
December 2019



**Request for an Environmental Impact
Assessment Screening Opinion**

**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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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A full planning application has been submitted to South Holland District Council on behalf of Triton Property Fund for the proposed expansion of the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure to provide 15 new comparison retail units (A1) and 3 flexible comparison retail/ ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3) (A1/A3). The development also proposes demolition of the existing NFU Mutual Offices and provision of revised car parking, landscaping and associated works.
- 1.2 Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure is an established tourist destination which attracts over 2.3 million visitors annually from across a wide catchment.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 In light of the recent allocation for a further 3,700m² net of comparison goods retail floorspace at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure in Policy 27 of the recently adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), the proposal seeks to provide for a new retail expansion at Springfields comprising 19 new units to be located as part of a new retail extension to the south of the existing outlet centre.
- 1.5 Additional car parking would be provided on land to the west of Camel Gate. The proposal also includes for substantial landscaping, to include new planting across parts of the Festival Gardens to the east of the new retail extension, areas of public realm, land to the north of the Springfields complex and across the car parks to the west of Camel Gate.
- 1.6 The development will support the need for continued growth and evolution at Springfields and 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.
- 1.7 Having due regard to the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, it is recognised the development falls within the description of 'Infrastructure Projects' at paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 and exceeds one of the thresholds in Column 2 of the table in the updated schedule.
- 1.8 The proposed development is considered to fall under Schedule 2, Part 10b of the Regulations.

- 1.9 Government guidance for screening of Part 10b developments states that for sites which have not previously been intensively developed are more likely to require EIA if:

*“The site area of the scheme is more than 5 Ha; or,
It would provide a total of more than 10,000 square metres of new commercial floor space; or,
The development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1000 dwellings).”*

- 1.10 For schemes falling under Part 10b of the Regulations, particular consideration should be given to the potential increase in traffic, emissions, noise and contamination.
- 1.11 For reasons set out below the nature of the proposed development is such that it is not considered that significant environmental effects are likely and the proposal need not be subject to environmental impact assessment.
- 1.12 This report therefore sets out the applicant's view in relation to the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment and is based on the EIA regulations and the associated National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.13 It is maintained there is no requirement for a formal EIA and a formal Screening Opinion is requested from the LPA in relation to the proposed development.

Site Description

- 1.14 The application site measures a total of 10.35 hectares and takes in land across the Springfields complex.
- 1.15 This includes the existing South Car Park, National Farmers Union (NFU) Mutual offices and its associated car park and part of the Festival Gardens. This part of the site measures approximately 1ha and will be occupied by the new retail development.
- 1.16 The red line area also takes in Camel Gate and land to the west required for car parking, which includes the Main Car Park for Springfields, the existing bus layby and drop-off and land at Fulney Hall. Additional car parking would also be provided by reconfiguration of the Springfields Garden Centre Car Park.
- 1.17 The Springfields Events & Conference Centre and associated land to the north is also included in the site area, where replacement tree planting and landscape enhancements are proposed along with some temporary car parking. A further strip of land along the eastern edge of the site adjacent to the A16 is included to allow for replacement of existing wind turbines with more modern and efficient models.
- 1.18 The development site is located to the north east of Spalding, between the Camel Gate/A151 roundabout and the A16/A151 roundabout.
- 1.19 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 around the edge of the existing outlet centre with the

wider Festival Gardens beyond, which include the recently opened JCB Adventure Land amongst other leisure facilities.

- 1.20 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.
- 1.21 South east of the site are residential properties and the wider built up area of Spalding.
- 1.22 The application site forms part of the wider Springfields complex, which dates back to the 1960's when the Festival Gardens opening in 1966.
- 1.23 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 bulbs and flowers.
- 1.24 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.
- 1.25 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.
- 1.26 Today, the wider Springfield complex includes a range of outlet stores, a garden centre, Festival Gardens, car parking, Exhibition & Conference Centre and the new Adventure Land which opened in 2018 and includes the JCB Young Drivers Zone, Tree Top Village, a miniature railway and land train, crazy golf and playbarn alongside the new Spring's Diner, whilst to the west of Springfields a seasonal water taxi operates along Coronation Channel, taking visitors into the historic centre of Spalding
- 1.27 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.
- 1.28 The centre currently employs around 650 people of which around 90% live within a relatively short distance to travel to work.
- 1.29 A number of improvements to Springfields have been delivered over the years, including the recent £1.2million investment towards 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.
- 1.30 The adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) (2019) acknowledges the strategic importance Springfields as a major existing tourist destination, attracting some 2.3 million visitors annually.

