Planning Statement

Prepared by: Libre Solutions

On Behalf of: BT Group PLC

June 2026

SITE NAME:	**LAND ADJOINING UNIT 2 WESTLODE STREET, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11 2AF**
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Application for full planning permission and advertisement consent for the installation of a proposed new global street hub, including the associated display of advertisements on both sides of the unit.
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REPORT TYPE:	Planning Statement
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1 INTRODUCTION

Application overview

This application for **Full Planning Permission** and **Advertisement Consent** is submitted by Libre Solutions on behalf of the BT Group to South Holland District Council ('the Council') for Land adjoining Unit 2 Westlode Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2AF.

About BT

BT InLinkUK service was first launched in 2017 and since then 494 InLink units were rolled out in 23 UK cities, including 31 InLinks in Southwark. In 2019 InLinkUK went into administration and no longer support the supply of these units to BT, so meaning the InLink product is no longer available. The InLink estate is under the full ownership of BT and since then, they have been working on their own new and improved unit, namely BT Street Hub.

BT Street Hub Project

BT is continuing to move forward with public connectivity and Street Hubs will provide a sleek and modern answer to the demands of a digitally connected society. BT Street Hub has all the existing benefits of the previous structure but with better Wi-Fi range, air quality monitoring, insight counting and small cell mobile connectivity. The addition of the 5G small cells to Street Hubs is very much in line with current UK Government's guidance on telecommunications developments and the National Infrastructure Strategy. Since the start of the original BT InLink project, the Government's commitment towards telecommunications deployment has been strengthened and NPPF 19, para 112 in particular confirms that, 'Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)".

The Street Hub will help future proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable. Investment in the high street is at an all-time low, but that has not slowed BT down as they look to ramp up the upgrade of their kiosk estate with the rollout of new Street Hubs across the UK. They are continuing their commitment to invest and improve in the high street one Street Hub at a time, and with that

decluttering these environments with the associated removal of existing BT phone boxes. Due to the increased functionality of the new Street Hub, it is a slightly larger structure from the first generation InLink units, in which it is 34cm longer, 7cm wider and 8.5cm taller.

Summary of the Proposal

The application seeks the installation of **a new generation BT Street Hub** measuring, 2986mm in height, 1236mm in width and 350mm in depth.



Figure 1– Existing and Proposed Site and surrounding, (Source: Libre Solutions)

2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This Planning Statement is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

1. Cover Letter
2. Planning Drawings
3. Anti-Social Management Plan
4. Global Media Street Hub Unit Dimensions
5. Street Hub Product Statement
6. Street Hubs Beyond Connection
7. Lighting Guidance
8. Highways Notice

This planning statement is structured as follows:

- Site context
- Proposal description
- Pre-application consultation
- Assessment against national and local policy
- Summary and conclusion

3 SITE CONTEXT

Site and Surroundings

The application site is located at Land adjoining Unit 2 Westlode Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2AF (Latitude: 52.78897, Longitude: -0.14892). The site is positioned on the **public footway on Westlode Street** within Spalding town centre. The **surrounding area consists predominantly of modern retail and commercial units**, including the B&M Home Discount store at 70 Westlode Street, providing an active commercial street scene.

Westlode Street takes its name from the historic Westlode drainage channel - an artificial watercourse of ancient origin that formerly flowed from Pinchbeck through Spalding to the River Welland. The Westlode was filled in and covered during the early 19th century, and Westlode Street was subsequently laid out to serve the northward expansion of Spalding following the removal of this former boundary. The northern section of Westlode Street, where the application site is located, is characterised by **modern retail and commercial development built predominantly in the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century**, including the B&M home discount store, creating a modern commercial streetscape.

The **proposed location is positioned within a wide footway area** containing existing bollards, lighting columns, signage and other items of street furniture. The footway at this location is of adequate width to accommodate the Street Hub without adversely affecting pedestrian movement or the designated cycle route adjacent to the site.

Character of Westlode Street at the Application Site

Understanding the specific character of the Westlode Street section at and around the application site is material to the heritage assessment of the Spalding Conservation Area designation.

The desktop appraisal for this site confirms that **'this section of Westlode Street is modern in character and appearance, with surrounding development consisting predominantly of commercial and retail units.'** The B&M Home Discount store at 70 Westlode Street is a dominant built form in the immediate vicinity - a large, modern retail warehouse unit of late-20th or early-21st century construction. Together with the wide, hard-surfaced public footway and the established street furniture of bollards, lighting columns and cycle route markings, the immediate character of the application site is distinctly modern and commercial rather than historic.

This modern commercial character of the Westlode Street frontage at the application site is the context within which the heritage assessment of the Conservation Area must be undertaken. The special character and significance of the Spalding Conservation Area derives from its historic core - the riverside, market place, Georgian and Victorian commercial buildings and associated listed building concentration - which are located to the south and east of the application site rather than on this modern northern section of Westlode Street.

