CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

THIS PAPER RELATES TO ITEM 4

ON THE AGENDA

Report to the Planning Committee

Date of Meeting: 12th November 2026

Subject: **Planning Application 26/00194/FULL to change the use of a former bank (use class 1A) to betting shop (sui generis use) and external alterations**

Report by: **Jacob Muff, Team Leader Planning and Building Standards**

1.0 Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the above application which is a full application seeking planning permission to change the use of a former bank (use class 1A) to betting shop (sui generis) with external alterations.

1.2. The application has been referred to the Committee for a decision, at the request of two elected members.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. The recommendation is to approve the application subject to the conditions listed in Appendix 1 and the plans listed in Appendix 2.

3.0 Considerations

3.1. Background and Relevant Site History

3.2. The property was formerly a bank. It has been vacant since October 2024, but had been occupied since 1991

3.3. The relevant site history is listed below:

3.4. 91/00057/A – An advertisement consent application submitted by TSB Bank Plc for the erection of an illuminated fascia sign and projecting sign was determined on 24 May 1991.

3.5. 91/00058/PD – A planning application submitted by TSB Bank Plc for alterations to the exterior of the bank premises was determined on 16 May 1991

3.6. 94/00093/AD – An advertisement consent application submitted by TSB Bank Plc for the installation of fascia and projecting signs was determined on 18 November 1994

3.7. 98/00032/AD – An advertisement consent application submitted by TSB Bank Plc for the display of fascia and projecting signs was determined on 11 January 1999

3.8. 03/00111/ADV – An advertisement consent application submitted by Lloyds TSB Scotland Plc for the display of a replacement illuminated cashpoint sign was approved on 26 May 2003

3.9. 06/00465/ADV – An advertisement consent application submitted by Lloyds TSB for the display of illuminated fascia and projecting signs was approved on 1 February 2007.

3.10. 12/00237/ADV – An advertisement consent application submitted by Lloyds Banking Group for the installation of 1 no. fascia sign, 1 no. projecting sign and 1 no. ATM sign was approved on 22 November 2012.

3.11. 21/00124/ADV – An advertisement consent application submitted by TSB for the display of 1 no. illuminated fascia sign, 1 no. illuminated projecting sign, 1 No. illuminated ATM sign and 1 no. freestanding A-frame board was withdrawn on 4 June 2021.

3.12. 21/00148/ADV – An advertisement consent application submitted by TSB for the display of 1 no. illuminated fascia sign, 1 no. illuminated projecting sign, 1 no. illuminated ATM sign and 4 no. A0 poster signs was approved on 15 July 2021.

3.13. Consultations

3.14. Public Health Scotland – No response received

3.15. Roads – No comments

3.16. Publicity and Representations

3.17. The application was advertised by a site notice and in the Alloa Advertiser. Two representations were received, both objecting to the proposal. In summary their concerns were:

3.18. - The increased concentration and cumulative impact that four bookmakers operating within a relatively small town could have.

3.19. - That gambling-related harms have significant consequences for individuals, families and communities; including putting them into financial difficulties, creating mental health challenges, causing relationship breakdowns and impacting on employment.

3.20. - The visibility and accessibility of gambling premises could create additional barriers for people attempting to reduce or stop gambling.

3.21. - The proposal is in an area of high deprivation, and it is highlighted that those communities may be disproportionately affected by gambling related harms.

3.22. - The proposal would conflict with public health initiatives to prevent gambling, to reduce harm and to treat problem gamblers

3.23. - A bookmakers would do little to diversify the town or to support the ambitions to improve the town's image, to attract visitors and to encourage investment

3.24. - There are other uses that would be better suited to this building that could bring much more benefit.

3.25. The Development Plan

3.26. Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) indicates that in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan. The determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Statutory Development Plan for the Clackmannanshire Council Planning Authority Area comprises the adopted National Planning Framework 4, 2023 (NPF 4) and the Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan, 2015 (LDP). As NPF 4 and LDP policies form the Development Plan, all the policies are to be read and applied as a whole.

3.27. Planning Assessment

3.28. The key NPF 4 policies are considered to be:

Policy 7 – Historic Assets and Places

Policy 9 – Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings

Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport

Policy 14 – Design, Quality and Place

Policy 15 – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Policy 23 – Health and safety

Policy 27 – City, Town and Local Commercial Centres

3.29. The key LDP policies are considered to be:

Policy EP14 – Retail Network Centre and Hierarchy

Policy EP15 – Promoting Town Centre Regeneration

Policy EP16 – New Retail and Commercial Leisure Development

Policy EP22 – Shop Front Design, Advertising and External Security

Measures

Policy EA23 – Conservation Areas

Policy EA25 - The development of brownfield unstable and contaminated land

3.29 Principle of Development

3.30 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of an existing vacant retail unit within Alloa town centre to a betting shop. The premises have been vacant for more than 12 months, and the proposal would provide an opportunity to bring an underused town centre building back into active commercial use. NPF4 Policy 27 supports proposals which enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, including those which increase the mix of uses. The proposed betting shop would introduce an alternative commercial service, contributing towards the diversity of uses available, maintaining an active frontage and supporting the continued functioning of this town centre Street.

