

Firstplan

**PROPOSED FOODSTORE AT
FORMER SWIMMING POOL SITE,
BOTWELL LANE, HAYES**



**STATEMENT
OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**

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CONTENTS

SECTION 1:	INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 2:	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	2
SECTION 3:	CONSULTATION PROCESS	6
SECTION 4:	SUMMARY OF THE FEEDBACK	9
SECTION 5:	RESPONSE TO THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED	10
SECTION 6:	CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY	8

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:	Invitation to Local Residents and Businesses
APPENDIX 2:	Invitation to Councillors and MP
APPENDIX 3:	Display boards
APPENDIX 4:	Leaflet
APPENDIX 5:	Response form



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in support of a planning application submitted by Lidl UK GmbH for a new foodstore of 2,824 sq m (GEA) on Botwell Lane, Hayes.
- 1.2 By way of background, planning permission was granted on 11 September 2014 for the construction of a Lidl foodstore extending to 2,085 sq m GIA (ref: 1942/APP/2013/3565). The approved scheme relates to the eastern part of the former swimming pool site. At the time the previous scheme was approved, Lidl had acquired the western part of the site and intended to sell the land for residential development. However, since planning permission was granted, Lidl have taken the decision to redevelop the full site to accommodate the proposed foodstore.
- 1.3 The current application is in principle, very similar to the approved scheme. The key differences are a slight increase in the sales area of the foodstore from 1,407 sq m to 1,689 sq m and an increase in car parking spaces from 62 to 146.
- 1.4 Lidl is committed to consulting local stakeholders and the local community about its planning applications and has a strong track record of effective consultation. This document explains the various consultation exercises implemented by Lidl prior to the submission of the original planning application, and the additional consultation undertaken as part of the current application, to ensure that the local community has been made fully aware of the proposal and have had an opportunity to comment upon the scheme.
- 1.3 This statement summarises the feedback received from the local community and details Lidl's response to the issues raised.



SECTION 2: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This section of the Statement provides a brief overview of recent Government policy and guidance in relation to community involvement in the planning system.

a) **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)**

2.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's new planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

2.3 The document outlines the importance of pre-application engagement at paragraph 118:-

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better co-ordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”

b) **Hillingdon Council's Statement of Community Involvement (November 2006)**

2.4 This document sets out how developers submitting planning applications are encouraged by the Council to engage the local community in advance of an application being submitted. The SCI advises that the key to any community consultation is to ensure that it is carried out at an early stage to enable communities to put forward and debate options and shape proposals before they are finalised.

2.5 Paragraph 7.3 states that the Council will now expect applicants to undertake their own community involvement for applications proposing commercial development which it considers are capable of having an impact on the wider community:-

- Tier 1 – 20,000 sq m +
- Tier 2 – 10,000 sq m +
- Tier 3 – 1,000 sq m +

2.6 Within this context, the application proposal comprises a 'Tier 3' development in that the proposed new store extends slightly above 1,000 sq m. The SCI advises that



applicants consider the following consultation measures for this type of development:-

- Dedicated website
- Citizen Panels

2.7 As the following section will demonstrate, in terms of measures to involve the local community in the pre-application phase, Lidl have gone beyond the policy advice set out in the SCI for a 'Tier 3' development in order to ensure that the local community has been made fully aware of the proposal and have had an opportunity to comment upon the scheme.



SECTION 3: CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 This section details the various pre-application consultation exercises undertaken by Lidl in order to ensure that the local community understand the proposal and are encouraged to provide their views. This includes details of consultation undertaken as part of the original planning application for a foodstore on the site which was approved in September 2014.

a) **Public Open Day**

3.2 A public exhibition was held on Thursday 10 October 2013 between 16.00 and 19.30 at The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Botwell Lane, Hayes, UB3 2AB for local residents and businesses. The venue was considered most suitable due to its convenient location near the application site which enabled local residents to walk to the exhibition. The exhibition hours were chosen to allow people to attend after work if desired.

3.3 An invitation to the event was sent to 11,062 residents and commercial premises within a 2km radius of the site (**Appendix 1**). Individual letters were also sent to the local Councillors and MP advising them of the event and personally inviting them to attend (**Appendix 2**).

3.4 The public open day was attended by four members of the Lidl property team who were on hand to answer questions and discuss the proposed scheme in detail and record any concerns raised. In addition, a number of boards were placed on display providing details of the proposal (**Appendix 3**). Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback either verbally or by completing the response forms made available.

b) **Feedback Methods**

3.5 For those who were unable to attend the public exhibition, the invitation letter included further details of the proposal as well as a number of ways to provide feedback. The letter included:

- a **leaflet** containing information about the scheme (**Appendix 4**);
- a link to a **website** created by Lidl (www.lidlhayes.co.uk) that contains information about the proposal and is updated as the application progresses;



- details of an **online petition**, which Lidl has set up to measure support for the proposal (Go Petition website www.gopetition.com/petitions/support-lidl-in-hayes.html);
- a **response form** with stamped addressed envelope to encourage feedback (**Appendix 5**); and
- two **email addresses** for those to register their support for the scheme (forlidlhayes@lidl.co.uk) and those with any concerns (againstlidlhayes@lidl.co.uk).

