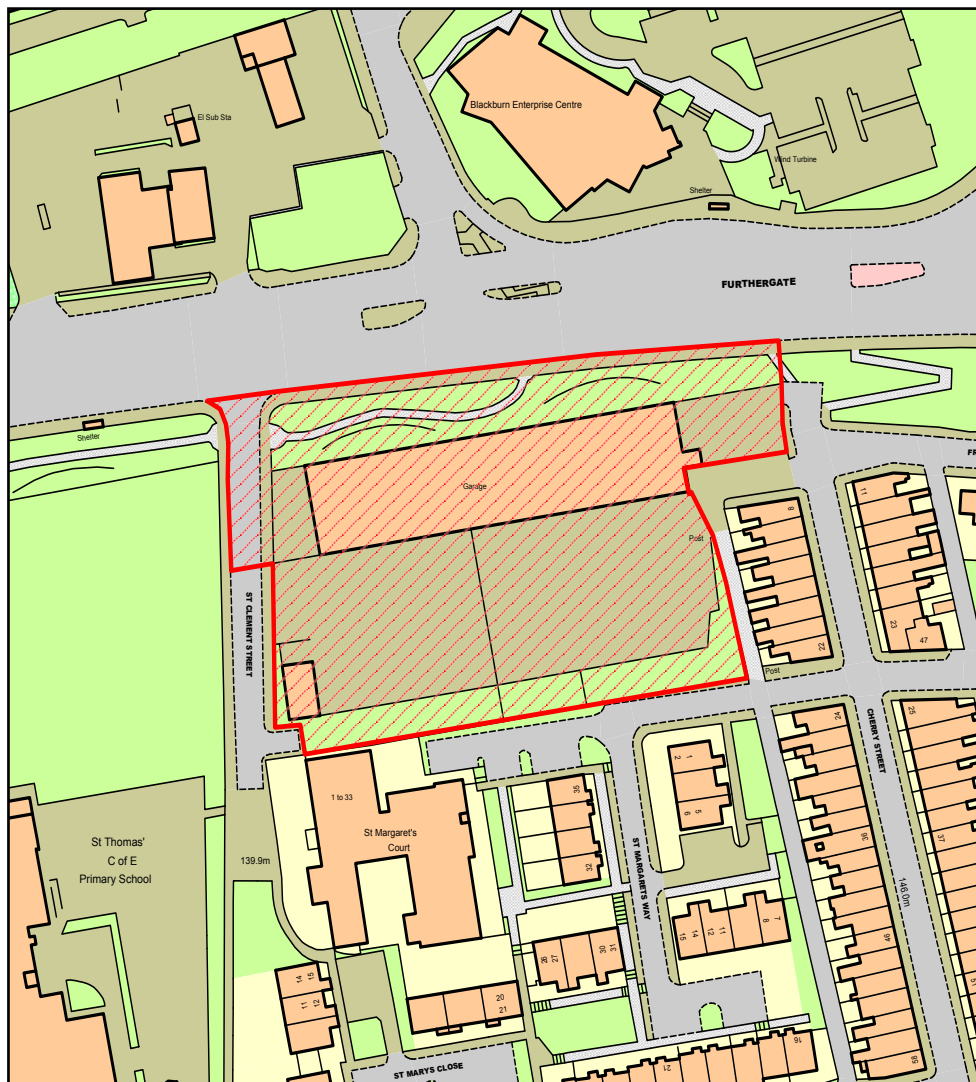


Proposed development: Full Planning Application: Demolition of existing building and the erection of a Lidl store (Use Class A1) with associated works including improved access, parking area and landscaping.

Site address:
Furthergate Works
St Clements Street
Blackburn
BB1 1AB

Applicant: Lidl UK Gmbh

Ward: Audley & Queens Park
Councillor: Yusuf Jan-Virmani
Councillor: Maryam Batan
Councillor: Salim Sidat



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVE – Subject to conditions as set out in paragraph 4.1.

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

- 2.1 The proposal will deliver a high quality retail development with associated off-street parking provision, which will assist in widening the retail offer in the borough; in accordance with the Council's strategic aims and objectives for economic growth and expansion of public facilities and services, without prejudice to existing retail provision in the borough's Town and District Centres. The proposal is also satisfactory from a technical point of view, with all issues having been addressed through the application or capable of being controlled or mitigated through planning conditions.

