

**Bromsgrove District Council
Planning Committee**

**Committee Updates
4th June 2026**

17/01468/FUL Stourbridge Road Car Park, Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove

Consultations

- A consultation response has now been received from Worcestershire County Council Public Health. The summary of the comments are:
“...the proposal may increase accessibility of less healthy food to children and young people, contribute to a less healthy local food environment, and is not strongly aligned with Policy BDP25 (Health and Wellbeing) or wider sustainable development objectives. On this basis, Worcestershire Public Health raises an objection on public health grounds.”

Representations

Total representations received relating to the application:

Number of contributors 478

Number of comments in support 27

Number of objections 450

Since the publication of the agenda a number of new representations have been received. In summary these raise the following material planning considerations:

- The impact on the highway network, in particular the Parkside Junction and the surrounding residential roads
- Health and Wellbeing concerns relating to the proposed use and its location close to medical facilities and schools
- Impact on residential amenity through the hours of operation and deliveries to the site
- Concerns relating to the principle of the development on the site

In both the case of the Consultation response and Representations received Members are encouraged to read the full comments available on the planning application record.

Officer response

Principle of development

- Within the comments received concerns are raised relating to consistency of decision making in relation to the Town Centre development sites allocated at BDP17 of the Bromsgrove District Plan.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the report which reviewed the demand for office accommodation is not up to date, the case remains that BDP17 at 17.15 states that the site provides an “opportunity” for a office led mixed use development with the supporting text to BDP17 at 8.181 stating that the “favoured approach” would be a development which incorporates new office accommodation.
- Neither of these statements are definitive in allocating the site for a specific use.

Public Health

- With respect to the matters raised by Public Health these are addressed in the procedural update at A10- A12 and section 4 of the Committee report.
- To clarify, the site lies within the designated town centre as defined by Policy BDP17 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and as such Policy BDP25.7 and the first part of paragraph 97 of the NPPF do not apply to the application.
- With respect to BDP25.6 your Officers consider that the proposal complies with this part of the Policy as set out at paragraph A11 and A12 of the procedural update.

- It is noted that the second part of paragraph 97 of the NPPF indicates that permission for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets should be refused in locations “where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social behaviour”
- Whilst the most recent comments from Public Health are noted, the comments do not provide any specific, tangible evidence relating to the impact of these uses on Bromsgrove Town Centre which would be necessary in order to refuse the application under this part of the paragraph 97.

Impact on residential amenity

- Officers have considered in detail the impact on residential amenity of the proposed use of the site. With reference to section 8 of the committee report it is noted that comments have been received which refer to the opening times/operation of the Birmingham Road retail park. Officers wish to clarify that there are no planning conditions relating to the use of this site which restricts the opening hours and/or deliveries to the site, notwithstanding the current arrangements relating to car parking at the site which are at the discretion of the existing operator.
- With respect to restricting the opening hours of the proposed building Officer comments relating to this remain as set out at section 8 of the Officer report. However, further consideration has been given to the need to restrict the timing of deliveries to the site and having regard to the High Quality Design SPD section 6.2.
- The submitted Delivery Management Plan explains that deliveries would be expected to occur 3-5 times per week with the delivery vehicle expected to park for between 15 and 75 minutes. Typically, restaurants would receive their deliveries on the same time and on the same days each week within a four-hour delivery slot.
- Officers are mindful that the noise and activity associated with the deliveries to the site is materially different to cars using the site when compared with the lawful use as a car park.
- Therefore, an additional condition is now recommended restricting the hours which deliveries can take place to the site:
- Deliveries to the store shall only take place between 20:00 to 00:00 and not at any other time.
- Reason: To protect the amenities of adjacent occupiers

25/00118/FUL Unit 1, Brook Retail Park, Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove

Town Centre Mitigation

Further representations from the Bromsgrove Centres Manager (04.06.2026) as follows:

- Following the previous discussions, I wanted to update our position on the mitigation approach.
- We have now identified a specific, costed and deliverable public realm scheme, which provides a clearer and more robust basis for requesting a contribution.
- The proposal relates to a festoon lighting scheme along the High Street, using existing lamp columns. This will replace the current surface-level lighting, which is reaching the end of its lifespan and is increasingly unreliable.
- The confirmed scheme costs are as follows:

Installation: £18,460.83 (excl. VAT)

Structural testing of columns: £2,455

Licences, project management and contingency

Total scheme cost: £25,000

- This provides a clearly defined and deliverable project that would enhance the visual quality and attractiveness of the town centre
- Supporting footfall, occupation time and the evening economy. It directly responds to the identified trade diversion impacts set out in the Nexus report. Given the scale of impact (clearly

adverse but not significantly adverse), this is considered appropriate and proportionate contribution as outlined above.

- The applicant has confirmed their agreement in relation to the above mitigation measures and proposed costs and expressed preference for the use of a Unilateral Undertaking to expedite the process. Officers raise no objections in relation to the agreed mitigation in fulfilment of the original resolution set out on page 63 of the published Agenda.

