

SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Proposed Demolition of Existing Takeaway and Erection of Commercial Units

10 Ballfield Lane, Kexbrough, Barnsley, S75 5EF

Prepared on behalf of Ecogise Properties Ltd

Barnsley MBC reference 2026/0706 | Drawing Reference: 26-016-01C

September 2026

Site address	10 Ballfield Lane, Kexbrough, Barnsley, S75 5EF
Applicant	Ecogise Properties Ltd
Planning reference	2026/0706 (invalidation letter dated 28 August 2026)
Proposal	Demolition of existing takeaway building and erection of a replacement two-storey building comprising three commercial units, with office accommodation at first floor, associated car parking, and bin and cycle storage
Drawing reference	26-016-01C
Proposed uses	Class E office/commercial uses: solar sales office, estate agency/property services office and the office base of Ecogise Electrical Ltd
Existing use	Vacant hot food takeaway (sui generis) on an established commercial site
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Date of assessment	18 September 2026

1. Introduction

This Sequential Assessment has been prepared by White Agus Ltd on behalf of Ecogise Properties Ltd in support of planning application 2026/0706 for the demolition of the existing takeaway building at 10 Ballfield Lane, Kexbrough, and the erection of a replacement two-storey commercial building comprising three ground-floor commercial units with office accommodation at first floor.

The application was submitted on 25 August 2026. By letter dated 28 August 2026 (reference 2026/0706/INVALID) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council confirmed that the application could not be validated until, among other things, a sequential assessment was submitted. This document responds to that request. It should be read alongside the Planning Statement (White Agus Ltd, June 2026) and drawing 26-016-01C.

The assessment applies the sequential test set out in Policy TC3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, published 17 August 2026) and Policy TC1 of the Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019). It identifies the sequentially preferable locations relevant to the proposal, records the search that has been carried out for suitable and available sites in those locations, and explains why the application site is the appropriate location for the development.

The assessment is proportionate to the scale of the proposal. The development would provide approximately 240 square metres of gross floorspace on a 0.03 hectare site, replacing an existing commercial building of approximately 60 square metres. It is a small-scale, locally focused proposal and the level of analysis reflects that.

2. The Site and the Proposed Development

The site

The site is located on the west side of Ballfield Lane in Kexbrough, within the Urban Barnsley settlement as defined in the Local Plan. It extends to approximately 0.03 hectares (National Grid reference SE 29992 09633) and is occupied by a single-storey, flat-roofed former hot food takeaway building with hardstanding to the front and side. The building has been vacant for some time and is in poor condition; the ecologist's survey of 11 September 2026 records multiple areas of roof damage, rotten soffits and water ingress through the ceiling.

The surrounding area is mixed in character, with residential properties and other commercial premises along Ballfield Lane. The site is previously developed land in established commercial use. A hot food takeaway is itself a main town centre use, so the site already accommodates a main town centre use in this location, and the lawful use could be resumed without the need for planning permission.

The proposal

The proposal is for a two-storey building providing three separately accessed ground-floor commercial units, each with its own entrance and signage zone to Ballfield Lane, with office accommodation at first floor serving Unit 3. Five parking spaces are provided to the frontage, with bin and cycle storage to the rear of each unit.

The floorspace of the proposal, scaled from drawing 26-016-01C, is approximately as follows:

Element	Approximate gross floorspace	Notes
Existing takeaway building	c. 60 sq m	Single storey, to be demolished
Proposed ground floor (Units 1–3)	c. 130 sq m	Three units of c. 40 sq m each including WCs and stair
Proposed first floor	c. 110 sq m	Office, meeting room, kitchen and WCs serving Unit 3

Element	Approximate gross floorspace	Notes
Proposed total	c. 240 sq m	Net increase over existing of c. 180 sq m

The intended occupiers are the businesses of the applicant's group: Unit 1 as a sales office for Ecogise Solar, Unit 2 as an estate agency/property services office for Ecogise Properties, and Unit 3 with the first floor as the office base of Ecogise Electrical Ltd. All of the proposed uses fall within Class E of the Use Classes Order. The Ecogise group currently trades from Unit 51, Claycliffe Business Park, Barugh Green, approximately two kilometres from the site, and the proposal would provide a permanent, purpose-built base for the group close to its existing operations and customer base in the Darton, Kexbrough and Barugh Green area.

3. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

The Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework on 17 August 2026. Chapter 8 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) contains the national decision-making policies for main town centre uses. Policy TC3 (Main town centre uses outside town centres) states:

- 1. A sequential test should be applied to proposals for main town centre uses for which planning permission is required, where these are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an allocation for that purpose in an up-to-date development plan.*
- 2. The sequential test means that main town centre uses involving new development should be located within town centres identified in the development plan; then, if this is not feasible, 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. When considering edge of centre and out of centre locations, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre by sustainable transport modes.*
- 3. Applicants and local planning authorities should exercise flexibility when considering issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.*
- 4. Where a development proposal fails to satisfy the sequential test, or is likely to have a significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in policy TC4, it should be refused.*

Policy TC4 (Assessing the impact of development on town centres) requires an impact assessment for retail and leisure development outside town centres only where the proposal exceeds a locally set floorspace threshold or, in the absence of one, the default threshold of 2,500 square metres gross.

The NPPF glossary (Annex B) defines main town centre uses as retail development, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses, banks, professional services, offices, and arts, culture and tourism development. For all main town centre uses other than retail, an edge of centre location is one within 300 metres of a town centre boundary; for office development this also includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. An out of centre location is one which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the settlement.

National decision-making Policy E2 (Meeting the need for business land and premises) is also relevant. It requires substantial weight to be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt.

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance on town centres and retail advises that the sequential test should be applied in a proportionate manner and that the area of search and the sites considered should reflect the

nature of the proposal and the catchment it is intended to serve. It confirms that applicants should demonstrate flexibility on format and scale, but that it is not necessary to show that a potential town centre or edge of centre site can accommodate precisely the scale and form of development proposed; and that where there are no suitable sequentially preferable locations, the sequential test is passed.

Case law

The approach to the sequential test has been settled by the courts. In *Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council* [2012] UKSC 13 the Supreme Court held that the question is whether an alternative site is suitable for the development proposed by the applicant, not whether the proposed development could be altered or reduced so that it could fit an alternative site, and that the test is to be applied in a practical, real-world commercial setting. Disaggregation of a proposal across several sites is not required. In *Aldergate Properties Ltd v Mansfield District Council* [2016] EWHC 1670 (Admin) the High Court confirmed that suitability and availability are judged by reference to the development proposed, applying reasonable flexibility, rather than by reference to the particular circumstances of the individual applicant alone. This assessment adopts that approach.

Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019)

Policy TC1 (Town Centres) sets out the borough's hierarchy of centres and the sequential approach:

Support will be given to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the following hierarchy of centres: Town – Barnsley Town Centre; District – Cudworth, Hoyland, Wombwell, Goldthorpe, Penistone, Royston; Local – Athersley, Bolton on Dearne (St Andrew's Square), Darfield, Darton, Dodworth, Grimethorpe, Hoyland Common, Lundwood, Mapplewell, Stairfoot, Thurnscoe (Houghton Road), Thurnscoe (Shepherd Lane).

... The Local Centres serve smaller catchments and development here will be expected to meet the needs of the local area and not adversely impact on the vitality or viability of other nearby centres. All retail and town centre developments will be expected to be appropriate to the scale, role, function and character of the centres in which they are proposed. A sequential approach will be used to assess proposals for new retail and town centre development. This will help to achieve the spatial strategy for the borough and will focus development on identified centres in the first instance. Edge of centre and out of centre development will only be allowed where it meets the requirements of NPPF.

The supporting text (paragraph 15.17) explains that outside Barnsley Town Centre and the District Centres, the network of Local Centres meets more day-to-day needs and is the focus for small-scale local shops and services. Kexbrough is not a designated centre. The nearest designated centres to the site are the Darton Local Centre (Church Street, approximately 1.2 kilometres to the east) and the Mapplewell Local Centre (approximately 2.2 kilometres to the north-east). Barnsley Town Centre is approximately 5.5 kilometres to the south-east. Policy TC3 of the Local Plan sets the local thresholds for impact assessments; the proposal falls far below every threshold.

