

December 2019



Planning & Retail Statement

**Springfields Outlet
Shopping & Leisure
Spalding
PE12 6EU**

**Proposed Extension of
Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure
to comprise demolition of existing
NFU Mutual offices and provision
of Comparison Retail Floorspace (A1),
Flexible Retail and/or Coffee Shops/
Restaurants Floorspace (A1/A3),
Access, Revised Car Parking,
Landscaping & Associated Works**

On behalf of
Triton Property Fund

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Executive Summary

The Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure complex is a well established major tourist destination in Spalding, Lincolnshire which draws an annual footfall of some 2.3 million visitors, therefore attracting a significant number of visitors into Spalding who would not otherwise visit the town, with visitors travelling from destinations such as Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Stamford, Grantham and Skegness.

The wider Springfield complex includes a range of outlet stores, garden centre, Festival Gardens, an Exhibition & Conference Centre and leisure facilities.

A number of improvements to Springfields have been delivered over the years, including the recent £1.2million investment in the new Adventure Land located within the Festival Gardens, which opened in 2018 and includes the new JCB Young Drivers Zone and other activities including a Tree Top Village, Springy's Beach, Dino Golf and miniature railway. Combined with the new Springy's Diner, Adventure Land provides an attractive destination for all the family and complements the outlet offer at Springfields.

However, while the above improvements have assisted in maintaining the role of Springfields as a premier tourist destination including the benefits the outlet centre provides to the town, Springfields needs to continually evolve and develop in order to address challenges the centre is facing to maintain that position.

The recently adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (March 2019) recognises the strategic importance of Springfields as a visitor attraction and a major local employer. To help meet the need for further comparison retail floorspace in Spalding, Policy 27 of the Local Plan (2019) allocates approximately 3,700 sqm (net) of comparison floorspace in the short term at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.

The proposed development therefore seeks to deliver Policy 27 of the Local Plan and would provide a modern and attractive extension to the existing outlet centre, comprising the demolition of the existing NFU Mutual offices and provision of new comparison retail floorspace (Class A1), flexible comparison retail and/or ancillary coffee shops/restaurants floorspace (Class A1/A3), access, revised car parking, landscaping and associated works.

The development would result in the creation of 18 new units and would provide a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits which include:

- The creation of around 350 new jobs in addition to 650 jobs currently provided at Springfields, one of the largest employers in Spalding;
- Increased opportunities for local contractors and suppliers, with the outlet centre currently using 25 local contractors and suppliers;
- Increased annual footfall providing an attractive tourist destination for all the family;
- Spin-off benefits for Spalding and the local economy through increased number of visitors to the town and increased local spend, with Springfields currently having a catchment reaching areas within a 90 minute drive of the town and locations further afield including Norwich and Leicester;
- Measures for town centre improvement including Section 106 funding, the offer of participation in the Spalding Town Centre Steering Group and measures to

improve linkages with the centre which include potential use of technology such as the Springfields VIP App to promote the town centre;

- A new and modernised office building for NFU Mutual, helping to retain local jobs;
- Relocation of the Springfields Horticultural Society offices close to their Events/Conference Centre; and
- Environmental benefits including substantial new planting across the site with approximately 10 to 1 replacement tree planting and investment in on site renewable energy supplies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning & Retail Statement has been prepared by ID Planning on behalf of Triton Property Fund in support of a full planning application seeking the expansion of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, Spalding, in line with Policy 27 of the adopted Development Plan for the area. The proposal includes demolition of the existing National Farmers Union (NFU) Mutual offices and provision of 15 new units comprising comparison retail (A1) and 3 flexible comparison retail and/or coffee shops/restaurants units (A1/A3), which could all be used for comparison retail (A1).
- 1.2 Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure provides a wide range of retail and leisure orientated uses across an area of 15.5 hectares. The wider complex at Springfields includes a range of outlet stores, a garden centre, Festival Gardens, car parking, Exhibition & Conference Centre and a range of leisure facilities including the recently opened Adventure Land, incorporating the JCB Young Drivers Zone, Tree Top Village, a miniature railway and land train, crazy golf and playbarn alongside the new Spring's Diner and seasonal water taxi taking visitors into the historic centre of Spalding. The centre therefore provides an attractive destination for all the family with the retail outlet complimented by a range of leisure facilities.
- 1.3 The Springfields complex is well established as a major tourist destination and draws an annual footfall of some 2.3 million visitors. It is ideal for all the family and the site is good for all ages whilst also including access for those with disabilities.
- 1.4 Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure therefore attracts a significant number of visitors into Spalding who would not otherwise visit the town, with tourists travelling from areas including Kings Lynn, Peterborough, Stamford, Grantham and Skegness.
- 1.5 A number of improvements to Springfields have been delivered over the years, including the recent £1.2million investment in the new Adventure Land located within the Festival Gardens. However, the outlet centre is continually needing to evolve in order to remain an attractive destination and maintain its role as a premier tourist destination.
- 1.6 The recently adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) (March 2019) recognises the strategic importance of Springfields as a visitor attraction and a major local employer. To help meet the need for further comparison retail floorspace in Spalding, Policy 27 of the SELLP (2019) allocates approximately 3,700 sqm (net) of comparison floorspace in the short term at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.
- 1.7 In light of the Local Plan allocation and the continued need for growth and evolution at Springfields, the following application proposes the expansion of Springfields on land to the south of the existing outlet centre in order to create 3,660m² gross of new comparison retail floorspace (A1) and provision of 616m² gross of flexible floorspace for either retail and/or food and drink uses (A1/A3). The restaurant offer would attract operators that would otherwise not location in Spalding.
- 1.8 The development proposal would provide an enhanced retail offer for both local residents and the wider catchment of Lincolnshire and parts of the East Midlands and Norfolk, increasing choice in the market and further enhancing the attractiveness of Springfields as a major tourist destination, with the potential for wider economic spin-off benefits for Spalding.

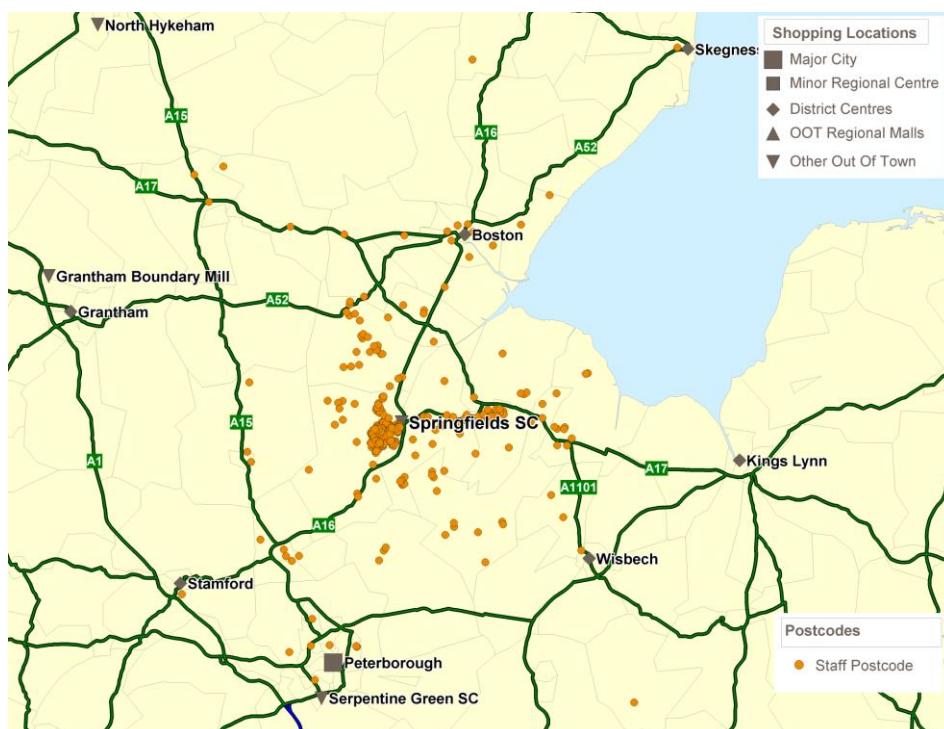
- 1.9 The proposed expansion would also result in a further 350 new jobs created in addition to the 650 jobs already provided at Springfields, with further significant benefits for the local economy and employment.
- 1.10 The proposal therefore seeks full planning permission for the:
- “Proposed Extension of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, to comprise demolition of the existing NFU Mutual offices and provision of comparison retail floorspace (Class A1), flexible comparison retail and/or coffee shops/restaurants floorspace (Class A1/A3), access, revised car parking, landscaping and associated works”*
- 1.11 This Statement describes the application site and proposed development before assessing the proposal against the development plan and relevant material considerations. The latter includes the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance.
- 1.12 The report proceeds as follows:
- Section 2 describes the application site and the proposed development;
 - Section 3 provides an overview of planning policy;
 - Section 4 provides an assessment of planning merits; and
 - Section 5 sets out our conclusions.

2. Site Description & Planning History

Site Description and Background

- 2.1 The development proposal relates to land at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure which is located to the north east of Spalding, between the Camel Gate/A151 roundabout and the A16/A151 roundabout.
- 2.2 The application site red line measures 10.35ha and comprises land located within the wider Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure complex which measures a total of approximately 15ha.
- 2.3 Land within the red line area includes the existing South Car Park, NFU Mutual offices and its associated car park, part of the Festival Gardens, the Springfields Garden Centre Car Park, Springfields Events & Conference Centre and associated land and a strip of land running adjacent to the A16 to the east.
- 2.4 The red line area also takes in Camel Gate and land to the west which includes the Springfields Main Customer Car Park, an existing bus layby and drop-off and land at Fulney Hall.
- 2.5 The wider application site is bounded to the south by the A151/ Holbeach Road, while to the west the site adjoins the Coronation Channel. The eastern site boundary extends along the edge of the existing outlet centre with the wider Festival Gardens beyond, which include the recently opened Adventure Land amongst other leisure facilities. A strip of land included in the red line situated between the A16 and Festival Gardens is currently occupied by wind turbines associated with the Outlet Centre.
- 2.6 The northern part of the site includes land within ownership of Springfields Horticultural Society which adjoins the Marsh Lane employment site to the north and the A16 to the east.
- 2.7 South west of the site are residential properties and beyond the Coronation Channel the wider built up area of Spalding.
- 2.8 A Site Location Plan is attached (3841-070-L02 Rev P4).
- 2.9 The application site forms part of the wider Springfields complex, which dates back to the 1960's when the Festival Gardens opened in 1966.
- 2.10 The gardens grew over time and acted as a successful visitor attraction, providing show gardens and exhibition plots for wholesalers and retailers to showcase the variety and durability of their bulbs and flowers.
- 2.11 However, visitor numbers declined towards the 1990's to around 20,000 per year compared to a previous peak of 125,000. The decline threatened closure of the Festival Gardens without further investment through a proposed Factory Outlet Centre (FOC), which was granted planning permission by the Secretary of State in 2001.
- 2.12 The Springfields Outlet Centre opened in 2004, providing outlet stores, an information centre, cafes and restaurants along with other associated uses. Further investment was secured in 2006 with the grant of planning permission for further outlet units, a Travelodge Hotel and improvements to the Festival Gardens including public art and sculptures.

- 2.13 Today, the wider Springfield complex includes a range of outlet stores, a garden centre, Festival Gardens, car parking, Exhibition & Conference Centre and a range of leisure facilities including Adventure Land with Springy's Diner and family orientated leisure activities.
- 2.14 In addition to the South Car Park, further car parking and a restaurant associated with the outlet are located to the west of Camel Gate, with overflow parking further north.
- 2.15 The centre currently employs around 650 people of which around 90% live within a relatively short distance to travel to work.
- 2.16 Details of accessibility by a choice of transport mode are set out in the submitted Transport Assessment. This shows good access on foot and by sustainable transport modes with both the centre of Spalding and with surrounding residential areas to the south and west.
- 2.17 Cycle lanes exist to the south of the site along Camel Gate and connect Springfields with Spalding Town Centre via an existing cycle route along the River Welland. Cycle parking facilities are also currently provided at Springfields.
- 2.18 Bus stops located along Camel Gate and Holbeach Road are in close proximity to the site and are served by frequent bus services operating towards locations including Spalding Town Centre and King's Lynn.
- 2.19 Rail connections are also possible with Spalding Train Station some 2.2km south west of the site, providing frequent access from both Lincoln and Peterborough.
- 2.20 As set out earlier, the Springfields complex attracts an annual footfall of over 2.3 million visitors and clearly represents a major tourist destination, drawing visitors from areas beyond Kings Lynn to the east, Peterborough to the south, Stamford & Grantham to the west and Skegness to the north, as shown below.



