DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Application No:** | **H17-0165-26** | **Applicant:** | **Snaith Flowers Ltd** |
| **Proposal:** | Proposed Packing Warehouse | | |
| **Location:** | Station Road Surfleet Spalding | | |
| **Terminal Date:** | 9th October 2026 | | |

**Planning Policies**

**South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019**

| | |
|---|---|
| 01 | Spatial Strategy |
| 02 | Development Management |
| 03 | Design of New Development |
| 04 | Approach to Flood Risk |
| 07 | Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio |
| 28 | The Natural Environment |
| 30 | Pollution |
| 36 | Vehicle and Cycle Parking |
| APPENDIX 6 | Parking Standards |

**National Guidance**

**National Planning Policy Framework August 2026**

Section 3 - Decision-making policies (DM1 - 10)
Section 4 - Achieving sustainable development (S1 - S6)
Section 7 - Building a strong, effective economy (E1 - 4)
Section 12 - Making effective use of land (L1 - 3)
Section 14 - Achieving well-designed places (DP1 - 4)
Section 15 - Promoting sustainable transport (TR1 - 8)
Section 17 - Pollution, public protection and security (P1 - 6)
Section 18 - Managing flood risk and coastal change (F1 - 9)
Section 19 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (N1 - 9)

**Representations:**

| | Object | Support | No Obj. | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PARISH COUNCIL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| WARD MEMBER | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PLANNING LIAISON OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| WELLAND AND DEEPINGS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SHDC INTERNAL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| OTHER STATUTORY BODIES | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |

## CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

### Proposal

The proposal seeks full planning permission for a proposed packing warehouse. The warehouse is proposed to expand the existing business, Snaith Flowers, which is located to the north-east of the site. The warehouse would also feature some office space to support the expansion of the business.

The warehouse is proposed to measure 40m in length and 26m in width, featuring a gable end roof form that measures 8.5m in height up to its ridgeline, and 6m in height up to its eaves. The building is proposed to feature a lean-to extension that would feature a sloped roofline on its north-eastern elevation. The lean-to extension is proposed to measure 16m by 6.8m. A loading dock is also proposed on the north-eastern elevation. A balcony area is proposed on the south-eastern elevation. Lastly, a small plant room is proposed on the north-western elevation measuring 5.6m by 2.8m. The plant room features a sloped roof line that measures 3m in height and 2.5m up to its eaves.

A vehicular access is proposed from Station Road which is to the north of the site and this access is proposed for office workers and visitors. HGVs are proposed to continue to use an existing vehicular access to the north-east of the site. Car parking spaces are proposed to the south-west of the building.

### Site Description

The site partly overlaps an existing concrete yard and hardstanding area within the north-eastern portion of the site which is used by Snaith Flowers. The south-western portion of the site comprises agricultural land. To the immediate south is the River Glen and there is agricultural land beyond the river. There is agricultural land immediately to the west of the site, beyond which there is residential development. There is also residential development to the north of the site, on the opposite side of Station Road and to the north-east of the site beyond the existing Snaith Flowers site.

The site is within the settlement boundary of Surfleet, as identified by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the accompanying policies map.

The site is within Flood Zone 1, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

### Planning History

H17-0467-00: (Outline Application) Residential development - refused 08 January 2001 - appeal dismissed 06 January 2001

H17-1075-24: (Outline Application) Erection of single dwelling, garage and pool - refused 12 February 2025

H17-0068-24: (Full Application) Additional hard standing area to store pallets and wooden bins - approved 08 March 2024

Land to the north-east (Snaith Flowers Site):

H17-0977-20: (Agricultural Permitted Development) Flower storage building with canopy - approved 25 November 2020 (prior approval not required)

H17-0973-20: (Agricultural Permitted Development) Farm machinery store - approved 26 November 2020 (prior approval not required)

H17-0603-23: (Agricultural Permitted Development) Erection of storage building extension and provision of hardstanding - approved 18 August 2023 (prior approval not required)

## Consultation Responses

The responses received from consultees during the consultation period are summarised below. The responses can be viewed in their entirety on South Holland District Council's website.