Relevant Designations

A review of the South Holland District Council planning records, the SELLP 2019 Policies Map and associated spatial data confirms the following designations apply to the application site:

- **Spalding Settlement Boundary (SELLP Policy 1):** The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Spalding, the Sub-Regional Centre of South Holland and the most sustainable settlement in the district for the direction of growth, investment and infrastructure;
- **Spalding Town Centre Boundary (SELLP Policies 24, 25):** The application site lies within the defined Spalding Town Centre Boundary, reflecting its location at the commercial northern approach to the historic town centre. SELLP Policy 25 specifically supports investment in infrastructure that supports the competitiveness and attractiveness of Spalding town centre;
- **Spalding Conservation Area (SELLP Policy 29):** The application site falls within the designated Spalding Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was designated and has been extended over time to encompass the historic town centre and surrounding areas of architectural and historic interest. The heritage assessment of the proposal's impact on the Conservation Area is addressed in detail in Section 6 of this statement;
- **Designated Cycle Route (SELLP Policy 33):** The application site is located adjacent to a designated cycle route. The proposed siting of the Street Hub has been assessed to maintain adequate clearance for cyclists using the route, addressed in Section 6 of this statement;

A review of the Historic England National Heritage List for England confirms that the nearest Listed Building to the application site is the Friends Meeting House at 53 Westlode Street (Grade II). The heritage implications of proximity to this Listed Building are assessed in the heritage assessment in Section 6. The application site is not within a Listed Building curtilage and no other Listed Buildings are immediately adjacent to the site.

Relevant Planning History

A review of the South Holland District Council planning register has been undertaken. **No planning history directly relating to telecommunications infrastructure or Street Hubs has been identified** at the specific application site.

However, the **surrounding area has an extensive planning history** relating to changes of use, commercial redevelopment, shopfront alterations and advertisement applications along Westlode Street, including various applications associated with the commercial development on this section of Westlode Street. This commercial planning history confirms the established active commercial character of the Westlode Street frontage.

The absence of site-specific telecommunications history is not a material constraint. The surrounding Westlode Street commercial frontage has an active commercial planning history that supports the principle of commercial street infrastructure at this location within the Conservation Area.

4 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for the installation of one Street Hub unit measuring 2986mm in height and 1236mm in width and 350mm in depth to be located on a parcel of land adjoining Unit 2 Westlode Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2AF. installation of a Street Hub will support the telephone and wi-fi coverage of the area.

The installation of the proposed Street Hub unit forms part of a strategic plan for the removal of existing, outdated BT payphones and adapting to contemporary demands. In this instance, this is a new installation of a street hub which is not replacing a piece of the old infrastructure.

The proposed street hub will contribute to modernising and decluttering the council's streetscape, supporting the objectives of the UK Digital Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the relevant policies within the local Development Plan.

The new street hub, with its modern design and high-quality construction, will provide modern infrastructure to location with a heavy footfall, aligning with the characteristics of the surrounding urban area.

5 LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This application is for full planning permission under section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [the 1990 Act] and express advertisement consent under regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 [the Regulations]. Applications for full planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the 1990 Act). Under the advertisement Regulations, Express Consent is required for the advertisement element, notably the 2no digital screens on each side of the Street Hub. As per regulation 3 of the Regulations, applications for Express Advertisement Consent must be determined in the interests of amenity and public safety, considering (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and (b) any other relevant factors.

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

PART I – Section 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out the Government's advertisement control planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Regulations are a material consideration for the Express Advertisement Consent application.

The proposal fully accords with the requirements of these regulations which require local planning authorities to consider only amenity and public safety. In respect of amenity, the Street Hub is located within a commercial urban environment where illuminated displays are already an established characteristic. The design, scale and appearance of the unit are consistent with surrounding street furniture and do not detract from local character or any feature of architectural, cultural or historic interest. The removal of outdated BT kiosks also reduces visual clutter, resulting in a net improvement to the streetscape. In respect of public safety, the siting of the unit ensures that it does not obstruct pedestrian movement, sightlines or the interpretation of highway signage, nor does it interfere with CCTV, security systems or traffic-monitoring devices. The installation therefore meets the statutory tests of amenity and public safety and complies with the Regulations.

UK Digital Strategy

Digital connectivity is now considered to be a utility, and modern life is increasingly impossible without it. Connectivity drives productivity and innovation and is the physical underpinning of a digital nation. Being connected is fundamental to the success in our modern world and Street Hub provides a cost-free way for communities to get online and take advantage of available opportunities. The Government has committed that every individual and every business should have the skills and confidence to seize the opportunities of digital technology and have easy access to high-quality internet wherever they live, work, travel or learn.

