



PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of a planning application for the erection of polytunnel extension, revisions to site arrangement (to remove existing covered sales area, provide additional parking to front of site and new security fencing) and external alterations at:

Retford and Gainsborough Garden Centre, Bar Road,
Saundby, Beckingham, Retford, DN22 9EU

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Planning Policy	4
3.0	Relevant Planning History	4
4.0	Planning Considerations	5
5.0	Planning Balance	11

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of a planning application for the extension and of the existing garden centre at Retford and Gainsborough Garden Centre.
- 1.2 The proposed works include the erection of a polytunnel extension to the rear of the building, extension of the site to the east, demolition of the existing covered sales area to the front of the building, revised parking arrangements, new compost area, security fencing and removal of an existing polytunnel.
- 1.3 This statement will consider the planning policy position engaged by this proposal and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.
- 1.4 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to nearby development and to the village of Beckingham, which lies to the north of the site.



- 1.5 The application is supported by a suite of plans by Medusa Design which should be considered alongside the content of this statement.

2.0 Planning Policy

2.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023. It sets out the Government's planning policy and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

2.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.

2.3 The development plan for Bassetlaw Council consists of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. The following policies within this document are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- CS1: Settlement Hierarchy
- CS3: Retford
- DM1: Economic Development in the Countryside
- DM4: Design and Character
- DM7: Securing Economic Development

2.4 These policies will be referred to throughout this statement wherever relevant to this proposal.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The site has been the subject of a number of applications related to the commercial operation of this facility as a garden centre.

3.2 Where relevant, any planning history will be referenced directly within the 'Planning Considerations' chapter of this statement.

4.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

4.1 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

4.2 Chapter 6 of the NPPF provides the Government’s planning policy on *“Building a strong, competitive economy”*. Within that chapter, paragraph 85 recognises the importance of supporting economic development. It provides that:

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. 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. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future”.

4.3 Paragraph 86 advocates a flexible approach to economic growth, providing a platform for economic prosperity. It provides that planning policies should;

“a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;

b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;

c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and

d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.”

4.4 Paragraphs 88 and 89 deal specifically with the rural economy, stating that:

“88. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

(a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;

(b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

(c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

(d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

89. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.

4.5 The principle of supporting the expansion and improvement of businesses in rural locations can be seen to be supported by national policy and recognised as being important to the sustainability and viability of rural communities. This position is continued to be endorsed through the development plan, where paragraph 5.3 states:

“Although Bassetlaw has a number of large settlements, it is primarily a rural District. As such, it faces many problems common to rural areas, which affect the continuing vitality of its communities. Key issues, which are addressed both here and in other policies throughout this DPD, include the need to retain access to local services and facilities; support for rural businesses; the affordability of housing; and pressure for development, which affects the rural landscape and heritage assets. Many of these matters have been considered in the Core

Strategy policies, notably CS8-CS9. Others, which, in addition to the above, have an impact on the wider countryside (which, for the purposes of this document is any area outside a development boundary, including the settlements covered by policy CS9), are dealt with in more detail in policies DM1-DM3. These address:

- *Economic Development in the Countryside;*
- *Conversion of Rural Buildings, and;*
- *General Development in the Countryside”.*

4.6 Policy DM1, in support of these aims, states that:

“Proposals for standalone economic development (e.g. tourist attractions; equine enterprises; rural business) in rural areas will be supported where they can demonstrate that:

- any necessary built facilities will be provided by the re-use of existing buildings or, where the re-use of existing buildings is not feasible, new buildings are located and designed to minimise their impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside;*
- the development requires the specific location proposed and there are no other suitable sites in, or close to, settlements covered by policies CS2-CS8 or on brownfield land;*
- they are viable as a long-term business;*
- the scale, design and form of the proposal, in terms of both buildings and operation, will be appropriate for its location and setting and be compatible with surrounding land uses;*
- where the proposal includes a retail use, it is demonstrated that this will not have an adverse impact on the vitality or viability of local centres; rural service centres; and shops and services in surrounding villages; and*
- they will not create significant or exacerbate existing environmental or highway safety problems”.*

4.7 The proposals here are considered to align with all of these criteria, as demonstrated below.

any necessary built facilities will be provided by the re-use of existing buildings or, where the re-use of existing buildings is not feasible, new buildings are located and designed to minimise their impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside

4.8 The proposals seek to utilise underused areas of the site, demolish elements that are no longer fit-for-purpose and to extend the building in a manner which gives rise to no detrimental impacts.

4.9 There are no buildings that could be reused on the site for these purposes. The proposal has, therefore, focussed on ensuring that the resultant extension and revised site arrangements provide improved facilities for customers whilst enhancing the appearance of the site. The location of the extension means it would only be seen in the context of existing, larger, built form.