- 2.21 In doing so the outlet attracts a significant number of people to Spalding who otherwise would not visit the town, providing the potential for wider spin off benefits for other shops and services in Spalding.
- 2.22 The site therefore represents a key element of the overall tourist offer in this part of Lincolnshire and is a clear economic driver for the area. The centre provides an important component of the overall offer in the town for businesses looking to locate in the area and for those looking to live in South East Lincolnshire, with 25 local contractors and suppliers used on site and scope for this to increase with the proposed extension.
- 2.23 However, as the history of Springfields demonstrates, the wider complex cannot stand still and the management team are continually seeking new high-end occupiers to improve the outlet's retail offer to maintain its position in an increasingly competitive environment not just with other factory outlet centres but also the growth of internet shopping.
- 2.24 Recent investments at Springfield have included a £3.0m investment in 2015 of which a major £1.0m investment went towards the Home & Garden Centre and its restaurant.
- 2.25 Further recent enhancements have included the opening of the Adventure Land, an upgrade to the site's water fountains to include sound and light displays, a new Winter Wonderland at Christmas and plans to update the retail environment including new mall furniture, café plazas, high tech promotional schemes and upgrades.
- 2.26 Mall and shop front upgrades to modernise the frontage of the retail space and ensure the design remains relevant and contemporary.
- 2.27 While the above improvements have assisted in maintaining the role of Springfields as a premier tourist destination including the benefits the outlet centre provides to the town, Springfield needs to continually evolve and develop in order to address challenges the centre is facing to maintain that position, which include the recent grant of permission for the Grantham Designer Outlet Centre (S17/2155) and the Grantham Designer Outlet Village (S17/1262) by South Kesteven District Council.
- 2.28 Continual investment is therefore vital to securing the future of the leisure and retail at Springfields and ensuring the centre can evolve to continue to provide a premier visitor attraction in Lincolnshire.
- 2.29 Given the need for continued investment at Springfields and in accordance with the recently adopted SELLP (2019), the development proposes expansion of Springfields to the south of the existing outlet centre.
- 2.30 This would provide an opportunity for Springfields to become a significant factory outlet centre serving the east of England and continuing to boost the attraction of Spalding as a tourist destination.

Planning History

- 2.31 The site has an extensive planning history associated with the existing use of the wider site area as Springfields Outlet Shopping & Festival Gardens.
- 2.32 Planning permission (SU147-63) for a show garden and offices at Springfields was granted in September 1963, followed by a planning application for an office block

(SU83-64) which was approved in May 1964 and now comprises the NFU Mutual offices which are located to the south of the Springfields complex.

- 2.33 Over the following years, a number of planning applications relating to the growth of the show gardens at Springfields were approved. This included an application approved in July 1965 for development of a show garden, erection of a restaurant, implement store, toilet accommodation and entrance building (SU92-65).
- 2.34 Permission for a control office, photographic society kiosk, information and souvenir sales building (SU244-65) was granted on the site in 1966, highlighting the growth of the site as a visitor attraction.
- 2.35 Between 1967 – 1986 a number of planning applications were approved across the wider site which included permission for a garden shop (SU63-67), show hall (SU10-67), on-site toilets (SU160-69), a number of advertisement consents, a change of use application from show hall to a show hall and cafeteria (H16-0110-79) and an extension to provide an additional ballroom and lounge bar (H16-0703-79).
- 2.36 In August 1988, an outline consent (H16-1402-87) was granted on site for a two-storey hotel comprising 60 bedrooms with full restaurant facilities. A further planning application was approved in September 1989 for a hotel extension and provision of additional car parking (H16-0862-89).
- 2.37 Outline planning permission (H16-0569-98) for the redevelopment of Springfield Gardens to include leisure, horticultural, food and drink, retail, craft workshop and related uses with associated landscaping, car parking provision and related highway works was granted following a called in decision by the Secretary of State.
- 2.38 Approval of reserved matters (H16-0361-02) was granted in September 2002.
- 2.39 In December 2006 a further full planning application (H16-0401-06) was granted for alterations to Springfield Gardens to include additional retail floorspace, a hotel, creation of new gardens and for revised car parking. This application related to the eastern part of the Springfield Outlet Centre and Festival Gardens which now includes the South Car Park, a Travelodge, Marks & Spencer and Gap amongst other retailers.
- 2.40 In September 2017 full planning permission (H16-0645-17) was granted on part of the Festival Gardens for a family entertainment centre, including change of use of the existing playbarn (Class D2) to an American themed diner (Class A3) with associated works.
- 2.41 Leisure activities granted through the permission included a JCB Young Drivers Diggerland, improvements to the existing train running on site with a new train station, a high top hobbit village for adventure play, sheltered infant sand play and café area, refurbishment of the existing mini gold facility, a gold panning activity area, picnic space a portable stage and an area for remote control boats.
- 2.42 A non-material amendment (H16-0574-18) relating to permission H16-0645-17 was granted in July 2018.
- 2.43 A planning application was approved in May 2019 (H16-0290-19) for the relocation of the NFU Mutual offices and its car park from the existing location south of Springfields outlet centre to land approximately 350m north between Camel Gate and Roman Bank.

- 2.44 The permission will enable NFU Mutual to vacate their existing offices on land directly south of Springfields outlet centre and occupy new, modern office accommodation within the wider Springfields complex. This will free up land to the south of Springfields outlet centre in order to accommodate the proposed retail expansion.
- 2.45 A further planning application (H16-0579-19) was approved in July 2019 for external alterations to the existing Fens Centre, located within the Springfields complex along with the erection of a tractor store on land to the west of the Springfields Events & Conference Centre.
- 2.46 This will allow Springfields Horticultural Society to relocate their office and storage from land between Camel Gate and Roman Bank in order to allow the NFU Mutual offices to relocate.
- 2.47 Both planning permissions assist in facilitating the wider reconfiguration of the Springfields complex in order to support the proposed expansion of the outlet centre.

3. Proposed Development

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the report provides a description of the proposed expansion at Springfields and should be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted with the planning application, particularly the Design & Access Statement and architectural plans.
- 3.2 As set out earlier, the development proposal seeks full planning permission for the expansion of Springfield Outlet Shopping & Leisure to provide 15 new comparison retail units (A1) and 3 flexible comparison retail/ ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3) to the south of the existing outlet centre.
- 3.3 The proposal will result in a high quality sustainable development which will enhance the provision and choice of retail on offer, boosting the attractiveness of Springfields as a retail and leisure destination and the town of Spalding as a place to visit.
- 3.4 The development will result in significant social and economic benefits in providing around 350 new jobs at Springfields while also supporting the status and attraction of Springfields as a tourist destination, providing the potential for wider spin off benefits for other shops and services in Spalding.
- 3.5 The proposal also offers benefits for local suppliers. As highlighted earlier around 50% of contractors or suppliers used on site are based within 5 miles of Spalding.

Proposed Scheme

- 3.6 The proposal is brought forward in line with the recently adopted development plan Policy 27 for the area and to help meet future needs for retail development in Spalding.
- 3.7 The development seeks to support further investment at Springfields in order to allow the outlet centre to attract new high-end fashion occupiers. This would allow Springfields to maintain its position as a premier retail destination in South East Lincolnshire, amongst an increasingly competitive retail environment.
- 3.8 The proposed extension to Springfields therefore proposes an extended mall arrangement in the form of an extension at the southern end of the existing outlet centre on the existing South Car Park and NFU Mutual offices and car park.
- 3.9 The new retail buildings would adjoin the existing Travelodge Hotel and retail units Gap and Radley which form part of the existing outlet centre.
- 3.10 The retail extension would include provision of 15 new comparison retail units (A1) and 3 retail/ ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3), providing 4,276m² gross of retail floorspace plus a new shopping walkway which would connect the extension with the existing outlet.
- 3.11 The proposal would not exceed the stated retail limit in Policy 27 of the adopted local plan of 3,700m² net floorspace.
- 3.12 Servicing for the retail extension is proposed to the rear of the new building. Access for servicing is via an existing junction onto Camel Gate, which will continue to provide

access for customers to the Travelodge Hotel and also to delivery yards serving the existing outlet.

- 3.13 An area of high quality public realm is proposed between the new retail extension and its frontage with Camel Gate, creating an attractive environment on arrival into Springfields.
- 3.14 Landscaping is also proposed across the wider site area, which includes new garden features within the Festival Gardens and wider boundary planting.
- 3.15 Increased customer car parking provision is to be made to the west of Camel Gate in order to address the loss of 64 spaces at South Car Park and to provide additional car parking to serve the new retail extension.
- 3.16 Overall, a further 300 car parking spaces are to be provided to the west of Camel Gate. At weekends and public holidays when the centre is open, a further 51 spaces would be available at Fulney Hall to the south west of the site and further parking at the new NFU Mutual offices recently granted permission (H16-0290-19), for use by staff only at certain peak periods (ie weekends / public holidays).
- 3.17 It is envisaged that the extension to Springfields will create around 350 new jobs and would result in a major boost for both employment and the visitor economy in Spalding.
- 3.18 The Design & Access Statement and supporting plans provides further details relating to the proposed development.
- 3.19 The proposed development would be phased, with Phase 1 including relocation of the Springfields Horticultural Society from their existing offices west of Camel Gate to occupy space in the Fens Centre Discovery building, where minor alterations are to be carried out under permission granted in July 2019 (H16-0579-19) to accommodate the Society. Phase 1 will also see the demolition of the Horticultural Society existing offices approved under (H16-0290-19) and demolition of the Dromesdary Lodge.
- 3.20 Phase 2 of development will entail the demolition of the existing NFU Mutual offices to the south of the existing outlet along with the construction of the new NFU Mutual offices and associated car parking which were granted permission under H16-0290-19 to be located west of Camel Gate on the site of the existing Horticultural Society offices.
- 3.21 At Phase 3, the new NFU Mutual offices will be occupied and the site of the former NFU Mutual offices will be prepared ahead of construction for the new retail outlet extension.
- 3.22 The final Phase 4 development will see construction of the new outlet extension, reconfiguration and creation of additional car parking across the site and addition of grasscrete for overflow surface car parking on land east of Camel Gate. The phase will also include relocation of the existing bus layby to the western side of Camel Gate and replacement of the existing wind turbines to the far east of the site with new more efficient models.
- 3.23 Further details are provided on the Site Masterplan – Phasing (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_102 Rev P4).

Retail Design and Layout

Layout

- 3.24 The proposed layout for the retail extension has taken account of a number of factors which have led towards what we consider to be an optimum layout for the site, with regard to connectivity, access, relocation of existing development on site, visibility from the road network and car parking considerations.
- 3.25 The Phase 3 extension is located to the south of the existing retail outlet, fronting onto Camel Gate and the A151.
- 3.26 The layout of the proposed extension has been designed so as to respond to the surrounding site context and create a strong, permeable link between the new development and the existing Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.
- 3.27 Buildings which form part of the existing retail outlet are centred around the Dutch Market Square, from which the outlet buildings form separate quadrants separated by shopping walkways identified as the North, East, South and West Avenues.
- 3.28 South Avenue extends from Dutch Market Square towards retail units Gap and Radley and the South Car Park, where the proposed retail extension is to be located.
- 3.29 As described earlier, the extension to Springfields comprises a modern extension with pedestrianised mall. The new extension is orientated so as to align with existing retail units at the outlet.
- 3.30 The new shopping walkway extends from a proposed new entrance on Camel Gate and connects to the existing South Avenue, resulting in a central shopping walkway which extends the entire length of the Springfields Outlet, creating a retail circuit which facilitates the movement of visitors throughout the entire outlet.
- 3.31 The location of the new entrance at the south west corner of the new retail development provides convenient access into Springfields for those using customer car parks along Camel Gate, travelling by bus to stops on Holbeach Road and Camel Gate and for visitors travelling by foot or cycle from the main built up area of Spalding and residential areas to the south.
- 3.32 To the front of the new extension adjacent to Camel Gate the layout proposes an area of high quality public realm. This space includes for outdoor seating associated with proposed retail/ ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3), planting and street lighting and places an emphasis on pedestrian movement along the front of the new retail extension.
- 3.33 The proposed public realm would also assist in creating a sense of arrival for visitors as they approach the new walkway into the site.
- 3.34 The orientation of the new retail extension to the south of the site also provides good visibility of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure to traffic travelling along the A151, promoting the attractiveness of Springfields as a visitor destination and providing a strong gateway development.
- 3.35 An existing delivery road which takes its access from Camel Gate and serves delivery yards to the south east and south west of the existing outlet centre is to be retained. It is envisaged that this road would be utilised for deliveries to both existing and new retail units.

3.36 The proposed Ground Floor Plan (Option 5 – Level 00) shows an access to be retained between the existing Springfields Outlet and the new retail expansion which would provide vehicular access for service deliveries to the south east service yard serving the existing outlet along with a proposed service link to the rear of the new retail expansion.

3.37 Bin stores for new retail units are provided to the rear of units 67 – 74.

Proposed Extension

3.38 The western side of the extended mall is sited along Camel Gate, with its frontage set back from the highway by proposed public realm.

3.39 Here the extension is single-storey and comprises a mix of 5 retail units (A1) and 3 retail/ ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3). A service link runs north to south through the centre of the building and provides rear access to all units for staff and delivery of stock.

3.40 Units A, B and C comprise the proposed food and drink units or units for retail use (A1/A3) and are situated to the west of the service link where they front onto a new public realm area and Camel Gate.

3.41 Units 60 – 64 form 5 retail units (A1) to be located within the building and are situated to the east of the service link, with customer access to stores available via the new shopping walkway to the east.

3.42 The southern side of the extended mall has a circular design, with the curved southern elevation creating visual interest and a sense of arrival for shoppers as it guides visitors towards the new entrance at the south west corner of the outlet extension.

3.43 This would be further enhanced by proposed potential food and drink uses fronting onto Camel Gate with the potential for outdoor drinking and dining areas as shown by the Ground Flood Plan (Option 5 – Level 00) creating a strong active frontage for visitors as they arrive along Camel Gate.

3.44 The provision of ancillary food and drink units at Springfields would create a wider choice for visitors and contribute towards the attractiveness and function of Springfields as a retail and leisure destination.

3.45 The eastern units fronting the pedestrianised mall are larger in size and form an 'L' shape at the south east corner of the site. The units are sited adjacent to the Festival Gardens to the east and the A151 to the south, where the extension has good frontage and visibility from the road network.