The proposal directly supports the ambitions of the UK Digital Strategy, which recognises digital connectivity as a modern utility essential for everyday life and economic growth. The Street Hub provides free, high-quality public Wi-Fi and modern communication services that help ensure residents, visitors and businesses can easily access digital information and online resources. This improved connectivity contributes to digital inclusion, offering support to individuals who may not have immediate access to personal broadband. By enhancing access to digital services within the town centre, the proposal advances the Strategy's aim of building a digitally confident society capable of participating fully in the modern economy.

UK Infrastructure Strategy: A 10 Year Strategy (June 2025)

The Report identifies that high-quality infrastructure boosts growth and plays a vital role in delivering higher living standards. Investment in infrastructure, including digital connectivity, will improve transport and communications networks, thereby supporting productivity and efficiency improvements.

The proposal is fully aligned with the UK Infrastructure Strategy, which emphasises the importance of high-quality infrastructure in boosting economic growth, supporting productivity and improving living standards. The installation of the Street Hub represents an investment in modern digital infrastructure that improves public access to reliable connectivity and online services. By replacing outdated telephone kiosks with a multifunctional, efficient and contemporary unit, the proposal contributes to the Strategy's objective of upgrading existing infrastructure to meet current and future digital needs. As such, the development clearly supports national aims to deliver infrastructure that is resilient, accessible and capable of supporting a modern, competitive economy.

Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022)

The Code of Practice has been fully revised, and the latest version was published by DCMS in March 2022. It acknowledges that the planning system plays a key role in delivering the digital infrastructure.

The proposal is fully consistent with the principles and objectives of the Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development (March 2022), which recognises that the planning system plays a vital role in delivering high-quality digital infrastructure in a sustainable and well-designed manner.

The proposed Street Hub contributes directly to the Government's aim of ensuring fast, reliable and accessible digital connectivity, supporting the ambitions outlined in paragraphs 8–12 of the Code, including the need for universal dependable coverage, modern telecommunications capability and infrastructure that enables economic, social and well-being benefits. Although the Code refers broadly to wireless infrastructure such as masts and cabinets, it also encourages all communication operators to follow its principles, which focus on good design, appropriate siting, and engagement with local communities.

The Street Hub replaces older, outdated telephone kiosks with a modern, streamlined unit that reduces street clutter, enhances visual amenity and provides improved digital services such as free Wi-Fi and emergency capability.

The installation therefore supports the Government's wider strategy for delivering high-quality digital infrastructure and aligns with the Code's emphasis on upgrading connectivity in a manner that is environmentally responsible, well integrated into the urban context, and beneficial to residents, visitors and businesses.

National and Local policies are most relevant to the submitted applications.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024		
Chapter	**Policy Text (abridged)**	**Comments**
2. Achieving Sustainable development	Paragraphs 7–14 of the NPPF define the purpose of the planning system as contributing to sustainable development, summarised as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The Framework (at paragraphs 10–11) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision-making, this means granting permission for proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the plan is absent or out-of-date, granting permission unless (i) specific policies provide a clear reason for refusal, or (ii) adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits.	The proposed Street Hub constitutes a sustainable development: it delivers social, economic, and environmental benefits, including improved digital connectivity, enhanced public realm and accessibility, and support for economic activity. There is no conflict with the current Development Plan, and no significant adverse effects are identified; accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development strongly supports approval.
6. Building a strong competitive economy	Paragraph 85–89 promote a strong, competitive economy, encouraging planning decisions that help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. The national policy recognises the importance of digital and technology sectors among priority growth areas.	The Street Hub supports local economic growth by providing free high-quality digital connectivity, enhancing the attractiveness of the public realm, facilitating business access, and promoting digital inclusion. It aligns with national economic objectives and supports innovation and productivity.
10. Supporting High-Quality Communications Infrastructure	Section 10 of the NPPF emphasises that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of high-quality communications infrastructure, including next-generation digital networks (e.g., 5G, full-fibre broadband). It encourages use of existing masts, buildings or structures before building new ones, and requires that the number of new masts and telecom infrastructure be kept to a minimum consistent with network need. Paragraph 123 clarifies that local planning authorities must determine electronic communications proposals on planning grounds only and must not seek to control competition between operators or impose	The Street Hub replaces existing BT payphone kiosks with a modern telecommunications infrastructure unit. It leverages established street-level infrastructure rather than introducing a large new mast, thereby aligning with the NPPF's requirement to minimise new telecom sites while improving network capacity. The proposal is consistent with promoting high-quality digital infrastructure and facilitating future network upgrades.

