

ATLAS

PLANNING GROUP

PLANNING STATEMENT

Unit 6 Paxton Business Centre

Salisbury

SP2 7YR

March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Atlas Planning Group in support of an application seeking planning permission for the temporary change of use for 3 years of Unit 6 at the Paxton Business Centre, Salisbury, SP2 7YR from Class B8 to Class F1 (a) to accommodate an Alternative Provision educational facility.

ABOUT STEP EDUCATION

- 1.2 Step Education is an Alternative Provision education provider that operates within the Local Authority's mentoring through skills category, offering a structured, supportive environment for young people aged 11–18 who benefit from a more practical, relationship-centred approach to learning. The programme blends hands-on trade-based skill development with personalised academic mentoring, ensuring that each student receives targeted support that builds confidence, resilience and future-readiness.
- 1.3 Students engage in meaningful project based learning across a wide range of vocational areas, such as construction basics, carpentry, creative trades, and workshop-based problem solving. The sessions are designed to encourage teamwork, communication and responsibility, develop transferable technical skills that students can utilise in the future and provide a sense of achievement through tangible outcomes.
- 1.4 Alongside practical sessions, each student has the opportunity to receive tailored academic support delivered through one-to-one mentoring. These sessions involve the reinforcement of core subjects, help with organisation, study habits and goal setting as well as support with reintegration into mainstream education or transition to further education, apprenticeships or employment.
- 1.5 Overall, the provision offers mentoring through skills in its truest sense. It gives students who struggle within mainstream education an opportunity to thrive within an environment where they can gain practical skills, academic confidence and develop the personal resilience needed for a successful future.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Salisbury, within the Churchfields Industrial Estate, and comprises a single unit within a larger two storey industrial building that consists of 10 units. The unit benefits from direct vehicular access from Whittle Road.



Figure 1 - Aerial view of application site

2.2 As existing, the unit has a total GIA of 204.12 square meters and comprises of the main ground floor area, with a walled off two-storey office section to the rear of the unit, which contains kitchenette and WC facilities. Both pedestrian and vehicular loading access is provided from Whittle Road. A total of 6 car parking spaces are allocated within the rear parking area.



Figure 2 – Existing northern elevation

PLANNING HISTORY

PLANNING APPLICATION - S/1999/2079

- 3.1 In 1999 an application was submitted for the construction of 11 Units (B2) with parking service area.
- 3.2 The application was approved in 2000.
- 3.3 Unit 6 of this permission is the section of the building subject to this application.

THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks planning permission for the 3 year temporary change of use of Unit 6 of the Paxton Business Centre from Use Class B8 to Class F1 (a) to accommodate an Alternative Provision educational facility.
- 4.2 The proposed change of use does not require any alterations to the external appearance of the building.
- 4.3 The internal layout is to remain largely unchanged, with the main section and separate two storey office section being maintained.

- 4.4 6 car parking spaces are allocated to Unit 6, there is to be no change to this allocation under this change of use.

