

Glenbrook Property

Planning Statement

Matalan, 7 Seven Stiles Avenue,
Newport, NP19 4TX

Date: August 2024



CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Site Description and Surroundings.....	2
3.0	Application Proposal	6
4.0	Planning Policy Context	7
5.0	Planning Assessment	12
6.0	Summary and Conclusions	15

Prepared by:	Rhianon Jones		
Checked by:	Kate Gapper		
Issue Date:	12/08/2024	Revision Number:	1



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Carney Sweeney, on behalf of Glenbrook CP Limited (“the applicant”), to accompany a full planning application in respect of the existing Matalan store at Seven Stiles Avenue, Newport (“the application site”).
- 1.1.2 The application seeks consent for a *‘Change of Use from Class A1 (Non-Food Retail) to Class B1 (Business) and/or Class B2 (General Industrial) and/or B8 (Storage or Distribution) and/or Class A1 (Non-Food Retail).’*
- 1.1.3 This statement focuses on the general planning and retail policy issues associated with the application proposals. It is intended to assist Newport City Council in its determination of the application and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the Development Plan and Planning Policy Wales (PPW).
- 1.1.4 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 provides a description of the site and its surroundings;
 - Section 3 provides details of the proposed development;
 - Section 4 outlines the relevant planning policy framework in relation to the site and the development;
 - Section 5 provides an analysis of the key planning considerations arising from the proposed development; and
 - Section 6 sets out our conclusions.



2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The application site forms part of the Newport Retail Park District Centre located approximately 3.8km to the south east of Newport City Centre and just under 3.6 km from Junction 24 of the M4 motorway. The location of the site is shown in Figure 2.1 below.

