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13th March 2025

Project/File: 333101668/A5/HW

Development Management
Planning, Building Control and Licensing
Manchester City Council

VIA THE PLANNING PORTAL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference: Planning application at Co-op, 135-141 Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8EE

On behalf of our Client, the Co-operative Group ('Co-op'), we hereby submit an application seeking planning permission for external works to facilitate the subdivision of the retail unit alongside amendments to the Sunday opening hours at the Co-op foodstore, 135-141 Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester ('the Site').

This application is accompanied by the following documents and plans:

- Application Form
- Existing Site Plan, Location and Block Plan (8816.55-BOW-A1-ZZ-ZZ-ZZ-A-0001)
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plan (8816.55-BOW-A1-ZZ-ZZ-ZZ-A-0002)
- Proposed Site Plan (8816.55-BOW-A1-ZZ-ZZ-ZZ-A-0003)
- Existing Elevations (8816.55-BOW-A1-ZZ-ZZ-ZZ-A-0004)
- Proposed Elevations (8816.55-BOW-A1-ZZ-ZZ-ZZ-A-0005)
- Detailed Plant Specification Plan
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Tree Assessment

We also ask you consider the contents of this letter when determining the application. This provides a description of the Site and the proposed development and provides an assessment of the proposals against the development plan and relevant material considerations.

Site Location and Description

The Site comprises the Co-op foodstore in Whalley Range. It is bound by Withington Road to the west, Mayfield Road to the south and east, and a car showroom to the north. The shop is a single storey brick-built building fronting onto Withington Road with the car park and service yard to the rear. The car park is accessed via Mayfield Road to the south and the service yard via the gated access on Withington Road to the north.

The shop is open to customers 07:00 – 22:00 Monday to Saturday and 10:00 – 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays in line with the hours approved by planning permission reference 096967/JO/2011/S1.

The surrounding area includes a mix of uses with dwellings to the south and east and commercial premises to the north and west on the approach to Whalley Range Local Centre. The Site also falls within the boundary of the Whalley Range Conservation Area.

Proposed Development

Co-op is submitting a full planning application for external works to facilitate the subdivision of the retail unit on the Site into two units alongside amendments to the Sunday opening hours.

The proposed description of development is as follows:

> *"External works to facilitate the subdivision of the retail unit including shopfront alterations, blocking up and creation of new door openings, installation of a parcel service locker, cycle parking, bollards and ATM, replacement plant equipment and enclosure, removal of a tree, boundary treatment and car park works alongside amendments to Sunday opening hours."*

The driver behind the proposed development is the Co-op's intention to downsize the shop from a 692sqm gross foodstore to a 406sqm gross convenience store in line with the rest of their estate. In doing so, this leaves a surplus floorspace of 285sqm gross to be occupied by another commercial operator within Use Class E (commercial, business and service).

Whilst the reconfigured Co-op would have a smaller footprint it would continue to sell a range of fresh fruit and vegetables; bread and other bakery products; freshly prepared ready meals; as well as a limited supply of household items (such as nappies, cleaning products, toiletries etc.). The store will, therefore, continue to meet the top up shopping needs of residents. The additional benefit of the proposed development is that it would create a new commercial unit (within Use Class E) that could potentially provide a new service for residents.

To support the operation of the two retail units the following works are proposed:

- Removal of a section of masonry wall and door on the principal elevation and the installation of a glazed shopfront for the Co-op store.
- Installation of ATM in the Co-op shopfront.
- Installation of 3no. Sheffield cycle stands.
- Installation of 18no. bollards to the front of the Co-op store.
- Redecoration of existing shopfront for the sublet unit.
- Installation of a parcel service locker to the rear of the building.
- New door opening in the northern elevation.
- Replacement plant with enclosure to the rear of the Co-op store.
- Opening to be blocked up and door to be installed on the western elevation.
- Brick wall to be constructed with existing brick along the northern boundary.
- Existing gate between the Site and 54 Mayfield Road to be reinstalled.
- Section of 1.1m high hit and miss timber fence to be installed along the northern boundary.
- Tree to be removed along the northern boundary.
- Remarking of the customer car park.

Vehicular access and egress to and from the retail units for customers will be as per the existing arrangement from Mayfield Road to the south. The delivery arrangements for each unit will also remain

as per the existing arrangement, with access and egress from Withington Road and dedicated loading bays and service entrance proposed to the west of the building. The boundary between the servicing area and customer car park will continue to be defined by a metal fence and gate.

In addition to the proposed external works, to align with what is permitted by Sunday trading laws, Co-op propose to amend the Sunday opening hours for their store from 10:00 – 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays to 07:00 – 22:00.

Legislative and Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the decision maker to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The statutory development plan for the purposes of determining this planning application comprises the Places for Everyone ('PfE') (2024) strategic joint development plan document, the Manchester Core Strategy ('Core Strategy') (2012) and the remaining policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') (1995). Relevant policies from the development plan include:

- *PfE Policies:*
  - JP-Strat9: Southern Areas.
  - JP-S1: Sustainable Development.
  - JP-G7: Trees and Woodland.
  - JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
  - JP-P1: Sustainable Places.
  - JP-P2: Heritage.
  - JP-C8: Transport Requirements for New Developments.
- *Core Strategy Policies:*
  - SP1: Spatial Principles.
  - T2: Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need.
  - EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas.
  - EN3: Heritage.
  - EN15: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
  - DM1: Development Management.
- *UDP Policies:*
  - DC14.1 and DC14.2: Shopfronts and Related Signs.
  - DC18.1: Conservation Areas.
  - DC26.1, DC26.3 and DC26.4: Development and Noise.

