
Railway Pension Nominees Limited
Beehive Centre, Cambridge
The Beehive Redevelopment
Town Centre Use/Retail Planning Statement
August 2023

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1.0 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 Alder King Planning Consultants has been instructed by Railway Pension Nominees Limited ('Railpen') to prepare a Town Centre Use/Retail Planning Statement in connection with an outline planning application at The Beehive Centre, Cambridge for:

The demolition and redevelopment of the Beehive Centre, including in Outline Application form for the demolition and redevelopment for a new local centre (E (a-f), F1(b-f), F2(b,d)), open space and employment (office and laboratory) floorspace (E(g)(i)(ii) to the ground floor and employment floorspace (office and laboratory) (E(g)(i)(ii) to the upper floors; along with supporting infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, vehicular access, car and cycle parking, servicing areas, landscaping and utilities.

Context for this Statement

- 1.2 This statement addresses the relevant retail/town centre use policy tests outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For town centre proposals not in a centre and not in accordance with an up to date development plan, the NPPF advises that the following issues should be taken into consideration in assessing their acceptability:

An impact assessment (paragraph 90); and

The sequential approach (paragraphs 87 and 88).

- 1.3 The NPPF, paragraph 91, advises that where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the above factors, it should be refused.

Evidence Base and Methodology

- 1.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 'Town Centres and Retail' section (paragraphs 1-18) confirms how the Government intends policies within the NPPF should be applied in practice. It provides recommendations and advice for applicants when preparing retail/town centre use statements in support of planning applications. The guidance is intended to help developers, retailers, and operators of other key town centre uses when preparing planning applications involving town centre uses and to assist LPAs when considering these types of applications.
- 1.5 The NPPG sets out advice on the key evidence which is required to support applications and confirms how the sequential approach and impact tests should be applied. The evidence base and methodology adopted in this Retail/Town Centre Use Planning Statement has full regard to the advice and recommendations set out in the NPPG.

Structure of Statement

1.6 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Section 2: provides a description of the application site and proposals.

Section 3: considers the sequential approach.

Section 4: considers retail impact.

Section 5: sets out the conclusions of the assessment.

2.0 Application Site and Proposal

Introduction

- 2.1 This section of the statement provides a description of the application site and surroundings and the application proposal.

Site Location

- 2.2 The 7.85ha application site comprises the existing Beehive Centre, located off Coldhams Lane, Cambridge. The site lies to the east of Cambridge City Centre within the administrative boundary of Cambridge City Council. A site location plan showing the site boundary in red is shown at Figure 2.1.

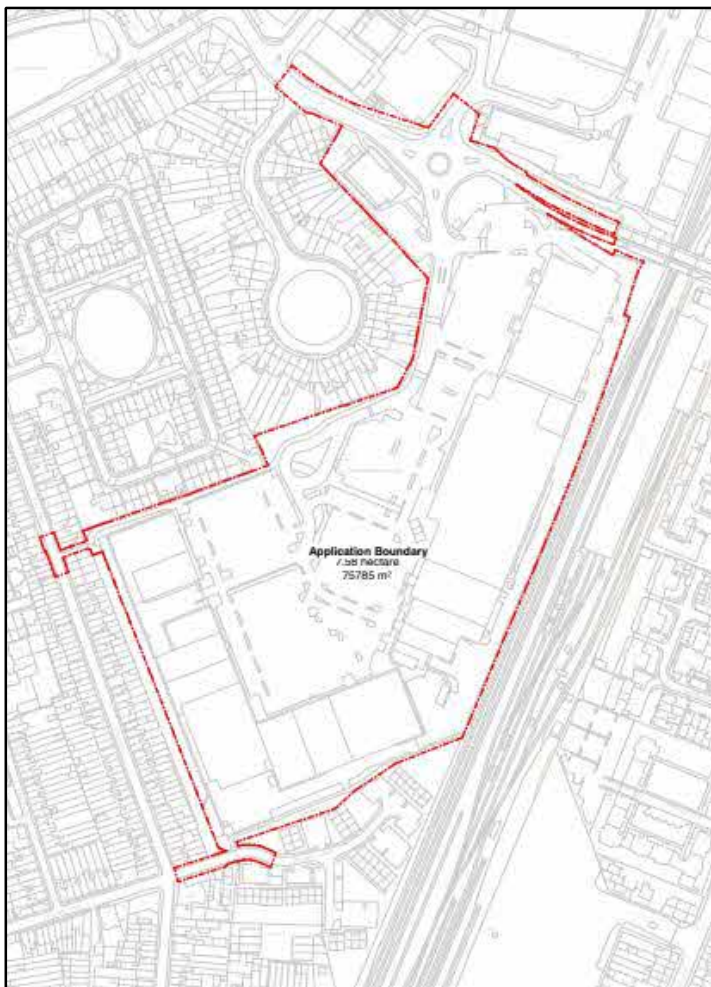


Figure 2.1: Site Location Plan

- 2.3 Coldhams Lane runs along the northern boundary of the site, beyond which is the Cambridge Retail Park. The railway line adjoins the site's eastern boundary. The residential areas of Sherwood Close and St Matthew's Gardens are immediately to the west of the site, with further residential dwellings located immediately to the south, including York Street and Sleaford Street.

- 2.4 The Beehive Centre comprises large retail units providing over 22,000sq m of retail floorspace. An overview of the current occupiers of the retail units is shown at **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Current Occupiers at The Beehive Centre

Unit	Tenant	Floorspace of Unit (sqm)
Unit 1	Dreams Ltd	693
Unit 1a	Tapi Carpets & Floors Ltd	450
Unit 2a	Carpetright Plc	710
Unit 2b	Gymfinity Kids Ltd	1,948
Unit 3	Next	995
Unit 4	Go Outdoors	991
Unit 5	B&M	1,863
Unit 6a	Hobbycraft	679
Unit 6b	Pets at Home	1,149
Unit 7a&b	Cotswold Company	949
Unit 7c	Costa	139
Unit 7d	Subway	93
Unit 8	Marks & Spencer	1,355
Unit 9	Asda	6,525
Unit 10a	TJX UK	2,040
Unit 10b	Wren Kitchens	1,490
Unit 11	Porcelanosa	567
TOTAL		22,637

- 2.5 The site is located approximately 430m to the east of the eastern edge of the defined City Centre Boundary. In retail terms, it is located in an out-of-centre location.

Application Proposal

- 2.6 The site involves the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and redevelopment of the site. The description of development is as follows:

The demolition and redevelopment of the Beehive Centre, including in Outline Application form for the demolition and redevelopment for a new local centre (E (a-f), F1(b-f), F2(b,d)), open space and employment (office and laboratory) floorspace (E(g)(i)(ii) to the ground floor and employment floorspace (office and laboratory) (E(g)(i)(ii) to the upper floors; along with supporting infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, vehicular access, car and cycle parking, servicing areas, landscaping and utilities

- 2.7 The application proposal will therefore result in the demolition of the existing 22,637sq m of retail floorspace and the redevelopment of the site to create a sustainable and welcoming place for all comprising workplace and life-science buildings alongside a high-quality new Local Centre. Eleven new buildings for life-science,

innovation and office uses are proposed, alongside the new Local Centre and open spaces to create a vibrant mixed-use environment.

2.8 The proposed Local Centre will comprise a mix of use at ground floor level, including a convenience store(s), comparison units, cafes and restaurants, leisure facilities and health and wellbeing establishments. The Local Centre will serve both the people employed within the application site and existing local residents in the immediate vicinity of the site.

2.9 Whilst the application is at outline stage, and for the purposes of this Town Centre Use/Retail Planning Statement, the illustrative scheme shows that the new Local Centre could include the following town centre uses:

Class E(a) convenience floorspace – 1,542sq m

Class E(a) comparison floorspace – 795sq m

Class E(b) restaurants and cafes floorspace – 2,794sq m

2.10 Given the foregoing, the application proposes a total floorspace of 5,131sq m within Classes E(a) and E(b). Notably, this is a reduction of circa. 17,500sq m of Classes E(a) and E(b) floorspace when compared with the existing retail park use of the site.

2.11 For illustration purposes, the proposed ground floor plan showing how the uses could be distributed across the site is shown at Figure 2.2.

2.12 Sustainability is a core focus of the proposed buildings, which will feature all-electric power, hot water and heating and cooling systems and will achieve BREEAM Excellent as a minimum.. The masterplan also seeks to achieve 100% Biodiversity Net Gain through the retention and planting of trees and the introduction of new climate resilient habitat types.

