

Written submission from Catherine Wilde - supporter

Dear Members,

I would like to put forward my complete, wholehearted support for Lidl's planning application. In my opinion there is an exceptional need for a new foodstore in Tadley. In particular, the current Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how vast this need is. Sainsbury's was overwhelmed, and I have struggled to purchase the necessities.

As a lifelong Tadley resident, I have always been aware our grocery options are significantly limited in price and variety. Sainsbury's has a monopoly as the only large store centrally located on the main bus route. The location suggested for Lidl's foodstore is ideal as it is central, easily accessible, affordable to travel to and near other more specialised retail outlets, reducing time, cost and environmental impacts for residents.

The store would notably improve the retail availability and product choice with a broad range of affordable goods, which is important: Tadley has 12,000 residents, but lacks diversity in groceries. This means people are forced to travel further afield or go without. On the back of the economic recession and rising food prices, this is less and less viable.

The Office of Fair Trading notes continuing concerns about lack of local competition, with an ideal of three or more "one-stop" stores within 15 minutes. In contrast, we only have the option of Sainsbury's or travelling far into Basingstoke/Newbury, which results in increased, unsustainable reliance on journeys by car. Furthermore, Lidl's unique selling point is its discount prices. Because of this, a Lidl would offer a qualitative improvement of choice, opportunity and quality of life, especially for poorer parts of the community.

[Personal data redacted]. I have often struggled with affording groceries. I cannot use public transport easily, nor are the Basingstoke stores readily accessible by bus. Bringing shopping home is difficult without driving everywhere, and has a higher impact on the environment which I'm uncomfortable with. Having the option of a discount retailer without having to travel would be life-changing for me and many others in disadvantaged groups.

The new Lidl store wouldn't draw many more people onto the roads as people would be diverting from Sainsbury's, or would go shopping after work or errands. There are also other discount retailers in other nearby cities, so it wouldn't be bringing traffic into Tadley, but rather cutting carbon footprint and boosting the local economy by encouraging residents to shop nearby.

It would also benefit other local businesses: by cutting food and transport bills, there is more money to spend on other products. I also think the creation of 40 new jobs with competitive salaries, paying Living Wage, would be a huge benefit to the community, as well as encouraging healthy competition. Furthermore, I appreciate that Lidl tries to buy British produce, support our farmers and source responsibly.

I hope you will consider these significant benefits in your decision as to whether or not to grant planning permission.