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<b>Application Number:</b>	20/03286/3FUL
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<b>Application Type:</b>	Full Application
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<b>Proposal Description:</b>	Formation of a 20-space car park for the council's new fleet of EV cars along with a solar panel canopy covering the area.
<b>At:</b>	Civic Offices, Waterdale

<b>For:</b>	Richard Smith – Property Services
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<b>Third Party Reps:</b>	None	<b>Parish:</b>	N/A
		<b>Ward:</b>	Town

<b>Author of Report:</b>	Nicola Howarth
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## SUMMARY

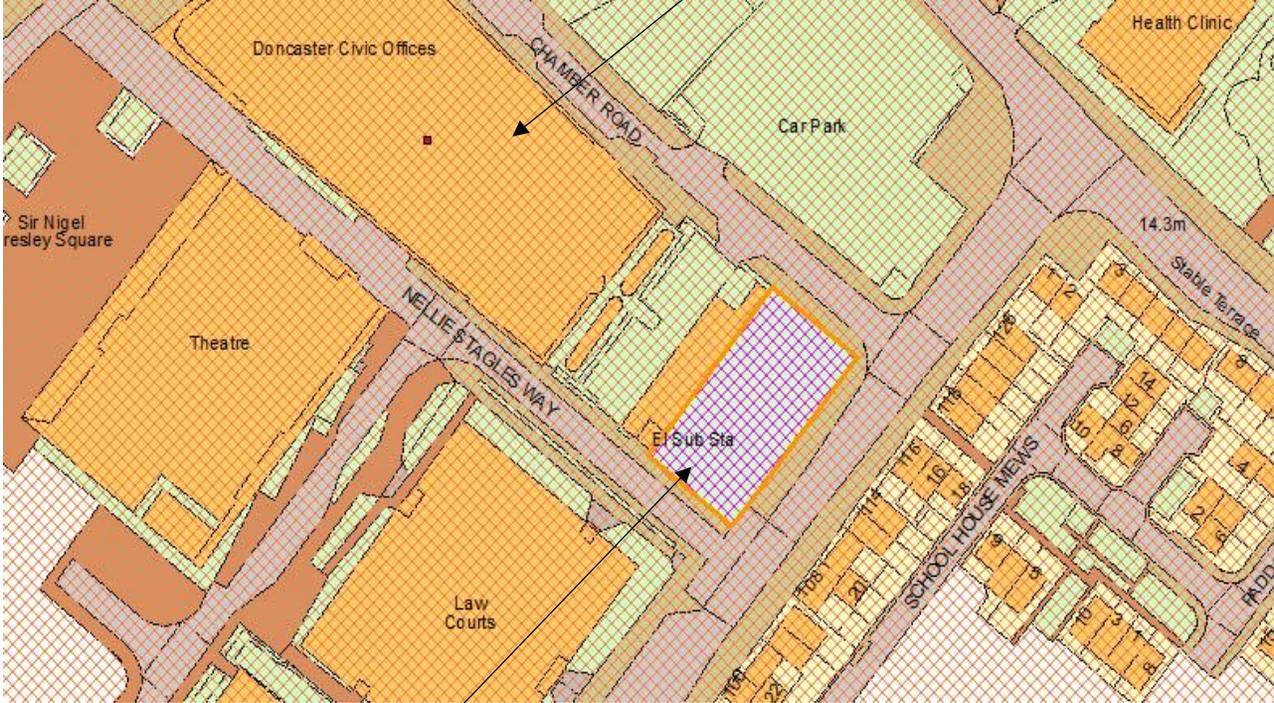
The application relates to the proposed formation of a 20-space car park for the DMBC's new fleet of EV cars together with a solar panel canopy covering the area.

The proposed car park is located to the rear of the Civic Office on land currently used as a contractor's compound. The site lies within an Office Policy Area where such uses are assessed on their merits, with regard to highway safety and the relationship of the site to surrounding uses.

Having considered the planning merits of this application, the development is judged not to cause harm to neighbouring properties, the highway network or the wider visual amenity of the area and there are no material planning considerations that would demonstrably indicate that the application should be refused. The proposal is recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION: GRANT planning permission subject to conditions**

**DMBC Civic  
Offices**



**Application Site**

## **1.0 Reason for Report**

- 1.1 This application is being presented to planning committee because the applicant is an internal Council department.