- 1.31 In recognising the need for further comparison retail floorspace in Spalding, Policy 27 of the SELLP allocates approximately 3,700m² (net) of comparison floorspace at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure.
- 1.32 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 of new comparison retail floorspace (A1) and flexible retail and/or ancillary food and drink uses (A1/A3) measuring 616m².

Proposed Development

- 1.33 The development proposal seeks full planning permission for the expansion of Springfield Outlet Shopping & Leisure to provide 19 new units comprising comparison retail (A1) and flexible comparison retail and/or ancillary food and drink (A1/A3).
- 1.34 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.
- 1.35 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.
- 1.36 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.
- 1.37 The new retail buildings would adjoin the existing Travelodge Hotel and retail units Gap and Radley which form part of the existing outlet centre.
- 1.38 The retail extension would include provision of 15 new comparison retail units (A1) and 3 comparison 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.
- 1.39 The proposal would not exceed the stated retail limit in Policy 27 of the adopted local plan of 3,700m² net floorspace.
- 1.40 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.
- 1.41 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.
- 1.42 Landscaping is also proposed across the wider site area, which includes new garden features within the Festival Gardens and wider boundary planting.

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- 1.43 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.
 - 1.44 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.
 - 1.45 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.
 - 1.46 The Phase 3 extension is located to the south of the existing retail outlet, fronting onto Camel Gate and the A151.
 - 1.47 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, with the new units and the proposed shopping walkway aligned with the existing retail units and shopping walkway, creating a retail circuit which facilitates the movement of visitors throughout the entire outlet.
 - 1.48 A new proposed entrance to the retail extension at the south west corner fronting onto Camel Gate is designed so as to ensure convenient access for those using customer car parks on Camel Gate, travelling by bus to stops on Camel Gate or Holbeach Road and for those arriving by foot or cycle from the main built up area of Spalding, including Spalding Town Centre and residential areas to the south.
 - 1.49 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.
 - 1.50 This would be further enhanced by the proposed public realm and opportunity for outdoor drinking and dining, with the 3 flexible retail and/or food & drink (A1/A3) uses fronting onto Camel Gate as shown by the Ground Flood Plan (Option 5 – Level 00) creating a strong active frontage for visitors as they arrive along Camel Gate.
 - 1.51 The height of the building increases along the southern elevation towards the Camel Gate/ Holbeach Road roundabout and creates an attractive gateway building on arrival into Springfields and for those arriving into Spalding from the A16 to the east.
 - 1.52 At this stage, the future operators of the retail and food and drink units is not known.
 - 1.53 A Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of the application and provides details on the design and materials of the new development and consideration of the proposed layout of the new development, which has taken account of connectivity and access, relocation of existing development on site, visibility from the road network and car parking considerations.

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- 1.54 We therefore consider that the new development comprises the optimum layout for the site, with the new buildings aligning with the existing outlet centre to provide connectivity with the wider Springfields complex.
- 1.55 The material palette of the new buildings includes a mix of bespoke bronze back lit debossed cladding and artificial green walls creating on the southern elevation of the new development, with multi-tone brown insulated cladding, neutral colour insulated panels, dark colour insulated panels, glass, feature debossed bronze panels and modular concrete paving used throughout the rest of the development.
- 1.56 In terms of access, the site is currently served by bus stops on Camel Gate and Holbeach Road to the south. The proposal provides a new bus layby along the eastern edge of Camel Gate, which replaces the existing bus layby to the west of Camel Gate, where new car parking is to be provided.
- 1.57 The Site Masterplan (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_100-P10) shows 300 new car parking spaces to be provided across the wider site, which would include for 31 new disabled parking spaces. Additional car parking on the site will 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;
- 1.58 Provision of 8 replacement coach parking spaces are to be provided on land to the south of the new NFU Mutual offices, which is the subject of a separate planning application, with temporary car parking for staff to be provided at weekends and bank holidays on land at Fulney Hall and at the new NFU Mutual offices permitted under application H16-0920-19.

