

TABLED UPDATE FOR ITEM 2.2 ON PUBLISHED AGENDA.

Reference and address 22/504598/FULL- Land At Queenborough Road, Isle of Sheppey

Further Representations

1. KCC Ecology have provided final comments referred in paragraphs 4.11 and 6.39 of the report. The Ecologist confirms that *“the landscape plan (revision P06) appears to have been revised to feature native-only planting, which will both maximise biodiversity value and be in keeping with the Kent countryside. In addition, we have reviewed the submitted condition assessment, which corresponds accurately with the metric results, and are satisfied with the results.”*

2. A further 9 online/postal responses in support of the proposal have been received since the publication of the report largely on grounds of retail choice. In addition, the following points should be noted: -

2.1 Need more jobs on the Island which Lidl will provide

2.2 More shopping choice will make stores more competitive

2.3 Sheppey needs food stores that offer good value for money

2.4 Many islanders resort to shopping off the island to access cheaper prices and better value. They should not have to travel 10 miles to Sittingbourne to feed their families.

2.5 If traffic flow from Tesco supermarket is reduced then traffic flow through the Tesco roundabout will be increased and help commercial traffic to Sheerness docks and New Road Industrial estate.

(Officer comment: For clarification, the merits of the proposal are largely reflected in the assessment of the report vis-a- vis jobs, access and social benefits. While the traffic flow impact on the town centre is conjecture, it is acknowledged that statutory consultees (KCC Highways and National Highways) have confirmed acceptance of the proposal on traffic and road safety impact grounds.

3. A further representation to the published committee report has been received from Tesco Plc. They are critical of the committee report on the following grounds and continue to object to the proposal: -

3.1 Inappropriate assessment of retail impact on the Tesco Superstore and the Town Centre.

(Officer comment: For clarification, the RIA has been assessed by Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) and found to be acceptable as set out in paragraphs 6.7.1

to 6.7.6 of the report. For clarification, the 'solus' impact on Sheerness Town Centre from the Lidl store is estimated to be less than 1% and while the cumulative impact is acknowledged to be significantly adverse by LSH. But that is mainly due to the solus impact of the Aldi store. LSH consider that there is a case to view the cumulative impact as adverse rather than significantly adverse when considering the solus impact of the proposed Lidl store)

3.2 Conflict with the Site's Allocation at Cowstead Corner

(Officer comment: For clarification, the departure from the Local Plan is acknowledged in the report under paragraphs 6.2, 6.8 and 7.1 of the report. In addition, it should be clarified that Policy A4 seeks to provide employment generating uses. The proposal will generate up to 40 new jobs, the lack of demand for the allocated hotel use must be weighed alongside the benefits the proposed alternative retail use will bring to the site, which include job creation; a substantial net gain in biodiversity; increased choice and competition in discount food retailing at a time when the cost of living is rising higher. Officers consider there are public benefits of the proposed development to justify departure from the allocated hotel use.)

3.3 Harm to heritage asset – Grade 2 Listed Neats Court

(Officer comment: For clarification, the heritage impact has been assessed that the development would not cause significant harm to the significance of the grade II listed Neats Court. It should be clarified that any harm will therefore amount to the lower level of 'less than substantial harm' in the context of the guidance set in Chapter 16 of the NPPF. Para 202 of the NPPF states 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.' In this case the public benefit as referred in paragraphs 7.1 of the report which clearly outweigh the less than substantial harm. The committee is also asked to note that the site is allocated for development in the Local Plan and consideration was given to heritage impact at the allocation stage).

4. The committee is asked to note that since the publication of the report the Legal Officer has drawn attention to a resolution by Cabinet in 2019 that proposed a locally set threshold of 500sqm for a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA). Planning officers were not aware of this lower threshold to the NPPF (paragraph 6.4 refers) when the report was completed. Notwithstanding this, an RIA was submitted by the application to support the proposal and reviewed as summarised in the report under paragraphs 6.3 to 6.8. Therefore, the recommendation remains unchanged.
5. The committee is also asked to note that community consultation undertaken by Lidl on this proposal is available on the web site. The physical evidence has been

submitted by the applicant which should be available in the Council Chamber. In summary the applicant wishes to point out that all residents on the Isle of Sheppey were consulted with the following results: -

5.1 As of 4th July, a total of 2,474 responses have been received, of which almost 92% express support for the proposed store. The detailed breakdown is:

- Support 2273 (91.87%)
- Object 137 (5.54%)
- Undecided 64 (2.59%)

6. **Recommendation: As set out in paragraph 8 of the report to Grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report with delegated authority to amend the wording of conditions as may reasonably be required.**