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1.1 The planning application is submitted following pre-application discussions and a follow-up written appraisal of the merits of the proposal. The main issues are summarised as follows:

- *The need to justify loss of the existing B2 employment use (employment uses typically are identified as industrial B1, B2 or B8 uses).*
- *The need to justify the proposed out of centre retail use, to ensure no unacceptable impact on the borough's defined Town and District Centres, through submission of a Retail Impact Assessment and Sequential Test. The scope of the assessments was agreed at pre-application stage.*
- *The need to safeguard neighbouring residential amenity and air quality, through submission of targeted reports to assess likely impacts.*
- *The need to demonstrate appropriate access / egress arrangements, to ensure safe and efficient highway movement, through submission of a Transport Statement and other supplementary reports as deemed necessary. Concern was expressed at the potential conflict of vehicles turning right out of the St. Clements St / Furthergate junction.*
- *The need to provide off-street parking and serving in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.*
- *The need to ensure appropriate design standards, in order to reinforce the established character of the locality. Concern was expressed at the intention to site the car park to the front of the site and building to the*

rear which could result in a car dominated form of development, inconsistent with the general pattern along Furthergate.

- 3.1.2 The application site is Furthergate Works which is currently occupied by Fix Auto. It is located within the Inner Urban Area of Blackburn, to the immediate south of Furthergate - a length of the A678 arterial road that leads into Blackburn Town Centre - and is flanked by Cherry Street to the east and St. Clement Street to the west. An industrial building exists along the northern boundary adjacent to Furthergate with an associated parking / servicing area to the rear. A length of landscaped verge adjacent to Furthergate is also included which runs the length of the site. The site is essentially rectangular, extending to circa 0.87 hectares, with the existing building occupying a floor area of circa 1,733 square metres. Land levels throughout the site are consistent.
- 3.1.3 The area is generally defined by its mixed use character. Land to the north of Furthergate hosts a range of commercial uses. Land to the immediate west hosts St Thomas C of E Primary School and associated playing fields. Land to the south and east hosts residential terraces and cul-de-sacs.
- 3.1.4 The length of the A678 that is Furthergate comprises, in part, 6 lane traffic including a dedicated bus lane and 'ghost island'. The road forms a dominant physical separation between the allocated employment area to the north and the residential area to the south.
- 3.1.5 Vehicular access to the site will be from the east of St. Clements Street, close to its junction with Furthergate. Pedestrian connectivity is provided by footways along Furthergate and from the neighbouring residential street network.
- 3.1.6 The site is well served by the public transport links that run along Furthergate, which forms part of the wider Pennine Reach network.
- 3.1.7 The site is unallocated, in accordance with the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies.

3.2 Proposed Development

- 3.2.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a Lidl Store (use Class A1), comprising 1,896 square metres gross internal floor area with a net sales area of 1,312 square metres, and associated works including alterations to the St. Clement Street / Furthergate junction, vehicular access into the site from St. Clements Street, vehicular egress from the site onto Cherry Street, car parking and landscaping; as set out in the submitted drawings. The proposal seeks to supplement Lidl's pre-existing offer in Blackburn with Darwen through the introduction of a new store to cater for residents in the east of the borough and transient trade.

3.2.2 Lidl's position in the market is defined by a 'retail philosophy centred on simplicity and maximum efficiency at every stage of business, from supplier to consumer'. It is categorised as a 'deep discounter' concentrating on selling a limited range of primarily own brand goods at competitive prices.

3.3 Development Plan

3.3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.3.1 The Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy and adopted Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. In determining the current proposal the following are considered to be the most relevant policies:

3.3.2 Blackburn with Darwen Core Strategy:

- CS2: Types of Employment land
- CS3: Land for Employment Development
- CS4: Protection and reuse of employment sites
- CS11: facilities and Services
- CS12: Retail Development
- CS16: Form and Design of New Development

3.3.2 Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan Part 2 (2015):

- Policy 2: The Inner Urban Area
- Policy 7: Sustainable and Viable Development
- Policy 8: Development and People
- Policy 9: Development and the Environment
- Policy 10: Accessibility and Transport
- Policy 11: Design
- Policy 26: Town Centres – a Framework for Development
- Policy 27: District Centres – a Framework for Their Development
- Policy 29: Assessing Applications for Main Town Centre Uses
- Policy 40: Integrating Green Infrastructure & Ecological Networks with New Development
- Policy 47: The Effect of Development on Public Services