	health safeguards beyond those set by international guidelines.	
11. Making effective use of land	Section 11 supports the effective and efficient use of land, encouraging redevelopment of previously developed or under-used land and ensuring that new development makes appropriate use of land in sustainable locations.	The installation of the Street Hub represents efficient use of existing urban infrastructure, replacing obsolete payphone kiosks and consolidating services. It enhances the utility of the site without requiring additional land take or urban sprawl, consistent with Section 11 objectives.
12. Achieving well designed places	Though the NPPF does not repeat detailed advertisement control, its design and sustainable development aim overlap with amenity and public safety considerations. Combined with national regulation, the proposal's design must respect visual amenity and not create hazards or nuisances.	The Street Hub's compact, slender design preserves pedestrian flow (footway width maintained). Its illuminated screens are in the context of a commercial streetscape where similar signage exists. There is no detrimental impact on the local visual character, street clutter, pedestrian or vehicular safety, or public amenity.
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic	215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.	The Street Hub does not adversely affect the setting of heritage assets and is appropriately scaled and sited within the existing streetscape.

National Planning Policy Guidance		
Chapter	**Policy text (abridged)**	**Comments**
Determining a planning application	Emphasises a positive approach to decision-making, working proactively with applicants to approve sustainable development where possible.	The Street Hub is a sustainable infrastructure proposal with no identified adverse impacts. The guidance supports approval where proposals accord with policy and deliver public benefits.
Effective use of land	Encourages efficient use of land and existing infrastructure, particularly in built-up areas, to meet development needs sustainably.	The proposal makes effective use of existing footway space and replaces obsolete payphone infrastructure, avoiding additional land take.

Design	Development should respond positively to local character, public realm quality, accessibility, and safety.	The Street Hub has a compact, contemporary design that integrates with existing street furniture, maintains pedestrian accessibility, and respects the surrounding town centre character.
Advertisements	Advertisements should be assessed in terms of amenity and public safety, considering location, scale, illumination, and cumulative impact.	The proposed digital advertising element is appropriate within a commercial town centre context, does not harm visual amenity, and does not create hazards to pedestrians or traffic.
Telecommunications	Supports expansion of digital communications infrastructure; encourages use of existing sites and minimisation of new structures; proposals should be assessed on planning grounds only.	The Street Hub replaces an existing payphone kiosk with modern telecom infrastructure, aligning with guidance to use existing street assets and improve network coverage without proliferation of new masts.
Town centres and retail	Town centres should be supported as accessible, vibrant locations providing services and infrastructure that benefit users and businesses.	The Street Hub enhances town centre functionality by providing digital connectivity for residents, visitors, and businesses, supporting vitality and footfall.
Health and wellbeing	Planning should support environments that promote social inclusion, access to services, and wellbeing.	Free public Wi-Fi and charging facilities support social inclusion and accessibility, particularly for people reliant on digital services.
Historic environment	Development affecting the setting of heritage assets should be proportionate, contextual, and avoid harm.	The Street Hub does not adversely affect the setting of heritage assets and is appropriately scaled and sited within the existing streetscape.

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036	
Policy	**Policy text (abridged)**

Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy	New development will be directed to the most sustainable locations in South East Lincolnshire. The Sub-Regional Centres of Boston and Spalding are the primary focus for growth, investment and infrastructure. Within the settlement boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centres, development will be permitted that supports their role and function. Spalding is identified as the principal settlement of South Holland and a Sub-Regional Centre where growth, infrastructure and investment is directed. The Local Plan seeks to ensure Spalding continues to perform its role as a Sub-Regional Centre across the range of uses and activities needed to serve its hinterland.
Policy 2: Development Management	Proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to: 1. size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses; 2. quality of design and orientation; 5. the capacity of existing community services and infrastructure; 6. impact upon neighbouring land uses by reason of noise, odour, disturbance or visual intrusion;
Policy 3: Design of New Development	All development will create distinctive places through the use of high quality and inclusive design and layout and, where appropriate, make innovative use of local traditional styles and materials. Design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable. Development proposals will demonstrate how the following issues, where they are relevant to the proposal, will be secured: 1. creating a sense of place by complementing and enhancing designated and non designated heritage assets; historic street patterns; respecting the density, scale, visual closure, landmarks, views, massing of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area; 2. distinguishing between private and public space; 3. the landscape character of the location; 10. the appropriate treatment of facades to public places, including shop frontages to avoid visual intrusion by advertising, other signage, security shutters, meter boxes and other service and communication infrastructure;
Policy 9 – Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy	The vitality and attractiveness of Boston and Spalding town centres as visitor destinations will be supported. Development proposals that improve the quality, accessibility and character of the town centres for visitors will be encouraged. Development that supports the visitor economy through improvements to digital connectivity, the public realm and visitor infrastructure within the town centres will be viewed favourably.
Policy 24 – The Retail Hierarchy	The vitality and viability of the retail hierarchy, with Boston town centre and Spalding town centre as the Sub-Regional Centres, will be supported and protected. Development proposals that support and enhance the role, function, vitality and viability of town centres will be encouraged. Proposals for main town centre uses outside

