

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0474
Location: WM MORRISON SUPERMARKETS PLC, DAWSON STREET, HEYWOOD, OL10 4PU
Proposal: Internally illuminated fascia signs and various non illuminated advertisement signs
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.

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area and within Heywood Town Centre as defined by Saved UDP Policies G/D/1 and G/S/1 respectively.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks advertisement consent for the addition of internal and external advertisements to a modular banking unit which is the subject of application PL/2026/0430.

The application proposes the following advertisements:

- 4No. fascia signs, externally illuminated around the top of the modular banking unit
- Blue vinyl wrap around the rear of the unit with bank logos and writing
- 1No. hanging sign showing which banks will be available on which days (non-illuminated)
- 1No. digital display internally illuminated on both sides at 700cd/sqm

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2026/0430 – Installation of a single-storey modular banking cabin (Use class E(c)(i)) including installation of bollards and access ramp. Approved Subject to Conditions

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Local Guidance

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

G/S/1 Hierarchy and Role of Centres

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

P3 Improving Design of New Development

DM1 General Development Requirements

Legislation

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, no publicity was issued for this application.

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

None received.

ASSESSMENT

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, whilst also noting that advertisements should be subject to control for planning purposes only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

It is well established that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. As such, with all applications for advertisements an assessment should be made as to the impacts on visual amenity and to accord with policy P3 of the Core Strategy; signs should be compatible with the surrounding area and protect the character and appearance of the host building and street scene.

Policy P2 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that enhancing and protecting the Borough's unique character can lead to improvements in quality of life and can also help to booster the visitor economy and inward investment. It states that the Council will protect and enhance the boroughs character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside and the qualities of its landscape

The application proposes the addition of several signs and advertisements to a modular banking unit which is to be sited in front of the Morrisons Supermarket on the Times Retail Park – the construction of which was approved under application PL/2026/0430. The advertisements would be a combination of vinyl wrap, digital screens, and internally illuminated signs; the branding for the modular unit would be externally illuminated.

Taking the advertisements together, it is not considered that the proposed advertisements would be significantly detrimental to the visual character of the surrounding area having regard to the location of the development within the Times Retail Park and it is expected that one would see such advertisements in this location. The advertisements would be sufficiently removed from neighbouring dwellings and from Heywood Town Centre that the visual impact of the advertisements would be contained to the area immediately adjacent the supermarket.

The banking unit fascia strip around the top of the unit externally would be externally illuminated. A Luminance Assessment has been submitted as part of the application submission in support of this. The Luminance Assessment ascertains that the average luminance along the long elevations would be 50cd/sqm, with a worst case scenario being 100cd/sqm, whereas the shorter elevations would be an average luminance of 42cd/sqm and 84cd/sqm at a worst case scenario. A digital screen is proposed inside of the unit which would be illuminated on both sides at an output of 700cd/sqm.

The Institute of Lighting Professional guidance, PLG05/23 sets out acceptable lighting standards for advertisements during both the day and the night. Officers consider that, given the site location and relative levels of activity, that the application site is located within the E3 Zone. In accordance with Table 4, maximum luminance levels during the night time are therefore recommended at 300cd/sqm. Table 10.5 gives guidance in relation to maximum luminance levels relative to daylight ambient luminance.

In relation to the externally illuminated fascia signs, both the best case scenario and worst case scenario would be significantly below the maximum luminance level during the daytime and night. It is therefore not considered that the luminance of these advertisements would adversely affect the character of the area.

The proposed digital screen is a commercial digital screen with integrated media player, capable of showing video and moving content. Whilst the content shown on the submitted elevations is static, the capability of the equipment is such that, absent of any control, moving video or images could be displayed at any time following any grant of consent. The application site is located within an operational car park and the externally facing face of the digital screen would be visible to drivers maneuvering within the car park. Moving, flashing, or video imagery in this location therefore has the potential to distract drivers in a way that static images do not. Such distraction within this location would give rise to a risk of driver distraction which would be a risk to the general public.

Having regard to the above, it is considered prudent to attach a condition to any grant of permission restricting the use of the digital screen to static images only and no video content in the interest of public safety and the safe operation of the Times Retail Park car park. It is further considered prudent that the digital display does not show any content which appears, or would be mistaken for, official road traffic signs, parking signs, or matrix signs to avoid confusing drivers in the interest of public safety; it is recommended this be secured by way of condition.

The advertisements would be sufficiently removed from the ingress and egress points of the car park that the advertisements are not considered to give rise to any unacceptable impacts on the wider highway network outside of the retail park.

It is therefore considered that the application, subject to the imposition of the aforementioned conditions, does not materially conflict with the requirements of the adopted Places for Everyone policy JP-P1, adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies P1, P2, P3, T2 and DM1, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as they are material to visual amenity and highway safety.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (11)

- 1 No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
- 2 No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to –
 - endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway sign or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
- 3 Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.
- 4 Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.
- 5 Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.
- 6 The approval is for a period not exceeding five years from the date of this consent.
- 7 No image displayed on the externally facing screen shall contain any moving, flashing, scrolling, animated or video content, and only static images shall be displayed.

Reason – In the interest of amenity and public safety.

- 8 No content shall resemble, or be liable to be mistaken for a traffic sign, traffic light, or matrix sign.

Reason – In the interests of amenity and public safety.

- 9 During the hours of darkness the luminance of the advertisements hereby permitted (including the digital display) shall be no greater than the recommended maximum nighttime luminance value set out for Environmental Zone 3 in Table 10.4 within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide (PLG 05/23) 'Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (or its equivalent in a replacement guide) in cd/sqm.

Reason – In the interests of amenity and public safety.

- 10 In daylight hours, the luminance of the advertisements hereby permitted (including the digital display) shall be controlled in order to reflect ambient light conditions (to ensure it is neither too bright or too dull), and shall at all times be no greater than the recommended maximum daytime luminance values set out in Table 10.5 within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide (PLG 05/23) 'Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (or its equivalent in a replacement guide) in cd/sqm.

Reason – In the interests of amenity and public safety.

- 11 In the event of a malfunction, the digital display shall default to a blank display.

Reason – In the interest of amenity and public safety.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 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.

Informatives (1)

For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans/documents:

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- Application Form
- J0516_CAUK_Banking-Hub_Cabin_v13 (Proposed Visuals/Colours)
- Proposed Site Plan (Revision B)
- Cash Access UK Window Displays (Specifications)

- 02_BANKING HUB_HANGING SIGN_REV 00
- Design and Access Statement
- J0516_CAUK_Banking-Hub_Cabin_walls_AW2.2
- J0516_CAUK_Banking-Hub_Cabin_v15_FASCIA UPDATE
- Proposed Elevations
- Sign Face Luminance Assessment (Williams Lighting Consultants)