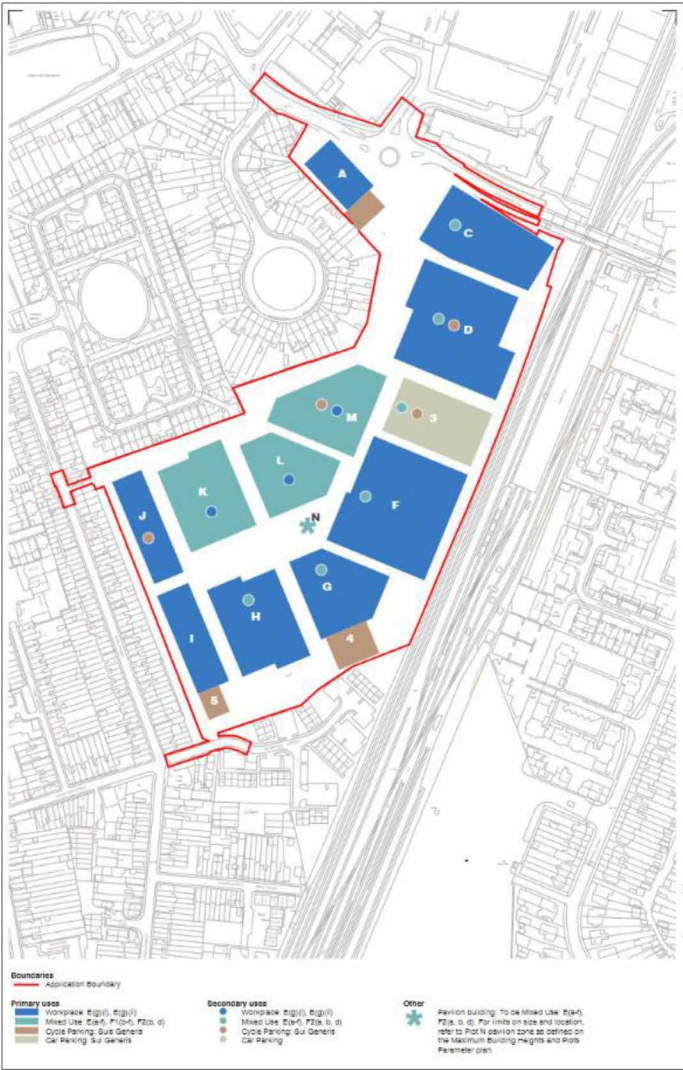


Figure 2.2: Proposed Ground Floor Plan

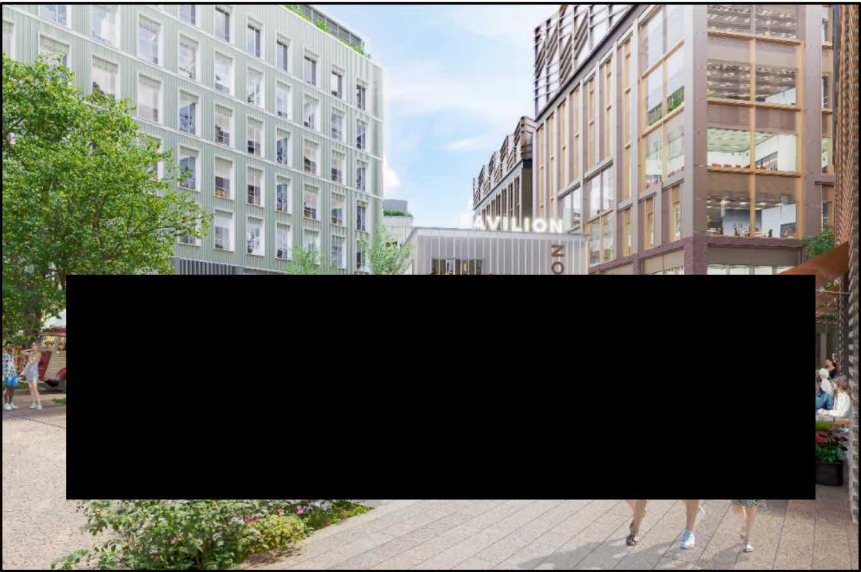


Figure 2.3: CGI Image of Application Proposal ('Garden Square North')

3.0 Sequential Approach to Site Selection

- 3.1 The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan (paragraph 87).
- 3.2 Since the application site is located in an out-of-centre location and not allocated for retail development, this statement provides supporting evidence addressing this NPPF policy requirement in relation to the proposed town centre uses. The statutory development plan is found to generally be in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF in so far as retail policy matters and the sequential approach are concerned. Policy 6 (Hierarchy of centres and retail capacity) of the adopted Cambridge Local Plan (October 2018) notes that retail and other main town centre uses should be directed to the designated centres in line with the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Sequential Approach Requirements

- 3.3 Paragraph 87 identifies that main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
- 3.4 Paragraph 88 identifies when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. The NPPF requires applicants and local planning authorities to demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.

Sequential Approach Guidance

- 3.5 The NPPG was published in March 2014. Confirmation of how the sequential test should be used in decision taking is set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPG 'Town Centres and Retail' section. It notes that the application of the test should be proportionate and appropriate for the given proposal. A checklist is provided which sets out the considerations that should be taken into account in determining whether a proposal complies with the sequential test:

With due regard to the requirement to demonstrate flexibility, has the suitability of more central sites to accommodate the proposal been considered?

Is there scope for flexibility in the format and/or scale of the proposal?

If there are no suitable sequentially preferable locations, the sequential test is passed.

- 3.6 Paragraph 12 of the NPPG identifies 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 be accommodated in specific locations'. It notes that where this is the case robust justification will need to be provided.

- 3.7 Finally, paragraph 13 provides guidance on how viability should be promoted. It identifies that LPA's need to be realistic and flexible in terms of their expectation as promoting new development on town centre locations can be more expensive and complicated than building elsewhere.

Locationally Specific Need for Proposed Town Centre Use Floorspace

- 3.8 The application comprises a mix of town centre uses within Use Classes E and F forming part of a masterplan vision for the application site, which in part replaces some of the lost retail floorspace that is currently provided on the site.
- 3.9 Moreover, in respect of the proposed Class E(a) and E(b) uses, the proposed floorspace is sought to create a high-quality Local Centre for future employees on the application site as well as for existing local residents in the surrounding area. The uses are also intended to provide active uses at ground floor level which should be encouraged from an urban design perspective.
- 3.10 As set out in Section 2 of this statement, the application proposes circa. 5,000sq m (gross) of retail/town centre use floorspace comprising Use Class E(a) (convenience and comparison) and E(b) (food and drink). The vision is to provide an appropriate level and mix of town centre uses to meet the needs of employees within the application site and the day to day needs of local residents.
- 3.11 Accordingly, given the provision of retail/town centre use floorspace within the application site is to primarily serve employees within the application site and existing local residents within its catchment, it would not be suitable or viable to locate it any other centre.
- 3.12 Given the site-specific nature of the proposed retail/town centre use floorspace, in accordance with the NPPG, a sequential assessment of sites outside of the application site should not be required. However, and notwithstanding the above, for robustness, the remainder of this section provides a sequential site assessment.

Methodology

- 3.13 The approach adopted in this sequential site assessment is consistent with the recommendations and guidance set out in the NPPG regarding the sequential approach to site selection.
- 3.14 The remainder of this section provides details on:
- The site search parameters
 - Flexibility of format and scale
 - Definition of availability
 - The site analysis undertaken

Site Search Parameters

- 3.15 We review whether there are any sequentially preferable sites/units in surrounding defined centres within an 800m / 10 minute walking distance radius from the application site, as shown at Figure 3.1. The 800 metres / 10 minute walking distance radius reflects what is defined as the preferred maximum walking distance to ‘town centres’ from the Institute of Highway Engineers (IHT’s) ‘Providing for Journeys on Foot’ document.

