

**Lidl Deputation – 7th December 2017
Cllr. Michael Wilson**

Chairman, members of the Committee I've asked to make a deputation against the recommendation to grant to permission to build this Lidl store. At the outset I will say that I have no objection to Lidl per se or indeed the building of a supermarket on Hayling Island.

I have no objection to healthy competition but my concerns regard firstly whether this is a suitable site, secondly whether the argument in the report that it will have a significant effect on the need for islanders to shop on the mainland is credible and thirdly, the likely effect on the existing district centres if permission is granted.

The Committee will know from reading the papers that essentially this is not a suitable site: Firstly, it is outside the urban area and to grant permission would be contrary to our own policies the field is described as a non-urban area which I understand is a definition in our core strategy and is I understand a definition only reserved to areas of Hayling Island. It is described as an area which helps to define the boroughs special environment and identity. Policy CS17 sets out how we should deliver development within the urban areas whilst protecting the non-urban areas. Further, the building proposed is too large to accommodate our minimum parking standards reinforcing the fact that this is an unsuitable site. Members would have noted that our minimum standard is 156 spaces and this is 30 spaces short of that minimum. I am aware that members have expressed concern that our current parking supplementary planning document which was only approved in July last year has been questioned as to its effectiveness in preventing displacement due to those parking standards being below the actual requirement necessary in reality. Allowing permission granting permission for a development which fails to meet even those minimum standards must surely call into question our own policies and competence.

At 7.5 on page 30 it is stated that it is “helpful to understand that Lidl retail model when looking at the sequential testing of this proposal, Lidl stores are not destination stores in their own right, having a limited retail offer, and customers usually visit other stores in their area to complete their shop”. Clearly, this would support the suggestion that this is an unsuitable siting given that it is out of the urban area and defined as “out of centre” in the report due to its lack of proximity to the existing district centres and any other retail.

As the Chair of the Infrastructure Delivery Advisory group for Hayling Island I was somewhat bemused to read paragraph 7.54 on page 36 that the Highway Authority has advised that the local highway network is not at capacity. As we have requested capacity figures from the Highway Authority on numerous occasions, I am somewhat surprised by this response particularly as the modelling which is being undertaken by a separate company, is not yet available. I find this assertion highly dubious.

As members will know, one of the recommendations is that the infrastructure benefits which will be gained from a food store on Hayling Island would help make the Island more self-sufficient and help reduce travel to the mainland. This is a suggestion which has appeared in many residents emails to me and if it were the case then I would not be here before you today. However, I have given some careful consideration to the difference types of retail offering which are outlined in this report: Firstly, there are the existing supermarkets which are largely defined as convenience stores, secondly there are the mainland large supermarkets, Tesco’s in Havant, Sainsbury’s in Farlington, etc., and thirdly there is the Lidl/Aldi model. For the assertion to be correct the proposed Lidl supermarket would have to effectively take the place of the mainland retailers. We are told in the report that generally Lidl’s stores offer a limited product range circa 1800 products and do not offer a full range of items normally found within a main store which

would typically offer over 45,000 product lines. At 7.28 on page 31 it states the retail offer provided by deep discount is fundamentally different to the main food offer provided by the main supermarkets such as Tesco and Asda. It would therefore follow that if Lidl is not in direct competition with those supermarkets on the mainland, the existence of a deep discount supermarket would have little or no impact upon the traffic travelling to those mainland supermarkets and little or no impact on the suggestion that this would help with the Island's self-sufficiency. As the Officer will confirm this information and, indeed the definition of a deep discounter is the definition of the former Competition Commission in its 2008 Grocery Market Investigation. Deep Discounters – who and I quote “carry a limited range of grocery products and base their retail offer on selling those products at very competitive prices”. The distinction between the deep discounters and the main supermarkets is a difference which has been acknowledged in Planning Appeals relating to Lidl stores, in particular, the London Borough of Merton case (APP/T5720/V/04/1171394) in which the Planning Inspector states “...*the Lidl offer is materially different to that provided by the mainstream food retailers*”; in other words, in that case it was deemed sufficiently different to warrant approval. In this case, it is argued Lidl that they are in a sense offering significantly similar goods to keep residents from travelling to the mainland: It cannot be both.

If this supermarket is unlikely to fulfil the infrastructure and sustainability objectives of keeping residents on the Island rather than using mainland supermarkets, then it calls into question the assumptions which have led the Officer to recommend that we should depart from our Local Plan Policies and our Parking Policy and allow development outside the urban area in a place which we would normally protect.

If Lidl is not to impact upon the main retailers then I have concerns about its impact upon the existing district centres:

The Merton decision was cited in paragraph 1.3 of Lidl's Planning and Retail Statement in a Barnsley Council application in July 2015 :

*The A1 retail unit is proposed to be occupied by Lidl; a deep discount foodstore, which performs both a 'main food' and 'top-up' shopping role. Deep-discount stores act as **complementary** retailers to mainstream food shopping. The proposal will address the identified qualitative **deficiency in convenience shopping** within the area and therefore meet an identified qualitative need. Furthermore, it will provide increased competition, enhanced consumer choice and up to 40 local jobs in addition to accommodating an entirely new type of convenience shopping facility in Wombwell.*

In a Planning Statement to Broadland District Council in October 2017 at 6.3 of the statement they describe themselves as a "substantial presence in the **convenience retail market**".

As 7.30 on page 31 the report highlights that the existing stores are relatively small and generally serve a localised catchment providing for the day to day convenience shopping needs of residents living within the immediate surrounding area. I know as well as the members of the committee who may well have been to a Lidl that they sell milk, eggs, bread, cheese, wine beer all the basic staples which you would seek from a local convenient store, in other words they are more likely to be in direct competition. I also note from the proposed conditions at Condition 16 on page 47, that they can set up to 25% of their total floor space to sell clothing and foot wear, watches and jewellery, pharmaceuticals personal care and products, books, music records and CD,DVD and toys. They also sell garden furniture, these would all be in direct competition with our existing retailers in the existing district centres.

We have also seen the effect of the Solent Road development upon Havant town centre. We have also seen impact of the retail park in Waterlooville upon that town centre to allow this out of town development would condemn the existing district centres of Hayling Island to a similar fate. Leaving the Local Authority to deal with the aftermath. For the reasons stated I would urge you to refuse this application. The relevant model reasons are: R101 – Open Spaces, R111 – Setting a Precedent and R162 – Inadequate Car Parking.

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