

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Appeal by: Lidl UK/Orchard Street Investment Management LLP
Site Address: Homebase Ltd, Unit 1 George Richards Way Broadheath, Altrincham
WA14 5GR

LPA reference: 98127/FUL/19

PINS reference: APP/Q4245/W/21/3267048

Statement of Case by Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Forum

1. The Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Forum is the body designated under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare the Local Plan for Altrincham Town Centre known as the Altrincham Business Neighbourhood Plan (ANBP).

1.1 The Local Neighbourhood Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act with three rounds of public consultation, approval of the Plan via the Planning Inspectorate, and a Referendum of electorate and businesses within the Plan designated area in 2017. The prepared Plan was the Plan adopted by Trafford Council as the Local Plan for Altrincham Town Centre covering the period 2015 - 2030. Full details of the adopted Plan are here <https://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-plan/altrincham-neighbourhood-business-plan.aspx> The geographic area covered by the Plan is shown at this same link as Plan 2: Plan Boundary & Points of Interest.

2. The case the ANBP will make is the need to put the Town Centre first in all planning decisions affecting retailing and residential in the area commonly known as Altrincham, which would include Broadheath. The ANBP are a statutory consultee on planning matters in Broadheath. The Priority in locating food retail through the sequential test is town centre first, then edge of town centre, then only if neither is possible a site further out. The Council presumes, or infers, incorrectly that a town centre site for a Lidl store is not available. Trafford's document refers to the proposal at Broadheath providing 1858 sq m gross, (1272 sqm net). Such space could be made available in the former Debenhams or Rackham's. As the Council owns the Stamford Quarter this omission is very surprising both as the owner and the planning authority. As far as we know neither location has been closely examined to see if a small store could be accommodated. That becomes even more unacceptable when the Neighbourhood Plan, approved by the Council and part

of the Development Plan, urges the provision of 'one or more convenience stores' within the town centre (see para 4.2.7. of the Adopted Plan).

2.1 Having ignored the prospect of securing a convenience store within the town centre, an objective contained in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and therefore explicit Council approved policy, the Council then goes on to argue that the existence of an agreement to lease at Altair between Nickal and Lidl, (such agreement having not been seen and verified) means that a Lidl store could feasibly be developed within that Altair development. This may be a reasonable presumption in terms of the physical capacity of the site (Altair) but ignores the fact that such express retail consent has not been granted and should an application be submitted would be very vigorously opposed by the Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Forum, the Civic Society and countless members of the public. Such a proposal would be contrary to Policy 'R' New Retail Development, approved by the Council in the Neighbourhood Plan adopted in November 2017, and therefore be refused.

2.2 The Plan recognised that outline planning permission had been granted for part of the empty site known as Altair. That planning permission did not cover the whole of the site. Part of the site is without planning permission included the Altrincham Leisure Centre. Within the Plan at Policy 'A' – Land Allocations. (Supports Objectives 7, 8 10 and 11. See Plan 6 on page 28) it specifically says "Site E [Altair] – is allocated for leisure uses (excluding A1 retail), offices, car parking and residential. (See Policies H 1, CP 1 and OF 1)".

The adopted Plan specifically excludes A1 retailing on the Altair site. If planning permission for a Lidl or similar A1 retail store were to be granted it would be against the local authority's adopted policies. It could be concluded that existing policy is being ignored and that no effective policy control is being applied.

2.3 The Council makes no comment on the potential impact of the inferred possibility that the development of stores at Altair and at Broadheath could both be physically accommodated, without any suggestion that the cumulative impact of two Lidl stores would be detrimental or not.

3. Since the preparation of the Plan the retail scene has changed significantly. The trend towards on-line shopping has accelerated. The town does not want to have more bricks & mortar stores which may become unused in the near future. The latest Grimsey Review (Nov 2020) highlights a 42% fall in retail property investment between 2014 and 2018. Retail experts at KPMG expected high street retail space to shrink by 25% by 2025 but

now see that happening by 2022-23. Any new retail stores should be using the existing high street space to avoid increasing future empty space.

Forum Working Group

Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Forum

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No attachments