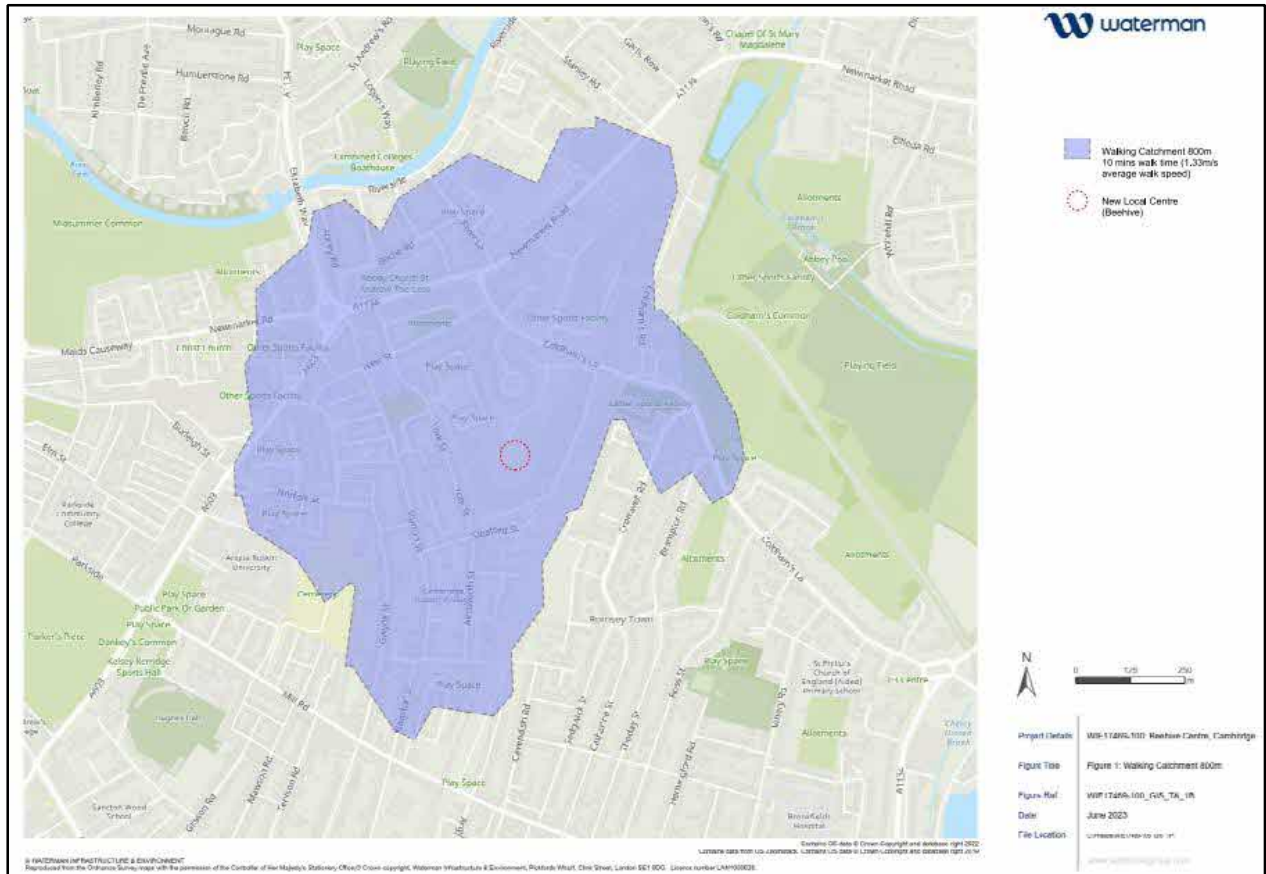


Figure 3.1: Walking Catchment 800m / 10 Minute Walking Distance (plan courtesy of Waterman)

- 3.16 The defined centres within this catchment are the far eastern edge of Cambridge City Centre i.e. the eastern edge of the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Primary Shopping Area (PSA) and Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre.
- 3.17 Therefore, this section of the statement considers potential sequentially preferable units/sites within or on the edge of these centres.

Flexibility of Format & Scale

- 3.18 The definition of suitability is pertinent to the consideration of flexibility of format and scale. The definition was clarified in recent case law, in particular the Aldergate v Mansfield District Council & Anor [2016] EWHC 1670 (Admin) Judgment (commonly known as the Mansfield Judgment). The Mansfield Judgment considers a challenge against the grant of planning permission for a discount foodstore at Sherwood Oaks

Business Park. There were four grounds for the challenge, including the manner in which the sequential test had been applied. In respect of the sequential test, paragraph 35 of the Mansfield Judgment addresses the sequential test requirements of the NPPF and finds that:

‘...“suitable and “available” generally mean “suitable” and “available” for the broad type of development which is proposed in the application by approximate size, type, and range of goods. This incorporates the requirement for flexibility in [24] NPPF, and excludes, generally, the identity and personal or corporate attitudes of an individual retailer. The area and sites covered by the sequential test search should not vary from applicant to applicant according to their identity, but from application to application based on their content.’

3.19 Paragraph 38 goes on to identify that the sequential test policy requirements of the NPPF: *‘...are simply not couched in terms of an individual retailer’s corporate requirements or limitations. That would be the antithesis of planning for land uses and here, its default policies. It would take very clear language for such an odd result to be achieved.’*

3.20 The subsequent paragraph 39 goes on to identify that the proposed occupier of a scheme is generally irrelevant. Paragraph 41 identifies that the imposition of a ‘personal permission’ condition does not allow a planning permission to be consistent with the requirements of the sequential test.

3.21 Accordingly, it is clear from the Mansfield Judgment that, in applying the sequential test:

‘suitable’ and ‘available’ generally means suitable and available for the ‘broad type of development which is proposed in the application by approximate size, type and range of goods’;

‘flexibility’ generally excludes the ‘identity and personal or corporate attitudes of an individual retailer’; and

‘available’ relates to the site’s availability for the type of retail use which permission is sought and not its availability to a particular retailer.

3.22 Provided that an element of flexibility is exercised on issues such as format and scale, any potential sequential sites should be considered only in terms of whether they could accommodate a broadly similar development proposal. The application proposal comprises circa. 93,000sq m of main town centre use floorspace including, inter alia, the employment (office and laboratory) floorspace within Class E((g)(i) and (ii)) which the local centre is seeking to serve. Without this employment floorspace the local centre would not come forward. Therefore, a sequentially preferable site should be able to accommodate *all* of the proposed main town centre use floorspace. However, and without prejudice to this position, for robustness, this sequential approach assessment considers potential sites/units for the proposed Class E(a) and Class E(b) floorspace only, which comprises the proposed retail and restaurant and café uses.

3.23 Accordingly, Alder King has reviewed the sequential approach to establish whether other units/site opportunities are available or suitable to support the applicant’s development which would require floorspace of 5,131sq m (gross) of retail/restaurant and café use floorspace.

- 3.24 Adopting a degree of flexibility, as required by both the NPPF and NPPG, we have widened the potential site size requirements to be between 4,618sq m and 5,644sq m, which represents approximately a 10% reduction/increase on the proposal to establish whether other site opportunities are available and suitable to support the applicant's development.

Definition of Availability

- 3.25 In accordance with the NPPF, any sequential sites need to be available or expected to be available within a reasonable period.
- 3.26 If there is any uncertainty on a site/unit coming forward for development, for example there are practical/feasibility/viability issues to resolve or investment/occupier interest or funding is still to be secured, then a site cannot be considered to be available. If a potential alternative site does not satisfy the availability test it is not sequentially preferable, irrespective of the position in terms of suitability.
- 3.27 Given its size, the proposed development is likely to come forward in 6 phases. Assuming outline planning permission is granted in Q3 of 2024 and a subsequent reserved matters application is granted in Q4 of 2025 it is currently anticipated that the development phases will be completed between 2028 to 2034. The proposed ground floor retail/restaurant and café use floorspace will primarily be delivered in the earlier phases of the development, between 2028-2030.
- 3.28 Accordingly, for a site to be considered available for the proposed development it should be available between 2028-2030. Allowing for a reasonable level of flexibility (a reasonable period) we have assessed potential sites/units on the basis of them being available between 2027-2031.

Sequential Site Analysis

- 3.29 In accordance with guidance set out in the NPPF and NPPG, the applicant has undertaken a sequential site analysis of potential in-centre, edge-of-centre locations, and sequentially preferable out-of-centre sites. This process has included:

An analysis of adopted and emerging development plan policy documents.

A review of potential town centre and edge-of-centre sites/unit in Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre and the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA.

- 3.30 Each are considered in turn below.

Analysis of Development Plan Policy Documents

Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA

- 3.31 The Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA is identified as an Area of Major Change (AOMC) as set out at Policy 12 in the Cambridge Local Plan. Policy 12 recognises that the AOMC will be the primary focus for

providing additional comparison goods retail in the City Centre, along with other mixed uses. The policy identifies that up to 12,000sq m of new comparison retail floorspace could be provided in the area.