3.4 Other material Planning Considerations

3.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework):

The Framework sets out the government's aims and objectives against which planning policy and decision making should be considered. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should proceed without delay, unless impacts which significantly and demonstrably outweigh

the benefits of a proposal are identified. The following sections of the Framework are considered relevant to assessment of the proposal:

- Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

3.4 Assessment

3.4.1 The Development Plan reaffirms The Framework's principles of sustainability which includes support for sustainable economic development and encouragement of effective re-use of land; subject to the principles of high quality design and securing a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

3.4.2 In assessing this application, the following important materials considerations have been taken into account:

- Principle
- Accessibility and Transportation
- Amenity
- Design / Character and Appearance
- Environment

3.4.3 Principle

The principle of the development is guided by the sites current employment use (notwithstanding that it is not allocated as an Employment Site in the Local Plan Part 2), which is accepted as a lawful B2 use, and retail policy. Taking each in turn:

3.4.4 The Core Strategy sets out the principle of protecting existing employment sites (typically classified as B1, B2 or B8 uses) whether allocated as such or not, in order to maximise economic potential and in recognition of an under provision within the borough. The Commercial Property Market Study, published December 2015, sets out in detail the Borough's position relative to employment provision; a copy of which was provided to the applicant at pre-application stage. The study builds on the borough's 2013 Employment Land Review and evidence base for the subsequent Development Plan.

3.4.5 The site's location is considered to be highly sustainable, by virtue of its position on a main arterial road and proximity to motorway links. Moreover, its size and layout is of a type that is evidently in demand. Accordingly, the principle of an A1 proposal is tested against the aims and objectives of Core Strategy Policy CS4, which sets out a presumption towards retention of employment land, unless it's current use causes an unacceptable loss of amenity for surrounding uses or it is demonstrated that the land is no longer capable of beneficial use for employment within the life of the Core Strategy.

- 3.4.6 Notwithstanding the sites generally sustainable location, the primary point of access from St. Clements Street is less than optimal for general employment purposes, on account of the volume and type of vehicular movement associated therewith. This is considered to be in contrast to the type of heavy traffic generated by a Lidl store, which is limited to only one Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) delivery a day. HGV conflict with traffic associated with drop off and pick up times along St. Clements Street for the nearby St. Thomas C of E Primary School, is also recognised as problematic. In this regard, the highway network will benefit from the proposal offering 2 hours free parking, thereby allowing parents to park free of the public highway during these times.
- 3.4.7 The sites size of less than 1 hectare is considered to limit its redevelopment potential for a viable employment use, particularly through a new build proposal. In this context, it should be recognised that permission exists for the demolition of the existing building, which was secured under permitted development rights afforded by the (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), following assessment of a prior notification submission to the Local Planning Authority (10/18/1064). The building can, therefore, be lawfully demolished without any obligation to redevelop the site.
- 3.4.8 The sites proximity to residential uses to the south and east is such that detriment to amenity levels currently experienced could be unduly impacted by vacation of Fix Auto's from the site. The Fix Auto operation, although an accepted, lawful, general industrial B2 use, is relatively non-intrusive in terms of noise generation and general nuisance although a degree of noise from vehicle maintenance is nonetheless experienced. This is in contrast to the potential alternative B2 uses of the site which could pose a much greater threat to residential amenity by virtue of increased activity, odour, dust, light or other forms of pollution, which could not be controlled under the planning process.
- 3.4.9 Reinforcing this position, a letter from the Director of Fix Auto's, confirms the intention to relocate regardless of whether the application is approved; an eventuality which exposes the site to alternative unrestricted B2 uses and a consequential increased threat to residential amenity.
- 3.4.10 The proposed Lidl store represents a de-intensified use of the site, with a reduced threat to neighbouring amenity. It is submitted that during public exhibitions held by Lidl, prior to submission of the planning application, neighbouring residents anecdotally raised their concern at current noise levels experienced from the site and offered support of the proposal as a more residentially compatible use.
- 3.4.11 Alternative B1a industrial office accommodation is not considered viable, on account of the scale of the building making it unsuitable for such conversion. This is supported by the aforementioned Market Study which identifies a local office market demand on smaller suites of below 500 square metres.
- 3.4.12 Alternative B8 storage and distribution accommodation is also considered less than viable, on account of the sites logistics, scale and general market demand for larger buildings.

