

Application Number:	P/FUL/2022/06012		
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2022/06012 - dorsetforyou.com (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)		
Site address:	Land east of Sandford Road and south of Pottery Lines Sandford Road Sandford BH20 7AD		
Proposal:	Development of Class E(a) retail food store with associated parking, landscaping and access.		
Applicant name:	Lidl Great Britain Ltd		
Case Officer:	Peter Walters / Naomi Shinkins		
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Ezzard, Cllr Holloway		
Publicity expiry date:	31 January 2023	Officer site visit date:	July 2022, October 2023, September 2024
Decision due date:	16 February 2024	Ext(s) of time:	13 November 2024
No of Site Notices:	2 posted on 18 th October 2022		
SN displayed reasoning:	The application was advertised by means of site notices displayed on the northern and southern ends of the site facing the A351		

This application is before committee for consideration, at the request of the Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

REFUSE - due to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and impact on the character of the area (see full reasons for refusal in section 17 of this report).

3.0 Reason for the recommendation:

- The development is considered to be inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt.
- Impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- Impact on the character of the area.
- Very special circumstances do not exist, as the harm to the openness of the Green Belt, the harm to the character of the area and any other harm is not clearly outweighed by the proposed benefits

Members of the planning committee should note the proposed development would be in excess of the 1000 square metre threshold for development within the Green Belt that triggers the need for the application to be referred by the Secretary of State if the committee

does not agree with the officer recommendation and is minded to approve the application. The Secretary of State will determine whether the application should be called in for a public inquiry. This is in accordance with Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021. Officers note that the Direction has been updated in 2024, however, paragraph 16 of the 2024 Direction requires applications submitted prior to 2024 to be considered under the 2021 Direction.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	<p>UNACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Conflicts with Policy EE3 of the Purbeck Local Plan but the retail need is a material consideration in this particular case which indicates that the plan should not be followed. However, it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt as noted below.</p>
Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt	<p>UNACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Inappropriate development causing harm to the openness of the Green Belt, both spatially and visually, which is not clearly outweighed by proposed benefits</p>
Design and impact on the character of the area	<p>UNACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Impact on the character of the area that is intrinsic to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.</p>
Environmental Impact Assessment	<p>ACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Concluded that the proposal does not require and Environmental Statement</p>
Need for Retail Provision	<p>ACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Retail need for approx. 70% of floorspace evidenced in retail catchment area, increasing to 100% of floorspace including Wool and Bovington.</p>

Impact on local centres	ACCEPTABLE Local supermarkets are overtrading therefore acceptable impact on local centres.
Impact on the setting of a listed building	ACCEPTABLE Subject to condition to provide information boards to illustrate the industrial heritage of the surrounding area.
Access, Highway Safety and Parking	ACCEPTABLE Does not cause severe harm to the highway network – subject to conditions.
Neighbouring Amenity	ACCEPTABLE Does not cause harm to neighbouring amenity that would warrant refusal – subject to conditions.
Impact on flooding and drainage	ACCEPTABLE Subject to conditions requiring a detailed surface water management scheme for the site and a maintenance and management scheme for the surface water management scheme.
Impact on biodiversity	ACCEPTABLE Subject to the implementation of the approved Biodiversity Plan and securing compensation payment via legal agreement.
Impact on protected sites	ACCEPTABLE Subject to a condition restricting parking to store hours to discourage the car park being used to access nearby protected sites.
Impact of the verge	ACCEPTABLE

	Subject to condition management of the verge in the area will be affected, applicant will need to discuss any new responsibility for parts of the verge with the Senior Ranger.
Waste	ACCEPTABLE Subject to condition requiring submission of a detailed strategy.
Mineral Safeguarding	ACCEPTABLE Site is in a protected minerals safeguarding area however not considered expedient to extract from a small area.
Land contamination	ACCEPTABLE Subject to monitoring condition to deal with unexpected land contamination.
Very Special Circumstances	Considered that very special circumstances do not exist as harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and any other harm, is not clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5.0 Description of Site

- 5.1 The application site comprises a parcel of land 1.25 hectares in size, roughly rectangular in shape. The land is stated as being in agricultural use but has been allowed to fallow this year. Site levels undulate slightly from west to south-east, which is approximately 0.6m lower. The site is a meadow, but with trees around the boundary, particularly notable on the south-western boundary.
- 5.2 The site is located to the east of the A351 Sandford Road, a significant transport route leading from Poole via Wareham to Swanage. To the north-east and east of the site is 'Pottery Lines', a cul-de-sac of residential development and the Sandford public house. To the south is an area of established woodland. To the south-west is the Sibley Pottery, which includes a Grade II listed Kiln; a residential dwelling, a retail unit (currently vacant) and a restaurant. To the north-west and south-west, across the A351 are residential dwellings. To the west of the site is a roundabout, providing access to the B3075 Morden Road.
- 5.3 Land to the east of the A351 is generally less intensively developed, with the exception of Pottery Lines cul-de-sac and represents a transition from the built-up area to the countryside. The site forms part of the South-East Dorset Green Belt, and lies outside the settlement boundary of Sandford.

- 5.4 To the east of the site, approximately 150m away, is the Holton and Sandford Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Approximately 220m to the south-west and 500m to the south-east is the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area and ‘Ramsar’ site (a Ramsar site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in Iran). The Morden Bog and Hyde Heath SSSI positioned approximately 220m to the south-west, is part of the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and its western extent is also part of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar site.

6.0 Description of Development

- 6.1 The applicant is seeking planning permission to erect a food store with a gross internal area of 2269 square metres and with a sales area of 1411 square metres. The building would have a maximum height of approximately 8m. The length of the building is approximately 60m and the width approximately 26m. The main building would utilise timber effect cladding with red brick panels and a rendered spine wall painted to specification RAL 9010 (pure white). The north-west and north-east elevations would include illuminated supermarket (LIDL) signage and wall mounted billboards. These will need separate advertisement consent. The application proposes a sedum roof and roof mounted solar PV panels.
- 6.2 The proposal would include a car park with a total of 112 spaces, of which 92 are for general use, 6 are for disabled spaces, 12 are for parent and child parking and 2 EV charging points. The proposal also includes provision for 12 cycle parking spaces.
- 6.3 The application includes the formation of a new access point onto the existing roundabout, known as the Sibley Pottery Roundabout. The proposal also includes a landscaping scheme and ancillary facilities including trolley storage areas and a substation.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

Application reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision date	Officer notes
6/1978/0890	O/A - Use land for residential purposes and divert B.3075 to new roundabout etc.	Approved	08/03/1979	<i>Relates to land to the north of the site</i>
6/1979/0334	O/A - Residential development and new vehicular access.	Approved	07/12/1979	<i>Relates to land to the north of the site</i>

6/1979/0419	O/A - Use land for residential purposes.	Approved	08/11/1979	<i>Relates to land to the west of the site</i>
6/1984/0015	Erect four houses and garages, form new vehicular access.	Approved	07/03/1984	<i>Part of Pottery Lines residential development</i>
6/1985/0206	Erect a pony shelter.	Approved	10/06/1985	
6/1988/0378	Retain pony shelter (renewal).	Approved	01/06/1988	<i>Reaffirms the lawful use of the land as for agricultural purposes</i>
P/PAP/2022 /00239	Development of a Lidl store with associated access and parking	Written Response	26/07/2022	<i>Advised that as the site is situated within the South East Dorset Green Belt it does not benefit from any of the exceptions set out in the NPPF for development. The applicant would therefore need to demonstrate very special circumstances exist to justify development in the Green Belt.</i>
P/ESC/2022 /05465	Request for EIA Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for the construction of a new Lidl Store.	EIA not required	15/09/2022	

8.0 List of Constraints

- South East Dorset Green Belt

- Within 400m of Dorset heathlands Ramsar site- 400m heathland buffer
- Within the Poole Harbour Nutrient catchment area
- Adjacent to the Grade: II Listed Building: Kiln at Sibley Pottery List Entry: 1154975.0 (statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 1000
- Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding; Clearwater and Superficial Deposits Flooding
- Dorset Council Land (Freehold): Land for road improvement at Morden Road / Sandford Road, Wareham St Martin - Reference 06427 - Distance: 0
- Wildlife Present: Himalayan Cotoneaster plant
- Minerals Safeguarding Area – sand and gravel and ball clay
- Historic Contaminated Land - Description: Sandford Brick Works – tramway to main line railway

9.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. Ward Councillor - Cllr Holloway - OBJECT

- Comments received 17th November 2022
- Objection on the grounds made by the Parish and Town Council

2. Ward Councillor – Cllr Ezzard - OBJECT

- Comments received 9th January 2023
- Objections on the following grounds:
 - Impact on the Green Belt
 - Within 400m of the heathland
 - Impact on traffic and increased congestion

- Proximity to listed buildings
- Impact on other local stores
- Better suited near Swanage
- Concerns regarding traffic count information provided

3. Wareham St Martin Parish Council - OBJECT

- Comments received 18th November 2022 and further comments received on 5th March 2024.
- Objection on the following grounds:
 - Site is within the South East Dorset Green Belt
 - Impact on nearby SSSI
 - Proximity to nearby historic buildings including Grade II listed Kiln on Sibley Pottery Site
 - Site is outside of settlement boundary
 - Impact on nearby local retail businesses
 - Increased traffic generation
 - Reporting of accidents understates impact
 - Concerns about pollution, including increased air and noise pollution
 - Lack of suitable infrastructure such as bus stops
 - Concerns that much support comes from people outside the Parish who would not be affected by the proposals
 - Proposals are contrary to NPPF, Purbeck Local Plan 2012 and emerging Purbeck Local Plan, the Wareham St Martin Village Plan and the climate emergency.
- Further comments received 27th November 2023
- Continue to object raising the following additional points:
 - Applicant's own Transport Assessment acknowledges an increase in traffic on Sandford Road – increasing existing congestion issues and making it difficult for first responders to attend emergencies.

- The CO2 produced by the store has not been taken into account

4. Dorset Council (DC) – Landscape - OBJECT

- Objection – comments received 15th November 2022
- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Would not consider appearance, setting, character, interest, integrity, health and vitality of existing landscape or its trees and hedgerows.
- Existing trees would not be retained wherever possible
- Proposed landscaping would be inappropriate and ineffective
- Officer must consider whether alleged lack of retail provision outweighs harm

5. DC - Policy - Urban Design – NO COMMENT

- Response received on 16th July 2024
- Acknowledged receipt of consultation request but do not wish to comment on this application.

6. Dorset Police Architectural Liaison Officer – NO OBJECTION

- No objection – comments received 6th January 2023

7. DC - Rights of Way Officer - COMMENTS

- Comments received 6th January 2023
- Changes to the access with an additional exit from the roundabout will involve changes to the verge management, developers will need to take account of this

8. Environment Agency – NO COMMENT

- No comments to make

9. DC - Flood Risk Management – NO OBJECTION

- Initial comments received on 19th October 2022
- Further comments received 16th May 2023 on receipt of additional information
- No objection following groundwater surveys indicating infiltration levels acceptable.
- Conditions recommended

10. Wessex Water – NO OBJECTION

- Comments received 6th January 2023
- No objections to the proposal.

11. DC - Building Control - COMMENTS

- Comments received 17th October 2022
- Fire safety plans to enable consultation with Fire Officer to be provided
- Structural Engineers design/ calculations package to provided where applicable
- Details of foul and surface water drainage will need to be provided.
- Consider Part B of the Building Regulations – means of escape and boundary conditions.

Officer note: These matters will be dealt with at a building regulations stage and an Informative Note will be added to the proposal.

12. Dorset & Wilts Fire & Rescue – Planning – NO COMMENT

- response received 11th July 2024
- Acknowledged receipt of consultation request but do not wish to make comments.

