# Holbeach Road, Spalding

# Planning and Retail Statement

Lidl UK GmbH

September 2017

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# 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning and Retail Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Lidl UK GmbH.

1.2 It accompanies an application for planning permission at the former Welland Hospital site, Holbeach Road, Spalding, for:

*"Erection of a Class A1 food store, new access, service yard, car parking, landscaping and associated works"*

1.3 The food store unit is to be occupied by Lidl.

1.4 The purpose of this Statement is to assess the proposed development against relevant policies in the statutory development plan, having regard to other material planning considerations. It also includes a retail assessment.

1.5 This application for full planning permission has been submitted simultaneously with an outline application for the vacant plots of land either side of the proposal site. This application seeks outline planning permission for up to 36 residential units. It is proposed that all of the units will be affordable.

1.6 This planning statement draws upon other documents accompanying the application and should be read in conjunction with the following:

1 Planning drawings prepared by John Roberts Architects;

2 Design and Access Statement prepared by Lichfields;

3 Flood Risk Assessment prepared by CSG Consulting Engineers;

4 Phase 1 and 2 Geoenvironmental Assessment prepared by CSG Consulting Engineers;

5 Transport Assessment and Travel Plan prepared by SCP;

6 Acoustic Assessment prepared by NoiseAssess Ltd;

7 Landscaping Plan prepared by BEA Landscape Design Ltd;

8 Extended Phase 1 Ecology Survey prepared by CBE Consulting; and

9 Tree Survey prepared by CBE Consulting.

# 2.0 Key background information

2.1 This section sets out information on the applicant and the site, including a review of the planning history, before describing the proposed development that is subject of the planning application. This will inform the planning policy and retail assessment in subsequent sections of this Statement.

## The site and surrounding area

### The planning application site

2.2 The site was previously occupied by the Welland Hospital and former Bettinson Garage. The buildings have been cleared from the site.

2.3 The planning application site measures 1.04 hectares (shown on Location Plan ref. 7277L/19) and is bounded by:

- Holbeach Road to the south alongside a number of residential properties; and
- residential properties to the north.

2.4 The two sites to the east and west of the site are intended to be redeveloped for residential use and are subject of a separate outline planning application. The residential and retail proposals are connected and should be seen as a comprehensive redevelopment of the wider site with all the residential units to be affordable.

Figure 2.1 The site from Holbeach Road



Source: Lichfields

2.5 The River Welland (west) and Coronation Channel (east) are situated in close proximity to the site. The site is within Flood Zone 3a (Environment Agency) – an area with a high probability of flooding.

2.6 The site is not located within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on or near the vicinity of the site. There are in total four trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order on the site.

2.7 The site is located approximately 1.6km north east of the centre of Spalding town centre, along Holbeach Road. It is an out of centre site in retail terms as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2).

2.8 Accessibility to the site is dealt with in the transport assessment prepared by SCP. The current access to the site is from Roman Bank and off Holbeach Road. The site is easily accessible by public transport. East and west bound bus stops are located close to the application site, with services into Spalding town centre/rail station and to surrounding towns.

### The surrounding area

2.9 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character; however, in the immediate vicinity of the site there are a number of commercial uses including a small convenience store, a Post Office and a takeaway. Springfields Outlet Shopping Centre is located 0.4km to the north east of the application site.

## Existing retail hierarchy

2.10 The emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017) defines the retail hierarchy of the centres identified in the joint strategic planning area. Two sub-regional centres (Boston and Spalding) are identified alongside the district centre of Holbeach and five other local centres. Spalding town centre is the closest 'sub-regional centre' approximately 1.6km south of the site. Spalding is identified as the largest retail centre in the South Holland Local Plan (2006).

Figure 2.2 Spalding Town Centre



Source: Lichfields

Figure 2.3 Springfields Outlet Shopping Centre




Source: Lichfields

2.11 Within Spalding, there is a good range of food stores. Lidl already operates a store to the south of the train station. The town centre also includes Aldi, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer's Simply Food and Iceland stores. There is also a range of other smaller food retailers and international food stores in the centre of Spalding. The health check of Spalding town centre (Appendix 2) demonstrates that the centre is an attractive, vital and viable market town.

## Planning history

2.12 A review of the Council's online planning records reveal no relevant planning history to the current proposals.

## The application proposal

2.13 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a Class A1 convenience food store, as shown on the proposed site plan (drawing ref. 7277L-sk07). The unit will provide 2,123 sq.m (GIA) of Class A1 floorspace with a net sales area of 1,325 sq.m. The development also includes a car park, servicing area, landscaping and associated works. In total 148 car parking spaces are proposed, including parent/child spaces and disabled parking spaces. A new access will be formed from Holbeach Road. The proposed store is to be occupied by Lidl. This is part of a strategy to trade two stores in Spalding and the intention is for the existing town centre store to remain open.

2.14 This application forms part of the wider redevelopment of the former Welland Hospital and former Bettinson Garage sites that as a whole comprise approximately 2ha of land. The development of a food store on this site allows for an all affordable housing scheme to be developed on the two residential sites to the east and west of the application site.

## Lidl's current business model

2.15 Lidl UK GmbH has been developing stores throughout the UK since 1994 and currently operates over 600 stores nationwide. Lidl offers high quality products at low prices, as a result of the company's cross-European bulk buying power, and its efficient approach to store format, staffing and management.

2.16 There are a number of factors which help to limit the impact of Lidl stores on existing town centre shops. These include:

- the limited number of product lines that their stores carry, with customers tending to visit other shops to meet day-to-day convenience needs;
- Lidl stores do not incorporate specialist butchery or delicatessen counters; and
- the comparison (i.e. non-food) goods offer in their stores varies widely changing on a twice weekly basis, thereby dispersing any possible impact across a range of sectors.

2.17 Along with all other stores nationwide over recent years, the store will include a bakery. These bakery facilities provide a range of parbaked, frozen items, which are then heated in store on a daily basis for customers to purchase. Lidl does not, however, significantly vary the range of products sold in their bakery over time, nor do they bake products 'on demand'. They are not, therefore, able to offer the more bespoke service, or range and choice of products, which is generally offered by specialist/independent bakeries that are often found in town centres. Rather, they sell a set range of items which complement the other shopping undertaken by visitors to their stores, and do not represent a destination in themselves.

2.18 A typical Lidl store will offer approximately 1,500 product lines, compared with a typical range of 20,000+ lines in a superstore operated by one of the main convenience retailers. Subject to seasonal variation, Lidl stores dedicate around 20% of floorspace to the sale of non-food comparison goods items, with the remaining floorspace being used for the sale of convenience goods.