Surfleet Parish Council:

As this commercial operation is situated centrally within the village we have concerns about the increase in traffic movements of large lorries into and exiting the business and the ongoing impact on local residents.

Lincolnshire County Council - Historic Environment:

The proposal is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains. Consequently, no further archaeological input is necessary for this application.

Natural England:

Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this application and therefore has no comment to make on its details. Although we have not been able to assess the potential impacts of this proposal on statutory nature conservation sites or protected landscapes, we offer the further advice and references to Standing Advice.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust:

The applicant should be minded that the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Greater Lincolnshire was published in January 2026, and has outlined several actions that need to be considered. The proposed development neighbours the Glen River, which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). We therefore expect the applicant to have regard of the relevant LNRS actions, the mapped areas of which includes the proposed site; a. Action 146 - Create buffers around existing LWSs and link to appropriate habitats to build resilience. b. Action 76 - Reduce nutrient and sediment run-off by creating habitat buffers along rivers, streams and connected water courses to improve water quality

SHDC Ecology Officer:

There has been sufficient evidence provided to determine this application, as long as the mandatory 10% net gain is achieved through securing offsite units pre-commencement. Overall, the biodiversity assessment and metric calculations appear rigorous, and we can have confidence in their conclusions. In this case the metric indicates that 10% mandatory net gain cannot be achieved onsite, and therefore the proposals require 1.04 area-habitat units and 0.03 watercourse units off-site. The applicant has provided thorough ecological documentation therefore in my judgement providing sufficient ecological data to determine this application. We support all mitigation and enhancement recommendations provided in the PEA and request they be set as a condition at discharge. We request that a minimum of 2 tree or pole mounted bird boxes and 1 bat box are also included on site to help mitigate habitat losses. These are required to enhance biodiversity and to be in line with Local Plan Policy 7.2.14. We will also require a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be provided pre-commencement due to the proximity of the site to a local wildlife site.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service:

There does not appear to be any information within the proposal with regard to fire appliance access. Therefore, please ensure that; Access to buildings for fire appliances and fire fighters must meet with the requirements specified in Building Regulations 2010 Part B5.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue require the installation of one fire hydrant conforming to BS750-2012 within 90m of the premises entrance in respect of this planning application to be provided at the developer's expense - if the proposed premises measures at 280m2 or more. Fire hydrant acceptance testing will be carried out by a Hydrant Inspector on completion, and a standard hydrant marker "H" plate will be fitted nearby. Following adoption, the Fire Service will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and repairs for the lifetime of the fire hydrant.

Environmental Protection:

First Response (24th March 2026): The proposed layout suggests that the refrigeration plant room is close to nearby residential properties. we would advise relocating this to the Southern elevation closest to the river. if not feasible please provide full specification of plant and acoustic protection measures.

Second Response (14th August 2026): Following a site visit I am happy that the construction and position of the proposed plant room will be suitable for the location. This should not give rise to unwanted sound on site, and is not likely to affect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Environment Agency:

First Response (27th April 2026): We object to the proposed development as submitted because it involves the use of a non-mains foul drainage system in circumstances where it may be feasible for the development to be connected to a public sewer but no justification has been provided for the use of a non-mains system. The site is less than 10m from the River Glen and the Anglian river basin management plan requires the restoration and enhancement of water bodies to prevent deterioration and promote recovery of water bodies. The proposed development could cause pollution to enter this watercourse. We recommend that the application be refused on this basis. Private sewage treatment facilities should only be used where it is not feasible for a development to be connected to a public sewer, because of the greater risk of failures leading to pollution of the water environment posed by private sewerage systems compared to public sewerage systems.

Second Response (24th August 2026): We have reviewed the amended plans and they do not relate to the earlier concerns we raised on this application. We therefore maintain our objection and refer you to our letter dated 27 April 2026 for our position on this application.

Third Response (17th September 2026): We have reviewed the amended documents and consider that they satisfactorily address our earlier concerns. Our previous objection is withdrawn subject to a compliance condition requiring the foul drainage to be carried out in accordance with document reference 'SW26-275-REP-01A' and drawing reference 'SW26-275-001' (contained in Appendix F), prepared by Shields Wilson Limited.

Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board (IDB):

I am pleased to see that soakaways are the first choice for surface water disposal from the proposed warehouse. I recommend consulting the Environment Agency as soon as possible due to the proximity to the River Glen. If a treated effluent discharge is proposed from the package treatment plant into the River Glen then the Environment Agency need consulting for this also.

The IDB were re-consulted between 26th September and 17th September as further drainage details were provided during the determination of the application; however, no further responses were received from the IDB.

Anglian Water:

Section 1 - Assets Affected There are assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement close to the development boundary that may affect the layout of the site. Anglian Water would ask that the following text be included within your Notice should permission be

granted. Anglian Water has assets close to or crossing this site or there are assets subject to an adoption agreement. Therefore the site layout should take this into account and accommodate those assets within either prospectively adoptable highways or public open space. If this is not practicable then the sewers will need to be diverted at the developers cost under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991. or, in the case of apparatus under an adoption agreement, liaise with the owners of the apparatus. It should be noted that the diversion works should normally be completed before development can commence

Section 2 - Wastewater Treatment/Foul Water Disposal From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of foul water disposal does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the proposals. The Local Planning Authority should seek the advice of the Environment Agency if the drainage system directly or indirectly involves the discharge of treated water into a watercourse. If planning permission is granted the strategy should be listed within the decision notice with any approved plans . Should the proposed method of foul water management change to include interaction with Anglian Water operated assets, we would wish to be re- consulted to ensure that an effective foul water drainage strategy is prepared and implemented.

Section 3 - Surface Water Disposal: The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer. From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the surface water management. The Local Planning Authority should seek the advice of the Lead Local Flood Authority or the Internal Drainage Board. The Environment Agency should be consulted if the drainage system directly or indirectly involves the discharge of water into a watercourse. If planning permission is granted, the strategy should be listed within the decision notice with any approved plans. Should the proposed method of surface water management change to include interaction with Anglian Water operated assets, we would wish to be re-consulted to ensure that an effective surface water drainage strategy is prepared and implemented.

Lincolnshire County Council - Highways and SUDS:

First Response (24th March 2026): Additional information is required. There are no visibility measurements on the splay drawing - it should be in accordance with Manual for Streets. Clarification is required - the staff numbers detailed on the application form look to reduce with the proposal, please confirm if this is additional staff to the existing. A servicing plan is required. A Drainage Strategy is required. It says that Surface water will be managed so that stormwater from the site will not affect any adjoining properties or increase flood risk elsewhere - justification is required.

Second Response (02nd July 2026) Outstanding information previously requested A written Drainage Strategy complete with a drawing is required. Reference/action following the objection from the EA is required within the statement.

Third Response (07th August 2026): Outstanding - A written Drainage Strategy complete with a drawing is required. Reference/action following the objection from the EA is required within the statement. It is noted that the applicant would like the drainage to be conditioned and dealt with precommencement. This can only be done once the principles of the drainage have been submitted. This is a major application, and we need to be satisfied that the site can drain adequately and sustainably whilst not having any negative impact on surrounding land or properties. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere and directs major developments to incorporate SuDS unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.

The team were re-consulted between 26th September and 17th September as further drainage details were provided during the determination of the application; however, no further responses were received.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor (Police): No response received.

SHDC Inward Investment Manager: No response received.

Cllr S A Slade: No response received.

Cllr J Avery : No response received.

Cllr E J Sneath: No response received.

## Public Representations

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

## Key Planning Considerations

Development Plan

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

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

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026 (NPPF) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

There are no adopted Neighbourhood Plans for the area within which the site is located.

The main issues and considerations in this case include the following:

-Principle of Development;
oLocation within the Spatial Strategy
oProposed Business Expansion
-Design, Layout and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area;
-Impact on Residential Amenity;
-Highway Safety and Parking;
-Flood Risk and Drainage; and
-Biodiversity Net Gain.

These matters are assessed in turn below.

