

November 2025



Planning Statement

Insertion of Mezzanine Floor

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**Unit 3, Wellington Retail Park
Hambledon Road, Waterlooville**

On behalf of

DFS Limited

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of DFS Limited in support of a full planning application for the insertion of a mezzanine floor within Unit 3, Wellington Retail Park, Hambledon Road, Waterloooville, PO7 7FG.
- 1.2 The development seeks to enhance the existing retail offer of the DFS unit by extending the mezzanine floor. These changes will support the continued operation and competitiveness of DFS within Wellington Retail Park, strengthening the choice and quality of retail provision available at this established location.
- 1.3 Our assessment of planning merits takes the starting point as the development plan before taking account of relevant material planning considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).
- 1.4 The report proceeds as follows:
 - Section 2 describes the site and its planning history;
 - Section 3 sets out details of the proposed development;
 - Section 4 reviews relevant planning policy;
 - Section 5 sets out assessment of planning merits; and
 - Section 6 provides our conclusions.

2.0 Site Description & Planning History

Site Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises Unit 3 within the Wellington Retail Park, a modern retail destination accommodating a mix of bulky goods and food retailers, including TK Maxx, Dreams, Home Bargains, Sainsbury's and M&S Foodhall.
- 2.2 The DFS unit currently provides a gross internal area of approximately 1,711 m², comprising a ground floor sales area of 1,424 m², back-of-house accommodation of 188 m², and a small existing mezzanine of 86 m².
- 2.3 The store benefits from direct pedestrian and customer access from the retail park car park, which provides approximately 530 shared customer spaces (including 30 disabled spaces), along with cycle facilities. Servicing is undertaken to the rear of the unit via an established service yard accessed from Hambledon Road.

Planning History

- 2.4 The original permissions for this site relates to the following applications:
- **99/54013/003** (Outline) – *Demolition of car showroom, associated buildings, existing retail unit and civic amenity site. Erection of 10,126 sq m non-food retail units, 1.207 sq m garden centre, 232 sq m fast food restaurant and associated access, car parking and servicing* – Approved on the 7th November 2000.
 - **00/54013/004** (Reserved Matters) – *Approval of matters reserved under Planning Permission 99/54013/003 (external appearance, design and landscaping) in respect of development of 8,127 sqm non-food retail units to the north of the existing Hambledon Road, with associated car parking and access* – Approved on 23rd of February 2001.
 - **01/54013/006** – *Variation of conditions 16 and 17 of planning permission 99/54013/003 in order to increase the level of floor space that can be used for non-bulky or unrestricted A1 (retail) use* – Approved on the 9th of July 2001.
- 2.5 The most recent permissions for Unit 3 relate to its subdivision, which resulted in a reduction in size of the DFS unit to create an additional unit to the north of the site, now occupied by Pets at Home.
- **APP/15/00576** – *Subdivision of Unit 3 to create a unit of 767 sqm at ground floor* – Approved on 20 July 2015. *Request to Discharge Condition No. 4 22.4.16)* – Approved on the 20th of July 2015.
 - **APP/15/00577** – *Erection of a mezzanine floor ancillary to ground floor retail use within proposed unit following subdivision of Unit 3 to create a retail unit of 767 sqm at ground floor (Ref: APP/15/00576)* – Approved on 20th of July 2015.

Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks planning permission for the insertion of an extended mezzanine floor.
- 3.2 This development will enable the store to maximise its floorspace capacity and deliver an enhanced retail environment, ensuring the efficient display of goods across the DFS range and improved customer experience within the existing unit.
- 3.3 The application is accompanied by the following plans:
 - 1277-WHB-MA-20-0001_P00 (Ground Floor Plan as Existing)
 - 1277-WHB-MA-20-0002_P00 (Mezzanine Floor Plan as Existing)
 - 1277-WHB-MA-20-0010_P02 (Ground Floor Plan as Proposed)
 - 1277-WHB-MA-20-0011_P02 (Mezzanine Floor Plan as Proposed)
 - 1277-WHB-SA-20-0001_P00 (Site Location Plan & Site Block Plan)
- 3.4 The application seeks permission for the installation of a new mezzanine floor measuring 1,022 m² GIA, comprising 858 m² of additional sales floorspace and 160 m² of ancillary staff/back-of-house space. The mezzanine will be served by two new staircases and a lift, providing customer and staff access.
- 3.5 Following the works, the store will provide a total of approximately 2,647 m² GIA, compared with the existing 1,711 m² GIA. This represents a net increase of around 936 m². The ground floor sales area will be reconfigured to measure 1,513 m², supported by 107 m² back-of-house space.
- 3.6 The proposal would result in additional staffing requirements thus creating further employment opportunities. DFS have indicated that the existing employment levels at the store include 5 FTE and 2 PTE. The proposed mezzanine will result in the need for an additional 3 FTE and 1PTE employees.

