



NORWICH City Council

Committee name: Planning applications

Committee date: 08/05/2025

Report title: 10 Barnard Road, Norwich, NR5 9JB

Report from: Head of planning and regulatory services

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose:

To determine:

Application no: 23/01615/F

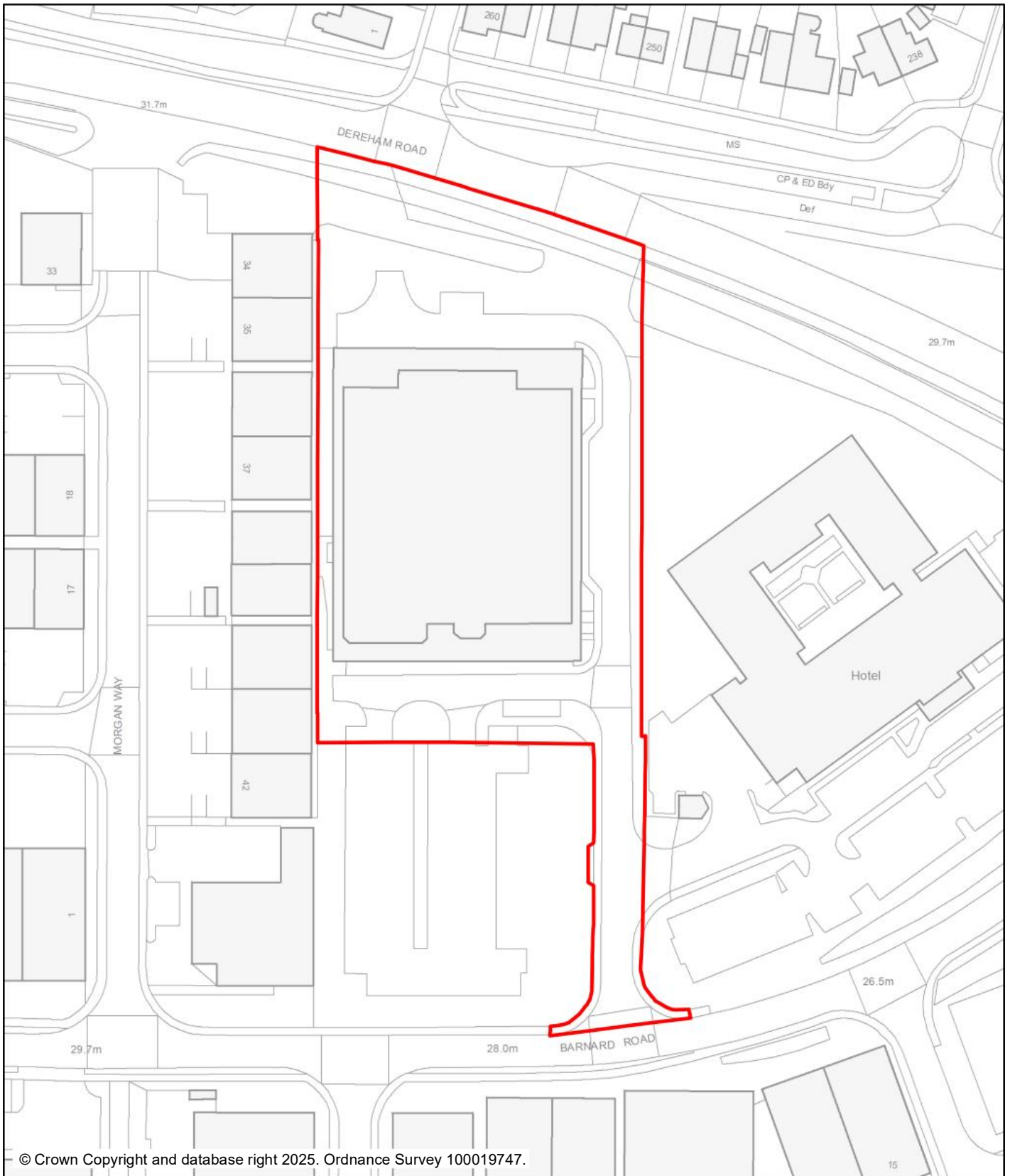
Site Address: 10 Barnard Road, Norwich, NR5 9JB

Decision due by: 16/05/2024

Proposal: Construction of a Class E food store with associated access, car parking, servicing and landscaping.

Key considerations: Principle of development
Introduction of a retail 'town centre use' in a designated employment area
Loss of existing community facility
Design
Amenity
Transport
Trees and Landscaping
Biodiversity
Flood risk and drainage
Energy and water efficiency
Nutrient neutrality and increased recreational disturbance

Ward: Bowthorpe



Scale: 1:1,250

Planning Application No:

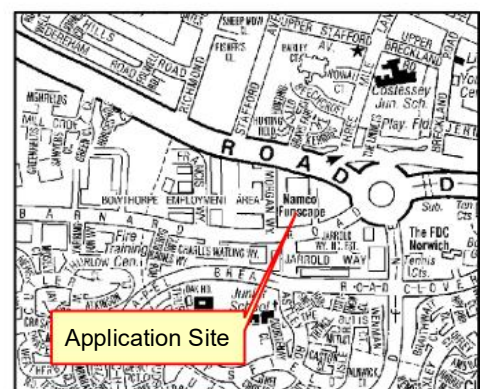
23/01615/F

Site Address:

10 Barnard Road,
Norwich
NR5 9JB



NORWICH
City Council
PLANNING SERVICES



Case Officer: Sarah Hinchcliffe

Applicant/agent: Honeyview Investments Ltd/Emery Planning

Reason at Committee: Objections

Recommendation:

It is recommended to approve the application for the reasons given in the report and subject to the planning conditions set out in paragraph 194 of this report, and grant planning permission.

The site and surroundings

1. The application site is 1.02 hectares and is located in the Bowthorpe Employment Area. An existing extensive single storey building on the site is currently used as a bowling facility operated by Namco Funscape.
2. The bowling facility includes 30 bowling lanes, a video games area, a café and separate 'Pro shop', which provides equipment and advice for bowlers who use their own equipment to bowl. There is also a large separate room with a bar which operates as a function suite and can be hired out for parties and group events.
3. There is parking for over 100 cars to the south of the building up to the road frontage with Barnard Road, which is within the applicant's ownership but does not form part of the application site.
4. Servicing for the existing building is to the north and east. The site is accessed from the south, directly from Barnard Road via an existing access road which also serves the adjacent hotel to the east. This access is intended to also serve a separate site in the applicant's ownership which will be created from the car parking area between the application site and Barnard Road, but is not being considered as part of this planning application.
5. On the adjacent site to the east is a hotel. To the north is Dereham Road and on the opposite side of this road is residential development in the parish of Costessey, within South Norfolk District. The site currently has no direct access to Dereham Road for vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists. To the south and west are brick and metal clad commercial buildings typical for an employment area, which extends further south and west. Further to the south are the extensive residential areas of Bowthorpe, Chapel Break, Clover Hill and Three Score.

Constraints

6. Designated employment land – Bowthorpe Employment Area (DM policy DM16 applies).
7. Tree Preservation Order - TPO 613 –1 Sycamore. Group of 7 oak (DM policy DM7 applies)

Relevant Planning History

8. The records held by the city council show the following planning history for the site.

Case no	Proposal	Decision	Date
4/2000/0399	Extensions and alterations to front of building, new mezzanine level restaurant and alterations to car park.	Approved	12/07/2000
4/1992/0793	No.2 Post mounted triangular signs.	Temporary consent	18/12/1992
4/1994/1013	Erection of signs.	Approved	06/01/1995
4/1999/0985	Extensions to building at front and rear and to car park.	Approved	17/02/2000
06/00056/O	Outline proposals for the demolition of existing bowling alley and erection of hotel and separate public house/restaurant.	Withdrawn	27/04/2006
07/00056/O	Outline application for the erection of hotel and bowling alley.	Refused and dismissed at appeal	30/04/2007

* Note the appeal grounds are materially different and not relevant to this application for retail use.

The Proposal

9. To demolish the existing building on the site (3,345sqm) to allow redevelopment and construction of a Class E food store. The building is intended to be occupied by the discount food operator Lidl and the building, servicing and parking arrangements reflect this.
10. The proposed building has a gross internal area of 1,949sqm, including a net sales area of 1,331sqm of which 1,001 sqm (approx. 80% of net floor space) will be for convenience goods sales and 250sqm (approx. 20% of net floor space) for comparison goods sales.
11. Supporting infrastructure includes 102 car parking spaces, 42 cycle parking spaces, hard and soft landscaping and improved pedestrian and cycle access, including from the north via a new access ramp into the site. The site will continue to be accessed from the existing access from Barnard Road which is shared with the hotel site adjacent to the east and will be modified to also provide a point of access to a separate parcel of land to the south of the application site.
12. The site will remain largely open with knee rail fencing as necessary around the perimeter of the car park. The rear of the building will be secured with 2 metre high weldmesh fencing.

Summary of Proposal – Key facts:

13. The key facts of the proposal are summarised in the tables below:

Scale	Key Facts
Total floorspace	1,949 square metres (GIA) 1,331sqm retail sales floor space • 1,001 sqm convenience goods sales • 250sqm comparison goods sales.
No. of storeys	Single storey
Max. dimensions	Length – 70 metres Width – 34 metres Height – 5 metres - 7.2 metres

Appearance	Key Facts
Materials	Walls – white and grey metal insulated composite panels. North elevation – glazed façade. Roof – light grey trapezoidal composite profiled metal, with solar panels.
Energy and resource efficiency measures	Roof mounted solar pv panels and air source heat pump

Operation	Key Facts
Opening hours	Monday – Saturday 08:00 – 22:00 Sunday – 10:00 – 18:00
Ancillary plant and equipment	Un-specified. Suggested a plant area will be enclosed by a close boarded acoustic fence adjacent to the loading ramp at the southern end of the building.

Transport Matters	Key Facts
Vehicular access	From Barnard Road
No of car parking spaces	Total = 102 spaces • 6 disabled spaces • 9 parent and child spaces • 10 electric vehicle charging spaces • 6 motorcycle space
No of cycle parking spaces	42
Servicing arrangements	Deliveries via a dedicated service ramp and delivery entrance at the southern end of the building. Waste provision inside the building.

Representations

14. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 27 letters of representation were received during initial consultation, 12 letters were received during a second round of consultation and 9 letters received after a final round of consultation. The issues raised across all consultations are summarised in the table below:

Issues raised	Response
The use currently occupying the site is a real asset to Bowthorpe and its surrounding communities, allowing for events, social activities and recreation for all ages. The community greatly benefits from diverse recreational facilities like this. It will be such a loss to the community.	See main issue 1 and assessment of the social benefits.
Place the Lidl in the Bowthorpe shopping centre, which in recent years has seen the departure of the police station, pharmacy & post office and needs new investment.	See main issue 1 and the sequential and impact assessment.
A safe crossing on Dereham Road is needed to access new cycle and walking facilities.	See main issue 4, a new crossing on Dereham Road forms part of the proposals.
It would attract people with cars and encourage more traffic into an already busy area so potentially more accidents, more congestion and pollution.	See main issue 4
Current pedestrian access to the industrial estate is a concern with substandard pavements and no cycling provision and no safe crossing of Barnard Road, with a large number of large articulated vehicles using Barnard Road.	See main issue 4, a number of off-site highway improvements to promote walking and cycling to the site are proposed.
We need this [existing] leisure facility and not another supermarket (in addition to Aldi, Roys and Sainsburys nearby, plus other retail amenities at nearby Longwater). Its loss will have a devastating effect on the local community.	See main issue 1.
Another supermarket would take business away from a local supermarket (Roys) and other business at Bowthorpe centre.	See main issue 1 and the retail impact assessment.
The Bowthorpe employment area is mainly industrial, with the exception of Namco, Castle Carvery and the Brook Hotel - it is not a retail park.	See main issue 1 and discussion around justification of uses in this location.
The alley has been a major part of Costessey and Bowthorpe for many years and provides the community with a ten-pin bowling facility including families, school children, people with a disability, members of the public, and league bowlers. Note that this is the only bowling facility in Norwich that provides league bowling.	See main issue 1.
The site has the only Anglian Pro Ten Pin	See main issue 1. Specialist

Issues raised	Response
Bowling shop in Norfolk. Where you can get a bowling ball, holes drilled to fit your fingers, and all the equipment needed for more serious bowlers without having to travel for many, many miles.	provision such as this may need to be sought further afield.
As chair of the Norfolk & Suffolk Tenpin Bowling Association I am deeply concerned about this development. This region has limited access to ten pin bowling facilities given the size of the county and the specific needs of our sports. My objection is on behalf of the 1000's of bowlers that use this centre every week for both competitive and recreational bowling. To lose this facility would erode further the sports facilities so badly needed by the residents of this City and the wider county. Reducing or removing any BTBA approved and sanctioned Tenpin Bowling facilities would seriously affect the County's ten pin bowling ability and the Norfolk & Suffolk County Association should be involved in any future discussions on removing this bowling facility!	See main issue 1. There are a number of bowling facilities within Norwich and the wider county that provide facilities for bowling at various levels.
Loss of this bowling alley will also mean the loss of junior, Adult & Senior league bowling facilities in Norwich. It is only 1 of the 2 County bowling facilities that is recognised by the British Tenpin Bowling Association. This would force people to travel significant distances for league bowling. There are a good number of Junior, Youth, Adult & Senior Norfolk Tenpin bowlers who are currently representing the England teams at home and in international tournaments. The loss of this facility would seriously impact their chances of future representation in their chosen sport! This sporting facility also supports disabled bowlers alongside the various and numerous visitors who enjoy the fun of bowling in a relaxed environment.	See main issue 1. There are a number of bowling facilities within Norwich and the wider county that provide facilities for bowling at various levels.
Neither of the other two [Norwich] centres are interested in supporting local	See main issue 1.