Principle of Development

*Location within the Spatial Strategy*

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

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

The definition of "settlement" is found within Annex B of the NPPF, reading as follows: "Settlement: Includes cities, towns, villages and other predominantly built-up areas, including land which is allocated or has permission for development which will form part of the built-up area once the

development is complete. This includes areas defined as a settlement in the development plan (whether using defined settlement boundaries or equivalent terms, or criteria for identifying settlement extents where boundaries have yet to be defined). Settlements do not include hamlets and scattered groups of houses located outside predominantly built-up areas, unless specifically defined as a settlement in the development plan. For the purpose of this Framework they also exclude villages which lie within and are defined as part of the Green Belt in the development plan."

The Framework is clear that settlements which are defined in a Local Plan would constitute settlements for the purposes of the NPPF. It is also clear that settlements would not include hamlets or scattered groups of houses. On this basis, it is considered that the settlement boundaries outlined in the SELLP are still wholly applicable here, and that the site should be considered as an outside of settlement location.

In this case, the site is within the defined settlement boundary of Surfleet, which is a Minor Service Centre. Within Minor Service Centres, Policy 1 sets out that development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities. Development will normally be limited to Allocated and Committed sites and infill.

Policy S3(1) of the NPPF states:
"Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:
a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;
b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied".

As such, Policy S4 of the NPPF also needs to be taken into account as this policy sets out that proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

*Proposed Business Expansion*

Policy E2 (Meeting the need for business land and premises) of the NPPF sets out that to support business growth, substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt.

Policy E4 (Rural business development) of the NPPF sets out that in applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses.

Policy 7 of the Local Plan is also considered to be relevant in this case as Policy 7 relates to improving South East Lincolnshire Employment Land Portfolio. The main objective of Policy 7 is to improve the district's employment land portfolio in line with its identified needs. The policy details that economic growth will be focused within the higher tier settlements, therefore, in the most sustainable locations, ensuring that better access between housing, jobs and services is promoted.

Policy 7 designates 139ha of land as 'Main Employment Areas' and 0.4 hectares of land as 'Local Employment Areas'. The policy also identifies multiple sites as 'Established Employment Sites' across the district which are expected to perform an important role in the local economy, provided proposals are of a scale that respect the character of the area and / or neighbouring land uses. All of these designations are reserved for uses falling within use classes B1, B2 and B8.

The site does not fall within the above referenced employment designations and instead is considered as an 'Other Employment Site'. For such sites, Policy 7 sets out the following:

*"New employment development/businesses or the extension of an existing business outside the above allocated employment sites will be supported provided that the proposal involves the re-use of previously-developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable building capable of conversion/re-use is available or the re-use of previously-developed land is not available or is unsuitable, proposals on non allocated sites may be acceptable provided:*

*a. the development does not conflict with neighbouring land uses;*
*b. there is no significant adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area;*

*c. the design is responsive to the local context;*
*d. there will be no significant adverse impact on the local highway network;*
*e. there will be no significant adverse impact upon the viability of delivering any allocated employment site;*
*f. proposals maximising opportunities for modal shift away from the private car are demonstrated; and*
*g. there is an identified need for the business location outside of identified employment areas on the Policies Map."*

Although the site currently features some areas of hardstanding, the site also features undeveloped land and as such, it is necessary to consider the proposals against the above referenced criteria.

Firstly, it is necessary to consider whether "it can be demonstrated that no suitable building capable of conversion/re-use is available or the re-use of previously-developed land is not available or is unsuitable". Initially, the submitted planning statement contained limited information regarding the need for the proposals or whether alternative sites had been considered and if so, why they had been discounted. This was discussed with the applicant's agent and the opportunity to provide additional information was given. A Justification Statement was subsequently submitted, and this has been taken into account when assessing the proposals.

According to the Justification Statement, Snaith Flowers has been operating from their site in Surfleet for the past 26 years and the business continues to grow. The amount of land farmed by the business has grown from 400 acres 3 years ago to approximately 900 acres currently. This includes land which is used to grow flowers in the local area around Surfleet. According to the Justification Statement, the proposed warehouse is required as there is a need to store the business products once harvested in a chilled storage environment and an additional pack house is needed to prepare the products before they are ready to be delivered.