13. DC - Economic Development and Tourism – NO OBJECTION

- Comments received 6th January 2023
- No objection however consider that store will take trade away from other stores

14. Historic England – NO COMMENT

- response received 26th October 2022
- Acknowledged receipt of consultation request but do not wish to make comments on this application.

15. DC -Conservation – NO OBJECTION

- Response received 30th March 2023
- Will impact setting of listed assets
- Mitigation provided by boundary buffers and landscaping
- Further mitigation required in the form of interpretation boards to provide public awareness of the of the historic local feature.

16. DC - Environmental Assessment – NO OBJECTION

- Comments received 20th February 2023
- No changes to EIA Screening that was previously issued.

17. Dorset Wildlife Trust – NO COMMENT

- Response received 8th August 2024
- No comments to make.

18. Natural England – NO OBJECTION

- Comments received 23rd January 2023
- No objection subject to a planning condition restricting the time cars may park to ensure that it is only used by customers and not by dog walkers.
- Biodiversity Plan should be approved by the Natural Environment Team to meet duties under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and Regulation 9(3) of The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.

19. DC - Natural Environment Team – NO OBJECTION

- Biodiversity Plan approved.

- Compensation payment required to be secured by legal agreement.

20. DC – Minerals and Waste Team – NO OBJECTION

- Comments received on 24th June 2024
- Site lies on land safeguarded under Policy SG1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014, for sand and gravel.
- Given size of the site, it is not considered expedient to attempt to achieve prior extraction of the site. Therefore, no objections with regards to Mineral Extraction
- No objections to waste, the proposal should comply Policy 22 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019 (*officer note: this will be secured by planning condition*)

21. Public Health Dorset – NO COMMENT

- response received 20th January 2023
- Acknowledged receipt of consultation request but do not wish to comment on this application.

22. DC - Environmental Protection – NO OBJECTION

- Response received 4th July 2024
- No objection to submitted noise impact assessment (NIA)
- Condition required for opening hours
- Lighting assessment acceptable
- Condition required for lighting to be turned off overnight
- Condition required for construction management.

23. WPA - Contaminated Land Consultant – NO OBJECTION

- Response received 26th July 2024
- Historic land use involving the pottery plus clay and gravel extraction.
- No contaminant linkages have been identified as being significant following invasive investigation
- However, it is appropriate to maintain vigilance for the potential for impact for currently unknown issues with contamination.
- Condition should be applied requiring a watching brief and actions to be taken in the event that any contamination is discovered during the construction process.

24. DC -Policy – COMMENTS

- Response received October 2023
- When arriving at a decision on the development proposal, it is important that the case officer considers:
 - Issue 1, and whether the proposed development in the countryside is consistent in principle with Policies CO and CF of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012);
 - Issue 2, and the strategy for meeting retail development needs in the adopted Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012) and the Swanage Local Plan (2017) and whether:
 - the retail sequential test has been passed;
 - development is likely to adversely affect the vitality and viability of a town centre;
 - Issue 3, and whether;
 - the proposals meet any of the exceptions to inappropriate development in national planning policy relating to the Green Belt; and
 - if the proposals do not meet the exceptions, are there very special circumstances for the proposed development in the Green Belt.

Third Party Concerns

Over 600 comments have been received from local residents and from the wider area. The following is a high-level summary of the comments received and the full comments are available online.

Objections

Principle of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrary to Local Plan policy – does not meet the definition of a village/local shop as set out in Policy CF of the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 • Contrary to Wareham Neighbourhood Plan • Should use other brownfield sites first • Contrary to emerging Purbeck Local Plan that has gone through examination.
Impact on Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of part of the Green Belt • Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt • Set a precedent for developing in the Green Belt with similar assessment of quality. • No very special circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impact of the loss of current green open space • Retail need does not constitute very special circumstances
Impact on ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmful impact on local ecology • Negative impact on wildlife • Loss of a wildlife corridor • Evidence of bats using site as a wildlife corridor
Impact on the neighbouring listed building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the setting on the impact of the listed building
Impact on the character of Sandford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal would have a harmful impact on the character of Sandford • Concerns regarding the loss of trees on the site
Impact on local amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution arising from traffic visiting supermarket • Noise levels arising from supermarket and deliveries • Impact on neighbouring property values • Increase emissions in Sandford • Impact of light on neighbouring properties • Substation near boundaries • Boundary treatment would have a harmful impact on amenity and would block a path used to access the Keysworth Woods
Highway safety and parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased congestion as a result of visitors to the supermarket – creating new primary journeys • Concerns about emergency vehicle access • Suitability of the roundabout for turning HGVs • Insufficient EV charging points • People travel to Poole to do linked shopping trips – they will still travel to Poole to do this so traffic will not be reduced • Difficult for pedestrians outside of Sandford to access – width of pavements and level crossing • Comments from Swanage less useful, as they use ferry to access shops in Poole and Bournemouth • No provision for motorhomes and caravans in the car park. • Car park not large enough • Requires an upgrade to pedestrian access • Some parking will be used by staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys undertaken at a quiet time of the year – may not reflect the situation at peak times of the year • Upgrading the pedestrian crossing would exacerbate congestion
Impact on existing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing businesses will be negatively impacted by the proposal • Existing businesses struggling to find sufficient staff – proposal would exacerbate labour shortage • Already sufficient supermarkets in the area • Argument undermined by closure of a store in Sandford • Trade leakage identified by applicant’s report is linked to working patterns and multi-purpose journeys to Poole and is therefore not indicative of a retail need • Other surveys suggest smaller store needed, therefore sequential test should look for smaller sites • Concerns regarding methodology of surveys
Drainage and Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about drainage of the site
Anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding the potential for the development to encourage anti-social behaviour • Concerns regarding littering in car park
More suitable alternative locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site at Holton Heath would be better suited to the development.
Loss of space for other uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of space that is used for a temporary fun fair
Impact on nearby protected landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding the impact on the nearby SSSI landscapes and the nearby National Landscape (formerly AONB) • Concerns car park will be used to access nearby heathland • Impact on dark skies
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who initially objected were not canvassed by the applicant to comment on the application • Question applicant’s survey – weighted in their favour. • Desire for a discount retailer is not considered to be the same as a need for one • Question sequential test and retail impact assessment • Poor public transport links • Loss of heat sink in the summer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing adoption of Electric Vehicles reduces significance of carbon emissions savings
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Support

Retail provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of suitable retail provision Assist families with the cost of living crisis Increased housing provision requires improvement in local facilities. Improves local facilities Existing supermarkets cannot meet current demand Won't harm local businesses or character of Wareham May encourage people to come to Wareham to do their shopping – creating linked trips Supermarket in Swanage often has low stock Car parking restrictions at other stores in Sandford restrict their use
Provision of jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal will provide new jobs in the area.
Reduction in traffic movements and highway safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal will reduce the need for travelling to Poole for shopping, therefore reducing the amount of traffic Reduction in traffic reduces emissions from vehicles Acceptable as long as upgrades to roundabout are made. Improved road safety with upgrade to crossing Suitable crossing will be required Improves highway safety as it slows traffic down. Could consider a traffic light system if required Safer to enter and exit than Co-op in Sandford East to cycle to site along existing cycle network.
Car parking provision in Wareham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is insufficient car parking in Wareham for shopping High car park charges in Wareham
Current use of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is used for occasional funfair which doesn't bring significant economic benefits to the area. Land considered to be an eyesore Funfair harms flora and fauna on site Better use of the site

Provision of facilities and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal will provide EV charging points in Sandford • Better parking for disabled users
Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only loss of small amount of Green Belt • Quality of Green Belt is poor
Design of store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of store will minimise visual impact • Some changes suggested to reduce massing of the store
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun fair already has impact on biodiversity, Lidl could offer enhancements
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be nice to see a free connecting bus to Swanage • Would like to see bus route stop near the site • Larger supermarket chain would not be appropriate • Provides opportunities for community projects • Trees should be replanted • Preferable to housing • Should include affordable housing • Lidl could plant trees to offset loss of Green Belt • Offset area for biodiversity could be purchased.

Petitions Objecting	Petitions Supporting
<p>1 petition with 182 signatures</p> <p>(summary of concerns include – impact on Green Belt, impact on highways, better locations elsewhere, impact on ecology and protected sites, supermarket not needed, impact on the character of the area, noise impact, impact on existing retail)</p>	<p>0</p>

10.0 Duties

10.1 S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

10.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990- section 16 requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent, special regard is to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

11.0 Relevant Policies

Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 Adopted 18th July 2024:

Policy V2: Green belt

Policy E1: Landscape

Policy E2: Historic Environment

Policy E4: Assessing flood risk

Policy E5: Sustainable Drainage Systems

Policy E7: Conservation of protected sites

Policy E8: Dorset Heathlands

Policy E9: Poole Harbour

Policy E10: Biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy E12: Design

Policy EE3: Vibrant and Local Centres

- supports provision of an additional 700sqm (net) convenience retail floorspace. Policy H4: Moreton Station/Redbridge Pit requires 350sqm and Policy H5: Wool requires 350sqm of convenience floor space.
- Retail development in Purbeck will be managed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- Identified retail centres in Purbeck include town centres of Swanage, Wareham and Upton; and local centres of Wool, Bere Regis, Lytchett Matravers and Corfe Castle.
- Out of town retail proposals for main town centre uses, as defined in the NPPF, will be permitted where there is an identified need, and it has been demonstrated that the location is appropriate in accordance with the sequential test as required by national planning guidance
- proposals over 200sqm (gross) are supported by a retail impact assessment that establishes the development would not harm the vitality or viability of town and local centres.
- The impact of proposed development on the national site network (including European sites)

Policy I2: Improving accessibility and transport

Policy I3: Green infrastructure, trees, and hedgerows

Material Considerations

Swanage Local Plan (Adopted June 2017)

Policy TCR: Town Centre Redevelopment.

Policy TCR identifies land between Kings Road West and the railway station as a town centre redevelopment site to accommodate the majority of the district's retail needs, as set out in PLP.

Emerging Local Plans:

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

There are no neighbourhood plans for Sandford.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

Section 4 'Decision making': Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the

area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Section 7 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' - Paragraph 92 advises that: 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. Applicants and local planning authorities should 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. Section 9 'Promoting sustainable transport' - paragraph 115 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Section 12 'Achieving well designed and beautiful places' indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 131 – 141 advise that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' indicates that development within the Green Belt will be considered inappropriate and harmful to the openness of the Green Belt unless it falls within narrowly defined categories or unless very special circumstances can be justified to allow the development (paras 152 and 154).

Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'.

Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscapes) great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty (para 182). Paragraphs 185-188 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.

Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'
Paragraph 205 of the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to an asset's heritage conservation.

Other material considerations

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction, December 2023.
Purbeck District Design Guide SPD

Purbeck Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2018

Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 SPD

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)

NPPF consultation draft 2024 and associated Written Ministerial Statement 2024

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019) – Policy 22

12.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

13.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

13.1 As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

13.2 Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The following will assist in minimising disadvantages and would be secured by condition:

- Access – the store will offer step free access to accommodate users with disabilities and mobility impairments. Parking spaces for disabled users and users with young children will be provided.
- Upgrade to pedestrian crossing – an upgrade to the pedestrian crossing will be provided to give due regard to inclusive mobility.

14.0 Financial benefits

What	Amount / value
Material Considerations	
Jobs created	5 full time, 35 part (23 full time equivalent)
Non Material Considerations	
CIL contribution	£241,631.09

15.0 Environmental Implications

15.1 The proposed development will result in the loss of a greenfield site and the loss of habitat. However, the development includes compensation for the loss of habitat, which is to be secured by a legal agreement, as well the inclusion of a green roof and solar PV panels on the roof.