2.0 Approach

- 2.1 We have adopted the approach set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance which essentially requires 2 questions to be answered:-
 1. Does the proposal constitute Schedule 2 development in the meaning of the regulations? and;
 2. If so, is it likely to have “significant effects” on the environment having regard to Schedule 3 of the Regulations?
- 2.2 In determining the likelihood of significant effects, we have used a standard checklist of topics derived from the Regulations in accordance with current EIA practice having regard to Schedule 3 of the Regulations and the thresholds listed in the EIA Regulations, Schedule 2.
- 2.3 The relevant thresholds for urban development projects include the following criteria to determine if a proposal would fall under Schedule 2 development. Those amended thresholds are as follows:
 - i. The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or
 - ii. The development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
 - iii. The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.
- 2.4 In this case the proposed development falls under Schedule 2 as an urban development project and the application site measures 10.35 hectares and thus exceeds the 1 hectare urban development criteria and the overall development criteria. We have therefore considered whether the proposed development should be subject to EIA procedures.

3.0 Likelihood of Significant Effects

- 3.1 When screening applications for Schedule 2 development in order to determine whether or not EIA is required, the National Planning Practice Guidance focuses on whether the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 3.2 Schedule 3 of the Regulations sets out the selection 'criteria' which must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 3.3 Schedule 3 identifies three broad criteria which should be considered as follows;
- Characteristics of development (e.g. size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated);
 - Location of development (e.g. the environmental sensitivity of the location; and
 - Characteristics of potential impact (e.g. magnitude and duration).

Indicative Thresholds and Criteria in the EIA National Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.4 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) relating to Environmental Impact Assessments indicates that it is possible to provide a broad indication of the type or scale of development which is likely to be a candidate for EIA.
- 3.5 This is set out in the '*Thresholds and Criteria for the identification of Schedule 2 development requiring Environmental Impact Assessment and indicative values for determining significant effects*' section of the guidance.
- 3.6 An EIA is unlikely to be required for the development of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. It advises that "key issues to consider" are the "physical scale" of the development and to "potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise".
- 3.7 Indicative scale thresholds are also suggested in the Table at paragraph 058 of the PPG, reflecting EIA regulations, including a site threshold of 5 hectares.
- 3.8 The total site area is 10.35ha hectares, however while the proposal is above the threshold of development which may require an EIA, the application red line comprises mostly existing development associated with the wider Springfields complex.
- 3.9 The main aspect of the development proposal includes for the provision of a retail extension to the south of the existing outlet centre, where a total of 15 new comparison retail (A1) and 3 flexible comparison retail and/or ancillary food and drink (A1/A3) units will be provided.
- 3.10 This is located on land to the south of the existing outlet centre, which measures approximately 1 hectare.

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- 3.11 Across the wider site, the application does not propose any changes across much of the existing Springfields site, with the existing outlet centre building, Garden Centre building, Events & Conference Centre and the wider extent of the Festival Gardens remaining unchanged.
- 3.12 Across the Garden Centre car park, existing Main Centre Car Park and at Fulney Hall, development proposals comprise only minor works to facilitate changes to the car parking layout and at Fulney Hall the use of an area for temporary car parking. Those works would not require any built development across some 2.1 hectares of the total site area.
- 3.13 A further 3.5 hectares of the red line area comprises land associated with Springfields Events & Conference Centre to the north of the site. In this location, the development proposes only temporary car parking across an area of approximately 0.08 hectares, while other works would include tree planting along the northern boundary of the site and replacement of existing wind turbines with modern and more efficient models along the site's eastern edge.
- 3.14 Therefore, while the total site area comprises a total of 10.35ha and is therefore technically over the threshold of 5 hectares, only a small proportion of the site would undergo development which is of a different scale or nature to the existing development on site.
- 3.15 A similar point arises in relation to the total quantum of built development proposed (4,276m²) against the indicative threshold of 10,000 m².
- 3.16 The proposed development would provide for approximately 3,660m² of new comparison retail floorspace (A1) and 616m² of flexible comparison retail and/or ancillary food and drink (A1/A3). This amounts to a total of 4,276m² of new build development.
- 3.17 The proposal therefore falls well below the indicative threshold of 10,000m².
- 3.18 It is also advised that when considering the thresholds, it is important to consider the location of the proposed development.
- 3.19 In this case and as highlighted under the 'Site Description' the application site forms part of the wider Springfields complex, an established retail and leisure destination located to the north east of Spalding.
- 3.20 The proposal for new retail development would therefore not be of a different nature to that of development currently on the site.
- 3.21 The wider site area is occupied by a range of outlet stores, cafés, over 700 car parking spaces, an Exhibition & Conference Centre, Garden Centre, the Festival Gardens and a range of leisure facilities.
- 3.22 Land to the south of the outlet centre is currently occupied by the existing NFU Mutual offices, which are proposed under a separate planning application (H16-0290-19) to relocate to land north west of the wider Springfields complex which is currently occupied by an office and storage building used by Springfields Horticultural Society.

