

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council

Our Ref: BCS/IES/996/25

Your Ref:

Planning Portal ref. PP - 13953212

14 May 2025

Dear Sir

PLANNING APPLICATION BY POTTS BAKERS LIMITED FOR CHANGE OF USE, ALTERATION AND EXTENSION TO FORM (CLASS B2) BAKERY, UNIT 4, STAIRFOOT BUSINESS PARK, BLEACHCROFT WAY, STAIRFOOT, BARNSELY, S70 3PA

Introduction and background

This letter is submitted in support of a planning application for the change of use, alteration and extension of Unit 4 Bleachcroft Way, Stairfoot, Barnsley to form a Class B2 bakery on behalf of Potts Bakers Ltd.

Potts Bakers is a long-established company and local employer currently operating from premises on Stanley Road, Stairfoot, some 0.5km from the application premises. The company have outgrown these existing premises, and the current site is significantly constrained and has prevented much needed expansion. The company wish to expand and remain locally in Stairfoot and this application represents a major investment in both the business and local area.

The planning application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-13953212) and comprises and is supported by the following documents;

1. Planning Application For, signed and dated;
2. Ownership Certificate and Agricultural Land Declaration, signed and dated;
3. OS Location Plan;
4. Proposed Site Layout;
5. Existing and Proposed plans and elevations;
6. Noise Impact Assessment;
7. Design and Access Statement;
7. BNG Exemption Statement

Payment of the application fee has been made via the Planning Portal, on submission.

Cont./2

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

In addition to the above and enclosed documentation, I would be grateful if you would consider the contents of this letter in support of the application.

The Proposal

This application seeks the change of use from Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) consented under planning permission ref. 2019/0104, dated 17 April 2019 to a bakery under Class B2 (General Industrial Use). Officers will be aware the current B8 use has been implemented through use of part of the building by EVRI as a warehouse and transportation hub and this remains the lawful use.

The building is currently vacant and has not been occupied since 2019. The site has been marketed by Smiths Surveyors with no interest for its storage and distribution approved use.

The application seeks the change of use to bakery (Class B2) with a small extension of 96.0sq.m and the addition of 12no. extract flues to the roof.

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises unit 4 Bleachcroft Way, Stairfoot, located some 2.5km east of the town centre.

The property is a large single storey building extending to some 2695sq.m of warehouse space, with ancillary office and staff facilities. It has roller shutter doors in the front elevation and a large service yard to the side of the premises. The premises are part of a much larger building the remainder of which is occupied by EVRI as a warehouse and transportation hub.

On the opposite side of Bleachcroft Way is a former B&Q which have been vacant for some considerable time. A range of retail units are located east of the premises, including Tesco Extra, B&M Home Store, Pets at Home, Harvey's Furniture and Dunelm which form part of a retail park.

Cont./3

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

Development plan policy & National Planning Policy Framework guidance

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Barnsley District is the Barnsley Local Plan adopted January 2019. The site is unallocated within the Local Plan located within the "urban fabric" which is defined as land within the built-up area with no specific designation.

Local Plan Policy E3 (Uses on Employment Land) confirms that on allocated employment sites or on land currently or last used for employment purposes the Council will allow the following uses: research and development (B1b) and light industry (B1c); general industry (B2); or storage or distribution (B8).

The supporting text to Policy E3 advises that the provision of well-located employment land is key to the Borough's future economic growth, and it is therefore essential that both new employment land and land currently in use or last used for employment purposes, is protected and safeguarded from non-employment uses.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework, revised 2024, (the Framework) forms the relevant policy guidance at the national level for the determination of all planning applications.

As previously set out, planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Cont./4

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

Framework guidance confirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development which includes economic objectives to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity along with social and environmental objectives.

Paragraph 11 identifies how this presumption is to be applied in making decisions on individual applications stating:

- i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.*

Beyond Chapter 4 of the Framework there are 13 topic areas which form the Framework document. Those topic areas considered of relevance to this planning application are set out below.

Section 6. Building a strong, competitive economy

Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Section 12. Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 of the Framework reaffirms that the Government remains committed to encouraging high density development and the most efficient use of land.

Cont./5

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

In particular, paragraph 125(d) states that planning policies and decisions should "*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings...*"

Planning policy assessment

While the starting point for decision making is the development plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development always applies. Accordingly, this section of this supporting letter identifies the main planning considerations and provides an assessment of the planning merits of the case in support of the proposed development in the context of relevant Framework guidance and development plan policy.

The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions, but it does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Development that accords with an up-to-date development plan should be approved.