Further Representations:

1. Firstplan Limited on behalf of Waitrose & Partners

- Firstplan act on behalf of Waitrose & Partners, who operate a store at St John Street, Bromsgrove, which is located within the policy-defined boundary of Bromsgrove town centre. Firstplan have previously submitted an objection to the above application on 2nd July 2025 and 18th December 2025. Both of our previous representations have identified significant concerns that the proposed development has the potential to significantly undermine the vitality and viability of Bromsgrove town centre, to which our client's store can be considered a clear 'anchor' store.
- We understand that the planning application is now to be determined at planning committee on 4th June 2026, with an officer recommendation of 'minded to approve', subject to securing of funding for town centre mitigation measures and final condition wording. Waitrose are extremely disappointed to learn of this recommendation, given the clear and obvious risks to the vitality and vitality of Bromsgrove town centre which the application presents. We are also disappointed that the officer report, in its summary of the comments on the application, fails to clearly set out to Members that the application has been subject to representation by four different foodstore operators who are currently serving Bromsgrove — Waitrose, Co-Operative, Morrisons and Asda. This is, in our experience, a highly unusual scenario and confirms the clear and genuine concerns regarding the likely impacts of the proposed development.
- Further to our previous representations, it is noted that the application has been subject a further planning submission by the applicant's agents (Alder King) which has in turn been reviewed by the Council's retail planning advisors, Nexus Planning ('Nexus') in respect of retail impact matters. It is acknowledged that that AK have instructed additional market research evidence in terms of local shopping patterns to attempt to address an area of concern we previously identified, namely the fact that the primary evidence did not robustly forecast an accurate turnover of our client's store (meaning in turn it was not possible to accurately quantify the impacts arising against it). It is highly significant to note that, following the additional research undertaken, our client's store is still identified as having a convenience goods turnover of just £2.1m. This confirms our client's store is attracting a turnover which is significantly lower than Waitrose's company average levels. Further trade diversion from this store will further reduce the trading performance of the store relative to company average levels and presents our client with significant cause for concern.
- As identified at paragraph 2.10 of the Nexus report, AK are of the view that the updated evidence does not fully correct what they consider to be an 'anomaly' of the Waitrose store turnover. We are surprised that, in light of this clear admission, the Council consider that the application can be robustly determined by Members, as a clear and accurate understanding of likely trading impacts on our client's store has still not been obtained. Waitrose consider that determining the application in the absence of a full accurate understanding of this point is erroneous.
- Nexus comment (para 2.14 of their April 2026 advice that): "it remains a reasonable possibility that the Waitrose store simply has a low to modest trading performance. This situation will need to be taken into account within the overall assessment of the likely impact of the proposal on the health of Bromsgrove town centre". We are of the view that the Council has not fully considered this highly important point given officers' recommendation of the application for

approval. The Council's appointed consultants have identified that Waitrose as a key town centre anchor store is likely to have a 'low to modest' trading performance, which will evidently be worsened in the event the application before officers is approved. As a clear and important town centre anchor store, this conclusion should present officers and Members with significant cause for concern.

- At paragraphs 2.26 to 2.36 of their April 2026 advice, Nexus recast AK's own impact assessment figures and identify an impact of -16% on the survey-estimated turnover of our client's store, equivalent to a trade diversion of £0.3m. We consider this to be an underestimate; as we identified in our previous comments in December 2025, Waitrose are of the view that trade diversion from their store to the proposed development will be in excess of £1m per annum, which represents over £1m of spending being lost from Bromsgrove town centre. Diversion of £1m of spending from our client's store would, based on the updated forecast convenience goods turnover of £2.1m, result in an impact of -47.6% on our client's store.
- We thus repeat the comments set out in our December 2025 objection that in the context of the anchor role which the Waitrose store plays in the town centre, supporting linked trips to other stores and services (the most recent survey data provided by AK shows that almost 1 in 5 visitors to Waitrose link their shopping trip with other businesses in the town centre, which Nexus considers (para 2.41) to be 'relatively high'), such a level of trade diversion should present officers and members with significant cause for concern. This is especially significant given the current vitality and viability of the town centre is, in our view, nothing more than reasonable.
- We highlight a key conclusion from Nexus' April 2026 report that "it is important to highlight that the additional household survey information reinforces the key principle that grocery stores and convenience goods shopping play a significant role in the overall role, attractiveness and function of the town centre". By approving the proposed development, the Council would therefore be actively undermining this identified key strength of the town centre. Nexus come to the conclusion (para 2.50) that the proposal will have a "clear adverse impact on Bromsgrove town centre" but conclude that "based upon the updated impact assessment and on the clear assumption that comparison goods sales are strictly controlled and mitigation measures provided, we do not consider that a significant adverse impact on the town centre is likely". We do not agree with this conclusion; in the absence of a clear and robust assessment of the turnover of our client's store (and associated linked trips supporting other businesses in the town centre), we do not consider that such a conclusion can be accurately drawn. Furthermore, as we have identified, Waitrose forecast that £1m of trade diversion will take place from their store to the proposed development — significantly higher than that assessed by AK or Nexus, and the conclusions in respect of potential town centre impacts need to be considered on this basis.