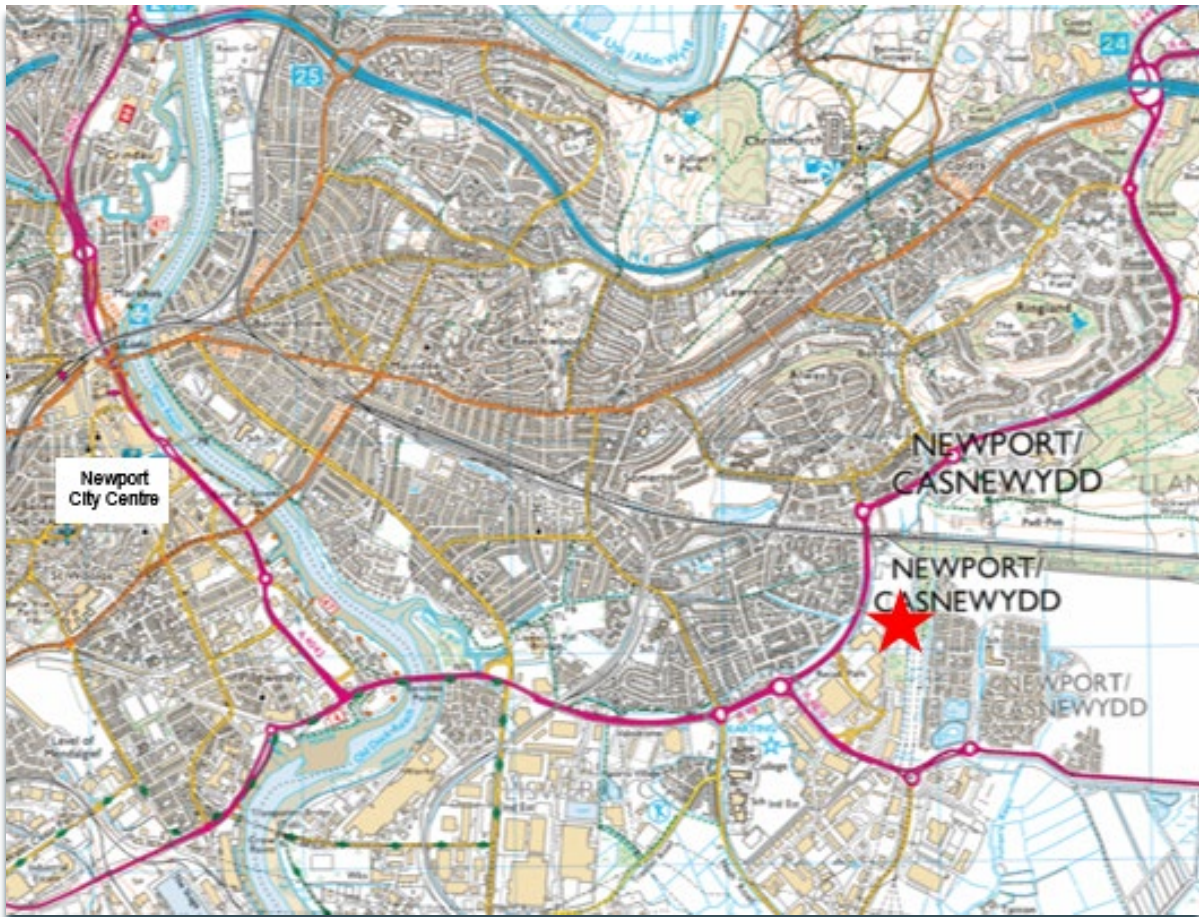


Figure 2.1: Site Location

2.1.2 The site comprises a rectangular parcel of land, measuring approximately 1.25 hectares, with an existing Matalan retail unit occupying the northern part of the site with associated car parking to the south (see Figure 2.2 overleaf).



