

Item (1)	
Application:	19/01063/COMIND
Site Address:	Land to south of Ravenswing Farm, Tadley.
Proposal:	Erection of Class A1 foodstore, car parking and access and landscaping.
Applicant:	Lidl UK Limited
Report to be considered by:	District Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	8 th July 2020
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=19/01063/COMIND>

Purpose of Report: For the District Planning Committee to determine the planning application.

Recommended Action: The Eastern Area Planning Committee resolved that the application be approved.

Reason for decision to be taken: The application is contrary to the statutory development plan, and is of high public interest.

Key background documentation: Eastern Area Planning Committee Agenda Report of 4th December 2019, the update report, and the minutes of that meeting, plus officer recommended conditions should the application be approved.

Key aims N/A

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	30 th June 2020

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Michael Butler
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Implications

Policy: The proposal conflicts with Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS18, and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

Financial: If the application were approved and implemented, it would be liable to a CIL charge of just under £355,000.

Personnel: N/A

Legal/Procurement:	N/A
Property:	N/A
Risk Management:	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment:	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 4th December 2019, the Eastern Area Planning Committee (EAPC) considered the agenda and update reports for this application, which seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new freestanding discount food store. The store is proposed on a greenfield site, outside of any defined settlement boundary, on land immediately adjacent to the district administrative boundary, adjacent to the urban area of Tadley. The applicant is Lidl UK. The officer recommendation was to refuse planning permission on the grounds that it would be clearly contrary to adopted policy to protect the wider countryside in the district, it would have a harmful visual impact, and the emergency plan prepared by the applicant was not acceptable, in the light of the proximity of the application site to the licenced nuclear facility at AWE Aldermaston.
- 1.2 However, the Members of the EAPC were impressed by the extremely high local levels of support for such a new discount food store in the Tadley/Aldermaston area, which in their view was a clear indication of the significant local retail need for such a store. They also considered that if the application were to be approved and trade, it would, in the light of the continuing need to reduce levels of carbon dioxide production, reduce many private vehicle trips from local residents to discount food stores in Newbury, Reading and Basingstoke. They also considered that, whilst inevitably the store would have some localised visual impact, this would not be harmful in the wider context of the urban area of Tadley and indeed the AWE itself. In addition, regard was had to the additional employment created by the store and other economic benefits. They also agreed with officers that any harmful retail impact (if any) would be contained only to the local Sainsbury store, but that the scheme would not harm the future vitality or viability of Tadley itself.
- 1.3 The Committee were, however, concerned about the apparent lack of a satisfactory emergency lockdown plan at the store, should a radiation emergency occur at AWE Aldermaston, in the light of the requirements of Policy CS8 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006 in relation to impacts of development on off-site emergency planning around AWE. The applicant was requested by the committee to improve this emergency plan prior to the DPC meeting. Officers have succeeded in achieving this, in liaison with the applicants agents. The applicants have now produced nine revised versions of the emergency plan, and it is much improved upon the original one presented to EAPC on the 4th December 2019.
- 1.4 Whilst there remain some outstanding detailed points within the latest revision of the plan which have been raised by the AWE Off-Site Emergency Planning Group, officers are now content that there is a high degree of certainty that they could be resolved under the remit of a planning condition before any development takes place. As such, it can now be concluded that the development is capable of complying with Policy CS8 subject to a condition to secure the final approval and implementation of the emergency plan. It is important for the Committee to also be aware that any permission, if granted, would not be personal to Lidl, so in the event that another retailer were to occupy the store the

emergency plan requirements would apply to any other operator, and the condition allows for necessary revisions to be agreed.

- 1.5 Since the last application was heard by EAPC the Council has received an additional 64 representations to the proposal. An additional 55 are in support and so the total at the time of writing is 904 in support. The matters raised are similar to those raised before, although a number do note that in their opinion the need for an emergency plan is not well based. An additional nine objections have been received making the total 64 in objection. Again most of these are based upon points that have previously been raised, including the traffic implications, the view that there is no need for a new store, and the loss of a greenfield site.
- 1.6 Since the EAPC meeting, the applicants have submitted further revised plans which show an emergency only access from the site onto the Silchester Road. This forms part of the updated emergency plan and seeks to ensure that in the event of an incident at the AWE, the main A340 route to the west of the site will not be unduly congested by traffic exiting the store, which could impede any responding blue light service vehicles. Consultation has been undertaken on these plans. No objections have been raised on the introduction of this access from any parties including Hampshire County Council Highways (Silchester Road is within their administrative responsibility). Aldermaston Parish Council have not objected either. No further specific public comments have been received specifically regarding this new access. The Committee needs to be aware that this access would only be used in the case of an emergency and not for general use, or indeed any routine servicing.

2. CONCLUSION

- 2.1 Members of the EAPC resolved to approve the application contrary to the recommendation of Officers. Owing to the conflict with the development plan, the implications for the determination of similar future applications across the district, and the high public interest, the Development Control Manager referred the application to be determined by the DPC.

3. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To **DELEGATE** to the Head of Development and Planning to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** on the grounds of the following grounds:
 1. The application site is located on a greenfield site outside of any defined settlement boundary as identified in the statutory development plan. Accordingly, to the proposal conflicts with Policies ADPP1 and ADPP6 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, and is unacceptable having regard to the overriding need to protect the open countryside from urban growth. This is consistent with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework
 2. The development of this substantial retail store, at this prominent location in terms of public visibility close to main thoroughfares, with the associated access, hard surfacing, car parking and external lighting, will be harmful to both local visual amenity and be harmful to the wider landscape character and setting of the urban built form of Tadley. The application conflicts with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS18 (in terms of the loss of green infrastructure) and Policy CS19 (in terms of landscape and visual harm) of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. The application is accordingly unacceptable, notwithstanding the proposed additional landscaping around the application site.

4. APPENDICES

1. Committee agenda report for the EAPC meeting held on 4th December 2019
2. Committee update report for the EAPC meeting held on 4th December 2019
3. Approved minutes for the EAPC meeting held on 4th December 2019
4. List of recommended conditions should the application be approved