Issues raised	Response
bowlers. The other Norwich bowling alleys are just too expensive. The free car park and discounted prices are important for retired and young people.	
Access to the bowling alley is important to physical and mental wellbeing. People come together both young and old to have fun while keeping fit.	See main issue 1 which discusses the health and well-being implications.
The adapted rooms and bar area are used for socialising.	See main issue 1. There are community-based halls and public bars within the surrounding residential areas that could offer potential alternative arrangements.
The development would not comply with policies relating to employment land and it has not passed the sequential test for retail use to be located in this area.	See main issue 1 and discussion around justification of uses in this location.
It is highly unlikely that that the existing building would simply be converted into a retail use because the building does not lend itself to a retail use. It would be necessary to demolish the building, or at the very least, carry out substantial works to it, to allow it to be used for retail purposes	See main issue 1 and discussion around fall-back.
Potential devastating effect on local wildlife.	See main issue 6.
Lidl will bring affordability and quality to the area and a great employer.	See main issue 1 and the economic benefits of the proposals.
There is nothing in the public to domain to suggest Namco as the leaseholder wish to vacate the site. I believe the site is profitable so how does it compare with other of Namco's sites with regard to footfall, revenue, profitability and costs? If the Norwich site is out of alignment, then why, and what could be done to correct this?	See main issue 1. Due to commercial sensitivities associated with a tenant business, limited detailed information has been provided to the local planning authority for publication.
This bowling centre was designed to be used by the local community, league bowlers from the County and the sporting elite from the Country and Internationally. The building size, layout, carparking and location are still ideal for that purpose. If commercial operators do not want to invest in the bowling equipment and think they will not get a large enough profit from the site, then a combination of local government, community and sports interests could purchase and/or operate the bowl.	See main issues 1. Although a community facility it is also a private business. The site is privately owned, and the business operation is a private concern.
The Slimming World group operating	See main issue 1. There are

Issues raised	Response
from the function room [at the bowling centre] has supported thousands of people to lose weight, become more active and have a community group. Without the access to a Slimming World group in Bowthorpe many people with obesity would not have found the help & support to make healthier changes and have been able to dramatically change their lives, which in turn saves the NHS thousands every year and why the NHS and Norfolk County Council support referring local residents to funded places at my groups.	community-based halls and function rooms within the surrounding residential areas that could offer potential alternative arrangements.

15. In addition to the public representations, detailed representations were also made on behalf of Waitrose and Partners, ALDI Stores Ltd and Roys of Bowthorpe as summarised below.

16. Firstplan on behalf of Waitrose and Partners (Eaton Centre store)

Objection (additional justification required in terms of compliance with sequential and impact tests) as the application can be considered contrary to development plan policy. Based on the justification which has been submitted, we do not believe that the applicants have satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with national and local policy requirements in respect of the application of the sequential and retail impact tests.

Waitrose have traded from their branch at the Eaton Centre since 1995. The Waitrose store acts as the clear 'anchor' store to the district store and is one of the principal retailers serving the western side of the city and surrounding villages. The remaining small-scale retail and service outlets in the district centre are supported by the footfall attracted to the Waitrose store and consequently the Waitrose can be considered to play a critical role in supporting the wider vitality and viability of the district centre. The Waitrose store is located approximately 12 minutes' drive from the application site and our client considers there to be potential for the district centre to which they form the anchor store to be impacted.

17. Avison Young on behalf of ALDI Stores Ltd (Larkman District Centre store)

Our objection relates to the loss of community facilities and thus conflict with Policy DM22, which has not been appropriately considered; impact on ALDI's in-centre store at Larkman District Centre; and issues with the methodology of the Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) more generally.

The applicant has provided the local authority with an [retail] analysis which is based on out-of-date and inaccurate data; has omitted to include large sections of data which is required to properly assess the impact of the proposed development; and has presented a forecast pattern of trade diversion which is plainly incorrect. Therefore, under any reasonable examination, the applicant's impact assessment has failed to demonstrate compliance with Policy DM18 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014 and paragraph 94 of

the latest version of the NPPF. For this reason alone, the local authority should reject the applicant's assessment and should refuse planning permission unless these deficiencies are addressed.

18. Lanpro on behalf of Roys of Bowthorpe (Bowthorpe District Centre store)

Our client operates the Roys store located within the Bowthorpe District Centre and also owns the Bowthorpe Shopping Centre.

In terms of retailing offer, Roys Store is the anchor to the shopping provision and supports the centre by way of linked trips and spin-off trade. Whilst identified as a 'variety store' Roys is a supermarket, offering predominantly convenience type goods. The store also offers a smaller range of comparison type goods including fashion and a garden centre. The shopping centre itself comprises 17 units that offer retail, service, food and drink and office uses. Whilst the perception of the Centre is relatively healthy, there is a comparatively high turnover of premises, with a continuous number of vacant units. Over the past years store closures include the Post Office, the Norwich & Peterborough Building Society, Corals betting, Boots Pharmacy and McColls convenience store.

Given the important role of Roys to the Bowthorpe District Centre for linked trips and spin off trade, the under performance of the store clearly illustrates the vulnerability of the centre to new competing developments.

It is advanced that the submitted Retail Impact Assessment has overestimated the turnover of the Roys store. Therefore, the potential retail impact of the proposed Lidl store on our client's store, and Bowthorpe District Centre, has been significantly underestimated. The factual position relating to the turnover of Roys has been stated above, and in reality, the proposed development has the potential to detrimentally impact on the vitality and viability of Bowthorpe District Centre. This would be contrary to the requirements of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which supports and protects the viability and vitality of established town centres.

In terms of the fallback position, it is unlikely a food retailer would realistically consider the refurbishment of the existing building for a new store development. Such a development would result in a constrained store that would unlikely meet the operational requirements of a modern food store retailer and would potentially compromise the offer provided to the customer.

Due to the lack of up-to-date data, it is not possible to come to a robust conclusion on the efficacy of the submitted Retail Assessment.

The supporting Retail Assessment in its current form underestimates the retail impact on our client's retail store. Indeed, the potential impact on Roys store at Bowthorpe raises significant concern. Given that Roys is the anchor to Bowthorpe District Centre and supports the centre through linked trips and spin off trade, the anticipated trade diversion resulting from the proposed Lidl store has the potential to adversely affect the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. Such negative impact is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance which seeks to protect town centres.

For the reasons stated above, it is submitted that planning permission for the proposed Lidl food store should not be granted.

19. A letter from Norwich Cycling Campaign includes critical observations of the transport elements of the proposals, including;

- Barnard Road carries traffic consisting in large part of HGV and other industrial traffic, has sub-standard walking infrastructure and no cycling provision, yet is the primary active travel desire line to the site of the new development, especially for residents of Bowthorpe.
- Do not support the proposed Toucan crossing of Dereham Road. The proposed crossing would interfere with the new segregated cycle route presently under construction on Dereham Road.
- There should be provision, at the developer's expense, cycle and walking infrastructure built to LTN 1/20 standard from the junction of Wendene, to connect across Wendene with the existing cycle/walking route from the direction of Bowthorpe Park, along Barnard Road, past the new development as far as Mayfly Way.

Consultation responses

20. Consultation responses are summarised below the full responses are available to view at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Statutory and non-statutory consultees

Anglian Water

21. No objection subject to imposition of conditions. Confirm that there are AW assets within and close to the site. In relation to wastewater treatment, they indicate the foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Whitlingham Trowse Water Recycling Centre that will have available capacity for these flows. Conditions are recommended regarding on-site drainage and surface water disposal.

Environmental Protection (Norwich City Council)

22. Request that the following conditions are attached to any approval granted:

- No trade deliveries or collections shall take place before 07:00 hours and after 23:00 hours Monday to Saturday and before 09:00 and after 18:00 Sundays. There shall be no trade deliveries or collections, on Bank or Public Holidays.
- No use of the premises shall take place until a mechanical plant system has been installed in full accordance with a scheme to be first submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority and, once installed, shall be retained as such thereafter. The scheme shall conform to the recommendations given at paragraphs 5.11 and 5.12 of the submitted noise impact assessment.
- Development shall not begin until a detailed noise and dust management plan/scheme to protect residential dwelling surrounding the site from noise, dust and smoke, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

23. Have reviewed the report Phase II Geo-Environmental Site Investigation Reference: BRD4290-OR2-A dated 12th September 2023. The report finds no contamination in the area tested; however, the foundations have not yet been removed. The report recommends that there is attendance by a Geo-Environmental consultant during the removal of existing foundations as part of the demolition should be considered. Inspection of the subsequent excavations and the undertaking of a couple of trial pits would address the limitations in the exploratory point layout. I would like to add a condition to ensure this is carried out; by adapting the unknown contamination condition and using the asbestos informative.
24. I have reviewed the Air Quality Assessment, Report Ref – 2306810-R02 dated December 2023 produced by Ardent Consulting Engineers. Provided the mitigation measures in section 6.0 are implemented I have no objections and suggest this should be conditioned with the requirement for a Demolition and Construction Management Plan to formalise this. I do request the wording is changed in this document from “avoid bonfires” to “no bonfires”.
25. No occupation/use of the development hereby approved shall take place until details have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority of all external lighting for the site, including any security or other intermittent lighting. Such details shall include specifications for the lighting proposed, its location and position within the site, height and levels of illumination proposed. The details shall also specify that any external lighting includes cowl, or other similar device, to ensure that the lighting only illuminates the site directly. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed and retained as such thereafter.

Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council)

26. Following engagement with the Highway Authority, the applicant has produced an accepted package of offsite highway improvements to support active and sustainable travel to the site from the wider community.
27. A preliminary design of a toucan crossing to the north of the site has been produced. The applicant has liaised with colleagues in Highway Design who have been leading on the recent Dereham Road highway improvement scheme to ensure that the design of the crossing integrates with the recently completed works.
28. The applicant has also submitted a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit based on the submitted design of the toucan crossing. Further technical review of all associated highway improvement work will be undertaken as part of any forthcoming Section 278 agreement.
29. Therefore, the Highway Authority has no further comment to make and recommends conditions. (visibility splays, parking for construction workers, construction traffic management plan, off-site highway improvement works to be delivered by 278 agreement, travel plan).

Norfolk County Council (Minerals and Waste)

30. While the application site is partially underlain by a Mineral Safeguarding Area (Sand and Gravel), it is considered that as a result of the nature of the existing and proposed development and the site location it would be exempt from the

requirements of Policy CS16-safeguarding of the adopted Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

31. With reference to the proposed commercial development, based on the location and infrastructure already in place, we will require a minimum of 1 fire hydrant to be installed, in a location agreed by Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service to ensure adequate fire fighting water provision. The fire hydrant shall conform to BS750 and should provide a minimum sustained outlet discharge of no less than 20l/sec in line with the 'National guidance document on the provision of water for fire fighting' published by Water UK.
32. A minimum requirement for commercial/industrial development would normally be fire hydrants on no less than a 125mm main. This is subject to clarification of the type, size and use of the commercial premises. To comply with Building Regulations all commercial buildings, with any single compartment of more than 280m², should have a hydrant provided, if there is not existing provision within 100mtrs of the building. Hydrant(s) should be located within a vehicular travel distance of 90 metres from the entry points of buildings or the inlet point of a Dry Riser where required. The developer is responsible for ensuring sufficient hydrants are installed, in compliance with water regulations and Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2 sections 15 & 16 (Fire Hydrants / Water Supplies and Vehicle Access) with reference to the 'National guidance document on the provision of water for fire fighting' published by Water UK. All proposed hydrant provision should be to the satisfaction of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. All expenses incurred shall be borne by the developer, owner or occupier of the commercial entity.
33. Reminder of Building Regulations requirements around access and facilities for the fire service, including water supplies.