Figure 3.1: Photograph of the Grafton Centre

- 3.32
- Policy 12 notes that the Council will coordinate the production of a masterplan for the area, which will need to be consulted upon locally and adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) before the submission of any major planning application. The Grafton Area Masterplan and Guidance SPD was subsequently adopted in December 2018.
- 3.33
- The SPD identifies and number of small opportunity areas and development plots on the site. The Framework Plan from the SPD shows the indicative development and is provided below.

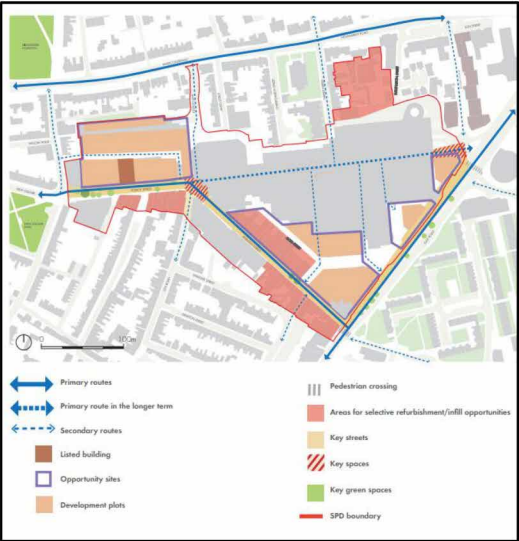


Figure 3.2: SPD Framework Plan including indicative development

- 3.34 After taking into account other identified SPD requirements, such as refurbishment/infill areas, all of the opportunity sites and development plots identified in the SPD are too small to accommodate the proposed development.
- 3.35 In 2022, the Grafton Centre was acquired by Trinity Investment Management who are currently undertaking consultation on potential changes to the centre. that keeps a smaller number of the existing retail units but converts the majority of the Centre into laboratories for science research.



Figure 3.3: Masterplan currently being consulted on by owners of the Grafton Centre

- 3.36 The current masterplan for the site identifies that the existing retail use will remain a significant activity in the centre but the east side of the shopping centre would be converted into laboratory and office space for start up, small businesses and established companies in the science and technology industry. It would also include a Premier Inn hotel (which already benefits from planning permission) and retaining the existing cinema and gym at the centre.
- 3.37 Taking into account the aspirations of the site by the current owners, which include the reduction of retail/town centre use floorspace and refurbishment of the centre for other uses, it can be concluded that the site/shopping centre is not suitable for the proposed development, which involves a new local centre.
- 3.38 In terms of availability, there are currently no timescale or programme for the redevelopment of the site/refurbishment of the Grafton Centre. The site comprises a number of active users/leases and it is unclear when these leases are due to end or if the existing occupiers are willing to relocate. Accordingly, given this uncertainty, and in the absence of any timescales for the sites redevelopment it cannot be considered to be available or available within a reasonable period for the proposed development.
- 3.39 Accordingly, based on the available evidence, it can be concluded that the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton site is not suitable or available for the proposed development at The Beehive Centre.

Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre

- 3.40 An analysis of adopted development plan policy documents identifies that there are no sites within or on the edge of Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre designated to include retail/town centre use development.

Review of Potential Sites/Units

Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA

- 3.41 A detailed review of the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA was undertaken by Alder King in May 2023. The potential redevelopment of the Grafton Centre is considered above in this section. In terms of current vacant units, the largest vacant unit in the Grafton Centre is the former Debenhams unit. The unit has been vacant for two years.
- 3.42 The former Debenhams unit measures approximately 3,500sq m. Whilst a large retail unit, even allowing for flexibility, it still would not be physically capable of accommodating the proposed development which seeks to provide at least 4,618sq m of retail/restaurant and café use floorspace. In addition, the proposal seeks to provide a mix of uses and units as part of the overall floorspace rather than providing all of the floorspace within one large unit. Accordingly, it is evident that the unit is not suitable for the proposed development.

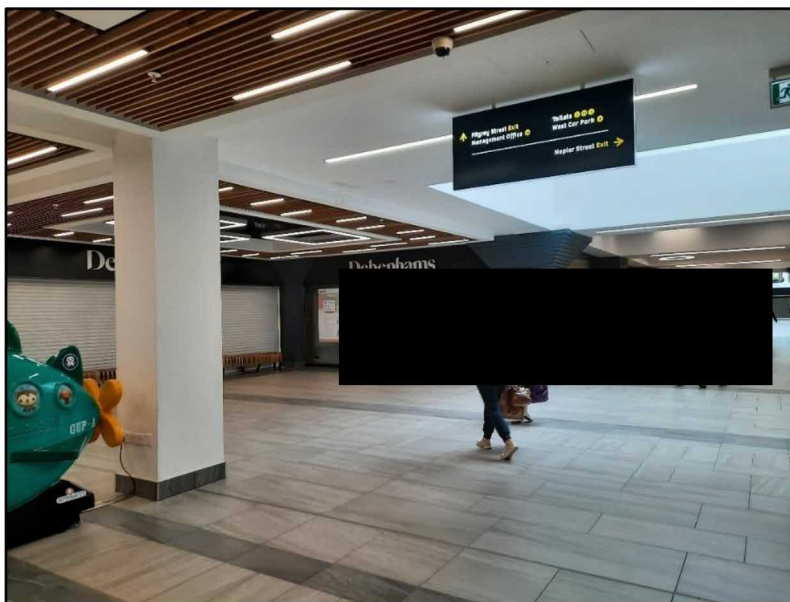


Figure 3.4: The Grafton Centre – former Debenhams unit

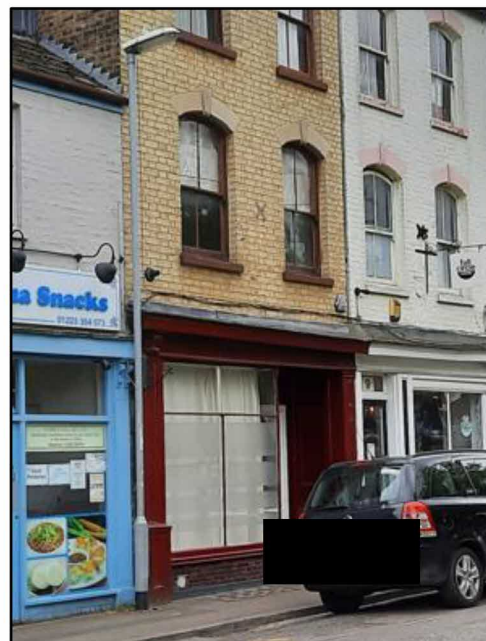
- 3.43 In terms of availability, whilst the unit is vacant from our review of online property marketing websites including CoStar, there is no evidence of it being marketed for sale or lease. A reason for this could be that it is purposely being left vacant in anticipation of the centre's refurbishment. Accordingly, based on the available evidence the unit cannot be considered to be available or available within a reasonable period.

Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre

- 3.44 A detailed review of Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre was undertaken by Alder King in May 2023. Our review of the centre has not identified any potential redevelopment sites that would need to be considered as part of this sequential analysis.
- 3.45 In terms of available units within the Neighbourhood Centre, at the time of our survey there were just two vacant units: 61 and 11 Norfolk Street.
- 3.46 Each of these units are physically too small, measuring less than 50sq m, and would not, either individually or cumulatively, be suitable for the proposed development. Even allowing for flexibility, the proposed development would need a floorspace of at least 4,618sq m.
- 3.47 Accordingly, our own review of Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre identifies that there are currently no sites or vacant units which would be suitable.



61 Norfolk Street



11 Norfolk Street

Conclusions Regarding the Sequential Approach

- 3.48 Given the supporting nature/ role of the proposed retail/restaurant and café use floorspace, in this instance the floorspace is site specific to the application site.
- 3.49 Notwithstanding the above, the foregoing analysis demonstrates that there are no suitable or available sequentially preferable sites or units in centres within the catchment area for the proposed development. Overall, it is therefore concluded that the proposed development passes the sequential test requirements.

4.0 Retail Impact

- 4.1 This section of the statement provides an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on nearby centres.
- 4.2 The NPPF sets out that when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. If there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500sq m gross.
- 4.3 Policy 6 of the adopted Cambridge Local Plan (October 2018) accords with the NPPF, recognising that any retail developments proposed outside the centres must be subject to a retail impact assessment, where the proposed gross floorspace is greater than 2,500sq m. The policy does also note that a retail impact assessment may be required below this threshold where a proposal could have a cumulative impact or an impact on the role or health of nearby centres within the catchment of the proposal.
- 4.4 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF identifies that planning applications for town centre uses outside town centres and not in accordance with an up-to-date plan should be assessed in terms of the following impacts on centres:
- 1) The impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planning public and private investment in a centre or centres within the catchment area of the proposal; and
 - 2) The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).
- 4.5 The NPPF advises that planning permission should only be refused where it is likely to have a significant adverse impact on one or more of the above factors. However, even in the event this presumption of refusal is triggered, this presumption is just one consideration which must be weighed against all other factors to establish whether or not the presumption is outweighed.