2.19 Lidl stores primarily seek to serve the immediate local community in which they are located, both in terms of their shopping function and also in terms of employment. Lidl seek to employ approximately 15 full time and 25 part time staff from their local community, so that they can offer both a friendly and familiar staffing service to customers. They are committed to attracting customers from the local communities in which their stores are located and offer a free phone taxi service in each of their stores to assist those who have mobility difficulties in the vicinity of the store.

# 3.0 Relevant planning policy

3.1 This section identifies key relevant policy and guidance at a national and development plan level, of relevance to the assessment of the proposed development. The proposed development is assessed against the policies in Sections 4.0 and 5.0.

## The statutory development plan

3.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that where an adopted development plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.3 The statutory development plan for the site comprises of the South Holland Local Plan (2006, as saved 2009). In accordance with the NPPF, and given the age of the Local Plan, only limited weight can be given to a number of its policies, depending on the degree of consistency with the NPPF.

3.4 The application site is not allocated for any specific purpose (see Figure 3.1 below) within the adopted Local Plan and lies within the settlement boundary of Spalding. Holbeach Road is identified as a 'Cycleway'.

Figure 3.1 South Holland Local Plan Proposals Map




Source: South Holland District Council

3.5 Policies of particular relevance to this application are summarised below:

1 Policy SG1 – General Sustainable Development;

2 Policy SG2 – Distribution of Development;

3 Policy SG3 – Settlement Hierarchy;

4 Policy SG7 – Energy Efficiency;

5 Policy SG11 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);

6 Policy SG12 – Sewerage and Development;

7 Policy SG14 – Design and Layout of New Development;

8 Policy SG15 – New Development: Facilities for Road Users, Pedestrians and Cyclists;

9 Policy SG17 – Protection of Residential Amenity;

10 Policy EC7 – Retail Development Outside Defined Retail Centres; and

11 Policy TC2 – Cycling, Cycleways.

## Other material considerations

3.6 Other material considerations include guidance contained within national policy and guidance. In addition, emerging policy is also relevant to this application. These are set out below.

### National policy and guidance

3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

3.8 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, March 2014) provides guidance on policies contained in the NPPF.

### South East Lincolnshire Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (December 2013) & Retail Papers (July 2016, & March 2017)

3.9 The South East Lincolnshire Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (2013) provides capacity forecasts and considers the health of the defined centres in South Holland District and Boston Borough. This document informs the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

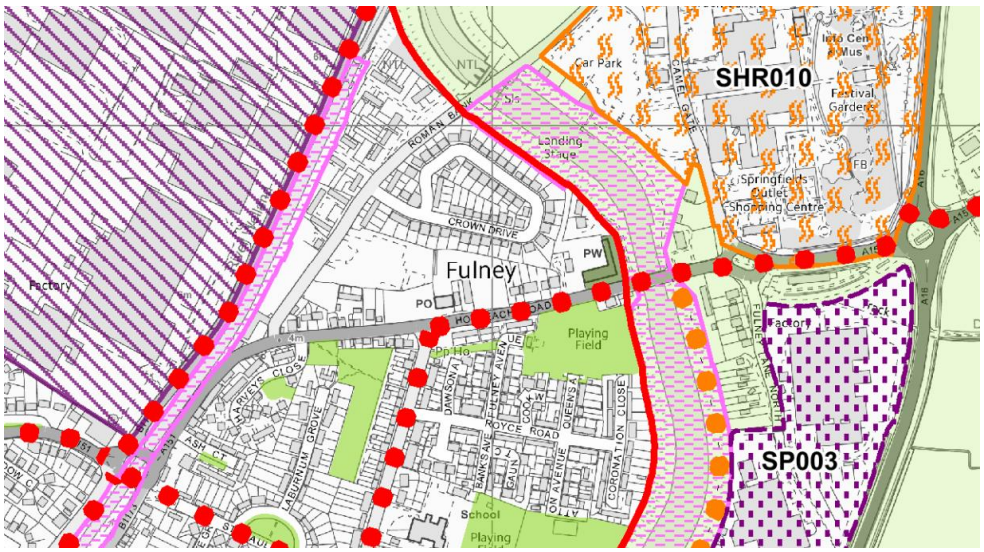
3.10 The South East Lincolnshire Retail Paper considers potential retail sites in the Spalding settlement boundary and is considered in more detail in the next section in relation to the sequential test.

### Emerging policy

3.11 South Holland forms part of the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC). The JSPC submitted the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017) to the Secretary of State for examination in June 2017. Limited weight can be given to the policies in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

3.12 The site is again not allocated for any specific purpose in the emerging Local Plan.

Figure 3.2 South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036: Publication Version Proposals Map (March 2017)




Source: South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

## Key issues

3.13 The above planning policies are relevant to the determination of this application. The key issue is whether the principle of a Class A1 food store is acceptable in this location.

3.14 The NPPF provides up to date guidance for the determination of planning applications for main town centre uses. The NPPF retail tests and relevant Local Plan policies are addressed in Section 4.0.

3.15 Other considerations include whether the development is acceptable in flooding and water, transport, sustainability, ground conditions, arboricultural, and design terms. An assessment of these issues is made against relevant planning policy in Section 5.0.

# 4.0 Assessment of retail planning matters

4.1 This section provides an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant retail planning policy identified in Section 3.0.

4.2 The application site is approximately 1.6km north east of Spalding town centre (the closest centre to the application site) and is an out of centre site in retail terms as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2).

4.3 The main policy considerations for the determination of planning applications for retail (as main town centre uses, NPPF, Annex 2) are set out in paragraphs 23 to 27 of the NPPF. The NPPF adopts a 'town centre first' approach to ensure the vitality and viability of town centres is maintained and enhanced i.e. local planning authorities should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre locations be considered. This sequential test is also addressed through Policy EC7 of the adopted local plan.

## Retail policy

4.4 Retail policy in the South Holland Local Plan (2006, as saved 2009) and is still used to assess retail development in South Holland. Policy EC7 states that retail development outside defined retail centres will be permitted only where there is an identified need for the development and:

- the proposal is consistent with the sequential approach to site selection;
- the development would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any nearby retail town, district or local centre;
- the development would be conveniently accessible to its catchment population by a choice of means of transport; and
- there would be no significant adverse environmental impact.

4.5 The latest 'Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study' (December 2013) that forms part of the evidence base for the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan assesses retail capacity across the Joint Strategic Planning area. The study describes Spalding as the principal retail centre serving South Holland and the south of the Joint Strategic Planning area.