16.0 Planning Assessment

The main considerations involved with this application are:

- the principle of the development
- impact on the Green Belt and very special circumstances (VSCs)
- the amount of unmet retail need within the plan area
- the design and form of the proposal and its impact upon the character of the area
- the impact upon neighbouring amenity
- impact on ecology
- impact on protected heathland
- impact on protected trees
- access and parking
- planning balance

The following report looks at each material planning consideration in turn. In the interests of clarity, in ascribing weight to the planning considerations in favour and against, the following scale will be used: **none, limited, moderate, significant and substantial**.

16.1 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

16.1.1 Firstly, the submitted application has been screened for EIA development.

16.1.2 The proposed development is for a food store with associated parking and landscaping, occupying a total area of 1.25 ha. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that EIA is more likely if the area of the scheme is more than 5

hectares or the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

- 16.1.3 The EIA screening has concluded the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in the significant use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution or nuisance given the scale and residential nature of the proposal. An EIA is therefore not required.

16.2 - Principle of Development

Background

- 16.2.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 says planning applications shall be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up to date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.
- 16.2.2 The application is in full and seeks planning permission to erect a food store with a gross internal area of 2269 square metres and with a sales area of 1411 square metres.

Hierarchy for retail provision

- 16.2.3 Policy EE3 of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 sets out the hierarchy for retail provision for the plan area as follows:

Retail development in Purbeck will be managed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. Identified retail centres in Purbeck include:
a. town centres of Swanage, Wareham and Upton; and
b. local centres of Wool, Bere Regis, Lytchett Matravers and Corfe Castle.

- 16.2.4 The application site falls outside of the defined settlement boundary of Sandford within open countryside. It is however directly adjacent to the settlement boundary and sits within a 'pocket' where it is surrounded by the settlement boundary to the north-west, north-east and south-west.
- 16.2.4 The application site is also Green Belt (as assessed later in this report).
- 16.2.5 In this case, the proposal is for retail development outside the defined settlement boundary and not in line with the Purbeck Local Plan hierarchy for retail provision.
- 16.2.6 Officers acknowledge comments made by the public regarding the conformity of the proposal against the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan. The plan area does not however extend to the application site and it is therefore not part of the development plan for this site. However, the impact of the retail store on the vitality and viability of Wareham is material and is considered in the officer assessment below.

- 16.2.7 The proposal is contrary to the Purbeck Local Plan 2014-2034 (PLP) and the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy EE3. The Purbeck Local Plan was adopted in July 2024 and found to be sound, and a logical approach to the delivery of retail provision in the plan area.
- 16.2.8 However, paragraph 12 of the NPPF, which reflects the statutory duty set out in section 10 and paragraph 16.2.1 above, states that local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up to date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed. This is addressed further later in this report.

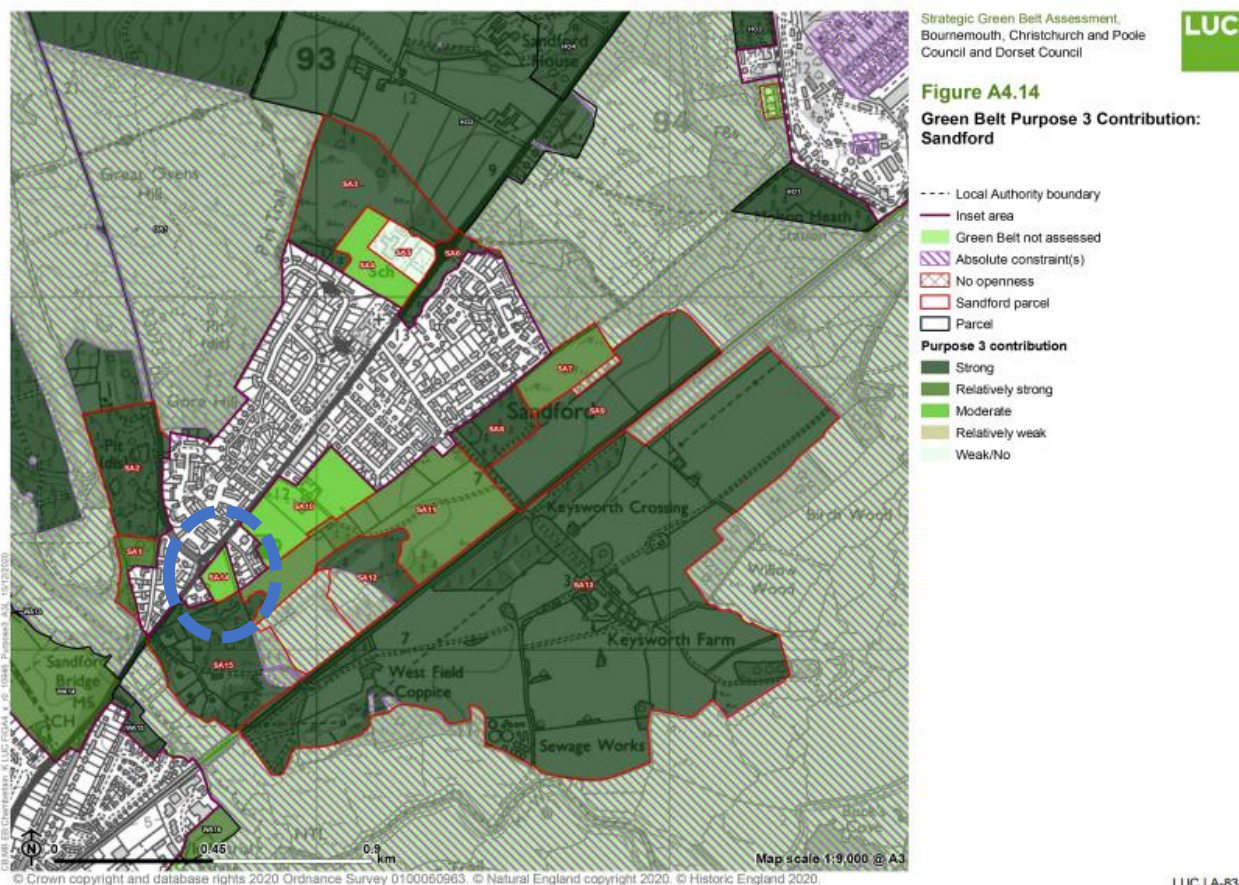
16.3 – Green Belt

- 16.3.1 As previously noted, the application site lies within the Green Belt and sits outside of the settlement boundary of Sandford within open countryside. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 confirms that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belt land. The identified fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 16.3.2 The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 16.3.3 Policy V2: Green Belt of the Purbeck Local Plan makes it clear that green belt boundaries have been amended at Lytchett Matravers and Upton to support sustainable development. No other boundaries have been amended under the newly adopted Purbeck Local Plan.
- 16.3.4 Paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2023 states that Local Planning Authorities should treat new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt subject to exceptions.
- 16.3.5 The applicant is seeking full permission to erect a food store with a gross internal area of 2269 square metres and associated access, parking and landscaping. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would not accord with the exceptions set out in paragraphs 154 & 155 of the NPPF. As a consequence, it would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would also not accord with the Green Belt purpose to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 16.3.6 The NPPF and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) makes clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states, that

substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Moreover, it is explained that no very special circumstances can exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt due to inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

- 16.3.7 Given the proposal does not meet any of the exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF, it is therefore necessary to consider whether there are 'very special circumstances' which clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt (arising from the inappropriate development) and any other harm resulting from the proposal.
- 16.3.8 When considering harm, 'Appendix B Detailed Stage 2 Harm Assessments: Sandford' of the Strategic Green Belt Assessment Stage 2 Harm Assessment (December 2020) and the assessment of harm for the application (identified as parcel SA14 in the green belt assessment), needs to be considered.
- 16.3.9 The Strategic Green Belt assessment sought to analyse the contribution of certain parts of the Green Belt and the contribution it makes to Green Belt purposes including:
- the relevance of each Green Belt purpose, given the parcel's location relative to large built-up areas, towns, countryside and historic towns;
 - the extent to which the land can be considered open in Green Belt terms;
 - for Purpose 1-3, the degree of distinction between the parcel and urban area(s) - that is, the extent to which land is associated with the urban area or with the wider countryside.
- 16.3.10 The Green Belt harm assessment finds that the site makes the following contribution in terms of Green Belt objectives:
- 1 - a weak, or no, contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area.
 - 2- a weak, or no, contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging.
 - 3 - a moderate contribution to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
 - 4 – a weak, or no, contribution to preserving the setting and special character of a historic town.
 - 5 - an equal contribution to assisting with urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 16.3.11 The applicant suggests that this area of Green Belt does not significantly contribute to achieving the purposes as set out in the NPPF. The application site land makes a moderate contribution under purpose 3 and purpose 5 (where all sites in the Green Belt make an equal contribution). Under purpose 3, the assessment further identifies:
- Land is open countryside but there is weak distinction between the parcel and the inset area, which reduces the extent to which development would be perceived as encroachment on the countryside. Overall the area makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.*

However, this does not justify development within the Green Belt, which would be harmed by reason of inappropriate development. Officers consider despite it being a 'moderate' contribution, this should be protected regardless to prevent further erosion of the Green Belt and further encroachment on the countryside in this area as discussed further below.



Appendix B Detailed Stage 2 Harm Assessments: Sandford' of the Strategic Green Belt Assessment Stage 2 Harm Assessment (December 2020) and the assessment of harm for the application (identified as parcel SA14 in the green belt assessment)

- 16.3.12 Harm to the openness of the Green Belt may be considered in both spatial and visual terms. Factors such as the visual impact of the proposal, its volume and the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation are all relevant considerations.
- 16.3.13 The development would result in both visual and spatial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In order to assess whether a development would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt necessitates a baseline to be established. At present the 1.25 hectare site is undeveloped. The proposal identifies development in the form of a 2269 square metre Class E(a) retail food store (measured internally) with 112 associated parking spaces, landscaping, and highway access.
- 16.3.14 The site's planning history, aerial photographs and Google Street View images confirm that there was previously a small stable building on the site, but all traces of

the former stable building appear to have gone. The site is not considered to be previously developed land within the Green Belt, it remains undeveloped, and that forms the baseline for this assessment. At present, the site forms an area of open grassland between Pottery Lines, a residential development and the former Sibley pottery and a restaurant to the south. The land which is enclosed by low hedging trees and scrub is visible on approaching from Sandford to Wareham on the A351 and from the B3075 from Morden, and the site provides a gap between settlements providing a sense of leaving the settlement. The site adds to the character of this side of Sandford Road, which is more open and characterised by pockets creating significant gaps between less dense and lower scale development. The open form of the site contributes towards the openness of the Green Belt in terms of its role and function.