- 3.23 As set out further below, the existing NFU Mutual buildings proposed for demolition have been identified as having low potential for bat presence, however a bat emergence survey completed in May 2019 confirmed there were no roosting bats present.
- 3.24 The development site is located to the north east of Spalding, between the Camel Gate/A151 roundabout and the A16/A151 roundabout.
- 3.25 The wider site is bounded by the Marsh Lane employment site to the north, the A151/Holbeach Road to the south, the A16 and existing Festival Gardens to the east.
- 3.26 To the west, the existing customer car park adjoins the Coronation Channel, identified as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). However, the development proposes only minor alternations to the car park near to the Coronation Channel, while the Ecological Appraisal confirms there would be no adverse impacts on the LWS.
- 3.27 To the south west of the site is the wider built up extent of Spalding, which includes residential development and further employment development to the south of Holbeach Road.
- 3.28 Therefore, the general character of the surrounding area and the development site is well developed, while the existing Springfields complex is allocated in the recently adopted SELLP (2019) for a further 3,700m² (net) of retail development.
- 3.29 Nevertheless, in considering whether a proposed development should be EIA development and therefore subject to environmental impact assessment, a key question is whether the proposed development would be likely to have '*significant effects on the environment*'.
- 3.30 Against this background we have considered the proposal in the context of EIA issues against a number of aspects as set out below.
- 3.31 For reasons set out below we do not consider the proposal would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore need not be subject to environmental impact assessment.

Air Quality

- 3.32 The proposed development is for a retail extension to the existing Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure and will result in the creation of 4,276m² new floorspace.
- 3.33 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) (prepared by Sandersons Associates) which includes consideration of traffic impact on the local road network.
- 3.34 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.

- 3.35 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.
- 3.36 The TA identifies that given the nature of the proposed retail development and its proximity to the A16, which connects Boston, Peterborough, the A151 and Holbeach Road, which is a principal route between Spalding and the A16, the TA concludes that not all predicted trips in relation to the development would be completely new to the highway network, with a large proportion of trips to the retail development likely to be associated with pass by trips.
- 3.37 Given the nature / scale of development proposed, the likely level of traffic generation particularly given the potential for linked trips, and the site context and location, overall it is considered the development proposal would not have a 'significant' effect on air quality in the locality. Pre-application discussions with South Holland District Council confirmed that an Air Quality Assessment would not be required.

Built Heritage & Archaeology

- 3.38 A Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Prospect Archaeology which considers the archaeological potential and impact on designated heritage assets in relation to the proposed development.
- 3.39 The assessment confirms that in relation to archaeological potential, there is potential across Area 1 for evidence of land use and settlement from the late Saxon period, with an excavation in 2005 on land within the south west portion of Area 1 identifying archaeological evidence from the Saxo-Norman period to the 14th century. As previous excavation has already included part of Area 1 with the remainder of that land not habitable for much of the medieval period, the potential is low and no further work is recommended.
- 3.40 The assessment also identifies that Area 2 of the site appears to have been reclaimed in the late Saxon/early medieval period, meaning there may be evidence of agricultural use in this area. However, the assessment recognises that given that very minor works are proposed across this area of the site, there would be no impact in terms of archaeology.
- 3.41 The Heritage Assessment therefore confirms that, dependent on development proposals, a programme of excavation in those areas not previously excavated in 2005 should be carried out in Area 1.
- 3.42 Should any archaeological features be identified as part of this process, further work to record remains in advance of, or during development is recommended.
- 3.43 The assessment also confirms that based on the proposed development areas which are already within an area developed for modern retail and industrial units, the change to the setting of the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall would be negligible.
- 3.44 Based on the above, there would be no significant impacts in terms of archaeology or built heritage arising from the proposed development.