Retail Impact Guidance

- 4.6 Confirmation of how the retail impact text should be used in decision taking is set out in paragraph 17 of the 'town centres and retail' section. The guidance states that the impact test should be undertaken in a proportionate and locally appropriate way, drawing on existing information where possible.
- 4.7 The NPPG also notes that the test relates to 'retail and leisure developments (not all main town centre uses' and that 'it is important that the impact is assessed in relation to all town centres that may be affected' (paragraph 14).

Requirement for a Retail Impact Assessment

- 4.8 Given that the proposed development involves a reduction (circa -17,500sq m gross) of retail floorspace a retail impact assessment a retail impact assessment is not technically required.
- 4.9 Furthermore, as noted in Section 2, the proposed town centre uses comprise part of a wider application proposal including new life science buildings. They are intended to create a new Local Centre to serve the employees that will work within the application site as well as existing local residents within the walking catchment of the new centre. Even if an impact assessment was required, which it isn't, a conventional assessment of impact of the proposed retail and food and drink uses on defined centres would be of limited help in determining the application given the purpose and nature of the application proposals.
- 4.10 Notwithstanding the above, and without prejudice to the position set out above, we provide below a capacity assessment which we consider would be of more assistance to the Council to enable them to assess whether the town centres uses proposed are scaled to meet the needs of new employees and the local residential catchment. To be of further assistance, this section also provides a qualitative proportionate vitality and viability assessment of nearby centres to assess whether any are vulnerable to potential retail impact.

Capacity Assessment

- 4.11 In calculating potential capacity for retail and leisure floorspace in association with the development proposals we have taken into account spend from:
- (1) The future employees of the application site; and
 - (2) The existing local residents within the catchment area.
- 4.12 For the avoidance of doubt all retail expenditure is 2022 Prices and to be robust the assessment adopts the current year, 2023, both in terms of population and expenditure data (so it doesn't allow for population and retail expenditure growth from 2023 to when the retail units open (circa 2028-2030)).

Assumptions

- 4.13 The capacity assessment is based upon a number of key assumptions. These assumptions are based on national statistics as well as from figures obtained from the planning application project team, in particular from the Economic Impact Assessment prepared by Volterra.
- 4.14 The following assumptions have been made.

Future Employees of the Application Site

- 4.15 The submitted Economic Impact Assessment (prepared by Volterra) sets out the projected employment at the application proposal based on the most likely end user of the proposed development. The proposed development includes a new local centre (E(a-f), F1(b-f) and F2(b,d)) and employment floorspace

(E(g)(i)(ii)) comprising offices and laboratories. The projected employment figures comprise all of the aforementioned uses, including the lab space being brought forward in the lab-enabled blocks.

- 4.16 Accordingly, it has been assumed that the proposed development will create employment for 6,710 employees, this equates to 6,050 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) new jobs.

Existing Local Residents within Catchment Area

- 4.17 The local catchment area (10 minute walking distance) of the application site is identified at Figure 3.1 in Section 3 of this statement. Data obtained from retail and population data provider Experian confirms that the population within the identified local catchment is 6,859 at 2023 (2021 census).

Capacity Assessment

- 4.18 The potential capacity for retail and town centre use floorspace on the application site is based on the assumptions outlined above is set out below.

Potential Turnover of Proposed Local Centre

- 4.19 Table 4.1 below sets out the potential turnover of the proposed local centre.

Table 4.1: Potential Turnover of Proposed Local Centre

	Floorspace (sq m gross)	Floorspace (sq m net)	Benchmark Sales Density (£/sq m)	Turnover (£m)
Convenience	1,542	1,157	7,000	8.10
Comparison	795	596	3,000	1.78
Restaurant/Cafe	2,794	-	3,500	9.78

Notes:

2021 Prices

Benchmark sales densities are AK Planning judgment based on size and role of Local Centre

Assumed 75/25% gross/net floorspace split – convenience/comparison retailing

- 4.20 It is assessed, after adopting appropriate estimated benchmark sales densities for the floorspace that the Local Centre could generate a convenience goods turnover of upto £8.1m, a comparison goods turnover of upto £1.78m and restaurant/café turnover of upto £9.78m.

Employees

- 4.21 The Economic Impact Assessment identifies that the 6,710 employees (6,050 FTEs) within the application site would spend approximately £10.6m per year (gross) in the local area (@2023). This spend comprises spending predominantly on retail uses covering Use Classes E(a) and E(b), including shops and restaurants/cafes primarily for the purpose of lunch and/or coffee.
- 4.22 The £10.6m annual spend by the 6,050 FTE employees equates to an annual spend of £1,752 per employee and weekly spend of £33.69 per employee. Assuming a 5 day working week for employees (based on the FTE figure), this therefore equates to a daily spend of £6.74 per employee. This accords with the 2005 YouGov survey that found that workers in the UK spent on average £6 a day in the local area around their place of work (some 18 years ago). This figure also accords with the average daily spend set out in the Economic Impact Assessment which identifies daily spends dependent on the type of worker of between £6 and £14.
- 4.23 It is considered that most employees are likely to purchase lunch and/or a drink 'on the go' and return to work. Therefore, it is likely that a significant number of employees would spend most of their daily spend in shops on lunch i.e. for convenience use. However, it is likely that some spend within shops would be on comparison goods, for example, clothing or at a florist.
- 4.24 It is also likely that many lunch purchases would be in cafes, either eat in or takeaway. Whilst the number of lunchtime trips to restaurants may be less frequent when they are undertaken it is likely that the amount of spend would be more than the average of £6.
- 4.25 Accordingly, for the purpose of this capacity assessment we have assumed that the average daily employee spend of £6.74 is split 50:50 between retail shops and cafes/restaurants. Therefore, it is anticipated that each employee will spend an average of £3.37 per day on retail (E(a)) use at stores within the application site. Of this £3.37, it is anticipated that 80% would be on lunch purchases i.e. convenience goods, and the remaining 20% on comparison goods. Therefore, we have assumed that £2.70 would be spent on convenience and £0.67 on comparison goods.
- 4.26 Based on the anticipated total number of employees on the application site (6,050), it is projected that £16,335 will be spent per day at convenience stores. This equates to a yearly amount (based on a 5 day working week) of £4,247,100 i.e. circa £4.25m annual turnover. Similarly, it is projected that £4,054 will be spent per day at comparison stores. This equates to a yearly amount (based on a 5 day working week) of £1,054,040 i.e. circa £1.05m annual turnover.
- 4.27 Following on from the above, the remaining half (£3.37) of the average daily worker spend (£6.74) is anticipated to be spent in restaurants and cafes within the application site i.e. circa £5.3m annual turnover.
- 4.28 In conclusion, it is assessed that potential expenditure generated by employees of the application site alone could support some 54% of the total Class E(a) and E(b) floorspace proposed in the Local Centre.

Local Residents

- 4.29 We provide below an assessment of the level of retail, restaurant and cafes uses (Classes E(a) and E(b)) floorspace generated by local residents within the local centre catchment. In doing so we have had regard to the following retail data which is widely adopted by retail planners:

Experian MMG3 Population/Expenditure Census Software – provides information on population and expenditure estimates; and

Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 20 (February 2023) - provides information on expenditure forecasts and internet shopping spend/expenditure.

- 4.30 The Experian MMG3 software, after excluding internet expenditure, identifies that on average a person within the catchment area spends £2,774 per annum on convenience goods and £2,909 per annum on comparison goods (@ 2023)

- 4.31 Applying the average spend to the number of residents within the catchment area, it is assessed that existing residents generate in the region of:

£19.02m of convenience goods expenditure per annum; and

£19.95m of comparison goods expenditure per annum.

- 4.32 Turning to expenditure on food and drink uses generated by residents in the local catchment area, the Experian MMG3 software identifies that on average a person within the catchment spends £2,117 per annum in restaurants and cafes.

- 4.33 Applying the average spend to the number of residents within the catchment area, it is assessed that existing residents currently generate in the region of:

£14.52m food and drink expenditure per annum.