- 16.3.15 The development of a retail store will result in a tangible visual impact and encroachment into the countryside. The built form, the car park and the associated paraphernalia (for example trolley stores, lighting, advertisement material and EV charging points) together with site activity during operating hours will represent a marked change from the undeveloped nature of the site and will have the effect of urbanising a rural site. The change will also have a permanent visual impact. The store will be appreciably visible from the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposed development would therefore be in conflict with the third purpose as set out in the NPPF which seeks to prevent encroachment into the countryside. This impact should be afforded substantial weight in the planning balance regardless of its performance in relation to the purpose of the Green Belt.
- 16.3.16 In terms of the spatial impact, the site is at present undeveloped, the proposal will result in development of the majority of the site, to accommodate the supermarket itself, but also the car park and its associated works such as an upgraded access, delivery ramp and close boarded fencing to site boundaries. The scale of the proposed footprint is substantial. The proposal would have a harmful and urbanising effect on the natural environment. The openness of the Green Belt is characterised by its permanence in remaining open. By virtue of the proposal to develop a supermarket, the openness will be lost.
- 16.3.17 To limit both landscape and visual effects, a landscaping scheme has been submitted which included tree retention, tree planting, understorey planting and ornamental shrub planting, with the existing hedge to the site frontage retained at 1m. While the proposed landscaping will help to soften the visual impact of the development within the street scene, it will not mitigate the visual and spatial impact of the development and associated works (e.g. lighting, parking and other works) with such a substantial footprint on this undeveloped, open field. It is therefore considered that the proposal will have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 16.3.18 For these reasons it is considered that the proposed development would result in harm to the Green Belt, both on a visual and spatial level, by virtue of the development of a previously undeveloped site and the scale of development (including associated paraphernalia). In addition it constitutes inappropriate development as defined by the NPPF. The application should therefore only be approved if the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

- 16.3.19 Officers note that the Government is consulting on a revised NPPF. Proposed paragraph 152 of the draft NPPF states that commercial development should not be regarded as inappropriate where the development would utilise 'Grey Belt' in sustainable locations, where the development meets the requirements of proposed paragraph 155 and the development would not fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole. There also needs to be a demonstrable need for land to be released for development of local, regional or national importance. Finally, development needs to be able to meet the planning policy requirements set out in proposed paragraph 155.
- 16.3.20 The definition of "Grey Belt" as set out in the proposed NPPF would be: *"For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the green belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes (as defined in para 140 of this Framework), but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of this Framework (other than land designated as Green Belt).*
- 16.3.21 Under the associated 'Scope of Consultation' paragraph 10 under 'Chapter 5 – Brownfield, grey belt and the Green Belt' ([Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#)) also notes:
- We are interested in whether further support is needed to assist authorities in judging whether land makes a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes. We propose incorporating the following into the glossary appended to the NPPF but welcome views on the most effective way of providing this guidance: Land which makes a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes will:*
- a) Not strongly perform against any Green Belt purpose; and*
 - b) Have at least one of the following features:*
 - i. Land containing substantial built development or which is fully enclosed by built form*
 - ii. Land which makes no or very little contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another*
 - iii. Land which is dominated by urban land uses, including physical developments*
 - iv. Land which contributes little to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns".*
- 16.3.22 However, it is noted that the NPPF is in draft form. Consultation closed on the 24th September 2024 and the responses need to be considered before a final NPPF is published. A publication date has not been advised. It is therefore considered that the draft NPPF can be given limited weight at this time.
- 16.3.23 Alongside the draft NPPF, a ministerial statement has been prepared which outlines the need to utilise grey belt land, particularly for bringing forward housing schemes. This is considered to carry more weight, however, the statement makes no reference to the release of grey belt land for commercial purposes. Therefore, it is considered that this does not apply to the application.

- 16.3.24 **The issue of harm to openness of the Green Belt is attributed substantial weight against the development as required by national policy.**

Very Special Circumstances

- 16.3.25 The applicant has submitted a case for 'very special circumstances' (VSCs) making the case that harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other circumstances as follows:
1. *Significant quantitative need for a new Local Assortment Discounter (LAD)store.*
 2. *Significant qualitative need for a new LAD store.*
 3. *Reduction in transport movements.*
 4. *Community comments.*
 5. *Job creation and economic benefits.*
 6. *No alternative sites.*
- 16.3.26 The proposed is for new retail development on open Green Belt land. As set out above, this together with associated operational development (access, parking, roads, retail paraphernalia) will by its very nature create a loss of openness, resulting in inappropriate development and harm to the Green Belt. As the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, planning permission should only be granted in very special circumstances where the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. Thus very special circumstances can only be considered once all impacts of the proposal have been assessed.
- 16.3.27 Whether or not harm to the Green Belt identified in this report is clearly outweighed by VSCs is assessed at the end of this report.

16.4 - Location and Sustainability

- 16.4.1 Again, the site is located outside the settlement boundary of Sandford but is surrounded by it. It is noted pedestrian links and vehicular routes are likely to be achievable under a consent. Sandford is considered a key service village (villages with the highest level of services and population outside of towns). The application site is within walking distance of Wareham.
- 16.4.2 The location of the site is technically not supported by the settlement hierarchy, however the site is directly adjacent to Sandford with deliverable pedestrian and vehicular access. Sandford is an identified as a key service village with some retail and community facilities.
- 16.4.3 Further to this, the site lies approximately 1.2 miles from Wareham town centre where there is a range of shops and facilities. It is 0.9 miles to Wareham train station. On Sandford Road a regular bus service links between Swanage and Poole; this is a regular service that runs hourly from approximately 7am to 11pm.
- 16.4.4 Given the location of the site, existing transport links and road network, on balance it is considered that the location would not warrant a reason for refusal of the scheme on the basis that the location is unsustainable.

- 16.4.5 **With the above in mind the issue of the location outside of the settlement boundary is therefore attributed limited weight against the development.**

16.5 - Need for retail provision

- 16.5.1 The proposal would provide 2269 square metres of floor space, of which 1411 square metres will be allocated for sales. The format takes a similar approach to other discount retailers, providing mostly convenience goods, with a small amount of comparison goods in the middle aisles which are regularly changed.
- 16.5.2 Paragraph 239 of the newly adopted Purbeck Local Plan states that the majority of retail provision in the plan area will be provided in Swanage, through the implementation of Policy TCR of the Swanage Local Plan. Policy TCR identifies land in Swanage between Kings Road West and the railway station as a key town centre redevelopment site with potential to accommodate the majority of the district's retail needs. According to the Purbeck Local Plan, this would provide 1,100 square metres of retail floor space of the 1,800 square metres required by the Plan.
- 16.5.3 The adopted Purbeck Local Plan identifies the need for 700 square meters additional retail outside of Swanage (Policy EE3: Vibrant and Town Centres). This is to be provided through allocated sites at Redbridge Pit/ Moreton Station and Wool, with 350 square metres being allocated in each of the allocated sites.
- 16.5.4 The applicant has advanced the argument that the retail provision in the plan area is insufficient to meet the demand in the Wareham and Sandford catchment area, both quantitatively and qualitatively and, although the Purbeck Local Plan allocates some retail provision in Policy EE3 in this catchment area, this will not meet the full demand. The applicant has challenged the evidence base which underpins the retail policies in the Purbeck Local Plan.
- 16.5.5 In order to demonstrate the need for additional demand, the applicant has undertaken a household shopper survey (HSS), covering the area that they consider constitutes the catchment area for the store. This was conducted by NEMS Research on behalf of the applicant, to identify shopping patterns and therefore turnover of the existing stores in the area. The study was conducted in July 2022. Respondents were asked where they did their last main food shop and then as a separate question what other stores they regularly use for their main food shopping. The HSS concluded that there was an unmet retail quantitative need of £27.9m, which is forecast to rise to £28.45m by 2026, and that there is a significant unmet retail need in the area. The HSS report also suggests that a qualitative need for the store but acknowledges that this is a more subjective measure. However, they consider that the existing retail provision in the Wareham and Sandford catchment area indicates a qualitative need for improved grocery provision. Retail consultant Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH), was appointed by the Council to review submitted information in relation to retail need and retail impact.
- 16.5.6 The geographical area covered by the HSS report included the village of Lytchett Matravers. Lytchett Matravers is situated approximately 3 miles from an ALDI supermarket (Upton). The application site is 4.6 miles from the ALDI in question. The

Council's retail consultants contended that the HSS catchment area surveyed was too broad and that the report needed to be revisited to provide a clearer and agreed position in respect of overtrading.

- 16.5.7 The applicant sought to address the issues identified by the Council's consultants by providing further information setting out the extent of the survey zones, calculating the population in these zones and estimating the available expenditure of each zone.
- 16.5.8 The amended HSS report concludes that the existing retail provision is sufficient to meet the needs of the immediate Wareham, Sandford and Holton Heath area. However, when considering the needs of the wider area surrounding Wareham / Sandford / Holton Heath and Bere Regis and some settlements further away which would likely attract some trade (including the settlements of Wool and Bovington) it is considered that the need outstrips the existing supply.
- 16.5.9 The Purbeck Local Plan allocates retail provision in Wool (Policy EE3), The HSS report concludes that new retail store in Wool if built would most likely focus on top up shopping as opposed to a larger shop. For this reason it considers that the application proposal would not undermine the viability of the allocated retail if built. There is no dispute that there is currently an established unmet retail need within Wool and Bovington and that this proposal would meet that need. This is established both by the HSS assessment and the separate work that has been undertaken by LSH on behalf of the Council.
- 16.5.10 Bere Regis is also included in the HSS assessment. The report recognises that residents of Bere Regis are most likely to travel to either Dorchester or Poole for shopping, however, Sandford is geographically closer than either of these settlements. As with Wool there is an established need, highlighted in the HSS that is not met within Bere Regis village. The proposal would therefore meet the needs of the village.
- 16.5.11 To date, the redevelopment of the site in Swanage has not been delivered in the seven years since it was allocated in the adopted Swanage Local Plan. While Swanage is in a separate retail catchment area to Wareham, the lack of delivery of the expansion of the retail area in Swanage is considered to give additional weight to the assertion that there is unmet retail need within the Purbeck Local Plan area. Paragraph 239 of the Purbeck Local Plan states that in total 1800 square metres of provision should be provided within the plan area, of which 1100 square metres would be met by Swanage. As the retail provision has not been delivered in Swanage, this leaves a potential deficit of retail provision, which would be met by the proposed development. However, it is notable that the Purbeck Local Plan was found sound by the Examination Inspector in 2024 and the plan adopted in July 2024. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Inspector had no concerns regarding the proposed retail provision in the Purbeck Local Plan, and the retail policies within the Plan can therefore be reasonably said to be up to date. As such, it is considered that the proposed provision in Swanage should be expected to come forward within the plan period.
- 16.5.12 The applicant also suggests that there is an unmet qualitative need within the catchment area, citing a lack of retail options. Officers note a significant number of public comments to this effect. However, as local planning policy primarily focuses on

quantative need rather than qualitative need, this is not considered to carry the same weight. Planning policy generally does not specify qualitative retail requirements, as the market will dictate the type of retail provision in an area.

- 16.5.13 The applicant has demonstrated that there is a significant unmet retail need within the plan area that would justify the development of approximately 70% the proposed floorspace, and 100% when including Wool and Bovington. This has been checked and verified by the independent Retail Consultants – Lambert Smith Hampton.
- 16.5.14 As noted under the principle of development, the proposal is contrary to the development plan and the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy EE3. The development plan was adopted in July 2024 and found to be sound, and a logical approach to the delivery of retail provision in the plan area. However, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 says planning applications shall be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The unmet need is a material consideration that indicates the provision of some form of food store retail development is required.
- 16.5.15 While the unmet need is acknowledged, the wider context needs to be assessed when considering the planning balance in relation to Green Belt.
- 16.5.16 The unmet need identified is for the areas around and including Sandford, Wareham, Holton Heath, Bere Regis, Bovington and Wool. As identified in the submitted HSS existing retail facilities are identified in Wareham and the Purbeck Local Plan allocations are also considered. More specifically, proximity to other local assortment discounter (LAD) stores for these areas are as follows:

	Distance to Lidl Dorchester (shortest distance google maps, miles)	Distance to ALDI Upton (shortest distance google maps, miles)	Distance to application site (shortest distance google maps, miles)
Sandford	17.2	4.6	0
Wareham	16.5	5.7	1.2
Holton Heath	20	3.1	1.5
Bere Regis	11.3	9	7.5
Wool	12.2	11.5	7.2
Bovington	13	12	7.5

- 16.5.17 The existing provision of LAD stores in proximity to the areas of unmet need can be seen in the table above. ALDI in Upton is 4.6 miles from the development site. Distances to such facilities are only improved by 1.5 - 4.5 miles. It is also noted Upton and Dorchester have similar public transport links to Sandford.
- 16.5.18 As part of their submission, the applicant has referred to a planning decision by Central Bedfordshire Council (CB/19/02397/FULL - Land at 101 Field, Ampthill Road, Flitwick, MK45). In this instance land was also Green Belt land and the weight attributed to the retail need was 'substantial'.