4.10 The proposals would not, thereby, detract from the character and appearance of the countryside.

the development requires the specific location proposed and there are no other suitable sites in, or close to, settlements covered by policies CS2-CS8 or on brownfield land

4.11 It is apparent that this requirement relates more to completely new proposals for businesses wishing to be located in the countryside. In this case, the proposals relate to the expansion/alteration of an existing, well established, facility. There are no other viable sites that could accommodate these proposals and there is, therefore, no conflict with this criterion of policy DM1.

they are viable as a long-term business

4.12 The business is a well established, viable, business that wishes to remain in occupation of this site and continue to offer significant employment of local people.

the scale, design and form of the proposal, in terms of both buildings and operation, will be appropriate for its location and setting and be compatible with surrounding land uses

- 4.13 The works proposed seek to enhance the manner in which the site will be utilised.
- 4.14 There is no conflict with the adjacent land uses and the site will continue to operate precisely as it does currently, though with improved facilities and parking arrangements.

where the proposal includes a retail use, it is demonstrated that this will not have an adverse impact on the vitality or viability of local centres; rural service centres; and shops and services in surrounding villages

- 4.15 As detailed above, this is a well established business that has long co-existed with the nearest centres. It is entirely appropriate in a rural setting such as this.

they will not create significant or exacerbate existing environmental or highway safety problems

- 4.16 There are no known environmental issues resulting from the existing site, and the proposed works do not give rise to any additional environmental concerns.
- 4.17 As can be seen, the proposal thereby fully complies with policy DM1. Attention thereby turns to matters not directly covered by these policy requirements.

Highway Safety/Parking

- 4.18 The proposal seeks to provide additional parking provisions on the site, helping to ensure that the site can accommodate the levels of customer visits that are being experienced.
- 4.19 It is clear, therefore, that the proposal will improve parking and highway safety relating to the use of the site from that which currently exists (which, in any event, is not giving rise to highway safety issues).
- 4.20 As such, the proposal has fully considered the highway safety and parking aspects resulting from this proposal and thereby complies with paragraphs 114 and 115 of the NPPF.

Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.21 There appears to be no impacts resulting from this proposal that would require a Section 106 to be completed.

Flood Risk Management/SUDS

- 4.22 The site lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is not known to be affected by surface water flooding. There are, therefore, no grounds to consider that the proposal would be at risk from, nor give rise to, flooding.
- 4.23 Suitable drainage provision is available to accommodate the revised building and layout arrangements on the site.

Sustainable Development

- 4.24 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three objectives of sustainable development that schemes should seek to deliver. The proposal is also considered relative to these three objectives below.
- 4.25 From an economic aspect, the proposal would generate job creation and both provide and supplement employment where workers would contribute to the local economy through local spend and continued employment. The proposal seeks to contribute to the continued viability of this facility, which is well used and utilised by the local community. The continued viability of the garden centre is supported by local and national planning policy, which recognises the need to support rural enterprises. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.
- 4.26 Socially, the creation and retention of jobs in the current economic climate brings significant social benefits, enabling employment and promoting mental health. The facility acts as a meeting place as well as a commercial operation, where the café is an important community facility also. The proposal is, therefore, also socially sustainable.

- 4.27 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the extension and development of existing facilities is inherently sustainable, where the use of previously developed land is advocated throughout the NPPF and where the proposal is located within a contained part of the site that does not intrude into the landscape.
- 4.28 The proposal is serviced by safe and suitable access, can contain its own parking requirements and does not give rise to concerns in respect of pollution, residential amenity impacts, trees or heritage assets. As such, the proposal also fully engages with the environmental aspects of sustainable development.
- 4.29 It is thereby considered that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that complies with the NPPF and development plan policies as a whole.

5.0 Planning Balance

- 5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.
- 5.2 The development plan comprises the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document. As this proposal relates to an extension and alterations to an existing, established, business in a rural location, an important material consideration in the determination of this application is that paragraphs 84 and 87 of the NPPF and policy DM1 all support the principle of such development.
- 5.3 The material considerations that are relative to the determination of this application have been satisfactorily addressed (including design and layout, landscape impact, highway safety, and flood risk) such that they have been found to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and the relevant development plan policies.

- 5.4 The proposal has also been considered in light of the three objectives of sustainable development. It has been found that there are demonstrable economic, social and environmental benefits resulting from this proposal such that the development of this extension would accord with all three of the objectives.
- 5.5 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF identifies that proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. As such, and as the proposal is found to be a sustainable development, the LPA is requested to support this proposal and enable the extension and alteration of this facility by granting planning permission in the terms requested.