- 4.34 Whilst it is recognised that those residents in the local catchment will also visit other retail and food and drink venues in Cambridge and elsewhere (particularly Cambridge City Centre for comparison goods retailing) it is clear that the retail and turnover of the proposed Local Centre, after taking into account expenditure spent by office workers on the application site, represents a small proportion of this overall expenditure. Table 4.2 shows that only:

20% of the total convenience goods expenditure is required to support the proposed convenience floorspace

3% is required to support the proposed comparison goods floorspace; and

30% is required to support the proposed restaurant/café floorspace.

Table 4.2: Turnover of Proposed Local Centre Compared to Expenditure Generated by Workers and Local Catchment

(£m)	Convenience	Comparison	Restaurant/ Cafe
Potential Turnover of Local Centre	8.10	1.78	9.78
Expenditure Generated by Employees	4.25	1.05	5.30
Residual Turnover after Expenditure Generated by Employees	3.85	0.73	4.48
Expenditure generated in Local Catchment Area	19.02	19.95	14.52
% of Expenditure generated in Local Catchment Area needed to support Proposed Local Centre	20%	3%	30%

Conclusions on the Capacity Assessment

- 4.35 In summary, the above capacity assessment demonstrates that both the employees on the application site and existing residents within the catchment area are able to support the retail and town centre use floorspace (Use Class E(a) and E(b) proposed in the new Local Centre. Accordingly, the scale of retail floorspace proposed, which is significantly less than that currently on site, is appropriate.

Qualitative Assessment

- 4.36 Notwithstanding that the above capacity assessment demonstrates that the proposed town centre use floorspace is fully supported by new expenditure/spend from future employees of the application site and from existing residents with the catchment area of the proposed Local Centre, we provide below a qualitative assessment of the vitality and viability of surrounding centres to assess whether they are vulnerable to impact from the proposed local centre. The nearby centres that have been assessed are:

Mill Road West District Centre

Mill Road East District Centre

Mitchams Corner District Centre

Barnwell Road Local Centre

Arbury Road/Milton Road Local Centre

Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre

Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre

Ditton Lane Neighbourhood Centre

Green End Road Neighbourhood Centre

Chesterton High Street Neighbourhood Centre

Hawthorn Way Neighbourhood Centre

- 4.37 Given the size, role and strength of Cambridge City Centre and the complimentary role that the proposed Local Centre will provide we do not consider it necessary to undertake a detailed viability and vitality assessment of the centre. Furthermore, a health check of the centre has recently been undertaken as part of the Greater Cambridge Retail and Leisure Study (2021) (GCR&LS). The assessment concludes that:

Cambridge City Centre is performing well against a number of the key health check indicators.

The vacancy levels in both the Historic Core and the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street areas has reduced since the previous Retail Study was undertaken in 2013.

Cambridge performs very strongly relative to other comparative cities across the UK.

Cambridge benefits from its historic environment and universities, which attract tourists and students into the City, resulting in high levels of footfall.

- 4.38 It is evident that Cambridge City Centre has a healthy and strong retail sector with a wide range of reasons and attractions drawing people to the city centre. It clearly serves a different role and function to the proposed Local Centre on the application site and is not vulnerable to the potential impact of the proposed centre.

- 4.39 The following proportionate health check assessments provide up to date vitality and viability health checks of each of the above centres, adopting, where information is available, the health check indicators set out at paragraph 006 of the NPPG. The assessment has been informed by our own fieldwork and site visits carried out in May 2023.

Mill Road West District Centre

- 4.40 As defined on the Cambridgeshire Policies Map 2018, Mill Road West District Centre is located along Mill Road to the west of the railway line. The centre extends from the railway line to the east to just short of Mortimer Road to the west and comprises a linear centre along Mill Road. The centre primarily serves a local catchment accommodating a wide range of local shops and services.

- 4.41 The centre is located within a conservation area and is within a densely populated area with primarily terraced dwellings to the north and south. The recently developed Ironworks, on the north eastern edge of the centre (identified as R10 on the policies map), has created an additional 182 dwellings. A further 43 dwellings are identified for the Travis Perkins site on the south eastern edge of the centre (identified as R9 on the policies map).

Figure 4.3: Mill Road West District Centre

Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

- 4.42 Mill Road West District Centres accommodates some 93 retail and commercial units which are occupied by a range of uses but predominantly by leisure services. A breakdown of uses is provided at **Table 4.4** below, alongside the Experian GOAD average.

Table 4.4: Land Use Composition – Mill Road West District Centre

Category	No.	%	UK Av. %
Convenience	16	17	9
Comparison	10	11	27
Retail Service	11	12	16
Leisure Services	35	38	25
Financial and Business Services	9	10	9
Vacant	12	13	14
Total	93	100	100

Notes: Figures may not add due to rounding

- 4.43 As shown above, over one third (38%) of the units are occupied by leisure services, which includes restaurants, takeaways, cafes and public houses. This is significantly above the average for the UK which is 25%. There is also a reasonably high number of convenience units, at 17%, compared with national average of 9%. The number of comparison units, at 11%, falls below the national average of 27%, whilst the number of retail service units (12%) falling marginally below the national average of 16%. The number of financial and business services is approximately in line with the national average.

Photographs of Mill Road West District Centre



- 4.44 Overall, the diversity and composition of units within the district centre shows that Mill Road West, alongside Mill Road East, provides a range of services and facilities for the local community, commensurate to its position in the retail hierarchy.
- 4.45 In terms of vacant units, at the time of our site visit there were 12 vacant units, equating to 13% of the total number of units which is slightly below the national average of 14%. This lower than average vacancy rate is an indication of the centre's strength and vitality.
- 4.46 The majority of the centre is easy to navigate and accessible on foot. The centre runs along Mill Road, which is a busy two way 20mph road heading east from the city centre. There are several pedestrian crossings across Mill Road along the length of the district centre, albeit most of the retail and commercial units are located on the southern side of Mill Road. At the time of our visit footfall was reasonably high along the length of the district centre and heading towards Mill Road East District Centre.
- 4.47 There is a reasonably small short stay car park available at Gwdir Street in the eastern part of the district centre providing car parking for approximately 35 cars.
- 4.48 The centre is served by bus stops along Mill Road which connect the city centre to the east with residential areas to the east.
- 4.49 The environmental quality of the district centre is considered to be good, albeit it is located along Mill Road and so suffers slightly from this trafficked road (which we understand has been under review for potential changes by the local authority). Nonetheless, the centre is a vibrant and busy centre typical of a popular city district centre in a thriving residential area.
- 4.50 Overall, Mill Road West District Centre is considered to display healthy signs of vitality and viability. It is considered to be functioning well, providing a range of local services to the local population. The number of vacant units is slightly below the national average and there was steady and consistent footfall observed within the centre. The centre does not show any evidence that it is vulnerable to impact.

- 4.51 We are also not aware of any committed or planned investment within Mill Road West District Centre that could potentially be impacted upon by the proposed Local Centre.

Mill Road East District Centre

- 4.52 As defined on the Cambridgeshire Policies Map 2018, Mill Road East District Centre is located along Mill Road to the east of the railway line. The centre extends from the railway line to the west to around Ruth Bagnall Court to the east and comprises a linear centre along Mill Road.
- 4.53 As with Mill Road West, the centre primarily serves a local catchment accommodating a wide range of local shops and services. The centre is located within a conservation area and is within a densely populated area with primarily terraced dwellings to the north and south. Site R21, as identified on the policies map, is allocated for 78 dwellings, up to 270 student rooms and up to 1ha employment floorspace.

Figure 4.5: Mill Road East District Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

- 4.54 Mill Street East District Centre comprises 61 retail and commercial units which are occupied by a range of users. A breakdown of uses is provided in Table 4.6 below, alongside the Experian GOAD national average.

Table 4.6: Land Use Composition – Mill Road East District Centre

Category	No.	%	UK Av %
Convenience	10	16	9
Comparison	13	21	27
Retail Service	11	18	16
Leisure Services	13	21	25
Financial and Business Services	7	11	9
Vacant	7	11	14
Total	61	100	100

Notes: Figures may not add due to rounding

- 4.55 As shown in Table 4.6, overall, there is a reasonably even spread of the use of the units across the retail and commercial sectors. The highest number of units are occupied by comparison and leisure service users, with 21% of the total number of units occupied by each of these users. 16% of units are occupied by convenience users which is above the national average of 9%. The percentage of retail service and financial and business service users is approximately in line (within 2%) of the national average.