- 16.5.19 Every application should be determined on its own merits and the question of whether the development can be justified in the Green Belt having regard to existence of very special circumstances ultimately is a planning judgement for the decision maker for each application. It is however noted part of the officer assessment in the published Central Bedfordshire Council committee report notes:

3.4.7 There are no directly comparable food stores within some 7 miles of this site, and no discount food stores in either Flitwick or Ampthill which means that residents wishing to access such a facility would be required to travel significant distances in order to access one.

- 16.5.20 The majority of the catchment area (Wareham, Sandford and Holton Heath), which the proposed development would mainly serve, already have access to an existing LAD store 3.1-5.7 miles away. Distances to the LAD for other areas (Bere Regis, Wool and Bovington) are only improved by 1.5 – 4.5 miles.
- 16.5.21 While the importance of meeting an unmet retail need is acknowledged, the existing provision (both LAD stores and retail provisions other than LAD stores) in the surrounding area and allocated retail provision in the Purbeck Local Plan is also considered when affording weight to the matter.
- 16.5.22 **With the above in mind the matter of addressing an unmet retail need is attributed significant rather than substantial weight in favour of the development.**

16.6 - Impact on local centres

Sequential Test

- 16.6.1 The application site is situated outside of defined town centres. The proposed use is defined in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a main town centre use. Paragraph 91 of the NPPF states 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. As this is the case for this proposal a sequential test has been undertaken to identify potential alternative sites for the development. The results identified a number of possible sites but each was ultimately rejected for the following reasons:

On the edge of Wareham Town Centre:

- Former Gas Works, North Street – 190m of the defined town centre, the site is allocated in the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan for residential development and the shape of the site constrains the use for a supermarket.
- Land Adjoining B3075 Immediately south of River Frome – Is outside of the settlement boundary and therefore in open countryside. The site is within the National Landscape (formerly known as the AONB) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is an area at risk of flooding. It would therefore not pass the

flooding sequential test and would not be supported due to its designation as an SSSI.

Out of Centre Sites in Wareham:

- Wareham Hospital – site is allocated for housing by the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan.
- Former Wareham Middle School site – allocated in the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan as a site for a new healthcare and housing hub. Dorset Council has approved temporary planning permission on the site for use for homes.
- Wareham Recreation Ground – site is in use as a playing field and therefore would be contrary to the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan as well as the NPPF.
- Playing Fields of Former Wareham Middle School - The land is still in use as a playing field and therefore would be contrary to the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan as well as the NPPF.

Sites on the edge of Carey Road Local Centre:

- Westminster Road Industrial Estate – Allocated by the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan for residential development.
- Saltfire Stoves Site – Site is too small to accommodate a comparable sized store and is allocated for employment use therefore not suitable.

- 16.6.2 The applicant has also been advised to consider the site between Kings Road West the railway station within Swanage Town Centre when completing the sequential test. They consider that the site is not likely to come forward given commercial constraints on the site and therefore is not suitable. Notwithstanding this, the application site sits in a separate catchment area.
- 16.6.3 Further to the above the applicant has extended the search to Wool and Bovington as requested by officers. While it was not considered necessary for the purposes of the retail assessment, it was requested by officers in order to establish if no alternative sites were available in these areas given the justification for 100% of the floor space relied on need in Wool and Bovington. The extended search is beneficial to the consideration of potential out of Green Belt sites, while not necessary to provide an assessment of sequential approach.
- 16.6.4 It was not considered necessary for an extended retail sequential test for two reasons. Firstly, the purpose of the proposed development is primarily to serve a catchment area focussed on Wareham and to a lesser extent Swanage and therefore potential sites in both towns were considered in the original submission. Some trade from Wool and Bovington is expected, but it will be limited and a store within either settlement would serve a largely separate catchment to the one Lidl is seeking to serve. As a result, a site in either location, even if one were identified, would not be well located to serve the intended market and as such could be considered unsuitable. The second reason why neither location would be considered appropriate for the proposed store is that both are small settlements that would be expected to provide top-up shopping

facilities for their residents but would not be expected to provide higher order shopping facilities such as main food shopping. As set out in the recently adopted Purbeck Local Plan retail development in Purbeck will be managed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy (Policy EE3: Vibrant town and local centres).

16.6.5 When considering further out of Green Belt sites in Wool and Bovington it is noted the PPG advises '*reasonably available sites*' are those in a suitable location for the type of development with a reasonable prospect that the site is available to be developed at the point in time envisaged for the development.'

16.6.6 With regards to Bovington, the applicant has advised in respect of potential development sites, there are limited pockets within and adjoining the settlement boundary, but none that would be suitable for a LAD store. The Council accepts this on the basis that the Bovington Character Appraisal SPD (2012) notes "*Bovington is essentially an army camp with associated residential areas*".

16.6.7 With regards to sites in Wool within the settlement boundary, the applicant advised the following which is accepted by the Council:

The largest site within the village centre is Wool & Bovington Motors on Dorchester Road, but even this is only 0.1ha in size and so not large enough to accommodate the proposed Lidl; there is also no indication that it would be available for redevelopment. In addition the site is in active use comprising a car dealership, used car sales and petrol filling station. The site is therefore neither available nor suitable for the proposed use.

16.6.8 Adjacent to the settlement boundary, 8 potential sites are identified but are considered suitable as follows:

1 - Land on west side of A352 Wareham Road and north of East Burton Road – forms part of the flood plain and is designated as Zone 3 (high risk) in terms of flood policies. Being part of the functional flood plain makes this land unsuitable for almost any built development.

2- Land on east side of A352 Wareham Road, adjoining Station Garage and railway line – forms part of the flood plain and is designated as Zone 3 (high risk) in terms of flood policies. Being part of the functional flood plain makes this land unsuitable for almost any built development.

3 - Land north of Bindon Lane – forms part of the flood plain and is designated as Zone 3 (high risk) in terms of flood policies. Being part of the functional flood plain makes this land unsuitable for almost any built development. In addition, the site and surrounding highway infrastructure is entirely unsuitable for the proposed large format food store.

4 - Land south of Bindon Lane - forms part of the flood plain and is designated as Zone 3 (high risk) in terms of flood policies. Being part of the functional flood plain makes this land unsuitable for almost any built development. In addition, the site and surrounding highway infrastructure is entirely unsuitable for the proposed large format food store.

5 - Land on west side of B3071 Lulworth Road – the site and surrounding highway infrastructure is entirely unsuitable for the proposed large format food store.

6 - Land on east side of B3071 Lulworth Road – the site and surrounding highway infrastructure is entirely unsuitable for the proposed large format food store.

7 - Land to south of A352 Dorchester Road - site is allocated for housing with 350 sqm of retail provision in the Purbeck Local Plan.

8 - Land to north of A352 Dorchester Road, adjoining Burton Cross Roundabout – site is allocated for housing with 350 sqm of retail provision in the Purbeck Local Plan. the quantum of housing that could be provided.

- 16.6.9 Officers note that the ‘out of Green Belt’ sequential test has not been extended to Bere Regis, despite the part of the unmet need including this area. A retail sequential test was not required for Bere Regis for the same reasons as Wool and Bovington. Officers have not requested the ‘out of Green Belt’ sequential test be extended to Bere Regis as it would not impact the reasons for refusal. In the event of a resubmission or an appeal, an ‘out of Green Belt’ sequential test for the Bere Regis area would be required.
- 16.6.10 The applicant has stated that the sequential test evidences that there are no other appropriate sites for the development of the supermarket, and the Council’s retail consultants support that conclusion from a retail sequential test perspective. The Council supports this from a potential out of Green Belt sites perspective also.
- 16.6.11 Representations received from some members of the public suggest the former Overhill Engineering Works site at Holton Heath as a possible alternative suitable location. The site did not form part of the sequential test. The engineering works site is isolated and further from Wareham town centre than the application site and has extant planning permission for the development of storage and industrial units. It is therefore not considered to be a suitable site.
- 16.6.12 Based on the above, officers are satisfied that there are no appropriate alternative sites for this development and the proposal therefore meets the requirements of the sequential test as set out in the NPPF.
- 16.6.13 **As the matter of addressing an unmet retail need is attributed significant weight, it is considered appropriate the same weight is applied in favour of the development where there are no available alternative sites.**

Retail Impact Assessment (RIA)

- 16.6.14 In addition to the sequential test, Policy EE3 – Vibrant Towns and Local Centres of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034, states that planning applications for retail development over 200 square metres (gross) that are outside of town centre boundaries will need to submit a retail impact assessment. The retail impact assessment (RIA) submitted as part of the application concludes that the largest trade diversion is likely to arise from the Aldi store in Upton (approximately 4.6 miles away)

(-22%). The applicant asserts that while this is a high amount, the store is currently overtrading, due to lack of alternative provision (as outlined above) and therefore is acceptable. It is also noted that Aldi in Upton is not within the local centre (Wareham).

- 16.6.15 The submitted RIA identifies Sainsbury's in Wareham Town Centre as being second most at risk with a notional trading impact of -18.5%. The applicant again states that the store is currently overtrading, therefore the proposed development would not impact on the viability of the store. Lidl in Hamworthy (Poole) is expected to experience a loss of £1m, which is a loss of -12.7%, however this is not within a local centre.
- 16.6.16 The proposal is expected to divert £0.5m of trade from Aldi in Weymouth, which is -8.8%, although once again the store is out of centre and is considered to be drawing expenditure from Swanage.
- 16.6.17 The study also concludes that the impact on the Wareham Co-op store will be -8.4% however it is anticipated that the store will continue to trade above the benchmark level. The impact on Tesco Extra in Fleetsbridge Poole and the Co-op in Swanage is considered to be just over -3%. The Tesco is out of centre, the Co-op in Swanage is within the defined area however the trade diversion is not considered to be sufficient to have a harmful impact on the viability of this store. Lidl in Hatch Ponds Road in Poole will have an impact of around -8%, and Asda at West Quay Road in Poole around -1.2%. Lidl is out centre and the impact on Asda is not considered to be sufficient to have a harmful impact on the store's viability.
- 16.6.18 The proposal will also have a degree of impact on other stores, most notably SPAR in Carey Road Local Centre, which will have an impact of -7.6%. The study concludes that this will be not result in the store no longer trading.
- 16.6.19 The majority of trade will be convenience, however there will be a degree of comparison goods sold (approximate turnover is expected to be £1.59m). However, this is generated by the regular rotation of comparison good items that only appear for a short period of time (comparison goods are products which are usually higher value and purchased infrequently). As such, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on stores in the area selling comparison goods.
- 16.6.20 Paragraphs 94 and 95 of the NPPF note:

94. 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 2,500m² of gross floorspace). This should include assessment of:

- a) the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and*
- b) the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment*

(as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

95. Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 94, it should be refused.

- 16.6.21 The Council's retail consultant has considered the retail impact assessment provided by the applicant and they conclude that the impact on the vitality and viability of Wareham town centre is likely to be adverse but not significantly adverse based on the over trading of existing retail. Harm to Swanage and Carey Road is considered to be to a lesser extent than Wareham.
- 16.6.22 Policy EE3 notes that out of centre retail uses are only acceptable if the development would not harm the vitality or viability of town and local centres. The level of harm is not specified. Again, the proposal will have an adverse impact on Wareham town centre and, to a lesser extent on Swanage and Carey Road. As the existing retail provision is over trading it is acknowledged some adverse impact can be absorbed and is therefore not considered harmful impact in the context of Policy EE3. Further to this, again the impact is not significantly adverse. This being the case, the proposal is considered acceptable with regards to paragraph 95 of the NPPF, where the application should only be refused where the harm is significantly adverse.
- 16.6.23 **As the retail impact is not significantly adverse it is considered this issue is attributed limited weight against the development.**

16.7 - Economic Benefits

- 16.7.1 Policy KS1 of the Purbeck Local Plan seeks to secure development that improves the economic conditions in the area.
- 16.7.2 The proposal will provide employment in the area. The applicant has indicated that 5 full time and 35 part time roles will be created by the proposal (the full time equivalent will be 23 jobs). This is given moderate weight in the decision making process, taking account of the other material planning considerations.
- 16.7.3 **Taking into consideration the somewhat limited associated economic benefits, they are attributed moderate weight in favour of the development.**

16.8 Design and impact on the character of the area

- 16.8.1 As noted previously, the site is situated outside of the settlement boundary and within the open countryside.
- 16.8.2 The site currently consists of a pastoral field, with the Heath/ Forest Mosaic Dorset Landscape Character type – a patchwork of heath, forest and scrub which forms part of the wider Poole Basin, an extensive and expansive area of former heathland. The applicant has identified in their submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that the proposed development's significance on the effect of the application site would be minor adverse and the visual impact would also be minor adverse.