- 3.4.13 Submitted figures identify the site as currently employing 23 staff, within a floor space of 1,733 sqm (plus mezzanine), equating to 1 employee per 113 sqm. The proposed Lidl store will employ 40 staff on a floor area of 1,896 sqm, equating to 1 employee per 45 sqm; thereby demonstrating a greater than existing employment opportunity. Moreover, Fix Auto's stated intention to relocate within the borough ensures a net employment gain.
- 3.4.14 Within the life of the Development Plan, additional employment land is committed; together with the key strategic employment allocation at Whitebirk, adjacent to Junction 6 of the M65 which, although located within the Borough of Hyndburn, is well positioned to serve Blackburn with Darwen, with approximately 40% attributed to the borough's identified need.
- 3.4.15 Taking into account these demonstrable material circumstances, the proposal is considered to be consistent with Policy CS4 of the Development Plan and the objectives of The Framework.
- 3.4.16 Impact of the borough's strategic retail aims and objectives also guides the principal of the proposal. In this regard, scope of the Sequential Test and Retail Impact Assessment was agreed at pre-application stage, in order to inform retail impact on the relevant Town and District Centres in proximity to the application site; on account of the site being located neither within or on the edge of a defined Centre. The scope of the assessment is as follows:

The Sequential Test

- Blackburn Town Centre
- Little Harwood District Centre (27/3)
- Bastwell District Centre (27/4)
- Whalley Range District Centre (27/5)
- Johnson Street District Centre (27/7)
- Higher Eanam (27/8)
- Audley Range (27/10)

The Retail Impact Assessment

- Blackburn Town Centre
- Little Harwood District Centre (27/3)
- Bastwell District Centre (27/4)
- Whalley Range District Centre (27/5)
- Johnson Street District Centre (27/7)
- Higher Eanam (27/8) and
- Audley Range (27/10)
- New Bank Road (27/6)
- Whalley Banks (27/9)

- 3.4.17 An audit of the submitted information was independently undertaken by G L Hearn, on behalf of the Council, on the premise that the relevant Development Plan policies are broadly consistent with The Framework.
- 3.4.18 The Sequential Test assessed suitability of the former Blackburn Indoor Market, in Blackburn Town Centre, which is currently being marketed.

Although the site is suitable in size, a number of issues are identified by the applicant; including flood risk (the site lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3); costs associated with the culvert beneath the site; historic setting of the site relative to its proximity to listed buildings and the Council's preferred option of a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Although some of the issues cited are not considered to prohibit the proposal, the site is recognised as currently occupied by businesses which would need to be relocated; indicating that the site is unlikely to be immediately available. Its distance from a main road would also be contrary to meeting Lidl's business requirements. Accordingly, the site cannot be considered sequentially preferable.

3.4.19 The Lidl owned site at Eanam / Cicely Lane is also discounted as sequentially preferable, on account of logistical issues identified by Lidl which has prevented them from bringing the site forward for development.

3.4.20 The final site considered is on Canterbury Street which is accepted as being too small to accommodate the proposal.

3.4.21 No other sites are identified either within or on the edge of the identified Centres which could be considered more or equally as accessible as the application site. Moreover, the Council have not identified any additional sites which should be sequentially considered.

3.4.22 Accordingly, the proposal is considered compliant with the Sequential approach to retail development.

3.4.23 Retail impact assessment considers impact on investment in Blackburn Town Centre. The Council are satisfied that the proposal will not prejudice delivery of the key strategic former market's site. No other investment in any surrounding centres which could be prejudiced by the proposal has been identified.

3.4.24 Impact of the vitality and viability of the identified Centres is supported by data based on population and expenditure drawn from a five minute drive time from the application site. Although there are some differences in turnover of centres and stores identified in the applicant's assessment and data possessed by the Council, the proposed spread of trade is considered to have been reasonably assessed. Whilst it is accepted that the majority of trade will be drawn from larger superstores at Tesco and Asda, it is important to recognise that these stores are not afforded any retail policy protection. Localised trade drawn from surrounding District Centres demonstrates a reasonable spread given the location and overall health of those Centres. Overall, the trade drawn from Blackburn Town Centre is considered to be insignificant, given the projected turnover of the Centre.