4.6 Need is no longer a consideration within the retail tests of the NPPF. Notwithstanding this the Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study identifies a need of 2,286 sq.m net of convenience goods retailing in Spalding by the end of the plan period (2031) with a 'current' (2013) need for an additional 895 sq.m net. By 2016 the requirement increases to 1,130 sq.m net. As such a need has been identified for increased convenience goods floorspace in Spalding to serve local residents.

4.7 The other requirements of Policy EC7 are dealt with below and in Section 5.0.

4.8 Policy 23 of the Emerging Local Plan (2017) states that there is no 'quantitative' need for additional convenience goods floorspace in the Local Plan area before 2021. This is not consistent with the conclusions of the Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study. It also states that such provision should be as small-scale units of up to 500 sq.m (net) within new local centres or underserved areas. Lichfields objected to this policy on behalf of the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust as it is considered there is no basis for this prescriptive requirement.

4.9 The Local Plan has not yet been tested at an Examination and as such limited weight can be attributed to its policies. In addition, the NPPF sets out that the planning system should operate

to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support sustainable economic growth.

4.10 As is demonstrated below and in Section 5.0, these proposals represent sustainable development and will help secure economic growth.

## Sequential and impact tests

4.11 The application proposes the construction of a 2,123 sq.m (GIA) Class A1 convenience food store unit to be occupied by Lidl. As noted above, Lidl already operates a store in Spalding town centre, and commercially it would not be feasible or realistic for Lidl to seek dual representation through a second store elsewhere in the town centre. The new store will serve a different catchment, to the north of the town centre. However, notwithstanding this, and to ensure a robust sequential analysis, we have considered alternative sites within the town centre.

4.12 Paragraph 24 of the NPPF requires a sequential test to be carried out for applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre or in accordance with an up to date development plan. In this respect, the NPPF states that applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale.

4.13 Paragraph 26 of the NPPF states that when assessing applications for retail development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up to date local plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the proposed floorspace is over a proportionate, locally set threshold.

4.14 The South Holland Local Plan (2006) pre-dates the NPPF and there is no locally set threshold. The emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017), sets a local threshold in Spalding of 250 sq.m (net) whereby development over this figure is required to undertake an impact assessment. As noted above, the plan is yet to reach the Examination state, and this locally set threshold has therefore not been tested to determine whether it is appropriate. Again, Lichfields objected to this policy as there is no justification for such a low threshold. As such, there is no up to date local threshold and so the NPPF default threshold of 2,500 sq.m applies to these proposals.

4.15 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advocates a positive approach to meeting forecast retail needs, making clear that local planning authorities should assess and plan to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full. It also states that:

*"It may not be possible to accommodate all forecast needs in a town centre: there may be physical or other constraints which make it inappropriate to do so. In those circumstances, planning authorities should plan positively to identify the most appropriate alternative strategy for meeting the need for these main town centre uses, having regard to the sequential and impact tests."*

4.16 In relation to the sequential test in particular, the PPG requires that local authorities consider whether the identified need for main town centre uses can be accommodated on town centre sites. This should consider the suitability and availability of sites, with particular regard to the nature of the need that is to be addressed.

4.17 In addition, the PPG states that the use of the sequential test should recognise that certain main town centre uses have particular market and locational requirements, which mean that they may only accommodated in specific locations. It also recognises that, as promoting new development on town centre locations can be more expensive and complicated than elsewhere, local planning authorities need to be realistic and flexible in terms of their expectations.

# 1. Sequential test

### Court and appeal decision guidance

4.18 The Courts have provided clarification on the application of the sequential test and the need for applications to demonstrate flexibility. These judgements provide important legal precedents that apply to the interpretation of the NPPF. The Supreme Court's ruling in the case of Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council (2012) established that 'suitability' is very much related to the applicant's own requirements. Paragraph 29 of the Judgement (Lord Reed) states that a key question is *"whether an alternative site is suitable for the proposed development, not whether the proposed development can be altered or reduced so that it can be made to fit an alternative site".*

4.19 This principle has now been established in English law in the Administrative Court judgement in the case of R (on the application of Zurich Assurance Ltd T/A Threadneedle Property Investment v North Lincolnshire Council [2012].

4.20 In terms of availability the Rushden Lakes decision (APP/G2815/V/12/2190175) interprets this requirement as set out in the NPPF:

*"In terms of availability, NPPF [24] simply asks whether town centre or edge of centre sites are "available". It does not ask whether such sites are likely to become available during the remainder of the plan period or over a period of some years. NBC has previously adopted the same interpretation of "available" as LXB do. Mr Lewin accepted that in the Committee report (24 July 2012) in relation to an application to redevelop the Royal Mail site at Barrack Road for a 5,000+ sq m Tesco superstore, the Council rejected Legal & General's objection that availability should have been looked at over a longer time frame. The site was not currently available and that was what was required by the sequential test." (Paragraph 8.55).*

4.21 The above has informed the methodology we have applied to the sequential test for the current application.

### Methodology

4.22 In order to inform the sequential test analysis for this application, we have assessed the potential for sites within Spalding Town Centre as it is the nearest town centre to the application. Given its place in the retail hierarchy and the catchment area that the proposed store seeks to serve, this is the only town centre which needs to be considered as part of the sequential test.

### Site consideration

4.23 The application proposes a new food store comprising 2,123 sq.m gross floorspace, with associated access, parking and landscaping. Any potential sites would need to be able to accommodate a store of a similar scale and nature with associated parking and servicing. Taking into account the need for flexibility set out in the NPPF sites of at least 0.9 ha would be required to ensure the scheme can be delivered.

4.24 The methodology adopted in identifying site availability is as follows:

- **Development plan**: to identify sites allocated for retail development within the town centre;
- **Emerging plans**: to identify sites allocated for retail development within the town centre;

- **On the ground site survey**: to establish from a detailed site survey sites or buildings with potential for development occupancy, such as cleared sites, underdeveloped sites or redundant buildings.

4.25 Adopting the above approach enables the identification of all potential development sites. Should sites emerge, a thorough assessment is then made to establish their suitability and potential to accommodate a Class A1 convenience food store and their availability.

4.26 The NPPF confirms that, in relation to retail development the 'centre' constitutes the primary shopping area. Edge of centre sites are defined as being locations which are well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area.

**Assessment of identified sites**

4.27 We have considered sites within and on the edge of Spalding town centre. The sites that have been identified as potentially available and suitable are described in Appendix 1.

4.28 Appendix 1 demonstrates there are no sequentially preferable sites.

4.29 Importantly, we note that the Spalding Retail Paper (July 2016) concluded that:

*"It has been demonstrated through the assessment of sites that there are no sites available to meet the immediate identified need within, or adjacent to the town centre"*

4.30 In preparing the Spalding Retail Paper, a comprehensive review was undertaken, that confirmed that no sites are suitable or available. In addition, in terms of the out of centre sites that were considered, the site at Holbeach Road is the closest available site to the town centre and the most likely to generate linked trips. The Council's evidence base therefore effectively acknowledges that this is the most appropriate retail site in the town, in retail policy terms.

