



Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Late Observations Sheet
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
23 August 2012 at 7.00 pm

This page is intentionally left blank

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

23 August 2012

LATE OBSERVATION SHEET

Item 4.1 SE/12/01279/FUL Caffyns PLC, 80 London Road, Sevenoaks TN13 2JD

Further Representations

Further letters and emails of support have been received from six individuals (one reiterating previous comments). These raise the following matters:

- The store provides for a niche market of foods from European countries.
- The store would provide 'high quality food at much lower prices to those on lower incomes'.
- The store would be an amenity for the people of the town and is an appropriate use for the site.

One additional letter of objection has been received from a local resident which raises the following issues:

- The proposal would result in increased traffic as compared to the existing use and the road is already busy at peak times. An access from Morewood Close would be more appropriate.
- There should be a restriction on delivery hours.

A letter has been received from the Sevenoaks Society which indicates no objection to the proposal in principle. The letter refers to the 'deep-discounter' operation being significantly different from other out-of-centre retail organisations and that the design of the building would not harm the locality (some tree planting is suggested to the front boundary). The letter does, however, raise the following concerns:

- The number of 'full-time equivalent' employees would be the same as before.
- Vehicles manoeuvring on the site would cause vehicles to back up onto the road.
- The application has not looked close enough at the cumulative impact of proposed developments upon London Road. No development of the site should be allowed until the flow of traffic around the station has been significantly improved.

A letter has been received from the Sevenoaks Conservation Council raising concerns over the traffic generation of the proposal and its impact upon the character of the town. Concern is raised over the position of the access on London Road and the conflict of traffic on the site where the parking and delivery arrangements are shared.

A detailed letter with enclosures from the applicants was received electronically at lunchtime today. A covering email states that the letter was also sent to local Councillors. The email contains the following summary (prepared by Lidl):

- 1 The S.106 has now been agreed with SDC Legal Services. The S.106 restricts the store to a Deep Discounter with only 3,500 product lines. Various restrictions on products and services are included, along with a contribution towards air quality

Agenda Item 6

(Appendix 4). A list of Lidl stores that operate under similar S.106 restrictions is also attached.

- 2 Total support for the Lidl application stands at 923 petition signatures and 389 support comments, letters, and emails. This compares with only 36 objections. The split is 96% supporters, 4% objectors.
- 3 For comparison, the average major supermarket has a sales area approaching 4,000m² with close to 30,000 product lines (Appendix 6).
- 4 To provide further justification on parking numbers, a parking accumulation survey was carried out at a similar Lidl store (1,286m² sales) which opened in Wokingham in 2011. This shows a maximum car park occupancy of 53 vehicles on a Friday and 39 vehicles on a Saturday (Appendix 7).
- 5 Kent Highways asked us to use worst-case figures in the TA with only a 25% reduction for transferred, pass-by and diverted car trips. This would result in small highway impacts of 3.25% to 6.4%. Appendix 8 provides considerable evidence showing that transferred, pass-by and diverted car trips could be as much as 84%. This would result in negligible highway impacts of 1% or less.
- 6 Traffic counts were also undertaken at the Wokingham store (Appendix 7). When comparing the actual traffic generation of the Wokingham store with the figures used in the Sevenoaks TA, it is clear that the actual Sevenoaks traffic impact could be considerably lower than the TA suggests (especially during the Saturday peak).
- 7 Lidl stores only have one or two HGV deliveries per day which also transport waste and recycling on the return journey.
- 8 Store lighting, car park lighting, and any subsequently approved illuminated signage, will be switched-off shortly after the store closes at 9pm Monday to Saturday, and 5pm on a Sunday.
- 9 Lidl stringently operate the Think 25 alcohol scheme. Anti-social behaviour is bad for business and will be dealt with immediately. Repeat offenders will be banned from the Lidl premises.
- 10 A recent press article (Appendix 11) confirms that there are significant pockets of deprivation hidden amongst Sevenoaks' affluent areas. There will be strong local demand for the 40 full and part time retail jobs at the Lidl store, with remuneration substantially greater than most other retailers.
- 11 The car park will be controlled by an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system. Customers will be allowed 90 minutes free parking, after which time a penalty notice will be automatically issued. This will prevent commuter parking abuse.
- 12 All Lidl stores employ a caretaker who diligently removes all litter from the car park on a daily basis.
- 13 All available support and objection postcodes have been plotted onto a map of Sevenoaks. Appendix 16 clearly shows overwhelming support for the Lidl development evenly distributed throughout Sevenoaks.

Officer Response

With regards to the comments raised by interested parties, these matters are dealt with in the Officer's Report to Committee.

It is important to note that:

- The internal parking and manoeuvring arrangements on the site are considered satisfactory.
- The traffic generation resulting from the development of this site will not be unacceptable provided that the store is limited in its character to a 'deep discounter' retail use where it is expected that traffic generation will be less than an open A1 use and many of the trips will be linked with journeys already undertaken.

It has not been possible to review the correspondence from Lidl in any detail in the time available but, subject to the comments of KCC below, there are no matters arising from the covering email that require any change to the report and recommendation.

KCC Highways have the following comments on the Lidl correspondence:

With regard to the highway issues referred to within the email, our view remains that the supporting parking provision for this store is robust when compared to other deep discount A1 food retail stores in a similar context with any potential traffic impact being mitigated by the proposed highway works. I can also confirm that the applicant's Wokingham store survey results give a fairly typical example of the kind of results seen for such stores on the TRICS database which further confirm that the parking solution being offered for this proposed store is robust.

One point of slight concern is the reference by Lidl to deliveries which is indicated as being '1 or 2 HGV deliveries per day'. The Transport Assessment document submitted with the planning proposal clearly indicates that deliveries are via a single articulated HGV per day (also confirmed by the consultant to me this week) which is not totally consistent with what has been stated below. As a result, and in order to retain some form of control over this issue I would recommend that reference to deliveries also be included within the car park management scheme being secured through condition 18 (or, alternatively an additional delivery management plan condition be secured).

Amendments Proposed to Conditions

Condition 11 on cycle parking be amended to clarify that parking should be provided for both staff and customers. The first part of the condition is amended to read:

"No part of the development shall be occupied until secure cycle parking facilities for both staff and customers have been provided.."

Condition 18 on car parking management be amended to include management of deliveries. The first part of the condition is amended to read:

"Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme for the management of deliveries and for the management of car parking spaces..."

The reason for the condition be amended to start:

Late Observations
23 August 2012

Agenda Item 6

“To ensure *the impact of deliveries is minimised and to ensure adequate parking for the proposed use...*”

Otherwise the Officer's Recommendation remains unchanged.

Item 4.3 SE/12/01107/HOUSE Ringsdown, Crockenhill Lane, Eynsford, Dartford DA4 0JL

The side elevation drawing of the proposed garage does not exactly match the block plan. The applicant has confirmed that the block plan is correct. Amended elevations were submitted but an error still remains. The applicant has agreed to send in amended drawings to address this.

The officer's recommendation has been amended so that the application can be determined when the amended plans are received and after any consultation is considered necessary. Notwithstanding the above the application is still recommended for refusal.

Amended recommendation:

That the application be delegated to the Group Planning Manager for refusal as per the report and amended plans received.