3.46 A new proposed entrance is sited to the south west corner of the retail extension with a new central shopping walkway providing access to the proposed units.

3.47 A further 10 retail units (A1) are to be provided along the south east corner of the extension across units 65 – 74. A sub-station is provided to the north of the building, while a service link is located at the south east corner of the extension.

3.48 The southern elevation of the retail extension fronts onto the A151 and the Camel Gate Roundabout. This part of the building has an increased height and extends east to west along the site's southern edge, creating a prominent gateway development into Springfields.

- 3.49 The southern part of the extension comprises retail units 65 – 67. Unit 67 is the largest new retail unit provided by the development, with a floorspace of 782m².
- 3.50 North of the service link at the south east corner of the extension, the building height decreases and extends north to south alongside the shopping walkway and adjacent to retail units 60 – 64. The north eastern section of the extension comprises 7 retail units with access to each unit via the shopping walkway.
- 3.51 The submitted Ground Floor Plan Option 5 – Level 00 shows the proposed layout of the new development in further detail.
- 3.52 Along the western edge of the proposed retail extension and the frontage onto Camel Gate, an area of public realm is proposed which comprises a high quality design seeking to integrate the new extension with the existing outlet.
- 3.53 Landscape proposals across the public realm are identified on the accompanying plan 'Phases 1 to 3' and show substantial planting featuring yew domes, seasonal bedding, vertical planters, circular bronze planters, giant pebble seats and timber bench.
- 3.54 The design also includes a sculpture or sculptural signage to be commissioned to reference the significance of Springfield's bulb growing history and response to the character and history of the site. A further ground based sculpture would also be commissioned to feature historical reference, while along the new retail shopping walkway there would be ground artwork featuring a tulip motif and lighting.
- 3.55 The eastern edge of the new retail extension would occupy a limited part of the existing Festival Gardens which includes an existing fountain pool to be redeveloped as part of the proposals.
- 3.56 Further details are outlined below and are shown on the 'Landscape Proposals for Garden Edge' (M3041_PA_09_V01) which show modifications to allow for retention of part of the fountain pool and the remainder to be replaced by turf and topsoil with a remodelled lake garden to be created with a new lawn area and bitumen bound gravel path ensuring continuity in design to reflect the existing gardens.
- 3.57 The proposals also include additional planting including 17x new ornamental trees to provide a strong boundary between the Festival Gardens and new retail development. Other additional landscape planting includes new bulb planting and groundcover planting to create further landscape enhancements.

Materials

- 3.58 A number of visuals have been submitted in support of the development proposal and show the exterior design of the new development to incorporate a mix of materials.
- 3.59 The design of the development seeks to place an emphasis on active frontages through use of glass for new shop fronts, promoting interaction between shoppers and retail units.
- 3.60 Glazed canopies are to be provided over shop entrances which comprise a mix of glass and timber louvres which follow the perimeter of the building's sweeping façades.
- 3.61 The design and materials proposed along the southern elevation of the development seeks to create a strong and prominent gateway into the Springfields Outlet for those

arriving from the south. The southern frontage of the building also provides an attractive gateway into Spalding for those arriving from the A151 and A16 to the east.

- 3.62 A variety of high quality materials have been incorporated into the design of the southern elevation, with use of bespoke bronze effect back lit debossed cladding and artificial green walls creating an attractive and visually interesting development. Options to incorporate feature embossed bronze panels create further opportunity for reference towards Springfields historic character as do proposed decorative cut metal screens.
- 3.63 Green style walls are also considered to respond to the site context in respect of existing trees bounding the A151 which are to be lost through the development, therefore retaining a green gateway effect into both Springfields and Spalding.
- 3.64 The use of natural materials such as timber incorporated into the development is considered to incorporate into the wider sustainability of the design.
- 3.65 Further building details and visualisations are contained in the submitted Design & Access Statement.

Site Access and Transport

- 3.66 The application site forms part of the wider Springfields complex and therefore benefits from a number of existing access opportunities, including by sustainable transport.
- 3.67 A range of residential areas located south west of Springfields are identified to be within the recognised 800m and upper limit 2km walking distances.
- 3.68 Pedestrian islands at the Camel Gate/A151 Roundabout connect to a wide pavement extending along the eastern edge of Camel Gate, providing access to Springfields for pedestrians arriving from the south.
- 3.69 Furthermore, a number of locations fall within the recognised 5km cycle distance of Springfields, which include Fulney, Spalding, Low Fulney, Weston, Clay Lake, Little London, Pinchbeck and Moulton.
- 3.70 Existing pedestrian and cycle links also exist between Springfields and Spalding Town Centre, with a cycle link shown on the adopted Proposals Map for Spalding within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) to extend along the River Welland and towards Springfields.



- 3.71 In terms of travel by public transport, Springfields is served by a number of transport opportunities.
- 3.72 Bus stops are provided on Camel Gate with frequent services available to location including Spalding Town Centre and Kings Lynn. Further bus services operate along Holbeach Road, with bus stops located approximately 260m south west of the new retail extension at Springfields.
- 3.73 Springfields can also be accessed by coach. At present, coach parking is currently provided to the west of Camel Gate in an existing layby also used for bus drop offs. As set out further below, this area is to be redeveloped for car parking. 8 new coach parking spaces will therefore be provided on an area of land to the south of the proposed new NFU Mutual office car park.
- 3.74 A water taxi service also operates between Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and Spalding Town Centre during the months between March and September. An embarkation point is located to the west of the West Car Park, where the water taxi service operates along the Coronation Channel. This is retained.
- 3.75 Brown directional tourist signs for the water taxi are provided throughout Spalding and along the A16 Spalding Bypass.
- 3.76 Spalding Train Station is located approximately 2.2km from the site.
- 3.77 Visitors travelling to Springfields by car are currently able to access the site by parking at the existing centre car parks which can be access via Camel Gate. Car parks include the West Car Park and South Car Park, with separate car parks provided for the Garden Centre, Frankie & Benny's and the NFU Mutual offices. An overflow car park is also located north of the Springfield Outlet to the west of Camel Gate.
- 3.78 Following the erection of retail buildings, a total of 700 car parking spaces will be available within the wider Springfields complex following the loss of 64 parking spaces at the South Car Park. This does not include car parking spaces to be provided at the new NFU Mutual offices or the existing car park serving the Springfields Events & Conference Centre.
- 3.79 In order to address parking spaces lost at the South Car Park and to serve additional parking requirements in respect of the new retail expansion at Springfields, the application proposes reconfiguration of the wider site in order to provide additional car parking.
- 3.80 The 'Site Masterplan – Detailed (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_101 Rev P4)' sets out changes to the wider site in this respect.
- 3.81 As shown on the Site Masterplan, an additional 300 car parking spaces are to be provided within the wider site, of which 21 of those spaces would be for disabled car parking.
- 3.82 Additional car parking spaces are to be accommodated through reconfiguration of the West Car Park west of Camel Gate which would also include provision for 6 new vehicle charging bays in addition to 2 existing charging bays.
- 3.83 Further parking spaces are also shown to be accommodated on land currently used for overspill parking adjacent to Frankie & Benny's. Additional spaces would also be

provided on land currently occupied by a green mound, bus drop off and coach parking to the south of the West Car Park.

- 3.84 A further 10 new disabled car parking spaces are to be created to the east of Camel Gate, within the existing Springfields Garden Centre car park where an additional 2 standard parking bays are also to be provided.
- 3.85 In order for overflow parking space to be available, an area of land owned by Springfields Horticultural Society at the northern edge of the wider site adjacent to the Marsh Road employment site is proposed as grasscrete.
- 3.86 In terms of staff car parking, 2 additional car parking spaces are provided at the existing staff car park north of Spalding Dental Surgery. 51 temporary staff car parking spaces are also to be accommodated at Fulney Hall and further spaces in the new NFU offices car park, to be used on weekends and bank holidays only.
- 3.87 As identified earlier, existing coach parking spaces are to be relocated to land south of the proposed new NFU Mutual car park where 8 coach parking spaces will be available during weekdays. The existing bus stop layby will be relocated to a more convenient location along the western edge of Camel Gate, adjacent to the outlet centre.
- 3.88 A traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing provides access across Camel Gate for shoppers arriving by coach or using the West Car Park.
- 3.89 A new layby which takes its access from Camel Gate also forms part of the proposals. The inclusion of the layby would ensure that access and drop-offs could continue to be made for those visiting the Travelodge Hotel, while an access is also provided for service deliveries to the rear of the retail expansion.
- 3.90 In light of the proposed allocation for 3,700m² net comparison floorspace at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, it is recognised the allocation at Springfields also requires measures to enhance the site's connections to Spalding Town Centre and promote the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit.
- 3.91 The proposal therefore includes for a number of measures to promote Spalding Town Centre which include S106 funding, the offer to be involved with the new Spalding Town Centre Steering Group and a number of tech measures to promote attractions, offers and events in the town centre including use of the Springfields VIP App. These measures are discussed further in Section 5 of the Statement.

Landscaping

- 3.92 A number of plans have been provided in support of the planning application which detail the proposals for high quality landscaping across the wider site area.
- 3.93 As already highlighted proposals along the retail frontage with Camel Gate provide for high quality public realm to include circular bronze planters and seating, giant pebble seats and a long curved timber bench set onto a planter.
- 3.94 Substantial planting is provided along the frontage with Camel Gate and the A151, to include yew domes and swathes of seasonal bedding planting for colour and impact throughout the year. Vertical planter panels are also featured in the design, adding further colour and vibrance.

- 3.95 Modernised concrete paving is provided along with a sculpture or sculptural signage which will be commissioned to give reference towards the significance of Springfield's bulb growing history. A ground based sculpture is also proposed to be commissioned to feature further historical reference and to comprise either bronze finish metal work or natural stone.
- 3.96 The supporting Integration of Phases 1 to 3 plan (M3041_PA_10_V10) provides further details of proposed landscaping and public realm across the frontage of the site and shows landscaping to extend across the entire frontage of both the retail extension and the existing Outlet centre, allowing a cohesive, high quality and attractive design across the site which provides strong references to the history of Springfields.
- 3.97 Land to be occupied by the new retail buildings includes a small part of the western extent of the Festival Gardens. Plan M3041_PA_10_V10 details further landscaping proposals relating to reconfiguration of part of the existing fountain pool area within the Festival Gardens and have been prepared through discussions with Springfields Horticultural Society who manage the gardens.
- 3.98 The plan includes modifications which allow for retention of an area of the existing fountain pool and the remaining lake area to be replaced by turf and topsoil within the existing basin. A remodelled lake garden would be created to feature a lawn area and new bitumen bound gravel path.
- 3.99 The proposal also includes for planting of 17 new ornamental trees which provide a strong boundary between the Festival Gardens and retail units and will contribute towards maintaining the character and enclosure experienced within the existing gardens.
- 3.100 A brick wall to match the existing boundary structure to the gardens would provide further garden enclosure, while new bulb and groundcover planting within the gardens provide opportunities for enhancement.
- 3.101 Across the wider site, substantial planting is proposed include for planting across the car park west of Camel Gate and along Camel Gate, with landscaping proposed including native woodland planting with wildflower seeding, native understorey and shrub planting and native hedging. As shown by the Planting Proposals (M3041_PA_08_V02) mature trees would be retained along the site boundary.
- 3.102 Planting along the northern boundary of the site as detailed by the Boundary Planting Arena Site Plan (M3041_PA_05_V02) is proposed to replace existing tree species which are identified as having a short life span and have reached maturity.
- 3.103 Therefore, the development seeks to replace trees along the western end of this boundary with a mix of mature poplars and willows, creating a native canopy and understorey which would retain a strong landscape buffer between the site and adjacent Marsh Road employment site. This would create an ecologically and structurally diverse woodland.
- 3.104 Throughout the development, whilst approximately 190 trees would be lost as a result, the submitted landscape plans provide replacement planting of around 10 to 1 replacement trees, substantially increasing tree planting in the wider complex.
- 3.105 Full landscaping details are to be conditioned and addressed as part of condition discharge.

3.106 In light of the above, the development is considered to provide for substantial landscaping enhancements which provide for an attractive development which responds to the history and character of the Outlet centre whilst also providing opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

4. Relevant Planning Policy

Statutory Development Plan

- 4.1 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (SELLP) (2019) was formally adopted on 8th March 2019 by South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee. The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan is therefore now part of the statutory development plan for South East Lincolnshire, and replaces the South Holland Local Plan (2006) and Boston Borough Local Plan (1999).
- 4.2 Our assessment of planning issues therefore focuses on the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019).