Contaminated Land

- 3.45 A Geo-Environmental (Phase 1) Desk Study has been undertaken by 3E Consulting and considers the potential geotechnical and environmental issues associated with the site including its known history, geology, potential contaminant sources and transport pathways and linkages.
- 3.46 The Study concludes that the site has low environmental risk. Risk of ground gas emissions was also found to be low.
- 3.47 The Study advises that the findings of the assessment should not be taken as design criteria without further geotechnical data obtained from a suitably designed ground investigation, which could be secured by condition.
- 3.48 As such, it is considered the proposed development would not have a significant effect on the environment in relation to contaminated land.

Ecology

- 3.49 In respect of ecology, the application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal (Smeeden Foreman) which included both a desk-based study and a site survey.
- 3.50 The Ecological Appraisal concluded that there would be no adverse impacts on any designated sites given intervening landscape and lack of complimentary habitat between the application site and designated sites.
- 3.51 In terms of on site habitat, the Ecological Appraisal identified woodland, tree and hedgerow on site to have some conservation value in that they provide suitable habitat for roosting and breeding birds, bats, amphibians and small mammals.
- 3.52 However, subject to a number of proposed mitigation measures, the Ecological Appraisal confirms that there would be minimal impact on biodiversity as a result of the development, with the potential for wider biodiversity gains and enhancement across the site.
- 3.53 The Ecological Appraisal also undertook an initial building assessment for bat roost potential, and identified a number of buildings on site as having low potential for bat roosts. Buildings with low potential did not include the existing NFU Mutual offices which are to be demolished.
- 3.54 Pond surveys also identified that two ponds near to the site had potential for great crested newts (GCN), while a further pond was not surveyed due to access.
- 3.55 The Ecological Appraisal therefore recommends further survey work, following which should presence of bats or great crested newts be confirmed, appropriate mitigation could be achieved.
- 3.56 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.

- 3.57 In relation to bats, following the Smeeden Foreman survey identifying 2 buildings on site to have 'low' potential for bat roosts including the existing NFU Mutual office building, 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.
- 3.58 The Bat Activity and GCN eDNA Report (October 2019) also recommends a range of measures which for the site to provide further mitigation and enhancement.
- 3.59 In light of the work undertaken and including the results of further survey work it is considered the development proposal would not result in significant effects on ecology such that it should be made subject to EIA procedures.

Micro Climate

- 3.60 Given the scale of the buildings proposed within and surrounding the site, the topography of the site adjacent development which includes Holbeach Road to the south, the A16 to the east and the Marsh Road employment site to the north, it is unlikely the proposed development will result in significant changes to ground level micro climate conditions.

Noise and Vibration

- 3.61 The construction impacts of the development, including noise, dust, vibration and traffic movements, can be managed and mitigated during the construction phases through implementation of appropriate measures.
- 3.62 Nearest residential properties are separated from the site by intervening landscape, which includes the Holbeach Road roundabout to the south and the Coronation Channel to the west. It is therefore not considered that nearby residents would experience any adverse impacts in terms of noise. In this context, there are no noise and vibration issues which would warrant the request for an EIA.

Daylight and Overshadowing

- 3.63 Due to the site layout, scale of buildings and surrounding land uses the development is not considered to cause undue loss of daylight or overshadowing.

Visual Impact

- 3.64 Significant consideration has been had towards the visual impact and design of the proposal, with design principles set out within the submitted Design & Access Statement.

- 3.65 As set out under the description of the development proposal, the application proposes a high quality sustainable development comprising 15 new retail units (A1) and 3 flexible retail and/or ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3) across a new southern mall, with associated car parking and landscaping.
- 3.66 The new retail development would replace the existing NFU Mutual offices on the site, which are dated, unattractive and unsympathetic to surrounding development.
- 3.67 The new extension would provide a high quality modern and attractive design and in terms of visual impact would make a positive contribution to the surroundings and provide an attractive gateway development for those arriving into Spalding from the A16 to the east.
- 3.68 The proposed build includes a high quality mix of materials such including bronze and green style walls on the southern elevation of the build. The new retail extension is also sited so as to align with the existing outlet centre to create a continuous form of development.
- 3.69 Therefore, we do not consider the proposed development would result in significant effects on the environment warranting being made subject to EIA procedures.