Photographs of Mill Road East District Centre



- 4.56 Overall, the diversity and composition of units within the district centre shows that Mill Road East, alongside Mill Road West, provides a range of important services and facilities for the local community, commensurate to its position in the retail hierarchy.
- 4.57 In terms of vacant units, at the time of our site visit there were 7 vacant units, equating to 11% of the total number of units which is below the national average of 14%. This lower than average vacancy rate is an indication of the centre's strength and vitality.
- 4.58 The centre is easy to navigate and accessible on foot. The centre runs along Mill Road, which is a busy two way 20mph road heading east from the city centre. There are a couple of pedestrian crossings across Mill Road along the length of the district centre to link the units on both the north and south sides of Mill Road. At the time of our visit footfall was reasonably high along the length of the district centre albeit arguably a little quieter than Mill Road West District Centre.
- 4.59 There is a small car park available at the rear of the Co-op convenience store in the middle of the district centre providing free car parking for customers for up to 30 minutes for approximately 8 cars.
- 4.60 The centre is served by bus stops along Mill Road which connect the city centre to the east with residential areas to the east.
- 4.61 As with Mill Road West, the environmental quality of the district centre is considered to be good, albeit it is located along Mill Road and so suffers slightly from this trafficked road. Nonetheless, the centre is a vibrant and busy centre typical of a popular city district centre in a thriving residential area.

- 4.62 Overall, Mill Road East District Centre is considered to display healthy signs of vitality and viability. It is considered to be functioning well, providing a range of important local services to the local population. The number of vacant units is below the national average and there was steady and consistent footfall observed within the centre. The centre does not show any evidence that it is vulnerable to impact even if it was considered that the proposed Local Centre on the Beehive Centre site had a trading overlap with facilities in the centre. Do we want to say this?
- 4.63 We are also not aware of any committed or planned investment within Mill Road West District that could potentially be impacted upon by the proposed Local Centre.

Mitcham's Corner District Centre

- 4.64 As defined on the Cambridgeshire Policies Map 2018, Mitcham's Corner District Centre is located at an intersection where Chesterton Road, Milton Road and Victoria Road converge. The centre primarily serves a local catchment accommodating a range of local shops and services.
- 4.65 The western part of the centre is located within a conservation area.

Figure 4.7: Mitcham's Corner District Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

- 4.66 Mitcham's Corner District Centre comprises 48 retail and commercial units which are occupied by a range of users. A breakdown of uses is provided in Table 4.8 below, alongside the Experian GOAD national average.

Table 4.8: Land Use Composition – Mill Road East District Centre

Category	No.	%	UK Av. %
Convenience	9	19	9
Comparison	8	17	27
Retail Service	6	13	16
Leisure Services	17	35	25
Financial and Business Services	4	8	9
Vacant	4	8	14
Total	48	100	100

Notes: Figures may not add due to rounding

- 4.67 As shown in Table 4.8, overall, there is a high number of units occupied by leisure users (17 units, 35% of the total number of units), comprising primarily takeaways, restaurants and public houses. There is also a reasonably high number of convenience units, at 19% of the total number of units compared with the national average of 9%. Notably, there are two Co-op stores within the centre. There are 8 comparison units, which at 17% falls below the national average. The units falling within the financial and business services are in line with the national average, whilst retail services falls slightly below the national average at 13%.

Photographs of Mitcham's Corner District Centre



- 4.68 Overall, the diversity and composition of units within the district centre shows that Mitcham's Corner District Centre provides a range of important services and facilities for the local community, commensurate to its position in the retail hierarchy.
- 4.69 In terms of vacant units, at the time of our site visit there were 4 vacant units, equating to 8% of the total number of units which is below the national average of 14%. This lower than average vacancy rate is an indication of the centre's strength and vitality.
- 4.70 The centre is accessible on foot but is spread across a busy intersection which primarily comprises a one way traffic system. There are pedestrian crossings across the centre to allow safe pedestrian access between the different parts of the centre. At the time of our visit footfall was reasonably high particularly in the vicinity of the larger of the two Co-op stores on Mitcham's Corner.

- 4.71 Parking within the centre is limited with a small parking area provided outside of the Ailsa Court Co-op on Chesterton Road providing approximately 6 car parking spaces. The centre is also served by bus stops along Chesterton Road and Milton Road.
- 4.72 The environmental quality of the district centre is considered to be reasonably good, albeit it suffers slightly from the traffic system running through the centre. Nonetheless, the centre is a busy centre and does benefit from a landscaped area in the centre and a number of trees located throughout the centre.
- 4.73 Overall, Mitcham's Corner District Centre is considered to display healthy signs of vitality and viability. It is considered to be functioning well, providing a range of important local services to the local population. The number of vacant units is significantly below the national average and there was steady and consistent footfall observed within the centre. The centre does not show any evidence that it is vulnerable to impact even if it was considered that the proposed Local Centre on the Beehive Centre site had a trading overlap with facilities in the centre.
- 4.74 We are also not aware of any committed or planned investment within Mitcham's Corner District Centre that could potentially be impacted upon by the proposed Local Centre.
- 4.75 Owing to their smaller scale, the following sections of this statement provide a health check summary of the local and neighbourhood centres as identified at paragraph 4.42 of this statement.

Barnwell Road Local Centre

- 4.76 Barnwell Road Local Centre is located at the junction of Barnwell Road and Newmarket Road. The centre comprises a small row of retail and commercial units and a library along Barnwell Road. The row of units comprises a Spar convenience store, two takeaways, a pharmacy, a barbers and a community use. The centre also includes a McDonalds and Papa Johns to the north of Newmarket Road.

Barnwell Road Local Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.77 Our vitality and viability survey found that:

- There are no vacant units within the Local Centre, which indicates a strongly performing centre.
- The centre is accessible on foot from the local residential area, with a pedestrian crossing linking the two parts of it which are divided by Newmarket Road, and there are bus stops located within close proximity of the centre.
- At the time of our visit, footfall was as expected for a centre of this size.
- Approximately 8 car parking spaces are provided outside the row of retail and commercial units, with further car parking provided at McDonald's.
- The environmental quality of the centre is reasonable benefitting from a landscaped area to the front of the row units setting it back from the main road.

4.78 The vitality and viability health check of Barnwell Road Local Centre is considered good.

Arbury Road/Milton Road Local Centre

4.79 Arbury Road / Milton Road Local Centre is located at the junction of Arbury Road and Milton Road. The centre comprises 20 units, including 7 comparison users, 4 convenience users, 4 leisure services, 3 retail services and 2 financial and business service uses.

Arbury Road/Milton Road Local Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.80 Our assessment found that:

- The centre provides a good level of comparison, with 35% of the units occupied by a comparison user.
- The centre provides a good range of convenience retailers, including a Co-op convenience store as well as independent stores.
- There are currently no vacant units within the centre indicating a healthy and vibrant centre.

The centre is accessible by public transport and on foot from its surrounding residential catchment.

The centre has a good environmental quality and good footfall.

- 4.81 The vitality and viability health check of Arbury Road/Milton Road Local Centre is considered to be very good.

Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre

- 4.82 Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre is located along Norfolk Street and primarily comprises a row of units at its eastern end where Norfolk Street meets St Matthew's Street and a small row of units at its western end towards East Road. The centre comprises a total of 13 units including a mix of convenience, comparison, leisure service, retail service and financial and business service users.

Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

- 4.83 Our health check assessment found that:

The centre has a good level of leisure service providers, with 31% of the units occupied by leisure services.

The centre also provides 3 convenience stores for the local catchment.

The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good albeit slightly dispersed along Norfolk Street.

Whilst the vacancy rate of the centre is 15%, slightly above the national average of 14%, this equates to only two units.

The centre is easily accessible on foot for its catchment. However, it is lacking public transport links, with the nearest bus stops at the Grafton Centre on East Road.

- 4.84 The vitality and viability health check of Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be reasonably good.

Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre

- 4.85 Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre is a very small centre located at the junction of Fairfax Road and Cromwell Road. The centre comprises just four units, occupied by a newsagents, architect's office, fancy dress shop and a takeaway.

Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

- 4.86 Our assessment of the centre found that:

The centre provides a range of uses for a centre of its size, including convenience, comparison and a leisure service for local residents.

The environmental quality of the centre is good.

There are no vacant units within the centre.

The centre is easily accessible on foot.

- 4.87 The vitality and viability health check of Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be very good.

Ditton Lane Neighbourhood Centre

- 4.88 Ditton Lane Neighbourhood Centre is a small centre located on Ditton Lane at its junction with Thorpe Way. The centre comprises a row of four units plus a health centre.