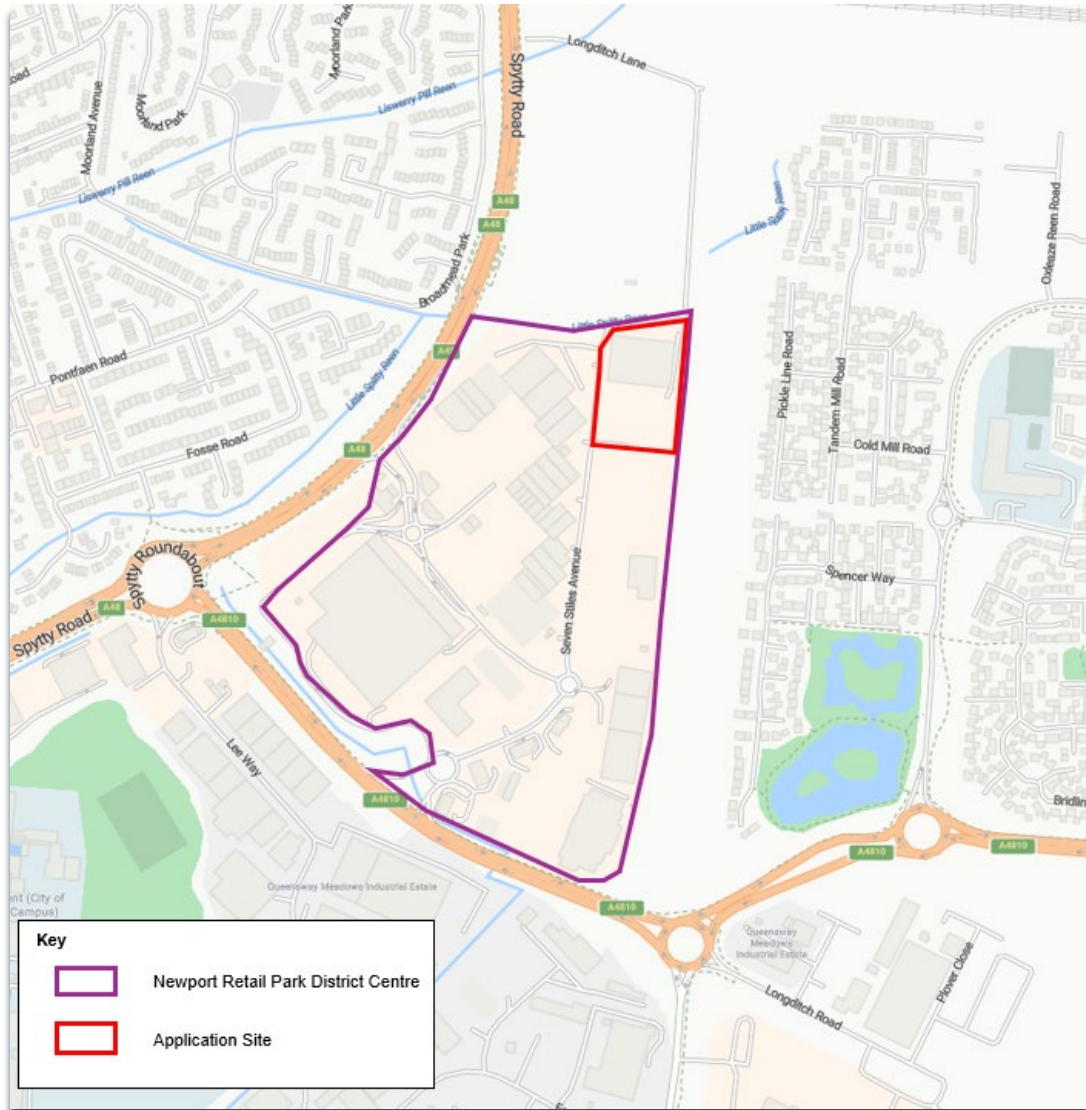


Figure 2.2: Site Location

2.2 The Surrounding Context

2.2.1 The character of the surrounding area is predominantly retail and commercial uses in nature. To the west, the site abuts Seven Stiles Avenue beyond which is the primary complex of the Newport Retail Park. To the south of the site is a vacant parcel of land, and beyond that a car showroom and its outdoor display and parking areas. To the east of the site is a small reën, and mature vegetation. Beyond this to the east is the major housing regeneration site forming the Eastern Expansion Area upon the former Llanwern steelworks site.





Figure 2.3: Aerial Image of Application Site

- 2.2.2 The composition of the Newport Retail Park is approximately triangular in shape and falls into distinct sections. The main retail part is formed by Tesco and 21 other retail units arranged around a central car park, with Central Avenue separating Tesco from the other units. To the east, across Seven Stiles Avenue, the pattern is different, with Cineworld cinema, JD Gym, the Peugeot car showroom, Home Bargains and Matalan as the only retailers in this section of the Retail Park.
- 2.2.3 At the southern end of this section, close to the access to the retail park off Queensway Meadows and distinct from the retail core, there are 4 food outlets. Between these units and Tesco, there are two further car showrooms.
- 2.2.4 There are no listed buildings within the context of the application site and the site is not set within any conservation area. There are no known environmental or ecological constraints to the site.



2.3 Planning History Context

- 2.3.1 It is understood that the original permission(s) for the main Newport Retail Park were granted sometime in the 1980s but with multiple subsequent permissions for new retail units, demolition and replacement units etc.
- 2.3.2 The strip of land running to the east of Seven Stile Avenue (incorporating the application site and the car showroom to the south) was previously undeveloped but formerly operated as an open air market during the 1990s permitted under planning permission 90/0426/F. The retail use was subsequently formalised by applications for the car showroom (LPA ref. 99/1290) and the Matalan (LPA ref. 00/0532). Both of these were subsequently built out in the early 2000s.
- 2.3.3 The Matalan consent, which was granted in July 2000 (Ref. 00/0532) was for *'Retail warehouse (3,828 sqm of A1 Non Food Retail) and Associated Car Parking'*. Condition 7 of this consent restricts the use of approved unit to the sale of DIY products, auto accessories, furniture, carpets, floor coverings, electrical, household goods, clothing and footwear (including fashion accessories) and no other purpose set out in Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and County Planning (Use Classes) Order 1997.



3.0 APPLICATION PROPOSAL

3.1 Rationale for the Proposed Change of Use

- 3.1.1 Matalan are the current occupiers of the retail unit but only have two years left on their lease. When their lease expires there is the possibility that Matalan will choose to relocate to another unit in the locality.
- 3.1.2 In anticipation of Matalan potentially surrendering their lease on the property in March 2026 and it becomes vacant, Knight Frank have been tasked with presenting the property to prospective retailers. Knight Frank have advised that there hasn't been any interest shown from the retail market due to the siting of the property.
- 3.1.3 The Matalan unit is sited at the very rear of the Retail Park and away from the main concentration of retail units. It sits on its own facing onto the rear service yards of several retail units. As such it doesn't benefit from any passing traffic or pedestrian footfall. This means that visitors to the Retail Park will often be unaware of Matalan's presence at the Retail Park as they are unlikely to stumble across it. The separation and distance from the main Retail Park together with the lack of visibility and prominence clearly impacts the stores ability to attract customers.
- 3.1.4 In order to try and improve the marketability of this unit and attract a wider range of tenants this application therefore seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing Matalan retail unit (Class A1 non-food retail) to Class B1 (Business) and/or Class B2 (General Industrial) and/or B8 (Storage) and/or Class A1 (non-food retail). Knight Frank advise that there has been quite a lot of interest shown by potential B1, B2 and B8 occupiers for which the market in Newport is very strong
- 3.1.5 The proposals do not seek an increase in the total floorspace of the premises and no external alterations are proposed to the unit itself or the site layout.