Norfolk Police Designing Out Crime Officer

34. Although Norfolk enjoys low crime levels, there should be no room for complacency. I have reviewed the crime records for this location over the previous 12 months. The types of crime include: Criminal Damage to and Theft from 10 Barnard Road, and also from the venue immediately adjacent the site. There have also been reports of theft of items from nearby businesses, together with incidences of theft from motor vehicles and theft of pedal cycle. It is therefore strongly advisable for the applicant to factor in protective security measures & practices to combat these types of offenses across this new development.
35. There is also an increasing problem with 'car meets' around the city's peripheral road and associated antisocial behaviour, which we are keen to address at early stages and strongly recommend features to slow and prevent movement of traffic over the site when required (i.e. when venue closed).
36. The proposed layout does show that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design features have been considered and incorporated, and I am encouraged by the reference to Security and Crime Prevention within the DAS & Planning Statement.

37. A major factor influencing the security of a facility is the nature of the surrounding land use and its location. The proposed site is located on the east of Bowthorpe Park Industrial Estate, adjacent to the A1074 arterial road just east of the Norwich Southern Bypass (A47). The site being some distance from 'active' buildings (to the north of A1074) cannot 'borrow' any additional guardianship from neighbouring buildings/dwellings and therefore may be vulnerable when the retail units are closed.
38. Vehicle access routes appear to be clearly defined off Barnard Road, with dedicated pedestrian and cycle access provided from Dereham Road to the north and Barnard Road to the south.
39. Be aware of the rising nuisance of 'car meets' taking place on industrial/commercial sites close to the city. To prevent unwelcome use of parking facilities when the site is closed, please consider:
- ANPR cameras (or similar index recording cameras) & signage (indicating how space is intended to be used i.e. for patrons-only) at the main access point.
 - Installation of a vehicle barrier to be used when venue is closed - restricting any unwelcome movement around the site.
40. Whilst the location of the cycle parking is supported, the cycle stands provided must facilitate the locking of both wheels and the crossbar. Hooped rings set into the ground do not provide for this and the cycle racks may need rethinking. These should be replaced with the new more appropriate facilities. This may become more important with the increase in popularity of electric cycles in general. Crime records show that pedal cycles have been stolen from the nearby vicinity. Please consider separate secure cycle parking requirements for employees, ideally within an additional layer of security – such as the external compound area or the store/service area
41. The indication of installing a secure inner fence line within a less secure outer perimeter is noted and supported. This will restrict access along the vulnerable western elevation.

Tree Protection Officer (Norwich City Council)

42. No objections from an arboricultural perspective. Recommend conditions to secure arboricultural supervision for works within root protection areas, to ensure that works on site are carried out in accordance with AIA/AMS/TPP and mitigatory replacement tree planting condition.

Landscape Architect (Norwich City Council)

43. There are a number of items which require clarification or further consideration. Most notably:
- Proposed Levels, ramp and western boundary.
 - Layout of car park for pedestrian access and ease of use
 - Western boundary treatment, mulched area
 - Planting areas, palette and principles
 - Sustainability of landscape design (suds)

44. Holding landscape objection in accordance with sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF, policy 2 and policy 3 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan 2024 Document 1, and policies DM2, DM3 and DM6 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014.

Assessment of Planning Considerations

Relevant Development Plan Policies

45. Greater Norwich Local Plan (2024) (GNLP)

- GNLP1 The growth strategy
- GNLP2 Sustainable communities
- GNLP3 Environmental protection and enhancement
- GNLP6 The economy
- GNLP7.1 The Norwich Urban Area, including the fringe parishes

46. Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan adopted Dec. 2014 (DMPLP)

- DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
- DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
- DM3 Delivering high quality design
- DM5 Planning effectively for flood resilience
- DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- DM7 Trees and development
- DM11 Protecting against environmental hazards
- DM16 Supporting the needs of business
- DM18 Promoting and supporting centres
- DM20 Protecting and supporting city centre shopping
- DM21 Protecting and supporting district and local centres
- DM22 Planning for and safeguarding community facilities
- DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
- DM29 Managing car parking demand in the city centre
- DM30 Access and highway safety
- DM31 Car parking and servicing
- DM33 Planning obligations and development viability

Other material considerations

47. Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework December-2024 (NPPF):

- NPPF2 Achieving sustainable development
- NPPF4 Decision-making
- NPPF6 Building a strong, competitive economy
- NPPF7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres

- NPPF8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- NPPF9 Promoting sustainable transport
- NPPF11 Making effective use of land
- NPPF12 Achieving well-designed places
- NPPF14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- NPPF15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

48. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Landscape and trees SPD adopted June 2016

49. Advice Notes and Guidance

- Water efficiency advice note October 2015

Case Assessment

50. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant development plan policies are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the council's standing duties, other policy documents and guidance detailed above, and any other matters referred to specifically in the assessment below. The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the main planning issues in this case against relevant policies and material considerations.

Main Issue 1. Principle of development

51. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP1, GNLP2, GNLP6, GNLP7.1, DM1, DM16, DM18 and DM22, NPPF section 6, 7 and 8.

52. The application raises several considerations in relation to the principle of development in this location. Firstly, there are the policy implications associated with the proposed use of the site, second there is the loss of the existing use operating from the site. Finally, the applicant has raised the issue of 'fall back' associated with the retail use proposed being a permitted use within the existing building without the need for planning permission. The weight to be attributed to the fall back position as a material consideration impacts the weight to be attributed to development plan policy when carrying out the overall planning balance.

53. Economic and social dimensions of sustainability also form part of the assessment around the principle of the development proposed.

Need to retain employment areas

54. As identified in the constraints section above, the site is located in the Bowthorpe Employment Area. The site is located on the very edge of that area and is not currently in a traditional employment use. Notwithstanding its current

leisure use, the site remains designated as part of a defined 'employment area' promoted primarily for employment use. Under Development Management Policies Local Plan (DMPLP) policy DM16 states that within employment areas, proposals for new employment development (Use Class B1 (now Class E(g)), B2 and B8, industrial, warehousing, office etc.) will be prioritised along with other forms of economic development where this would not conflict with the requirements of policy DM18 in relation to town centre uses, would not prejudice the function of the employment area and would not undermine committed proposals for its redevelopment or regeneration.

55. In November 2019 a Regulation 10A review of the Local Plan took place and concluded that policies DM16 and DM18 were fit for purpose at that time but a future review was considered desirable. More recently, whilst the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) 2024 notes that committed employment land is more than sufficient in quantity and quality to meet the potential for enhanced growth, the supporting 'Employment Land Assessment Addendum 2020' further reviewed existing employment sites and allocations and did not conclude that any should be reallocated for other uses. At this point in time therefore the existing employment areas still apply and policy DM16 and DM18 are both relevant to the determination of this planning application.
56. The site however is not currently in a use which is consistent with its employment designation. The loss of the bowling alley would therefore not result in the loss of an employment type use that is prioritised by policy DM16.

Proposed retail use

57. Although the application has been made with Lidl clearly stated as the end user, (and the supporting plans and documents are consistent with Lidl being the intended occupier, consistent with that company's operational requirements, store size and layout, car parking and delivery provision), an assessment of the proposed use has been made based on the principle of retail use in general within a specified 1,949 sqm store format accepting that this is more likely to attract a discount retailer.
58. The site is an 'out of centre' location and the retail use proposed is a 'main town centre use' as defined by the DMPLP and NPPF. DMPLP policy DM18 states that proposals for main town centre uses on employment areas will be assessed and determined in accordance with the criteria in policy DM16 (and, where applicable, DM17) prioritising these areas for employment and other economic development uses, and permitted exceptionally where:
- a) the sequential and impact assessment requirements have been satisfied, and it is demonstrated that it is not practical to accommodate the development on a more sequentially preferable or accessible site; and
 - b) the use is appropriate to the character and function of the employment area; or
 - c) the use is ancillary to or associated with an existing use already on the employment area.
59. The development should be both sequentially suitable (i.e. sited in the right place at the most appropriate level of the hierarchy of defined centres, set out in policy GNLP6) and provided at a scale appropriate to the centre in which they would be located and the catchment they would serve. Appendix 4 of the DMPLP requires that any proposal outside of a defined centre which would

exceed 1000 sqm GIA should contain an assessment of the impact on existing and proposed defined centres.

60. The sequential and impact assessments must demonstrate clearly that:

- the proposal could not be accommodated on any reasonable alternative and available site or sites within or adjacent to a defined centre at the appropriate level of the hierarchy; and
- the proposal would not result in a significantly harmful impact on the vitality and viability of the city centre or other existing and proposed centres, would not compromise committed proposals for their expansion and would not significantly undermine prospects for their regeneration, improvement or enhancement.

61. A Planning and Retail statement (including both a sequential and impact assessment) and subsequent addendums were submitted by the applicant in support of the application. Independent advice was sought by officers on the applicant's retail assessment, together with consideration of the objections received on behalf of the three retailers operating in designated retail centres. A summary of those objections is set out at paragraphs 16 – 18 above. An assessment of retail matters is included in the sections that follow.

Sequential Assessment

62. The sequential test seeks to guide main town centre uses towards town centre locations first, then, if no town centre locations are available, to edge of centre locations, and then to out of town centre locations, with preference for accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre

63. The applicant's sequential site assessment includes an assessment as to whether there is an alternative, suitable and available sequentially preferable site for the proposed development. A catchment/area scope that includes a 10-minute drive time was agreed with the applicant to ensure consistency with assessments at other sites. Their statement suggests that a typical Lidl food store will serve a more compact 5-minute drive time core catchment.

64. Their statement sets out market and locational requirements of the proposed development of a food store and how this has guided the range of alternative sites considered/assessed. A set of parameters around site area required, availability of surface level car parking, servicing arrangements and building requirements (single storey, open and un-restricted sales floor area) are considered to reasonably reflect the necessary requirements of a site to accommodate the type of retail store proposed and form the basis of the search for alternative sites. Many of these parameters will be quite standard across the industry, however proposed retail floor space will vary across retailers and can have an influence on the overall site area required.

65. The applicant has assessed sequentially preferable sites at seven centres:

- Bowthorpe Main Centre, District Retail Centre,
- The Larkman, District Retail Centre,
- Norwich Road, Costessey (in South Norfolk),

- Earlham West, Local Retail Centre,
- University of East Anglia, Local Retail Centre
- Colman Road/The Avenues, Local Retail Centre
- Colman Road/The Parade, Local Retail Centre.

66. The sequential assessment rules out the smaller Local Retail Centres and the area at Norwich Road, Costessey due to lack of availability of units, their small size and lack of parking provision. It also rules out provision on the UEA campus as being too specialist, with limited access to the general public and units which are too small. It is recognised that the provision in Costessey does not form part of a defined retail centre. The assessment also makes limited reference to a new development at Easton (within South Norfolk district), which includes a limited amount of retail provision. The assessment discounts this location due to the limited scale of provision.
67. The larger District Centre sites at The Larkman and Bowthorpe Main Centre are closer in distance to the application site and also with potential to accommodate the proposals while exercising some degree of flexibility. However, at both of these centres there are no available units of sufficient size to be close to accommodating the proposals. At The Larkman, Aldi provides the anchor to the centre and is currently operating and therefore this is not available.
68. Bowthorpe Main Centre is however much larger at over 3.5 hectares in area and with access to over 400 parking spaces. Roy's of Bowthorpe is the anchor store and is not currently available. At over 4,000sqm floor space the premises currently occupied by Roys would be capable of accommodating the application (Lidl's) 1,949sqm GIA requirement. Although there are vacant units in this centre (3 units out of 17 at the time of the councils most recent retail audit in October 2024), they are not large enough or adjacent to each other. A new development on the extensive area of car parking overprovision is explored and is also discounted due to it not being sufficient to accommodate a new store and the required amount of car parking and concerns relating to associated impacts on designated heritage assets at Bowthorpe Hall to the south. In order to accommodate the existing anchor store and the application proposals would require a complete redevelopment of the site and this would require agreement with the existing landowner and tenants which would put any such proposals beyond reasonable timescales for availability that paragraph 91 of the NPPF requires.
69. The applicant's assessment therefore concludes that there are no suitable and available sequentially preferable sites to accommodate the proposed development within defined centres within a 10-minute drive time from the site.
70. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that 'when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.' Although not on the edge of a district centre the application site is accessible from a main public transport corridor into the city. Officers are not aware of any available alternative sites that are located in a more accessible location at this time.

