

Application reference number	2026/0118
-------------------------------------	-----------

Application Type	Full Planning Application
-------------------------	---------------------------

Proposal Description:	External alterations to the existing building including, roof replacement, replacement windows and doors and installation of a heat pump condensing unit.
Location:	Dearne Library, Houghton Road, Thurnscoe S63 0JS

Applicant	Mr Matthew Young (BMBC)
------------------	-------------------------

Number of Third Party Reps	No representations have been received.	Parish:	
		Ward:	Dearne North

SUMMARY

This application is before Members as the Council is the applicant

The proposal seeks full planning permission for external alterations to the existing building, including roof replacement, replacement windows and doors and installation of a heat pump condensing unit. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in policy terms as the primary use of the building will be remain the same and the proposals primarily relate to the improvement of the existing building. As such the proposal is considered to be an acceptable and sustainable form of development in line with paragraphs 7 and 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023).

The report demonstrates that any harm generated by the proposal is outweighed by other material planning considerations. The development would not cause an unacceptable level of harm to neighbouring properties, the highway network or character of the area subject to suitably worded conditions.

Recommendation: GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions.

Site Location

Application site



Site Description

The application site comprises the Dearne Library / Thurnscoe Lifelong Learning Centre, located on Houghton Road, Thurnscoe. The site currently accommodates a public library and associated office functions, forming part of the Thurnscoe Lifelong Learning Centre. It is a purpose-built community facility that provides educational and library services to the local area. The property is positioned close to Shepherd Lane and adjacent to a small cluster of local shops and residential properties, contributing to a mixed-use local centre environment. The site is already developed, containing a single-storey structure typical of civic library buildings.

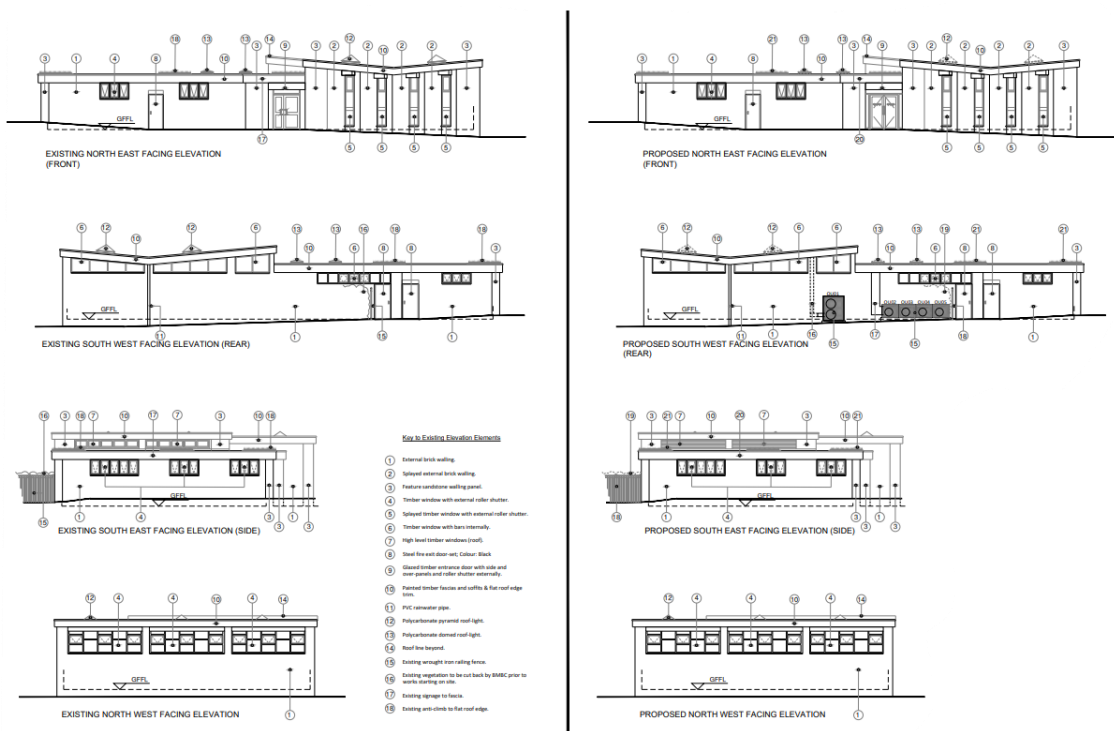
The building occupies a street-fronting position on Houghton Road, with pedestrian access available from the surrounding footways. The area is characterised by a mix of community facilities, residential dwellings, and small commercial units located nearby.