3.4.25 The overall retail impact of the proposal on the identified Centres is not considered to be 'significantly adverse'. Accordingly, the proposal is considered compliant with Development Plan Policies CS12 and 29.

3.4.26 Consequently, the principle of the proposal is compliant with the Development Plan and The Framework.

3.4.27 Accessibility and Transportation

Policy 10 requires that road safety and the safe, efficient and convenient movement of all highway users is not prejudiced and that appropriate provision is made for off street servicing and parking in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.

3.4.28 A Transport Statement (TS) submitted in support of the application has been reviewed by Capita Highways and the Council's highway consultee; supplementing detailed drawings which propose an alteration to the St. Clements Street / Furthergate junction in the form of widening the radii and realignment of the footway. These works are supported and would be delivered under a Section 278 agreement with the Local Highways Authority to be secured by application of an appropriately worded condition.

3.4.29 The primary access / egress at the site will be taken from the existing point east of St. Clements Street. Initial concern was expressed at the proximity to the St. Clements Street / Furthergate junction – measured at circa 30m – and the threat of queuing traffic onto Furthergate. The existing circumstances associated with the industrial use are, however, recognised as having the potential to generate a higher volume of heavy goods vehicular movement which is considered to balance out concern in this regard; on account that the proposed use will not present a significant additional threat to highway efficiency or safety.

3.4.30 Significant concern was also expressed at the frequency of traffic movements at the St. Clements Street / Furthergate junction, particularly with regard to right turn manoeuvres onto Furthergate. Consequently, utilisation of an existing egress contiguous with adopted highway, directly onto the northern most point of Cherry Street, has been negotiated with the applicant. This is rather than the alternative existing access / egress immediately adjacent to no. 8 Cherry Street, on account of this land being outside of the ownership of the applicant. Use will be limited to egress only and will serve as an effective alternative to the St. Clements Street / Furthergate junction, particularly for local traffic; thereby alleviating right turn pressures onto Furthergate. Egress only limitation at the junction will be secured by condition.

3.4.31 Whilst the Cherry Street egress offers a beneficial supplementary point of egress, particularly for local traffic, the pressures on the St. Clement Street / Furthergate junction are acknowledged as a significant concern, as highlighted by the Council's Highways consultees. To this end, the pre-existing circumstances associated with the application site should be afforded proportionate weight. These circumstances involve a significant number of staff, customer and trade deliver vehicles entering and leaving the site throughout the course of a working day; although staff vehicular movement is accepted as mainly limited to standard opening and closing times. Moreover, Fix Auto's commitment to vacating the site may well result in increased vehicular movement than that experienced with either the current or proposed use. This is particularly true of HGV movements, due to the lawful, unrestricted B2 industrial use. Accordingly, whilst use of the St. Clement Street junction is recognised as presenting a degree of right turn risk, the

degree of such risk associated with the proposal, in this context, is considered, on balance, to be acceptable.

- 3.4.32 Convenient pedestrian access to the site is offered from both Furthergate and St. Clements Street.
- 3.4.33 Appropriate provision and layout of 117 car parking spaces will be provided on site, of which 6 are disabled and 8 are parent child. In addition, 2 Powered Two Wheel spaces and 6 cycle stands will be provided, as will a taxi pick up and drop off point. Parking provision is considered acceptable when assessed against the Council's adopted parking standards; reinforced by the absence of objection in this regard from the highways consultee. It should also be recognised that the site benefits from excellent links to public transport which operate frequently along the A678.
- 3.4.34 The overall internal site layout appropriately caters for HGV deliveries; as demonstrated by a Swept Path Analysis and includes safe crossing points for customers and staff.
- 3.4.35 A Demolition Method Statement supports the application which has been reviewed as an acceptable methodology in addressing traffic management during demolition works. Although a similar Construction Method Statement has not been submitted to address the construction phase of the development, this can be secured by condition.
- 3.4.36 A Travel Plan has also been submitted and reviewed. The plan is considered to appropriately address the fundamental principles of sustainable travel. Its delivery will be secured by condition.
- 3.4.37 Third party objection has been received expressing concern towards the following matters:
- 3.4.38 Highway impact as a result of traffic generation from the nearby St Thomas C of E Primary School and its effect on adequacy of customer parking on the proposed car park serving the new store; given that Lidl intend to allow free parking for school traffic during drop off and pick up times. The applicants offer is welcomed, as it will alleviate congestion currently experienced on St. Clements Street, on account that off-street parking for school traffic is not currently available within the Fix Auto site. It should be recognised that Lidl are not obliged to offer availability of their car park and that the volume of school traffic is a pre-existing circumstance that the Council cannot arbitrarily impose responsibility on the applicant to cater for. A more detailed assessment of existing school traffic and car park accumulation (of Lidl and school demand), in this context, is not, therefore, justified. The applicant has confirmed that, whilst school traffic will be allowed to park on the store car park on an informal basis, the situation will be internally monitored to establish whether school traffic is having a negative effect on customer parking capacity. If so, right is reserved to restrict parking to customers only.