- 16.8.3 The site is located to the south east of the settlement of Sandford and this area of Sandford Road is characterised by small pockets of development and pockets of open land along this part of Sandford Road, including the application site, a pocket to the north of Pottery Lines and a pocket to the south of the 29029 restaurant. There is a sense of openness to part of Sandford created by these pockets and lower scale development.
- 16.8.4 The Council's Senior Landscape Architect has considered the LVIA and concluded that the landscape sensitivity of the site as medium and the magnitude of the landscape impact on the application site as large. They identify that the significance of the proposed development's landscape impact should be characterised as moderate to major.
- 16.8.5 As part of the proposal, a number of trees will need to be felled and the applicant has submitted a landscaping scheme. There are some reservations about the relatively open frontage of the site. It will be difficult to fully mitigate this due to a water main easement that precludes significant planting.
- 16.8.6 There are also reservations about the proposed planting scheme. Some of the tree species proposed and the planting mixes may add to sub-urbanisation of the site and they are therefore considered to be inappropriate in this location. The preference would be to use native tree species common to and present in the heathland such as Birch, Scots Pine and Oak and a mix of species within the planting mixes that are more reflective of native heathland habitat such as heather (*Calluna vulgaris* cultivars), dwarf gorse (*Ulex minor*) and dwarf Pine (*Pinus sylvestris watereri*).
- 16.8.7 The applicant, in response to the comments made by the Landscape Architect has updated the landscaping scheme to include native flora. However, details have not been provided and therefore a condition requiring a planting schedule would be required if the application was approved.
- 16.8.8 Within the car park a degree of planting is proposed to visually soften the impact of the hard landscaping. This includes trees between the central aisles of parking spaces and a landscaping buffer with a minimum of 5m width between the site boundary and the development.
- 16.8.9 The design of the supermarket follows the general design of Lidl supermarkets, featuring a largely mono-pitched roof, with a shallow second pitch on northern corner of the building. The roof plane will be a green roof with solar panels. The green roof will be particularly prominent on the north eastern elevation and visible from the road. This will help to partially reduce the visual impact of the building. The materials employed include timber effect cladding with red brick panels and a rendered spine wall painted to specification RAL 9010 (off-white).
- 16.8.10 The design of the store will help reduce the visual impact to a degree, however, as the site is currently undeveloped it is acknowledged that there will still be a significant visual change to the site, particularly with the open frontage as proposed. The internally illuminated signage will also increase the building's prominence in the street scene.

- 16.8.11 The building itself will be set back from the road by approximately 18m and therefore will be less dominant within the street scene, however, the open frontage with hard landscaping and associated car parking negate the set back. The trolley bay for the store will be set under a canopy adjacent to the store and there will be no other trolley bays in the car park.
- 16.8.12 The proposal will require car parking, providing a total of 112 parking spaces. This will also have an impact on the character of the area. A landscaping scheme has been submitted to visually soften the impact. This includes maintaining as much of the existing hedgerow as is practical and also retaining existing trees near the vehicular entrance to the store. A condition would be required to ensure that the trees are suitably protected during the construction, given the contribution to the visual amenity of the area that they make.
- 16.8.13 In terms of servicing the proposal development will generate both recycling and waste. The application form states that waste would be removed on the delivery lorry, being stored internally, which is considered acceptable with less visual impact than external bin stores.
- 16.8.14 In terms of boundary treatment, the applicant proposes using 2.1m close board fencing on the north eastern, south eastern and south western boundaries. This type of boundary treatment is not favoured by the Council's Landscape Architect, as such a condition would be required to secure details of suitable boundary treatment to be provided.
- 16.8.15 While it is not possible to entirely mitigate the visual impact of the development, it is acknowledged the landscaping will assist in reducing some of the impact. However, the visual impact concerns cannot be completely overcome, by virtue of the development altering the character of the area. As noted under the Green Belt assessment above, the site forms an area of open grassland between Pottery Lines, a residential development and the former Sibley pottery and a restaurant to the south. The land which is enclosed by low hedging trees and scrub is visible on approaching from Sandford to Wareham on the A351 and from the B3075 from Morden, and the site provides a gap between settlements providing a sense of leaving the settlement.
- 16.8.16 Based on the above, it is considered that the proposed retail development would have an adverse harmful impact on the character of this end of the settlement, which is currently undeveloped. There is a gradation in scale as you leave the settlement where densities are lower and of domestic scale on this side of Sandford Road. The addition of the proposed development adds an imposing scale of a commercial nature to what is currently open character adjacent to smaller scale development. On approaching Sandford from the Wareham direction, the proposed development would introduce an edge of settlement development that would normally be associated with a much larger scale settlement. The proposed would substantially erode the character of the area completely filling one of the characteristics pockets of openness both as you leave and enter the settlement. Therefore general landscape harm, in addition to the intrinsic harm to the Green Belt, is identified and conflicts with Policy E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan, in particular part (a) where development is required to positively integrate with its surroundings.

- 16.8.17 Further to the above, again the site is within the Heath/Forest Mosaic Dorset Landscape Character Type a patchwork of heath, forest and scrub which forms part of the wider 'Poole Basin' an extensive and expansive area of former heathland on acidic and impoverished soils. Urban influences of housing, military and industrial development impact significantly on the area. However, this does not justify the further erosion of the character of the area but rather highlights the importance to retain what associated spaces there are left.
- 16.8.18 Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF notes new development should (inter alia) be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. It is considered the proposed would impact substantially on the Heath/Forest Mosaic Dorset landscape character type, therefore conflicting with paragraph 135.
- 16.8.19 The Council's Senior Ranger has commented on the proposals. They have advised that the applicant will need to take responsibility for verge at the access point on the roundabout. Officers consider that it is therefore appropriate that a landscaping condition would need to take account of the verge if the application was approved.
- 16.8.20 **Taking into consideration the adverse visual impact of moderate to major with limited opportunity for mitigation, the issue of impact on the character of the area is attributed significant weight against the development.**

16.9 - Impact on the setting of a listed building

- 16.9.1 The site is situated adjacent to the Grade II listed Lime Kiln, which is associated with the former Sibley Pottery which ran from 1922-1939. To the east of the site is the former tramway linked with the Sandford Brickworks (now demolished). The adjacent Lime Kiln was designated in 1984, and described at the time as:
- Disused pottery kiln. Probably early C19. Central brick kiln and flue surrounded by weatherboarded ancillary buildings. Kiln of truncated oblong form-tapered, the longer sides slightly concave. Few structures of this type survive in the area.*
- 16.9.2 The Council's records confirm that the kiln was in fact constructed in the 1920s with the creation of Sibley Pottery. Despite this, there is still historic and architectural interest due to its former use, as well as the association with the former pottery. In addition, its design as a muffle kiln is rare. The kiln remains visible from the road despite the growth of vegetation and would have been more prominent in the street scene historically.
- 16.9.3 The surrounding timber clad buildings associated with the kiln are part of the former pottery and are therefore considered as non-designated heritage assets.
- 16.9.4 Whilst the site itself is not known to have been previously developed, the landscape has historically been involved in industry. The modern sprawl of Sandford has significantly compromised the historical industrial setting of the site. However, the open aspect to the land does provide a sense of isolation that has otherwise been compromised through modern development. The proposed development will inevitably impact upon this.

- 16.9.5 Officers therefore consider that less than substantial harm will therefore be caused by the proposal. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF requires any harm to heritage assets are justified. .
- 16.9.6 The proposal would meet an unmet retail need and this is considered to be a significant public benefit. It is also considered the proposed green roof will help to mitigate harm caused. In addition, the 5m buffer with natural screening also lessens the impact on the heritage asset. It is noted that the land on which the former tramway was situated is included in this landscape buffer. It is noted that the rear of the building will also have no clutter in the form of high level surfaces.
- 16.9.7 The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that subject to a condition requiring information boards to explain the area's history, they have no objections to the proposal.
- 16.9.8 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against public benefits. It is considered that the proposed information boards will provide a public benefit, allowing a better understanding of the industrial history of the site. The public benefits of meeting the unmet retail need and providing the information boards and meeting the unmet retail need are considered significant public benefits which outweigh the harm caused.
- 16.9.7 Taking into account the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on the setting of the listed building in accordance with Policy E2: Historic Environment of the Purbeck Local Plan.
- 16.9.8 **Based on the above the issue of impact on heritage assets is attributed limited weight against the development.**

16.10 Access, Highway Safety and Parking

Traffic movements

- 16.10.1 The applicant proposes providing access to the site from the Sibley Pottery roundabout. This leads into the car park which is situated to the north of the store. The applicant carried out a formal pre-application enquiry with the Council's Highways Team prior to the submission of the application. As a result, a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) has been submitted.
- 16.10.2 The TIA includes a TRICS analysis (Trip Rate Information Computer System - a database of trip rates for developments used in the United Kingdom for transport planning purposes, specifically to quantify the trip generation of new developments). The analysis has identified that there will be some increased movements on the highway network however it is considered that these would not adversely impact the traditional weekday am and pm peaks (08:00-09:00 and 17:00-18:00).
- 16.10.3 The assessment includes further analysis to establish the likely trip assignment and flows for the specified weekday and Saturday peak hours. A highway impact assessment has been carried out to compare the current traffic levels to those either with or without development, by using TEMPro traffic growth to provide an expected baseline for 2027. The assessment consider the impact on the Sibley Pottery Roundabout, the Wareham Roundabout, the Saxon Roundabout, Worgret (net change only) and Southern Wareham Bypass roundabout (net change only) and were

modelled using Junction 9 software. The result of the assessment is that these junctions can satisfactorily accommodate any additional traffic generated by the proposal. The assessment identifies no issues with either network capacity or highway safety.

- 16.10.4 Third party concerns were raised in relation to a bespoke data survey of vehicle flows and speeds at a specific location on the A351 approx. 1.5km from the application site, for a two-week period 10-23 May 2022 within a 24-hour window, cited as northbound only (undertaken by Dorset Council). For the purposes of this planning application, paragraph 5.1 of the submitted Transport Assessment details the highway impact assessment of the key junction's capacity and flow turning counts, which were undertaken 31 March – 2 April 2022. All found to be operating within acceptable limits and to a growth year of 2027 should the development be approved.

When the Highway Authority was reconsulted in December 2023, there had been updated guidance to promote and encourage active travel means. Therefore, the applicant submitted a separate Transport Note 12 Jan 2024, proposing to provide an improved uncontrolled crossing facility (for pedestrians and cyclists) with upgrades to the footway, the Sibley Pottery roundabout was modelled further to demonstrate it can operate within capacity adequately. The Highway Authority found this acceptable and that a signalised crossing facility was not justified. The improvements to the northern arm of the roundabout will be carried out via a section 278 Agreement and subject to a Road Safety Audit.

- 16.10.5 With the above in mind, the Council's Highways Authority is satisfied with the impact that the proposal will have on the highway network. The threshold set in paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

In this instance, the Council's Highway Authority considers that these high thresholds have not been met.