Socio-Economic

- 3.70 The proposed development comprises a new retail expansion at Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure, providing 15 new retail units (A1) and 3 flexible retail and/or ancillary food and drink units (A1/A3), with a total gross floorspace of 4,276m².
- 3.71 The provision of further retail floorspace at Springfields is allocated in the recently adopted SELLP (2019), which recognises the need for additional comparison retail floorspace in Spalding.
- 3.72 In terms of the economic benefits of the proposal, the development would create 350 new jobs in addition to the 650 jobs currently provided at Springfields. These jobs would be typically attractive to local residents.
- 3.73 Further economic benefits would be provided through opportunities for local supply chains in providing goods, skills and services to support the development, with further jobs created during the construction of the development.
- 3.74 As identified earlier, Springfields is a major tourist destination, attracting 2.3 million annual visitors across a wide catchment. Springfields therefore creates wider potential spin-off benefits for Spalding, in attracting a large number of visitors who would not otherwise visit the town.
- 3.75 The proposal for new retail floorspace at Springfields would provide an enhanced retail and leisure offer, allowing the centre to remain competitive within the wider retail market, promoting the attraction of both Springfields and Spalding as a premier tourist destination within South East Lincolnshire.

- 3.76 The application also includes for a number of measures to promote Spalding Town Centre, which include upgrades to the existing Springfields VIP mobile app to include adverts promoting town centre businesses and promotions along with local heritage sites and travel opportunities. Newsletters to Springfields VIP members will also include updates on local offers, attractions and events in the town centre.
- 3.77 Other measures include advertisements relating to Spalding Town Centre which will be posted on the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure website and installation of three new interactive screens at Springfields, with 20% of screen content to be dedicated to promoting attractions and connections to Spalding Town Centre.
- 3.78 The proposal therefore presents an opportunity for wider economic spin-off benefits for Spalding Town Centre, with benefits of the scheme summarised below:
- 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;
 - 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, potential 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.
- 3.79 In light of the above, the development would provide significant socio-economic benefits for the local area and residents.

Transportation

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- 3.80 A TA prepared by Sandersons Associates is provided with the planning application and concludes there are no constraints to the sites development in a transport and highways context.
- 3.81 The TA confirms that the site can be accessed by a range of sustainable transport modes which include walking, cycling, bus, train and water taxi.
- 3.82 A wide range of residential areas which are located south west of Springfields and fall within the recognised 800m and upper limit 2km walking distances. There is also good pedestrian connectivity to the south of Springfields and between Springfields and Spalding Town Centre.
- 3.83 Locations identified by the TA as being within 5km from the site include Fulney, Spalding, Low Fulney, Weston, Clay Lake, Little London, Pinchbeck and Moulton. The proposed site layout also provides for cycle parking to the west of Camel Gate within the main parking area for the site.
- 3.84 The proposed site layout includes relocation of the existing bus layby to be sited to the east of Camel Gate, providing direct access for shoppers into the outlet centre. Bus stops are also located south of the site along Holbeach Road. Frequent bus services are therefore available which connect the site to Spalding Town Centre and destinations further afield such as Kings Lynn.
- 3.85 The site can also be accessed by coach, with 8no coach parking spaces to be provided to the west of Camel Gate. Further sustainable transport opportunities include a water taxi service which operates between Spalding Town Centre and Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure from March to September, with an embarkation point located to the west of the Main Car Park at Springfields.
- 3.86 Spalding Train Station is located approximately 2.2km from the site, where train services usually operate from Peterborough to Lincoln and are typically hourly.
- 3.87 The site is therefore demonstrated to be accessible by a wide range of sustainable travel opportunities.
- 3.88 With regard to traffic impacts, the TA provides an assessment of base flows before looking forward to the design year for the assessment taking account of growth and all relevant committed developments. The TA has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions with highways officers and their advisers.
- 3.89 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.
- 3.90 The TA further 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.
- 3.91 It is also confirmed that the Holbeach Road roundabout junction to the south of Springfields will operate satisfactorily in the AM, PM and Saturday peak hours with an RFC ratio of less than 0.85.