4. Is the Sequential Test Engaged?

The proposed uses (offices and professional services) are main town centre uses as defined by the NPPF. The site is not within a designated centre, is more than 300 metres from the boundary of the nearest Local Centre, and is not within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. It is therefore an out of centre location for the purposes of national policy and Policy TC1, and the sequential test in NPPF Policy TC3 applies. This is acknowledged, and the test is applied in full below.

Two features of the proposal are nevertheless material to how the test should be applied. First, the site is an established commercial site which already accommodates a main town centre use (a hot food takeaway) that could lawfully resume trading. The proposal does not introduce main town centre uses to a location where none exist; it re-provides and modestly extends commercial floorspace on the same site, with a net increase of approximately 180 square metres. Second, the scale of the development is very

small. The whole building is approximately 240 square metres gross, less than one tenth of the default impact threshold in NPPF Policy TC4.

5. Methodology

Catchment and area of search

The proposal is intended to serve a local catchment. The occupiers are locally based businesses whose customers and workforce are drawn from Kexbrough, Darton, Barugh Green and the surrounding parts of north-west Barnsley, and whose existing premises are at Claycliffe Business Park in Barugh Green. The units are designed as small, customer-facing premises for local enquiries rather than as a destination office building. Consistent with the Local Plan hierarchy, in which the Local Centres serve smaller catchments and meet the needs of the local area, the sequentially preferable locations for a proposal of this nature and scale are the designated Local Centres serving that catchment, namely Darton and Mapplewell, together with their edge of centre areas (within 300 metres of the centre boundaries).

Barnsley Town Centre lies well outside the catchment of the proposal and a small local office development of this kind is not the type of development that Policy TC1 seeks to direct there. For completeness, however, the availability of small office and retail premises in Barnsley Town Centre has also been reviewed and is discussed at Section 6.

Requirements of the development and flexibility

Applying the flexibility required by NPPF Policy TC3(3), the development requires, in broad terms:

- a site or existing building capable of providing in the order of 180 to 300 square metres of gross floorspace (flexibility of around 25 per cent either side of the proposal has been applied);
- three separately accessed ground-floor units with a customer-facing frontage, or a building capable of conversion to that format, with associated office space;
- on-site parking for approximately five vehicles and access for van deliveries, reflecting the operational needs of an electrical contracting business; and
- availability now, or within a reasonable period, on either a leasehold or freehold basis.

In line with *Tesco v Dundee*, the assessment has not sought to disaggregate the three units across separate sites, although sites capable of accommodating the proposal in a different configuration have been considered.

Sources

The following sources were reviewed on 18 September 2026:

- Barnsley Local Plan Policies Map and site allocations – there are no allocations for town centre uses within or adjoining the Darton or Mapplewell Local Centres;
- Rightmove commercial property – premises to let and for sale in Darton, Mapplewell and Barnsley;
- Zoopla commercial property – premises to let in Darton and Mapplewell, including the wider results within the search radius; and
- PrimeLocation commercial property – premises for sale in and around Mapplewell.

The premises identified are summarised in the table at Appendix A.

6. Assessment of Sequentially Preferable Locations

Darton Local Centre (in centre and edge of centre)

The Darton Local Centre is focused on Church Street. There are no vacant sites within or on the edge of the centre, no premises for sale, and no allocations. One premises was identified to let: a first-floor room

within an operating beauty salon on Church Street, marketed at £600 per calendar month. This is a single room in shared occupation with another business, with no ground-floor presence, no separate frontage and no dedicated parking. Even applying considerable flexibility on scale and format it could not accommodate the development proposed, or any meaningful part of it, and it is not suitable.

The only other premises returned for Darton are industrial units at Darton Business Park on Barnsley Road (Unit 5, 10,000 to 87,884 square feet, and Unit 8, 8,772 square feet). These are out of centre, are industrial rather than office or retail premises, and are between ten and one hundred times the size of the proposal. They are not sequentially preferable and are not suitable.

