DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No:	**H11-0827-25**	**Applicant:**	**ME Group International Plc**
Proposal:	Installation of a modular self-service launderette facility and associated works (Retrospective)		
Location:	Lincolnshire Co-Op Long Sutton Food Store West Street Market Place		
Terminal Date:	13th February 2026		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
24	The Retail Hierarchy
29	The Historic Environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	1	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Description of Proposal

This is a full planning application for the creation of a self-service laundrette facility outside of the Long Sutton Co-op. Two washers and dryer are installed within a 3.15m wide by 2.3m deep by 2.21m high unit. The unit is constructed of grey sheet metal and glass panelling. This application is made retrospectively.

Site Description

The site is within the settlement boundaries of Long Sutton, as outlined within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019. The site is within the defined town centre and primary shopping area of Long Sutton, although is outside of the Conservation Area. The laundrette is located on the south side of the Co-op, near to the vehicular entrance to the site. Car parking is located to the south and east, with residential dwellings beyond. The north and west are occupied by the Co-op

Relevant History

No relevant history

Consultation Responses

The responses received from consultees during the initial consultation exercises, which can be viewed in their entirety through the South Holland website, can be summarised as follows:

Highway and Lead Local Flood Authority

"No objections - Installation of a modular self-service launderette facility and associated works (Retrospective). The Highways and Lead Local Flood Authority response is in relation to the impact the proposed development would be expected to have on the operation of the Public Highway. The Chase is a private road, and the highway authority has no jurisdiction over the use of this road. With regard to this application, we have considered the safety and impact of these proposals on Adopted Road - West Street its junction with The Chase. It is for the Local Planning Authority to determine whether the access provided by the private road is safe and suitable for all users."

Long Sutton Parish Council

"Objections - The Parish Council on principle object to retrospective applications due to them being submitted after development which is detrimental to those who abide by planning procedures and submit applications before works and not after"

Environmental Health

"no concerns"

Public Representations

This application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Procedure Order and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In this instance, no letters of representation have been received.

Key Planning Considerations

Evaluation

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019 (SELLP), is the development plan for the district, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 (NPPF) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Spatial Strategy

Policy 1 of the SELLP sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development, which meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment; in order to provide enough choice of land for housing to satisfy local need, whilst making more sustainable use of land, and to minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural plots by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 expresses this sustainable hierarchy of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order. The most sustainable locations for development are situated within the 'Sub-Regional Centres', followed by 'Main Service Centres'. Lower down the hierarchy are areas of limited development opportunity including Minor Service Centres, with areas of development constraint comprising 'Other Service Centres and Settlements'. The countryside is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and represents the least sustainable location.

The site is within the settlement of Long Sutton which is classed as a main service centre within Policy 1. As such development will be permitted that supports Long Sutton's role as a service centre, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

Retail Hierarchy

As the proposal relates to development within the primary shopping area of the town centre, Policy 1 is supported by Policy 24. In this context, Policy 24 states:

In the District Centre of Holbeach and the Local Centres of Crowland, Donington, Kirton, Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge, town centre uses will be permitted where they, on their own or cumulatively with other permitted development, will generate no significant harm upon the vitality and viability of that centre or any other centre within the hierarchy, particularly with regard to their role for food shopping. The provision of markets and other appropriate initiatives that would enhance the vitality and viability of such centres will be supported.
New development within the Sub-Regional, District and Local Centres will be expected to:
1. be physically integrated and have good pedestrian and cycle links, with the rest of the centre;
2. generate a reasonable level of footfall and be open to the public;
3. contribute to an appropriate balance of uses;
4. achieve an acceptable level of amenity, including provision of refuse and recycling facilities; an
5. achieve an acceptable level of highway access, parking and servicing."

Assessment

As the site is within the settlement boundaries of Long Sutton, the development would broadly align with the principles of Policy 1.

The proposal has a Sui Generis use. The development is not a typical town centre use, in that it is not a traditional storefront, but a more modern adaptation of a traditional service. On this basis, whilst the town centre location would warrant assessment under Policy 24, a degree of adaptability should be shown as not all provisions would be relevant here.

That being said, assessing the proposal against Policy 24, beginning with the opening text of the Policy, it is considered that the proposal would not generate any harm towards the vitality or viability of the town centre. The development is located at the far extremities of the shopping area, thereby reducing its impacts. In any event, it is a clearly secondary use to the wider shopping area, which would only increase potential footfalls.

Turning to the five criteria, the following is considered:

1.The development is well integrated into the area, being easily accessible by all modes of

transport.
2.The level of footfall would not be significant, although some would still be generated. The use would be continuously open to the public.
3.The proposal is a clearly secondary use, providing a facility to the community.
4.The proposal is not anticipated to have a significant impact upon refuse facilities by virtue of its nature. No amenity impact would occur due to the distance to residential dwellings
5.Highway access and parking is good due to the proximity to the Co-op car park.

For the above reasons, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies 1 and 24. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Layout, Design, Scale and Consideration of the Character of the Area

Section 12 of the NPPF, "Achieving well-designed places", states that the "creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve" and as such, it is generally accepted that good design plays a key role towards sustainable development.

Paragraph 135, contained within Section 12 of the NPPF, states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area (including beyond the short term) and should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. This goes on to establish that it is important that new development should be of the highest quality, to enhance and reinforce good design characteristics, and that decisions must have regard towards the impact that the proposed development would have on local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting such as topography, street patterns, building lines, boundary treatment and through scale and massing. Developments should create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, among other considerations.

Likewise, Policy 2 of the SELLP outlines sustainable development considerations for proposals; providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals. Furthermore, Policy 3 of the SELLP requires development to comprise good design; identifying issues that should be considered when preparing schemes so that development sits comfortably with, and adds positively to, its historically designated or undesignated townscape or landscape surroundings.

