

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0430
Location: WM MORRISON SUPERMARKETS PLC, DAWSON STREET, HEYWOOD, OL10 4PU
Proposal: Installation of a single-storey modular banking cabin (Use class E(c)(1)) including installation of bollards and access ramp
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Luke Rigby

SITE

The application site relates to the vehicular car park of the Times Retail Park in Heywood; access to the site is taken from Dawson Street and Bamford Road and the retail park is home to Morrisons, B&M and several other commercial businesses.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a modular banking unit with associated access ramp on the car park in front of the Morrisons Supermarket; it is submitted in tandem with an application for advertisement consent ref. PL/2026/0474

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2026/0474 – Internally illuminated fascia signs and various non illuminated advertisement signs. Pending Consideration

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

Policy G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

Policy SD1 Delivering Sustainable Development

Policy DM1 General Development Requirements

Policy P3 Improving the design of new development

Policy G6 Enhancing Green Infrastructure

Policy G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy T2 Improving accessibility

Appendix 5 Parking Standards

Sub-Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: N/A

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: In accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, notification letters were sent to immediate neighbours.

ASSESSMENT

Principle

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as defined by Saved UDP Policy G/D/1 and within Heywood Town Centre. The proposal seeks the installation of a modular banking unit within the established Times Retail Park positioned within the existing Morrisons Supermarket car park.

Under the NPPF, a banking facility is generally regarded as a main town centre use but is not a retail use. The application site is situated outside of the Primary Shopping Area but within the existing defined extent of Heywood Town Centre. As such it is located in a highly accessible town centre location satisfying the sequential approach to main town centre uses. The unit will provide a complementary customer service that supports the function and vitality of the wider Town Centre as a whole.

The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable in this instance subject to an assessment of all other material considerations.

Design and Impact on Character

Paragraph 131 of the Framework states that a fundamental aim of the planning system is the creation of sustainable, high quality and beautiful places. Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscape.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed unit would not be particularly congruous with the surrounding buildings of the retail park, it is considered that overall, due to the very limited scale of the proposal that the unit would be a relatively unobtrusive feature within the car park of the retail park. It would read as a small, flexible and modular feature which would not be visually dominating.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the design provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways and Parking

Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development should only be refused on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The proposed modular unit would be located adjacent to the front elevation of the Morrisons supermarket and would be sufficiently removed from the primary ingress and egress routes serving the wider car park and surrounding highway network. Consequently, the proposal would not impede vehicle access to or from the site, nor prejudice the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.

Whilst the unit would occupy a small area within the existing car park and introduce an additional physical feature for drivers to navigate around, the site functions as a supermarket car park where vehicle speeds are inherently low and drivers are required to exercise a heightened degree of caution due to the presence of parked vehicles and pedestrians. The proposal would maintain adequate visibility and manoeuvring space within the car park, and there is no evidence to suggest that it would result in significant conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

Taking these factors into account, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in a severe residual impact on the operation of the local highway network.

In addition, the proposed installation of protective bollards around the unit would reduce the risk of accidental vehicle strikes and provide an additional safety measure for customers accessing the facility.

In relation to parking, the proposed development would see a reduction of approximately 6 spaces; the Times Retail Park has a capacity of 470 spaces. A reduction in 6 spaces is therefore a marginal difference that would not materially impact on parking provision. It is not expected that the reduction would displace vehicles to park inappropriately.

Having regard to the siting of the proposed modular unit, the low-speed environment within the existing car park, the provision of protective bollards, and the marginal loss of parking spaces, it is considered that the proposal would give rise to only marginal impacts in highways and parking terms. The development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would it give rise to severe residual impacts on the operation of the highway network.

Biodiversity and Ecology

Paragraph 187 of the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The application submission includes an exemption form in which the applicant states they believe the development be exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain as the de minimis exemption applies and the development is below the threshold.

The application site relates to a vehicular car park which is entirely tarmac hardstanding; there is no priority habitat that the development would impact upon, and there is no scope for improvement. Officers are therefore satisfied that the development is subject to the de minimis exemption.

Other Matters

While the proposed use falls within Class E, the unit is a bespoke modular structure located within an active car park. The highways impact, parking displacement, and service arrangements have been assessed on the basis of a financial services pod. A transition to other uses within Class E (such as retail or a cafe) would generate distinct parking, dwell time, and servicing demands which have not been assessed and could severely prejudice the safe and efficient operation of the retail park car park.

Officers therefore consider it prudent to attach a condition restricting the use of the development to Class E(c)(i) to allow the Local Planning Authority to assess the impact of any future use on the safe operation of the highway network.

Conclusion

Subject to the conditions set out below and taking into account the provisions of the development plan and all other material planning considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

None received.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (4)

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason – To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and documents hereby approved: -

- Proposed Site Plan (Revision B; received by the Local Planning Authority on 12.06.2026)
- Site Location Plan (Revision A; received by the Local Planning Authority on 12.06.2026)
- Proposed Elevations (received by the Local Planning Authority on 11.05.2026)
- DWG No. RDS-CAUK-POBH-04 (Revision 05) (Proposed Floor Plans)
- Architectural Floor Plan (received by the Local Planning Authority on 11.05.2026)
- NCRA6111_CAUK_Banking Cabin_NCRA_Material List _21Jul26 (Material List)

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Unitary Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The materials used in the construction of the exterior of the development hereby permitted shall be those specified on approved document NCRA6111_CAUK_Banking Cabin_NCRA_Material List _21Jul26 (received by the Local Planning Authority on 21.07.2026).

Reason – In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order (with or without modification), the building hereby approved shall be used solely for the provision of financial services and for no other purpose, including any other purpose within Class E of the Schedule to that Order.

Reason – To ensure that any future alternative uses can be properly assessed in the interests of highway safety and the efficient operation of the wider retail park car park, in accordance with Policies DM1 and T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 5 The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.