4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this site is:

- The Newport Local Development Plan (adopted January 2015); and
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

4.2 The Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026

4.2.1 The Newport LDP was adopted in January 2015 and sets out the Council's planning framework for the development and use of land in Newport between 2011 – 2026. It forms part of the statutory development plan alongside Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.

4.2.2 As explained earlier the application site forms part of the Newport Retail Park District Centre. The LDP policies that are relevant to the proposals are set out below.

4.2.3 The LDP **objective 3** is *“to enable a diverse economy that meets the needs of the people of Newport and those of the wider South East Wales economic region”*.

4.2.4 **Policy R6 Retail Proposals in District Centres** confirms that within the Newport Retail Park improved shopping facilities will be favoured, provided that the proposals are of an appropriate scale and would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the City Centre. The policy goes to advise that proposals to vary/remove conditions, change the range of goods sold and change the size of units would be supported provide it does not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the City Centre or change the Centre's role as a District Centre.

4.2.5 **Policy R7 Non-Retail Uses in District Centres** advises that within District Centres activities in Use Classes A2, A3 and various leisure and community uses will be permitted where this would not prejudice the viability of the Centre's retailing role; satisfactory parking and access is provided and there would be no unacceptable effect on the local residential amenities or general character of the area in terms of noise and disturbance or extra traffic generated.

4.2.6 The supporting text goes on to advise at Paragraph 8.25, that where a change of use from an A1 retail unit to a non-shopping use (use class other than A1) is proposed, the assessment in terms of adverse effects should take account of:



- a) the existing level and nature of non-shopping uses within the District Centre as a whole;
- b) the size of the retail unit in terms of frontage length and floorspace in relation to the overall size of the centre or a continuous stretch of units in a block;
- c) the distribution and proximity of non-shopping uses within a frontage. Non-shopping uses should be dispersed as much as possible in order to limit the harm to the shopping role and character of the centre. Proposals that result in, or add to a continuous stretch of 3 or more non-shopping uses will be less favourably considered as they will fragment the shopping frontage; and
- d) the nature and opening hours of the proposed use.

4.2.7 **Policy SP1 Sustainability** advises that proposals will be required to make a positive contribution to sustainable development by concentrating development in sustainable locations on brownfield land within the settlement boundary. They will be assessed as to their potential contribution to:

- i) the efficient use of land;
- ii) the reuse of previously developed land and empty properties in preference to greenfield sites;
- iii) providing integrated transportation systems, as well as encouraging the co-location of housing and other uses, including employment, which together will minimise the overall need to travel, reduce car usage and encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport;
- iv) reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency and the use of low and zero carbon energy sources;
- v) the minimisation, re-use and recycling of waste;
- vi) minimising the risk of and from flood risk, sea level rise and the impact of climate change;
- vii) improving facilities, services and overall social and environmental equality of existing and future communities;
- viii) encouraging economic diversification and in particular improving the vitality and viability of the city centre and district centres;
- ix) conserving, enhancing and linking green infrastructure, protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment;
- x) conserving and ensuring the efficient use of resources such as water and minerals.

4.2.8 **Policy SP18 Urban Regeneration** outlines that proposals will be favoured which assist the regeneration of the urban area, particularly where they contribute to:

- i) the vitality, viability and quality of the environment of the city centre;
- ii) the provision of residential and business opportunities within the urban area;
- iii) reuse of vacant, underused or derelict land;
- iv) encourage the development of community uses where appropriate.



4.2.9 **Policy SP19 Assessment of Retail Need** directs retail and associated uses according to the retail hierarchy of centres as follows 1. Newport City Centre 2. District Centres (this includes Newport Retail Park) 3. Local Centre and 4. Out of Centre Retail Sites.

4.2.10 **Policy GP2 General Development – General Amenity** states that development will be permitted where there will not be a significant adverse effect on local amenity (environmental) or detrimental to visual amenity.

4.3 Future Wales: National Plan 2040

4.3.1 Future Wales: National Plan 2040 is the Welsh National Development Framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a Development Plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system.

4.3.2 The Welsh Government (WG) has adopted a ‘Town Centre First’ approach and this is explored under Policy 6, where it is mentioned that significant new retail facilities must be located within town and city centres. Subsequently, developments of a ‘significant’ scale can broadly be defined as where the facility will serve a town, city or region-wide catchment.

4.4 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

4.4.1 Future Wales is the Welsh Government’s highest tier of development plan in Wales. Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole. Under policy one of this document, ‘where Wales will grow’, the Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales but highlights three National Growth Areas, one of which is ‘Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys’.