## **2.0 Proposal**

- 2.1 Planning Permission is being sought to construct a car park for the use of the DMBC's fleet of electric cars together with a solar canopy. The car park will be constructed in grey bitumen and the canopy will be constructed in grey brick with timber fascia. The canopy design is a new 'solar canopy' - a flat roof structure, covering the car park area, fixed with solar panels. It is envisaged that this will provide a significant amount of power to support the EV fleet and help the council achieve its sustainability and biodiversity goals.
- 2.2 The proposed materials, used for this development, have been selected to complement the 'green' image of the project as well as its immediate surroundings. Corner columns, adjacent to College Road, have been surrounded by grey coloured brick. This will help the canopy tie-in with the existing service building, just behind the car park. A timber cladding fascia has been fixed to the canopy to soften its appearance and give a more natural feel to the structure. The solar canopy will be approximately 5m high at its highest point and 3.2m high fronting College Road. The overall size of the development is 45 metres long by 21 metres wide.
- 2.3 The new parking location will support the electrification of the Council's fleet with Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and provide access for the efficient collection and return of vehicles for Civic Office and town centre based staff. The application site is considered the most appropriate location, given its location next to the Civic Offices and easily accessible associated infrastructure for the charging and maintenance of the electric vehicles.
- 2.4 The proposals include:
- 20 EV Charging Bay (10 charge points).
  - 2 accessible spaces.
  - Solar panel flat roof canopy with timber fascia positioned facing South-East to ensure optimum amount of sunlight.
  - New tree planting to the North-East side.
  - Low level planting to the front and south of the site.
  - Vehicular access through the car park will be one way. Cars enter via Nellie Stagles Way and leave via Chamber Road.
- 2.5 The application follows after temporary planning permission was granted for a car park at Scarborough House (20/01206/3FUL). The sale of the Council House car park required the Council to relocate its fleet of 39 pool cars and other vehicles to a new location within the Civic Quarter/ Town Centre. This site will provide 20 spaces with an EV charge point shared between making a total of 10 charge points. The council's fleet will consist of 39 EVs, the other 19 being parked at the recently approved development at the former Scarborough House site.

- 2.6 The new parking location will support the electrification of the Council's fleet with Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and continue to provide access for the efficient collection and return of vehicles for Civic Office and town centre based staff.
- 2.7 This application is for a long term development and allows for an 'all electric' fleet to be parked and charged as well as the site being suitable for the construction of a 91kw solar carport, which can provide zero carbon generated electricity to the cars and the Civic Office.
- 2.8 The proposals were drafted and designed in consultation with the Planning Services Conservation Officer, Tree Officer, Local Plan team and urban designer. Along with Safer Roads, Strategic Asset Management and Parking Services.

### **3.0 Site Description**

- 3.1 The application site is in Doncaster Town Centre. It lies immediately behind the Civic Office, along College Road. It is in close proximity to the Law Courts, the former museum, the new museum and library, Cast Theatre and Savoy cinema and restaurants. A public car park lies immediately to the north of the site. The Gables, a relatively new modern housing development is opposite to the east of the site. The Law Courts lie to the south and DMBC Civic Office lies to the west.
- 3.2 Prior to being used as a construction site compound there was no development on the site and it was grassed over.
- 3.3 The site is in Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency's Flood Maps, and is therefore at low risk of flooding.

### **4.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 4.1 08/02535/OUTA – Outline application for development of mixed use Civic and Cultural Quarter on approx. 11.2ha of land (Comprising of new performance venue, public library, civic offices, A1/A2/A3/A4 retail, B1 offices, D2 Leisure uses, C1 Hotels, C3 residential, public open space)

### **5.0 Site Allocation**

- 5.1 The site is allocated as Office Policy Area as defined by the Proposals Maps of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (adopted in 1998).
- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions and the relevant sections are outlined below:
- 5.4 Paragraph 2 states that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.5 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
  - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
  - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.6 Paragraphs 122 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account where sustainable transport is promoting.
- 5.7 Paragraph 102 states that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals opportunities from existing transport infrastructure and changing transport technology and usage.
- 5.8 Paragraph 104 states that planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses in terms of sustainable transport, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping and other activities.
- 5.9 Paragraph 105 adds to this further stating that policies should take into account both the type, mix and use of development, as well as the need to ensure an adequate provision for charging plug-in and other ultra- low emission vehicles.
- 5.10 Paragraph 110 also states that developments should be designed to enable charging on plug in vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.
- 5.11 Paragraph 108 states that when assessing sites it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, given the type of development and its location.
- 5.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the impact upon the road network would be severe.
- 5.13 In terms of Town Centre development, paragraph 85 states that planning policies should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of development likely to needed.
- 5.14 Paragraph 120 states that planning decision need to reflect changes in the demand for land.