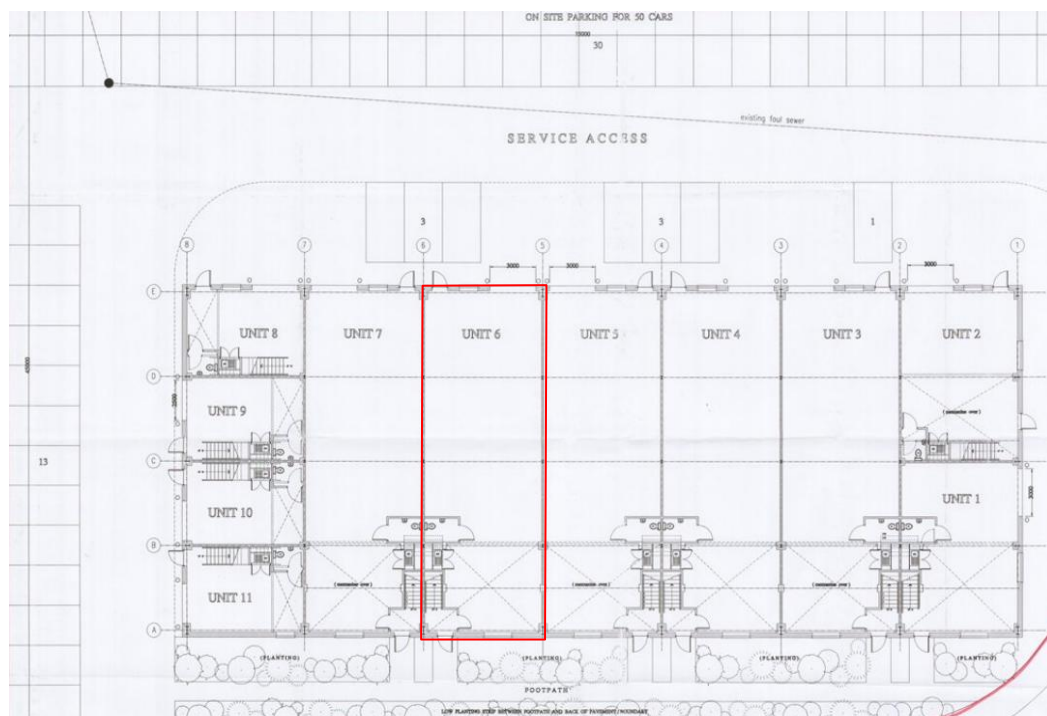


Figure 3 – Floor plans

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy (2015) is the Council's primary Development Plan Document, and the starting point for determining planning decisions, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Section 38(6) also requires determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) provides a national tier of policy and decision-making guidance for the planning system and forms a material consideration for planning decisions.
- 5.3 The policy and guidance contained within the statutory Development Plan Documents and all other relevant material considerations have been reviewed to see if the proposal is an appropriate form of development for the application site.
- 5.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires proposals that accord with the Development Plan to be approved without delay.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.5 Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the 'Settlement Strategy' for the county and identifies four tiers of settlement - Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres, and Large and Small Villages. Only the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages have defined limits of development/settlement boundaries.
- 5.6 Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the 'Delivery Strategy'. It identifies the scale of growth appropriate within each settlement tier, stating that within the limits of development, as defined on the policies map, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.7 The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Salisbury which is a Principal Settlement for the County. Principal Settlements are strategically important centres and the primary focus for development, providing significant levels of jobs, homes, community facilities and infrastructure.
- 5.8 In addition, the site is located in the designated Churchfields Industrial Estate, which is defined as a Strategically Important Site where 5 hectares of employment land will be retained up to the end of the plan period.
- 5.9 Core Policy 35 states that Principal Employment Areas should be *“retained for employment purposes within use classes B1, B2 and B8 to safeguard their contribution to the Wiltshire economy and the role and function of individual towns”*.
- 5.10 This application seeks the temporary change of use of Unit 6 of the Paxton Business Centre from Use Class B8 to Use Class F1 (a) to accommodate an Alternative Provision educational facility. The proposal will therefore result in the temporary loss of 204 sqm of B8 floor space.

5.11 Step Education operates under the Council's 'mentoring through skills' category. Currently within Wiltshire and particularly South Wiltshire there is limited number of alternative provision providers operating under this category. Furthermore, none of the current providers (listed in Figure 4 below), offer a construction focused approach to education. Therefore, the addition of an alternative provision facility that offers practical construction skills for students aged 11-18 would fill an existing gap within the South Wiltshire area and be hugely beneficial to students who require such educational facilities. As such the benefits of providing such a facility should outweigh the temporary loss of the B8 employment use.

Filter by type	Filter by area	Filter alphabetically	From	To
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	South Wiltshire	AFC Totton Development Programme	aged 11	aged 16
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	Countywide	Genna Rose Beauty Academy	aged 13	aged 16
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	Countywide	Grassroots Golf	aged 9	aged 18
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	Countywide	Player Ready	aged 7	aged 21
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	South Wiltshire	Rise 61	aged 11	aged 18
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	Countywide	SAS Mentoring	aged 5	aged 16
Mentoring - incl through skills/sport	Countywide	The Platform Project	aged 11	aged 24

Figure 4 – Table of Alternative Provision facilities operating under the mentoring through skills category

5.12 Despite the loss of a B8 use class the proposed change of use will still be contributing to the employment and economy of Wiltshire. The change of use is expected to support approximately 9 members of staff, subject to student numbers, meaning employment within the site is maintained despite the change of use. Additionally, the facility will provide students with the opportunity to develop practical skills, which will enhance their future employment prospects and subsequently contribute to the long-term economic success of Wiltshire.