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019)

- Policy 1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy 2: Development Management
- Policy 3: Design of New Development
- Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk
- Policy 6: Developer Contributions
- Policy 9: Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy
- Policy 24: The Retail Hierarchy
- Policy 25: Supporting Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres
- Policy 27: Additional Retail Provision
- Policy 28: The Natural Environment
- Policy 29: The Historic Environment
- Policy 30: Pollution
- Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable Low Carbon Energy
- Policy 32: Community, Health and Well-Being
- Policy 33: Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network
- Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking
- Appendix 6: Parking Standards

Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.3 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was updated and issued in February 2019. The framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.4 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, here it advises that:

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- **an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support**

growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- **a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities.....; and**
- **an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”**

- 4.5 The objectives are to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework. They are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions (paragraph 9).
- 4.6 Paragraph 11 sets out the Government’s commitment to supporting sustainable development. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.7 Section 3 relates to **‘Plan-Making’** with paragraph 20 setting out that strategic policies within the Local Plan should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for development including for retail.
- 4.8 Paragraph 23 goes on to state that land use designated and allocations should be identified on a policies map, with strategic policies providing a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward and at a sufficient rate to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period and in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This includes allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of an area.
- 4.9 Section 4 deals with **‘Decision-making’**. Here, paragraph 38 emphasises that local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, and that decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.10 Section 4 also encourages **‘Pre-application engagement and front-loading’** and paragraph 39 promotes good quality pre-application discussions which result in improved outcomes for the community.
- 4.11 Where beneficial, local planning authorities should also encourage applicants to engage with the local community before submitting their planning applications (paragraph 40).
- 4.12 Paragraph 47 deals with **‘Determining applications’** and confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.13 Section 6 confirms the government’s commitment to **‘Building a strong, competitive economy’**. Paragraph 80 confirms that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

- 4.14 The revised NPPF continues to place an emphasis on economic growth with paragraph 80 confirming that:
- “...significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development”.*
- 4.15 In addition, the approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. Paragraph 82 highlights that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.
- 4.16 Section 7 continues to support the role of town centres in the context of **‘Ensuring the vitality of town centres’**.
- 4.17 Paragraph 86 confirms that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. In this respect main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period of time) should out of centre sites be considered.
- 4.18 Paragraph 87 goes on to state that when considering out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre.
- 4.19 In relation to retail and leisure proposals which are outside town centres and not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, paragraph 89 indicates that an impact assessment should be required where developments are above a locally set threshold, with a default threshold of 2,500m² where no local threshold is identified.
- 4.20 In relation to out of centre proposals for retail and leisure, paragraph 89 indicates that an impact assessment will be required for such proposals
- 4.21 Section 9 deals with **‘Promoting sustainable transport’** and encourages transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that potential impacts can be addressed, opportunities to promote alternative modes of transport to the car can be pursued and environmental impacts can be taken into account (paragraph 102).
- 4.22 Significant developments should be focused on locations that can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport mode (paragraph 103).
- 4.23 Paragraph 105 indicates that local parking standards for non-residential development should have regard to the accessibility, type and use of the development, and to opportunities for travel by public transport.
- 4.24 The revised NPPF (paragraph 106) indicates a move away from maximum parking standards where maximum standards should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network.
- 4.25 When assessing applications for development it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities are taken to promote sustainable transport modes, that safe and suitable

access can be achieved for all users and that any significant impacts can be mitigated to an acceptable degree (paragraph 108).

- 4.26 Against this background, paragraph 109 confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an *“unacceptable impact on highway safety”*, or the residual cumulative *“impacts of development are severe”*.
- 4.27 Section 11 of the NPPF places a strong emphasis on **‘Making effective use of land’**. The planning system should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the availability and capacity of existing infrastructure and services and the scope to promotes sustainable travel.
- 4.28 Section 12 of the revised NPPF deals with **‘Achieving well-designed places’**. Planning decisions should ensure that developments (paragraph 127):
- Function well and add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of the development;
 - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping;
 - Are sympathetic to local character and history, including surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
 - Establish and maintain a strong sense of place;
 - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - 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.
- 4.29 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably (paragraph 128).
- 4.30 Great weight should be afforded to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, in accordance with paragraph 131.
- 4.31 Section 14 deals with **‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’**. In this context paragraph 165 advises that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that suggests that this would be inappropriate.
- 4.32 Paragraph 158 relates to the sequential test which aims to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.
- 4.33 Paragraph 159 goes on to state that where it is not possible for development to be located in areas of lower flood risk, the exception test may be required, depending on the vulnerability of the site and of the development proposal, in line with National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 4.34 With regard to the sequential test, paragraph 162 establishes that applications which come forward on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test will not need to apply the sequential test again. The exception test may need to be reapplied if relevant aspects of the proposal had not been considered when the rest was applied during plan-making or if more recent information needs to be considered.

- 4.35 In determining planning applications, paragraph 163 requires Local Planning Authorities to consider whether flood risk would be increased elsewhere and where appropriate applications are required to be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- 4.36 Section 15 deals with '**Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**'. In this context the NPPF confirms that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through various means including:
- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity
- 4.37 Paragraph 178 sets out that planning decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks from contamination or land instability. Decisions should also ensure that adequate site investigation information is available and prepared by a competent person in order to inform any assessment.
- 4.38 When dealing with planning applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting (paragraph 189), the level of detail being proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact.
- 4.39 Section 16 addresses '**Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**'. The NPPF notes that assets range from sites and buildings of local value to those of highest significance such as World Heritage Sites and assets are to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 4.40 Annex 1 of the NPPF deals with '**Implementation**' and identifies that due weight should be given to existing policies adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (paragraph 213).

Other Material Considerations

- 4.41 A number of other documents identified as material considerations, which include documents forming part of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan evidence-base:
- South East Lincolnshire Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (2013); and
 - Spalding Retail Paper (2017); and
 - Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan (2014 – 2030).

Spalding Retail Paper (2017)

- 4.42 The Spalding Retail Paper (2017) follows on from the South East Lincolnshire Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (2013) and confirms that within Spalding there is a current need for 10,810m² of comparison net floorspace in Spalding up to 2031.
- 4.43 The Council's Retail Study (2013) previously identified 3 potential sites for additional retail floorspace in Spalding Town Centre which included Chapel Lane, Red Lion Street and Gore Lane/Drapers Place. However, all three sites were identified as being unsuitable or unavailable to accommodate the 10,810m² net comparison goods floorspace within the plan period.

- 4.44 With regard to the NPPF and the sequential test set out at paragraph 86, the Retail Paper (2017) further considers 14 potential sites in Spalding based on their suitability for retail use, including each site's availability for retail use and the likelihood of each site being able to meet the immediate comparison floorspace need up to 2026 and the longer term needs up to 2031.
- 4.45 Of the 14 sites, site SHR010 (Springfields Outlet Centre & Festival Gardens) was identified as the Preferred Retail Site in Spalding, with the Retail Paper (2017) recommending that this site be taken forward for a retail allocation of 5,400m² net of comparison goods floorspace to address the short-medium term retail needs for Spalding.
- 4.46 Benefits associated with the retail allocation at Springfields which were identified by the Retail Study (2017) include:
- The availability of the site to accommodate additional retail floorspace;
 - A retail expansion at Springfields would enhance Spalding's retail offer and help boost visitor numbers;
 - Springfields plays an important role as a visitor attraction and retail destination for those within and outside Spalding, with further retail development creating a wider choice in the market and the opportunity for linked trips;
 - Provision of new jobs at Springfields in addition to existing jobs which are currently provided at the complex, with the potential for national-retailers and wider economic spin-offs for the local economy and local businesses;
 - Investment in the Exhibition and Conference Centre;
 - The retail development would use brownfield land;
 - The site is not of high environmental value and development would not result in any adverse visual or landscape impacts
 - The site has good sustainable transport access including good public transport links and pedestrian access.
- 4.47 The recent Retail Paper (2017) therefore demonstrates that the Springfields Outlet is the sequentially preferable site for additional retail floorspace in Spalding.
- 4.48 Following examination of the SELLP, the Inspector's Report concluded that in order to contribute towards the need for 10,810m² (net) comparison floorspace in Spalding by 2031, allocation of retail space at Springfields was appropriate given that no sequentially preferable sites were identified for allocation.
- 4.49 Therefore, in order to ensure sufficient retail provision in the short term, the Inspector found the proposed allocation of 3,700m² net at Springfields to be delivered in the forthcoming period up to 2022 to be sound, with the outstanding retail requirement of 7,110m² to be met thereafter in Spalding Town Centre or at edge of centre locations once sites become available.

5. Planning Assessment

- 5.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The development plan for Spalding comprises the recently adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) (March 2019), which has now superseded the former District Local Plan.
- 5.3 Whilst the development plan provides the starting point for our assessment, the NPPF represents an important material planning consideration and highlights a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework, which seeks to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.

Sustainable Development

- 5.4 The **NPPF** identifies three dimensions to sustainable development including economic, social and environmental. We consider the proposed expansion of the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure would make a significant contribution in the context of all three roles.
- 5.5 In relation to '**economic**' factors, the addition of 4,276m² gross (up to 3,700m² net) of new retail and ancillary food and drink floorspace at Springfields represents a significant further investment in the Springfields complex by Triton Property Fund and would result in a number of significant economic benefits.
- 5.6 Springfields has seen 14 consecutive years of growth in a challenging economic environment. The need for continued investment is essential given emerging competition in the wider region, such as that identified in Grantham earlier in the Statement. Supported by the development plan, the proposed investment will boost the local economy.
- 5.7 The proposed retail expansion would provide around 350 new jobs at Springfields, in addition to the existing 650 jobs which are currently provided. Many of these jobs would typically be attractive to local residents, with 60% of employees at Springfields currently living within 5 miles of Spalding and 90% within 15 miles, with Springfields one of the largest local employers in the Spalding area.
- 5.8 The development could also provide opportunities for local supply chains to benefit through the provision of goods, services and skills, with the potential for further jobs to be created during the construction phase of the development, with 25 local contractors and suppliers currently used on the site.
- 5.9 As set out earlier, Springfields attracts an annual footfall of over 2.3 million, providing the potential for significant spin off benefits for the local economy in Spalding in attracting a significant number of visitors to Spalding who would not otherwise visit the town.
- 5.10 This is highlighted by the distribution of VIP memberships at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, with many VIP members located within a 90 minute drivetime, while further afield there are a significant number of memberships in Norwich, Leicester and further afield in London, Birmingham and Nottingham.

- 5.11 The proposal for new retail floorspace would allow Springfields to improve its retail offer in a continuously competitive retail environment, therefore providing an opportunity to significantly enhance the attraction of both Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and Spalding as premier tourist attractions within South East Lincolnshire.
- 5.12 The development would also provide opportunities for the supply of goods and services by local businesses, contributing towards wider spin off benefits for the local economy.
- 5.13 As a result of the above the proposed development would provide an important '**social**' role. Springfields is currently one of Spalding's largest employers with around 650 jobs. The expansion of Springfields would create some 350 new jobs which would be available to local residents in a highly accessible location. The nature of the employment would provide allow jobs to fit around an individual's availability, leading to valuable employment opportunities within Spalding and the surrounding area.
- 5.14 The development proposal would also enhance a significant leisure attraction in Spalding, contributing towards a strong and vibrant town and supporting the social and cultural well-being of local residents in providing further opportunities for leisure and social activities, while retaining popular attractions already present at Springfields including the Festival Gardens and Adventure Land.
- 5.15 In relation to the '**environmental role**', the proposal involves the efficient re-use of land currently occupied by the outlet centre's South Car Park and the NFU Mutual offices and car park.
- 5.16 The development would enhance the quality of the existing built environment, which occupies a prominent location at the north east gateway into Spalding, by providing an attractive and high quality built development in replacement of the existing and dated NFU Mutual offices.
- 5.17 The development proposal has sought to incorporate the use of natural and sustainable materials where possible, which include use of timber.
- 5.18 In addition, replacement of the existing wind turbines along the eastern edge of the site is proposed to provide a more modern and efficient model of turbine which will assist in reducing the carbon footprint of the wider Springfields Outlet.
- 5.19 The high quality landscaping scheme which includes for substantial tree, shrub and floral planting would provide further environmental enhancement and provides opportunities for biodiversity improvements amongst other environmental benefits such as air quality regulation and cleaning of surface water runoff from the new development.
- 5.20 In dealing with sustainable development, the adopted **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan** (SELLP) includes **Policy 2** which deals with 'Development Management' but with a strong emphasis on sustainable development.
- 5.21 Policy 2 sets out that development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, which include criteria against the size, scale and layout of new development and impact on amenity, trees and the character and appearance of the area and existing development. Other criteria relate to use of sustainable materials and resources, site access, sustainable drainage and flood risk, impact on natural habitats and heritage assets.

- 5.22 In this respect, the size, scale and layout of the new development would relate well to the existing Springfields complex, with the proposed new buildings orientated to align with existing retail units at Springfields, creating a continuous form of development with cohesive landscaping which is appropriate to the character of the area, in a sustainable location and would not give rise to any adverse amenity impacts.
- 5.23 The overall design of the proposal is of a high quality, incorporating use of natural and sustainable materials such as timber and replacement upgraded wind turbines which will assist in reducing the site's carbon footprint. Substantial planting across the site is considered to provide significant landscape enhancements while also providing wider sustainability benefits in respect of biodiversity, water drainage and air quality.
- 5.24 The submitted Ecological Appraisal demonstrates the site is not ecologically sensitive. In respect of heritage, a Heritage Assessment has been submitted which identifies that the intervisibility between the new development and Grade II* Listed Fulney Hall and any subsequent change to setting would be negligible.
- 5.25 In terms of sustainability, which we address in more detail below, the proposal would respond in a variety of ways including the inclusion of more EVC customer parking spaces, on site energy regeneration through replacing existing outdated wind turbines with more modern efficient models and the use of regional contractors where possible, reducing travel distance during the construction phase.
- 5.26 There would be further sustainability benefits delivered through the proposed landscaping scheme, which provides for replacement planting in respect of trees to be lost through development, with the scheme providing around 10 to 1 replacement trees. This provides a substantial benefit in respect of ecology, drainage benefits and urban cooling.
- 5.27 In addition to new measures brought forward by the proposed investment, it is intended to carry through existing 'green' initiatives used in running the existing complex and including:
- Maintaining the current BREEAM In Use standard for Asset Performance and Building Management;
 - Rain water harvesting;
 - Composting areas;
 - LED lighting to car parks, malls & service yards;
 - LED lighting to offices;
 - Water meters to all eateries;
 - Introduction of sustainability section to tenant shop fits;
 - Install more efficient hand dryers in public WC's; and
 - Energy review audits.
- 5.28 Consequently, we find no material planning conflict in respect of **Policy 2** of the SELLP.
- 5.29 In light of the above we consider the proposed development would contribute to sustainable development in a positive manner as outlined above and comply with adopted policy for the area.