4.31 The updated Spalding Retail Paper (March 2017) again did not identify any town centre or edge of centre retail sites. It can therefore be concluded that there are no other forthcoming sequentially preferable sites. The only site taken forward in the retail paper was the expansion of the Springfields Outlet Shopping Centre for comparison goods. This is an out of centre location.

4.32 Based on the above we consider that the current proposals accord fully with the requirements of the NPPF and the development plan policy in terms of the sequential test.

## 2. Impact test

4.33 As noted above, the proposed food store falls below the NPPF threshold whereby an impact assessment is required. The adopted plan does not set a local threshold and therefore the impact test is not a relevant consideration in the determination of this application. On this basis alone, the proposals satisfy the impact test. However, given the intention is to introduce a lower threshold in emerging policy, we have considered the impact of the proposed development, in order to provide a robust assessment and also to provide comfort to the Council that the proposals will have no adverse impacts upon the vitality and viability of Spalding town centre. This needs to be considered in the context of the Lichfields health check (December 2016) (Appendix 2) which confirms a vital and viable centre, clearly able to withstand competition from the proposals.

4.34 The principal retail impact issue is whether the forecast retail turnover of the proposed development would result in an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of surrounding shopping centres. This assessment particularly focuses on Spalding, which is the nearest main centre to the application site.

## Turnover of the proposed development

4.35 The proposed Lidl food store will have a net sales area of 1,325 sqm. As set out earlier, it is assumed that up to 20% of the net sales area (265 sqm) will be used for the sale of comparison goods, and 80% (1,060 sqm) will be used for the sale of convenience goods. Given only a small element of the store will be used for the sale of comparison goods, the impact assessment has focused on the convenience goods element of the store.

Table 4.1: Convenience goods turnover of proposed store, 2017

| | Sales area (sq.m net) | Turnover (£ per sq.m) | Turnover (£m) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Convenience goods | 1,060 | £7,042 | £7.93m |

Source: Mintel

4.36 This results in a convenience goods turnover of the unit of £7.93 million in 2017 (figures have been re-based to 2011 prices to be consistent with the Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study).

4.37 For the purposes of this retail impact analysis we have assumed a design year of 2020, which allows time for the implementation of the planning permission and a settled trading pattern to be established.

## Turnover of Spalding town centre

4.38 Using the data within the Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (TCRCS, 2013) the total convenience goods turnover for facilities in Spalding is estimated to be £105.17 million at 2020 in 2011 prices (which includes the in, edge and out of centre provision). Around three quarters of this turnover is from the existing Sainsbury's and Morrisons stores. The comparison goods turnover for Spalding is estimated to be £154.60 million in 2020. The turnover for Spalding as a whole (including comparison and convenience turnover) is forecast at £259.77 million at 2020.

4.39 The figures within the TCRCS suggest that both the Sainsbury's and Morrisons stores are trading significantly above company average turnover. The convenience goods turnover for the Sainsbury's in 2020 is £33.50 million. With a net convenience goods sales area of 2,258 sq.m, this implies a turnover of £14,836 per sq.m, and the store is trading around 46% (or around £10 million) higher than the benchmark turnover of £10,189 per sq.m. Similarly, the convenience goods turnover of the Morrisons in 2020 is £43.82 million. With a net convenience goods sales area of 2,989 sq.m, this implies a turnover of £14,660 per sq.m, and the store is trading around 29% (or around £10 million) higher than the benchmark turnover of £11,387 per sq.m. These figures imply that there is surplus expenditure (around £20 million) in the Spalding area that could support additional floorspace, over and above the capacity identified in the TCRCS.

4.40 The TCRCS provides convenience goods turnovers of other main centres in South East Lincolnshire, which are estimated for 2020 as follows:

Table 4.2: Convenience goods turnover of centres, 2020

| Turnover £m | Boston | Crowland | Donington | Holbeach | Kirton | Long Sutton | Sutton Bridge |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Convenience | £130.02m | £3.30m | £3.20m | £26.20m | £3.80m | £10.51m | £2.56m |

Source: TCRCS 2013

## Trade diversion

4.41 In proposing a new Lidl store to the north east of the town centre, the aim for the new Lidl to serve the northern part of the town and beyond, and the existing store will continue to serve the centre and areas to the south. Lidl advise that there are two very distinct catchments within Spalding, and their intention is to retain their town centre store in order to better serve both

catchments. Given the limited amount of comparison goods floorspace within the proposed food store, our assessment has focused on the convenience goods element of the store.

4.42 The majority of trade will be diverted from existing supermarkets in and around Spalding, in particular customers who are travelling to use the existing Lidl, plus the Aldi and Sainsbury's stores in the town centre, and the out of centre Morrisons store. Looking at the patterns of trade draw within the TCRCS, residents within the Spalding zone (zone 4) also shop in Boston, Holbeach, Long Sutton and other centres both in and outside South East Lincolnshire.

4.43 On the above basis it is forecast that around 30% of the proposed Lidl store's turnover will be diverted from stores within Spalding town centre, and a further 50% from the Spalding stores in out of centre locations. These estimates reflect the existing shopping patterns within Spalding, derived from the TCRCS. The remaining turnover would be drawn from facilities in Boston and other district and local centres, plus some passing trade. Given the type and scale of retail facilities within the other district and local centres, we consider the level of trade diversion from any one centre would be limited.

4.44 Table 4.3 applies these assumed trade diversion figures to the estimated convenience goods retail turnover of Spalding, Boston and other centres in South East Lincolnshire in 2020.

Table 4.3: Forecast trade diversion

| Centre | Convenience turnover 2020 (£m) | Trade diversion | | Residual turnover 2020 (£m) | Impact 2020 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % scheme turnover | £m | | |
| Spalding – town centre * | £57.11m | 30% | £2.38m | £54.73m | 4.2% |
| Spalding – out of centre * | £48.06m | 50% | £3.96m | £44.10m | 8.2% |
| Boston | £130.02m | 5% | £0.40m | £129.62m | 0.3% |
| Other SE Lincs | £49.57m | 5% | £0.40m | £49.17m | 0.8% |
| Other | - | 10% | £0.79m | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **100%** | **£7.93m** | **-** | **-** |

* Split taken from TCRCS

4.45 Based on the above, stores in Spalding town centre will experience an impact level of 4.2%. The majority of this trade diversion will be from the existing Sainsbury's store, as the main supermarket in the town centre. As noted above, the Sainsbury's store is trading around 46% above benchmark turnover levels, and the likely trade diversion to the proposed Lidl store would go some way to redress this balance, and the store would continue to trade at a level significantly above company average. Even if all of the £2.38 million was diverted from the Sainsbury's, the store would continue to trade around 35% above benchmark. A significant proportion will also be diverted from the existing Lidl store, and as noted above, Lidl has confirmed that the existing store will continue to trade.