	defined centres must apply the sequential approach to site selection and demonstrate no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres.
Policy 25 – Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres	The Borough and District Councils will support the vitality and viability of Boston and Spalding town centres by: encouraging a diverse and complementary range of town centre uses; supporting the enhancement and renewal of retail and commercial frontages; encouraging investment in infrastructure - including digital infrastructure - that supports the competitiveness and attractiveness of the town centres; and improving the public realm and pedestrian environment within the town centres. Development that enhances the public realm quality, digital connectivity and accessibility of the town centre will be supported.
Policy 26: Primary Shopping Frontages	The Primary Shopping Frontages of Boston and Spalding are designated on the Policies Map. Subject to Permitted Development Rights (or any successor) ground floor A1 units in the Primary Shopping Frontages should be retained predominantly for retail use unless it can be demonstrated that the loss of an A1 unit, by change of use or redevelopment will: 1. make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Frontage; 2. not result in a loss of A1 floor space or frontage of a scale that undermines the retail function of the frontage; and 3. allow upper floors to be effectively used, including the possibility of independent use, where appropriate. The blanking out of shop windows by externally-positioned opaque blinds or vinyl film or by other means will not be permitted.
Policy 29: The Historic Environment	Distinctive elements of the South East Lincolnshire historic environment will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. A. Listed Buildings 1. Proposals to change the use of a Listed Building or to alter or extend such a building will be granted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal is in the interest of the building's preservation and does not involve activities or alterations prejudicial to the special architectural or historic interest of the Listed Building or its setting. B. Conservation Areas Proposals within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve (and enhance or reinforce, as appropriate) features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting. Proposals should: 1. Retain buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces; 2. Retain architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
Policy 30 – Pollution	Development proposals must not give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution through noise, vibration, light, dust, odour or other emissions. Where such impacts may occur, adequate mitigation must be incorporated. The impact of proposed development on amenity through light pollution will be assessed having regard to its

	effect on residents, highway users and the landscape. External lighting and illuminated features must be designed to minimise light spillage and glare beyond the application site. Within Conservation Areas, the impact of illuminated elements on heritage character will receive particular scrutiny.
Policy 33 – Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network	Development proposals must not create an unacceptable impact on the safety and operation of the highway network, including through traffic generation, vehicle movements and parking. Proposals must not create unacceptable risks for pedestrians, cyclists or highway users; must not result in a significant adverse impact on the safe and efficient operation of the local highway network; must provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes; and must not obstruct designated cycle routes or pedestrian movement. Development adjacent to designated cycle routes must demonstrate that the proposal does not obstruct or create hazards for cyclists using the designated route.

Spalding as a Sub-Regional Centre - Policy Context

Spalding is identified within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011–2036 as a Sub-Regional Centre (Policy 1: Spatial Strategy), which is the highest tier of the settlement hierarchy for South Holland and one of the two most sustainable settlements in South East Lincolnshire for the direction of development, growth, infrastructure and investment. This designation reflects Spalding's role as the principal town centre of South Holland, providing a wide range of retail, commercial, employment, health and community services.

SELLP Policy 25 (Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres) specifically and explicitly supports investment in infrastructure - including digital infrastructure - that supports the competitiveness and attractiveness of Spalding town centre. This policy directly supports the principle of the proposed Street Hub, which delivers free Wi-Fi, 5G connectivity and digital advertising within the defined Spalding Town Centre Boundary. The proposal is also consistent with SELLP Policy 9 (Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy), which supports development that improves the quality and accessibility of the town centre for visitors.

6 ASSESSMENT AGAINST NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Assessment overview

The areas of assessment are set out as follows:

- Principle of development
- Amenity
- Design
- Heritage
- Public Realm
- Sustainable transport, accessibility and traffic
- Crime, Security and Safety

Principle of Development

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF 2024 confirms that advanced, high-quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being, and that planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks. SELLP Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) identifies Spalding as a Sub-Regional Centre where development, growth, infrastructure and investment is directed. SELLP Policy 25 (Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Spalding Town Centre) explicitly supports investment in digital infrastructure within Spalding town centre.

The application site is located on Westlode Street within the defined Spalding Settlement Boundary and the defined Spalding Town Centre Boundary. The provision of a new Street Hub delivering free Wi-Fi, 5G connectivity, emergency calling and digital advertising within Spalding's principal Sub-Regional Centre is entirely consistent with these policy objectives. SELLP Policy 25 represents an explicit policy of support for this type of investment in digital infrastructure within Spalding town centre.