Principle of Development

- 5.30 The proposed development seeks the expansion of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure to provide 3,660m² gross of comparison retail floorspace (A1) and 616m² of flexible space to be used as comparison retail and/or ancillary food and drink (A1/A3)

across 3 units. The development also proposes associated works in relation to landscaping and car parking.

- 5.31 Taking the Development Plan as the starting point, the application site is identified on the adopted SELLP Proposals Map (2019) for Spalding as Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens 'SHR010' where adopted Policies 9 and 27 are relevant.



- 5.32 **Policy 9** of the SELLP (2019) addresses 'Promoting a Strong Visitor Economy', which we deal with further below. The policy identifies that development within the Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens, as identified on the Policies Map above, will be supported in principle where in accordance with criteria within that policy, of which criterion 1 supports development of facilities directly related to the functioning of the shopping centre, consistent with Policies 24 and 27. Policy 9 also supports ancillary development linked to the above use at Springfields.
- 5.33 The application site forms part of the wider Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens site identified as 'SHR010' in the SELLP and proposes to develop additional retail facilities in relation to the expansion of the existing shopping centre.
- 5.34 This would be in accordance with the proposed allocation for 3,700m² net of new comparison floorspace at Springfields, identified by Policy 27 and discussed in further detail below.
- 5.35 Some 616m² floorspace comprising flexible comparison retail and/or food and drink use is to be provided as part of the Springfields expansion, with the food and drink element considered to comprise ancillary development linked to the wider retail and tourist function of Springfields.
- 5.36 Therefore, we find the proposed development to be in accordance with adopted Policy 9 of the SELLP.
- 5.37 **Policy 24** 'The Retail Hierarchy' of the adopted SELLP sets out the Council's approach to new retail development, and states that other than other than for retail provision made under Policy 27 of the adopted Local Plan, proposals for main town centre uses located outside of a defined town centre are required to satisfy the sequential test in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.38 A retail impact assessment is also required for out-of-centre retail proposals above 250m² in Spalding, unless where the development is provided for under Policy 27.
- 5.39 In the above context, **Policy 27** allocates approximately 3,700 sqm (net) comparison retail floorspace at Site SHR010: Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens, to be developed in the period up to 2022 to meet the estimated retail needs for Spalding during this timeframe.
- 5.40 Policy 27 goes on to state that any non-A1 uses proposed within SHR010 will only be supported where they are shown to be ancillary to the effective functioning of the retail allocation, with a masterplan required as part of any application.
- 5.41 The policy also requires any application at Site SHR010 which seeks to deliver the allocated comparison floorspace must also propose measures to enhance the site's connections with Spalding Town Centre and promote the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit.
- 5.42 As set out earlier within this report, the planning application proposes to provide 3,661m² gross additional comparison retail floorspace at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure along with provision of 616m² gross floorspace comprising retail or food and drink uses. In total, the development would result in the creation of 18 new units at Springfields.
- 5.43 The floorspace provided is a gross figure, with the net floorspace of the proposed development up to 3,700m² net floorspace.
- 5.44 Therefore, in the context of Policy 24, the planning application for additional comparison retail floorspace at Site SHR010 Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure comprises development provided for under Policy 27 and subsequently the sequential test and retail impact assessment are not required. Consequently, we find no material conflict with Policy 24 of the SELLP.
- 5.45 In relation to Policy 27, the planning application seeks to deliver 4,276m² gross comparison floorspace at Springfields in accordance with the Local Plan allocation for up to 3,700m² net comparison retail floorspace at Site SHR010: Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens. 616m² of the proposed floorspace includes for both retail or food and drink uses, with the food and drink element ancillary to the effective functioning of retail to be delivered as part of the retail allocation at Springfields.
- 5.46 The development proposal therefore comprises an allocation for new comparison retail floorspace in the adopted Policy 27 of the SELLP and is therefore in accordance with the development plan. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 5.47 In accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the development proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan and should therefore be approved without delay.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 5.48 The NPPF highlights that *“significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”* (paragraph 80).
- 5.49 The development proposal would support economic growth in Spalding, creating a further 350 new jobs at Springfields in addition to the 650 currently provided.

- 5.50 As identified above, 60% of existing employees at Springfields live within 5 miles of Spalding. It is therefore envisaged the expansion of Springfields would result in further job opportunities for local residents, providing a significant economic benefit to the local area.
- 5.51 In addition, the development has the potential to result in wider benefits for local supply chains, who would be able to provide goods, services and skills to support the development, with further jobs to be created through the construction of the new retail buildings, with 25 local contractors and suppliers currently used on site.
- 5.52 In relation to the tourist economy, the adopted SELLP identifies Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure as a purpose-built visitor attraction, attracting over 2.3 million visitors annually.
- 5.53 As identified earlier, the development proposal for a further 4,276m² gross comparison floorspace at Springfields, with ancillary food and drink provision in up to 3 units considered to be in accordance with **Policy 9** of the SELLP which deals with 'Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy'.
- 5.54 The general thrust of Policy 9 supports proposals for tourism and visitor development which utilise existing attractions within South East Lincolnshire, to the benefit of the local economy, visitors and local communities.
- 5.55 Proposals will be supported outside of settlement development limits in exceptional circumstances, where development would support or enhance the enjoyment of an established visitor attraction and cannot be reasonably achieved from a town location.
- 5.56 Part 2 of Policy 9 goes on to support development of facilities which directly relate to the functioning of Springfields Outlet shopping centre, while ancillary uses linked to the above use will also be supported. It is therefore demonstrated that the proposal for new comparison retail floorspace (A1) with an ancillary food and drink (A3) element at Springfields is supported by the second part of Policy 9.
- 5.57 For reasons set out below, we also consider that the development proposal would be in accordance with Part 1 of Policy 9 in supporting proposals for tourist developments which utilise existing attractions in South East Lincolnshire, to the benefit of the local economy and communities.
- 5.58 The development proposal for further retail (A1) and ancillary food and drink (A3) provision at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure would result in the significant enhancement of Springfields as a tourist destination and would improve the choice and variety of retail offer available at Springfields.
- 5.59 As identified by the SELLP, Springfields is a major existing tourist attraction with an annual footfall of over 2.3 million. However, following the delivery of the proposed expansion of Springfields Outlet, the centre's management team forecast this figure to increase up to a footfall of 2.8 million visitors annually, an increase of half a million people.
- 5.60 This highlights a key opportunity to boost the attractiveness of both Springfields and Spalding as a tourist destination, drawing in visitors from a wide catchment who would not otherwise visit Spalding, creating wider spin off benefits to the economy.

- 5.61 This is emphasised by data provided by Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure in respect of their 40,000 VIP memberships, with the majority of VIP members located within a 90 minute drivetime of Springfields which includes locations such as Kings Lynn, Norwich, Cambridge, Peterborough, Northampton and Lincoln. Further afield, VIP memberships are located in Birmingham, Hull, Leicester, London and Nottingham, with further memberships distributed across the country, as identified earlier in the Statement.
- 5.62 The data above demonstrates the significance of Springfields as a visitor attraction and its value to Spalding and South East Lincolnshire as a tourism asset, a fact further highlighted by the recent nomination of Springfields Outlet in the Visitor Attraction of the Year category of the Lincolnshire Tourism Awards.
- 5.63 The potential for enhancement of Springfields through the provision of new high-end fashion stores (A1) and ancillary food and drink (A3) therefore provides a significant opportunity to boost tourism at an established visitor attraction, with wider spin off benefits in attracting increased tourism and spend in Spalding.
- 5.64 Policy 27 also requires the proposal to enhance the site's connections with Spalding Town Centre and promote the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit.
- 5.65 The development proposal also includes a number of measures to promote the town centre, discussed in greater detail further below, which will include advertisement of town centre businesses, promotions, events and attractions on the Springfields VIP App, website, within the Springfields newsletter and on interactive advertisements at Springfields.
- 5.66 These measures are considered to promote Spalding Town Centre and provide an opportunity for increased tourism in the town centre as a result of the development proposal.
- 5.67 The proposal would also support the aspirations of the Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan (2014-2030) which aims to double the real value of tourism to the Greater Lincolnshire economy by 2020.
- 5.68 In respect of Policy 9, while Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure is located outside of existing settlements, it has been established through the preparation of the SELLP and by the supporting Spalding Retail Paper (2017) that there are no sequentially preferable sites available within or at the edge of Spalding Town Centre, with the Inspector confirming following examination of the SELLP that allocation of further retail space at Springfields was appropriate given the absence of any sequentially preferable sites.
- 5.69 The development proposal for the expansion of Springfields is therefore considered to be in accordance with Part 1 of Policy 9 of the SELLP given that it provides a significant opportunity to enhance a tourist attraction and support growth of tourism in Spalding which cannot be reasonably achieved in the Town Centre.
- 5.70 In light of the above, we find the development proposal to present a significant opportunity to support the growth of the tourist economy in Spalding with wider economic benefits for the local community and find no material conflict with Policy 9 of the SELLP or the provisions of the NPPF.
- 5.71 Therefore, we consider the proposal should be supported and significant weight should be afforded towards the investment at Springfields which will make a significant

contribution towards the visitor economy in Spalding and support the vision for the tourist economy identified by the SELLP and the Greater Lincolnshire SEP.

Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- 5.72 **Policy 24** 'Retail Hierarchy' of the adopted SELLP sets out a town centre first approach in relation to retail and main town centre use development, in accordance with the NPPF.
- 5.73 As set out earlier, Policy 24 requires out-of-centre proposals for retail to undertake a sequential test to demonstrate there are no available sites which could accommodate the proposal within or at the edge of town centres, unless the proposal comprises retail provision made under Policy 27.
- 5.74 Policy 24 goes on to require a retail impact assessment for out-of-centre retail proposals in Spalding which are above 250m² unless the development is provided for under Policy 27.
- 5.75 It is established that the development proposal for 3,660m² gross comparison (A1) floorspace at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and 616m² gross flexible comparison retail and/or ancillary food and drink (A1/A3) comprises development provided for under Policy 27 of the SELLP. Therefore, the proposal is not required to undertake a sequential test or retail impact assessment.
- 5.76 In this respect, the preparation of the SELLP and the Spalding Retail Paper (2017) undertook consideration of the total requirement for comparison floorspace in Spalding up to 10,810m² (net) up to 2031.
- 5.77 In accordance with the sequential approach to retail development contained within the NPPF, the Council considered 14 sites which had the potential to accommodate the required retail floorspace in Spalding based on their suitability, availability and the likelihood of the site being able to meet the immediate comparison floorspace need up to 2026.
- 5.78 Through this process, the Retail Paper (2017) identified Site SHR010 (Springfields Outlet Leisure & Shopping) as the preferred retail site in Spalding based on the lack of availability of sites within Spalding Town Centre.
- 5.79 Of the 14 sites, site SHR010 (Springfields Outlet Centre & Festival Gardens) was identified as the Preferred Retail Site in Spalding, with the Retail Paper (2017) recommending that this site be taken forward for a retail allocation for 3,700m² net comparison goods floorspace to address the short-medium term retail needs for Spalding.
- 5.80 Benefits of allocating Springfields for additional comparison retail floorspace included the availability of the site, the potential to increase visitor numbers to Spalding, opportunities for linked trips at Springfields, further provision of jobs, use of brownfield land to accommodate new development and sustainable access to Springfields.
- 5.81 The Spalding Retail Paper (2017) subsequently demonstrates that Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure is the sequentially preferable site for new comparison retail floorspace in Spalding.
- 5.82 This was further confirmed within the Inspector's Report following examination of the SELLP, where the Inspector concluded that allocation of 3,700m² (net) comparison

floorspace at Springfields was “sound” in light of no sequentially preferable sites being identified within Spalding Town Centre.

- 5.83 The Inspector therefore found the allocation of 3,700m² (net) comparison floorspace at Springfields to be “sound”. This allocation is set out within Policy 27 of the SELLP and is discussed further below.
- 5.84 However, for the purposes of Policy 24, it is demonstrated that the proposal comprises development provided under Policy 27 of the SELLP and therefore neither a sequential test assessment or retail impact assessment is required.
- 5.85 This is further confirmed by the NPPF, which sets out at paragraph 86 that Local Planning Authorities should apply a sequential test to applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan.
- 5.86 Paragraph 89 similarly requires retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan to undertake a retail impact assessment.
- 5.87 It is demonstrated that the proposal for new comparison retail floorspace at Springfields is in accordance with Policy 27 of the SELLP as it forms an allocation in the adopted Local Plan. Therefore, the sequential test and retail impact assessment are not required.
- 5.88 We therefore find no material conflict with **Policy 24** of the SELLP or with the provisions of the NPPF.
- 5.89 **Policy 25** of the SELLP ‘Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres’ sets out a number of measures to promote appropriate opportunities to support and extend the offer of locations such as Spalding Town Centre. Measures include the promotion of town centre events and promotional information.
- 5.90 In this respect, the application for retail expansion at Springfields also includes measures in order to promote the attractiveness of Spalding Town Centre as a place to visit, the importance of which is highlighted in a recent South Holland District Council Cabinet Report (dated 29th October 2019) which sets out a 3 year town centre improvement plan for Spalding and includes for funding and the initiation of a Town Centre Steering Group for Spalding.
- 5.91 Measures therefore seek to link with the ambitions of the recent strategy for the town centre and include funding towards town centre improvements and tech linkages such as the proposed upgrade of the Springfields VIP App, which is available for download on Google Play Store and the Apple App. There are currently 40,000 VIP members for Springfields, with memberships spread across a wide catchment.
- 5.92 Proposed changes to the Springfields App could include the addition of adverts to promote town centre businesses, including any promotional offers being provided by town centre retailers. Adverts on the App could also use Springfields reach to promote local heritage sites such as Ayscoughfee Hall and Chain Bridge Forge along with travel opportunities.
- 5.93 Further advertisements relating to Spalding Town Centre are to be provided on the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure website, which will also include links to various town centre attractions along with live local travel, timetables and weather added onto the App. Local venues, news and events will also be advertised on the App and

updated weekly. There will also be a Springfields Live Youtube channel and Springfields TV.