71. Having regard to the information submitted and the independent advice that was received, it is considered that the application complies with policy GNLP6, DMPLP policy DM18 and paragraphs 91, 92 and 95 of the NPPF, as it has been demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites that are available and suitable within designated centres or other out of centre locations that are more accessible.

Impact assessment

72. The requirement for a retail impact assessment is set out within the NPPF, with a threshold of 2,500 sqm gross floor space unless there is a locally set lower threshold. DMPLP policy DM18 (supported by Appendix 4) requires an assessment of impacts to be applied where the scale of development proposed outside of a defined centre would exceed the lower threshold of 1,000 sqm gross internal area. It should be noted that this lower threshold for assessment reflects particular local circumstances in Norwich, where district and local centres and anchor food stores are typically smaller than average. Given these characteristics they are considered more sensitive to the impact of development which diverts trade to out of centre locations. The purpose of the test is to ensure that over time the impact of proposed development on the vitality and viability of existing town centres/centres is not significantly adverse.
73. The applicant's Planning and Retail Statement and addendums includes a retail impact assessment, including an assessment of the current state/health of existing centres; assessment of the trading performance of existing stores; assessment of turnover and the pattern and extent of trade draw associated with the development and an assessment of whether this will harm the vitality and viability of existing centres in the catchment area.
74. A cumulative assessment of impacts considered reallocating turnover from the now closed Drayton Road, Lidl store, together with trade diversion from the relatively new Aldi store at Longwater, in addition to the proposed new store at the application site.
75. This element of the applicant's submission was scrutinised by a number of competing food retailers and was subject to further questions and scrutiny by the consultant advising on retail matters on behalf of the Council. Upon reconsultation and with the understanding that the Council was being advised by an independent retail consultant none of the retailers found it necessary to add any further comment.
76. The retail impact assessment considers the same 10-minute drive time catchment as agreed for the sequential assessment. It therefore considers existing retailers located within this area. Including,
- Aldi at The Larkman,
 - Roys at Bowthorpe Main Centre,
 - ASDA at Drayton High Road,
 - Sainsburys at William Frost Way (Longwater),
 - smaller scale stores such as Co-ops and Morrisons Daily.

Note that Eaton Centre does not feature within the assessment as it falls outside of the drivetime catchment.

77. Much of the convenience goods impact falls, in the main, on out of centre stores, with 10% diverted from Asda at Drayton High Road and 20% from Sainsbury's at Longwater, Costessey. These impacts are proportionate in scale and are considered to be reasonable. While the impact on the Waitrose store at Norwich Road, Eaton is not separately identified in the assessment it is agreed that the distance of this store from the application site and the distinct trading formats of both Waitrose and Lidl as the proposed occupier, means that the trade diversion and impact on this store is likely to be limited and not to give rise to a significant adverse impact on the Eaton centre as a whole.
78. The applicant concludes that the impact on the smaller local retail centres is 'de minimis' i.e. immaterial in planning terms. We are advised that predicting the impact on smaller centres involves a degree of judgement and while it is not accepted that these impacts are 'de minimis' in planning terms, it is agreed that these centres and the stores within them are largely focused on meeting local needs encompassing discrete, typically walk-in shopping catchments. The UEA centre in particular meets the needs of students and workers at the university and would not be materially impacted by the proposed store. The Co-op at Norwich Road and the smaller convenience stores at Earlham are also focused on serving the immediate residential areas within which they lie, with an emphasis on meeting top-up and non-bulky food shopping trips. Consequently, they are less likely to compete with a larger discount food store which will primarily cater for main food shopping needs. Overall, it is not considered that the predicted impact on these local centres would be materially harmful, and they would continue to serve the local communities within which they are located. These smaller centres contain a range of outlets and there is no evidence to suggest that the cumulative impact would give rise to any store closures.
79. The impact on two designated district retail centres in particular became a significant focus for the assessment of impacts. These are 'The Larkman' and 'Bowthorpe Main Centre'.
80. The Aldi store at The Larkman District Centre is based on the available evidence, estimated to be trading well at almost double the company average levels. Moreover, within the last year it has been subject to significant investment through complete refurbishment of the store. The cumulative impacts on Aldi at The Larkman District Centre are significant at a 21.3% trading impact. However, bearing in mind the existing store is overtrading, the assessment identifies a post impact turnover of £14.4m, which suggests that it would continue to trade well and comfortably in excess of company average levels. There would consequently be no materially adverse impact on the health and vitality of this centre as a consequence of this reduction in turnover or the continued vitality of the centre as a whole, the smaller shops and business within the centre not being materially impacted by the proposal either directly or as a consequence of Aldi's reduced turnover. These shops and businesses are focused on serving predominantly local needs and their role and function would not materially alter.
81. The assessment of impacts on Bowthorpe Main Centre are different for a number of reasons. Information relating to the turnover of 'Roys' store is not publicly available information and therefore some assumptions have had to be made within the applicant's submission. Roys suggest that the turnover of its store is based on out-of-date information, including shopping patterns and

expenditure flows. The applicant, in the absence of access to turnover figures specific to Roys has used information contained within the Greater Norwich Town Centres and Retail Study Update 2020 which formed part of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). This has not been updated or replaced since publication. It is not unreasonable however to use this information to inform their assessment given that it continues to form part of the evidence base underpinning the GNLP. Roys have confirmed their turnover figures are below those estimated in the applicant's retail impact assessment and that this is considerably below the benchmark turnover used and is therefore under trading relative to company average levels. This is not contested by the applicant.

82. On the basis of the submitted information and considering the fact that Roys own the whole of the shopping centre and appear committed to trading from the centre and supporting existing retailers and businesses as well as seeking to re-let vacant units, it is concluded on balance that its closure is not probable as a consequence of a new Lidl store at Barnard Road (and taking into account the cumulative impacts of the developments highlighted at paragraph 74). The company appears to trade at an acceptable level albeit significantly below industry benchmark levels and this has been likely to have been the situation over a number of years. The company owns the centre and as a result benefits from rental income derived from other businesses. Its trading performance will also be supported by comparison goods sales (the information on turnover relates to convenience goods only, i.e. those purchased frequently) together with an established customer base. In addition the trade diversion of £0.6m or 6.7% trading impact identified by the applicant and not disputed by Roys reflects the fact that the new Lidl store is proportionately likely to compete more significantly with similar stores such as Aldi at The Larkman and the larger Sainsbury's at William Frost Way, Longwater, the latter also attributed to its very significant market share of food shopping in this part of the city.
83. In assessing whether the predicted trade diversion would give rise to a significant adverse impact taking into account the considerations in DMPLP policy DM18 and paragraph 94 of the NPPF, it is necessary to assess the impact on the centre as a whole. Bowthorpe Main Centre contains a range of uses including a health centre (including medical practice) and a public house. These along with retailers and other businesses in the centre will contribute to its overall performance. The centre is also served via a very extensive free car park and is capable of being conveniently accessed by bus and on foot from nearby residential areas and new areas still in planning and under construction at Three Score. Therefore, while a small diminution in customers visiting Roys annually could occur, the centre would remain the focus for a range of other trips. Consequently, on balance it is not considered that the impact on this centre would conflict with the requirements of Policy DM18 and paragraphs 94 of the NPPF.
84. Having regard to the information submitted and the independent advice that was received, it is considered that the application complies with policy GNLP6, DMPLP policy DM18 and paragraph 94 and 95 of the NPPF as it has been demonstrated that retail impacts and impacts on longer term vitality and viability will not be significantly adverse.
85. In conclusion, the proposed retail use could be permitted at this site in accordance with the requirements of DMPLP policy DM18. The requirements

of policy DM18 are met through (a) the satisfaction of the sequential and impact assessment as set out above and (b) confirmation that the proposed retail use at the very periphery of the employment area, adjacent to sites used for hospitality which are also 'main town centre uses' would not be an inappropriate use such that it impacts on the main character and function of the employment area as whole. For the same reasons the use would not prejudice the wider function of the employment area and would not undermine any committed proposals for its redevelopment or regeneration as required by DMPLP policy DM16.

Fall-back position: building conversion for retail use

86. It is important to note that changes to the planning use classes order within the last five years have resulted in the creation of a fall-back position for the applicant. An explanation of this is set out in more detail below, including the implications for this planning application.
87. Extensive changes to The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 created a new 'commercial, business and service' Class E, which incorporates a wide and more diverse range of uses which previously fell within different use classes. With relevance to these proposals indoor sport and recreation, leisure uses (previously Class D2) now fall within the same planning use class as retail uses (previously Class A1).
88. The bowling centre use is not restricted by planning condition and permitted development rights have not been removed. Consequently, the use of the existing building as a bowling alley now falls within the wider Class E use class and could be changed to retail use as a permitted change without the need for planning permission.
89. The changes to the Use Classes Order would only permit a change of use and not physical building works associated with the proposed change of use. Fall-back is a material consideration in the decision making process, of which the permitted development rights given by the Use Classes Order comprise an element. Case law suggests that regard must be had to an applicant's ability to implement a fall-back permission and whether the prospect of the fall-back taking place is realistic and not just theoretical. A true fall back would allow a change of use to take place and occupation of a building for the new use without the need for any consent from the local planning authority. The weight to be attached to the fall-back position should be determined by the decision-maker accordingly.
90. Although the existing building at 3,345 square metres is greater in floor area than the floor area (1,949 square metres GIA) being sought as part of the planning application it contains many of the physical and locational requirements that retailers/food retailers look for. Different retailers work from different floor area requirements, and some are comfortable with sharing a building/site with other retailers. The building is single storey, with a largely open interior, has access to an extensive car parking area and has servicing arrangements that are separate from the car parking. The site is located on a radial transport route alongside a public transport corridor. The retail sector is more easily than other sectors able to absorb costs associated with modifying an existing building allowing longer term investment in a building or them taking on a longer-term lease. Together this would suggest that the existing building

could be occupied quite readily for a retail use, in the same way that many other buildings have changed to retail use.

91. As a result of the change to the Use Classes Order a change of use of the existing building from the existing use to a retail use would not constitute development and the existing leisure/community facility of the building would be lost without the need for planning permission. Interestingly, the retail impacts associated with a larger extent of retail floor space created through conversion could theoretically be greater.

92. Given that the existing use could be lost and a retail use(s) introduced to the existing building without the need for planning permission and taking the view that there was a greater than theoretical possibility of this fallback being implemented, the fallback position can be given considerable weight as a material consideration that can be weighed against any conflict with the development plan.

Loss of existing leisure use/community use

93. As identified earlier, the site is currently operational as a bowling centre, a leisure use which the NPPF defines as a 'main town centre use'. The existing bowling alley dates from the early 1990s and was approved prior to the adoption of the current development plan, in the context of more permissive planning policies relating to the location of large-scale leisure development, and a relatively good supply of alternative sites and premises for employment use.

94. The premises at approx. 3,345 sqm, is not currently vacant, however it is suggested by the applicant that the use does not have a viable future, and the current operator wants to relinquish their use of the site. The existing operator has not however publicly confirmed the position with regards viability of the bowling operation at the site or their longer-term intentions. The proposal would however lead to the complete loss of the bowling facility from the site.

95. DMPLP policy DM22 concerns "planning for and safeguarding community facilities". A community facility or use is defined in the plan as "Facilities and uses generally available to and used by the local community at large for the purposes of leisure, social interaction, health and well-being or learning. This will include, but not be confined to, community centres, historic and community public houses, premises for indoor sport, leisure and cultural centres, places of worship, doctor's surgeries/ health centres, crèches, playgroups, libraries, schools and other training and educational facilities". This definition is similar to, and expands upon, the NPPF references to community facilities which mention health, education and cultural infrastructure, local shops, meeting places, sports clubs and venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses, music venues and places of worship.

96. It is clear that the premises is currently used for indoor sport and leisure. It is also generally available to use by members of the public for leisure purposes and social interaction utilising its bowling alley and other ancillary facilities such as sports bar, café, arcade games, pool tables and hire of its function room for events. Officers are therefore of the opinion that the existing use is a community facility.