- 16.10.6 The applicant states that highway movements will likely be reduced by the development, as a result of shopping trips being made at the store, instead of shoppers travelling to Poole. The applicant claims that mileage will be reduced by 1,546,652 miles a year, with a reduction of 400 tonnes of greenhouse gases. It is accepted that there is likely to be some mileage reduction by local residents to the application site who shop at similar stores elsewhere, however, it is difficult to accurately quantify this. Therefore officers consider that limited weight can be given to this argument. However, as explained above, the proposal is not considered to have unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe impact on the road network.
- 16.10.7 **Based on the above the matter of reduced traffic movements is attributed limited weight in favour the development.**

Access, Transport and Parking

- 16.10.8 Proposed access is via a new arm from the Sibley Pottery roundabout directly to the application site and is considered acceptable by the Highway Authority.
- 16.10.9 Policy I2 – Improving Accessibility and Transport of the Purbeck Local Plan states that development should be located at the most sustainable location to reduce the need to travel. As noted previously, there are existing public transport links in close proximity and pedestrian access to the development from Wareham, with a shared pavement and cycle path provided from Wareham Town Centre passing the site (part of a cycle network that connects to Poole). Again the location of the application site in terms of sustainability is considered acceptable as set out earlier in this report.
- 16.10.10 In accordance with Policy I2, the proposal includes cycle storage to encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport. There is also an island that allows pedestrians to cross adjacent to the Sibley Pottery Roundabout to provide pedestrian access to the site. As part of the proposal, the applicant has agreed to enter into a Section 278 agreement with the Council's Highway Authority to upgrade the crossing. This would be secured by means of a Grampian condition if the application was approved.
- 16.10.11 In terms of parking provision, the proposal includes 112 spaces. The Dorset wide car parking guidance recommends 1 parking space per 14m², and one space for every 2 full time staff members, equating to 111 parking spaces and on this basis no objections have been raised by the Council's Highways Authority. Delivery and service lorries pass through the car park to the delivery yard at the southern end of the store. No concerns have been raised in relation to highway safety in this respect.
- 16.10.12 Officers note the concerns raised by a local resident that at present the area to the north-east of the site is used by walkers accessing the woods to the south east of the site. They contend that the proposed development would encourage people seeking to access the site through their garden. There are no public rights of way across the site and therefore no right to access.
- 16.10.13 The application is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its highway impact and compliant with Policy I2 of the Local Plan.
- 16.10.14 **With the above in mind the issue of highways impact is therefore attributed limited weight against the development. Highways improvements secured in relation to the development are considered neutral in that they are necessary to mitigate impacts of the development.**

16.11 Neighbouring Amenity

- 16.11.1 There are residential properties to the north-east / east of the application site, on Pottery Lines. There is also a residential property (Egdon Cottage) to south west of the site, adjacent to the old pottery. In addition, residential properties are present to the north west of the site, on the opposite side of the A351, Sandford Road.
- 16.11.2 Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the store on neighbouring residential properties. The properties on Pottery Lines would at the closest point be

approximately 13.4m from the nearest car parking spaces and approximately 53m from the store. Concerns have been raised with regards to the impact on the privacy of the neighbouring properties.

- 16.11.3 The car park will generate a degree of noise by virtue of parking vehicles, lorry deliveries, moving shopping trolleys and other noise associated with this type of development. The 5m landscape boundary will alleviate to a degree some of the noise associated with the development, however, officers also consider that it is appropriate to condition that the boundary treatment will provide a degree of acoustic screening to further mitigate the impact on these properties.
- 16.11.4 In addition, planting of native trees is proposed along the boundary of these properties. Over time, this will contribute to protecting the privacy of the neighbouring residents further. A condition will be applied in order to ensure that the trees and landscaping are provided.
- 16.11.5 The owners of the properties on Pottery Lines have raised concerns regarding the loss of the existing view. The distance between the store and the residential properties is considered to be sufficient to ensure an acceptable outlook, however, there is no right to a view, therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 16.11.6 Egdon Cottage, to the south west, is approximately 15.6m to the south west of the main store building and is screened by mature trees, those of which are within the boundary of the site are to be retained. The roof pitch slopes towards the boundary with this property and therefore, has a height of approximately 5.1m. This being the case, the outlook of the property is considered to be suitably maintained.
- 16.11.7 Although the plant vent is on the other side of the building, it is considered likely that there will be a degree of noise generated by the plant and by unloading of lorries. However, the Environmental Health Team are satisfied with the Noise Assessment submitted with the proposal. There are no windows on the south west elevation of the building facing Egdon Cottage, and the only openings on the store elevation are emergency exits. This will limit the noise impact on the neighbouring property. This being the case it is considered that the amenity of Egdon Cottage would not be harmfully impacted by the proposal that would warrant refusal.
- 16.11.8 A substation is proposed at the northern end of the site, and is approximately 14.9m from the nearest residential property. The substation would have a footprint of approximately 3.2 square metres but further details have not been provided. Officers consider that it would be appropriate to apply a planning condition requiring further details of the substation, ensuring the design protects neighbouring amenity with regards to acoustic screening, if the development was approved.
- 16.11.9 The properties across the A351 Sandford Road are situated further from the proposed store and separated by the road. As such, it is considered that the impact in terms of noise, privacy and outlook to these properties will be limited.
- 16.11.10 The applicant has proposed opening hours of 07:00-22:00 Monday to Saturday and Bank Holidays and either 10:00-16:00 or 11:00-17:00 on Sundays. This is in line with other similar supermarkets. The Environmental Health Officer considers that it is appropriate to condition deliveries to stricter hours of 8am-10pm on Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm on Saturday and not all on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Both the opening and delivery hours would be secured by means of a planning condition.

- 16.11.11 There is likely to be a degree of light spill from the car park into neighbouring properties. In order to protect their amenity and also for biodiversity interests a condition would need to be applied in relation to the lighting in the car park if the development was approved. The Council's Environmental Health Team have also advised that a construction management plan should be provided in order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. This would be achieved by means of a planning condition.
- 16.11.12 The proposal is likely to have a degree of impact on the surrounding areas with regards to air pollution. AN air quality assessment was submitted as part of the planning application. It is noted that levels are likely to be higher during peak traffic volumes at present. Public Health Dorset were consulted on the proposals and have not raised any objections to them. Therefore officers are satisfied that the proposal will be acceptable in this regard.
- 16.11.13 The application is therefore considered in this respect to be acceptable and compliant with Policy E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan (2024) subject to conditions to secure the opening and delivery hours and the details of the substation.
- 16.11.14 **With the above in mind the issue of impact on neighbouring amenity is therefore attributed limited weight against the development.**

16.12 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 16.12.1 The site is not situated within proximity of any watercourses and is not adjacent to the coast therefore it is not at risk of coastal or fluvial flooding. The site is also not known to be at risk from surface water flooding. However, it is noted that the site may be at risk of groundwater flooding. This is particularly a concern during the winter months. This would also potentially prevent the use of infiltration for surface water drainage.
- 16.12.2 The Council's Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has been consulted on the proposal and advised of the need for infiltration tests to be undertaken. The applicant has carried out the study to establish the groundwater levels of the site and it has been observed to be about 1.9mbgl, which are considered to be acceptable levels. This being the case, the Lead Local Flood Authority is satisfied that subject to conditions the groundwater levels are acceptable, and suitable for infiltration surface water schemes.
- 16.12.3 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of flood risk and surface water drainage and compliant with Policy E5 of the Purbeck Local Plan subject to conditions requiring a detailed surface water management scheme and management and maintenance of the scheme have been provided.
- 16.12.4 **With the above in mind the issue of flood risk and drainage is therefore attributed no weight against the development.**

16.13 Biodiversity

- 16.13.1 The site exceeds the 0.1 hectare threshold that requires a biodiversity survey to be undertaken. Accordingly, the applicant has undertaken a survey and produced a biodiversity plan. The survey determined that the site includes scattered trees, species poor hedgerow and dense scrub. This may create a habitat for nesting birds and commuting or foraging bats. No evidence of bat roosts has been found on the site.

The site also includes semi-improved natural grassland which provides a habitat for reptiles.

- 16.13.2 The Biodiversity Plan offers mitigation for the loss of the habitats and measures. Artificial lighting must not be installed within or directed along existing or created hedgerows and trees and must have a max of 0.5 lux. As explained above, a 5m buffer has been incorporated to protect bat populations from the built environment. This buffer area must also be as dark as possible with a max of 0.5 lux. The landscape buffer must be protected from the start of construction. Planning conditions would be required to secure this.
- 16.13.3 In addition, four bat boxes are recommended on the site, the positioning of which would be informed by a qualified ecologist. Furthermore, the landscaping scheme must include flower, berry and fruit bearing species to enhance the habitat for bats; night scented flowering plants, to encourage foraging bats to use the site, post-development. The Biodiversity Plan noted that one tree, labelled T38 was classified as a low potential tree for a bat roost. However, due to ivy growth on the tree, a roosting feature cannot be ruled out. The tree will not be removed and is scheduled to be protected during the construction process.
- 16.13.4 It is noted that the site features reptiles on the site. The applicant has reached an agreement with Natural England to translocate the reptiles from the site. This forms part of the biodiversity plan and is considered to be acceptable in terms of suitable mitigation in this regard.
- 16.13.5 The proposal will result in the loss of semi natural grassland, which cannot be replaced on the site. A Unilateral Undertaking is being prepared in order to provide a compensation payment for the loss of the grassland.
- 16.13.6 Taking into account the above, the Biodiversity Plan has been assessed by Dorset Council's Natural Environment Team who have approved the scheme. Officers are therefore satisfied that biodiversity interests on the proposal have been adequately addressed. Therefore the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy E10: Biodiversity and Geodiversity of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034.
- 16.13.7 Officers note that planning applications are expected to provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). However, this only applies to planning applications validated from 12th February 2024. This application was validated in 2022 and therefore the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply to this proposal.
- 16.13.8 **With the above in mind the issue of impact on biodiversity is therefore attributed limited weight against the development.**

16.14 Impact on protected sites

- 16.14.1 The application site is situated approximately 375m from the Poole Harbour Ramsar site. Policy E8: Dorset Heathlands does not prohibit commercial development within 400m of protected sites. Policy EE3 requires consideration of the impact on protected sites. During the EIA Screening process, the Council conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on protected sites. Natural England have been consulted on the proposals and advise that there is no in principle objection to the proposal.

- 16.14.2 There is the potential for the car park to be used by people who are then looking to access the Ramsar site and outside trading hours. In order to mitigate this, they have recommended that a condition is added requiring a restriction on the number of hours that cars can be parked in the store car park. Officers consider that a barrier across the car park would also be appropriate to prevent the car park from being used when the store is closed. This would be secured by planning condition if the development was approved.
- 16.14.3 Officers note comments received from members of the public regarding the impact upon dark skies. It is noted that the site does not sit within the Dorset National Landscape. In addition, to the north-west and south-west of the site is the A351 which has street lighting. In addition, there is residential development to the north, west and south of the site which also generate light pollution. Taking account the existing light pollution, the proposal is not considered to significantly increase light levels. However, in order to minimise the impact on neighbouring properties, and to protect biodiversity, a planning condition will be added requiring details of lighting to be provided.
- 16.14.4 **With the above in mind the issue of impact on protected sites is therefore attributed no weight against the development.**

16.15 Minerals Safeguarding

- 16.15.1 The site is identified as being within a Mineral Safeguarding Area. The Council's Minerals and Waste Team have identified that the land is likely to have deposits of sand and gravel. However, given the size of the site, they have concluded that it would not be expedient to require the extraction of any minerals prior to the construction of the supermarket. Therefore, officers consider that the proposal is acceptable in this regard.
- 16.15.2 The Council's Minerals and Waste Team have been consulted on the proposal. They have raised no objections to the proposal however they have advised that the proposal will need to demonstrate compliance with Policy 22 of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019). In order to ensure that this is the case, a planning condition would be added to ensure that a detailed waste scheme is agreed with the Council if the development was approved. Subject to this condition, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 16.15.3 **With the above in mind the issue of impact in relation to minerals safeguarding is therefore attributed no weight against the development.**

16.16 Land Contamination

- 16.16.1 The site is situated adjacent to the former Sibley Pottery. Officers note that the records indicate the potential for contamination of the land as a result of the former industrial use of the neighbouring land.
- 16.16.2 The applicant commissioned a land contamination survey that included invasive inspection based on desktop surveys. The survey found no evidence of contamination of the land.