- 5.94 Springfields also provide monthly newsletters to their VIP members. In order to promote Spalding Town Centre further, Springfields centre management are proposing to include within newsletter updates information about local attractions, town centre offers and events in order to raise the profile of Spalding Town Centre.
- 5.95 It is also envisaged for three new interactive screens to be fitted at Springfields, with 20% of screen content to be dedicated to advertisement of Spalding Town Centre, linkages to the centre via the water taxi and promotion of local attractions.
- 5.96 Further promotion opportunities include participation in the Council's proposed new Spalding Town Centre Steering Group along with the potential for linked events and opportunities for joint working with businesses and retailers.
- 5.97 In light of the above, it is demonstrated the proposal would make use of opportunities to promote Spalding Town Centre and therefore has the potential to provide wider spin off benefits for tourism in Spalding.
- 5.98 We therefore consider that the proposal is in accordance with the aspirations of Policy 25 of the SELLP.
- 5.99 In relation to Policy 27 'Additional Retail Provision' approximately 3,700 sqm (net) comparison retail floorspace is allocated at Site SHR010: Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens, to be developed in the period up to 2022 to meet the estimated retail needs for Spalding during this timeframe. Non-A1 uses at Springfields are supported where they are shown to be ancillary to the effective functioning of the retail allocation, to be shown on a site masterplan.
- 5.100 As set out under the 'Principle for Development' the planning application comprises 3,661m² (gross) comparison floorspace and some 616m² retail and/or ancillary food and drink at Site SHR010: Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens. The proposal therefore comprises an allocation in the adopted SELLP, in accordance with Policy 27.
- 5.101 Policy 27 further requires the allocated retail development at Springfields includes measures to enhance the site's connections with Spalding Town Centre and to promote the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit.
- 5.102 It is demonstrated above that the proposal accords with Policy 24 of the SELLP in that it takes up a number of opportunities to promote Spalding Town Centre businesses, events and attractions to customers at Springfields.
- 5.103 These measures include funding towards Spalding Town Centre improvements and tech linkages including advertisements of Spalding businesses, promotions, events, transport opportunities and attractions via the Springfields VIP app, which is currently available to some 40,000 customers at Springfields. These measures will also be included in monthly member newsletters for Springfield customers, as well as three new interactive screens within the outlet centre.
- 5.104 The proposal therefore complies with **Policy 24** and **Policy 27** in promoting the attractiveness of Spalding Town Centre as a visitor attraction.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 5.105 **Policy 2** of the SELLP requires consideration of access and vehicle generation levels, while **Policy 3** notes that new developments should demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways can be secured.
- 5.106 **Policy 33** seeks to support a sustainable transport network and requires an appropriate Transport Assessment to be submitted with proposals, with the form to be dependent on the scale and nature of development proposed.
- 5.107 The development proposal is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (prepared by Sanderson Associates) which demonstrate that there would be no adverse impacts in respect of traffic and impact on the road network, and that opportunities for sustainable travel are available via walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.108 The TA identifies a range of residential areas which are located to the south west of Springfields and fall within the recognised 800m and upper limit 2km walking distances, with pedestrian islands at the Holbeach Road roundabout connecting pedestrians arriving from the south to a wide pavement along the eastern edge of Camel Gate, which serves the outlet centre.
- 5.109 The Transport Assessment further identifies a number of locations to be within the recognised 5km cycle distance of Springfields, which include Fulney, Spalding, Low Fulney, Weston, Clay Lake, Little London, Pinchbeck and Moulton.
- 5.110 As set out earlier within the Statement, existing pedestrian and cycle links also exist between Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and Spalding Town Centre.
- 5.111 It is therefore considered that there are excellent opportunities for staff and visitors to access Springfields by walking or cycling.
- 5.112 Around 60% of existing staff who work at Springfields live within a 5 mile radius of the site, therefore it is considered a significant proportion of staff are able to travel to work via sustainable transport modes.
- 5.113 In terms of travel by public transport, the TA identifies a number of transport opportunities which include bus stops along Camel Gate and Holbeach Road, with frequent services available to locations which include Spalding Town Centre and destinations further afield such as Kings Lynn.
- 5.114 The development proposes to relocate the existing bus stop located to the west of Camel Gate at the existing bus layby to the eastern edge of Camel Gate outside the outlet centre.
- 5.115 The TA further confirms that Springfields can be accessed by coach, with coach parking currently provided within the existing bus layby. As shown on the Detailed Site Masterplan (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_101 Rev P4) coach parking is to be relocated in order for the existing bus layby to be used for required car parking. New coach parking spaces will be provided on land south of the proposed new NFU Mutual office car park.
- 5.116 Further sustainable transport opportunities include a water taxi service which operates between Spalding Town Centre and Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure from

March to September. The water taxi operates along the Coronation Channel, with the TA confirming that an embarkation point is located to the west of the Main Car Park at Springfields.

- 5.117 Spalding Train Station is located approximately 2.2km from the site, where train services usually operate from Peterborough to Lincoln and are typically hourly.
- 5.118 Bus services operate between Spalding Train Station and Springfields, while sheltered cycle provision at the train station also provides an opportunity for cycling between the station and outlet centre.
- 5.119 In light of the above information, it is clear that Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure links to existing transport networks and public transport routes and is accessible by a wide range of sustainable transport opportunities which include walking, cycling, bus, coach, water taxi and train. Updates to the Springfields VIP App will also provide details on live local travel and timetables which would promote sustainable travel opportunities.
- 5.120 The Transport Assessment also identifies the potential for linked trips, with the majority of trips expected to come from those already accessing the existing outlet centre.
- 5.121 Therefore, we find the development proposal to be in accordance with **Policies 2, 3 and 33** of the SELLP in providing accessibility by a choice of sustainable travel modes.
- 5.122 In terms of traffic generation, the TA uses 'pay on foot' barrier system data in relation to vehicular trip rates and parking, as car parking at Springfields is all controlled except for staff parking. The assessment is carried out on a pro-rata basis and highlights the variation in trip rates between weekdays and weekends due to the nature of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.
- 5.123 The proposed retail extension trips were based on a pro-rata increase related to the existing floor area of Springfields inclusive of the shops, restaurants and internal garden centre area and using trip rates from the barrier system.
- 5.124 Table 6.3.2 of the TA calculates a pro-rata increase for 2-way movements through the car park barrier system and estimates 26 two-way trips in the weekday AM peak period, 62 two-way trips in the PM peak and 169 two-way trips in the Saturday peak.
- 5.125 In relation to Traffic Growth Factors, the TA uses 2019 and 2024 as the assessment years for the likely growth in traffic flows in accordance with the latest guidance from the Department for Transport. Traffic growth figures were then allowed for within traffic assessments.
- 5.126 The TA identifies that due to the nature of the retail development and its proximity to the A16 which runs between Boston, Peterborough and the A151 Holbeach Road which is a principal route between the A16 and Spalding, together with the location of competing opportunities the TA considers that not all predicted trips will be completely new to the highway network and that a large proportion of trips to the retail proposal will be associated with pass by trips.
- 5.127 Based on research presented by the TRICS Research Report 95/2 and the later TRICS Report 14/1, the TA identifies that around 40% of development trips could be construed as pass-by/ diverted (non-primary) trips and the remainder (10%) new and 50% transferred) could be treated as new.

- 5.128 The TA also identifies the potential for linked trip making between the existing and proposed uses on the development. However, for the purposes of the assessment all development trips were treated as new to the highway network for a robust assessment.
- 5.129 In terms of traffic distribution, the TA identifies that all traffic would have to approach the site via the Holbeach Road roundabout, although some traffic could access the site via Roman Bank from the A151 however this would be a longer distance to the main car park, while the route is along narrower carriageways.
- 5.130 The Holbeach Road roundabout junction was assessed using 2018, 2019 and 2024 base traffic flows. The assessment concludes that the junction operates satisfactorily in the AM, PM and Saturday peak hours with an RFC ratio of less than 0.85.
- 5.131 The TA also considers a further scenario for the Saturday using highest Saturday predicted traffic flows and confirms that the Holbeach Road junction would operate satisfactorily if there were higher levels of development traffic. It is therefore demonstrated that the junction would continue to operate within its theoretical capacity.
- 5.132 The TA therefore concludes that the development would have no material adverse impact on the local and wider highway system in respect of both safety and capacity. It is therefore considered the site is suitable from a transport perspective in terms of the development proposed.
- 5.133 Therefore, we find no material conflict with **Policies 2 and 33** of the SELLP or the NPPF.
- 5.134 In terms of parking, **Policy 36** of the SELLP sets out that guidance for 'Vehicle and Cycle Parking' and requires that parking provision comprises the minimum standards set out in Appendix 6 of the SELLP.
- 5.135 Policy 36 goes on to state that for major non-residential development, secure and covered bicycle parking for employees should be provided close to the building entrance, with changing and shower facilities available where possible. For visitors, cycle storage should be provided close to the building main entrance.
- 5.136 The policy also requires that where more than 50 parking spaces are provided, at least one double electric vehicle charging point will be required (2 spaces) and for each 50 additional spaces, one double charging point is to be provided up to a maximum of three spaces (6 space). Policy 36 also requires parking to be well-integrated through appropriate materials and landscaping.
- 5.137 **Appendix 6 'Parking Standards'** of the SELLP notes that for comparison retail (A1) there is a minimum requirement for 1 car parking space per 20m² and 1 cycle stand per 500m². For food and drink uses (A3) there is a minimum requirement for 1 car parking space per 5m² of public dining area.
- 5.138 Using the above standards, the TA identifies a requirement for 196 additional car parking spaces for the retail aspect of the proposal and 85 spaces for ancillary food and drink uses based on a presumption of 2/3 dining area to overall floor area. The TA also identifies a requirement for 5% disabled parking provision in accordance with the Lincolnshire County Council Development Guide.

- 5.139 Overall predicted parking demands for the proposal have been assessed using data from the 'pay on foot' barrier system based on a pro-rata basis in a similar manner to the development trips.
- 5.140 The TA summarises the highest overall predicted parking accumulation with the proposed extension, with 12 occasions where the predicted accumulation exceeds 1,000 but which falls below 1,096 spaces.
- 5.141 Occasions where parking demands are high are anticipated to fall on weekend days in peak season where parking spaces are identified as available and where there are arrangements for overflow parking in the Springfields Events and Conference Centre.
- 5.142 Subsequently, the TA confirms that an acceptable level of parking is proposed which can be managed at times of high demand.
- 5.143 As set out earlier in the Statement, a total of 700 car parking spaces are to be available within the wider Springfields complex following the loss of 64 parking spaces at the South Car Park, where the new retail extension is to be developed. This figure does not include car parking spaces to be provided at the new NFU Mutual offices following the recent grant of planning permission (H16-0290-19), parking at Fulney Hall or the existing car park which serves the Springfields Events & Conference Centre.
- 5.144 The Site Masterplan – Detailed (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_101 Rev P4) shows the proposed reconfiguration of the wider site in order to provide for additional required car parking spaces, of which a further 300 car parking spaces are to be provided at Springfields creating a total of 1,000 car parking spaces. 52 of those spaces are to be for disabled parking, which equates to a provision of just over 5%.
- 5.145 Additional car parking provision is to include:
- 22 new spaces within the Main Car Park west of Camel Gate to include 6 new vehicle charging bays in addition to 2 existing charging bays;
 - 178 spaces at land used for overspill parking adjacent to Frankie & Benny's and the Dromedary Lodge;
 - 98 spaces at the existing bus layby to the west of Camel Gate to include 21 disabled spaces;
 - 2 additional car parking spaces at existing staff car park north of Spalding Dental Surgery.
 - Reconfiguration of Springfields Garden Centre Car Park to create 10 new disabled car parking spaces and 2 standard spaces with no net change in spaces;
- 5.146 This would result in the provision of 300 new car parking spaces at Springfields in addition to the existing 700 spaces, creating a total of 1,000 car parking spaces.
- 5.147 Further car parking opportunities to accommodate staff only at peak times are available at Fulney Hall (51 spaces) and the new NFU Mutual offices (45 spaces) on weekends and bank holidays for staff only, making a total of 1,096 spaces available on such dates.
- 5.148 As shown on the 'Site Masterplan – Detailed' further overflow car parking spaces will also be available at times of peak parking demand on land owned by Springfields Horticultural Society at the northern extent of the wider Springfields site. In order to

ensure that temporary parking can be well incorporated into the existing landscape, grasscrete material is proposed in this location.