97. However, the applicant has suggested that a commercial bowling facility such as currently found at the site is not a community facility and is just like any

other commercial bowling /sports facility. Generally, community facilities are provided by a range of public, private and voluntary sectors organisations. There is no reference within the DMPLP definition to suggest that community facilities cannot be commercial businesses nor are they expected to be free to use or open to the general public without the need for membership or paying a fee to use the facilities.

98. Representations suggest that the business operating from the site is well attended by clubs and organised groups for structured bowling and league bowling and provides a facility that meets specific organised group demands which differ from other bowling facilities within Norwich, which may have contributed to its continued success in this out of centre location. Its 30 lanes provide competitive quality bowling supported by a pro-shop for the purchase of equipment and professional equipment care/maintenance. As a result, the customer base of the existing bowling facility is greater than the immediately local community (either the ward/parish adjacent to the site or even the Norwich City Council administrative area).
99. The periods of consultation have generated a significant number of public representations from residents of Norwich and Norfolk summarised at paragraph 14 above. A significant proportion of those representations explain quite emotively that the facility includes individual and specific group usage for leisure and to host leagues and tournaments, such as:
- Monthly usage by Age UK group,
 - Use by schools,
 - Use by people with a disability and carers,
 - The only facility in Norwich which provides league bowling for junior, youth, adult and senior bowlers,
 - Young Falcon Bowlers Club,
 - Use by bowlers who bowl at a national level representing England/GB.

Many suggest that the facilities at the site would be difficult to replicate elsewhere and the benefit to local residents would be lost. Great emphasis is placed by those making representations on the facility being the hub of ten pin bowling in the East of England, including accessing professional facilities, coaching and specialist services assisting in up to county level sport through access to coaching and support.

100. The applicant contends however that the existing bowling facility does not meet specific demands, any more than any other commercial bowling facility and it should not therefore be afforded any special or different status to any other similar facility within the city. They suggest that any clubs and organised groups which use the existing bowling facility make up a small proportion of the facility's turnover and do not contribute enough to secure it as a viable entity moving forward. It is not possible to verify these claims due to a lack of involvement in the application from the existing bowling operator/tenant.
101. Information available to the local planning authority suggests that the existing use does fall under the local plan definition of 'community facilities/uses'. The proposals would therefore result in the loss of a valued indoor leisure facility, currently used by individuals and community groups.

102. DMPLP policy DM22 states that development resulting in the loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:
- a) adequate alternative provision exists or will be provided in an equally accessible or more accessible location within 800 metres walking distance; or
 - b) all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility but it has been demonstrated that it would not be economically viable, feasible or practicable to retain the building or site for its existing use; and
 - c) evidence is provided to confirm that the property or site has been marketed for a meaningful period and that there is no realistic interest in its retention for the current use or for an alternative community use.
103. In relation to part (a) the applicant highlights that there are at least 13 existing facilities which fall within the definition of 'community facilities/use' within 800 metres of the site. They list uses including a public house/restaurant, gym, football facility, primary schools and playgrounds. None of these listed community facilities represent 'adequate alternative provision' as they are not able to provide the specific space and equipment requirements of an indoor bowling centre. However, the purpose of this part of the policy is to ensure that an appropriate and accessible range and choice of community facilities is maintained within Norwich in order to promote healthy communities. Being quite a specialist type of use requiring a building of significant scale and with the ability to provide specialist equipment within the building it is not surprising that there is not adequate alternative provision within an 800 metre walking distance.
104. Therefore, when applying DMPLP policy DM22, as no known alternative provision currently exists within 800 metres then parts (b) and (c) of the policy go further to require applicants to demonstrate lack of viability concerning the continued use of the site for the existing use and lack of realistic interest in retaining the building for an alternative community use.
105. Whilst it is not the role of the development plan to seek to protect facilities indiscriminately which are clearly not economically viable or feasible to retain in any form, it is reasonable to require that the loss of any community facility of value should be justified by evidence before development proceeds, and it is important that sufficient evidence is provided to enable a proper assessment.
106. The applicant suggests that the current occupier would need to invest heavily to bring the existing bowling offer up to standard for continued use in the long term, with aging equipment within a building with increasing operating costs.
107. Due to sensitivities associated with an existing tenant continuing to operate from the building, no marketing exercise has taken place to determine whether there would be a realistic interest in the building being used for a similar use or an alternative community use. The applicant did however commission two pieces of work from a chartered surveyor that has knowledge of the Norwich commercial market, to explore the feasibility of alternative community uses within the existing building.
108. Information provided to the local planning authority would suggest that leisure operators favour being located in leisure/retail hubs or at the very least

in locations close to other significant anchors. The reality of this location is that it does not have those characteristics. The large scale of the building and open format reduces the amount and type of businesses or uses for which the existing building would be suitable. Alternative leisure or community uses would likely require significant investment to modernise the building and convert so that it is fit for an alternative use. Whether the investment comes from the tenant or landlord, plus the likely rent returns that could be commanded for such uses in this location, conversion of the building or site to other community uses is likely to not be viable. This general position was also confirmed to likely be the case by the council's own surveyor.

109. In conclusion, information available to the local planning authority suggests that the existing use does fall under the local plan definition of 'community facilities/uses'. The proposals would unfortunately result in the loss of a valued indoor leisure facility. However, evidence suggests that issues around longer-term viability of the bowling operation continuing at the site and the need for investment in the building just to ensure continued operation of the bowling facility, it is extremely likely that a bowling facility does not have a long term viable future at the site. Evidence has also been provided which suggests a likely lack of interest in a building of this age or a site in this location for alternative leisure or community uses. Notwithstanding that no specific marketing exercise was completed to ascertain 'realistic interest' in the site for alternative uses, in the absence of information to the contrary, the requirements of the policy are considered to have broadly been met, and the loss of the community facility has been justified.
110. Also as discussed in the paragraphs above relating to 'fall-back', broad and diverse changes to the Planning Use Classes Order intended to promote economic development and allow greater flexibility have resulted in much more broadly accepted use changes being permitted development. Unless uses are controlled by specific planning conditions (which is not the case here) then development plan policy can no longer be relied upon to protect or prevent uses associated with existing buildings.
111. We must not forget that the existing community use on the site is a 'main town centre use' which is located in an out of centre location, a use which under current policy would be equally difficult to justify in this location. There are currently three other bowling facilities located within and adjacent to the city centre retail and leisure area in more sustainable and accessible locations alongside complimentary uses, with much less emphasis on accessibility by private car. There are other bowling facilities across the county which appear to still offer a level of facility that is suitable for league bowling. Given the distances that customers tend to travel to use such specialist facilities, Norwich does appear to be well served with bowling facilities. Whether the alternative facilities are able to offer use by organised groups and more structured training alongside leisure bowling is to a certain extent for the market to determine.
112. The assessment of the loss of the community facility has not been assisted through confidentiality around information relating to the viability of the existing use and sensitivities around that use continuing to operate at the site while the planning application process takes place. However, a conclusion on this matter has been reached through further questioning around leisure and community operations, considered in the context of the possibility of the use of the building being permitted to change to a number of alternative uses which

would not be considered a community facility without the need for planning consent. As a result, the application is considered to broadly comply with the requirements of DMPLP policy DM22 and the loss of the existing community facility at the site can be accepted.

Economic and social issues

113. DMPLP policy DM16 generally confirms that “proposals which create employment and business development, ... and allow accessible and equitable job opportunities for all will be permitted where consistent with the overall sustainability objectives set out in Policy DM1 and other policies of the plan”. The retail use proposed represents economic development which would create 40 new on-site full-time equivalent jobs and in doing so would continue to contribute to the growth of the Norwich economy. The job creation and associated economic benefits would accord with the first criterion of DMPLP policy DM1. Although some of these will replace jobs that will be lost as a result of the closure of the bowling facility and the job creation is not of a scale in itself which is exceptional in the context of the wider Norwich economy.
114. The loss of the community use/leisure use from the site has consequential harmful impacts associated with loss of a facility that promotes social interaction, community cohesion and has positive health and wellbeing benefits that policies GNLP2, DM1 and section 8 of the NPPF promotes, and as expressed in many of the representations. The loss of the bowling facility is regrettable, but not unacceptable in policy terms. The applicant as part of their submission identified 13 existing community facilities within an 800 metre radius of the site including areas for play, sports and fitness facilities and places for people to meet. Chapel Break community centre and Breckland Hall, Costessey are located within 800 metres of the site with Clover Hill Village Hall a little further away. The activity of ten pin bowling aside, these existing buildings and spaces could be utilised to fulfil many of the social, health and wellbeing elements associated with the existing use. It is appreciated however, that they do not allow an alternative provision for the bowling use, which would need to be sought at existing facilities within the city centre or at Dereham and Kings Lynn. Therefore, on balance the harm associated with the loss of the existing bowling facility at the application site can be mitigated to some extent through there being opportunities locally to access other facilities intended to promote health, wellbeing and social interaction and there being other bowling facilities within the city and wider county to fulfil the specific bowling need. There will however remain a low level of harm to health, wellbeing, social interaction and community cohesion associated with the loss of the existing bowling facility and this must be considered in the context of other harm and benefits of the scheme in the overall planning balance.

Main Issue 2. Design

115. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP2, DM3, NPPF section 12.
116. The single storey metal and glass clad building proposed is of a fairly standard discount food store design. The mono-pitch roof incorporates a projecting canopy along the main shopfront elevation and part of the side elevation to provide protection to the store entrance, trolley storage area and areas of cycle parking. The location however has no heritage or landscape constraints that would suggest that an alternative design should be sought.

117. The building will be located so as to be visible from Dereham Road, a main arterial road into and out of the city. Although access by vehicles will need to be navigated via the roundabout further east on Dereham Road and then Barnard Road, which provides access to the employment area. Visibility from the Dereham Road is restricted due to site levels, with the building being located approximately 2.5 metres below the level of Dereham Road and the proposed new single storey building being at least 1.5 metres less tall than the existing building found at the site.
118. From Barnard Road the building will be located well back from the site frontage, but this is not a dissimilar arrangement to the existing situation.
119. The Designing Out Crime Officer has made a number of recommendations around site security given that the site does not benefit from high levels of natural surveillance. Some of those recommendations seek to restrict access to the car parking area outside of the store opening hours to prevent anti-social behaviour. Any requirements for a site access barrier, provision of ANPR cameras and CCTV can be dealt with as may become necessary once the development takes place.
120. Totem signage is indicated to the Dereham Road frontage, which would require a separate application for advertisement consent requiring consideration of amenity and public safety.
121. As the application only proposes development on part of the site currently occupied by the bowling centre this will leave the area currently used as car parking for the bowling centre outside of the application site. This remaining parcel of land is of sufficient size and with a potential access option to ensure that the land could be developed for employment uses. Any proposed development here would however need to be subject to a separate planning application.
122. The development will not appear incongruous within the street scene and will relate appropriately to its surroundings in terms of its appearance, scale and layout as it responds to the character of this commercial area. The application therefore complies with policies GNLP2 and DM3 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Main Issue 3. Amenity

123. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM2, DM11, NPPF section 12.
124. As the site is located within an existing employment area the closest residential (C3 use) properties are located over 40 metres away on the north side of Dereham Road within the parish of Costessey and the neighbouring South Norfolk district. Between the site and those closest properties is the A1074 Dereham Road, a main arterial road into the city centre, areas of landscaping and a small section of private road are all positioned between the application site and residential properties.
125. On the adjacent site to the east is a hotel. There are quite substantial boundary treatments in place (a combination of high walls, fences and mature landscaping) between the application site and the adjacent hotel.

126. Due to the separation distances involved there are unlikely to be significant residential amenity concerns as a result of the physical building or the use proposed at this site.
127. The proposed loading area is via a recessed access ramp which minimises noise break out during deliveries. The area is located at the southern end of the building facing away from residential properties. In addition, the level of deliveries associated with a retail use such as proposed is not considered significant in the context of the industrial area in which the site is located.
128. The applicants Noise Assessment was considered by Environmental Protection officers who suggest that noise and disturbance can be adequately controlled using planning conditions as necessary relating to operating/delivery hours, operation of plant and control of lighting. The application therefore complies with policies DM2 and DM11 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Main Issue 4. Transport

129. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP2, DM28, DM30, DM31, NPPF section 9.
130. The applicants Transport Assessment has modelled the impact of traffic generation from the proposed development on key elements of local highway infrastructure. It concludes that the proposed development is unlikely to result in a material impact on local highway network operating performance. Any change in traffic flow demand would not result in severe changes in future highway network conditions. There will not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the cumulative impacts on the road network in conjunction with other relevant committed developments will not be severe as required by paragraph 116 of the NPPF.
131. In addition, the NPPF at paragraph 110 advises that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

Accessibility

132. As identified earlier the application site is located at the edge of an employment area, outside any defined retail centre. Although located at the edge of the city's administrative area, between the residential areas of Bowthorpe and New Costessey, there has also been significant amounts of new housing development along Dereham Road within the neighbouring South Norfolk district. The site is therefore within a practical walking and cycling distance of local residential areas. The application site does however stand separate from many existing services but is located adjacent to a hotel and public house and restaurant and a large employment area. The site currently benefits from good access by car, however any redevelopment proposals for the site will require improvements to allow safe and convenient access to the site for all through encouraging and improving walking, cycling and public transport access to the site as necessary and as required by policies GNLP2, DM1 and the NPPF.