There appears to be at least three storage buildings within the Snaith Flowers site to the north, all of which have been constructed using permitted development rights for agricultural units in recent years under applications H17-0603-23, H17-0973-20 and H17-0977-20.

Within the existing Snaith Flowers site which is to the north-east of the application site, there is a small office building and a canteen for employees. According to the applicant, the existing office space is relatively unsuitable as it is not purpose built and does not offer an attractive workspace. As part of the current proposals, dedicated office space is proposed within the building and this is also intended to provide a meeting space for visitors from supermarkets (the applicant's clients). Such visitors are required to conduct audits as part of their procurement process, and it is recognised that suitable meeting space is required to facilitate such meetings.

Therefore, in this case, it is recognised that the proposal seeks to expand an existing business and there is a site-specific requirement for the building to be located next to the existing Snaith Flowers site to expand current operations. It would not be practical or reasonable for the building to located elsewhere within the district due to the need for the building to be located close to the growing fields of Snaith Flowers, which are located around Surfleet. Once flowers are picked, they need to be stored and preserved quickly and as such, it would be practical for the flowers to be transported elsewhere within the district. As such, it is considered that the proposed building is justified in terms of Policy 7 and it is subsequently necessary to assess the proposals against criteria a to g.

*a. the development does not conflict with neighbouring land uses*

In terms of part a, as set out previously the existing Snaith Flowers site is located to the north-east of the site and partially overlaps the eastern portion of the site. There is an agricultural field to the south-west of the site, beyond which there are dwellings. There are also dwellings within the surrounding area, including to the north and further to the north-east. The River Glen is located to the south of the site, beyond which there are agricultural fields. The area comprises a mixture of agricultural land, residential development and some employment land including Snaith Flowers.

The proposal would expand the existing Snaith Flowers site and this could result in an increase in comings and goings to the site. According to the applicant, it is anticipated that there could be an average of one extra HGV entering and leaving the site per day as a result of the proposals. This might increase during busy seasonal periods. According to the application form, the offices within the building are proposed to be open from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday with no weekend working hours. The application form sets out that the packhouse could be operational from 6am to 9pm each

day which the applicant sets out it the same as the existing operations from the Snaith Flowers site. These are considered to be relatively long hours; however, as set out previously the council's environmental protection team have not raised objections in terms of potential noise disturbance from the site. For example, the operations would largely be contained within the proposed building. Whilst the increase in vehicular movements to and from the site might cause some degree of disturbance to nearby dwellings, it is not considered that this impact would be adverse. Notwithstanding this, it would be considered appropriate to limit the start of the opening hours of the warehouse to 7am rather than 6am as this would be considered a more suitable start time in the interests of protecting the amenity of nearby dwellings.

Therefore, it is not considered that the development would conflict with neighbouring land uses in accordance with part a.

*b. there is no significant adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area;*
*c. the design is responsive to the local context*

In terms of parts b and c, the proposed building would measure 40m in length and 26m in width, featuring a gable end roof form that measures 8.5m in height up to its ridgeline and 6min height up to its eaves.

A lean-to extension is proposed that would feature a sloped roofline on its north-eastern elevation. The lean-to extension is proposed to measure 16m by 6.8m. A loading dock is also proposed on the north-eastern elevation and a balcony area is proposed on the south-eastern elevation. Lastly, a small plant room is proposed on the north-western elevation measuring 5.6m by 2.8m. The plant room features a sloped roof line that measures 3m in height and 2.5m up to its eaves.

The external materials for the building are not indicated on the submitted elevation plans; however, the materials are set out within the submitted application form. The materials include profile metal cladding (anthracite grey and Goosewing grey) and anthracite grey aluminium windows and steel doors.

It is considered that the building would be relatively large; however, there are relatively large buildings to the north-east within the existing Snaith Flowers site. A comparison view of the existing buildings and the proposed building is shown on submitted plan 4435-25 05A which shows that the building would be of a comparable scale. It is also considered that the proposed building would feature a similar overall appearance to these buildings.