5.13 The proposal involves no major internal or external works and is only seeking a temporary change of use for 3 years. Temporary permission is sought as it is anticipated that Step Education will outgrow this facility over the years. This means once the 3 period is finished the building will be able to revert back to its existing B8 use. As such the proposal would not result in the permanent loss of employment land, nor would it compromise the long-term function of the Principal Employment Area.

5.14 The proposal would provide an Alternative Provision education facility which would address a gap of such facilities within the South Wiltshire Area. Furthermore, as the permission is temporary it means the B8

use class would be reinstated after the 3 year period, meaning there would be no permanent loss in employment floorspace. As such it should be considered that the need for such facility within Wiltshire outweighs the conflict with Policy CP35 of the Local Plan. Therefore, the principle of development should be deemed acceptable.

IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

5.15 Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings.

5.16 Section 12 of the NPPF also requires to be of a high-quality design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. Paragraph 135 states, inter alia, that “developments should:

A) function well and add to the overall quality of the area

B) be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping

C) be sympathetic to the local character”.

5.17 The existing, simple industrial design of the building, which is coherent with the surrounding buildings on the Estate, will not be materially impacted by the change of use. The building and its proposed use will continue to reflect the continued employment use of the site and local context. The change of use will not result in any material harm on the character and appearance of the application building, nor the wider important employment area.

5.18 As such, the proposal is in full accordance with Policy CP57 of the Core Strategy.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

5.19 Core Strategy Policy 57 ‘Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping’ requires development to ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.

5.20 The application site is located within an established industrial unit, where there are a range of industrial and commercial activities. This also means that there are no residential properties in close proximity to the application site, with the nearest being located approximately 130m north of the application site. Notwithstanding the sufficient separation distance between the application site and noted residential

units on the edge of the Estate, and such properties have a historic relationship with the existing commercial and industrial uses of the site and are therefore unlikely to be directly impacted by the change of use.

5.21 Given the proposed change of use is to an Alternative Provision educational facility, the proposal is unlikely to generate additional vehicle movements that would not already be expected within the existing employment area.

5.22 Considering the nature of the proposed change of use and the existing uses within the site, the separation distance between neighbouring dwellings it should be considered the proposed change of use to accommodate an alternative provision education facility would not harm the amenities of any nearby premises.

5.23 For these reasons, the proposal fully accords with Policy CP57 of the Core Strategy.

HIGHWAYS AND PARKING

5.24 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.

5.25 Core Policy 62 seeks to mitigate any adverse impact on the transport network on transport users, local community and the environment.

5.26 The application site benefits from being located within a highly sustainable location, where it is a 5-10 minute walk to the Rail Station and the city centre and approximately 200m from the 24 National Cycle Network and Wiltshire Cycle Way. The proposed alternative educational facility will be highly accessible and ultimately both the staff and the students will not be dependent on private vehicles for access.

- 5.27 Currently there are 6 car parking spaces allocated to Unit 6, which are located to the rear of the unit. This application does not propose any changes to the access or parking arrangements.



Figure 5 – Existing parking arrangement

- 5.28 The proposed alternative education facility will accommodate approximately 9 staff members and 15-30 students aged 11-18 at any one time. As can be seen from the parking Wiltshire parking standards below the provision of 6 car parking spaces will be sufficient to satisfy the standards set out for education centres. In any case the student demographic of the proposed alternative education facility will primarily include teenagers or younger who are less likely to drive or own vehicles and are more likely to utilise alternative/sustainable modes of transport.