Principle of B2 use

The principle of the change of use of the premises from B8 warehouse use to B2 bakery use is clearly supported both by Framework guidance and adopted Barnsley Local Plan policy, which seeks to ensure employment sites continue their role supporting the Borough's future economic growth and acknowledge the importance of support for the expansion of businesses to support economic growth.

The proposal is an important expansion of a local business which represents a major investment in the local economy in the region of £2.5m - £3m, leading to significant job creation in the next 5 years, in the order of an additional 50 full-time jobs long term, and should be supported.

As previously stated, the premises have been vacant for a number of years and is therefore not making any contribution to the local economy. The proposal represents a viable and long-term use for the building, therefore enabling the building to be put back into positive use, contributing to the District's economy.

Cont./6

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

In planning policy terms, the building is an underused parcel of land, in a sustainable location in Urban Barnsley in accordance with Local Plan Policy LG2, and SD1 and its continued use for employment purposes would be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

On this basis, the proposal is in accord with the Local Plan Proposals Map reaffirms the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Should it be necessary then the applicants are in agreement with the imposition of a planning condition limiting the B2 use to a bakery and to no other use within Class B2 without the approval of the planning authority.

In meeting the requirements of key Local Plan Policy E3 and Framework guidance relating to employment development, the principle of the proposed B2 bakery use is acceptable, subject to meeting more detailed development management policies, which need to be addressed, as set out below.

Other considerations

The continued use of the premises as a warehouse creates a baseline for any assessment of the impact of the proposed use. Consideration of the likely difference in impact arising between the authorised B8 use and the proposed B2 bakery use is set out below.

Amenity considerations

The planning application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment based on survey readings undertaken at the applicants' current premises at Stanley Road and the following proposed operating hours in connection with this current planning application. Officers will note these are more detailed than is possible to enter onto the planning application form and it is requested determination is based on the following:

Production hours

Mon-Fri: 24 hrs;

Sat: Other than the Christmas period, no production takes place on Saturdays and use is by cleaning staff only, with no dispatches from the premises and for deliveries between 0300-1700;

Sunday: 0300-2030 Production only, no deliveries or dispatches;

Cont./7

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

Deliveries/dispatches

Deliveries; 0700-1500 Monday to Friday only;
Dispatches: 0300-0500 Monday to Saturday only

The authorised use benefits from unrestricted 24-hour use/7days week for all operations including deliveries and dispatches involving articulated HGVs. By comparison, this application offers the opportunity to control the use by planning conditions restricting use/deliveries and dispatches as above, should this be considered necessary.

Taking this into account, the Noise Impact Assessment concludes no harm to the amenity of the occupants of the dwellings located to the south of the site will arise from operations or associated comings and goings and the proposal is in accordance with Policy GD1 on this basis.

Flood risk

The extract from the Flood Risk Map for England, confirms that the site is in zone 1 and is therefore outside any areas identified at flood risk.

Ecology

The site is not subject to any local, national or international statutory designations which will impact on the ability of the site to contribute to employment needs, as indicated on a search of the natural environment map found at www.magic.gov.uk.

Furthermore, assessment of the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, confirms that the proposal falls within the 'de minimis' threshold and therefore is exempt from BNG and a BNG Statement is submitted with the application on this basis.

Highway safety

Reference to the Local Plan SPD 'Parking' November 2019 identifies the proposed B2 use requires between 37 and 56 parking spaces based on a total GIA of 2791sq.m including the proposed extensions. The submitted Site Plan shows a total of 49 spaces can be accommodated at the site in accordance with policy requirements. This is notwithstanding the majority of Potts workforce are recruited locally and either walk or use public transport to get to work.

Cont./8

Chief Planning Officer
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
14 May 2025

Furthermore, the proposal is likely to lead to a change in the nature of vehicle movements with a significant reduction in HGV movements. Additionally, 10no. cycle parking spaces are provided.

On this basis it is concluded that the proposed use of the site is unlikely to lead to harm to highway safety. Therefore, its development would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy T3.

Conclusion on development plan policy compliance

It is considered the proposal accords with key development plan policies SD1, LG2, E3, T3 and GD1.

Conclusion on Framework sustainability guidance compliance

The proposed B2 bakery use will make effective use of this vacant building in a sustainable location leading to significant investment and employment creation.

Overall, subject to meeting the requirements set out above, it is considered the proposed use can constitute sustainable development as set out in the Framework and Local Plan SD1 and should be supported.

I look forward to discussing the application with the Planning Case Officer shortly. Should any further details be helpful in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Bradley Stankler Planning

Bradley Stankler