It is also recognised that as Snaith Flowers operates an agricultural unit of more than 5 hectares, the applicant could potentially use permitted development rights to apply for prior approval for a similar sized building. For example, the proposed building would not exceed the maximum allowances of an agricultural building that could potentially be applied for under Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. For example, Class A potentially allows for buildings up to 1,500 sqm and 12m in height.

The area around the site is characterised by residential and agricultural development. Whilst the proposal would introduce a large building into the area, it is not considered that the development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, thereby according with parts b and c.

*d. there will be no significant adverse impact on the local highway network*

In terms of part d, a new vehicular access is proposed from Station Road and this access is proposed for employees and visitors. A car park area is proposed to the south-west of the building within the site within which 14 parking spaces are proposed. There are existing car parking areas to the north of the site that can be used by seasonal workers.

It is predicted that there would be an extra HGV accessing and leaving the site per day as a result of the proposals on average, and there could also be more comings and goings as a result of office workers using the proposed building.

Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Highways and SUDS team have some raised concerns and queries within their consultation responses. Additional information has been provided and the team were re-consulted between 26th September and 17th September; however, no further responses were received. Notwithstanding this, the following summarises the concern / query raised and the

information that was provided to try to address this:

-Lack of visibility measurements: Visibility splays were added to site plan. The part of Station Road where the site access is proposed is relatively straight and open and it is not considered that the visibility splays would be poor.
-Clarification regarding staff number: As set out within the submitted Justification Statement, 6 full time staff are currently employed between the office and packhouse. There are an additional 40 part time staff (seasonal staff). The proposals would likely add another 3 full time employees, 2 in the office and 1 in the packhouse along with an additional 25 part time staff (seasonal staff).
-A servicing plan is required: This is shown on the amended site plan. HGVs will continue to access the site via a one-way system. HGVs enter from a separate access further to the north then cross an existing concrete yard area and exit via a route near to the River Glen and then onto Station Road further to the north. This is shown on the site plan with arrows.

Although LCC's highways team requested more information, the team have not raised significant concerns within their consultation responses. Policy DM3 of the NPPF sets out that decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal. In this case, it was not considered necessary to delay the determination of the application further in order to receive a further consultation response from LCC's highways team as it is not considered that the proposal is likely to result in an adverse highway safety impact. Instead, it is considered that there are suitable visibility splays from the proposed access, a suitable number of parking spaces within the site, and suitable arrangements for the one-way HGV system to continue to operate. Therefore, it is not considered that there would be a significant adverse impact on the local highway network, in accordance with part d.

*e. there will be no significant adverse impact upon the viability of delivering any allocated employment site*

In terms of part e, the allocated employment sites identified within Policy 7 include a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 uses. The proposed use is for a packhouse with ancillary office space and as such, the building contains some similarities with Use Classes B1 and B8. It is not considered that the proposal would undermine the viability of any allocated site and as such, the proposals are considered to accord with part e.

*f. proposals maximising opportunities for modal shift away from the private car are demonstrated*

In terms of part f, the site is located within the settlement boundary of Surfleet. According to the submitted Justification Statement, there is a car sharing policy in place which could help reduce the number of vehicular trips to and from the site. The site is also near to bus stops which offer relatively regular bus services (mostly hourly). Whilst Surfleet is not the most sustainable settlement in the district, it is considered that the proposals accord with part f.

*g. there is an identified need for the business location outside of identified employment areas on the Policies Map."*

In terms of part g, as set out previously, it is considered that there is a need for the business outside of identified employment areas.

Returning to Policy S4 of the NPPF, it is not considered that the proposal would have a 'substantial adverse impact' on the safeguarding of employment land within the district. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal accords with the underlying aims of Policies 1 and 7 of the Local Plan and Policy S4 of the NPPF, and as such, would be acceptable in principle.

Design, Layout and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DP3 (Key principles for well-designed places) of the NPPF states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan similarly outlines sustainable development considerations for

development proposals, providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals.

Policy 3 of the Local Plan accords with the provisions of Section 14 of the NPPF as it requires development to comprise good design; identifying issues that should be considered when preparing schemes so that development sits comfortably with, and adds positively to, its historically-designated or undesignated townscape or landscape surroundings.