3.31 Whilst NPF4 Policy 27(c) specifically identifies betting offices as a non-retail uses requiring careful consideration, it does not preclude such uses where they would not undermine the character, amenity or health and wellbeing of the community. Having regard to the prolonged vacancy of the premises and the established commercial nature of the surrounding area, the proposed use is considered acceptable in principle, subject to the detailed assessment of its potential impacts which is below.

3.32 Impact on the Built Environment

3.33 The proposed external alterations are relatively minor and would largely retain the existing appearance of the building. These include the replacement of the existing front entrance doors with new powder-coated aluminium doors and frames, with existing side elevation window and door frames retained and replaced only where necessary.

3.34 Two air conditioning units and two satellite dishes are proposed to the rear of the building, positioned on the flat roof and at high level on the rear elevation respectively. Given their location to the rear, these installations are unlikely to be prominent within the streetscape or have a significant visual impact. They are also not considered to raise any harmful impacts for the character or appearance of the conservation area in this location.

3.35 Overall, the proposed alterations are considered limited in scale and would not materially alter the character or appearance of the building or wider townscape. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the built environment.

3.36 Impact on Neighbouring Uses

3.37 The application site is situated within an established commercial area where a variety of town centre uses operate. The proposed betting shop is considered compatible with this surrounding commercial character and is not anticipated to generate any unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance beyond those normally associated with commercial premises. Additional activity associated with customers arriving and departing is considered appropriate for this a

town centre location and overall, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity.

3.38. Impact on Health

3.39. Public Health Scotland recognises gambling-related harm as a significant public health issue, with consequences extending beyond individuals to affect families, communities and wider society. It also identifies a relationship between gambling-related harm and deprivation; with those people living in more deprived communities more likely to be disproportionately harmed by the impacts of gambling, highlighting that land-based gambling premises are often concentrated in areas where people may be least able to afford to gamble.

3.40. The potential impact of the proposed betting shop on public health and wellbeing is an important planning consideration. Policy 27 of NPF 4 makes clear that a betting shop is a non-retail use, and states that further provision of such uses will not be supported where it would undermine the character and amenity of an area or the health and wellbeing of communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas. In addition, Policy 23 seeks to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of communities and to reduce health inequalities, stating that development proposals likely to have a significant adverse effect on health will not be supported.

3.41. Parts of Alloa experience relatively high levels of deprivation. Whilst there is no specific local evidence available to establish the prevalence or distribution of gambling-related harm within Alloa itself with no tailored consultation response having been received from Public Health Scotland, national evidence demonstrates that more deprived communities are disproportionately affected by gambling-related harms and it is therefore acknowledged that the introduction of an additional gambling premises has the potential to contribute to existing health inequalities.

3.42. It should also be recognised however that gambling opportunities are no longer restricted to a physical premises in ways that they may have been in the past. Online gambling provides widespread access to betting and other gambling activities, and the planning assessment must therefore balance the legitimate freedom of adults who choose to participate in lawful gambling activities, against the public responsibility to protect vulnerable individuals and communities from gambling-related harm.

3.43. Although there are two other betting shops located on the same street and visible from the application premises, the surrounding streetscape comprises a mix of uses, including a public house, dentist, convenience store, and other retail premises and commercial services. The proposed betting shop would therefore form part of an established mixed-use town centre environment. It is also noted that Alloa previously accommodated four betting shops, prior to the closure of Coral on Mill Street in 2021, which reduced the number to three. The proposal would therefore return the provision to a level previously established within the town centre, rather than introducing a level of provision which has not historically existed.

3.44. Whilst the existing concentration of betting premises and the potential public health implications are acknowledged, gambling within a setting such as this is licenced, many people enjoy gambling and gamble responsibly, and there is insufficient local evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development would result in an unacceptable concentration of betting facilities or a

demonstrable adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community.

3.45. Overall, having regard to the national evidence on gambling-related harm, the existing number and distribution of betting premises within Alloa, the regulated nature of the proposed use, its defined operating hours between 8am and 10pm, the mixed use character of the surrounding area, the historical provision of betting premises within the town centre, and the freedom of individuals to participate in lawful gambling activities, the proposal is not considered to be unacceptable in planning terms in relation to its potential impacts on health, and is not considered contrary to Policies 23 or 27 of NPF 4.

3.46. Impact on Vitality and Viability

3.47. The vitality and viability of Alloa town centre is an important consideration. Alloa benefit from a diverse range of uses which attract visitors, provides services and contributes to the overall economy and social function of the area.

3.48. This building has been vacant for more than 12 months, with no alternative uses coming forward. The proposed use would provide an opportunity to bring the building back into active use, adding to the existing range of town centre uses and would provide an additional facility for visitors to the town centre.

3.49. The continued occupation would help maintain activity along this town centre street, supporting an occupied commercial frontage that has the potential to generate additional footfall in this area. The presence of an operational business would also provide a degree of natural surveillance to surrounding streets, which is considered to be beneficial at this particular location.

