

DELEGATED

Report to Planning Committee 9 September 2026 Report of Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth

26/1069/RET

Lidl , Billingham Road, Norton

Expiry Date: 11 August 2026

Extension of Time Date: 9 September 2026

Summary

Retrospective planning permission is sought for the installation of 4no ANPR cameras to existing lighting columns.

There have been a number of objections to the application from the wider area of Stockton and also from a SBC Councillor.

The application has been assessed in full and it is not considered that the scheme has an adverse impact on the character of the area or wider conservation area/listed buildings, nor does it impact on neighbours' privacy and amenity. All material considerations have been considered in full and there are no valid reasons to refuse the application.

The application is recommended for approval with conditions.

Recommendations

That planning application 26/1069/RET be approved subject to the following conditions and informatives;

01 Approved Plans

The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s);

Plan Reference Number	Date Received
08237-ZZ-XX-DR-A-900001 P2	16 June 2026
08237 ZZ-XX-DR-A-990003 P2	21 August 2026

Reason: To define the consent.

Informative Reason for Planning Approval

Informative: Working Practices

The Local Planning Authority found the submitted details satisfactory subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application.

Site and Surroundings

1. The application site is the Lidl Store on Billingham Road in Norton. The site can be accessed from Billingham Road and also from the High Street in Norton.

2. Norton Conservation Area is to the south and west, with the entrance falling in the boundaries. There are a number of listed buildings to the south and south east and Norton Medical Centre is to the north.
3. The Store backs onto Billingham Road and there is landscaping alongside the boundary to the west.

Proposal

4. Retrospective planning permission is sought for the erection of four ANPR cameras in the car park area of the store. None of the cameras fall within the conservation area boundary.
5. There is one at the entrance from the high street on an existing pole, one on the canopy area close to the entrance of the store and two on a pole adjacent to the western boundary close to the entrance from Billingham Road

Consultations

6. Consultees were notified and the following comments were received.
7. Highways Transport & Design Manager
Highways Comments: There are no highway objections to the installation of 4no ANPR cameras to existing columns.
8. SBC Environmental Health
I have checked the documentation provided, have found no grounds for objection in principle to the development and do not think that conditions need to be imposed from an Environmental Health perspective.
9. Councillor Barry Woodhouse
I wish to object to the above application on the following grounds
 - As I understand it advertisements of more than 0.5m area require planning permission and to erect the signs mentioned without permission may be an offence
 - The signs and cameras are in a conservation area of Norton although clear signage is required by law there appears to be a significant over provision
 - The cameras appear to be placed at an excessive height which again appears out of character in the conservation area
 - The restrictions placed upon the time limits may both force parking elsewhere and damage the trading possibilities of other retailers in this historic area
 - The layout of both signs and cameras do in my opinion damage the amenity of the area, are visually intrusive and should require at least a reduction in provision
 - I would therefore ask that refusal which is sometimes difficult or at least not be determined further investigations are undertaken into the erection and placing of equipment by companies by either officers and or members of this Council
10. Historic Buildings Officer
No comment received
11. Norton Village Association
No comments received

Publicity

12. Neighbours were notified by individual letters and wider publicity has been given via press advert/site notice. 18 objections have been received across both applications from residents in the wider Stockton area and a summary of the comments received are listed below.
- Concerns over the company and their practices
 - Concerns this is a retrospective application
 - Visual Clutters from the camera and signs
 - Concerns about privacy, surveillance and the capture of images beyond the private car park.
 - Impact on current outstanding parking charges that have been issued
 - Concerns they have not paid for the applications

Planning Policy Considerations

13. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plan is the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Local Plan 2019.
14. Section 143 of the Localism Act came into force on the 15 January 2012 and requires the Local Planning Authority to take local finance considerations into account, this section s70(2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended requires in dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application and c) any other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework

15. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic social and environmental objectives (Paragraph 17).
16. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The national decision-making policies in the Framework are a material consideration in making decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan.
17. Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements, as must the preparation of development plans

18. The national decision-making policies should be read as a whole (including relevant footnotes and annexes). Some of these policies indicate how much weight the government would expect a particular consideration to be given, including cases where it is appropriate to give substantial weight to certain benefits, and the limited circumstances in which it is expected that permission would be refused.
19. The following policies are relevant to this application

DM3: Determining development proposals

1. When considering development proposals, local planning authorities should:

- a. Work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals, to enable a timely decision;
- b. Take a proportionate approach to the consideration of the planning matters raised by the proposals, in a way that reflects their scale, complexity and potential impact;
- c. Take account of planning matters raised during any pre-application engagement, including any positive responses to this engagement, as well as representations on the proposals;
- d. Consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal;
- e. Consider whether otherwise unacceptable development proposals could be made acceptable through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations; and
- f. Not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to their accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations.

DM8: Unauthorised development and enforcement

1. Where there has been unauthorised development and local planning authorities are considering whether enforcement action is expedient, they should take account of their local enforcement plan, the impact of the breach of planning control, and the extent to which the breach would otherwise be acceptable.
2. In cases of unauthorised development where consideration is being given to an application for retrospective planning permission (or through an enforcement appeal, whether to grant planning permission in respect of a breach of planning control), if it is concluded based on evidence that the unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should be given substantial weight in considering whether to grant planning permission.

NB The Consultation states that it responds to long-standing concerns about the integrity of the planning system being undermined by retrospective permissions. The policy does not mean that retrospective applications would be automatically refused. It will remain a matter of planning judgment for the decision-maker to decide whether to grant planning permission in light of the circumstances of each case.