3.6 The proposal has also attracted attention in the local press (eg Hayes & Harlington Gazette and 'Go West London'), which has also raised awareness in the local area.

c) Letter to Local Residents

3.7 A letter has been sent to local residents who attended the previous exhibition advising of the changes to the approved scheme.



SECTION 4: SUMMARY OF THE FEEDBACK

4.1 This section details the main comments and issues raised as a result of the public consultation exercises (i.e. responses attracted via the mail shot and public exhibition) in relation to the approved Lidl scheme.

4.2 To date, a total of 1086 people have registered their views; 983 of these (91%) support the proposal and 103 oppose the proposal (9%). The responses received as summarised below.

	For (With Comments)	For (Without Comments)	Against (With Comments)	Against (Without Comments)
	728	255	98	5
Total		983		103
%		91%		9%

4.3 In addition, the online petition at Go Petition has attracted 42 signatures in support of the proposed Lidl. A number of the signatories have also posted comments on the petition website.

4.4 The large number of responses received demonstrates the effectiveness of the consultation process as well a strong local interest in the proposal. The fact that 91% of comments favour the proposal, shows that there is overwhelming public support for the proposed new store.

4.5 The substantial number of positive comments received in support of the proposal can be summarised as follows:

- Retail benefits – a large number of respondents welcome the additional consumer choice provided by the proposed Lidl and the potential benefits for Hayes town centre. Comments included:

“I would welcome another foodstore in Hayes Town. All we have at the moment is an Iceland which is a fairly small shop.”

“We do not have adequate places to shop near us apart from a small pricey Tesco and Iceland.”



“Apart from Matalan, Wilkinsons and Iceland, Hayes Town has no other decent well known stores. I think allowing a store on the proposed site will bring people in to Hayes Town and therefore bring more money in to the surrounding shops.”

“We desperately need a store like this in Hayes town. It will be good competition and bring more people into the town centre.”

- Convenience of town centre location – a number of respondents supported the convenient location of the proposed store. Typical comments included:

“We think it would be very handy to have a discounted store in the neighbourhood within walking distance.”

“This is an ideal location near the heart of Hayes town.”

- Job Opportunities – a number of respondents noted the economic benefits of the proposal in terms of job creation.

“The proposed Lidl will provide job opportunities within the local area.”

- Reuse of vacant site – support was received regarding the reuse of the application site which has remained vacant since the closure of the swimming pool.

“The former pool site is an eyesore at the moment. Very glad to hear that it is finally being regenerated and put to good use.”

4.6 The limited number of comments received in opposition to the proposals are summarised as follows:-

- Retail need – some concerns were raised regarding the need for an additional supermarket. Comments on this issue included:

“We do not need another Lidl, there is one 15 minutes away on the Uxbridge Road.”

“There are sufficient superstores in the area or near to this area. An additional food store will not benefit the community.”

- Loss of green space – a limited number of concerns were raised over the potential loss of green space and the impact on the visual amenity of the area.



- Loss of parking - A number of objections concerned a perceived loss of parking. However, the proposal does not involve the loss of any public parking and the plans appear to have been misinterpreted by some respondents. The objections relate to the loss of the public car park to the north of the application site on Central Avenue. However, this car park will be retained. In fact, it falls outside the application site boundary and will remain operational and under the ownership of the Council.
- Traffic and Highway Issues – comments included concerns regarding traffic generation.

4.7 Overall, the original proposal received overwhelming support, particularly in respect of the additional consumer choice offered by a discount store and the benefits to Hayes town centre.



SECTION 5: RESPONSE TO THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED

- 5.1 As noted in the previous section, the feedback to the proposal has been overwhelmingly positive. A very limited number of objections were received and many of the objections raised are directly contradicted by a larger number of positive comments, particularly in respect of the need for a Lidl in this location.
- 5.2 It should be highlighted that objections relating to the loss of parking are factually incorrect and are therefore not responded to.
- 5.3 In terms of the loss of green space, the application site is a previously developed brownfield site and its reuse will not involve the loss of green space. The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure that the vast majority of trees surrounding the site are retained in order to preserve its visual amenity.
- 5.4 Finally, concerns relating to transport and highway issues are addressed in the Transport Assessment supporting the planning application.
- 5.5 In light of the substantial support for the proposed Lidl store and after consideration of all the consultation responses received, Lidl have decided that there was no requirement to amend the design or layout of the proposal as a result of the feedback received in 2013. However, changes to the layout and design have been made as the trading format has evolved and this has led to the submission of a larger store proposal.
- 5.6 The public consultation exercise highlighted the benefit of the store being located within such easy walking distance of the town centre and the potential for linked trips. In order to make the most of this strategic location, a minor enhancement was made to the original proposal to include two pedestrian walkways within the site to allow access directly through the customer car park to Botwell Lane and Central Avenue.



SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

- 6.1 As part of the preparation for the planning application for the approved scheme, Lidl undertook a detailed consultation exercise to engage local residents, businesses and Councillors. Over 11,000 invitations were sent to a public open day and over 1,000 responses were registered.
- 6.2 The feedback and comments received from the consultation process were analysed in detail. As a result of the overwhelming scale of local support **(91% of respondents favour the development)** no material changes were made to the application proposals from those exhibited at the public consultation event.