The proposal is also consistent with SELLP Policy 9 (Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy), which supports development that improves the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of the town centre for visitors, and SELLP Policies 24 and 26, which support the vitality and viability of Spalding's town centre retail area and primary shopping frontage. SELLP Policy 2 (Development Management) confirms that development will be permitted where sustainable development considerations are met, including quality of design, character and amenity - all of which are satisfied by this proposal. The presumption in favour of sustainable development under both NPPF paragraph 11 and SELLP Policy 1 supports approval.

Amenity

Express advertisement consent must be assessed in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, which limits consideration to amenity and public safety. SELLP Policy 30 (Pollution) requires external lighting and illuminated features to be designed to minimise light spillage and glare beyond the application site.

Pedestrian Movement: The Street Hub is positioned within the wide footway on Westlode Street alongside the existing bollards and lighting columns. The footway is of adequate width to accommodate the Street Hub without adversely affecting pedestrian movement. The proposed siting has been specifically assessed to confirm adequate pedestrian clearance is maintained.

Cycle Route: The Street Hub has been positioned to maintain adequate clearance for cyclists on the adjacent designated cycle route. The positioning within the established furniture zone - alongside existing bollards and lighting columns - ensures no new obstruction is introduced to cycle movement. This is addressed further in the cycle route assessment below.

Visual Amenity and Illumination: The Street Hub's brightness management system ensures controlled illumination responsive to ambient conditions, minimising any potential light spill consistent with SELLP Policy 30. The modern commercial character of this section of Westlode Street provides an appropriate commercial context for the Street Hub's digital screens. Within Conservation Areas, SELLP Policy 30 notes that illuminated elements will receive particular scrutiny: the controlled brightness management system directly addresses this requirement.

Residential Amenity: Westlode Street is a commercial street; nearest residential properties are set back from the commercial frontages. Directional speakers ensure no noise nuisance.

Design

SELLP Policy 3 (Design of New Development) requires all development to create distinctive places through high quality and inclusive design. The proposed Street Hub is a contemporary, purpose-designed structure with a slim vertical profile of only 350mm depth. The Street Hub is positioned within the established street furniture zone alongside the existing bollards and lighting columns, integrating coherently with the existing furniture composition rather than creating a freestanding isolated element in the open pedestrian zone. The unit's modern, commercial character is consistent with the established

commercial character of the B&M retail environment and the wide pedestrian footway on this section of Westlode Street.

Heritage

The application site falls within the Spalding Conservation Area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in the exercise of planning functions.

Paragraphs 199–215 of the NPPF 2024 set out the policy framework for assessing impacts on heritage assets. SELLP Policy 29 (The Historic Environment) applies, requiring proposals within a Conservation Area to preserve and enhance features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting.

Character and Special Interest of the Spalding Conservation Area

The Spalding Conservation Area derives its special architectural and historic interest from the following character areas:

- **The Riverside (north and south of High Bridge):** The most historically significant area of the Conservation Area, characterised by Georgian and Victorian merchant houses, warehouses and commercial buildings lining the River Welland. The riverside setting - with its tree-lined walks and historic buildings - forms the core of the Conservation Area's special character and contains the greatest concentration of Listed Buildings;
- **The Historic Commercial Centre (Market Place, Hall Place, Sheepmarket):** Three linked historic spaces with their mediaeval street pattern, market hall, Georgian shopfronts and Victorian commercial development, forming the commercial heart of the historic town. This area contains important Listed Buildings including the Market Hall;
- **Church Street:** Characterised by significant historic buildings and the approach to historic places of worship;
- **Pinchbeck Road:** A residential approach road with Victorian and Edwardian development.

The character of the Spalding Conservation Area is therefore defined by the historic buildings and townscape of the **riverside and market areas** - the Georgian and Victorian architecture, the river setting, the surviving historic street pattern and the high concentration of Listed Buildings in the central and riverside sections. The Conservation Area contains a significant number of Listed Buildings, the majority concentrated in the core historic areas.

Character of the Application Site within the Conservation Area

The application site on the **northern section of Westlode Street** is located at the **periphery of the Spalding Conservation Area**, in the section characterised by modern commercial development including the B&M Home Discount store at 70 Westlode Street. The desktop appraisal confirms that this section of Westlode Street is **'modern in character and appearance, with surrounding development consisting predominantly of commercial and retail units.'**

The character of the northern Westlode Street frontage at the application site reflects this modern commercial character:

- The **B&M Home Discount store at 70 Westlode Street** - a large, modern retail warehouse unit of late-20th or early-21st century construction, which represents the dominant built form at this location and a significant departure from the historic Georgian and Victorian character of the riverside and market place areas;
- **Modern commercial frontages** and associated service infrastructure, including bollards, lighting columns, cycle route markings and street furniture typical of a modern town centre commercial environment;
- **Wide, hard-surfaced pedestrian areas** with minimal historic fabric or architectural features that contribute to the Conservation Area's significance;
- A predominantly late-20th century commercial character that bears little visual relationship to the historic riverside, market place and Church Street areas that define the core character and significance of the Spalding Conservation Area.