DP3: Key principles for well-designed places

1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where

appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation 95 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.

Local Planning Policy

20. The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application.

Strategic Development Strategy Policy 1 (SD1) - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

1. In accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), when the Council considers development proposals it will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:
 - Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or,
 - Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Strategic Development Strategy Policy 8 (SD8) - Sustainable Design Principles

1. The Council will seek new development to be designed to the highest possible standard, taking into consideration the context of the surrounding area and the need to respond positively to the:
 - a. Quality, character and sensitivity of the surrounding public realm, heritage assets, and nearby buildings, in particular at prominent junctions, main roads and town centre gateways;
 - b. Landscape character of the area, including the contribution made by existing trees and landscaping;
 - c. Need to protect and enhance ecological and green infrastructure networks and assets;
 - d. Need to ensure that new development is appropriately laid out to ensure adequate separation between buildings and an attractive environment;
 - e. Privacy and amenity of all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - f. Existing transport network and the need to provide safe and satisfactory access and parking for all modes of transport;
 - g. Need to reinforce local distinctiveness and provide high quality and inclusive design solutions, and

- h. Need for all development to be designed inclusively to ensure that buildings and spaces are accessible for all, including people with disabilities.
2. New development should contribute positively to making places better for people. They should be inclusive and establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.
3. All proposals will be designed with public safety and the desire to reduce crime in mind, incorporating, where appropriate, advice from the Health and Safety Executive, Secured by Design, or any other appropriate design standards.

Historic Environment Policy 2 (HE2) - Conserving and Enhancing Stockton's Heritage Assets

1. In order to promote and enhance local distinctiveness, the Council will support proposals which positively respond to and enhance heritage assets.
2. Where development has the potential to affect heritage asset(s) the Council require applicants to undertake an assessment that describes the significance of the asset(s) affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation will also be required where development on a site which includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest. Applicants are required to detail how the proposal has been informed by assessments undertaken.
3. Development proposals should conserve and enhance heritage assets, including their setting, in a manner appropriate to their significance. Where development will lead to harm to or loss of significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset the proposal will be considered in accordance with Policy SD8, other relevant Development Plan policies and prevailing national planning policy.
- c. Conservation Areas - Billingham Green; Bute Street; Cowpen Bewley; Eaglescliffe with Preston; Egglecliffe, Hartburn; Norton; Stockton Town Centre; Thornaby Green; Wolviston and Yarm
- d. Listed Buildings

Material Planning Considerations

21. The main material planning considerations of this application include the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the conservation and wider area and impact on neighbours.
22. The automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras have been erected within the car parking area of the food store which surrounded by commercial properties to the north and south and residential premises to the west. The car park is surrounded by Norton conservation area with listed buildings to the south and west.
23. The poles and cameras are fairly discreet and not located within the conservation area although they are close to the boundaries, however given the scale and location of the ANPR cameras it is not considered that they would have a significant adverse visual impact on the conservation area or the wider area given this is a private commercial car park serving an existing food store. There is substantial screening on the western boundary which means the cameras are not highly visible outside the boundaries at the car park.
24. Given the location and size of the ANPR cameras It is therefore considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the conservation area or the surrounding wider area.

25. No objections have been received from the immediate neighbours and given the discreet positioning of these cameras as it is not considered they would have an adverse impact on residents and their amenity. The cameras are fixed and facing the car park and access roads and there is no impact on private amenity areas.
26. Concerns have been raised regarding the operator and their practices however this is not a matter to be considered by this planning department nor are the legality of the existing fines.
27. Concerns have been raised that this is a retrospective permission however the planning system specifically allows someone to apply for planning permission after work has been carried out and this is provided for under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is a mechanism used to regularise development that was carried out without permission.
28. Whilst the proposal is retrospective and Policy DM8 of the new NPPF states *“if it is concluded based on evidence that the unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should be given substantial weight in considering whether to grant planning permission”*, this is not a reason for refusal. As explained in the consultation documents the policy does not mean that retrospective applications would be automatically refused. It will remain a matter of planning judgment for the decision-maker to decide whether to grant planning permission in light of the circumstances of each case. Therefore the fact that this is retrospective would not be a reason to refuse the application and the application has to be considered on its merits. It should also be noted that despite concerns raised, the application has been submitted with the appropriate plans and has paid the required fee.
29. Concerns have been raised that the signs and cameras could be distracting to drivers however the cameras are erected above the eye line of drivers and are not distracting. Accordingly, the Highway Transport and Design Manager has raised no objections on highway or pedestrian safety grounds
30. The cameras have been directed on this private car park to ensure with those using the car park are shopping in the Lidl store and it is not used for general parking for the Norton area. This is a private car park and the restrictions in place are at the discretion of the owners and this would not be a reason to refuse the application.

Conclusion

31. In conclusion is not considered that the proposed APNR cameras have a significant adverse impact on the conservation or wider area or on immediate neighbours and it is not considered that the scheme is unacceptable.
32. In view of the considerations set out within this report, the application is recommended to Approved with Conditions.

Financial Implications

No known implications to the Council .

Environmental Implications

See report .

Legal Implications

No known implications to the Council .

Community Safety Implications

The provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report. There are no implications.

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward and Ward Councillors

Ward	Norton Central
Ward Councillor	Councillor Lisa Evans
Ward Councillor	Councillor S I Nelson LLB(Hons) BA (Hons)

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance
Stockton on Tees Local Plan Adopted 2019

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