## 5.15 Core Strategy 2011 – 2028

5.16 To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (see section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

5.17 In May of 2012 the LDF Core Strategy was adopted and this replaced many of the policies of the Unitary Development Plan; some UDP policies remain in force (for example those relating to the Countryside Policy Area) and will continue to sit alongside Core Strategy Policies until such time as the Local Plan is adopted. Core Strategy policies relevant to this proposal are:

5.18 Policy CS1 relates to the quality of accommodation and development within Doncaster. It makes it clear that development should be accessible by a range of transport modes. Developments should also be designed to work with their surroundings which protects and enhances the built and natural environment.

5.19 Policy CS14 relates to design and sustainable construction and states that all proposals in Doncaster must be of high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness, reinforces the character of local landscapes and building traditions, responds positively to existing site features and integrates well with its immediate and surrounding local area.

5.20 Policy CS8 refers to Doncaster Town Centre. It states that regeneration should be focused to development opportunities at the Civic and Cultural Quarter.

5.21 Policy CS9 refers to Travel Choice, stating that parking in the Town Centre will be appropriately managed to support vitality and viability as well as reflecting local priorities.

## 5.22 Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies (Adopted 1998)

5.23 Policy TC11 refers to the Office Policy Area which states that proposals for other uses will be treated on their merits having regard to highway safety and the relationship of the site to surrounding uses, providing that they are consistent with other policies in the plan, particularly shopping and conservation.

5.24 Policy TC21 states that within Doncaster Town Centre the accommodation of adequate car parking facilities should reflect the balance needed between short and long stay parking; highway capacity; environmental factors and highway safety.

5.25 Policy TC24 states that proposals within the town centre should be considered in relation to the Council's current car parking standards and the need to maintain commercial attractiveness.

## 5.26 Local Plan

5.27 The Local Plan has been formally submitted for examination on 4th March 2020 and an Inspector has been appointed therefore the Local Plan is now under examination. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that the LPA may give weight depending on the stage of the Local Plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the

weight that may be given). When the local plan was published under Regulation 19 in August 2019, all of the policies were identified as carrying 'limited weight' for the purposes of determining planning applications. Taking into account the remaining stages of the local plan process, it is considered the following levels of weight are appropriate between now and adoption dependant on the level of unresolved objections:

- Substantial
- Moderate
- Limited

5.28 The Local Plan is now advanced to the latter stages of the Examination in Public, and consultation on proposed Main Modifications to the Plan concluded on Sunday 21 March 2021. The Council is aiming to adopt the Local Plan by Summer/Autumn 2021. The following policies are considered appropriate in assessing this proposal and consideration has been given to the level of outstanding objections resulting in appropriate weight attributed to each policy:

5.29 Policy 1 reinforces the guidance within the NPPF in that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy is afforded limited weight as there are outstanding unresolved objections and the Council has, through the examination, proposed the policy is deleted entirely via a Main Modification to the Plan.

5.30 Policy 15 relates to Town Centre parking and states that car parks should be managed in favour of short stay car parking with supply aligned to meet operational demand. The policy states that car park development will only be permitted where it provides efficient parking, which makes the best use of the land; is of high quality; discourages all day commuter car parking; well-designed for the provision of disabled drivers; and includes sustainable refuelling infrastructure such as EV Charging points. This policy is afforded substantial weight, as there are no unresolved objections.

5.31 The site is allocated under Site Ref 841 in the Emerging Local Plan, which relates to Policy 69: Key Doncaster Town Centre and Main Urban Area Mixed-Use Sites.

5.32 Policy 69 states that the allocation aims to become a 'central business district' that will build on the existing civic developments. Future development will include a mixture of uses including high-density housing; Grade A offices; education facilities; new library; leisure uses **and additional parking provision**. Development will be expected to follow the high architectural standard and quality public realm delivered in the earlier phases. This policy can be afforded substantial weight, as there are no unresolved objections.

5.33 Policy 59 states that low carbon and renewable energy proposals will be supported where they have no unacceptable adverse effects on highway safety and infrastructure. This policy is afforded moderate weight as there are no significant unresolved objections.

