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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
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: Nick Jones
From:

Green Lane
Burbage
Buxton

SK17 9DL

Phone:

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Neither

Comments: Dear Planning Officer,

I've already submitted an objection to the planning application however I also wish to respond to the Economic Development Statement submitted by High Peak Borough Council's Regeneration Service, dated 22 July 2026.

As a local resident, I find the statement unconvincing. It appears to accept broad claims about regeneration without properly showing how this specific proposal would benefit Buxton town centre.

I am not against regeneration. I want to see the Springs area improved, and I recognise that the current shopping centre needs investment. However, I do not believe the HPBC statement properly addresses the concerns many residents have raised about this particular application.

The central issue is that the Regeneration Service statement cites general regeneration benefits, but does not evidence that this specific scheme will deliver them for Buxton. It assumes that investment, construction activity, flexible commercial floorspace and new residents will automatically strengthen the town centre, without properly testing the actual impacts of this application: reduced or displaced parking, uncertainty for existing traders, loss of retail focus, limited secured leisure or entertainment provision, construction disruption, heritage impact, and the shift towards a predominantly residential-led scheme. General regeneration theory is not a substitute for evidence that this proposal, in this location, with this mix of uses, will genuinely improve Buxton's town-centre economy.

The statement itself acknowledges an important gap: the application does not state the proposed number of new employees. It refers to either 337 or 377 full-time equivalent existing employees on the site, but gives no clear

comparison with the number of jobs likely to be created by the proposed development. Without that comparison, I do not see how anyone can conclude that the scheme would provide a net employment benefit.

The statement also presents the proposal as mixed-use, but the application appears to be heavily dominated by residential development. Around 332 homes are proposed. At the same time, the officer's own statement appears to show total commercial floorspace reducing from 9,819.75 sqm existing to 9,403.56 sqm proposed, a reduction of around 416 sqm. If that interpretation is incorrect, the Council should explain clearly how the commercial floorspace figures have been calculated and what genuinely additional public-facing retail, leisure or entertainment space is being secured. On the figures provided, this does not look like a commercial-led town-centre regeneration scheme. It looks more like a residential-led development with some flexible commercial space included.

A further concern is that the statement does not properly consider the pressure that a large residential component could place on existing public services and infrastructure. Around 332 homes could mean a significant increase in residents in the town centre, with additional demand for GP appointments, dentists, school places, waste services, public transport, road capacity and everyday local facilities. Buxton already experiences pressure on many of these services. If the economic case relies partly on attracting new residents, it should also assess the public cost and infrastructure impact of that growth. Increased local spending cannot be considered in isolation from increased pressure on public services, congestion, parking demand and local infrastructure.

I am also concerned that references to possible cinema, drinking establishment, learning, workspace and creative uses are not the same as firm commitments. These appear to be permitted or flexible uses, not guaranteed facilities. I cannot see clear evidence of a confirmed cinema, entertainment venue, cultural anchor, leisure destination, youth provision, or evening-economy offer. Buxton needs real, deliverable uses that will draw people into the town, not just theoretical possibilities.

The statement says the development will increase footfall and vitality, but it does not explain how this will happen if convenient town-centre parking is reduced, displaced or made less accessible. Parking and access are among the biggest concerns raised by residents. If people find it harder to visit Spring Gardens, existing shops and businesses could suffer.

There is also very little reassurance about construction disruption. A scheme of this scale could affect existing traders for years. If parking is removed or disrupted before replacement parking is approved, funded, built and open, the impact on shops, cafes and services could be serious.

The statement suggests that new residents will support local spending. That may be true to some extent, but new rental apartments do not automatically create a stronger shopping centre, a better visitor destination or a more resilient high street. If the result is less retail, reduced parking, weaker access and years of disruption, the overall effect could be negative.

I am also concerned by the reference to visitors staying overnight and larger-scale attractions, festivals and multi-day events. I do not see how this application secures those outcomes. It does not appear to deliver a major visitor attraction, a guaranteed entertainment venue, or a clear cultural offer that would strengthen Buxton's visitor economy.

Buxton is not just an underused urban site waiting for more housing. It is a historic spa town with a visitor economy, a rural catchment, a distinctive architectural identity and an existing retail role. Regeneration here should mean more than adding a large number of private rented homes into the town centre.

The public response should also be taken seriously. The concerns being raised are not simply opposition to change. Many people want the area improved, but object to this particular scheme because they feel it is too residential-led, too large, too weak on parking, too uncertain for existing traders, and not ambitious enough in terms of leisure, entertainment, public benefit and town-centre vitality.

I therefore ask the Council to place limited weight on the Regeneration Service statement unless further evidence is provided. In particular, I believe the Council should require:

1. A clear comparison between existing and proposed employment.
2. A proper assessment of retail, leisure and entertainment provision.
3. Evidence of secured deliverable public-facing uses.
4. A full assessment of the impact on existing traders during construction.
5. A proper explanation of how reduced or displaced parking will affect footfall.
6. Evidence that the residential-led model is genuinely the best form of regeneration for Buxton. 

In its current form, the statement reads more like a general argument in favour of investment than a clear assessment of this application.

For these reasons, I do not believe the statement demonstrates that the economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the concerns raised by residents.

Yours faithfully,

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