4.46 There would be a limited impact on other stores within the town centre. Generally, facilities will compete on a like for like basis, and we expect trade to primarily be drawn from the existing supermarkets. Apart from the main supermarkets, the majority of the convenience stores in the town centre are small, independent or specialist retailers, and these would not be significantly affected by the development. Smaller units within the town centre already compete effectively with the existing out of centre facilities. We consider that there is no reason why these units should not continue to trade well in the face of competition from the proposed scheme.

4.47 Impact on the out of centre stores in Spalding would be around 8.2%. This primarily relates to the Morrisons store, given that this is located to the north of Spalding town centre and is likely to serve a similar catchment area to the proposed store. As noted above, this store is also trading significantly above company average levels. It should also be noted that out of centre stores are not protected by retail policy.

4.48 Stores in Boston would experience an impact of just 0.3%, and impact on other centres in South East Lincolnshire would be around 0.8%. These impact levels are low, and would not cause stores to close.

## Impact on vitality and viability and planned investment

4.49 In terms of the impact tests set out in the NPPF, this very limited level of trade diversion needs to be considered in terms of the:

1 impact on the vitality and viability of centres; and

2 impact on existing, committed and planned investment.

4.50 The limited levels of trade diversion would not have a significant adverse impact in the context of the above tests. The forecast trade diversion needs to be considered in the context of the relative strength of Spalding town centre. The health check within Appendix 2 demonstrates that the centre trades well, and it is not considered to be vulnerable to the proposed Lidl supermarket. In addition, as noted above, the larger stores are trading significantly above benchmark level, reducing the impact effects on these stores. We consider that there is no reason why these units should not continue to trade well in the face of competition from the proposed scheme.

4.51 The proposed Lidl store will enhance the current retail offer and better serve residents, particularly to the north of Spalding, and will complement the retail function of the town centre rather than compete with it. This is further demonstrated by the fact that Lidl is planning to operate two stores in the town.

4.52 It is clear that as well as the overall impact levels being limited, no single retailer will be significantly affected as the trade diversion will be split between a number of retailers. None of these retailers would be affected to the extent that their future trading level would be prejudiced. In addition, people will continue to link trips to the town centre, as Spalding is the main retail centre in the area.

4.53 The figures above relate to impact on the convenience goods turnover of the centre only, and impact on the town centre as a whole would be proportionally much lower. The town centre will continue to be a vital and viable centre.

4.54 The development would have no impact on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in the town centre. This reflects the fact that there are no more sequentially preferable sites, located within or on the edge of the town centre, which are fully suitable and/or available, and which could accommodate the proposed development. The TCRCS and the Spalding Retail Paper (March 2017) do not identify any retail commitments for Spalding. We are not aware of any planned investment that would be affected by the proposed development.

## Conclusion on Retail Impact

4.55 The above assessment considers the extent to which the forecast retail turnover of the proposed development will impact upon the vitality and viability of Spalding town centre as the closest main centre to the application site.

4.56 The analysis concludes that the forecast level of impact from the town centre would be low, and the role and function of the town centre would not be undermined as a result of the proposed development. There would be no harm to the vitality and viability of Spalding town centre in terms of the considerations of the NPPF.

4.57 More generally, all centres and stores will continue to benefit from growth in expenditure over the period to 2020 and beyond, which will help to more than offset any trade diversion, and to maintain their wider vitality and viability.

4.58 As stated above, there is no requirement for an impact assessment to be undertaken, as the floorspace of the proposed development falls below the NPPF threshold. However the assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in its consideration of the application and has demonstrated that there would not be any significant adverse impacts arising from the development. The proposed development therefore accords with the requirements of the NPPF.

## Conclusions

4.59 The proposals have been tested against relevant local retail policy and the retail tests within the NPPF.

4.60 The proposals are in accordance with the Local Plan, in particular policy EC7, and significant weight should be attributed to the sustainable economic growth this development will secure.

# 5.0 Assessment against national policy

5.1 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that its policies are material considerations which should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. At paragraph 7 of the Framework it is explained that there are three dimensions to sustainability:

- an economic role;
- a social role; and
- an environmental role.

5.2 As such, this section considers how the application proposals will contribute to the building of a strong, responsive and competitive economy that supports vibrant and healthy communities, and contributes to the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment.

## Economic contribution

5.3 National planning policy requires LPAs to take a positive approach towards economic development, including retail development, and makes clear that applications which secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably. The NPPF emphasises the importance that should be attached to the creation of additional jobs to promote economic sustainable development (Paragraph 9).

5.4 The proposed new food store will provide a source of employment for the surrounding areas. Based upon the floorspace of the proposed development, and information provided by the operator, it is estimated that the new Lidl food store could potentially create 40 direct new full and part time jobs, equating to 28 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs.

5.5 These figures relate to gross employment, and do not take into account either any potential displacement of existing employment or any employment multiplier impacts, including any indirect or induced employment that could be supported. This includes employment which will be generated through spending in the local economy by those employed at the developments, and through the use of local firms/suppliers by the proposed food store.

5.6 The subject application proposals represent a sizeable investment in the local area. They would also generate new employment during the construction phase, a proportion of which will be captured at the local level, as well as related spin-off jobs. The proposed development will therefore result in a boost to local employment and the local economy.

5.7 In addition, the NPPF promotes competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer, and sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing town centres. It has been demonstrated in Section 4.0 that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impact upon existing centres, including Spalding town centre. It has also been demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable opportunities which are suitable and available to accommodate the proposed development.

5.8 In practice, the proposed development would enhance Lidl's existing offer in the town, and provide more choice for local residents. The store will help to generate linked trips with existing facilities in Spalding town centre, driving footfall in centre, reducing spending leakage to other centres, and broadening the town's customer base more generally

5.9 In the context of the above, it is clear that the proposed development would have a significant positive impact in economic terms, resulting in the creation of new jobs and retaining more local spending in the town.

## Social contribution

5.10 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should work proactively to secure developments that improve the social conditions of their area.

5.11 Retail employment has become increasingly important in recent years. The positions created within the proposed new food store would include those in management, checkouts, customer service, restocking, security and cleaners. Such opportunities can represent a good route into employment, and represent a stepping stone towards other forms of employment and increasing skill levels.

