Further Market Evidence to support Change of Use for the upper ground floor (19A) from Use Class E to Use Class C3 (residential self-contained upper ground floor with rear extension and associated alterations DC/24/0691

Justification for the Loss of the Commercial Unit at 19A Carfax, Horsham RH12 1EB

I am happy to advise that the property, both units (lower ground and upper ground floor), have been marketed on various major commercial property sites such as Zoopla Commercial, On the Market, and Prime Location for a long time now. I attach a few links here as evidence as requested:

- Zoopla Commercial: https://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/commercial/details/66065821/?search_identifier=1591340a1a918b7f1807e56ef5aa0113
- On the Market: https://www.onthemarket.com/details/13951615/?channel=commercial
- Prime Location: https://www.primelocation.com/to-rent/commercial/details/66065821/?search_identifier=da39dc54373fef5789b05f15db1e27a3

Unfortunately, the lower ground floor has remained empty for almost a year and a half, with very few inquiries, all wanting to open another food business in the already saturated food business market in the area. Potential tenants withdrew their applications after learning that there are many neighbouring units already operate cafe businesses. Additionally, there have been no inquiries at all for the upper ground floor unit, which is the subject of this application.

The harsh market evidence has led to the decision to move XCLUSIV to the ground floor or another suitable site on the ground floor within the district. This decision will not only fill an empty commercial unit but also revive the business.

While I appreciate the council's economic development concerns about losing a commercial site, it must take into account its overall suitability for businesses. This is especially important given that this site was already an empty unit for over five years before the applicant acquired it. Efforts to revive the unit have proven unsuccessful, supported by business experience and market evidence. It has already been costly and will be even more costly if the situation remains unchanged.

Although the upper ground floor is marketed for commercial interest, as a business owner who has experienced sharp declines in revenue after moving from the street-level lower ground floor to the upper ground floor, I am unsure if it is right to do so knowing businesses may have a slim chance of surviving and growing on the upper ground floor. I believe it would also be contrary to the council's Economic Strategy, as seeing businesses fail and unemployment increase would be a huge cost for the economy in the long term.

Hence, the decision to change the under-demanded commercial unit to a residential unit will not only avoid such costs but also align with the Council's overall Housing policy. It will also be in line with Government Policy under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, specifically in Schedule 2, Part 3, Class M, which permits the change of use from Class E (formerly A2) to C3 (residential) for an area up to 150 square meters.