Education Centres	Staff	2 per 3 staff
	Visitors	1 per 7 staff
	Pupils	1 per 10 2nd yr 6th formers
	College Students	1 per 4 students
	Parent – Infants	1 per 12 pupils
	Parents – Primary	1 per 20 pupils
	Parents Secondary	1 per 30 pupils.
	Higher and Further Education	Staff: 1 per 2 staff + 1 per 15 students ¹

Figure 6 – Wiltshire Car Parking standards for education centres

- 5.29 For these reasons, the proposal is considered acceptable on highway grounds.

- 5.30 The Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework explains that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at high risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 5.31 Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states that *“when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:*
- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*
 - b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;*
 - c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
 - d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
 - e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.”*
- 5.32 As determined by the Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the building that is subject to the change of use falls within flood zone 1, which is the lowest risk of flooding. However, the Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Environment Agencies flood map for planning shows the section of hardstanding to the front of the unit to be within flood zone 2.
- 5.33 However, in accordance with the NPPF’s flood risk vulnerability classification, the existing and proposed use is deemed ‘less vulnerable’ to flood risk. Since the residual risk to flooding will not be materially impacted by the change of use, and the proposals will not result in any additional built footprint, the unit is appropriately flood resilient where safe access and escape routes can be achieved.

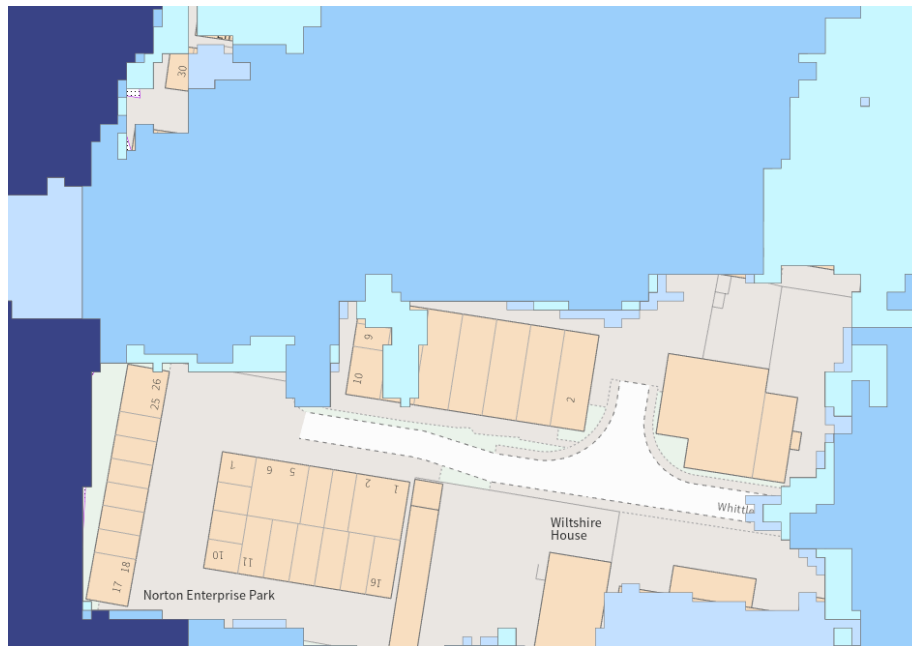


Figure 7 – Extract from SFRA showing present and future flood risk

5.34 As such, the proposal would not result in any undue harm with regard to flood risk and is in full accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and PPG.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the temporary change of use of Unit 6 of the Paxton Business Centre from Class B8 to Class F1 (a) to accommodate an Alternative Provision educational facility.

6.2 Whilst the application site is located within a principal employment area where B use classes should be maintained, it can be seen there is a clear need for such alternative education facilities within Wiltshire.

6.3 The proposed change is temporary for a period of only 3 years and proposes no major physical changes, meaning after this period the building would be able to convert straight back to the B8 employment use. Therefore, this proposal would not result in the permanent loss of employment floorspace.

6.4 It is also clear the proposed temporary change of use would:

- Comply with the local and national planning policies of relevance
- It will not adversely affect other users of the business park
- It will not be detrimental to highway safety and sufficient parking is provided on site.

6.5 Taking into the above into account, we respectfully request the application is approved without delay.