

16th October 2019

Bethany Brown
Trafford Council
Trafford Town Hall
Talbot Road
Stratford
M32 0TH

Via email only

Bethany.brown@trafford.gov.uk

Dear Bethany,

Re: Application 98127/FUL/19 | Unit 1 Altrincham Retail Park | Extension, refurbishment and subdivision of the existing Homebase store to provide a downsized unit for Homebase and a new Class A1 retail unit to be occupied by Lidl.

Asda Stores Limited ("Asda") **object** to the above application submitted to Trafford Council ("the Council") by Lidl UK / Orchard Street Investment Management LLP ("the applicants").

Asda's Altrincham store on George Richards Way is positioned less than a kilometre to the east of the application site. The Asda store plays an important role employing local colleagues and takes its role in the local community seriously. Asda does not object to competition, in fact it believes customers benefit from greater choice, but this choice must be in the right location and meet all the necessary policy tests in order to provide those benefits, which this proposal does not.

This objection is based on three main points, which are discussed in more detail below, and are summarised as follows:

1. The proposed development fails the sequential test and should be refused;
2. The noise assessment fails to consider the effect of noise from deliveries on the amenity of nearby residents and is a serious omission within the application; and,
3. The design of the proposed development is inadequate given the prominent A56 frontage.

We also urge the Council to consider Lidl's trading philosophy with caution since the application is for a convenience retailer that is not distinguished from any other retailers within the context of national retail policy.

Retail Policy

With regards to the sequential assessment, Policy W2.12 Out of Centre Development says:

"Outside the centres identified above, there will be a presumption against the development of retail, leisure and other town centre-type uses except where it can be demonstrated that they satisfy the tests outlined in current Government Guidance."

The relevant "Government Guidance" is the sequential test set out at paragraphs 86 and 87 of the NPPF.

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The applicants have identified a sequentially preferable site, the 'Altair' development site, which is being brought forward by Nikal Developments. The site is suitable and available for the type of development proposed and indeed Lidl are interested in the site.

The fact that the applicant suggests that there is a need for a Lidl at both the Altair site and the application site is not a matter which should be given any weight. The "needs test" does not form part of national or local retail policy where decision-making is concerned and even if it did the applicants simply suggest that there is a need for both stores without evidence and with no guarantee that both stores would come forward if approved.

If the Council came to the view that there was a need for more convenience retail that could not be accommodated in-centre then it would be up to the Local Plan to allocate sites based on evidence within their retail study, not for applicants to demonstrate that there is a need as part of the development management process.

If the Council approve this out-of-centre Lidl they will be doing so whilst there is a sequential preferable site at Altrincham town centre. In short, the application fails the sequential test, does not comply with Policy W2.12, and should be refused on this basis.

Policy W2.14 goes on to say:

"Proposals to expand any of the three existing retail warehouse parks (White City, Trafford and Altrincham) should be justified against the tests set out in national guidance. Further development within the retail warehouse parks should be limited to the sale of bulky comparison goods only."

Policy W2.12 seeks to limit the sale of goods at Altrincham Retail Park to bulky comparison goods. Given that this proposal includes convenience retail goods, it is imperative that the justification for the proposal is sufficiently robust. Whilst the applicants have attempted to justify the proposal against the tests set out in national guidance, the sequential test has failed and as such the proposed development should be refused.

Noise Assessment

With regards to noise, Policy L7.3 Protecting Amenity says:

"In relation to matters of amenity protection, development must:

- *Be compatible with the surrounding area; and*
- ***Not prejudice the amenity*** *of the future occupiers of the development and/or occupants of adjacent properties by reason of overbearing, overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, **noise** and/or disturbance, odour or in any other way."*

The applicants seek 24 hour deliveries to the Lidl unit. The applicants suggest that "usually" each store has one or two dedicated deliveries per day.

Without any restriction in place, the application is effectively seeking consent for any number of deliveries at any time of day or night. It is therefore incredible that the noise assessment does not consider the effects of the deliveries on the amenity of nearby residents. We consider this a serious

omission which needs to be addressed before a conclusion can be reached on whether the proposed development complies with Policy L7.3 of the Local Plan.