4.4.2 The Welsh Government (WG) has adopted a ‘Town Centre First’ approach and this is explored under Policy 6, where it is mentioned that significant new retail facilities must be located within town and city centres. Subsequently, developments of a ‘significant’ scale can broadly be defined as where the facility will serve a town, city or region-wide catchment. Planning authorities are encouraged to take a similar approach for smaller developments. A sequential approach must be used to inform the identification of the best location for these developments.

4.5 Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February 2024)

4.5.1 PPW12 advises on the role of retail centres and appropriate uses within them. Paragraph 4.3.30 states that although retailing (Class A1) uses should underpin retail and commercial centres, it is only one of the factors which contribute towards their vibrancy. Paragraph 4.3.31 goes on to advise that primary areas are typically characterised by a high proportion of A1 retail uses, and their designation requires an understanding of the existing distribution of uses in a centre together with careful



consideration of a centre's role and how it relates to the retail strategy for the area. Secondary areas typically contain mixed uses, for example shops, cafes and restaurants, financial establishments and other services and community facilities.

4.5.2 PPW12 places value on the economic development which generates economic prosperity and regeneration. Paragraph 5.4.2 defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long-term prosperity, jobs and incomes. It goes on to state that the growth of output and employment in Wales as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic uses. Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services.

4.5.3 Paragraph 5.4.4 confirms that wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration.

[Technical Advice Note 4: Retail and Commercial Development \(November 2016\)](#)

4.5.4 TAN4 (Paragraph 9.3) confirms that flexibility to expand or contract primary and secondary areas and to allow changes of use to attract investment and diversify the range of businesses is essential within vulnerable or declining centres.

[Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development \(February 2014\)](#)

4.5.5 TAN23 (Paragraph 1.2.1) confirms that it is essential that the planning system recognises, and gives due weight to, the economic benefits associated with new development. TAN23 (Paragraph 1.2.5) goes on to advise that LPAs should recognise market signals and have regard to the need to guide economic development to the most appropriate locations, rather than prevent or discourage such development.

[Newport Employment Land Review \(ELR\) \(February 2022\)](#)

4.5.6 Section 4 of the ELR considers the demand for land and property within Newport. It advises that Newport may be characterised by three distinctive market propositions:

- A resurgent logistics market focused on the M4 (east of the Bryn Glas Tunnels).
- Port related demand reflecting the strength of Newport Docks and capacity for growth.
- A strong technology/hybrid market combining component manufacture & office provision focused on out-of-town business parks.

4.5.7 The report advises that the Newport industrial sector remains strong with positive interest across a range of sites and encouraging wider signs of growing demand from inward investors, although lack of availability is constraining the area's ability to respond.



- 4.5.8 Newport's office market is described as positive, although it remains in the shadow of Cardiff and to some extent Bristol. The report suggests office enquiries are increasingly looking for high quality fit-out, flexibility in use of space and high-speed internet.

[Economic Resilience & Reconstruction Mission, Welsh Government \(2021\)](#)

- 4.5.9 This document has been developed in the context of dealing with the dual impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit and is an evolution of the Welsh Government Economic Action Plan.
- 4.5.10 The document advises that Town Centres can no longer rely on just retail to thrive and therefore as part of the 'Transforming Towns' agenda, new economic opportunities and employment must be brought back to Town Centres. This should be as part of a wider offering of leisure, learning, local services and cultural activities. Additionally, there is the opportunity to re-purpose Town Centre buildings to create regional co-working hubs, deconcentrating and relocating the workforce back into Town Centre locations when required.



5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. An assessment of the proposed development has been made against the relevant planning policy framework for the Site. Account has been taken of all relevant material considerations in respect of the following matters:

- Principle of Development
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Flood Risk
- Traffic and Transport
- Green Infrastructure

5.2 Principle of Development

5.2.1 The proposed development involves the re-use of an existing retail unit to the rear of the main shopping area of the Newport Retail Park.

5.2.2 The proposal to allow reoccupation of this unit, in the event that the current occupier Matalan decide to relocate to another unit in the near future, would help support existing businesses in the vicinity, facilitate further investment, development and potentially associated job opportunities in the area in line with the Welsh Government's mission to create economic resilience in Town Centres.