- 3.92 The assessment of traffic impact takes account of all relevant factors and concludes the impact of the proposed development would not be 'severe' and would not lead to unacceptable impacts on highway safety, and therefore meets the relevant tests in paragraph 109 of the NPPF.
- 3.93 The proposed development is also accompanied by a Framework Travel Plan which includes measures to encourage access to the site by modes other than the private car. The Travel Plan focusses on reducing staff single occupancy peak hour vehicle trips by 5% from the predicted level includes appointment of a Travel Plan Coordinator to promote and monitor take-up of sustainable transport modes.
- 3.94 As a consequence, there are no highway related matters which would generate the requirement for an EIA.

Waste

- 3.95 The disposal of waste will be handled in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Council. Waste collection facilities are incorporated into the layout of the proposed development.
- 3.96 Given the nature of the proposed development it is not considered that the type of waste produced or its disposal would result in significant effects on the environment.

Water and Flood Risk

- 3.97 The development proposal is located in Flood Zone 3 and is therefore identified as having a high risk of flooding.
- 3.98 However, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (prepared by 3E Consulting) confirms that the majority of land in South Holland is also in Flood Zone 3, therefore there are no reasonably appropriate sequentially preferable sites in terms of flood risk which are available.
- 3.99 The FRA also confirms that the development proposal comprises a 'less vulnerable' development and therefore the exceptions test is not required.
- 3.100 The FRA identifies that the site is in Flood Zone 3 and is at residual risk of fluvial and tidal flooding, surface water flooding, groundwater flooding and sewer flooding.
- 3.101 A number of mitigation measures are therefore proposed by the FRA including raised finished floor levels above 300mm, on-site landscaping to direct surface water towards drainage systems, use of sustainable drainage systems where possible, use of the Environment Agency's Flood Alert Service, preparation of a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan
- 3.102 With regard to the above, account has been taken to minimise the impact and it is demonstrated that the proposal can be delivered that does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 3.103 Based on the proposed mitigation measures, the development would not result in a significant impact in terms of flood risk.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 In conclusion, the Proposed Development can be considered to be a Schedule 2 development.
- 4.2 However, based on the information provided it is concluded the proposed development would not result in significant effects on the environment and as such the application does not need to be subject to an EIA. This reflects both the character of the site and the character of the surrounding area.
- 4.3 The planning application is supported by the following documents:
 1. Application Forms & Ownership Certificates
 2. Cover Letter
 3. EIA Screening Report
 4. Design & Access Statement
 5. Planning Statement
 6. Statement of Community Involvement
 7. Transport Assessment
 8. Travel Plan
 9. Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy
 10. Site Drainage Details (As Built & Storm Water)
 11. Heritage Assessment
 12. Ecological Appraisal
 13. Bat Activity and GCN eDNA Report
 14. Arboricultural Survey Report
 15. Phase I Desk Survey
 16. Utility Survey
 17. Scheme Plans

Masterplan

- Site Location Plan (3841-070-L02 P4)
- Site Masterplan (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_100-P10)
- Site Masterplan – Detailed (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_101-P4)
- Site Masterplan – Phasing (SPFDS-WBA-SI-ZZ-DR-A-90_102-P4)

Retail

- Site Layout (SPFDS-WBA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-20_104-P6)
- Level 00 GA Plan (SPFDS-WBA-XX-00-DR-A-20_105-P16)
- Level 01 GA Plan (SPFDS-WBA-XX-01-DR-A-20_106-P6)
- Roof Plan (SPFDS-WBA-XX-RF-DR-A-20_107-P5)
- GA Sections (SPFDS-WBA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-20_108-P5)
- Elevations (SPFDS-WBA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-20_109-P7)
- Existing NFU Elevations (4328AB-09)

Landscape

- Tree Strategy (M3041_PA_01_V05)
- Landscape Layout for Retail Development (M3041_PA_02_V03)
- Boundary Planting – Arena Site (M3041_PA_05_V02)
- Planting Proposals for Car Parks and Camelgate (M3041_PA_08_V02)

- Appendix G - Landscape Proposals for Garden Edge (with water) (M3041_PA_09_V09)
- Integration Phases 1 to 3 (M3041_PA_10_V10)

Visuals

- SP Phase 3 – View A Rev A
- SP Phase 3 – View A Night Rev A
- SP Phase 3 – View B Rev B
- SP Phase 3 – View C
- SP Phase 3 – View D Rev A

- 4.4 Having regard to the matters set out in this Screening Report, it is considered the Proposed Development does not need to be subject to EIA procedures.