4.0 Planning Policy Review

Statutory Development Plan

- 4.1 Havant Borough Council's development plan currently consists of:
- 4.2
- Core Strategy (2011);
 - Allocations Plan (2014)
- 4.3 The site is located within the Town Centre.
- 4.4 Key policies of relevance to consideration of the merits of the application in the adopted Havant Local Plan include the following:
- Policy CS4 – Town, District and Local Centres
 - Policy CS20 – Transport and Access
 - Policy DM11 – Planning for More Sustainable Travel
 - Policy DM12 – Mitigating the Impacts of Travel
 - Policy AL3 – Town, District and Local Centres

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 4.5 The revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published in December 2024. The introduction confirms it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.6 The NPPF identifies three overarching objectives that contribute to achieving sustainable development including economic, social and environmental (paragraph 8). At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' (paragraph 11).
- 4.7 The three objectives that contribute to sustainable development are to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework.
- 4.8 Paragraph 11 sets out the Government's commitment to supporting sustainable development. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.9 Section 4 deals with '**Decision-making**'. Paragraph 39 emphasises that local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision takers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.10 Paragraph 48 (**Determining applications**) confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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- 4.11 Section 6 confirms the government's commitment to '**Building a strong, competitive economy**' with paragraph 86 confirming that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.
- 4.12 The revised NPPF continues to place an emphasis on economic growth with paragraph 80 confirming that:
- "...significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development".**
- 4.13 The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. Planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 86).
- 4.14 Section 7 continues to support the role of town centres in the context of '**Ensuring the vitality of town centres**'. Retail policy considerations are addressed in the context of the erection of the mezzanine floor inside a town centre.
- 4.15 Section 9 deals with '**Promoting sustainable transport**' and encourages transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages so that potential impacts can be addressed, opportunities to promote alternative modes of transport to the car can be pursued and environmental impacts can be taken into account (paragraph 109).
- 4.16 Paragraph 116 addresses the consideration of development proposals and 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, following mitigation, would be severe.
- 4.17 Section 11 of the NPPF places a strong emphasis on '**Making effective use of land**' with the planning system supporting development that makes efficient use of land.

5.0 Planning Assessment

- 5.1 This section addresses policy considerations so far as they relate to the insertion of a mezzanine floor.
- 5.2 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and country Planning Act 1990, applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 The development plan for Havant Council comprises the:
- The Core Strategy (2011);
 - The Allocations Plan (2014),
- 5.4 A key material consideration is the NPPF (2024).

Sustainable Development

- 5.5 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development including economic, social and environmental. We consider the proposed development would contribute to all three roles.
- 5.6 In relation to '**economic**' factors, the proposal represents new inward investment in this part of Waterloooville, which will deliver new employment opportunities as a result of the increased floor space.
- 5.7 Provision of new employment opportunities (estimated as an additional 3 FTE and 1 PTE posts) across a potential range of levels and roles within the operation of the site will make a positive contribution to the local economy through both direct employment but also through wider spin off benefits as those working at the site would spend money in the local economy leading to multiplier effects.
- 5.8 Employment opportunities will also be generated during the repurposing works to provide the mezzanine and alterations to the external elevations.
- 5.9 The proposal provides an important '**social**' role. New employment opportunities would be attractive to local residents given the nature of the work and the ability for job opportunities in retail to fit around an individuals' availability. This would lead to gainful employment with a national retailer providing high quality training programmes leading to good career opportunities.
- 5.10 In relation to the '**environmental role**', the proposal will reuse an existing unit through refurbishment and upgrade, thus minimising waste and use of resources. Reusing urban land is something given emphasis in Section 11 of the NPPF.
- 5.11 In light of the above and our overall assessment of the planning merits of the proposed development, it is considered the proposal will provide a sustainable development.