133. The site is accessed from Barnard Road but also has a frontage (without direct access) to Dereham Road which is a corridor of movement and a public transport corridor with frequent bus services into the city. As part of the proposed site layout a continuous walk/cycle corridor is provided along the eastern site boundary, with a crossing point internal to the site connecting into improved shared pedestrian and cycle provision along the west side of the existing site access road. This provision will allow a safe and segregated route to the new store from both key approach directions. It will also allow pedestrians and cycles to pass through the site from the Dereham Road to Barnard Road in a more formalised way than exists at present.
134. The site is located very close to the Dereham Road transport corridor which over the last year has had a highway improvement scheme delivered by Norfolk County Council under the Transforming Cities Fund to provide improvements intended to “provide shorter and more consistent journey times for buses, improve connectivity between different modes of travel, as well as a safer environment for those walking or cycling along Dereham Road. It is also the aim to provide better connections between the two large communities on either side of the main road and provide safer access to local schools and other amenities”. The results on the ground include a reduction in speed limit on Dereham Road, a new travel hub (an area less than 400 metres to the east with bus stops, real time passenger information and micromobility hub), a bus gate (diverting buses from the Wendene roundabout), a new section of inbound bus lane and segregated pedestrian and cycle facilities along Dereham Road adjacent to the site.
135. This planning application proposes a package of off-site highway improvements which work with these recent infrastructure changes and make modifications to provide a new Toucan crossing cycle route across the Dereham Road, with ramped and stepped access into the application site to provide access to the site. This will allow safe access for pedestrians and cyclists from the north and the Dereham Road and Costessey area in particular.
136. The applicant was also asked to investigate the extent of opportunities to improve active travel connections to the south of the site for residents accessing the site from Bowthorpe, Chapel Break and Clover Hill to the south and east.
137. The applicant has committed to deliver targeted improvements to infrastructure on Barnard Road and connecting links, to maximise accessibility to the application site on foot and cycle. There are currently limited pedestrian crossing facilities available within the immediate vicinity of the site, including at the site entrance connection to Barnard Road and at other surrounding linking side road junctions. There is no specific cycling infrastructure on Barnard Road itself. The applicant proposes a package of supporting pedestrian improvement works to promote improved active travel access, including
- New zebra crossing on Barnard Road (exact location and design to be agreed through safety audit) to provide safe pedestrian crossing opportunities to Barnard Road in the immediate vicinity of the application site access.

- Revision / extensions to existing double yellow line parking restrictions to local sections of Barnard Road to respond to the proposed new zebra crossing and to ensure safe large delivery vehicle access to / from the application site.
- New dropped crossings, including tactile paving, across the site access road connection to Barnard Road, plus an additional tactile crossing point of Barnard Way to the east of the application site access road junction, connecting to the current termination of the northern footway.
- New dropped crossing points and tactile paving across formal side roads connections to the northern side of Barnard Road (i.e. Francis Way & Morgan Way), improving pedestrian connections from the application site towards Mayfly Way (and onwards to Chapel Break and Bowthorpe Centre).
- New dropped crossing point and tactile paving across the Jarrold Way side road to the southern side of Barnard Way, therefore improving pedestrian connections between the application site and the existing public footpath that links towards Chapel Break Road.
- Improved crossing point of Chapel Break Road (new tactile paving) and relocation of existing street lighting column to reduce conflict with pedestrian movements at this crossing to enhance links on foot between the site and Chapel Break Road / Bowthorpe and the local bus stops on nearby Astley Road.

138. The existing industrial estate layout and restricted highway boundary along the northern side of Barnard Road has limited the potential for delivering segregated / off-carriageway cycle infrastructure. However, the proposed new walk / cycle connection and associated Toucan crossing from the site to Dereham Road to the north would provide a direct connection into the recently improved Dereham Road cycle corridor, offering wider linkages to Bowthorpe and Clover Hill, via Mayfly Way and Butterfly Way respectively. Whilst these connections are less direct when compared to a journey via Barnard Road, the additional distance is not significant, for cycle users. On balance, it is therefore considered that a lack of segregated cycle facilities on Barnard Road would not represent a significant barrier to customer/staff cycle journeys to and from the application site from areas to the south.

Parking

139. Norwich City Council parking standards require 95 car parking spaces, 5 parent and child spaces, 5 motorcycle spaces and one electric vehicle charging space for a retail store of this size.

140. The amount of parking proposed has been reduced at officers' request from 120 spaces to the 102 spaces now proposed. The division within the total amount of spaces between specific types of parking provision meets with the parking standards. In addition, the provision of 10 electric vehicle (EV) charging bays is very much welcomed and at 10% provision exceeds the councils parking standards. The remainder of the rear row of spaces (a further 11 spaces) will be constructed to include appropriate ducting to allow for future conversion to full EV spaces should this be identified as necessary in future, in response to increased EV demand levels.

141. The parking standards require 38 cycle spaces for customers (adjacent to principal entrances) and 19 for staff (covered and secure). The increased provision of 42 cycle spaces adjacent to the store entrance and under the cover of a high-level building canopy is sufficient for customer and staff needs. Staff cycle storage can also be accommodated within the non-public areas of the building as required.
142. The highway authority does not object to the development and support the delivery of a new Toucan crossing on Dereham Road where crossing demand is currently evident from observed trodden tracks across the highway verge adjacent to the site. Following engagement with the highway authority, the applicant has produced an accepted package of off-site highway improvements to support active and sustainable travel to the site from the wider community. A number of conditions are recommended to secure the necessary highways elements.
143. The on and off-site highway measures proposed provides enhanced active travel measures to the site which are more appropriate to the use proposed. They encourage public transport use and provide significant improvement to pedestrian and cycle access to and through the site and in particular within the wider employment area. The measures in turn help to reduce dependency on private car usage to access the site. The development proposed is therefore considered to broadly comply with the provisions of policy GNLP2, bullet 3 of policy DM1, DM28 and paragraphs 110, 115 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Main Issue 5. Trees and landscaping

144. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP3, DM3, DM7, NPPF section 12 and 15.
145. There is approximately 2.5 metres levels difference between the Dereham Road to the north and the application site. A strip of highway verge at the same level as Dereham Road transitions to an embankment on which is located a group of seven semi-mature oak trees and a large sycamore tree which are subject to a tree preservation order. The embankment forms the edge of the northern most section of car parking/servicing area to the north of the existing building. There is a more substantial area of trees and shrubs in the north east and north west corner of the site.
146. The proposals involve the removal of some of the trees on the embankment and some reprofiling to accommodate a ramped and stepped pedestrian/cycle path to allow access to the site from the Dereham Road. A revised set of proposals has sought to modify the access ramp design and retain more of the embankment and trees along the Dereham Road boundary. As a result, four category B semi-mature oak trees in this location are proposed to be removed with replacements provided within the site landscaping scheme. Some of the replacement trees are proposed along the Dereham Road frontage in order to maintain the green corridor that exists along this section of Dereham Road.
147. The eastern boundary of the site is currently vegetated. Along this boundary there are large shrubs and ground cover and a small number of trees. The visual presence of laurel along this boundary originates from large laurel bushes which are located on the adjacent hotel site and which as a result of limited management have grown through the boundary fencing and into the

application site. Along the eastern boundary in order to deliver a pedestrian/cycle path the vegetation will be cut back to the boundary and three trees along the boundary (2 x category C, oak and sycamore and 1 x category B, willow) will be removed. The path will be of cellular 'no dig' construction' to limit wider impacts on remaining vegetation. New planting along this boundary will consist of ground cover shrubs.

148. A further two trees to the south of the site (both category B, alder and silver birch) require removal as they conflict with the position of the new building.
149. Outside of the proposed building footprint the remainder of the site consists of an area for car parking with limited areas of shrub, perennial and ground cover planting. The soft landscaping scheme proposes over 3,400 ornamental plants and shrubs and 246 grasses across together with 16 medium sized native replacement trees.
150. Replacement tree planting at a ratio short of 1:2 replacement is confirmed in locations to the Dereham Road frontage and along the southern site boundary adjacent to the vacant piece of land in the applicant's ownership. The applicant has considered the interrelated matters of tree removal, landscaping and biodiversity gain and made revised attempts to bolster the landscaping provision and the inclusion of new tree planting. As a result the replacement trees have risen in number from 6 originally proposed to 16 now proposed and the applicant feels that this maximises the trees that can comfortably be accommodated on the site while providing adequate space for them to grow unimpeded.
151. The landscaping proposals do little to break up the car parking area, however the arrangement of car parking arrangement wrapping around the building serves to reduce its dominance in the layout. The focus of landscaping around the site boundaries concentrates on the areas that the wider general public experience in order to provide greatest wider visual benefits. This is an approach that would not differ significantly from the general approach taken to functional and easily maintained site landscaping across the wider employment area.
152. Suggestions raised by the council's landscape architect around layout improvements and improving elements of the proposed landscaping to further increase biodiversity and climate resilience can largely be dealt with through a full landscaping condition.
153. The proposals would broadly accord with policy DM3 of the DMPLP and Policy 2 of the GNLP which require appropriate provision of landscaping and green infrastructure. They would also accord with the second criterion of policy DM1 which seeks to safeguard visual and environmental qualities of Norwich.

Main Issue 6. Biodiversity

154. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP3, DM3, DM6, NPPF section 15.
155. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), including a preliminary bat roost assessment of the building highlighted that due to its type of construction and good state of maintenance the building has negligible roost potential.

156. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNG) has been submitted (using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric). However, the application was submitted before mandatory net gain requirements were introduced and therefore provision of 10% statutory biodiversity net gain does not apply. Therefore, the test of the NPPF paragraph 187(d) requirement of 'providing net gains for biodiversity' should be applied. The government's Planning Practice Guidance has clarified that 'decision makers should not give weight to local policy which requires biodiversity gains for types of development which would be exempt under the statutory framework'.
157. A BNG Assessment has been provided solely to demonstrate that a net gain in biodiversity will be achieved on site. It identifies that the proposals will result in the loss of:
- an area of 1,300 square metres of modified grassland in poor condition at the northern edge of the existing carpark;
 - 335 square metres of ornamental/non-native shrubs along the eastern boundary;
 - 9 trees – 4 oaks in a TPO group along the Dereham Road frontage, 3 trees along the east boundary and 2 to the south west corner. Mostly approximately 30 years old.
158. The BNG hierarchy first requires a scheme to consider whether it can deliver net gains on site. A soft landscaping scheme proposes a modest amount of habitat creation including over 3,400 ornamental plants and shrubs, 246 grasses and 16 replacement trees across an area equating to over 1000 square metres around the edges of the site. The result is a 2% net gain of biodiversity.
159. In addition, there is a requirement to provide biodiversity/ecological mitigation and an opportunity to incorporate a number of enhancements to benefit species (in particular associated with the retained boundary features) as recommended within the PEA. This includes landscaping measures that are incorporated into the landscaping design, together with sensitive lighting design. Recommended ecological enhancements include incorporation of new bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities with bird and bat boxes, artificial refugia/hibernaculum for small mammals and insect hotels. Suggested enhancement measures can be secured planning condition.
160. The biodiversity and ecological assessments and landscaping proposals have together confirmed the site provides opportunity to incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate any potential impacts to ecological features and to demonstrate 'biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF and DMPLP policies DM3 and DM6.

Main Issue 7. Flood risk and drainage

161. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP2, DM3, DM5, NPPF section 14.
162. It is a requirement of the NPPF that development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Policy GNLP2 requires the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be

inappropriate. DMPLP policies DM3 and DM5 go on to require the incorporation of mitigation measures to deal with surface water arising from development proposals to minimise and where possible reduce the risk of flooding on the site and minimise risk within the surrounding area.

163. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy was submitted in support of the application which highlights, the existing application site is largely covered by a building of a large footprint and hard surfacing used for servicing the building. The site currently discharges surface water unrestricted into the existing surface water sewer within Barnard Road. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and contains variable ground materials including large amounts of clay, which resulted in a poor infiltration rate from the limited amount of on-site testing carried out. There will however be an increase in impermeable area as a result of the proposed development.
164. Mapping from both the Environment Agency and the councils Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) shows that the site is impacted by surface water flooding. The existing service road (to the east of the site) is at medium risk and a larger area to the north of the site is at a low risk, with smaller negligible areas at high risk.
165. The proposed site layout generally maintains the service road to the east and replaces some of it with car parking leaving the existing overland routes in place and unobstructed by proposed buildings. In addition to this the proposed building is recommended to be set a minimum of 150mm above external levels where feasible and external levels and drainage designed to divert and capture any overland flows away from the building.
166. As the ground conditions offer limited opportunity to provide infiltration drainage a surface water drainage design is proposed which can accommodate up to a 1 in 100-year critical storm event plus 40% climate change without flooding by providing onsite attenuation and then connection into the existing sewer network. The drainage strategy proposes tanked cellular storage beneath the car park area as a means of attenuation, before discharge to the public sewer within Barnard Road at a restricted discharge rate of 5.0/s to be agreed with Anglian Water. Water quality improvements are achieved through filter drains and a bypass separator.
167. Confirmation of any necessary connections will be required from Anglian Water who have requested a planning condition to secure a foul drainage strategy and surface water management strategy. A surface water planning condition is not considered necessary as sufficient information has been provided in this respect to satisfy officers that surface water is being appropriately dealt with. The proposals comply with policies GNLP2, DM3 and DM5 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014 and section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Main Issue 8. Energy and water efficiency

168. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP2, DM1, NPPF paragraphs 165, 168.
169. The applicants Energy Statement proposes to reduce the regulated CO₂ emissions of the development by 49% when compared with Building Regulations requirements. The Energy Statement also proposes to contribute

159% energy from renewable energy (waste heat, air source heat pump, and solar photovoltaics). A total of 160 kWp (maximum power output under standard conditions equivalent to bright sunshine) solar photovoltaic capacity is proposed. The submission suggests that this equates to 721 m² roof space and could equate to 355 panels (depending on size). The panels are proposed to be mounted 'flush' (i.e., parallel) to the roof and orientated due west. The proposed roof plan confirms this through a large number of solar panels across the roof area totalling 404 panels.

170. The insulated building fabric with high thermal performance (low u-values), low airtightness, 100% energy efficient LED lightings, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery system, harnessing waste heat from the sales floor chillers to heat the retail area and high seasonal efficiency air source heat pump ensures energy demand and associated CO₂ emissions are reduced.
171. This exceeds the policy requirement of providing a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy.
172. As a commercial development a high level of water efficiency will be expected to be delivered to meet BREEAM 'very good' standard for water efficiency. The applicant advises that water consumption for the store will be reduced through water efficiency measures including efficient water fittings throughout the store, including services valves complete with flow restrictors, dual flush toilets, and low water consumption appliances where provided. The incoming mains cold water supply will also be separately metered, using a smart meter to easily monitor water consumption and will be connected to the stores central control system.
173. Suitably worded conditions will be used to secure delivery of the specified energy requirements and water efficiency measures as required by policy GNLP2.

Main Issue 9. Nutrient neutrality and recreational disturbance (GIRAMS)

174. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – GNLP1, GNLP2, GNLP3, DM1, DM3, DM6, NPPF section 15.
175. The application has been assessed against the conservation objectives for the protected habitats of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation and the Broads Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site concerning nutrient pollution in accordance with the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations). The Habitat Regulations require Local Planning Authorities to ensure that new development does not cause adverse impacts to the integrity of protected habitats such as the River Wensum or the Broads prior to the granting planning permission.
176. The development proposed does not involve the creation of additional overnight accommodation and as such it is not likely to lead to a significant effect as it would not involve a net increase in population in the catchment and is also not considered a high water use development. This application has been screened, using a precautionary approach, as is not likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives either alone or in combination with other projects and there is no requirement for additional information to be submitted to further assess the effects. The application can, with regards

nutrient neutrality, be safely determined with regards the Conservation of Species Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

177. The potential for recreational activities to disrupt the protection objectives of habitats sites in and around Norfolk is related to the level of growth in each Local Plan 'in combination'; specifically, an increase in population resulting from identified new housing requirements across the County that will in turn ensure more people visit habitats sites for recreation. The development proposed does not include new dwellings and therefore is not considered to contribute to an increase in population. This application has been screened, using a precautionary approach, as is not likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives either alone or in combination with other projects and there is no requirement for additional information to be submitted to further assess the effects. The application can, with regards increased recreational disturbance, be safely determined with regards the Conservation of Species Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

178. Accordingly, this application is not liable for contributions to the Green Infrastructure Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) as no additional dwellings are being created as part of the proposal.

Other matters

179. The following matters have been assessed and considered satisfactory and in accordance with relevant development plan policies, subject to appropriate conditions and mitigation: Contamination.

Equalities and diversity issues

180. There are equality or diversity issues, these are discussed below. Access to a facility that provides for people with specific needs, including those with disabilities will be lost through the closure and demolition of the existing bowling centre. The implications of this to the wider community have been addressed in the body of the report above.

181. The new retail use is designed to comply with relevant legislation to enable all customers to access the building as simply as possible. The car park is designed with customers in mind to ensure that cars and pedestrians can manoeuvre easily into and around the car park, with provision of disabled and parent and child specific parking spaces.

S106 Obligations

182. None.

Local finance considerations

183. Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant or the Community Infrastructure Levy. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make

a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority.

184. The application is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

Human Rights Act 1998

185. Officers have considered the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to approve this application. They consider that the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8/Article 1 of Protocol 1 is justifiable and proportionate for the protection of the rights and freedom of others or the control of his/her property in this way is in accordance with the general interest.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

186. Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

187. This application requires the weighing up of a range of factors as set out in the sections above. The position of retail use fall-back within the existing building weighs significantly in favour of the application as a realistic alternative that would see the introduction of a retail use to the site and at the same time the loss of the existing community use without the need for planning permission. The matter of the 'fall-back' position is a significant material consideration which greatly effects the weight to be applied to the retail policies and policies associated with the loss of the community use.
188. The proposals are considered to comply with DMPLP policies DM16 and which permit main town centre uses in employment areas. Independent advice has been sought on the sequential approach taken by the applicant in selecting the site and the retail impact on designated retail centres. Following receipt and consideration of this, the council is satisfied that the sequential test has been passed and there will not be an unacceptable retail impact on vitality and viability of The Larkman and Bowthorpe Main Centre district retail centres or any other designated retail centre. In this regard, the application complies with DMPLP policies DM16 and DM18, GNLP6 and relevant paragraphs within section 7 of the NPPF.
189. Reasonable information has been provided to demonstrate that the existing community use does not have a long-term viable future in the building and use of the building or site for an alternative community use is likely not viable. Notwithstanding that no specific marketing exercise was completed to ascertain 'realistic interest' in the site for alternative uses, the proposals are broadly in compliance with DMPLP policy DM22. Considered together with the fact that the retail use fall-back diminishes the weight to be applied to this policy when the loss is somewhat inevitable, results in the conclusion that the loss of the existing community facility can be accepted.

190. A low level of harm to health, wellbeing, social interaction and community cohesion is a consequence of the loss of the existing bowling facility. This low level of harm is outweighed by the acceptance of the loss of the community use and its replacement with a retail use.
191. The proposals are supported by a package of on and off-site highway measures which provide enhanced active travel measures to the site and provide additional benefits to the wider employment area. They facilitate access to public transport and provide significant improvement to pedestrian and cycle access to and through the site and the wider employment area. The measures in turn help to reduce dependency on private car usage to access the site. The development therefore broadly complies with the provisions of policy GNLP2, bullet 3 of policy DM1, DM28 and paragraphs 110, 115 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.
192. Subject to the imposition of reasonable and necessary conditions, it is considered that the proposals will have acceptable impacts on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, highway safety, trees, ecology, drainage and flood risk and climate change. When having regard to these, the application on balance represents an acceptable form of development that complies with national planning guidance and the policies of the adopted development plan when read as a whole.
193. The development is in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.

Recommendation

194. To approve application no.23/01615/F – 10 Barnard Road, Norwich, NR5 9JB and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:
1. Standard time limit;
 2. In accordance with plans;
 3. Deliveries hours restriction – not before 07:00 or after 23:00 Monday to Saturdays or before 09:00 and after 18:00 Sundays, with no trade deliveries or collections on Bank or Public Holidays;
 4. Details of any external plant and equipment to be agreed and to conform with sections 5.11 and 5.12 of the Noise Assessment;
 5. Noise and dust management plan during construction;
 6. Unidentified contamination condition;
 7. Demolition and Construction Management Plan;
 8. Details of external lighting;
 9. Arboricultural supervision for works within root protection areas,
 10. Works on site to be carried out in accordance with arboricultural information
 11. Notwithstanding the submitted landscaping details an enhanced scheme including suitable replacement tree planting and detailed finished levels and contours of the embankment and ramp arrangement to Dereham Road shall be submitted and approved before the building is brought into use.
 12. Car and motor cycle parking (including active and passive EV provision) and cycle parking to be provided before first use of the building;
 13. Details of roads, footways, cycleways, including foul and surface water drainage to be approved prior to commencement;
 14. Provision of required visibility splays prior to occupation;

15. Details of on-site construction worker parking to be agreed prior to commencement;
16. Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to be agreed prior to commencement;
17. CTMP implementation during construction;
18. No works above slab level until details of the off-site highway works are agreed;
19. Off-site highway works to be completed prior to first occupation;
20. Submission of a travel plan prior to first occupation;
21. Provision of fire hydrant;
22. Finished floor levels to be 150mm above external ground levels;
23. Foul drainage works, including connection point and discharge rate to be agreed with Anglian Water;
24. Energy reduction measures in accordance with energy report;
25. Water efficiency measures;
26. Biodiversity enhancement strategy to secure delivery of biodiversity enhancement measures;
27. Details of enclosure of the land outlined in blue to ensure sensitive and appropriate means of securing the site.

Informative notes

- Anglian Water
- Asbestos
- Check for bat usage of roof space before demolition of the building
- Works within public highway
- Need for a Section 278 agreement

Appendices: None

Contact officer: Senior Planner

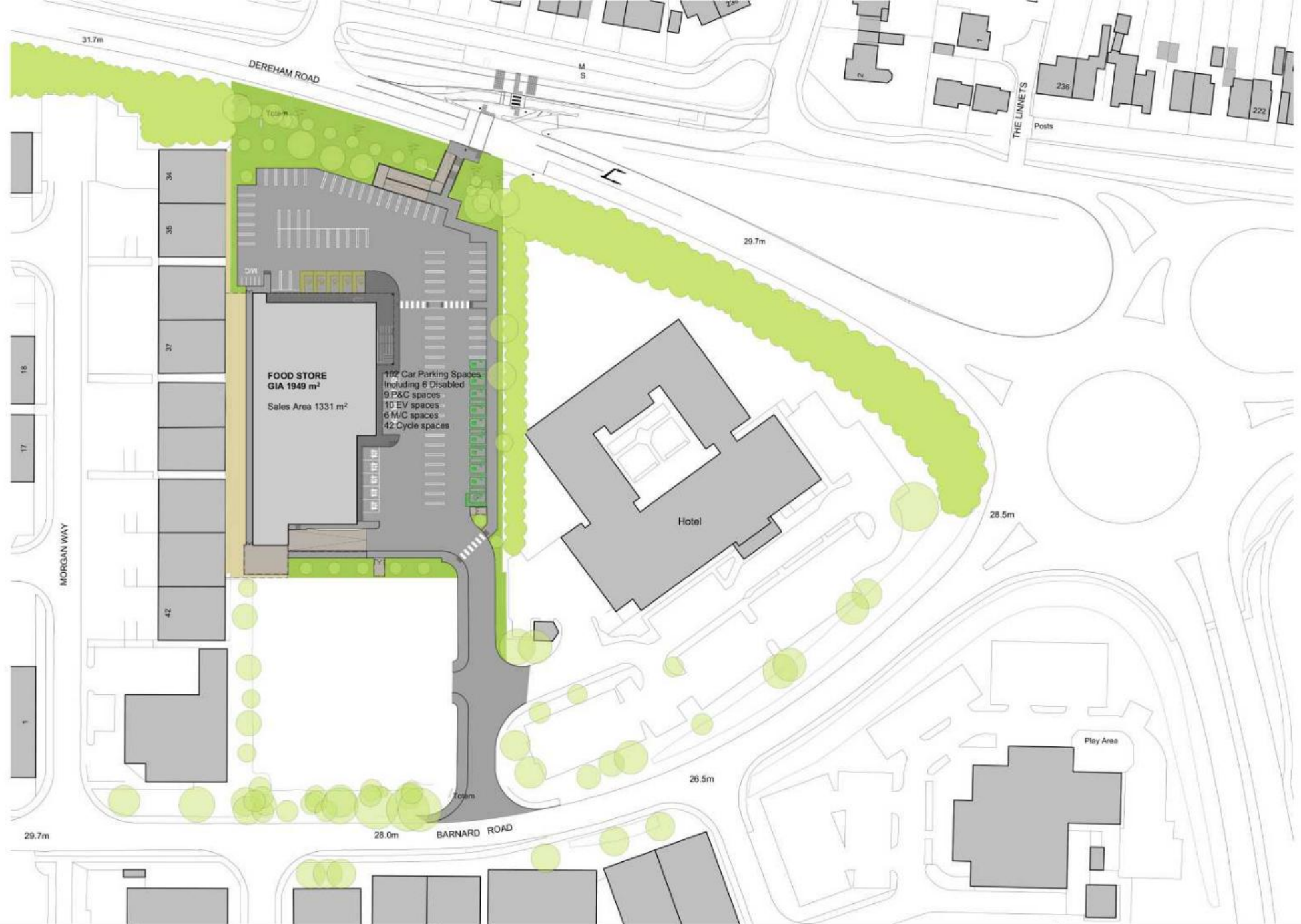
Name: Sarah Hinchcliffe

Telephone number: 01603 989413

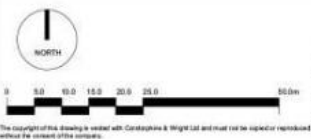
Email address: sarahhinchcliffe@norwich.gov.uk