5.2.3 As Newport Retail Park is identified as a designated District Centre in the adopted LDP it is afforded some protection under LDP Policies R6 and R7

5.2.4 Policy R7 relates to proposals for non-retail uses in District Centres. The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 8.25 explains that where a change of use from an A1 retail unit to a non-shopping use is proposed, the assessment in terms of adverse effects should take account of the existing level and nature of non-shopping uses within the District Centre as a whole; the size of the retail unit in terms of frontage length and floorspace in relation to the overall size of the centre or a continuous stretch of units in a block; and the distribution and proximity of non-shopping uses within a frontage. Non-shopping uses should be dispersed as much as possible in order to limit the harm to the shopping role and character of the centre.

5.2.5 Newport Retail Park contains a high number of Class A1 uses. According to the Council's Retail & Leisure Study (2019) and the latest data within the report, the retail park comprises 21 comparison goods units (Class A1 non-food) and 2 convenience good units (Class A1 food) which equates to a total of 74.2% of the retail park offer. Other uses within



the retail park include retail services (travel agent and opticians), leisure services, and sui generis uses such as car showrooms. The retail study indicates that the vitality and viability of Newport Retail Park is stable. The study concludes that with a high proportion of national retailers and low vacancy rate, the Newport Retail Park appears to be functioning well as a retail destination, meeting the needs of the local population, as well as being a destination for residents from further afield, in terms of both convenience and comparison goods.

- 5.2.6 The existing retail unit, whilst within the District Centre boundary of the Newport Retail Park, lies outside and to the rear of the main shopping area of the park. The unit lies on its own and does not form part of a retail frontage. It has its own separate access road (Via Seven Stiles Avenue) and car park area. The character within this distinct section of the retail park comprise leisure uses, a car showroom and food outlets.
- 5.2.7 It is clear therefore that the proposed change from Class A1 use to a flexible mixed Class A1/B1/B2 use will not adversely impact the viability of the centre's retailing role or the character of the centre.

5.3 Sustainable Economic Development

5.3.1 Any consideration of the economic benefits of the proposed development has to be set within the adopted LDP's objectives to achieve a diverse economy that meets the needs of the people of Newport and those of the wider South East Wales economic region. The market evidence provided within the Newport ELR (February 2022) and the marketing narrative provided by agents Knight Frank demonstrate a demand for industrial and office development within this locality.

5.3.2 Key economic considerations in this instance include:

- Delivering additional investment into the Newport Retail Park, making productive use of a property in an existing retail area;
- Provision of employment opportunities for both full and part time workers;
- Increased revenue to the local authority through new business rates associated with the development.

5.3.3 The economic benefits of the proposed development are therefore significant.

5.4 Flood Risk

5.4.1 The application site lies entirely within Zone C1, as defined by the Development Advice Map (DAM) referred to in Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (TAN15) (July 2004). NRW Flood Map information, which is updated on a quarterly basis, confirms the site to be within the 0.5% (1 in 200 year) and 0.1% (1 in 1000 year) annual probability tidal flood outlines of the River Usk, which is a designated main river.



5.4.2 Given that the proposals relate to the change of use of an existing low vulnerability use to another and that there is no increased flood risk, it is considered that national requirements for assessing development in a flood risk can be satisfied.

5.5 Traffic and Transport

5.5.1 The site is highly accessible by both private vehicle and public transport. It is serviced by an existing car park available on-site. Given the application is not proposing the creation of additional floorspace it is not considered that the proposed development will generate a higher number of trips than the previous use of the unit generated. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on highways or parking.

5.6 Green Infrastructure

5.6.1 The proposed application will not create any additional buildings or floor space and will not negatively impact on the existing environment. The existing soft landscaping on the site will remain in situ.



6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 CarneySweeney have been instructed by Glenbrook CP Limited to submit a full planning application in respect of the existing Matalan unit at Seven Stiles Avenue, Newport, NP19 4TX.
- 6.1.2 The site is situated to the rear of the main shopping area of Newport Retail Park but within the defined District Centre boundary of the retail park. The site comprises an existing retail unit currently occupied by Matalan and associated car parking.
- 6.1.3 Planning Permission is sought for the following:

'Change of Use from Class A1 (non-food retail) to Class B1 (Business) and/or Class B2 (General Industrial) and/or B8 (Storage) and/or Class A1 (non-food retail).'

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The development proposals have been shown to accord with national and local policy requirements relating to the principle of the proposed development and other material considerations.
- 6.2.2 Taking into account all the above matters, the proposal is regarded as a sustainable development located in an appropriate location and considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the statutory Development Plan and other material considerations. As such, planning permission should be granted without delay.