Mapplewell Local Centre (in centre and edge of centre)

There are no vacant sites, allocations or premises for sale within or on the edge of the Mapplewell Local Centre. One premises was identified to let: a recently refurbished first-floor unit at Fountain Parade of 972 square feet (approximately 90 square metres), marketed at £1,053 per calendar month for retail or office use.

This unit has been considered carefully because it is in a sequentially preferable location. It is, however, a single first-floor unit of around 90 square metres, less than 40 per cent of the floorspace proposed and below the floorspace range applied with flexibility. It has no ground-floor frontage, cannot be subdivided into three separately accessed units, and has no dedicated parking or servicing for van deliveries. At most it could accommodate one of the three intended occupiers as an upper-floor office. Following Tesco v Dundee, the applicant is not required to disaggregate the proposal in order to fit part of it into an unsuitable unit elsewhere. The unit is not suitable for the development proposed.

Barnsley Town Centre

A number of office suites are available to let in Barnsley Town Centre, including serviced and managed suites at Wellington House (Market Street), Regent Chambers and Queens Court (Regent Street), Churchfield Court, 20 Regent Street and the Digital Media Centre (County Way), with individual suites ranging from under 100 to over 3,000 square feet. Small retail units are also available, for example at Regent Street and Royal Street.

These premises are available, but they are not suitable for the development proposed. They are upper-floor or internal suites within larger multi-let office buildings, let on serviced or short-term terms, and none provides three separately accessed ground-floor units with a customer frontage, on-site parking and van access. More fundamentally, Barnsley Town Centre is approximately 5.5 kilometres from the catchment that the proposal is intended to serve. Relocating the occupiers' local sales, property and electrical contracting offices to the town centre would not meet the locational requirement of the development, which is to provide a small local base for businesses operating in the Kexbrough, Darton and Barugh Green area, and would not deliver the redevelopment of a vacant and deteriorating commercial building in Kexbrough. Policy TC1 directs the majority of new retail and town centre development to Barnsley Town Centre, but it also recognises that development in and around the Local Centres should meet the needs of the local area; a 240 square metre local office development is plainly in the latter category.

Other locations

There are no District Centres within a reasonable distance of the site's catchment; the nearest (Royston) is over five kilometres away and serves a different community. Other office and industrial premises returned by the searches (Wharnccliffe Business Park, Oaks Business Park, Kendray Business Centre, Zenith Networkcentre, Claycliffe Business Park and similar) are all out of centre business park or industrial locations and are therefore not sequentially preferable to the application site. They have not been assessed further.

Accessibility of the application site

NPPF Policy TC3(2) asks that, as between out of centre locations, preference is given to accessible sites well connected by sustainable transport modes. The application site fronts Ballfield Lane within the built-up

area of Kexbrough, is served by the Stagecoach 95 bus service between Kexbrough and Barnsley Interchange with stops on Ballfield Lane, and is within walking and cycling distance of the residential areas of Kexbrough and Darton and of Darton railway station. Cycle storage is provided for each unit and the applicant has confirmed that staff cycle to work in the summer months. The site is at least as accessible as any other out of centre location in the catchment and is more accessible by sustainable modes than the business park locations returned by the searches.

7. Impact

NPPF Policy TC4 requires an impact assessment for retail and leisure development outside town centres only where the proposal exceeds the locally set threshold or the default of 2,500 square metres gross. Local Plan Policy TC3 sets local thresholds which the proposal also falls far below. The proposal comprises approximately 240 square metres of office and professional services floorspace, the majority of which is for the applicant's own businesses, on a site that already has a lawful main town centre use. No impact assessment is required and, given the scale and nature of the development, there would be no discernible effect on the vitality and viability of Darton, Mapplewell or Barnsley Town Centre.

8. Conclusion

The proposal is for the replacement of a vacant, deteriorating takeaway building on an established commercial site in Kexbrough with a small two-storey building of approximately 240 square metres providing three commercial units and first-floor offices for locally based businesses.

