

Planning Services
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

BY EMAIL



18th May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

PLANNING APPLICATION REF. PL/2026/01361

HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION COMPRISING 2NO. SEVERABLE COMPONENTS SEEKING: (I) FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLASS E(A) FOODSTORE AND ASSOCIATED CUSTOMER CAR PARKING / ACCESS / SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS, IN ADDITION TO: (II) OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A DRIVE THRU UNIT WITH EV CHARGING HUB AND ASSOCIATED CUSTOMER CAR PARKING / ACCESS / SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

THE BIKE SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, DEVIZES, SN10 2JG

OBJECTION ON BEHALF OF WM MORRISON SUPERMARKETS LTD

We are instructed by our clients, Wm Morrison Supermarkets Ltd (Morrisons), to review the above-mentioned planning application for a new out-of-centre retail development of 1,875 sq. m gross for Aldi with 91 parking spaces on an allocated industrial site, and we object on the grounds of conflict with local and national policy on retail and town centres and conflict with the site's allocation as a strategic employment area.

Summary of Objection

Morrisons operates an in-centre foodstore within Devizes town centre, which generates significant linked trips for the other shops and services of the town centre. The town centre is dependent on a strong convenience retail offer for its viability and vitality.

Our comments are based on a review of the adopted development plan, the NPPF and the information contained in the supporting documentation for the application, which includes the following documents:

- Planning and Retail Statement, prepared by Avison Young, February 2026

In summary, it is not considered that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal cannot be accommodated elsewhere in or on the edge of existing centres in the catchment area.

Furthermore, the proposal is contrary to the site's allocation as a strategic employment area.

Retail and Town Centre Policy

Sequential Test

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. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not

available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.’ (para. 91); and

‘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’ (para. 92); and

‘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’ (para. 95)

The proposed foodstore would not be located in a defined centre, so the applicant is therefore required to demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative sites either within or on the edge of any defined centres within the store’s proposed catchment area.

We note that Avison Young have identified a potential alternative development site within the town centre boundary, referred to as ‘Central Wharf, which is allocated in the Local Plan for mixed use development (Policy Ref. HC11), including retail. The site, which we estimate could extend to 0.8 ha, is largely owned by Wiltshire Council and is used for car parking. Avison Young state that the site is not available, but the site is referred to in the most recent Council retail study as a retail opportunity development site and is proposed for reallocation as a retail development site in the new Local Plan. This would suggest that the site may be available and as it would provide sufficient area for Aldi to develop a store in a town centre location, further evidence needs to be provided as to whether the land is available.

In our view, the applicant has not yet satisfied the sequential test, which in itself, is sufficient reason to justify a refusal of planning permission.

Loss of Employment Land

The site is allocated as part of a large 8.4 ha strategic employment area (Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP12 and CP12), to meet the town’s employment needs. We note that the Local Plan Review proposes to carry forward this allocation.

While we acknowledge that the proposed Aldi would not be likely to undermine the delivery of the adjacent site which has outline planning permission for employment development, there is no evidence as to why this site could not be developed for employment use. The proposed retail development would result in the ‘loss’ of 8% of the allocation, which would be contrary to the adopted and draft Local Plan strategy of delivering 8.4 ha of employment land. We note that the application site was the subject of an EIA screening for employment development, which suggests that the landowner had considered it suitable for employment development.

In our view, the proposal raises significant conflict with its allocation for employment development and there is no evidence that the site should not be retained for employment use.

Summary and Conclusions

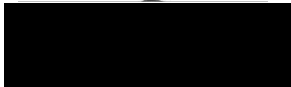
Morrisons operates an in-centre foodstore within the town centre of Devizes.

In summary, it is not considered that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal cannot be accommodated elsewhere in or on the edge of existing centres in the catchment area. In particular, there appears to be an alternative development site at Central Wharf in the town centre that could accommodate the proposed Aldi store.

Furthermore, the proposal is contrary to the site's allocation as an employment area and there is no evidence the land should not be retained to meet local employment land needs.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Creighton on the number listed above

Yours sincerely



PEACOCK AND SMITH