There are no policies in the Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD or Joint Minerals DPD that are relevant to the proposed development. However, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), Planning Practice Guidance and the Manchester City Council Shopfront and Signage Design Guide are material considerations.

Our assessment against these policies is set out below.

Planning Assessment

Consideration of the Site, proposed development and planning policy context has led us to identify that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of any future planning application are

principle of development, design, heritage, residential amenity, trees, biodiversity and highways. We consider each of these in turn below.

Principle of Development

The proposed development is required to allow the Co-op foodstore to trade more efficiently and in line with the core of its estate. The established lawful use of the building is retail (Use Class E(a)) and there are no planning conditions restricting the subdivision of the unit. As such, permitted development rights would allow the subdivision of the existing building to create two smaller retail units within Use Class E without the need for planning permission.

Notwithstanding this, the Co-op has a well-established role in meeting the local shopping needs of residents through the existing store on the Site. The proposed development will enable the Co-op to better meet these needs by providing a new modern convenience store that not only improves the shopping experience for residents but makes a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the area. The new commercial unit (within Use Class E) would also provide a new service for residents. For these reasons the principle of development should be supported.

Design

Although modern in its use of materials the new shopfront includes traditional features as identified in the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide. The design would also be sympathetic to the building in terms of its scale, proportions and materiality. The bollards to the front of the Co-op are there to reduce the risk of ram raid attacks and the level access ensures the new store is accessible for all.

The other external works to the building and car park are minor in nature and of a scale and materiality that would complement the proportions and appearance of the building and surrounding area. The click and collect locker and plant have also been purposefully located to the rear of the building in the car park and service area to minimise their visual impacts from Withington Road.

Set in this context, we consider the proposed development accords with Policy PfE JP-P1, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 and UDP Policies DC14.1 and DC14.2 as well as the relevant material considerations in relation to design.

Heritage

The Heritage Statement concludes that the Site does not make any meaningful contribution to the significance of the Whalley Range Conservation Area. The proposed development is minor in scale and will preserve the significance of the asset. As such, it is considered that no harm will arise from this development. As no harm has been identified to the historic environment, the proposed development accords with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and PfE Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies EN1 and EN3 and UDP Policy DC18.1.

Residential Amenity

Although the retail use on the Site is well-established; there are residential properties neighbouring the Site. As such, the noise generated by the proposed development is a key consideration in the determination of this application. We provide our response to the key issues relating to residential amenity in further detail below.

Hours of Operation – The Co-op proposes to extend the opening hours of the new Co-op store on from 10:00 – 16:00 to 07:00 – 22:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The Monday – Saturday opening hours

would remain as per the existing store and as approved by planning permission reference 096967/JO/2011/S1 – 07:00 – 22:00.

The extended Sunday opening hours would align with Sunday trading hours and would be in line with the opening hours for Co-op stores in similar locations such as Barlow Moor Road in Chorlton and Maple Road in Brooklands which are open 07:00 - 22.00, 7 days a week.

In addition, the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) shows that the noise generated by customers between the hours of 16:00 – 22:00 on a Sunday would not impact negatively on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings. As such, the extension to the Sunday opening hours should be considered appropriate.

Plant - The intention is to utilise the existing plant location within a timber enclosure to service the Co-op store. A separate planning application will be submitted if plant is required to serve the sublet unit. 1 of the 3 floor mounted air conditioning units within the existing plant area is proposed to be removed and a new gas cooler is proposed to be installed as per the refrigeration design plan. 2 other air conditioning units to the north of the building are also proposed to be removed. The NIA confirms that the additional plant will not impact negatively on the residential amenity of the surrounding local area.

Overall, the proposed development will not impact negatively on the residential amenity of dwellings within the surrounding area in accordance with Core Strategy Policies SP1 and DM1 and UDP Policies DC26.1, DC26.3 and DC26.4.

Trees and Biodiversity

The Silver Birch tree in the car park is causing structural damage to the wall along the northern boundary of the Site. It, therefore, needs to be felled to prevent further damage. The principle of removing this tree has previously been accepted by the Council under application reference 133270/TCA/2022. The loss of this tree as part of the proposed development should, therefore, be considered acceptable.

The proposed development is exempt for biodiversity net gain requirements on the basis it does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25sqm of onsite habitat and 5m of onsite linear habitats. However, there is a requirement in national and local planning policy to enhance the natural and local environment. Bird and bat boxes can be installed to enhance on site habitats if deemed to be necessary.

Highway Consideration

The delivery arrangements to the Co-op store and sublet unit will remain as per the existing arrangement with delivery vehicles entering and exiting the Site via Withington Road. There will, therefore, be no impacts on highway safety.

The Transport Statement demonstrates that the proposed development will not result in any material increase in vehicle movements that would have an adverse impact on the local highway network given there’s no increase in floor area compared to the existing store. It also shows that the parking provision within the Site has sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed development.

To encourage cycle trips to and from the Site, 3 Sheffield type parking stands (parking for up to 6 bicycles) are proposed. This accords with the Core Strategy standards which requires parking for up to 5 bicycles i.e. 1 space per 140sqm.

For the reasons outlined above the proposed development, therefore, complies with PfE Policy JP-C8 and Core Strategy Policies T2 and DM1.

Conclusions

Based on our assessment above, we conclude that the proposals accord with the relevant policies in the development plan and planning permission should be granted without delay in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

We trust that you have all the information you need to determine the application. However, should you require anything further please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been validated in due course.

Yours sincerely,

STANTEC UK LIMITED

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