This section of Westlode Street is therefore at the **periphery** of the Conservation Area both geographically and in terms of the attributes that define its special character. The principal significance of the Spalding Conservation Area is concentrated in the riverside, market place and historic core, which are located to

the south and east of the application site. The northern section of Westlode Street, at the application site, makes a limited contribution to the character and special interest of the Conservation Area compared to these core historic areas.

Listed Buildings - Friends Meeting House, 53 Westlode Street

The nearest Listed Building to the application site is the **Friends Meeting House at 53 Westlode Street** (Historic England: Grade II). The Friends Meeting House is a notable example of Quaker meeting house architecture, likely dating from the late 18th or early 19th century. Its significance derives from its architectural interest as a surviving example of non-conformist religious architecture in Spalding and its historic associations with the local Quaker community.

The proposed Street Hub would be positioned on the footway on Westlode Street, in the section characterised by the B&M store and modern commercial development. The Street Hub, measuring 2,986mm in height and 350mm in depth, is a slim, vertically-proportioned piece of street furniture. The modern commercial character of the streetscene at this location - particularly the large B&M retail warehouse and associated modern commercial development - already represents a significant change from the historic character of Westlode Street. The Street Hub is of modest scale and would not dominate, overpower or visually obstruct the Friends Meeting House or materially affect its setting beyond the existing context of modern commercial development that already characterises this section of the street.

Impact Assessment

Conservation Area Character: The application site is located on the northern periphery of the Spalding Conservation Area, in the section that makes a limited contribution to its special character compared to the riverside and market place areas. The introduction of a Street Hub - a modern piece of street furniture consistent with the modern commercial character of this section of Westlode Street - would not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The unit's slim profile (350mm depth) and alignment with the existing bollards and lighting columns within the established street furniture zone ensures it would not introduce additional visual clutter to the pedestrian environment.

Friends Meeting House Setting: The proposed Street Hub is positioned on the footway in the modern commercial section of Westlode Street. The unit's slim, vertical profile (2,986mm tall, 350mm deep)

means it would not form a visually dominant element within the streetscene. The modern commercial character of the area - particularly the B&M retail warehouse - already forms the dominant visual backdrop to this section of the street. The Street Hub does not introduce a more visually intrusive element than those already present and would not materially harm the setting of the Friends Meeting House Listed Building.

Contribution to Conservation Area Character: SELLP Policy 29 requires development within a Conservation Area to preserve and enhance features that contribute positively to the area's character. The proposed Street Hub does not remove, obscure or harm any architectural details, historic building lines, historic surfaces or other features that contribute to the Conservation Area's character. The wide hard-surfaced footway area on which the Street Hub is proposed does not itself contain historic fabric or features of Conservation Area character significance.

Illumination and SELLP Policy 30: SELLP Policy 30 notes that within Conservation Areas, the impact of illuminated elements on heritage character will receive particular scrutiny. The Street Hub's brightness management system adjusts screen luminance in response to ambient light conditions, minimising light spillage and glare beyond the unit's immediate vicinity. The controlled illumination of the digital screens is appropriate to the modern commercial character of this section of Westlode Street and does not harm the historic character of the Conservation Area's core areas.

Level of Heritage Impact

Having regard to the above assessment, the proposed Street Hub would result in no harm to the significance, character or appearance of the Spalding Conservation Area or the setting of the Friends Meeting House Listed Building. This conclusion is supported by:

- The application site is located at the modern, commercial periphery of the Conservation Area, in a section that makes a limited contribution to its special character;
- The section of Westlode Street at the application site is characterised by modern commercial development - particularly the B&M retail warehouse - and does not exhibit the historic architectural character that defines the Conservation Area's special interest;
- The Street Hub is a compact, slim-profile structure (350mm depth) that would not dominate, overwhelm or visually intrude upon any surviving historic elements of the Conservation Area or the setting of the Friends Meeting House;

- The unit's alignment with the existing bollards and lighting columns within the established street furniture zone ensures it integrates coherently with the modern commercial streetscape without introducing additional visual clutter;
- The controlled brightness management system ensures illumination levels are proportionate and minimise light spillage, addressing the specific scrutiny that SELLP Policy 30 requires for illuminated elements in Conservation Areas.

Planning Balance - Heritage

In the event that any minimal residual harm to the character of the Conservation Area is identified - which the Applicant does not consider to be the case - this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal under NPPF paragraph 215 and SELLP Policy 29. The public benefits are substantial, including free public Wi-Fi directly supporting the vitality of Spalding town centre (SELLP Policy 25), 5G infrastructure, emergency calling and community safety benefits. These public benefits substantially and demonstrably outweigh any residual heritage impact.