Principle of Development

- 5.12 The proposed development seeks the installation of a mezzanine floor within the existing DFS unit at Wellington Retail Park, Waterlooville. The mezzanine will provide approximately 1,022 m² of additional internal floorspace, increasing the unit's total gross internal area to around 2,647 m². This will enhance the operational efficiency of the store by creating further retail sales and supporting back-of-house space.
- 5.13 The application site is located within the defined Waterlooville Town Centre boundary as designated in the Havant Borough Local Plan. **Policy CS4** of the Core Strategy and **Policy AL3** of the Allocations Plan both promote the delivery of main town centre uses within identified centres, recognising their importance to local vitality and viability. As such, the provision of additional retail floorspace in this location is wholly consistent with adopted planning policy. Given that the development is situated within a designated town centre, there is no requirement to apply the sequential test or undertake a retail impact assessment, which would otherwise apply to proposals in out-of-centre locations.
- 5.14 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the proposal makes efficient use of an existing building, supports economic growth, and strengthens the role of Waterlooville as a Town Centre. Paragraphs 80, 86 and 120 of the Framework give clear support to such developments, confirming the principle of the mezzanine is acceptable.
- 5.15 The application is therefore considered to be in full compliance with Local **Policies CS4** and **AL3** and the overarching principles of the NPPF 2024.

Economic Growth

- 5.16 The NPPF highlights that *“significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”* (paragraph 85).
- 5.17 The proposal would provide economic growth through new employment opportunities and wider spin off benefits in the local economy during both the construction and operational phases.
- 5.18 We consider the proposed development would have a positive and beneficial effect on the local economy in Waterlooville. This includes creation of new jobs and therefore greater local spending power to which significant weight should be given.

Highways and Accessibility

- 5.19 The site is served by established vehicular access arrangements from Hambledon Road and the adjoining A3 roundabout. Parking for approximately 530 vehicles, including dedicated disabled bays, is provided across Wellington Retail Park, together with secure cycle parking and pedestrian links. These facilities will continue to serve the DFS unit following the introduction of the mezzanine floor.

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- 5.20 A Transport Statement prepared by Via Solutions (2025) accompanies the application and assesses the potential transport implications of the development.
- 5.21 The statement states that the proposed development will generate no more than 13 additional two-way trips an hour, which is well within the normal daily fluctuation of traffic on the highway network.
- 5.22 It is anticipated that the existing parking provision within Wellington Retail Park is sufficient provision from any slight increase in parking demand from the proposals (no more than 6 vehicles).
- 5.23 The statement therefore concludes that the introduction of the mezzanine will result in a negligible increase in trip generation, with no material impact on the operation of the local highway network.
- 5.24 A review of accident records confirms there are no underlying highway safety issues in the vicinity of the site.
- 5.25 The unit is also readily accessible by bus, cycle and on foot, ensuring it complies with the requirement to support sustainable travel choices. The site is also well served by buses with 2 services every 15 minutes on Hambledon Road (B1250) with good pedestrian and cycle accessibility, providing opportunities for staff / visitors to walk or cycle to the site.
- 5.26 The scheme is therefore in full accordance with Core Strategy **Policy CS20**, which requires developments to be accessible and not give rise to unacceptable transport impacts.
- 5.27 It also satisfies Development Management **Policies DM11** and **DM12**, which promote sustainable travel and require mitigation of significant transport impacts where they arise. In this case, no mitigation is necessary given the negligible scale of impact. The development also aligns with paragraph 116 of the NPPF, which makes clear that planning permission should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed mezzanine floor at Unit 3, Wellington Retail Park, represents a sustainable and policy-compliant development.
- 6.2 The mezzanine will provide approximately 1,022 m² of additional internal floorspace, increasing the unit's total gross internal area to around 2,647 m². This will enhance the operational efficiency of the store and strengthen the role of Waterloooville Town Centre, in line with the objectives of Policies CS4 and AL3 of the Havant Local Plan.
- 6.3 The accompanying Transport Statement confirms that the mezzanine will result in a negligible increase in vehicle movements, with no adverse impacts on highway safety or capacity. The proposal therefore accords with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Development Management Policies DM11 and DM12, as well as national policy in the NPPF which supports economic growth, efficient use of existing buildings, and town centre vitality.
- 6.4 In summary, the proposal will deliver clear economic and operational benefits, without any harm to retail policy objectives, highways, design or amenity considerations.
- 6.5 It represents sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and the NPPF, and planning permission should therefore be granted without delay.