These policies accord with the provisions of the NPPF and require that design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable. Proposals for new development would therefore require the aforementioned considerations to be adequately assessed and designed, including the siting, design, and scale to be respectful of surrounding development and ensure that the character of the area is not compromised.

The development is not of any visual merit. However, it is located to the rear of Co-op, within an area which is functional rather than aesthetically pleasing. On this basis, the proposal would be well integrated into the area. Despite not enhancing the area, it would not detract from it either, acting as a neutral factor.

The scale of the development is relatively small, reducing its impact. The brightness does attract additional attention to the development; however, due to its positioning, it is still not overly prominent.

Taking account of the design, scale, and nature of the development, as detailed above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The proposal would not cause an adverse impact to the character or appearance of the area and would therefore be in accordance with Policies 2 and 3 of the SELLP and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impacts Upon Resident Amenity

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Policies 2 and 3 of SELLP sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing

development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

Ample distance to residential properties has been maintained to prevent significant noise disturbance. The brightness may disturb residents of 15 and 16 Church Green; however, this would be no more impactful than the existing lights on the Co-op building.

As detailed above, the scale and design of the proposal is considered to have no significant or unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjacent properties or land users, when also taking account of the conditions recommended. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Section 12 of the NPPF and Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan in terms of impact upon residential amenity.

Flooding Considerations

Section 14 of the NPPF requires development plans to "apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development - taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change - so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by: (...) applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, the exception test as set out below".

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states "the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding". The strategic flood risk assessment provides the basis for applying this test.

Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states that "the sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk)."

If, following the application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the Exceptions Test can be applied if appropriate. The process for applying the Exception Test is outlined within Paragraphs 177, 178 and 179 of the NPPF. Paragraph 178 states "to pass the exception test it should be demonstrated that: a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall"

The site lies within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Maps. These have been created as a tool to raise awareness of flood risk with the public and partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Emergency Services and Drainage Authorities. The Maps do not take into account any flood defences.

The South-East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides an overview of how flood risk has been considered in shaping the proposals of the Local Plan, including the spatial strategy and the assessment of housing and employment sites. Policy 4 of the SELLP is clear in that "Development proposed within an area at risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency's flood map or at risk during a breach or overtopping scenario as shown on the flood hazard and depths maps in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) will be permitted" in instances where specific criteria is met.

It is worth noting that large parts of the district of South Holland lie within Flood Zone 3. It is therefore necessary to use the refined flood risk information (Hazard and Depth maps) within the SFRA as a basis to apply the sequential test.

Within the SFRA the site is classed as danger for most, with flood depths expected to reach up to 1m.

The proposed use is unconventional; and therefore, allowances should be made from a flood risk perspective. As a self-serve facility, there would be no staff members etc at risk of flooding, only the

machines. The machines themselves are secured into the ground so would not be vulnerable to the impacts of flooding.

That being said, the majority of Long Sutton is located within the same flood risk classification. The exception being the land immediately surrounding the church which, as a Grade I listed building within the Conservation Area, would be an inappropriate location for such a development. On this basis, the location can be considered sequentially appropriate.

Overall, when considering the development on balance, it is considered, given the mitigation measures detailed and recommended by condition, that the proposal accords with Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the SELLP and the intentions of the NPPF with regards to flood risk.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) requires developers to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using standardized biodiversity units measured by statutory biodiversity metrics. This is often referred to as the mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain.

"Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits".

The biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition. This relates to a condition that seeks, once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development, alongside the need to submit a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition". The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
(c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

The proposal would fall under the de minimis exemption outlined in Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Heritage and Conservation

Policy 29 of the SELLP, alongside Section 16 of the NPPF, relates to the preservation of the historic environment. Both outline that all applications which impact the Conservation Area should preserve or enhance the setting of that area.

In this regard, in respect of any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through Section 72 the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Paragraph 220 of the NPPF relates to applications which would impact upon the Conservation Area, stating the loss "of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole."

Paragraphs 214 and 215 broadly outline that proposals which harm a heritage asset, with this harm categorised as less than substantial or substantial, should provide benefits to the area which outweigh the harm caused.

The site is located approximately 55m from the edge of Long Sutton Conservation Area at its

closest point (with the site being south of this point). Only limited views of the proposal from the Conservation Area are possible. Views towards West Street to the north are entirely obscured by the Co-op building. This would also sever all lines of site between listed buildings and the site. The distance of 70m to the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area would be sufficient to reduce views and prevent a harmful relationship with the Conservation Area forming. Moreover, views would be obscured by the existing boundary treatments around the Co-op carpark.

On this basis, there would be no material impact upon the Conservation Area.

Outstanding Matters from Representations

The objection received by Long Sutton Parish Council is noted. However, Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, enables the submission of retrospective planning applications. Procedural guidance is clear that retrospective applications should not be prejudiced; and therefore, to resist this application on the basis that it is made retrospectively would be improper.

Planning Balance

As detailed above, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal represents appropriate development within the defined settlement boundary. The development hereby proposed does not materially harm the character or appearance of the locality, or amenity of nearby residents, and provides adequate parking, whilst conforming with the SELLP and the provisions of the NPPF when viewed as a whole.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:
A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).
C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to

respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Conclusion

Taking these factors into consideration, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 24 of the SELLP, as well as Sections 12 and 14 of the NPPF. There are no significant factors in this case that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal; therefore, the planning balance is in favour of the proposal.

Recommendation

Based on the assessment detailed above, it is recommended that the proposal should be approved under Delegated Authority.