

## Planning Committee Update Sheet 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### Item 6 – Land at School and Golden Hill Lanes, Leyland

#### 07/2018/8309/FUL

The agenda report includes representation made by Lidl Supermarkets in objection to the proposal. Lidl's objection is based on the principle of development, sequential testing and retail impact. Aldi have today (6.3.19) lodged a rebuttal to that objection which is summarised as follows:

***'Principle of Development*** - *The principle of development should be determined by the proposed use not the end occupier. The planning application provides justification as to why a Class A1 foodstore is acceptable in local and national planning policy terms. Lidl's view that Aldi's relocation to the proposed site would not be positive for the centre's growth ignores the opportunity to address existing imbalances between uses as identified by WYG (the Councils Retail Assessor) in their review of the planning application and town centre health checks.*

***Sequential*** - *Lidl's objection focuses upon the potential for the existing Aldi foodstore to be extended or replaced to meet the enhancements sought by the relocation. In doing so, they identify that the former Job Centre located on Towngate (adjacent to existing store) is for sale and suggest that the combined site could deliver similar development to that proposed. Aldi have previously considered the ability to extend the store however the landowner refused to sell the land.*

*Lidl also suggest that the combined area of the existing foodstore and Job Centre sites meets the 0.63ha minimum site area that Aldi would typically require. This does not however acknowledge that site required to deliver quantitative and qualitative enhancements sought by this planning application (and in response to circumstances in Leyland) extends to 0.69ha and that the proposed design constitutes a highly efficient use of land. Aldi have prepared a potential site layout (provided within the wider response) which although for illustrative purposes shows that regardless of form, a similar A1 development in the form suitable for a national retailer cannot be achieved on the site, and would not allow for changes to, or additions to the car park.*

*The Lidl objection fails to acknowledge that any development on the existing would be split between two separate parcels of land (job centre and completely separate store site accommodating 13 car parking spaces located to the rear of the job centre building). No other land is available for development and, aside from car parking, prospective buyers do not have the right to develop over land. Land in third party ownership presents a clear constraint to redevelopment options.*

*In addition, regardless of the form of a development or extension, no foodstore operator would be able to make full use of the job centre parking spaces due to their location in relation to the foodstore, fixed location of the servicing area and car park layout. Whilst 2 or 3 of spaces could be used by staff, the remaining 10/11 spaces could not be used by customers due to their physical separation from the wider car park. The link would be very difficult to achieve with an extended foodstore, and if provided would be of poor quality and rise concerns for safety and security of customers.*

*Whilst it is acknowledged that in-centre sites are generally more accessible and that a principle of the sequential test is for less car parking to be provided at in-centre sites, an important consideration is that car parking spaces at the existing foodstore cannot meet demand. Despite being within a Town Centre location, Aldi recognise this deficiency and a larger foodstore on site would generate additional trips.*

*Given the above, enlargement of the existing foodstore is not considered suitable as the site would be unable to accommodate sufficient levels of car parking, alongside an extended foodstore, servicing and hard and soft landscaping. The potential extension option is therefore dismissed.*

**Impact** - *The LPA has appointed advisors WYG to assess proposed development (December 2018). WYG identify there is no need for a full retail impact assessment as proposed development falls below the national impact threshold. Regardless, of threshold WYG have assessed the likely impact of the proposals and have identified a number of benefits associated with the proposed development. These include:*

- *An increase in trade for other retailers*
- *Continuation of linked trips*
- *The existing foodstore being occupied by an alternative operator.*

**Concluding their statement, WYG set out that the positive benefits for Leyland Town Centre would outweigh any implications from a retail impact policy perspective.**

**Highways** - *In response to Lidl's transport objection, all highways matters have been reviewed and resolved with the Local Highway Authority'.*