Ditton Lane Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.89 Our health check assessment found that:

The centre provides a range of uses to meet the day-to day needs of the local residents, including two convenience uses, a comparison use and a leisure use (takeaway).

There are no vacant units within the centre

The centre is accessible on foot, with a pelican crossing across Ditton Lane to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians.

There is a small layby in front of the units off Ditton Lane providing car parking for approximately 3 cars, as well as a small parking area to the rear.

The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good for a centre of its nature.

4.90 The vitality and viability health check of Ditton Lane Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be very good.

Green End Road Neighbourhood Centre

4.91 Green End Road Neighbourhood Centre is located where Green End Road meets Scotland Road and Ashfield Road. The centre comprises units on three corners of the junction.

Green End Road Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.92 The centre comprises two retail stores (a Nisa Local and a pet shop) and a takeaway, alongside a children's nursery, church and sight advice centre. There is also a site within the centre currently being redeveloped for the erection of 9 no. apartments and ground floor commercial space (LPA Ref: 22/5100/FUL). As we understand, conditions are currently being discharged to enable the development to commence (LPA Ref: 22/05100/CONDA).

4.93 Our survey of the centre identifies that:

The centre provides a convenience store to meet the day to day needs of local residents.

There is just one vacant unit within the centre.

There is currently investment in the centre as demonstrated by the current development site referred to above.

The centre is accessible on foot and there is car parking available for approximately 4 cars at the front of the Nisa Local.

The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good albeit split across the road junction.

4.94 The vitality and viability health check of Green End Road Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be reasonably good. Whilst there is currently one vacant unit within the centre there is also evidence of current investment in the centre for commercial and residential purposes.

Chesterton High Street Neighbourhood Centre

4.95 Chesterton High Street Neighbourhood Centre is a long linear centre located along the High Street in Chesterton. The centre comprises 19 units interspersed with primarily residential dwellings. Parts of the centre are located within a conservation area.

Chesterton High Street Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.96 Our vitality and viability assessment found that:

There are a relatively high number of retail units provided in this centre for a neighbourhood centre.

There are a range of uses provided within the centre, with the highest number falling within the leisure service category, including cafes and a public house.

There are also several comparison (3), convenience (4) and retail service (4) units.

There are 2 vacant units within the centre which equates to less than 11% of the total number of units in the centre. This falls below the national average of 14%.

The centre is accessible on foot to local residents and there are bus stops located along the High Street.

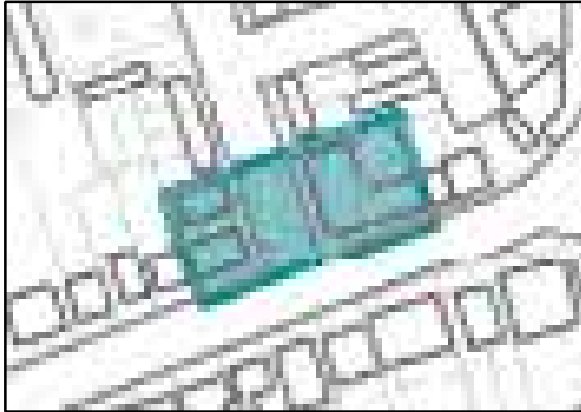
The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good albeit it is dispersed and spread out along approximately 500m of the High Street.

4.97 The vitality and viability health check of Chesterton High Street Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be good.

Hawthorn Way Neighbourhood Centre

4.98 Hawthorn Way Neighbourhood Centre is located at the junction of Hawthorn Way and Chesterton Road. The centre comprises a Spar convenience store, a bakery and a café, as well as units in use as a yoga and wellbeing centre.

Hawthorn Way Neighbourhood Centre



Source: Extract from Cambridgeshire Policies Map

4.99 Our assessment found that:

The centre provides uses to serve the day to day needs of local residents.

There are no vacant units in the centre.

The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good.

The centre is accessible on foot and there is a pelican crossing providing a safe access from the south of Chesterton Road.

4.100 The vitality and viability health check of Hawthorn Way Neighbourhood Centre is considered to be very good.

Conclusions on Impact

4.101 The proposed retail and town centre uses comprise part of wider application proposal including new life science buildings and open space. The town centre uses are proposed to create a high quality Local Centre to serve the employees that will be employed within the application site as well as existing residents within the catchment of the application site.

4.102 The proposed Local Centre will provide a vibrant centre for the local community providing them with a diverse mix of shops, cafes, restaurants and services to cater for both employees and local residents. The wider application proposals seek to create a welcoming place for all, improving local access to open and green spaces and the creation of a new public realm for the community to enjoy all year round.

4.103 Given that the proposed development involves a reduction (circa -17,500sq m gross) of retail floorspace a retail impact assessment is not technically required. Notwithstanding this, this section of the statement has provided a capacity led retail impact assessment together with a qualitative assessment of nearby centres to assess whether any are vulnerable to potential retail impact.

- 4.104 The capacity assessment demonstrates that both the employees on the application site and existing residents within the catchment area are able to support the retail and town centre use floorspace (Use Class E(a) and E(b)) proposed in the new Local Centre and that the scale of retail floorspace proposed, which is significantly less than that currently on site, is appropriate.
- 4.105 The qualitative vitality and viability health check assessments of nearby centres demonstrates that all nearby centres display good levels of vitality and viability. There is no evidence to suggest that the centres are vulnerable to impact even if it was considered that the proposed Local Centre had a trading overlap with facilities in them.
- 4.106 Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of the test set by prevailing policy insofar as retail impact is concerned.

5.0 Conclusions

Introduction

- 5.1 This Town Centre Use Retail Planning Statement has been prepared by Alder King Planning Consultants in connection with an outline planning application at The Beehive Centre, Cambridge.
- 5.2 The proposed development comprises the redevelopment of the site for a new local centre, open space, employment floorspace and associated works. The new local centre seeks to provide up to 5,131sq m of retail and town centre uses floorspace (Class E(a) and E(b)).
- 5.3 This statement addresses the relevant retail/town centre use policy tests outlined in the NPPF, namely;
- The sequential approach; and
- Retail/town centre use impact.

Sequential Approach to Site Selection

- 5.4 The proposed town centre uses form part of a wider masterplan vision for the application site, which in part replaces some of the lost retail floorspace that is currently provided on the site. Moreover, the proposed town centre use floorspace is sought to create a high-quality Local Centre for future employees on the application site as well as for existing local residents in the local catchment area.
- 5.5 Accordingly, given the provision of retail/town centre use floorspace within the application site is to primarily serve employees within the application site and existing local residents within its catchment, it would not be suitable or viable to locate it any other centre outside of the application site. Given the site-specific nature of the proposed retail/town centre use floorspace a sequential assessment of sites outside of the application site should not be required.
- 5.6 However, and notwithstanding the above, for robustness, a sequential site assessment has been undertaken. The assessment demonstrates that there are no suitable or available sequentially preferable sites or units in Norfolk Street Neighbourhood Centre or the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton PSA. Overall, it is therefore concluded that the proposed development passes the sequential test requirements.

Retail/Town Centre Uses Impact

- 5.7 The proposed retail and town centre uses comprise part of wider application proposal including new life science buildings and open space. The town centre uses are proposed to create a Local Centre to serve the employees that will be employed within the application site as well as existing residents within the catchment of the application site.

- 5.8 Given that the proposed development involves a reduction (circa -17,500sq m gross) of retail floorspace a retail impact assessment a retail impact assessment is not technically required. Notwithstanding this, a capacity led retail impact assessment has been provided together with a qualitative assessment of nearby centres to assess whether any are vulnerable to potential retail impact.
- 5.9 The capacity assessment demonstrates that both the employees on the application site and existing residents within the catchment area are able to support the retail and town centre use floorspace (Use Class E(a) and E(b) proposed in the new Local Centre and that the scale of retail floorspace proposed, which is significantly less than that currently on site, is appropriate.
- 5.10 The qualitative vitality and viability health check assessments of nearby centres demonstrates that all nearby centres display good levels of vitality and viability. There is no evidence to suggest that the centres are vulnerable to impact even if it was considered that the proposed Local Centre had a trading overlap with facilities in them.
- 5.11 Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of the test set by prevailing policy insofar as retail impact is concerned.

Overall Conclusions

- 5.12 Overall, in the light of our detailed analysis, it is concluded that the proposals are consistent with the requirements of current planning policy relating to retail/town centre use impact and the sequential approach. Accordingly, the proposals are acceptable from a retail and town centre use planning perspective.