#### 5.34 Neighbourhood Plan

5.35 There is no Neighbourhood Plan for this area.

#### 5.36 Other Material Planning Considerations

- Development Requirements and Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015)
- National Planning Policy Guidance

### **6.0 Representations**

6.1 This application has been advertised in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England)) Order 2015 as follows:

6.2 Site Notice

6.3 No representations have been received in response to the application publicity.

### **7.0 Parish Council**

7.1 No Parish Council for this area

### **8.0 Relevant Consultations**

8.1 **DMBC Area Manager** – No Comments received.

8.2 **DMBC Ecology** - Noting that the area proposed for this development is currently a site office and compound and formally, amenity grassland there is no appreciable biodiversity value to the site that would be lost through the development. Impacts on urban wildlife such as birds and bats would be insignificant. Where solar farms are constructed in rural situations there can be some impact on larger mammals and invertebrates. However, in this urban situation this will very likely not be the case. The proposed planting in the landscape scheme will provide a significant uplift in the biodiversity value of the site with trees and lower growing plants that could be used by foraging birds and bats and pollinating insects. No additional lighting is proposed which also favours urban wildlife. No objections on ecological grounds and no conditions.

8.3 **DMBC Economic Development** – No comments received.

8.4 **DMBC Environmental Health** - No comments

8.5 **DMBC Highways** - No comments received.

8.6 **DMBC Urban Design** -. Expressed concern the car park was to be built on a site identified as having the potential for offices and has outline planning permission for such use as part of the CCQ outline application. A car park and carport will not, in urban design terms, create the level of activity and strong active street frontage to College Road that an office building scale of development (or other similar use) would do. However, it is recognised that the current office market is challenging in the town

centre and there are other more important sites where new offices may be focused. The relatively temporary nature of the structure also does not preclude development in the longer term future if development economics get to a point where a more vibrant use could be developed on the site and / or the additional multi storey is built at Chamber Road.

- 8.7 The proposal has obvious benefits in terms of electrifying the Council's fleet and making the pool cars and access to them more safe and secure. Also moving the pool cars to this site does help to free up the larger College Rd car park for development which should be of more benefit to the town centre than the current car park. If the use is acceptable in principle, I have very little issue with the design.
- 8.8 The Urban Designer requested a landscape plan be submitted as part of the application together with a management plan. This has been submitted and the Officer is satisfied with the landscape and management proposals. Materials and finishes would require planning condition.
- 8.9 **South Yorkshire Police Architectural Liaison Officer** - No objections or comments to make in relation to the design, layout and security of this property.

## **9.0 Assessment**

9.1 The principal issues for consideration under this application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Impact upon Residential and Visual Amenity
- Impact upon Highways
- Other Considerations

9.2 For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

### Principle of Development

- 9.3 The application site is allocated as Office Policy Area in the adopted UDP 1998. Policy TC11 states that for uses other than offices, proposals will be treated on their merits in regard to highway safety and the relationship of the site to surrounding uses.
- 9.4 The application proposes to create a relatively small car park, which will be used to accommodate the DMBC Electric Pool Car fleet. The main works associated with the development include the provision of a hard surfaced area with Electric vehicle charging points with a solar canopy over.
- 9.5 On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Doncaster Council Committee unanimously voted to pass the Motion to declare a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and to establish a Local

Commission. Following this, Doncaster's Commission on the Climate and Biodiversity was formed. Findings from the commission will inform Team Doncaster's new Borough Strategy in 2020, which will outline opportunities to accelerate progress towards a net-zero carbon and regenerative place. The Commission published an Interim Position Statement in July 2020.