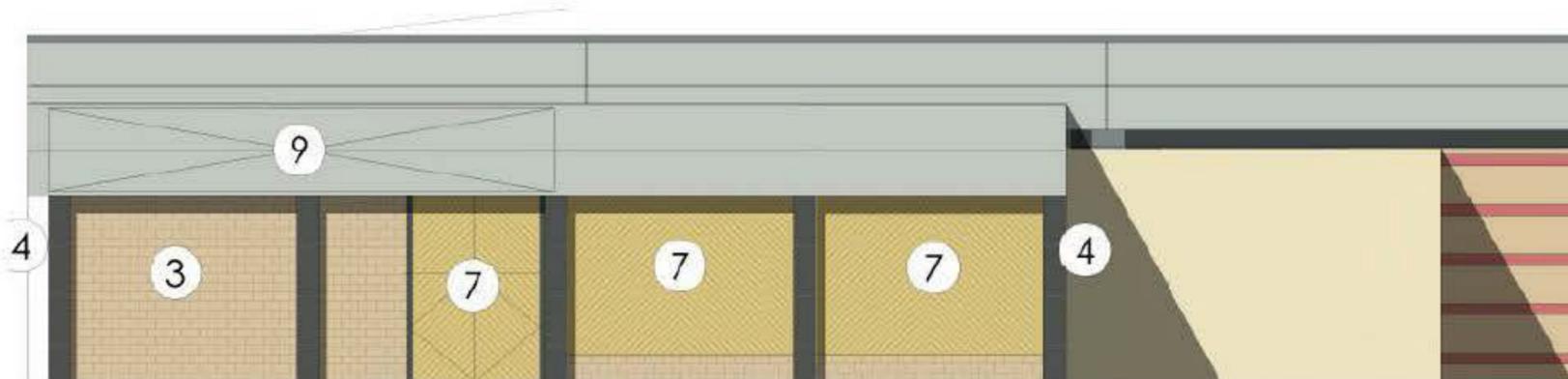
Design

With regards to design, Policy L7.1 Design Quality says:

In relation to matters of design, development must:

- *Be appropriate in its context;*
- *Make best use of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area;*
- **Enhance the street scene** or character of the area by appropriately addressing scale, density, height, massing, layout, elevation treatment, materials, hard and soft landscaping works, boundary treatment; and
- *Make appropriate provision for open space, where appropriate, in accordance with Policy R5 of this Plan.*

The layout and design of the proposed store is not of sufficient high-quality, fronting onto a major transport route and is contrary to Policy L7.1. The proposed development pushes the building line towards the A56, an important route into and out of Altrincham, but the elevational treatment is lacking in animation and articulation for such a prominent frontage. We consider that more can be done to improve the appearance and design of the unit.



Lidl Trading Philosophy

The applicant suggests that because of Lidl's limited product range, retail offer, shorter trading hours and relatively compact catchment area, Lidl shoppers generally tend to utilise other shops and stores as well as Lidl to fulfil their grocery shopping. However, the fact remains that shoppers can fulfil a complete shop at a Lidl store, and its turnover which is estimated at £13.2m will be drawn from other retailers, Altrincham town centre and Sale town centre. We therefore urge the Council to consider Lidl's trading philosophy with caution.

In the event of the Council being minded to support the development, planning conditions should be attached to restrict the size of the store and its retail offer.

Summary

In the absence of an adequate sequential assessment the Council are not able to conclude that the sequential test has been passed. In this regard, it is worth remembering paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework which says:

Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 89, it should be refused.

Accordingly, unless the applicants can demonstrate that the Altair site is not suitable and available, the application should be refused planning permission.

Furthermore, as things stand no conclusions can be drawn as to the effects of deliveries on the amenity of nearby residents and we request that this be considered within an updated noise assessment so that an informed decision can be made.

We also ask whether the applicants are willing to consider the eastern elevation which we currently consider to be of insufficient quality and thus contrary to policy.

We trust these comments will be considered prior to determination of the planning application and would be grateful if you could keep us informed as matters progress.

Yours faithfully