5.12 The application proposals would also enhance the existing range of food store provision available to residents within Spalding and the surrounding area. The proposed development would help to ensure that local needs are met in a conveniently accessible location, and reduce the need to travel.

5.13 The proposed development would therefore make a positive contribution to the social dimension of sustainable development.

## Environmental contribution

5.14 As required by the NPPF, proposed new developments should contribute to, protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

5.15 The application site is considered to represent a sustainable location for the proposed development, due to its proximity to surrounding residential areas and its location within the defined settlement boundary. The proposed development would provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, as well as those travelling by car.

5.16 Lidl is committed to achieving low energy sustainable development through both the day-to-day running of its stores and designing sustainability initiatives within its buildings. As a group, Lidl operates a corporate environmental policy which represents a conscious effort to reduce carbon emissions through store design and operating procedures.

5.17 Key features which are typically implemented in respect of proposed new Lidl stores are as follows:

- the store will be heated using a refrigeration waste heat recovery system. This form of renewable energy recovers waste heat from the food chilling equipment and is used to provide heating to the main sales area, warehouses and offices area. The use of this system will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 26%;
- temperature levels within the store will be controlled by a Building Management System (BMS) and will vary throughout the store dependent on the use of each area;
- low energy lighting design, using highly efficient LED luminaires, will be used throughout the store.
- all lighting will be connected to the BMS. The lighting within the sales area will be controlled by timers set to the opening times of the store which means that lighting is not left on unnecessarily. The sales area uses full lighting during trading hours and cuts back to one third lighting before and after trading hours to allow for the stocking of the store. Occupancy lighting controls will be used on non-retail areas;
- BMS and LUX sensors also power the external lighting. This means that lights are only on during dark hours and ensures that they do not remain on later than one hour after the store closes;

- water consumption is carefully monitored and there are sensors on the taps in the toilets in order to minimise usage and prevent wastage from them being left on;
- Lidl use '4 fan' chiller condenser units, which are externally mounted. These units are designed to omit very little noise and be as environmentally friendly as possible;
- Lidl undertake careful planning of store stock levels, stock availability and deliveries to the food store to ensure unnecessary journeys are avoided and the maximum amount of products possible are delivered per litre of fuel used. In addition Lidl will optimise each delivery by returning all waste to the distribution depot on the lorry's return journey;
- an Integrated Waste Management Policy, which complies with relevant legislation and minimises the impact of the food store on the environment, will be used with high packaging recoverability as a result of Lidl's efficient delivery and stocking system. Lidl will install waste handling equipment, such as a plastic/cardboard baler, into the store; and
- Lidl install manually operated 'dock levelling' plates within new stores which are used in conjunction with a sloped loading ramp. These 'dock levelling' plates replace hydraulic scissor lifts, which were previously used by Lidl, and have significantly lower energy consumption levels.

5.18 As a result of all of the above, the building is likely to achieve a high standard of energy efficiency and perform well in excess of Part L minimum requirements.

5.19 The development will therefore embrace and maximise elements of sustainable design in accordance with national planning policy.

## Summary

5.20 Overall, the proposed development will make an important contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local area. Taking all relevant considerations from paragraphs 18 to 219 of the NPPF into account, it is considered that the application proposal represents sustainable development and, as such, there should be a presumption in favour of the scheme, as required by the NPPF.

# 6.0 Assessment against development plan policy

6.1 The preceding section of this report has addressed the key issues of principle and accordance with the NPPF. However, in line with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the following section considers how the proposed development fully accords with the relevant policies within the adopted development plan.

6.2 In addition to the retail policy considerations addressed in Section 4.0 of this report, other development plan policies relevant to the determination of this application are discussed in further detail below.

## Location

6.3 Policy SG3 of the South Holland Local Plan describes Spalding as the District's principal urban settlement, identified as the main location for new development. All developments must also be located having regard to sustainable development principals in accordance with Policy SG2. The proposal site has been previously developed and the effective reuse of the site should be encouraged in accordance with the NPPF and Policy SG2. Furthermore the proposals accord with the provisions of Policy SG1 of the South Holland Local Plan as demonstrated below.

6.4 Overall, the proposals' location on a brownfield site within the development limits of Spalding demonstrates compliance with these policies.

## Flooding

6.5 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) accompanies this planning application prepared by CSG Consulting Engineers. The proposal site is located within Flood Zone 3, however the site is protected by a flood defence system managed by the Environment Agency.

6.6 The FRA concludes that from a surface water drainage and flood risk assessment viewpoint is it considered that the development is appropriate for this location and will provide adequate levels of flood protection for the life time of the development, subject to appropriate detailed design. The proposals will have no impact with regards to surface water run-off on the surrounding existing properties, subject to ensuring that the surface water run-off is retained on site and directed into a full designed surface water system including Sustainable Drainage Systems. In addition the FRA confirms that the development satisfies the requirements of the NPPF with regards to flooding and type of development.

6.7 In regard to the Sequential Test only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required. All of the area between the River Welland and the Coronation Channel is in Flood Zone 3. Indeed the majority of the land within the Spalding development limits is within Flood Zone 3. There are therefore no lower flood zone available sites, including within the centre of Spalding. It is therefore considered that the Sequential Test is passed.

6.8 In terms of the first part of the exception test, the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risks. The redevelopment of the site represents brownfield development and will deliver a new class A1 retail unit. The proposals will enhance the area and regenerate this vacant site providing jobs opportunities for local residents. The site is in a sustainable location within the Spalding settlement boundary with good public transport links to the centre and beyond. It will also encourage linked trips with the town centre.

6.9 As such, the proposals therefore fully accord with Local Plan policy SG11.

## Transport

6.10 A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan accompany this planning application prepared by SCP. The Transport Assessment considers the cumulative impact of the retail and neighbouring residential proposals. It concludes that there are good opportunities to access the site by sustainable modes of transport, including by foot, by bicycle and by bus.

6.11 The proposed site access would be provided in the form of a priority controlled junction onto Holbeach Road. The new access is designed to accommodate two way movement and turning movement of a Lidl delivery vehicle. The modelling confirms that proposed amendment to the white-lining to introduce a new right turning pocket into the proposed Lidl would have no detrimental effect on the free flow of traffic.

6.12 In total the site will provide 148 car parking spaces of which 5 are to be disabled parking spaces and 8 are family parking spaces. This is in accordance with adopted parking standards. In addition 24 cycle parking spaces are to be provided, which accord with the cycle parking standards (minimum of 1 stand per 250 sq.m gross).

