(a) continues to assert that applications for development should give priority first to the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, and secondly to the accessibility of public transport.
- 8.28. The local highway authority (LHA) has been consulted on this application.
- 8.29. The Site does not currently exhibit a vehicular access, nor is one proposed as part of the application. The applicant proposes a new front door onto Station Road and a new rear door onto Lancaster Road to facilitate pedestrian movement.
- 8.30. The LHA is also satisfied that the application will facilitate sustainable movement. The applicant has demonstrated the Site's proximity to public transport infrastructure and all necessary amenities required by residents are within an active travel distance.
- 8.31. The LHA notes that if residents were to require car parking, the town centre contains ample public parking places for this need to be supported without identifiable harm to the local movement network. The LHA also acknowledges the provision of cycle parking as part of the proposals but has requested that a condition be imposed to ensure that the development provides for 12 cycle spaces in accordance with the guidance. On-street parking in the area is controlled to ensure and is primarily visitor only, with double yellow lines used to ensure safety. It is therefore concluded that the proposal will not exacerbate existing parking problems in the area in accordance with policy DM18.
- 8.32. Subject to a condition requiring the provision of 12 cycle spaces, this application is considered to be acceptable with regard to highway safety and is compliant with the relevant development plan policies, requirements of the NPPF and guidance by the Local Highway Authority.

Impact upon residential amenity

- 8.33. Policy DM10(a) states that developments will be permitted if they would not have significant adverse impacts on the privacy and amenity of nearby occupiers of adjacent buildings. Policy DM10(b) furthers this by highlighting that the amenity of future residents should not be adversely affected by activities within the Site's vicinity.
- 8.34. Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF states that decisions should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high level of amenity.
- 8.35. The application site is not located directly opposing other residential dwellings, and thus the risk of an incursion of privacy is avoided. The application includes the restoration and enhancement of the building to meet current building regulation standards.

- 8.36. All of the proposed bedrooms and the common room are in excess of Hinckley's minimum sizes for HMO's as shown on drawing 25-69-PT2-PL02-A.
- 8.37. The Council's Environmental Health Team have been consulted on the application and have raised no objections with respect to noise, air quality or other health considerations.
- 8.38. Therefore, this application is considered to be acceptable in its consideration of amenity concerns and compliant with Policy DM10 of the SADMP and the requirements of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 8.39. Policy DM6 of the SADMP states that development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including long term future management.
- 8.40. Paragraph 187(d) of the NPPF states that decisions should contribute to minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Paragraph 192(b) also highlights the importance of the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 8.41. LCC Ecology were consulted on this application. The Site comprises an existing post office building, and thus there are no environmental features available to be enhanced or introduced. It was identified that the uppermost floor of the application site could be suitable for the presence of roosting bats. As this application proposed the introduction of new dormers and further internal work in these areas, it was requested that the applicant conducted further assessment/survey work to determine the presence of bats.
- 8.42. The Ecology Team also recognised that the site is located within a swift alert area, and the risk of swifts nesting within or on the uppermost floor was also considered to be likely.
- 8.43. The applicant subsequently provided a Bat and Bird Survey to assess the likely presence of bats and swifts. The survey concluded that the site had not previously been used by roosting bats, and it was unlikely that it would be used as such in the future. The presence of nesting swifts was also not identified. After re-consultation with the Ecology Team, they are now satisfied that enough information has been provided to determine this application subject to a condition in respect of a swift enhancement scheme.
- 8.44. Therefore, subject to a suitably worded condition, this application is considered to be acceptable with respect to biodiversity matters and is compliant with the requirements of the NPPF.

Flooding and Drainage

- 8.45. Policy DM7 of the SADMP seeks to prevent development from resulting in adverse impacts on flooding by ensuring that development does not create or exacerbate flooding.
- 8.46. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site specific flood risk assessment (FRA).

- 8.47. The Council's drainage officer has been consulted on the application and raises no issues or objections on sustainable drainage grounds. No conditions have been recommended in this case.
- 8.48. The site is not within an area at high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1) and there are no surface water concerns. The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing building.
- 8.49. The proposal is considered to be in compliance with development plan policy with respect to flood risk and drainage considerations.

Planning Balance

- 8.50. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S20(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.51. This application accords with development plan policy and is considered to be a suitable and acceptable form of development.
- 8.52. There are not considered to be any material planning considerations to warrant the refusal of this application.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 9.2. Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty in the consideration of this application.

- 9.3. There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1. Approve planning permission subject to the following conditions as set out below.

Conditions and Reasons

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following approved details:

- Site Location Plan, Drg No. 25-69-PT2-PL01
- Proposed Elevations, Drg No.25-69-PT2-PL04-A
- Proposed Floor Plans, Drg No.25-69-PT2-PL02-A
- Internal/External Bat and Bird Survey The Post Office Hinckley May 2026

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DM1 and DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until such time as cycle parking for 12 cycles has been provided. Thereafter, the cycle parking provision shall be kept available for such use in perpetuity.

Reason: To promote travel by sustainable modes and prevent the exacerbation of any existing on-street parking issues in the area, in accordance with Policies DM17 and DM18 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the NPPF.

4. The existing wooden windows shall be retained, and the new dormer windows shall be constructed of wood and painted white to match them.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in accordance with Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the NPPF.

5. Prior to commencement of the use hereby permitted, details of the colour, finish and material of the main door fronting onto Station Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The door shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the HMO and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in accordance with Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the NPPF.

6. Prior to installation of the dormer windows hereby approved, a sample of the proposed brick to be used for the dormers shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The dormers shall be put in place in accordance with the agreed brick material and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in accordance with Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the NPPF.

7. No occupation of the use hereby permitted shall take place unless and until a swift (*Apus apus*) enhancement scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This is to detail the provision of a minimum of 2 woodcrete nest

boxes, the make/model and location on building. All works are to proceed strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to help enhance biodiversity on site in accordance with Policy DM6 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the NPPF.

Informatives:

In dealing with the application, through ongoing negotiation the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service and by seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application and this has resulted in the approval of the application. The Local Planning Authority has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Planning Permission does not give you approval to work on the public highway. Therefore, prior to carrying out any works on the public highway you must ensure all necessary licences/permits/agreements are in place. For further information, please telephone 0116 3050001. It is an offence under Section 148 and Section 151 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud on the public highway and therefore you should take every effort to prevent this occurring.