Proposed Development

The proposed development relates to external alterations to the building which comprise the following:

- The replacement of the existing roof with a similar flat and monopitch roof which will increase the height marginally by approx. 150mm.
- Replacement windows with UPVC
- Installation of a heat pump condensing unit (ground mounted on a concrete base)
- Replacement fascias, soffits downpipes, gutters etc.

Existing and Proposed Elevations:



Relevant Site History

<i>Application Reference</i>	<i>Application description</i>	<i>Status</i>
B/02/1593/DE	Installation of security shutters to front and side elevations.	Approved
B/03/1991/DE	Erection of extension to existing library to form new cisco lab, mess, exam room and staff facilities.	Approved

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the current development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment, and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies which are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means, no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027, or earlier, if circumstances require it.

Local Plan

The site is identified as Urban Fabric within the Local Plan as such the following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – States that proposals for development will be approved where there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land. Policy GD1 below will be applied to all development.

Policy GD1: General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

Policy D1: High quality design and place making – Development is expected to be of a high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel – New Development is expected to provide at least the minimum levels of parking for cycles, motorbikes, scooters, mopeds and disabled people set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety - New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. NPPF policy of relevance to this application includes:

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that:

Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that:

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-

designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that:

In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and

d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF goes on to state that:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Relevant Consultations:

Biodiversity:

No objections have been raised with regard to the proposed development. Suitable roost assessments and have shown there is no bat roost at present and as such development could commence without the need for any protected species mitigation licence. The Biodiversity Officer has requested the scheme provide further ecological enhancements such as bat/bird boxes and this will be secured via condition.

Highways DC:

Highways Development Control raised no objection to the proposed development.

Pollution Control:

No objections subject to condition with regard to time restrictions on construction activities.

Ward Councillors:

No comments received.

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to the surrounding properties and no representations have been received.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the proposal in principle
- The impact on the character of the area
- The impact on neighbouring residential properties
- The impact on highways safety
- The impact on the ecology of the site

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of development

Dearne Library is an established and well-used community facility within the defined urban area of Thurnscoe. The proposals are limited to external/design and layout alterations and will not change the use of the premises.

As such, the proposals are acceptable in principle, subject to meeting other development plan policies in relation to the design and impact on the character of the area, residential amenity, highways safety and ecology. This weights significantly in favour of the development.

Visual amenity and impact on the character of the area

Policy D1 states that Development is expected to be of high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and features of Barnsley including heritage and town scape.

The application site lies within the Urban Fabric. The building itself is of limited architectural interest and is not a focal point in the street scene. The existing building is a single storey building built with dark coloured bricks and has a sloped roof.

The general design and form of the building will be retained. The existing roof will be replaced with an almost like-for-like roof which will see a minor increase in height (less than 200mm) and the other minor alterations/replacements to the building will have a limited visual impact and will not cause harm to the character of the area.

There are no proposed changes to the external layout and parking formation at the front of the library. The new A/C units to be installed are at the rear of the building and will primarily be out of public view and will therefore have a limited visual impact.

The proposed alterations will not significantly improve the character and appearance of the area nor will it cause harm, as such the proposal is in accordance with policy D1 of the Local Plan. Overall, the proposal will have a neutral impact which weighs moderately in favour of the development.

Residential Amenity

Policy GD1 states that proposals for development will be approved if:

- There will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents;

The proposed replacement windows and doors are within the same positions as existing and therefore these minor amendments would not introduce any harm to occupants of nearby properties.