- 5.149 In light of the above, the development proposal would provide sufficient parking provision of 1,000 spaces on weekdays 1,096 spaces at weekends and bank holidays. The development also includes a 5% provision of spaces for disabled parking and a total of 8 electric vehicle charging points on site.
- 5.150 Bicycle storage provision is also provided as shown on the 'Site Masterplan – Detailed'. 4 cycle storage stands are located south of Frankie & Benny's, adjacent to a pavement which links the wider Main Car Park to the existing main entrance of the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, with access across Camel Gate provided by a pelican crossing.
- 5.151 The proposal is therefore considered to provide sufficient car parking provision including for disabled parking spaces and electric vehicle charging points along with cycle storage provision in a location close to the main outlet entrance, in accordance with the requirements of **Appendix 6** and **Policy 36** of the SELLP.

Design

- 5.152 The submitted Design & Access Statement sets out in further detail the design approach to the development proposal, which seeks to deliver a high quality retail expansion of the existing Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.
- 5.153 The NPPF aims to achieve well-designed places that function well and add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of the development as well as being visually attractive with good layout and landscaping whilst creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 5.154 In addition, the NPPF affords great weight to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability and help raise the standard of design in an area (paragraph 131).
- 5.155 Adopted **Policy 2** 'Development Management' supports sustainable development, including development which is appropriate in size, scale, layout, density and character. Policy 2 also seeks quality design in development with use of sustainable materials and resources. Enhancement of historical buildings is supported.
- 5.156 In terms of size and scale, the proposal for 4,276m² gross of additional floorspace at Springfields is in line with that of Policy 27 of SELLP which allocates additional retail floorspace in this location.
- 5.157 Furthermore, the submitted elevations show the new retail extension to respond positively to the height and scale of the existing outlet centre, with the height of the larger new 'L' shaped building increasing towards its frontage with the A151 to the south.
- 5.158 The increase in height towards the buildings southern frontage with the A151, coupled with the elevational treatment and use of materials, which include high quality bronze style cladding and artificial green walls, creates a strong and attractive gateway for those arriving into both Springfields and Spalding from the A151.

- 5.159 As set out further below, the layout of the new retail development responds to layout by aligning with the existing outlet centre, creating a central shopping walkway which connects the retail extension to the wider outlet centre.
- 5.160 Use of materials are also discussed in further detail below and include use of sustainable timber along with incorporation of substantial green landscaping across the site.
- 5.161 In terms of heritage, the intervisibility between the new retail development and the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall to the south west is limited, with the existing NFU Mutual offices being of poor design and making a negative contribution toward the setting of Fulney Hall.
- 5.162 The new retail development proposes a significant improvement on site in terms of quality and design, while use of green style walls within the build responds to the setting of Fulney Hall.
- 5.163 The size, scale, layout and design of the new retail expansion is therefore considered to respond to the character and surrounds of the site, including the existing development close to the site and potential access opportunities to the south. We therefore find the proposal to accord with **Policy 2** of the SELLP in respect of design.
- 5.164 **Policy 3** 'Design of New Development' promotes development to create distinctive places through use of high quality and inclusive design and layout and innovative use of local traditional materials and styles where appropriate.
- 5.165 Policy 3 goes on to provide a number of design criteria which include consideration of creation of a sense of place through complementing and enhancing designated and non designated heritage assets, respecting scale, density, landmarks, visual closure and massing of neighbouring buildings (1).
- 5.166 Other criteria include consideration of landscape character (3), accessibility (4), provision of refuse facilities and parking layouts (5), lighting of public spaces (6), ensuring public spaces are accessible to all (7), crime prevention (8), building orientation to enable use of decentralised and renewable low-carbon energy for the lifetime of the development (9), appropriate treatment of facades to public spaces including shop frontages and signage (10), residential amenity (11), flood risk mitigation (12) and incorporation of landscaping and biodiversity(13).
- 5.167 As set out above, the design of the new development has sought to respond to its context, with regard to existing development within the area including the existing outlet centre.
- 5.168 The proposed development comprises an extension to the south of the existing complex providing 18 new units. The buildings are sited in order to compliment one another and allow provision of a central shopping walkway which forms an 'L' shape as it extends through the new retail development.
- 5.169 The phase 3 expansion is also orientated to align with the existing Springfields outlet centre, with current and proposed retail units to be connected by the new shopping walkway which links to the existing South Avenue to the north, providing a continuous and legible form of development which facilitates the movement of visitors throughout the outlet.

- 5.170 To the south west, the new shopping walkway connects to a new entrance which provides access into Springfields via Camel Gate. The location of the new access is considered to provide convenient access into Springfields for those arriving on foot or by bus from the south, where bus stops on Holbeach Road and residential areas are located, with Spalding Town Centre beyond.
- 5.171 The design of the development is therefore considered to contribute towards an accessible layout which responds to existing development and the wider context.
- 5.172 Furthermore, the submitted TA demonstrates the accessibility of the site which is supported by a range of sustainable transport modes.
- 5.173 The development is therefore considered to make best use of opportunities for sustainable travel and accessibility in accordance with criterion (4) of Policy 3.
- 5.174 The wider site also incorporates additional car parking in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 6 of the SELLP. Parking on site includes provision of disabled car parking spaces located close to the outlet building, while bicycle storage is also provided along a pavement link which connects the Main Car Park to the main entrance of the existing outlet.
- 5.175 The submitted 'Option 5 – Level 00 Ground Floor Plan' also shows provision of refuge storage to the rear of the retail extension.
- 5.176 We therefore find the proposal to meet criterion (5) of Policy 3.
- 5.177 Provision of public realm to the front of the new extension along its frontage with Camel Gate provides outdoor seating, planting and street lighting and creates a high quality and attractive environment upon arrival into Springfields which integrates with the existing Springfields development.
- 5.178 Additional benefits of public realm and street lighting coupled with the provision of active frontages provided by potential food and drink uses and outdoor dining contribute towards the creation of a safe environment which is well lit with natural surveillance.
- 5.179 Public realm provision further seeks to facilitate pedestrian movement along the front of the new extension and towards the new covered entrance into Springfields. This is further enhanced by the design of the retail units which front onto Camel Gate and have a curved southern elevation which guides visitors towards the new entrance.
- 5.180 The wider layout of the site includes for high quality landscaping and enhancement through substantial planting within the car park to the west of Camel Gate, at the western edge of the Festival Gardens comprising redevelopment of the existing fountain pool and new planting within the Springfields Horticultural Society charity land to the north of the site.
- 5.181 In light of the above, the development provides an attractive, accessible well-lit and safe area of public realm which incorporates natural landscaping. We therefore find the proposal to meet criteria (3), (6), (7), (8) and (13) of Policy 3.
- 5.182 Materials used in the new development comprise a mix of double-gazed aluminium shopfronts, multi-tone brown cladding and neutral colour insulated panel finishing facing the rear service wall.

- 5.183 Use of bespoke bronze effect back lit cladding and green style walls on the southern elevation of the build provides for a strong and attractive gateway into the Springfields site as visitors arrive from the south and would also provide an attractive approach into Spalding for those arriving from the east.
- 5.184 Artificial green walls have also been incorporated into the design and are considered to respond to the existing site context by maintaining a green frontage along the A151, whilst tulip motifs and decorative cut metal screens with bronze finish are proposed along the frontage of Camel Gate in response to the bulb growing history of Springfields.
- 5.185 Glass is used in each shopfront, with glazing providing opportunities for display windows and placing an emphasis on active frontages and interaction between shoppers and retail displays, providing appropriate treatment of shopping facades in accordance with criterion (10) of Policy 3.
- 5.186 Canopies are to be provided over shop entrances which comprise a mix of glass and timber louvres which follow the perimeter of the building's sweeping façades
- 5.187 Timber is also incorporated into the design which is considered to reflect use of timber across the existing outlet centre and in order to maximise the use of natural and sustainable materials within the build.
- 5.188 The proposal therefore incorporates a mix of high quality materials and would contribute towards a distinctive and attractive development, with use of timber in the build incorporating sustainable materials which respond to those materials used within the existing outlet.
- 5.189 In terms of flood risk, the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy indicates that the site is in Flood Zone 3 and at residual risk of river and tidal flooding. The report therefore proposes a range of suitable mitigation measures to address flood risk which include raised finished floor levels above 300mm, use of on-site landscaping to direct surface water drainage and use of sustainable drainage systems where possible.
- 5.190 In light of the above, the development proposal is considered to be of a high quality which would make a positive contribution in respect of place. We therefore find the development to comply with **Policy 3** of the SELLP.

Climate Change

- 5.191 **Policy 31** of the SELLP relates to 'Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. The policy requires proposals to demonstrate that the consequences of climate change have been addressed, minimised and mitigated.
- 5.192 Criteria in Part 1 of the policy relate to high quality design, adoption of the sequential test for flood risk and SuDS incorporation, reducing the need to travel and incorporating measures to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- 5.193 As set out above, the development is considered to be of a high quality architectural design which incorporates the use of attractive materials and is of an appropriate size, scale and layout.
- 5.194 Matters relating to flood risk are set out further below and within the provided Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy. However, the wider district of South Holland is almost entirely located within Flood Zone 3, and subsequently there are no sequentially

preferable sites available in terms of flood risk. Sustainable drainage measures for the site are set out within the Drainage Strategy.

- 5.195 The submitted TA confirms that the development proposal provides an opportunity for linked trips given the existing range of retail, food and drink, leisure facilities and employment opportunities available within the wider Springfields site. The proposal is also located close to residential development to the south west in Spalding, reducing the need to travel.
- 5.196 Landscape plans submitted with the application demonstrate that opportunities for planting and green infrastructure throughout the site have been promoted, with substantial planting proposed at the sites north eastern extent, within the main car park to the west of Camel Gate, at the western edge of the Festival Gardens and within public realm along the retail frontage with Camel Gate. The level of landscaping proposed along with measures for biodiversity enhancement set out within the Ecological Appraisal are considered to provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and improve the resilience of ecosystems on site.
- 5.197 In addition to the above, the development also proposes replacement wind turbines at the eastern edge of the site. The model proposed comprises a modern and more efficient upgrade to the current turbines and provides a source of renewable energy for the site which would assist in reducing the carbon footprint of the development and comprise a cost of £140,000 in investment.
- 5.198 Other measures which are set out earlier in the report include provision of additional EVC customer parking spaces, use of regional contractors where possible which would reduce the travel distance to site during construction and further sustainability benefits through the proposed landscape scheme, which provides tree planting to replace those lost through the development at an approximate ratio of 10 new trees to each tree lost, providing substantial sustainability benefits in respect of biodiversity, air quality drainage and urban cooling.
- 5.199 In addition to new measures brought forward by the development, existing 'green' initiatives on site are intended to be maintained in order to ensure the site continues to operate in a sustainable way, with measures including:
- Maintaining the current BREEAM In Use standard for Asset Performance and Building Management;
 - Rain water harvesting;
 - Composting areas;
 - LED lighting to car parks, malls & service yards;
 - LED lighting to offices;
 - Water meters to all eateries;
 - Introduction of sustainability section to tenant shop fits;
 - Install more efficient hand dryers in public WC's; and
 - Energy review audits.
- 5.200 The development proposal has therefore had regard to **Policy 31** and measures to address, minimise and mitigate climate change.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 5.201 **Policy 4** 'Approach to Flood Risk' sets out that development will be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 where there are no other sites available at a lower risk of flooding, meaning that the sequential test in terms of flood risk has been passed. Policy 4

identifies that the sequential test is not required for sites which are allocated in the Local Plan.

- 5.202 This reflects the approach of the NPPF, which confirms that where planning applications come forward on sites allocation in a development plan through the sequential test, the sequential test need not be applied again.
- 5.203 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3 which is identified as having a 'high probability' of flooding. However, this is also case for virtually all of the wider area around Spalding and within the South Holland District. Subsequently, there are no reasonably appropriate sequentially preferable sites in terms of flood risk which are available.
- 5.204 However, and notwithstanding the above, the application site comprises Site SHR010: Springfields Outlet Shopping and Festival Gardens, an allocated development site in the adopted SELLP. Therefore, in accordance with Policy 4 and paragraph 162 of the NPPF the application does not require consideration of the sequential test in respect of flood risk.
- 5.205 Policy 4 further requires development to be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the vulnerability of the proposed development is compatible with the flood zone, to propose appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures, consider appropriate flood warning and evacuation procedures, incorporate use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and demonstrate the proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- 5.206 A Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (prepared by 3E Consulting) is provided in support of the application and confirms the site is within Flood Zone 3 and at residual risk of fluvial and tidal flooding.
- 5.207 The report establishes that given the proposed retail use comprises 'less vulnerable' development the exception test is not required.
- 5.208 The FRA goes on to recommend a number of mitigation measures to address flood risk on the site, which include incorporation of raised floor levels at 300mm above existing levels, use of on-site landscaping to direct the flow of surface water runoff and use of sustainable drainage measures where possible.
- 5.209 In addition to the above, the FRA advises that the entire site is signed up to the Environment Agency Flood Alert Service and that a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is prepared for the site.
- 5.210 The Surface & Foul Water Drainage Plan included in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy proposes an underground attenuation tank to be provided as part of the reconfiguration of the existing fountain pool within the Festival Gardens in order to manage drainage on site.
- 5.211 The proposal is therefore considered to accord with **Policy 4** in that an FRA is provided for the site and demonstrates that appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures and can be accommodated.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 5.212 **Policy 28** of the SELLP supports the protection, enhancement and management of both international, national and locally-designated sites, habitats and species, and

indicates that where there would be adverse impacts on the above features, development will not be permitted. Policy 28 also requires that all developments result in a net gain for biodiversity.

