

[REDACTED]

From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories: [REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0228 Site Address: Spring Shopping Centre & Land South of Station Road
Buxton Derbyshire Comments by: Beverley Turner

From:
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Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: I strongly object to planning application HPK/2026/0228.

I support investment in Buxton and recognise that parts of the town would benefit from careful and sensitive regeneration. However, I do not believe this proposal achieves an appropriate balance between redevelopment, protecting the town's unique historic character, and meeting the needs of existing residents, businesses and visitors.

My concern is that the proposal appears to prioritise commercial viability and development potential over the long-term interests of Buxton and the people who live here. Regeneration supported by public funding should deliver clear and lasting public benefit. It should protect and enhance the qualities that make Buxton special rather than risk permanently changing the character of one of England's most important historic spa towns.

Heritage, Design and Local Character

This is my greatest concern.

Buxton is not a metropolitan city requiring high-density urban redevelopment. It is an internationally recognised historic spa town, valued for its Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture, limestone buildings, parks, open spaces and distinctive townscape. These qualities are fundamental to why people choose to visit, live in and invest in Buxton.

Once this heritage and character are lost, they cannot be recreated.

The proposed development introduces large contemporary buildings of significant scale within the historic core of Buxton. While the applicant refers to drawing inspiration from local architectural features, I do not believe the proposals genuinely preserve or enhance the character of the town. Referencing individual historic elements does not compensate for a development whose overall scale, massing and appearance are more characteristic of a modern city-centre regeneration scheme.

The purpose of regeneration should be to strengthen what already makes Buxton successful, not replace it with a fundamentally different model of development. Buxton's identity is built on its historic spa heritage, independent businesses, architecture and attractive public spaces. This proposal risks diluting those qualities rather than enhancing them.

Loss of Town Centre Parking

My principal concern is the loss of centrally located public parking and the lack of adequate replacement provision.

Although the revised proposals include more parking than the original scheme, they still provide fewer spaces than currently exist at The Springs. Buxton serves a wide rural catchment and is a major visitor destination due to its heritage, cultural attractions and location on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

Many visitors, older people, families and those with mobility issues rely on convenient town-centre parking. Public transport options do not provide a realistic alternative for all users, and there is limited opportunity to significantly expand road or rail capacity due to Buxton's geographical constraints.

Reducing parking provision risks making the town centre less accessible, increasing pressure on surrounding residential streets and negatively affecting existing businesses that depend on visitors being able to access the town easily.

The development includes more than 300 homes together with office, retail, leisure and hospitality uses. It is unclear how much of the proposed parking provision will be available for existing town-centre users rather than being required by new residents, workers and commercial occupiers.

If a parking demand assessment has been undertaken, it should be made publicly available. Residents should be able to understand how the Council and applicant have concluded that the proposed parking provision is sufficient.

The current free resident parking provision at The Springs is also an important community benefit, and the application does not clearly explain how this will be protected or replaced.

Impact on Existing Businesses and the High Street

The proposals raise concerns about the impact on existing businesses.

Waitrose and other existing retailers at The Springs rely on convenient customer parking. I have not seen any published assessment demonstrating the likely impact of reduced parking availability on these businesses or the wider town centre economy.

The scheme also introduces additional cafés, bars and restaurants. However, there appears to be no clear assessment of the effect this additional commercial provision could have on existing independent businesses, particularly during quieter periods outside the main tourist season.

Regeneration should support and strengthen existing businesses rather than simply move activity from established operators into new premises.

The project has received significant public funding intended to support town-centre regeneration, yet the majority of the focus appears to be on The Springs rather than delivering improvements across the wider High Street and Higher Buxton.

The Council should demonstrate how this scheme benefits the whole town centre rather than concentrating investment in one area.

Housing, Sustainability and Infrastructure

I am not convinced that the proposed housing mix is appropriate for Buxton.

The application appears heavily focused on private rental housing rather than delivering a balanced mix that clearly responds to local housing needs, including genuinely affordable homes.

More importantly, the development appears to increase population without providing the necessary supporting infrastructure.

There are no clear proposals for additional GP provision, schools or other essential services despite the demands that more than 300 new homes will create. Local healthcare provision has already reduced in recent years, and existing services are under pressure.

There also appears to be insufficient evidence regarding expected car ownership, commuting patterns and the impact on existing transport networks.

A sustainable development is not simply one that builds new homes. It must also provide the infrastructure, accessibility and environmental standards needed for the community that will live there.

The scale of new construction, including significant concrete structures, also raises concerns regarding embodied carbon and whether lower-carbon alternatives and opportunities to reuse existing buildings have been fully considered.

Traffic and Access

I am concerned about the impact on traffic, access and highway safety.

The proposals involve significant changes to Station Road and Palace Road, including changes to vehicle routes and access arrangements. These changes require careful scrutiny by the Highway Authority due to the scale of the development and the potential impact on pedestrians, shoppers, cyclists, disabled users and general traffic movement.

Given Buxton's constrained road network, additional traffic generated by the development could increase congestion and reduce accessibility.

Environmental and Flood Risk Concerns

I recognise the aspiration to open up sections of the River Wye that currently flow beneath the existing streets and development area. However, this should not be considered solely as a public realm improvement without fully assessing the environmental consequences.

The application should clearly demonstrate that opening up the river will not increase flood risk, create drainage problems or introduce additional long-term maintenance issues.

Given the increasing frequency of extreme rainfall events and concerns regarding sewage discharges into waterways during periods of heavy rainfall, robust flood risk, drainage and ecological assessments are essential.

This evidence should be publicly available and demonstrate that the proposals will not increase flood risk within the site or elsewhere along the River Wye.

I am also concerned about the impact of significant new construction on biodiversity, existing trees and the wider environment. These impacts should be fully assessed and properly mitigated.

The Wider Regeneration Strategy

Residents need to be able to understand how this scheme contributes to the regeneration of Buxton as a whole.

The regeneration project has received significant public funding intended to support Buxton's town centre. However, the investment appears heavily concentrated around The Springs, while much of the existing High Street and Higher Buxton receive comparatively little direct benefit.

The Council should clearly demonstrate how this scheme supports existing businesses, established retail areas and the communities that already live and work here.

Buxton is already a successful destination. Its success comes from its heritage, architecture, independent businesses, public spaces and relationship with the Peak District. Regeneration should build on those strengths rather than introduce a development model more suited to a metropolitan city.

Conclusion

I support regeneration that sensitively enhances Buxton and complements the town's established character, architecture and historic identity. However, I do not believe this application has demonstrated that it will deliver development that is in keeping with the existing and expected future character of the town.

The proposal appears to place too much emphasis on residential and commercial development while insufficiently addressing:

the loss of town-centre parking;
the impact on existing businesses;
the lack of supporting infrastructure;
the environmental impact of large-scale construction;
flood and drainage concerns; and
the need to preserve Buxton's unique historic character.

Before planning permission is granted, the applicant should provide clear and publicly available evidence demonstrating that the scheme will:

provide adequate parking for residents, visitors and businesses;
protect existing retailers and the wider town-centre economy;
deliver appropriate infrastructure alongside housing;
genuinely preserve and enhance Buxton's historic character;
minimise environmental impacts; and
provide long-term public benefit.

Buxton's heritage is its greatest asset. It is the reason people visit, live here and care about the town. Regeneration should respect and strengthen what makes Buxton unique, not replace it with a form of development that does not reflect the character of this historic spa town.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning permission for application HPK/2026/0228 be refused.

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