- 9.6 Page 10 of this document makes reference to the current activity which the Council are undertaking as part of the climate agenda and particularly refers to the replacement of Doncaster Council *'diesel pool cars and a selection of light commercial vans with electric vehicles in 2020'*. It builds on this further referring to the *'development of a dedicated EV-only fleet car park at the Council's Civic Office and the redevelopment of Scarborough House car park with 39 EV charge points (subject to planning)'*.
- 9.7 This proposal is part of a masterplan, proposed by the Transportation/ Energy Department, to develop the land to the rear of the Civic Office to provide for 20 EV Charging spaces. Not all of the pool cars are to be accommodated at the Civic Office and planning permission was previously granted for additional EV Pool Cars at the Scarborough House development. These details were approved by Planning Committee last year.
- 9.8 Policy TC11 makes it clear that proposals should have regard to its surroundings. The application proposal is very closely associated with the existing office use at the Civic Building and the outline planning permission for the civic building and the wider civic and cultural quarter defined the site as office use. Clearly, the pool cars need to be accommodated within close proximity to the office and therefore the application site is ideally located. Although typically the use of vehicles to commute to the Town Centre is discouraged, the use of Council Pool Cars is required by various departments, in order to undertake site visits/home visits etc. Therefore, the proposed use must be within close walking distance of the Civic Office.
- 9.9 Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered an acceptable use within the town centre and would therefore adhere to Policy TC11 consequently, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable and this weighs considerably in favour of the application. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations.
- 9.10 Impact Upon Residential and Visual Amenity
- 9.11 Policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy states that 'new development should have no unacceptable negative effects upon the amenity of neighbouring land uses or the environment' and paragraph 127 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decision should create places that have a high standards of amenity for existing and future users . Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2019) indicates, amongst other things, that the planning system needs to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring well-designed and safe built environments, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- 9.12 The proposed development is in close proximity to existing residential housing. However, the site is closely associated with the civic office building and within a highly urban location, near to other car parks. The scale of the car parking is relatively small

and given that the primary use of the proposed car park is the accommodation of the Council's Pool Car fleet, these will predominantly be used during typical office hours, limiting the comings and goings from the car park during anti-social hours. The use of the EV Charging Points will be controlled and managed by the Council's enforcement team. Therefore, it is not anticipated that proposal will encourage anti-social behaviour.

- 9.13 Based on the above considerations, the proposed development is not considered to harmfully affect residential amenity.
- 9.14 The addition of the car park is judged not to cause visual harm to the character of the surrounding area. The use would be located alongside another other car park and office related uses. The only structure proposed as part of the development is the solar canopy, which is single storey height and open in nature. The proposed materials, grey brick and timber cladding will complement the immediate surroundings. The grey brick will help the canopy tie-in with the existing service building, just behind the car park. A timber cladding fascia has been fixed to the canopy to soften its appearance and give the frontage a natural look.
- 9.15 A proposed landscaping and landscape management plan has been provided. The Council's Ecologist and Urban Design Officer are satisfied with the proposals and the Council's Ecologist is supportive of the car park. There are no trees on the site and the proposal will not impact the existing trees which are located on the pavement outside of the site boundary. The planting areas for the site are designed to be mainly low height with taller shrubs scattered throughout. This is to maintain visibility and allow light into the car park. This will help with the areas security and safety for drivers and pedestrians.
- 9.16 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring residential properties through excessive disturbance or loss of privacy, given the scale and nature of the use proposed. The application site is in a sustainable location which is well connected to the civic offices. The landscaping proposals will enhance the built form and help it assimilate into the street scene mitigating any negative visual amenity and environmental impact.
- 9.17 Highways
- 9.18 Policies CS1 and CS14 of the Core Strategy require development to be of a high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness and that integrates well with its immediate surroundings. These policies also ensure that amenity is protected and highway safety not harmed.
- 9.19 There has been no objection to the proposals from Highways DC Officer. The proposed development has included the required number of accessible spaces. Vehicular access through the car park will be one way. Cars will enter via Nellie Stagles Way and leave via Chamber Road. A tracking plan provided with the scheme shows approximate vehicle tracking of a car pulling into a space and another reversing out of a space and leaving the car park. The development therefore complies with the above policies.

## 9.20 Other Considerations

### 9.21 Environmental Benefits

9.22 The replacement of existing diesel pool cars to provide a fleet of electric vehicles is a clear improvement in terms of environmental sustainability and will assist in reducing the carbon footprint created by the Council and its activities. Adopted Policy CS14 states that developments should be designed so that they are environmentally responsible and well managed. Policy CS18 states that proposals will be supported which reduce air pollution and promote more sustainable transport options and where relevant incorporate low emission technologies and cleaner transport fuels.

9.22 The proposed development will facilitate the electrification of the Council's fleet vehicles ensuring that when DMBC staff undertake site visits etc, there will no negative impact upon the local environment.