6.13 Overall, it is concluded that there is no evidence of any residual cumulative impact of the development and the residential proposals that could be categorised as 'severe' in highways terms. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF planning permission should not be withheld on highway grounds.

## Design

6.14 The design of the proposed food store is detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and planning drawings.

6.15 Overall, the proposed store is of a contemporary and attractive design. The store design has evolved to respond to the site's context and includes the following design features:

- white grained finish rendered walls and aluminium cladding finishes; and
- large glazed shopfront.

6.16 The layout and design of the building has been carefully considered and represents a functional design for a store of this type and one which is appropriate to its existing context and surroundings. The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy SG14 of the South Holland Local Plan.

## Noise

6.17 Policy SG14 (7) states that when the Council assess the design and layout of development the effect of the development on the amenity of nearby residents will, inter alia, be taken in to consideration. Furthermore, Policy SG17 states that planning permission will be granted for development which would not cause material harm to residential amenity. In considering this the potential noise nuisance including that associated with vehicular activity will be taken into account.

6.18 A Noise Assessment accompanies this application and assesses the noise from the proposed external plant, deliveries and customer vehicle movements associated with the proposed Lidl.

6.19 It is clear from the conclusions of the Noise Assessment that the proposed food store will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts and the expected noise levels are within acceptable parameters, subject to restrictions on the times of deliveries.

## Trees / landscaping

6.20 A Landscaping Plan (ref. 17-079-01) prepared by BEA Landscape Design Ltd accompanies this planning application. The plan provides full details of the proposed planting, maintenance, materials, and species of the proposed landscaping. As detailed, a total of 14 trees will be planted and three removed as part of the proposals.

6.21 A Tree Survey (ref. P986/1215/02) prepared by CBE Consulting accompanies this planning application. The trees to be removed are not protected by the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which covers some trees on the site. There are four trees on the site protected by a TPO in addition to six more trees protected by a TPO where their crown crosses the site boundary. All of these trees are to be retained. The Tree Survey provides recommendations for the protection of the retained trees during development works.

6.22 The proposed landscaping is fully detailed on the Landscaping Plan (ref. 17-079-01). A range of soft landscaping is proposed across the site. This includes wildflower meadows, bark mulch, turfed ground and shrub covered areas. The hard landscaping proposed includes grey concrete paving stones, anthracite block paving and tarmac. Timber board fencing and high timer knee rails are also proposed as boundary treatments.

6.23 The Landscaping Plan confirms that the proposals fully accord with Local Plan policy SG18.

## Contamination

6.24 A Phase 1 and 2 Geoenvironmental Assessment (ref. 696-R-01A) prepared by CSG Consulting Engineers accompanies this planning application. The reports makes a number of recommendations that can be controlled by condition, including remediation.

6.25 The report identified a localised area of soil and groundwater contamination surrounding the fuel underground storage tanks in the south west of the site. These tanks however have been permanently decommissioned and can therefore remain in situ.

6.26 The report recommends that in situ remedial works will be required to reduce the risk to neighbouring properties from volatile organic compounds and the potential liability associated with cross boundary contamination migration. Excavation and off-site disposal is not recommended due to running sand conditions, the shallow water table, and odour nuisance.

6.27 Overall, the development will not cause any materially unacceptable effects in terms of ground condition considerations.

## Ecology

6.28 This planning application is accompanied by a Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal. This Ecological Appraisal is site wide considering the Lidl site in addition to the adjacent sites where residential uses are proposed. The majority of the site surveyed has low ecological value as a result of its location and previous use. The site is naturalising from its previous use, however it is in its early stages with no significant habitat development having taken place with diversity of plant species limited. Overall there would be no loss of any significant habitat areas of high biodiversity as a result of the development, nor will the development of the site cause fragmentations of any such habitats within the locality by isolating these.

6.29 The site survey found no evidence of activity by protected species. Some of the trees within the site area have been identified as having 'low or moderate roost potential'. The site inspection site did not identify any physical evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats.

6.30 The scheme has been designed having consideration to features of relatively high value and has sought to replace or retain trees and hedgerows where possible. The planting of trees and hedges is included as part of the proposals, maximising ecological enhancement. It is considered that the proposals fully accord with the aims of the Local Plan to conserve or enhance features of value for nature conservation.

# 7.0 Conclusions

7.1 This Planning and Retail Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for the development of a Class A1 food store at Holbeach Road, Spalding.

7.2 The total additional floorspace sought through this planning application is 2,123 sq.m (GIA).

7.3 This application forms part of the wider redevelopment of the former Welland Hospital and former Bettinson Garage sites that as a whole comprise 2ha of land. Both the hospital and garage have now been cleared. The remainder of the wider site will be developed for residential use. These developments together will bring significant positive local impacts including, but not limited to, the creation of jobs and affordable homes in Spalding.

7.4 The proposed development has been demonstrated to fully comply with local and national planning policy particularly in relation to the retail tests. On this basis we trust that planning permission will be granted for this application proposal.

# Appendix 1: Sequential site assessment

## Summary of sites

## Spalding

No suitable or available sites were identified in Spalding on our visit (December 2016). The updated Spalding Retail Paper (March 2017) also did not identify any town centre or edge of centre retail sites. It can therefore be concluded that there are no sequentially preferable sites to the application site. Notwithstanding this we comment on the potential sites below.

### 1. Bull and Monkey pub

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 0.26ha in size and contains the boarded up vacant Bull and Monkey pub. The site lies within a Conservation Area and in 2013, planning permission was granted for the demolition of the pub (ref. H16-1046-12). Permission to demolish the building has now expired.

This site has been discounted as unsuitable as it is too small to accommodate the proposed development.

### 2. Former Johnson Hospital

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 0.5ha in size and is in a Conservation Area. The former Johnson Hospital still stands vacant on the site. This hospital has been vacant since at least 2010. Planning permission was granted on 11 May 2010 (ref. H16-0384-10) for the change of use from Class D1 to Classes B1, C1, C2 and D2. This permission has now expired.

This site has been discounted as unsuitable as it is too small to accommodate the proposed development.

### 3. Sorting Office

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 0.09ha in size and is in a Conservation Area. The former post office sorting office still stands vacant on the site. Planning permission was granted (ref. H16-0724-11) on 20 September 2011 for the demolition of this disused building and the erection of 12 apartments. It is stated on the application form that this site has been vacant since 1 January 1990.

This site has been discounted as unsuitable as it is too small to accommodate the proposed development.

### 4. Sessions House

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 0.18ha in size and is in a Conservation Area. Sessions House is also Grade II listed and listed building consent would also be required to demolish this building. Permission was recently granted on 10 January 2017 (ref. H16-1017-16) for the change of use of Sessions House to residential accommodation.