The visual impact of the development has been considered above. To summarise the site context, the site partly overlaps an existing concrete yard and hardstanding area within the north-eastern portion of the site. The south-western portion of the site comprises agricultural land.

It is considered that the site has a semi-rural character given that there is agricultural land both within the site and to the south-west of the site. Beyond this, there is residential development and there is also residential development to the north and north-east of the site, including on the opposite side of Station Road.

As set out previously, although the proposed building is relatively large, it is considered that it would be of a comparable scale and appearance to existing buildings to the north-east within the existing Snaith Flowers site. The building is set back from the road frontage, and it would not be adjacent to any of the nearby dwellings. Some planting is proposed along the site access including hedgerows and trees to create a softer edge of the site.

Overall, it is considered that the development would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy P3 (Living conditions and pollution) of the NPPF sets out that development should provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution. The policy also sets out that proposals should not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site.

Policies 2 and 3 of Local Plan sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

The site adjoins an agricultural field to the south-west and the existing Snaith Flowers site to the north-east. There are dwellings located further to the south-west and north-east and also on the opposite side of Station Road to the north of the site. As such, there is a mixture of uses around the site; however, as there are dwellings relatively close to the site, the impact of the proposals on the amenity of the nearest occupants needs to be considered.

Inevitably, the proposals would result in an increase in the comings and goings to the site given the site's current use as agricultural land. However, the site is adjacent to the existing Snaith Flowers site and as such, there are already staff members and HGVs entering and leaving the site to the north-east on a relatively regular basis. Therefore, the current proposals would increase the existing operations within the Snaith Flowers site rather than introducing a new business in a residential area.

It is likely that the proposals would result in an increase in vehicle movements to and from the site from both HGVs and staff members. According to the applicant, the proposed expansion is likely to result in an increase of one HGV entering and leaving the site per day on average. This could increase during busier times of the year. It is not considered that the proposed increase in staff members would be significant compared to the existing number of employees.

The council's environmental protection team initially requested that the proposed plant room was relocated to the south-eastern side of the building. Whilst the plant room is relatively small, initially no details were provided regarding the type of plant that was proposed or how much noise is expected to be generated from the plant. More information was requested from the applicant's agent and further details have been provided including confirmation that the proposed refrigeration system will include 2 Bitzer compressor units, 2 condensors with 4 fans on each condenser and 2

evaporators with 4 fans on each evaporator. Details have been provided confirming the expected noise levels from the plant which will be enclosed within the building.

The environmental protection team have been re-consulted and have confirmed that they no longer have concerns with the position of the proposed plant room as this should not give rise to unwanted sound on site and is not likely to affect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Whilst the proposals could increase the comings and goings to the Snaith Flowers site, it is not considered that this would result in an adverse impact on the amenity of the nearest dwellings.

Therefore, the development is considered to accord with the provisions of the Policy P3 of the NPPF and Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety and Parking

Policy TR6 (Assessing transport impacts) of the NPPF sets out that development proposals should only be refused on highways grounds if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan sets out that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to access and vehicle generation.

Policy 3 details that development proposals will demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways will be secured, where they are relevant to the proposal.

Policy 33 further reinforces the need for developments to be accessible via sustainable modes of transport.

Policy 36 of the Local Plan, in conjunction with Appendix 6, sets out minimum vehicle parking standards.

As set out previously, a new vehicular access is proposed from Station Road and this access is proposed for employees and visitors. A car park area is proposed to the south-west of the building within the site within which 14 parking spaces are proposed. There are existing car parking areas to the north of the site that can be used by seasonal workers.

As set out previously, although LCC's highways team have not provided a consultation response based on the latest information that has been provided, it is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the local highway network. It is considered that there are suitable visibility splays from the proposed access, a suitable number of parking spaces within the site, and suitable arrangements for the one-way HGV system to continue to operate.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact in terms of highway safety in accordance with Policies 2, 3, 33 and 36 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 15 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Section 18 of the NPPF sets out guidance relating to how local authorities should assess and determine applications which are subject to flood risk concerns.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan requires proposals to meet sustainable development considerations including in relation to sustainable drainage and flood risk (part 7).