The sequential test in NPPF Policy TC3 and Local Plan Policy TC1 has been applied. The sequentially preferable locations for a development of this scale and catchment are the Darton and Mapplewell Local Centres and their edge of centre areas. A search of the Local Plan allocations and the principal commercial property portals on 18 September 2026 identified no vacant sites or premises for sale in either centre, and only two premises to let, both single first-floor rooms or units that could not accommodate the development proposed even with flexibility on format and scale. The office suites available in Barnsley Town Centre are of a different format and are outside the catchment the proposal serves; they are not suitable for the development proposed. There are no suitable and available sequentially preferable sites, and the sequential test is passed.

The application site is an accessible, previously developed commercial site with an existing main town centre use. The development would make effective use of that site, deliver modern business accommodation for local employers to which Policy E2 of the NPPF gives substantial weight, and would have no adverse effect on any designated centre. The proposal accords with NPPF Policies TC3 and TC4 and with Policy TC1 of the Barnsley Local Plan.

Appendix A: Summary of Premises Identified (18 September 2026)

Searches of Rightmove, Zoopla and PrimeLocation commercial listings for Darton, Mapplewell and Barnsley, together with the Barnsley Local Plan allocations. Premises in sequentially preferable locations are shown first; out of centre premises returned by the same searches are listed for completeness.

Premises	Location / status	Size	Terms	Suitability
Church Street, Darton (Armitage Sorby)	Darton Local Centre – in centre	Single first-floor room	To let, £600 pcm	Room within operating beauty salon; shared premises, no frontage, no parking. Not suitable.
Fountain Parade, Mapplewell (Tandem Investments)	Mapplewell Local Centre – in centre	972 sq ft (c. 90 sq m), first floor	To let, £1,053 pcm	Single first-floor unit, under 40% of proposal; no ground-floor frontage, no subdivision, no parking. Not suitable.
Premises for sale, Darton and Mapplewell	Local Centres	–	–	None listed.
Local Plan allocations, Darton and Mapplewell	Local Centres and edge of centre	–	–	None.
Wellington House, Market Street, Barnsley	Barnsley Town Centre	Suites 97–3,117 sq ft (larger floors available)	To let, serviced/managed	Upper-floor serviced office suites in multi-let building; no ground-floor units, no dedicated parking; outside catchment. Not suitable.
Regent Chambers and Queens Court, Regent Street, Barnsley (Smiths)	Barnsley Town Centre	279–500 sq ft; 500–3,408 sq ft	To let, from £365 pcm	Office suites in multi-let buildings; outside catchment. Not suitable.
Churchfield Court, Barnsley (Hurstwood / Smiths)	Barnsley Town Centre	1,250–2,585 sq ft	To let, from £1,250 pcm	Office suites; outside catchment. Not suitable.
20 Regent Street and Digital Media Centre, County Way (Barnsley MBC)	Barnsley Town Centre	877 sq ft; 80–1,932 sq ft	To let, from £160 pcm	Managed office suites; outside catchment. Not suitable.
18 Regent Street; 5 Royal Street, Barnsley (Smiths)	Barnsley Town Centre	1,292–2,661 sq ft; 342 sq ft	To let	Retail/restaurant units; single units, outside catchment. Not suitable.
Unit 5 Darton Business Park and Unit 8 Barnsley Road, Darton	Out of centre – industrial estate	8,772–87,884 sq ft	To let	Not sequentially preferable; industrial format and scale. Not suitable.
Claycliffe Business Park, Barugh Green (various)	Out of centre – industrial estate	6,053–7,888 sq ft	To let / for sale	Not sequentially preferable; industrial. Not suitable.
Zenith Networkcentre, Whaley Road	Out of centre – industrial estate	1,547–1,832 sq ft	To let	Not sequentially preferable; industrial. Not suitable.
Wharnccliffe / Longfields Court, Oaks Business Park, Kendray Business Centre	Out of centre – business parks	Various suites	To let	Not sequentially preferable. Not assessed further.