This site has been discounted as unsuitable as it is too small to accommodate the proposed development. It is also unavailable.

### 5. Vacant Kings Road site (north of Kings Road roundabout)

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 0.6ha and is an L shape with a public path crossing the site. The site is allocated

in the adopted South Holland Local Plan (2006) by Policy EC13 (The Northern Expansion Area) and by Policy TC1 (Safeguarding Road Routes). Policy EC13 encourages mixed use proposals across a wider site that this site forms a part of. Policy TC1 safeguards the land for a proposed link road between the station and Pinchbeck Road / West Elloe Avenue.

Since this time the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan has allocated the site as a 'Local Wildlife Site'. Policy 24 (The Natural Environment) states that development proposals that would directly or indirectly adversely affect these assets will not be permitted unless:

- no alternative sites that would cause less or no harm; and
- the benefits of the development at the proposed site, clearly outweigh the adverse impacts on the features of the site and the wider network of natural habitats; and
- suitable prevention, mitigation and compensation measures are provided.

The development of a Class A1 food store and its associated parking / servicing arrangements would not accord with its allocation as a 'Local Wildlife Site'. This site has been discounted as unsuitable for a food store, and it would be too small to accommodate the proposed development.

## 6. Former Network Rail Depot / BT Depot (land north of Kings Road)

This site is in an edge of centre location as defined by the NPPF (Annex 2). The site is approximately 1.29ha in size. The site is allocated in the adopted South Holland Local Plan (2006) by Policy EC13 (The Northern Expansion Area) and by Policy TC1 (Safeguarding Road Routes). Policy EC13 encourages mixed use proposals across a wider site that this site forms a part of. Policy TC1 safeguards the land for a proposed link road between the station and Pinchbeck Road / West Elloe Avenue.

Since this time the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan has allocated the site for residential development, and an application (ref. H16-0486-16) for reserved matters to erect 42 dwellings on the site was approved on 4 January 2017.

Considering this latest application and its allocation for residential uses in the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan the site has been discounted as not suitable or available to accommodate the proposed development.

## Summary

Our assessment has identified that there are no sequentially preferable sites available within or on the edge of Spalding that could accommodate the proposed development. This is consistent with the Spalding Retail Paper July 2016 and March 2017 update.

Thus, the Class A1 Food store proposal satisfies the sequential test and has fully assessed potential alternatives within Spalding.

# Appendix 2: Spalding health check

## Spalding town centre

## Spalding

The Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (December 2013) prepared by Allied Planning that informs the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, undertook a comprehensive study of Spalding's retail offer and capacity.

Lichfields has prepared a health check of Spalding town centre based on our site visit (December 2016), and have reviewed the most recent retail data (where available). We set out our updated assessment below.

## Overview

Spalding is an attractive principal market town in South Holland. The centre and main shopping street is largely pedestrianised and upon our visit there was a bustling and vibrant market selling a range of food and goods.

## Diversity of uses

Lichfields' review and update of GOAD data identifies that 32.6% of retailers occupying Spalding town centre comprise comparison goods outlets, with convenience goods units occupying 10.2%. Service provision represents a particularly high proportion of units. The vacancy rate was found to be just 6.0%.

The percentage of convenience and comparison units in Spalding correlates with the national average. The vacancy rate is considerably below the national average indicating that the centre is healthy. Conversely, the percentage of retail services is higher than the national average, with GOAD data showing a high number of 'health and beauty' type service providers.

Table A2.1 Spalding Town Centre use mix

| Retail Category | No. Units | % Units* | Total Floorspace (sq.m) | National Average %** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Convenience | 29 | 10.2 | 12,660 | 10.4 |
| Comparison | 93 | 32.6 | 28,670 | 33.4 |
| Service | 96 | 33.7 | 10,280 | 24.8 |
| Vacant | 12 | 6.0 | 2,770 | 11.2 |
| Total | 285 | - | 82,030 | - |

* Rounded figures

Source: GOAD Plans (Jan, 2016), Lichfields site visit (Dec, 2016), ** UK Average for all town centres surveyed by GOAD Plan (Jan, 2017)

## Retailer representation

A range of national multiple retailers are represented in Spalding including: Halfords, WHSmith, New Look and Argos. These are primarily concentrated on the northern edge of the town. A full range of high street banks also have branches in Spalding. This reflects Spalding's regional importance and position in the retail hierarchy. There is however a high proportion of independent, smaller retailers and market vendors (not included in the above table). This demonstrates the continued strength and diversity of Spalding town centre's offer, contributing to the centre's vitality and viability.

In terms of convenience retail operators, the largest unit is occupied by Sainsbury's. This food store provides a full food and non-food offer with an ancillary café in-store. Of the 29

convenience units identified the vast majority (21 units) are 250 sq.m or less in size. Lidl also operate a store in Spalding town centre.

### Vacant retail property

Our updated survey (December 2016) indicates that there are currently 17 vacant units in Spalding and a vacancy rate of just 6.0%. The largest of these units is the Bull and Monkey Pub (see Appendix 1) at 340 sq.m. Overall, the vacant units are not clustered and are distributed throughout the centre.

### Pedestrian flows

The highest pedestrian flows were found through the main pedestrianised High Street, particularly through the market area. Flows were also high between the High Street and Winfrey Retail Park located between Swan Street and Spalding Football Club where M&S Simply Food, Wilko and B&Q, among other multiple retailers, are present in addition to both the towns bus and train stations.

### Accessibility

Spalding town centre is served by a train station and bus station, both located to the north of the centre. There are also a number of car parks serving the centre.

### Environmental quality

Spalding town centre is an attractive market town. Indeed there are a number of listed buildings and most of the centre is in a conservation area. The environmental quality of the centre is good, and it does not contain areas of excess litter, graffiti or visual indicators of crime.

### Summary

Overall, the current health of Spalding town centre is consistent with the findings of the Applied Planning Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (December 2013). Spalding remains and continues to be an attractive, vital and viable market town and is important in the regional retail hierarchy. The centre thrives and this is reflected in the combination of multiple retailers, a vibrant market and a low vacancy rate.

**Bristol**
0117 403 1980
bristol@lichfields.uk

**Cardiff**
029 2043 5880
cardiff@lichfields.uk

**Edinburgh**
0131 285 0670
edinburgh@lichfields.uk

**Leeds**
0113 397 1397
leeds@lichfields.uk

**London**
020 7837 4477
london@lichfields.uk

**Manchester**
0161 837 6130
manchester@lichfields.uk

**Newcastle**
0191 261 5685
newcastle@lichfields.uk

**Thames Valley**
0118 334 1920
thamesvalley@lichfields.uk