

Planning Statement

Proposal to combine 7no. existing Class E retail units to for one larger Class
E(e) unit

Units 28-34, Alhambra Centre, Barnsley

Barnsley MBC

July 2026

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1. Introduction

Barnsley MBC Property Services are seeking approval to combine 7no. existing retail units into 1no. larger Class E (e) unit to further extend the Health on the High Street offer.

2. The Site & Project Background

The Alhambra Shopping Centre was originally opened in August 1991 to serve as an extension to the existing retail offer of the town centre. Retail units are spread over two levels providing a varied retail offer with a mix of national and independent retailers. The internal and exterior appearance of the centre has remained unchanged since the opening and therefore still resembles that of an early 1990's shopping centre. Although the building has been well maintained over the years, the appearance is now dated, which has been further magnified by the opening of the new adjacent Glassworks development in 2021.

Barnsley Council acquired the centre in 2024 with a plan to transform the appearance and retail offer, bringing it in line with the Glassworks and wider the town centre offer.

Following the success of the NHS CDC facility in the Glassworks, the Council has been working with the NHS to create an extension to the Health on the High Street (HOTHs) concept. The existing CDC facility offers NHS outpatient scanning and x-ray services in an accessible location, which has reduced the pressure on the local hospital. The Health on the High Street project in the Alhambra will see further outpatient services moved away from Barnsley Hospital, along with other complimentary health and well-being provision including a new gym, operated by Barnsley Premier Leisure.

The next phase of the HOTHs project involves bringing together the services of the South West Yorkshire Foundation Trust into one accessible space. A space has been identified on the first floor of The Alhambra Centre, alongside the already established NHS outpatient services.

3. Pre-Application Advice

Initial contact was made with BMBC planning in June 2026 to discuss the proposal, with a view to confirming the type of application required as well as the level of supporting information expected inline with the national and local validation requirements.

4. Proposed Development

The units to which this application relate are located on the first floor of the centre. The units vary in size and are situated along one side of the mall. The proposed development will see units 28-34 combined into one large unit with a GIA of 12,313 sqft.

The works will involve the removal of the dividing walls between the units as well as the back of house walls. The existing shopfronts will be retained as the remodelling of this element forms part of the mall upgrades, which will be covered by a separate application.

The layout for the unit is still to be confirmed, but will be a mix of consultation rooms, reception and waiting spaces and staff areas. The proposed unit will also include the existing storeroom over the existing unit 30, which will be used as a new plant room.

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

As the proposed works align with the wider HOTHs offer already in place, we feel that consideration and compliance with the NPPF has already been suitably addressed and evidenced.

Barnsley Local Plan

The Barnsley Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is available on the BMBC website. The plan covers future development up to the year 2033. The plan outlines the Council's vision for the future of Barnsley and its residents as well as aspirations to be involved with the wider city regions including Leeds and Sheffield.

The plan outlines Barnsley's commitment to economic growth including provision of jobs, improvement in living conditions/quality of life, improving the choice of homes and protecting and enhancing environmental assets.

Relevant Policies

Given the relatively minor nature of the works, many of the Local Plan Policies don't apply, however, we have opted to address the following policies that could be considered as relevant to the proposed development

- TC1 - Town Centres
- BI01 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

TC1 - Town Centres

Policy TC1 addresses the need for redevelopment and enhancement of the existing town centres in the borough.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019, there has been extensive redevelopment in the main Town Centre with the Markets, Glassworks, Public Space Improvements, The Lightbox (Library) and more recently the completion of the Eldon Street regeneration project.

The proposed alterations will further bolster the HOTHs offer, which has already proved to be a successful addition to the town centre.

Based on the information provided above, we feel the proposed development has adequately addressed all the criteria under TC1.

BI01 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy BI01 relates to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geological features.

As the units are in an existing shopping centre, with no external space, it has a baseline of zero habitat units. We believe this means the development will be exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Based on the information provided above, we feel the proposed development has adequately addressed all the criteria under BI01.

6. Other Considerations

Operation of the proposed units

The proposed services will operate in a similar way to the existing HOTHs offer. Most services operating from this unit will be via pre-booked appointments with some drop in sessions.

Transport

The Town Centre location means the proposed unit already has well-established public transport links, with May Day Green Square providing a direct pedestrian link to the bus and train stations. There are two large multi-storey car parks in the Alhambra and the Glassworks, as well as council operated surface car parks in and around the Town Centre.

Deliveries

Deliveries to the existing units are made via the basement, which is accessed via a service road to the rear of the centre. This arrangement will remain the same for the new larger unit.

Employment Opportunities

The redevelopment of the Alhambra centre will create local employment opportunities in both the retail units and the Health on the High Street.

Sustainability

Although the proposed works will not involve the installation of any new building services or thermal elements, we would expect the tenant to take this into consideration with their fit out design, promoting the use of energy efficient building services plant, lighting and sustainable building materials. This will also be supported through the Building Regulations application, ensuring compliance with the relevant Approved Documents.

Access

The existing units are located at first floor, which can be accessed via the existing stairs, escalators and lifts. Access into the unit from the mall will be level. There is also accessible parking within the Alhambra car park with direct access onto the first floor of the mall.

7. Summary

The application seeks approval to combine 7no. existing retail units into 1no. larger unit.

The proposed units will add to the already successful HOTHs offer, making NHS services more accessible and providing new job opportunities for the people of Barnsley.

We believe the justification outlined in this statement, with the support of the other documents included with the application, demonstrates that the development will have a positive impact on the Town Centre.