Designated Cycle Route

The application site is adjacent to a designated cycle route, addressed under SELLP Policy 33 (Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network). Policy 33 requires that development must not create unacceptable risks for cyclists or obstruct designated cycle routes.

The Street Hub has been positioned within the established street furniture zone on the wide Westlode Street footway, alongside the existing bollards and lighting columns. This positioning has been specifically assessed in the desktop appraisal, which confirms that 'the proposal could be positioned to maintain adequate pedestrian and cyclist movement through the area.' The Street Hub does not introduce a new obstruction to cycle movement that is not already present within the established furniture zone; the existing bollards and lighting columns are comparable in scale and form to the proposed Street Hub. The proposal is consistent with SELLP Policy 33.

Public Realm

The Street Hub is positioned within the wide footway on Westlode Street, aligned with existing bollards and lighting columns, maintaining clear pedestrian routes and adequate clearance for cycle traffic. The

hub delivers free Wi-Fi, emergency calling, USB charging and 5G connectivity, enhancing the digital functionality of Spalding town centre's public realm and directly supporting SELLP Policy 25. SELLP Policy 3 requires development to improve the character and quality of the public realm: the Street Hub's modern, high-quality design is a positive addition to the established street furniture zone.

Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Traffic

SELLP Policy 33 (Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network) requires proposals not to create unacceptable impacts on highway safety, pedestrian movement or cycle routes. The Street Hub is positioned within the established furniture zone with adequate clearance for both pedestrian movement and cycle traffic on the adjacent designated cycle route. The unit does not generate vehicular traffic, servicing requirements or parking demand. No adverse impacts on highway, pedestrian or cycle safety have been identified.

Crime, Security and Safety

The Street Hub contributes positively to safety within Spalding town centre through integrated lighting (enhancing passive surveillance of the public realm), emergency calling and public safety messaging. A comprehensive Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan accompanies the application.

7 PLANNING BALANCE

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a single Street Hub unit on the public footway. The proposal forms part of a wider programme to modernise telecommunications infrastructure and improve digital connectivity within town centres.

Benefits of the Proposal

The proposal delivers a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits, consistent with the objectives of the development plan and national planning policy.

- From a social perspective, the Street Hub will provide free public Wi-Fi, emergency calling facilities, and device charging, supporting digital inclusion and accessibility for residents, workers, and visitors. This aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework's objective of promoting healthy, inclusive and safe communities, as well as Local Plan policies relating to inclusive design and social infrastructure.
- In economic terms, the provision of modern digital infrastructure at this town centre location supports business activity, visitor experience, and overall town centre vitality. Enhanced connectivity contributes to productivity and aligns with national and local policy objectives to support a strong, competitive and digitally enabled economy.
- From an environmental and land-use perspective, the proposal represents an efficient use of land by reusing existing street infrastructure and removing redundant phone boxes. This contributes to streetscape decluttering and avoids the need for additional land take or the installation of larger telecommunications structures, consistent with national policy and guidance on effective use of land and high-quality communications infrastructure.
- Data indicates that between Nov 2024-Nov 2025 over 1,900,00 calls have been made to essential charities for vulnerable people via BT Street Hubs. 2,010 calls to Childline, 1,640 Call to Youth Homelessness, 2,896 calls to Samaritans and 1,558 calls to Missing People.

The design of the Street Hub is compact, modern, and appropriate to its commercial context. It maintains adequate footway width, does not impede pedestrian movement, and integrates with existing street

furniture. The proposal therefore accords with development plan policies relating to design quality, public realm, and pedestrian safety.

Potential Impacts

The potential impacts of the proposal relate primarily to visual amenity, public safety, and heritage considerations.

- In terms of visual impact, the Street Hub is of modest scale and slender form and is located within an established commercial streetscape where signage and street furniture are already prevalent. Any associated digital advertising is controlled in scale and illumination and would not result in visual clutter or harm to local character.
- Regarding public safety and accessibility, the unit has been carefully sited to maintain pedestrian flow and avoid conflict with existing street furniture, trees, and transport infrastructure. No adverse impacts on highway or pedestrian safety have been identified.
- In relation to the historic environment, the proposal does not result in harm to the setting of any designated or non-designated heritage assets. The scale, design, and siting of the Street Hub ensure that the significance of heritage assets, where present, is preserved.

8 CONCLUSION

When assessed against the Development Plan as a whole, and in the context of national planning policy and guidance, the proposal is fully compliant with relevant policies within the National and local policies.

The identified benefits of the proposal, including enhanced digital connectivity, improved public realm, support for commercial vitality, and efficient use of existing infrastructure, are substantial and carry significant weight. No material harms have been identified that would outweigh these benefits.

Accordingly, in the overall planning balance, the proposal represents sustainable development and there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The application is therefore considered acceptable in planning and advertisement consent terms and should be supported and approved.