The library does not operate during unsociable hours and pollution control have not raised any concerns with regards to noise or disturbance.

In summary, the proposals are not considered to harm residential amenity and are compliant with Policy GD1. This carries significant weight in favour of the development.

Highway Safety

Policy T4 of the Local Plan states that new development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

No alterations are proposed to the existing access or parking arrangements. Nor will the use of the library intensify. The submitted details indicate that the library will be closed to the public for the duration of the proposed works. During this period, the entire site is to be secured with fencing, and the existing car park and external areas will be utilised as a construction compound accommodating skips, material storage, and parking for contractors' vehicles.

The submitted *Contractors' Compound Plan* indicates that Heras-type fencing and/or scaffolding is proposed to be positioned within the public highway along Shepherd Lane, subject to the requisite licences being obtained from the highway authority.

Given the above arrangements, the proposals are considered acceptable from a highways development control perspective and meet the requirements set out in policy T4 of the Local Plan. This weighs significantly in favour of the development proposals.

Impact on Ecology

Policy BIO1 of the Local Plan states that development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by protecting and improving habitats and species, maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments and encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.

The site is exempt from the national mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements under the de minimis exemption as it does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25sqm of on-site habitat and doesn't impact any linear hedgerows.

The application has been supported by a preliminary bat roost assessment to determine the presence/likely absence of a bat roost. The building was assessed as having negligible bat roost potential. It has therefore been concluded that roosting bats are likely to be absent and that the proposed works can proceed without the need of a protected species mitigation licence.

Recommendations set out within the report include precautionary works to be adopted during construction works in relation to bats and the installation of a suitable bat box. Such recommendations can be secured by way of a planning condition to secure suitable ecological enhancements in accordance with policy BIO1 of the Local Plan.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to harmfully impact ecology or biodiversity and suitable enhancements will be secured via condition. Therefore the proposal fully accords with policy BIO1 of the Local Plan and this weighs significantly in favour of the development proposals.

PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024) the proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed external alterations and layout changes to Dearne Library have been assessed against relevant policies of the Barnsley Local Plan and NPPF and are considered to be in full accordance.

In terms of design, the proposals will retain the existing form and character of the building, with minor alterations that will not harm the character of the area.

The proposals are not considered to result in any significant harm to residential amenity or highways safety.

The ecological impacts have been appropriately assessed through bat surveys, which confirm the likely absence of roosting bats. Precautionary measures and biodiversity enhancements, including the installation of a bat box, will be secured via condition.

Overall, the development is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan. The benefits of the scheme, including improved accessibility, enhanced facilities, and ecological enhancements, clearly outweigh the limited/neutral impacts.

Having balanced all material planning considerations, and noting that the objections have been addressed within this report, the proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development and is recommended approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

CONDITIONS/REASONS

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

REASON: In order to comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the amended plans and specifications as approved unless required by any other conditions in this permission:

- Existing and Proposed Elevations – Drawing Ref A-DR-015 Rev P1
- Roofing works – Drawing Ref A-DR-012 Rev P1
- Replacement Window Works – Drawing Ref A-DR-009 Rev P1
- Window Replacement Works & New Entrance Doors- Drawing Ref A-DR-010 Rev P1

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.

03. The development shall be completed in line with the recommendations in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (report ref: ER-7396-03, 15/08/2025) and the conditions of the planning permission. All the recommendations shall be implemented in full according, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure species are protected in accordance with Policy BIO1.

04. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following additional biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures. The measures listed below shall be implemented in full, prior to completion of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the features shall thereafter be permanently retained.

- At least 1 no. bat roosting boxes and bird nesting boxes to be installed in suitable locations within the site.

REASON: In the interest of ecological and biodiversity enhancements in accordance with policy BIO1.

05. During construction or demolition works, activity shall only take place between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1400 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays

REASON: To reduce or remove adverse impacts on health and the quality of life, especially for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance with Local Plan Policy POLL1