9.23 Paragraph 8 (c) of the NPPF (2019) indicates, amongst other things, that the planning system needs to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

9.24 The application proposal is not considered to harmfully impact the environment and helps to address the climate change agenda. The proposed development will facilitate the accommodation of the Council's future fleet of EV Pool Cars, which will therefore improve the Council's output in terms of carbon footprint, and will be in accordance with Emerging Policies relating to climate change.

9.25 Therefore the proposal will have a positive impact upon the environment. This weighs substantially in favour of the application.

## **10.0 PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION**

10.1 In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2019) the proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Officers have identified no harm that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits identified when considered against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The proposal is compliant with the adopted development plan and adopted policies and there are no material considerations which indicate the application should be refused.

## **11.0 RECOMMENDATION**

### **11.1 GRANT planning permission subject to conditions:**

01. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

#### **REASON**

Condition required to be imposed by Section 91(as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted must be carried out and completed entirely in accordance with the terms of this permission and the details shown on the approved plans listed below:
- Location Plan
  - Pool Car Relocation Plan (Site Plan) – Project number PQ2720 Drawing number A02 dated 26.11.2020
  - Maintenance plan for soft Landscape works – received 08<sup>th</sup> March 2021

REASON

To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.

03. The planting scheme shown on Drawing PQ2720 L01 hereby approved, shall be implemented in the first available planting season after commencement of development. The local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing within 7 working days of completion of the landscape works to the required standard and the completion shall be subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the approved document 5 year maintenance plan, March 2021 for a minimum of five years. Any landscape which is defective, damaged or removed within five years of establishment shall be replaced.

REASON

In the interests of environmental quality.

04. Before above ground or structural building works commence, product details and samples of the proposed external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved materials and details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

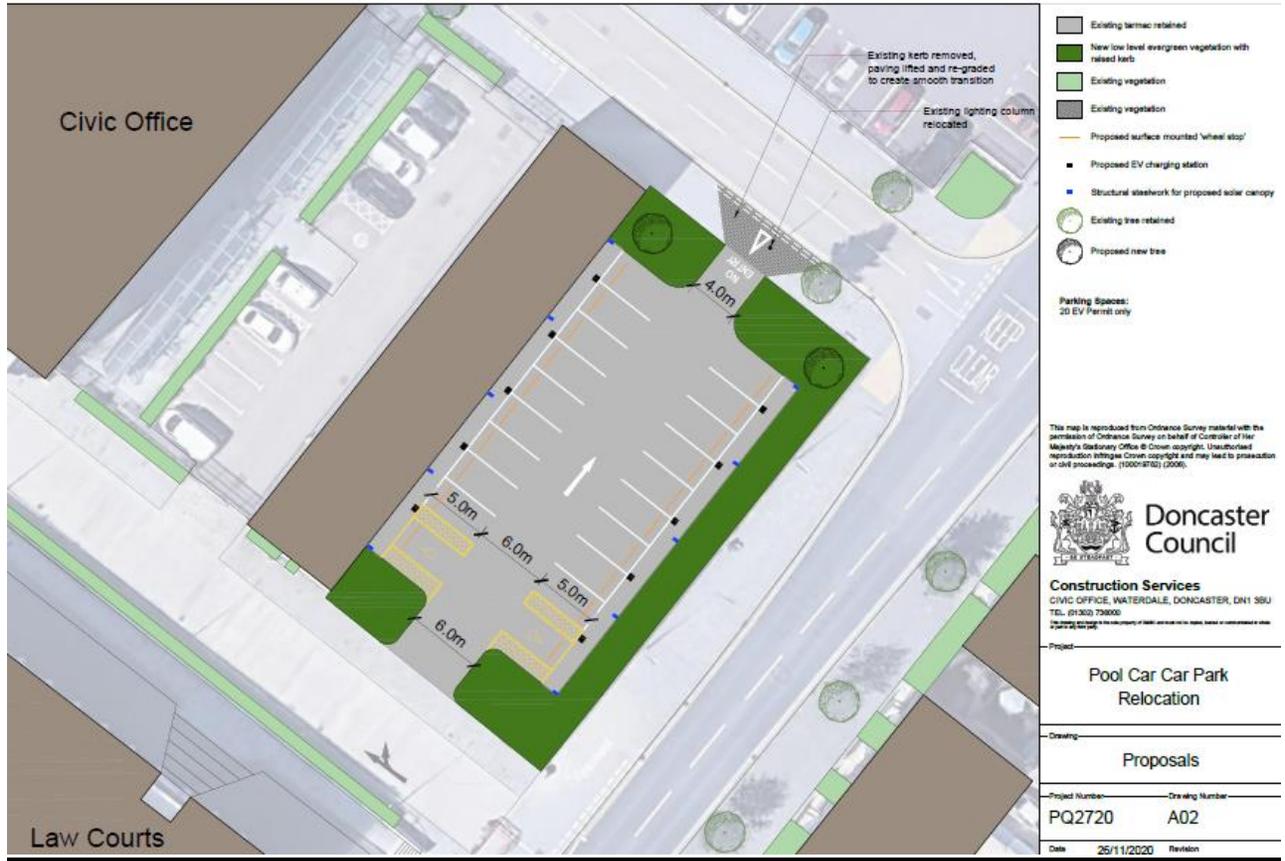
05. The development hereby granted shall not be begun until details of the foul, surface water and land drainage systems and all related works necessary to drain the site have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These works shall be carried out concurrently with the development and the drainage system shall be operating to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to the development being brought into use.