- 16.16.3 The Council's land contamination consultants have considered the findings of the survey and are content with the results. They have recommended a precautionary condition requiring a monitoring brief to be prepared in the event that further contamination is discovered.
- 16.16.4 **With the above in mind the issue of land contamination is therefore attributed no weight against the development.**

16.17 Very Special Circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt

- 16.17.1 As detailed in the report, very special circumstances will need to be demonstrated in order to justify development which is identified as causing harm to the openness of the Green Belt, both visually and spatially. In order to be acceptable, the very special circumstances must clearly outweigh the harm that is considered to be caused by the proposed development.
- 16.17.2 In each case, it will be for the decision-maker to form a planning judgment as to whether the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by countervailing factors such as to justify the grant of permission for inappropriate development. The applicant has identified a number of factors which it considers to constitute very special circumstances, each of which is considered below.
- 16.17.3 As noted previously, the applicant has submitted a case for 'very special circumstances' (VSC) making the case that harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other circumstances as follows:
1. *Significant quantitative need for a new LAD store.*
 2. *Significant qualitative need for a new LAD store.*
 3. *Reduction in transport movements.*
 4. *Community comments.*
 5. *Job creation and economic benefits.*
 6. *No alternative sites.*
- 16.17.2 Taking each circumstance in turn they are assessed in the planning balance as follows:
1. *Significant quantitative need for a new LAD store.*

With regards to this application, it is accepted that the proposal would make a contribution to retail need locally and it has been established, there is an unmet retail need within the area. The retail need demonstrated, and independently verified by retail consultants for the council evidences approximately 70% of the retail floorspace proposed (if Wool and Bovington are excluded, the figure is in excess of 100% if they are included).

The applicant also refers to the significant expenditure leak from the area. Officers consider if the retail need is addressed that the expenditure leak would be addressed as a result of this.

As set out earlier in this report, the matter of addressing an unmet retail need is attributed significant rather than substantial weight in favour of the development given the existing retail provision in the surrounding area and the proposed Purbeck Local Plan provision.

2. *Significant qualitative need for a new LAD store.*

As set out earlier in this report, as local planning policy primarily focuses on quantitative need rather than qualitative need, this is not considered to carry the same weight. Planning policy generally does not specify qualitative retail requirements, as the market will dictate the type of retail provision in an area.

Therefore the qualitative need is attributed moderate weight in favour of the development.

3. *Reduction in transport movements.*

As set out earlier in this report, the applicant states that highway movements will likely be reduced by the development, as a result of shopping trips being made at the store, instead of shoppers travelling to Poole. The applicant claims that mileage will be reduced by 1,546,652 miles a year, with a reduction of 400 tonnes of greenhouse gases. However, it is difficult to accurately quantify this, officers consider that limited weight can be given to this argument..

Based on the above the matter of reduced traffic movements is attributed limited weight in favour the development.

4. *Community comments.*

The applicant refers to the community support for the proposed development based on the consultation responses received and particularly when there is a cost of living crisis. Comments received generally point to a qualitative need, which is addressed above.

Therefore the factor of community comments is considered to fall under qualitative need as set out above.

5. *Job creation and economic benefits.*

As set out above, the proposal will provide employment in the area. The applicant has indicated that 5 full time and 35 part time roles will be created by the proposal. The full time equivalent will be 23 jobs.

Taking into consideration the somewhat limited associated economic benefits, they are attributed moderate weight in favour of the development.

6. *No alternative sites.*

As set out above, officers are satisfied that there are no appropriate alternative sites for this development and the proposal therefore meets the requirements of the sequential test as set out in the NPPF.

Again, where the matter of addressing an unmet retail need is attributed significant weight, it is considered appropriate the same weight is applied in favour of the development where there are no available alternative sites.

16.17.3 In a letter to the Council dated 5th Aug 2024 the applicant notes the following benefits:

- 40 new jobs;
- a biodiversity net gain;
- addressing the significant quantitative and qualitative need for a LAD store to serve this catchment (and indeed the wider area);
- provide discounted groceries in a cost of living crisis; and
- reducing the need to travel out to Poole, saving over 400 tonnes of CO2 during a climate emergency.

16.17.4 It is considered all these benefits are captured under the VSC analysis above except biodiversity net gain (BNG). The applicant has advised the on-site mitigation will not be sufficient to provide a net gain in and of itself, the off-site mitigation of a compensation payment (£23,396.58), in their view, will provide an overall net gain of 10%. This point was discussed with the Dorset Council Natural Environment Team (NET) and advised that the compensation purely deals with the loss. There might then be gains provided by other habitats where there is an overall uplift, which in this case is on-site trees and a small area of woodland. However it is not possible to suggest that this is a 10% gain because the information submitted does not quantify this compensation.

16.17.5 **While some net gain is acknowledged, it is afforded limited weight as it cannot be quantified.**

16.18 Planning Balance

16.18.1 As previously discussed paragraph 153 of the NPPF states:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

16.18.2 The following tables set out the planning considerations for and against the development and the weight that is being afforded to each consideration in the planning balance. Matters required to be secured by legal agreement (reptile translocation and highways improvements) are not included as these mitigate impacts of the development. In ascribing weight to the planning considerations in favour and against the following scale is used: **none, limited, moderate, significant and substantial.**

Consideration in favour	Weight	Reason
Provision of unmet retail need	Quantitative – Significant Qualitative - Moderate	Unmet need is not met elsewhere within the Local Plan, however still existing retail provisions in the surrounding area and Local Plan allocations for retail provision. and
Lack of other suitable sites	Significant	Sequential test has determined that there are no other suitable sites for this type and size of development.
Economic benefits	Moderate	Generates 5 full time and 35 part time jobs.
Information boards detailing history of the area	Moderate	At present there is no opportunity for members of the public to appreciate the industrial heritage of the site.
Reduction in traffic movements	Limited	Some reduction acknowledged but cannot be quantified
Biodiversity Net Gain	Limited	Some net gain acknowledged but cannot be quantified
Land does not make significant contribution to the Green Belt	Limited	Regardless of the performance of Green Belt land the impact on the openness is considered substantial
Draft NPPF and Ministerial Statement	Limited	The NPPF is at consultation stage and the wording could be adjusted. The Ministerial Statement does not directly reference commercial development in the Grey Belt.

Consideration against	Weight	Reason
Impact on the Green Belt	Substantial	Openness of the Green Belt harmed both visually and spatially as set out above.
Landscape Impact	Significant	Will significantly alter the character of the site and surrounding area

Conflict with Policy EE3	Limited	Merits of addressing retail need outweigh conflict with the policy.
Impact on the setting of the listed building	Limited	The loss of open space will alter the setting of the listed building (although it is noted that the setting is already significantly altered). This will cause less than substantial harm to its setting and some public benefits are provided. Based on the level on harm and proposed public benefits the weighting is limited.
Impact on highways	Limited	Impact on highways not considered severe.
Impact upon neighbouring residents	Limited	Impact on residents mitigated by planning conditions as set out above.
Impact on Biodiversity	Limited	Impact on biodiversity is compensated
Impact on local retail centres	Limited	Retail Impact Assessment which has been independently assessed for the Council concludes that the proposal is acceptable in this respect.
Location	Limited	Outside of the settlement boundary however adjacent to it.
Mineral safe guarding	None	No issues identified in relation to mineral safe guarding.
Contaminated Land	None	No issues identified in relation to contaminated land.
Impact on flood risk	None	Impact on flood risk considered acceptable.
Impact on protected sites	None	Car park barrier will discourage use of the car park for access to protected sites.

- 16.18.3 Again, the question of whether the development can be justified in the Green Belt having regard to existence of very special circumstances ultimately is a planning judgement for the Council.

16.18.4 The following table compares planning considerations in relation to the weight attributed to them.

Weight	Consideration AGAINST	Consideration in FAVOUR
Substantial	- Harm to the Green Belt	- None identified
Significant	- Impact on character of the area	- Quantative retail need - No alternative sites
Moderate	- None identified	- Economic benefits - Qualitative retail need - Heritage asset information boards
Limited	- Conflict with Policy EE3 - Location outside of settlement boundary - Retail impact - Impact on heritage assets - Impact on highways - Impact on neighbouring amenity - Impact biodiversity	- Reduction in traffic movements - Land does not make a significant contribution to the Green Belt objectives - Biodiversity net gain - Draft NPPF and Ministerial Statement
None	- Flood risk - Impact on protected sites - Impact on minerals safe guarding - Contaminated land	

16.18.5 Taking account of the above, regardless of the number of considerations in favour and against, the benefits must clearly outweigh the harm caused. Whilst there are a number of significant and less significant benefits, there is also substantial harm identified, including harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate development. Officers consider this harm and any other harm outweighs the benefits.

16.18.6 Therefore in accordance paragraph 153 of the NPPF very special circumstances do not exist and the development results in inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should be refused.

17 – Conclusions

17.1 Taking account of all of the above, officers consider that, the application is not in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole and the NPPF. As a result of the overall harm to the Green Belt and the substantial weight attached to this, along with

the other lesser harms identified, it is considered that the harm in this case is not clearly outweighed by the benefits outlined.

17.2 The officer recommendation is therefore for refusal for the reasons set out below.

18 – Recommendation

The application to be **refused** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development lies within the Green Belt within which no new development shall be permitted unless it meets one of the exceptions set out in the NPPF or there are 'very special circumstances'. The construction of a new food store and associated operational needs (parking, access, boundary fencing and retail paraphernalia) amounts to inappropriate development which is also harmful to the openness and visual amenities of this Green Belt area and the purposes of including the land within the Green Belt. The harm that would result is not clearly outweighed by other considerations, individually or cumulatively, and therefore very special circumstances do not exist. As such the proposals are considered contrary to the provisions of Section 13 of the NPPF 2023 paragraphs 152-156.
2. The application site is located outside the defined settlement within the open countryside and Green Belt. It is considered that the plans and other information submitted to support the application fail to show a development that positively integrates with the surroundings or that is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding landscape setting. The proposed will result in a detrimental impact on the open character of the area and encroachment into open countryside. The proposed therefore does not comply with national guidance on well-designed places as set out in paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023, National Design Guide and Policy E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018 – 2034.

Informatives

1. For clarity, the refused plans are as follows:

AD_100	Location Plan
AD_110 rev B	Block Plan
AD_111 rev B	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
AD_112 rev B	Proposed Roof Plan
AD_113 rev B	Proposed Elevations
AD_114 rev A	Proposed Boundary Treatments
AD_115 rev A	Proposed Site Finishes
AD_116 rev A	Proposed Topographical Overlay
AD_117 rev A	Proposed Context Plan
AD_118 rev A	Proposed Site Utilities Overlay
SD_700	Proposed Site Levels
SD_710	Proposed Site Sections 1 of 2
SD_710	Proposed Site Sections 2 of 2

AD_119 rev A Proposed Water Main Easement

2. In the event of an appeal or any resubmission the applicant needs to be aware that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be applied to this development.
3. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:
 - offering a formal pre-application advice service, and –
 - as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant received pre-application advice advising the proposed development is unlikely to be supported.
 - The applicant was advised that the proposal did not accord with the development plan and was given the opportunity to address concerns.
 - The Council has worked with the applicant to reduce reasons for refusal.
4. In the event of a resubmission or an appeal, an 'out of Green Belt' sequential test for the Bere Regis area would be required.