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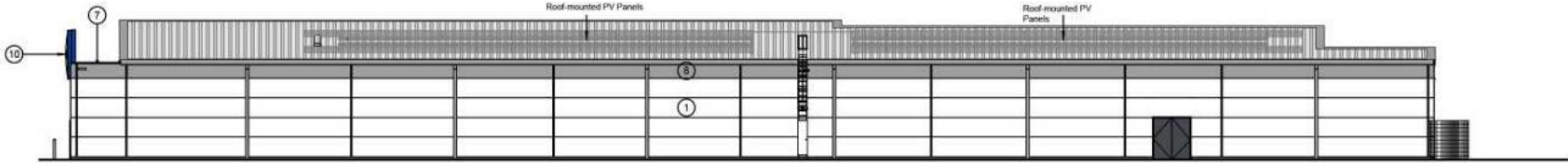
P107	Additional trees added	11.02.23	DC	CW
P108	Existing Tree positions updated	23.07.23	DC	CW
P109	Tree position amended	23.08.24	DC	CW
P104	Tree Added (Screening) updated following comments	25.08.24	DC	CW
P110	Landscape updated following comments	11.09.24	DC	CW
P111	Landscape updated following comments	17.09.24	DC	CW
P112	Landscape updated following comments	21.03.24	DC	CW
P108	Screening for Planning	11.10.23	DC	CW
P113	Screening for Planning	11.10.23	DC	CW



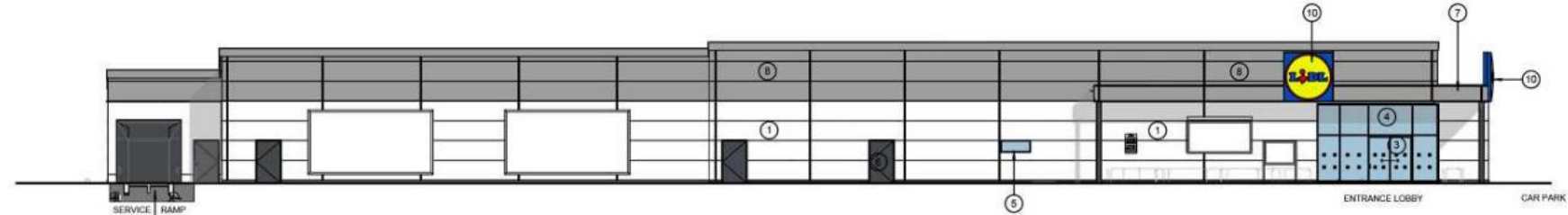


P-07	Additional trees added	28.02.20	DC	CW
P-08	Existing Tree positions updated	29.07.20	DC	CW
P-09	Revised position amended	08.08.20	DC	CW
P-10	Tree Added (See/amp updated following comments)	08.08.20	DC	CW
P-11	Layout updated following comments	01.09.20	DC	CW
P-12	Layout updated following comments	17.09.20	DC	CW
P-13	Updated following consultation	21.09.20	DC	CW
P-14	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-15	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-16	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-17	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-18	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-19	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-20	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-21	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-22	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-23	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-24	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-25	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-26	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-27	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
P-28	Updated following consultation	18.10.20	DC	CW
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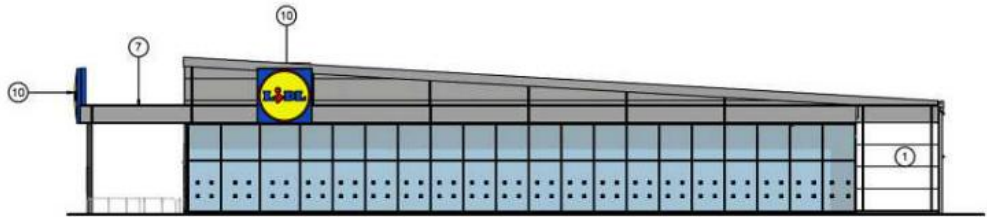
Client Williams Group				Corstorphine & Wright			
Project Barnard Road Norwich				Warwick Studio Buck Hall, Brook Street, Warwick, CV34 4B, 01925 533 444 corstorphine-wright.com			
Drawing Title Proposed Site Plan				Drawing No 19408-301			
Drawing Status PLANNING				Revision P-07			
Drawn DC	Checked CW	Paper Size A1	Scale 1:250	Date OCT 23			



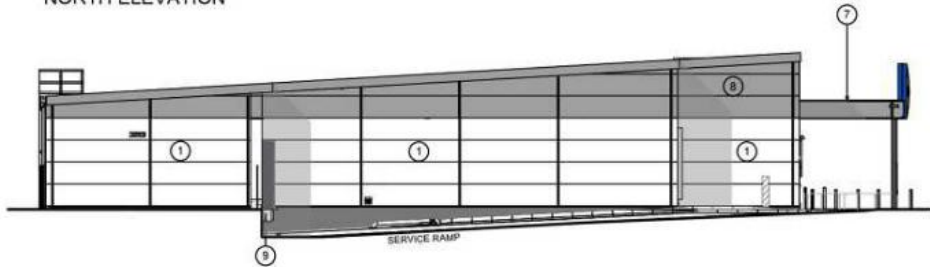
WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

- 1 WALL CLADDING PANELS - METAL INSULATED COMPOSITE PANELS COLOUR WHITE RAL9001
- 2 3° PITCH ROOF: PROFILED COMPOSITE METAL COLOUR ALUMINIUM RAL9001
- 3 POWDER COATED ALUMINIUM FRAMED GLAZED ENTRANCE LOBBY WITH AUTOMATIC DOORS COLOUR GREY RAL7024
- 4 POWDER COATED ALUMINIUM FRAMED GLAZED SHOPFRONT COLOUR GREY RAL7024
- 5 POWDER COATED ALUMINIUM FRAMED WINDOWS COLOUR GREY RAL7024
- 6 POWDER COATED STEEL DOOR COLOUR GREY RAL7024
- 7 EAVES, BOFFITS AND FASCIA PANELS COLOUR ALUMINIUM RAL9001
- 8 WALL CLADDING PANELS - METAL INSULATED COMPOSITE PANELS COLOUR ALUMINIUM RAL9001
- 9 MINI DOCK LEVELLER
- 10 INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED LED SIGNAGE



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P-00	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	18.10.23	DC	CW
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Chk.

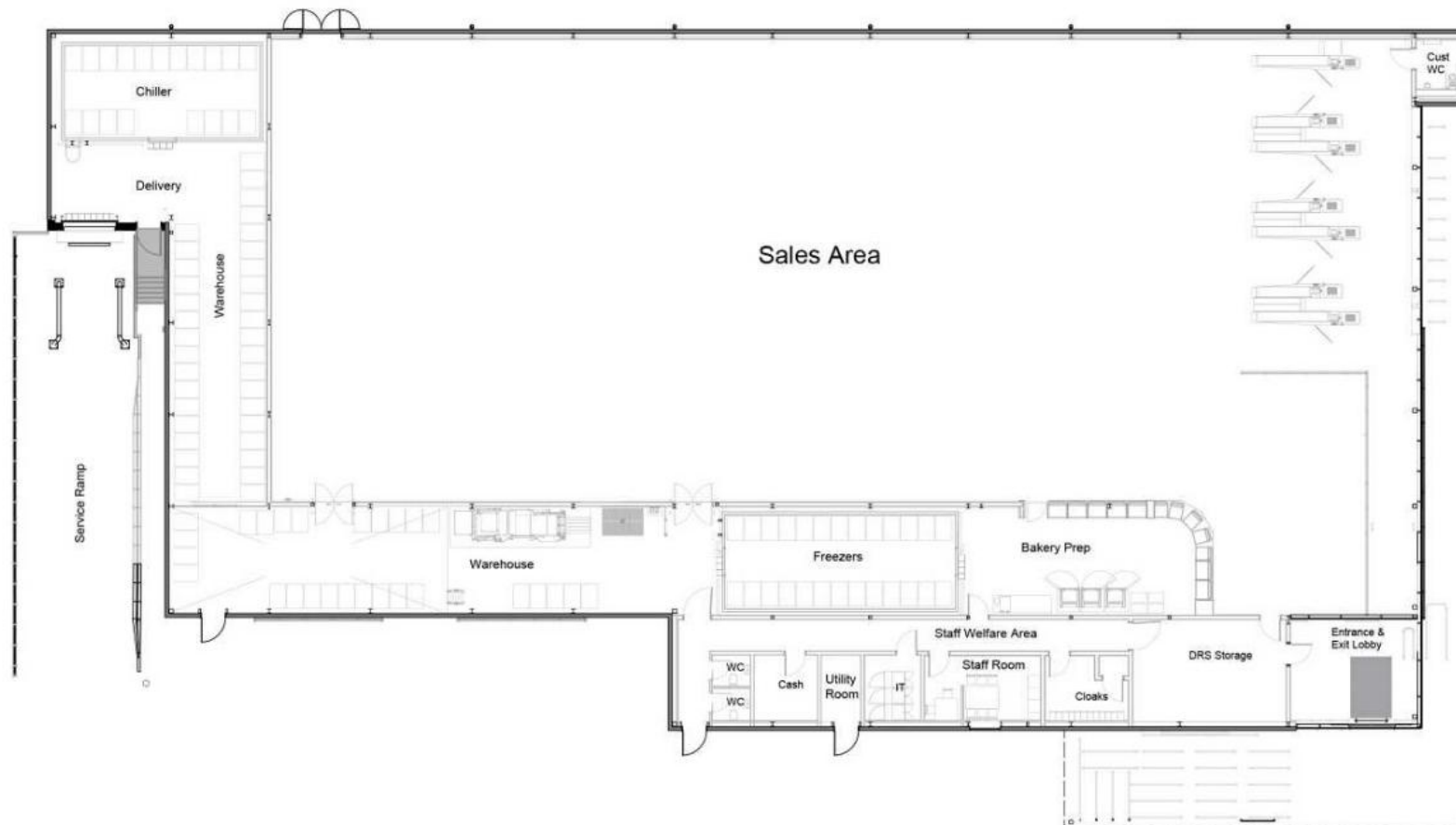
Client
Willaims Group
Project
Barnard Road,
Norwich
Drawing Title
Proposed Elevations

Drawing Status
PLANNING

Corstorphine & Wright

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Brook Hall, Brook Street, Warwick, CV34 4BL
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corstorphine-wright.com

Drawn	Checked	Paper Size	Scale	Date	Revision
DC	CW	A3	1:250	OCT 2023	P-00



Corstorphine & Wright

Warwick Studio

Brook Hall, Brook Street, Warwick, CV34 4BL

01926 658 444

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Drawing No.

19408-302

Revision

P-00

Drawn

DC

Checked

CW

Paper Size

A3

Scale

1:250

Date

OCT 2023