3.50. Whilst the proposal would not directly contribute to the traditional retail offer, the benefits of securing a viable use for a long-term vacant unit are recognised. On balance, the proposal is considered to support the vitality and viability of Alloa through the diversification of uses, increased activity in the town centre, and the reoccupation of vacant premises.

3.51. Economic Impacts

3.52. The proposed development is expected to create three full-time and three part-time jobs, providing employment opportunities within Alloa. The occupation of the currently vacant premises would also support economic activity within the town centre. Both represent a positive economic benefit, contributing towards local employment and the continued vitality of the High Street.

3.53. Public Bodies Equality Duty

3.54 In assessing the application, consideration has been given to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

3.55. The potential impacts of the proposed use on different groups within the community have been considered, particularly in relation to the health and wellbeing implications associated with gambling. Whilst gambling-related harm is recognised as potentially having a disproportionate effect on certain individuals and communities, including those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, no specific evidence has been identified to demonstrate that the proposed development would result in disproportionate adverse impacts on people sharing protected characteristics.

3.56. The proposed development would provide a commercial facility within an established town centre location, with no identified physical alterations that would give rise to particular accessibility or equality concerns beyond those associated with the existing premises. The proposal would also provide employment opportunities through the creation of three full-time and three part-time jobs.

3.57. The proposal would provide employment opportunities and bring an existing vacant commercial premises back into active use. Having regard to the nature and scale of the development and the assessment of its potential impacts in detail above, the relevant equality considerations are considered to have been appropriately taken into account.

3.58. Other Planning Matters

3.59. No other material planning considerations have been identified that would affect the recommendation.

3.60. Summary of assessment

3.61. Overall, the proposal is considered to represent an acceptable form of development within Alloa town centre. It would bring a long-term vacant commercial premises back into active use, contribute towards the diversity and vitality of the area and provide new employment opportunities. The proposed alterations would have a limited visual impact, and no unacceptable effects on neighbouring amenity or the wider built environment are anticipated.

3.62 Whilst the potential public health implications associated with an additional betting shop is acknowledged, particularly in the context of deprivation and the existing provision of betting premises within Alloa, the proposal is not considered to result in an adverse individual or cumulative impacts on public health and wellbeing. Having regard to the assessment above, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant provisions of NPF 4, including Policies 23 and 27. There are no material planning considerations of sufficient weight to warrant refusal of the application, and planning permission is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the proposed conditions.

3.60 Other Material Considerations

3.61 None.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

4.1. The proposal is in a location that is well connected, would support the 20 minutes neighbourhoods and local living concept, and meets the requirements of the Development Plan overall in relation to delivering sustainable and liveable places.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes ☐

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes ☐

5.4. Staffing

5.5. The application does not require any additional staffing resource.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities**

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all	☒
Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life	☐
Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential	☐
Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish	☐

(2) **Council Policies**

Complies with relevant Council Policies ☒

8.0 Impact Assessments

8.1 Have you attached the combined equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty and fairer Scotland duty? (All EFSIAs also require to be published on the Council's website)

Yes ☐

8.2 If an impact assessment has not been undertaken you should explain why:

8.3. It is contained within the body of the report and forms part of the assessment and decision making process.

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☐

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Conditions

10.2 Appendix 2 – Plans Considered

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☒ (please list the documents below) No ☐

- Adopted Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan (2015)

- National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Jacob Muff	Team Leader Planning and Building Standards	2621

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Jacob Muff	Team Leader Planning and Building Standards	[redacted]

Appendix 1 – Proposed Conditions

1. Standard Time Condition

   The development to which this permission relates shall commence not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

   Reason(s): To accord with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

2. Operating Hours and Customer Access

   The premises shall only be open to customers, and customer access shall only be permitted, between the hours of 8am and 10pm on any day. No customer access or betting activities shall take place outwith these hours.

   Reason(s): To limit the availability of gambling facilities and protect the health and wellbeing of the local community, in accordance with NPF4 Policies 23 and 27.

Appendix 2 – Plans considered

FINAL/NL/300726/MAP/01A – Location Plan

FINAL/NL/300726/503 REV A – Proposed AC and Satellite Dish Positions

NL/300726/102 REV B – Existing Shopfront Elevations

NL/300726/100 – Existing Floor Plans

FINAL/NL/300726/504 REV A – Existing and Proposed Roof Plans

FINAL/NL/300726/MAP/03 REV B – Block Plan

FINAL/NL/300726/MAP/02 REV A – Block Plan

FINAL/NL/300726/505 – Proposed Shopfront Elevations

FINAL/NL/300726/500 REV A – Proposed Floor Plans



N

Scale: 1:250

26/00194/FULL - 30 Drysdale Street, Alloa, FK10 1JL

Change Of Use Of Former Bank From Use Class 1A (Shops And Financial, Professional And Other Services) To A Betting Shop (Sui Generis Use) And External Alterations

0 10 20 30 40 50 metres

Date:
03 Nov 2026

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