

Deputation Submitted by the Applicant

Good evening Chair, members of the committee. My name is James Mitchell, Regional Head of Property for Lidl, thanks for the opportunity to speak to you in support of our proposals.

The scheme before you tonight is the result of 18 months of discussion with officers. I thank officers for the proactive way the application has been handled. Our proposals have evolved massively from submission with a host of improvements made, allowing the scheme to reach this committee with a recommendation for approval.

Time does not permit me to touch on all aspects of the application, but I will touch on a few key matters.

Firstly, retail policy considerations.

The Council policy team raise no objection. This position has been informed by expert external advice which has concluded the proposals comply with all national and local policy requirements, most notably the sequential test.

Turning to landscaping and aboricultural matters.

Our proposals have been hugely improved in this area. Whilst there is some loss of trees towards the site frontage within areas of adopted highway these trees are of generally low quality. The County have confirmed the proposals are acceptable to them and have agreed a CAVAT payment to mitigate the loss of the trees. The scheme boasts massive new soft landscaping and tree planting including 37 new trees, over 5000 hedge, shrub, and ground cover plants as well as extensive areas of wildflower meadow. Crucially our proposals offer vastly enhanced diversity of planting with associated biodiversity benefits. On this basis the case officer concludes our proposals are accepted.

Extensive discussions have taken place with Hampshire Highways to ensure a compliant scheme.

Suitable parking levels are provided along with EVC chargers and cycle parking. Lidl will improve the arm of the roundabout by widening to 2 lanes at the exit carriageway providing increased capacity along with improved crossing facilities. A pedestrian and cycle route into the site is provided direct from Purbrook Way. The proposals before you have been found to be acceptable from a safety, capacity, and policy perspective. In addition to the physical improvement works Lidl will make a s106 contribution of £124,500 towards pedestrian and cycle improvements along Purbrook Way is agreed. The approval of the application will also secure a CIL contribution of £225,000 which in combination with the aforementioned improvements produces a very attractive package of measures.

This application offers;

- Sustainable development including EVC and a solar PV array.
- A diverse and attractive landscaping and tree planting scheme.
- A high-quality design.
- A strong package of highway improvement measures.
- Compliance with all relevant policies.

The application is overwhelmingly supported by local residents with nearly 1200, or 80% supporting the scheme proposals.

Perhaps most importantly our scheme represents economic development creating 40 new locally recruited jobs. This store if would provide a high quality, low-cost shopping option for nearby residents and would serve to complement our other local stores.

Now more than ever in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis these key benefits should weigh heavily in the decision-making process.

On this basis I hope members will uphold their officer's recommendation and grant permission for this much needed development.

I am happy to answer any questions members may have and have with me our retail consultant Alastair Thornton and highway consultant Richard Broad should members have any questions for them. answer.

Thank you.