Policy 4 of the Local Plan requires proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to be supported by sufficient information relating to flood risks associated with the development.

The NPPF and Policy 4 of the Local Plan sets out that development in all flood zones, and development over 1 hectare in size in Flood Zone 1, will need to demonstrate that surface water from the development can be managed and will not increase the risk of flooding to third parties.

In this case, the site is within Flood Zone 1; however, the proposal is a major development and the proposal would introduce impermeable development within the site. The site is also located to the north of the River Glen. Therefore, the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA concludes that the probability of this development flooding from localised drainage systems is low; however, mitigation measures are set out within section 5.2. The Environment Agency has reviewed the recommended measures and has set out no objections to the proposed levels of flood risk mitigation. The implementation of the measures could be secured via a planning condition.

Within the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, areas across South Holland have been identified according to the level of hazard that is posed in terms of flood risk. Appendix C of the SFRA sets out guidance in terms of the minimum measures that are required according to what hazard category areas fall under. The site is partly within a Danger to Most hazard area and as the proposal if for a major 'less vulnerable' use, the SFRA recommends that the finished floor levels are set as high as practicable (a minimum of 300mm above the existing ground level). The submitted FRA does not specify this; however, it is considered that this measure could be secured via a condition to accord with the recommendations of the SFRA.

Initially, the application was not accompanied by drainage details and Lincolnshire County Council's Highways and SUDS Team raised concerns with the lack of information that was provided given that the proposal is a major development. A drainage strategy has subsequently been provided during the determination of the application. Within section 5.1.1.1 of the drainage strategy, it is concluded that ground conditions within the site mean that soakaways are unlikely to be viable. Therefore, the proposed drainage strategy is to include an attenuation pond and to discharge water to the nearest watercourse. LCC's Highways and SUDS team have been re-consulted to review the drainage strategy; however, no further consultation responses were received. As such, the drainage information has not been checked by LCC's Highways and SUDS team. It is unclear if sufficient testing has taken place to establish if soakaways are viable or not and as such, it would be considered appropriate to secure further drainage details via a condition.

With the inclusion of relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Policy 4 of the Local Plan and Section 18 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

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

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

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

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition".

The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
(c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

The application is accompanied by a BNG Assessment and associated BNG calculations. According to the submitted information, the BNG metric indicates that 10% mandatory net gain

cannot be achieved on-site and as such, the proposals require 1.04 area-habitat units and 0.03 watercourse units off-site. As such, the proposal seeks to provide BNG units off-site. The council's ecology officer considers that the BNG Assessment is sufficiently rigorous at this stage and as such, it is considered that the final BNG scheme could be secured through a pre-commencement condition.

The application is also accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) as the site is next to a Local Wildlife Site. The council's ecology officer considers that the submitted PEA is sufficiently detailed and the officer supports the mitigation and enhancement recommendations set out within the PEA. These measures could be secured via a condition.

The ecology officer has also recommended a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be provided pre-commencement to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect the River Glen Corridor local wildlife site which is next to the application site. This could also be secured via a condition.

## Planning Balance

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

The site is located within the settlement of Surfleet and proposes an expansion of Snaith Flowers which is a local employer within the area. As set out previously, Policy E2 of the NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt. It is considered that the proposed building would allow Snaith Flowers to expand and adapt by allowing, for example, by providing additional space to prepare and preserve flowers for sale across the country.

Although the proposed building is considered to relatively large, it is considered to feature a comparable scale and appearance to existing buildings located to the north-east and as such, the visual impact of the proposals is considered to be acceptable on balance. It is also considered that the development would not materially harm the amenity of nearby residents. The development is also considered to be acceptable in terms of other materials considerations such as highway safety, flood risk and biodiversity net gain.

In this case, it is considered that there are factors that weigh substantially in favour of the development and as such, the planning balance is in favour of the development.

## Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

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

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

balanced against other relevant factors.

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

Human Rights

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

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

## Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 28, 30 and 36 of the Local Plan, along with the identified sections contained within the NPPF. There are no significant factors in this case that indicate against the proposal and outweigh the consideration in favour of the proposal and the policies referred to above.

## Recommendation

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