- 5.213 An Ecological Appraisal is provided by Smeeden Foreman which considers the wider site and includes both a desk-based study and a site survey.
- 5.214 The Ecological Appraisal identifies the statutorily designated Vernatts Local Nature Reserve to be located within 2km of the site and also confirms that the site lies within an outer Impact Risk Zone of the Surfleet Lows Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 5.215 There are 8 non-designated sites located within 2km of the application site, of which the Coronation Channel Local Wildlife Site is identified as being in close proximity to the site.
- 5.216 However, the Ecological Appraisal confirms that due to the lack of complimentary habitats present within the site, severance by intervening land uses and the type of development works proposed, there would be no adverse impacts upon designated sites as a result of development.
- 5.217 In respect of habitats on site, the application site comprises predominantly hard standing, amenity grassland and planting, buildings, trees and woodland, hedgerows and dense scrub. The Appraisal identifies woodland, tree and hedgerow habitat to have some conservation value in that they provide suitable habitat for breeding and roosting bird species, bats, amphibians and small mammals.
- 5.218 Buildings inspected on site were identified as having low potential for bat roosts, with further assessment recommended for these buildings prior to any proposed works. A Bat Survey has since been undertaken by Woolley Ecology and is discussed in further detail below.
- 5.219 7 ponds were identified in close proximity to the site, 3 of which are located within the site boundary. The Ecological Appraisal identifies 2 of the 7 ponds as having potential for breeding of great crested newts, while a further pond was not accessed.
- 5.220 The Appraisal proposes DNA surveying of the 2 ponds and assessment of the pond not previously surveyed. Subsequent population surveys would then be undertaken if required. A further GCN Survey addressing these matters has been undertaken by Woolley Ecology and is addressed further below.
- 5.221 The Ecological Appraisal concludes that, dependent on further survey work, it is anticipated that the development proposal would result in minimal impact to biodiversity and could achieve potential biodiversity gains, subject to a number of mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.
- 5.222 Proposed mitigation measures include tree and hedgerow retention where possible, enhancement and replacement with use of wildflower seed mix for understoreys, incorporation of native species within landscape proposals, potential installation of bat and bird boxes, sensitive lighting schemes, avoidance of vegetation clearance during bird nesting seasons or following checks on site to ensure the absence of nests.
- 5.223 Further measures include immediate removal of brash piles during vegetation clearance to prevent creation of reptile and hedgehog refuge, precautionary working methods such as covering of trenches and capping of pipework at the end of working days to prevent accidental harm to passing badger or mammals, along with

precautionary measures such as use of sediment and Heras-type fencing to the south east boundary of the site to prevent impact to drainage ditches during works to protect water voles.

- 5.224 In light of the findings of the Ecological Appraisal, it is considered that the development proposal would not cause and adverse impacts on biodiversity and would provide for potential biodiversity gains through proposed enhancement measures which in addition to measures set out in the Ecological Appraisal include for substantial new planting across the wider site as part of the landscape strategy for the development.
- 5.225 A Bat Survey and GCN Survey was undertaken by Woolley Ecology in May 2019 and April 2019 respectively. The Bat Activity and GCN eDNA Report (October 2019) confirms that eDNA samples collected from 3 ponds surrounding returned a negative testing result for the presence of great crested newts (GCN) and it is therefore considered that GCN are absent from the waterbodies.
- 5.226 In relation to bats, following the Smeeden Foreman survey identifying 2 buildings on site to have 'low' potential for bat roosts, a single dusk bat activity survey was undertaken during optimal survey conditions in May 2019. The survey confirmed that no bat roosting was taking place within either building and therefore the demolition of both buildings was not considered likely to impact upon roosting bats.
- 5.227 The Bat Activity and GCN eDNA Report (October 2019) recommends a number of mitigation and enhancement measures which include an Amphibian Working Method Statement to reduce risk to amphibians. Actions in the Statement include installation of two log piles within open space to be created to compensate for habitat loss, search and removal of suitable refugia present by hand and relocation of any amphibians or reptiles to an area of habitat away from the construction area, along with initial strimming of vegetation to a height of 150mm which can then be stripped to 50mm after a 5 day period before stripping of soil.
- 5.228 A toolbox talk will be given to contractors by the Ecological Clerk of Works to include a briefing on amphibians, their habitat preferences and instructions to follow if amphibians are encountered.
- 5.229 Recommendations and enhancement for bats include use of low sodium lamps directed towards the ground for lighting during works and permanent lighting following completion, in order to prevent dispersal of light into habitats. Two bat boxes (Schwegler 1FF or similar) are to be erected on a nearby tree to increase roosting opportunities for bats within the local area. If any bats are unexpectedly encountered prior or during works, all works to that area should cease immediately and the advice of an ecologist, the Bat Conservation Trust of Natural England should be sought.
- 5.230 In light of the above, we therefore find no conflict with **Policy 28** of the SELLP.

Trees & Landscaping

- 5.231 **Policy 3** of the SELLP relates to good design and creation of distinctive places and includes consideration of the landscape character of a location, incorporation of existing trees and hedgerows and provision of appropriate new landscaping to enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure, flood risk mitigation and urban cooling.
- 5.232 An Arboricultural Survey (prepared by Smeeden Foreman) has been carried out across the wider application site, with the exception of land at Fulney Hall and the north east corner of the site.

- 5.233 The Arboricultural Survey considers trees which have the potential to be affected by development of the site and identifies the quality of each tree along with whether the tree has an arboricultural, landscape or cultural value.
- 5.234 The report also includes an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which identifies that as a result of the development proposal a number of trees will be lost in order to facilitate the development.
- 5.235 In order to address loss of trees on the site, the submitted application includes for substantial replacement and enhancement landscaping across the site.
- 5.236 Substantial landscaping and planting is proposed at the northern extent of the site, across the main customer car park to the west of Camel Gate and along Camel Gate, at the western extent of Springfields Festival Gardens around the reconfigured fountain pool and along the retail frontage with Camel Gate.
- 5.237 As discussed earlier within the report, landscaping provides for a high quality and distinctive design, with public realm details provided by the 'Integration of Phases 1 to 3' Plan showing how planting of bedding and bulbs is incorporated to include seasonal planting which respects the distinctive character and history of Springfields.
- 5.238 Planting of trees, hedges, shrubs and wildflower seeding across the wider site provide clear opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and connectivity and urban cooling.
- 5.239 Full details of the proposed landscaping scheme are set out within the provided landscape plans prepared by Barnes Walker, with the proposed scheme providing substantial replacement planting to address trees to be lost as a result of the development at a ratio of approximately 10 new trees to 1 tree lost.
- 5.240 However, in light of the above we find the development to be in accordance with **Policy 3** of the SELLP (2019) in relation to trees and landscaping.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 5.241 **Policy 29** of the SELLP relates to 'The Historic Environment' and indicates that proposals affecting the setting of a Listed Building will be supported where they preserve or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building.
- 5.242 The NPPF requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets when considering the impact of a development proposal on the significance of that asset (paragraph 193).
- 5.243 A Heritage Assessment (prepared by Prospect Archaeology) is submitted with the application and identifies the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall to be located some 60m west of the site, set within its own grounds and screened by mature trees to the east.
- 5.244 The Assessment identifies the development proposal would have a low impact on Fulney Hall and a negligible impact on setting due to intervisibility between the site and Listed Building.
- 5.245 We therefore find that the proposal would be in accordance with **Policy 29** of the SELLP and would not result in material harm to the setting of the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall.

Other Development Management Considerations

- 5.246 **Policy 30** of the SELLP (2019) relates to pollution and notes that development proposals on contaminated land, or where there is reason to suspect contamination, should be supported by an assessment of the extent of contamination and any possible risks. Proposals will not be conserved favourably unless the land is, or can be made, suitable for the proposed use.
- 5.247 A Phase I Desk Study accompanies the application and confirms that the site is not in an area at risk of coal mining, however based on the presence of made ground basic ground gas measures should be assumed for the site. In terms of contamination the Study concludes that the site has a low environmental risk until proven otherwise, with risk to human health from contamination to be mitigated by appropriate PPE during construction and the use of hardstand or soil capping throughout the proposed development if necessary.
- 5.248 The Study recommends ground investigation to confirm site conditions, to include as a minimum trial pitting and cable percussive boreholes or CPTs with combined groundwater/gas monitoring installations and subsequent monitoring, geotechnical and chemical laboratory analysis.
- 5.249 The Study provides an appropriate assessment and demonstrates that the site can be made suitable for the proposed use, such that we find the proposal to accord with **Policy 30** of the SELLP (2019).

Summary of Benefits

- 5.250 Having regard to all of the above, we consider the proposal for 4,276m² gross of new retail and ancillary food and drink floorspace at Springfields Outlet Centre & Leisure accords with the up-to-date development plan for the area and would assist in delivering Policy 27 of the SELLP (2019), which allocates 3,700m² net of retail floorspace at Springfields.
- 5.251 In doing so, the development will deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits and provide a sustainable form of development and creating an attractive extension. Key benefits arising from the proposal include:
- The creation of around 350 new jobs in addition to 650 jobs currently provided at Springfields, one of the largest employers in Spalding;
 - Increased opportunities for local contractors and suppliers, with the outlet centre currently using 25 local contractors and suppliers and ancillary food & drink;
 - Increased annual footfall to Spalding;
 - An enhanced retail and leisure attraction at Springfields through the addition of 18 new units to include new premium and designer brands;
 - Spin-off benefits for Spalding and the local economy through increased number of visitors to the town and increased local spend, with Springfields currently having a catchment reaching areas within a 90 minute drive of the town and locations further afield including Norwich and Leicester;

- Measures for town centre improvement including Section 106 funding, the offer of participation in the Spalding Town Centre Steering Group and measures to improve linkages with the centre which include potential use of technology such as the Springfields VIP App to promote the town centre;
- A new and modernised office building for NFU Mutual, helping to retain local jobs; and
- Environmental benefits including substantial new planting across the site with approximately 10 to 1 replacement tree planting, replacement of existing wind turbines with more modern and efficient turbines, provision of additional EVC charging points.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning & Retail Statement has been prepared on behalf of Triton Property Funds and seeks full planning permission for the expansion of Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, Spalding, to include demolition of the existing NFU Mutual offices and provision of 15 new units comprising comparison retail (A1) and provision of 3 new retail and/or ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3).
- 6.2 The Statement confirms the application site and proposal comprises allocation 'SHR010: Springfields Shopping and Festival Gardens' in the adopted SELLP (2019) which identifies the site for 3,700m² (net) of comparison retail.
- 6.3 The principle of new comparison retail development at Springfields is therefore established and the proposal would facilitate the delivery of a retail allocation in the adopted development plan.
- 6.4 The development would provide for 18 new retail units comprising a total gross floorspace of 4,276m² of comparison retail (A1) and including a small ancillary element of food and drink uses (A3).
- 6.5 The proposal forms part of a phased approach delivering wider benefits including relocating the Horticultural Society offices onto the main complex by the Events & Conference Centre and delivering new high quality modern replacement offices for the NFU, retaining jobs in Spalding.
- 6.6 The proposal would deliver significant economic benefits as a result of further investment in the Springfields complex, with the creation of an additional 350 new jobs in addition to the existing 650 jobs currently provided at the site. This is in addition to providing new replacement offices for NFU Mutual.
- 6.7 The proposal for new retail floorspace would allow Springfields to improve its retail offer in a continuously competitive retail environment. Springfields currently attracts an annual footfall of over 2.3 million and the scheme provides the potential for further spin off benefits for the local economy in Spalding in attracting a significant number of visitors who may not otherwise visit the town.
- 6.8 The application also incorporates a range of measures to promote the attractiveness of Spalding Town Centre, therefore promoting the attraction of both Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and Spalding as premier tourist attractions within South East Lincolnshire.
- 6.9 The development also provides an important social role through the creation of new jobs in a highly accessible location, with the nature of employment allowing jobs to fit around an individual's availability, leading to valuable employment opportunities within Spalding and the surrounding area.
- 6.10 Springfields is identified as a significant leisure attraction in Spalding and the proposal for increased retail and ancillary food and drink uses would contribute additional social benefits in supporting the social and cultural well-being of local residents through creating new social and leisure opportunities whilst retaining popular attractions already present at Springfields.
- 6.11 Environmental benefits arising from the proposal include the effective re-use of land occupied by the centre's South Car Park and NFU Mutual offices, provision of a new

retail extension featuring a high quality architectural design, opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including through substantial landscaping across the site and replacement of existing wind turbines with more modern and efficient model which will assist in reducing the carbon footprint of the wider outlet centre.

- 6.12 The high quality landscaping scheme which includes for substantial tree, shrub and floral planting would provide further environmental enhancement and provides opportunities for biodiversity improvements amongst other environmental benefits such as air quality regulation and cleaning of surface water runoff from the new development.
- 6.13 In light of the above the proposal would ensure provision of sustainable development in line with the NPPF and gains support from the NPPF in a number of respects including the significant weight which should be placed on building a strong and competitive economy.
- 6.14 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies national and local policy and represents a suitable development proposal for the site that addresses all the relevant and material considerations.
- 6.15 In this context, the proposal satisfies Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and is in accordance with an up-to-date development plan for the area. It is considered that planning permission should be granted.