The Applicant's Agent has provided a response in relation the above representation:

- This is objection from First Plan is one of driven by commercial interests to protect the turnover of their client. The potential trade diversion or impact arising from a development on an individual operator is not a planning matter, rather the retail policy test relates to impact on a town centre as a whole and not any individual store or sector - both whether there will be significant adverse impact on investment and on the vitality and viability of a centre.
- Compliance with this retail policy test has been looked at very carefully by officers, taking the advice of an independent consultant who specialises in advising local authorities on retail planning matters over 15 months. This detailed consideration has been informed by primary sources of empirical evidence in the form of two household surveys, up-to-date health checks of the town centre and using industry standard methodology and sources. It has involved sensitivity and scenario testing and has considered both direct and indirect effects on the town centre i.e. including effects from any reduction of linked trips.

- In contrast, First Plan make a number of unsubstantiated claims, without providing evidence about either the trading performance of their client's store or the town centre. Notwithstanding this, we note that whilst First Plan raise a number of concerns about their client's store and demands for different assessment, they fall short of saying this application gives rise to significant adverse impact on the town centre.
- The conclusion of the Council's independent adviser in respect of Bromsgrove Town Centre is that there will be an adverse impact on the retail sector of -5% (direct) and some indirect effects. Taken together, this will not be at a significant adverse level and so the relevant retail policy test is met. This conclusion relies on a suite of conditions which have been agreed with your officer and an appropriate mitigation in terms of a contribution towards a current project or scheme designed to enhance further the vitality and viability of Bromsgrove Town Centre; this mitigation is being discussed with officers, but the principle is accepted by our client.
- It is also worth noting that Waitrose has very strong customer loyalty, topping brand loyalty indices. This means that a Waitrose shopper is less likely to change their shopping habit to a new foodstore than any other fascia shopper. The reason for this is Waitrose's strong brand perception (based on quality, trust and service) and there being a low price-sensitivity among Waitrose shoppers. Overall, your consultant concluded that any viability issues or closure of the store is unlikely considering all circumstances.
- In conclusion, the most recent comments of First Plan on behalf of Waitrose do not raise any matters which have not already been carefully considered by your officers and their independent adviser. A robust assessment of this application has been undertaken, which concludes that relevant planning policies are met.

Response of Officers

- The representations received in relation to the application have been summarised on pages 66 and 67 of the published agenda. The summary does include those representations which cited harm to the vitality and viability of town-centre and local centre foodstores. The paragraph 'Response to Public Consultation Exercise' on page 77 further addresses the substantive points raised. Given that there have been three rounds of independent assessment of the proposal over an 18 month period, Officers consider that there has been a robust assessment undertaken in relation to the impact on the town centre and other local centres in respect of vitality and viability.
- Paragraph 2.14 of the Supplementary Advice No.2 on Retail & Town Centre Planning Policy Issues (Nexus Planning) states that 'In our opinion, the previous reasons for under-estimating the turnover and trading performance of the Waitrose have largely been addressed and, as a consequence, it remains a reasonable possibility that the Waitrose store simply has a low to modest trading performance. This situation will need to be taken into account within the overall assessment of the likely impact of the proposal on the health of Bromsgrove town centre'

Further representation from Councillor Jane Elledge dated 04.06.2026:

- Could you please consider the fact that following a site visit and review of relevant documents the Worcestershire County Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Strategic Delivery, Operations, Governance & Efficiency at the time had requested the Highways submission was reviewed. He noted the following:
- "The suggestion that a significant proportion of trips will be made by sustainable modes does not reflect how people actually shop, especially for main grocery trips. That needs to be properly tested.
- From a highways perspective, my immediate concern is the cumulative impact. We already know this network struggles at peak times, and as you've highlighted, queues and right-turn movements at Sherwood Road have historically caused knock-on effects. A development like this changes the frequency and intensity of those movements, not just the volume.

- I've asked officers to provide a detailed view on this, including:
- The robustness of the transport modelling and assumptions
- The cumulative impact on Sherwood Road, Stoke Road and the A38
- Whether the junction arrangements are genuinely fit for purpose
- What mitigation options are realistically available, including access and egress changes
- I also think it is reasonable that any mitigation required is clearly identified and secured as part of the planning process, rather than left as a future issue."

Officer Response:

- The WCC Travel Planning Team have raised no objection to the Travel Plan submitted with the application subject to a condition (No. 9 - page 79) subject to a condition to ensure implementation with the submitted plan. It is noted that WH have further responded to highway objections and responded on 26.02.26 raising no objection subject to conditions.

A briefing note from the applicant has been circulated via email to all Members at 2:10pm. This is available for public inspection via Public Access.

25/00798/S73 Land at Perryfields Road, Bromsgrove

Please see attached updated and revised presentation.