REASON

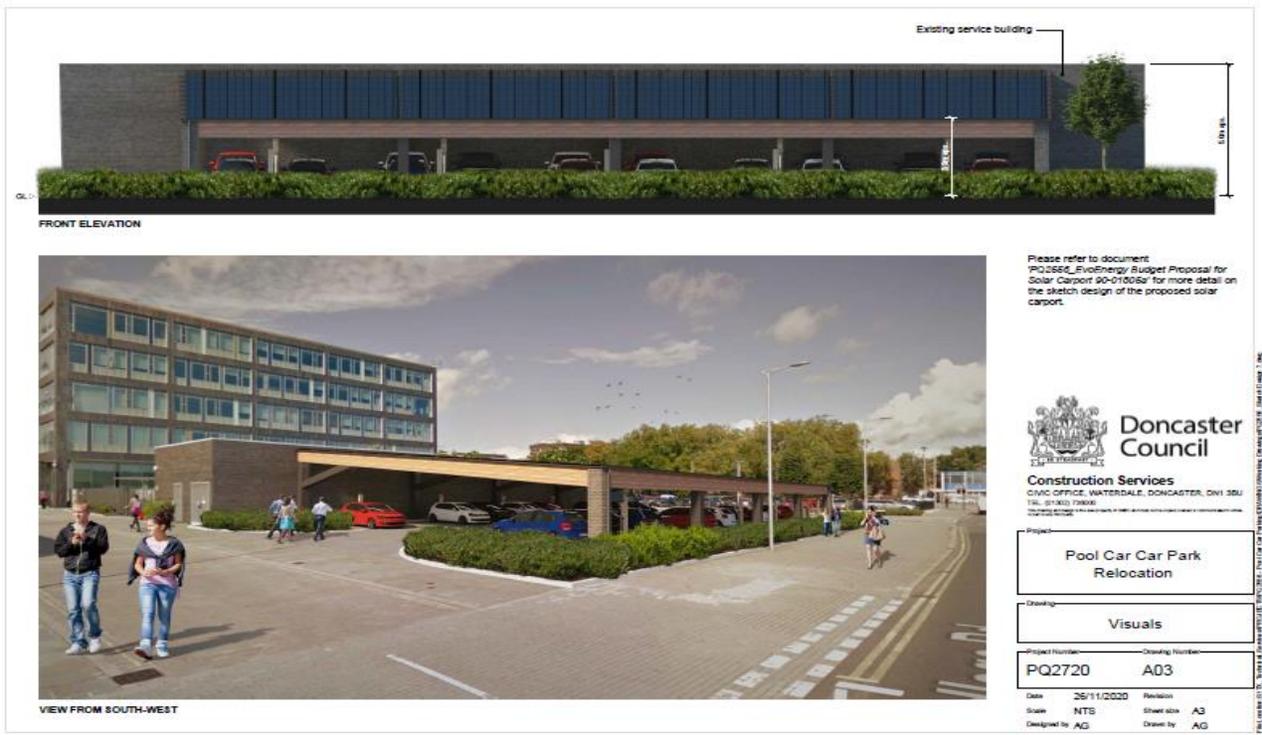
To ensure that the site is connected to suitable drainage systems and to ensure that full details thereof are approved by the Local Planning Authority before any works begin.

**The above objections, consideration and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence**

# APPENDIX 1- Site Proposals



# Visual Elevations



# Vehicle Tracking Plan