3.4.39 The absence of a 'swept path analysis' to demonstrate affective manoeuvrability. As aforementioned, this has been provided. It details all movements in and out of St Clements Street for a maximum legal articulated HGV, and is considered acceptable by the Council's highways consultee.

3.4.40 That traffic data was not collected during a 'neutral' period. Traffic surveys were undertaken on Thursday 18th October 2018 and Saturday 20th October 2018. As stated in WebTAG Unit M1.2 'Data Sources and Surveys' paragraph 3.3.6; *'Surveys should be carried out during a neutral or representative month, avoiding main and local holiday periods, local school holidays and half terms, and other abnormal traffic periods. National experience is that the following Monday to Thursdays can be neutral:*

- *Late March and April – excluding the weeks before and after Easter;*
- *May – excluding the Thursday before and all of the week of each Bank Holiday;*
- *June;*
- *September – excluding school holidays or return to school weeks;*
- *all of October; and*
- *all of November – provided adequate lighting is available.*

This requirement often dictates the timescale of the appraisal. Data processing may also add substantially to the study timescale”.

3.4.41 Accordingly, the Traffic Surveys have demonstrably been conducted during a neutral period. Moreover, Capita Highways audit of the TS concluded that the dates and times of the surveys were considered appropriate for the purposes of assessing the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network.

3.4.42 That inconsistencies exist with the submitted flow diagrams. No inconsistencies have been reported by Capita Highways in their TA audit. It is considered that the only inconsistency that could be cited is the fact the a reduction in number of right turners out of St. Clements Street has not been sought, as a result of opening the egress onto Cherry Street. This, however, ensures that the St. Clement Street assessments are as robust as possible.

3.4.43 Accordingly, on balance, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety and efficiency perspective; subject to implementation of the aforementioned measures, to be secured by condition.

3.4.44 Amenity

Policy 8 requires a satisfactory level of amenity and safety is secured for surrounding uses and for occupants or users of the development itself; with reference to noise, pollution, nuisance and the relationship between buildings.

3.4.37 Position of building

The proposed store will be single storey, positioned circa 3.4m from the southern boundary of the site, along a length of circa 77m. Appropriate separation between residential uses at St. Margaret's Court, St. Margaret's

Close and Cherry Street, in accordance with adopted standards, is achieved; thereby ensuring satisfactory levels of residential amenity.

3.4.38 Noise

The site is positioned adjacent to residential uses identified above, located to the south and to the east. Store opening hours will be limited by condition to between 07:00 – 22:00 hours daily, with the exception of Sundays and Bank Holidays which will be limited to 10:00 – 17:00 hours. However, on account of the relative proximity of the proposed development and the potential impacts on residential amenity, a Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Public Protection consultee. It is accepted that appropriate levels of residential amenity will be achieved during daytime hours; aided by provision of a 2.4m high acoustic fence mitigate noise disturbance to adjacent dwellings along Cherry Street. Night time noise is, however, considered to pose a significant threat to residential amenity; in recognition of the applicants desire to be able to receive deliveries, on occasion, when traffic conditions and other external factors outside of their control dictate the need during the night (ie between 23:00 and 07:00). In this regard, the applicant argues that the existing industrial B2 use of the site is unrestricted. Moreover, Fix Auto vacating the site means introduction of a future industrial use could well give rise to greater residential amenity impact, by virtue of increased activities, including deliveries on a continued unrestricted basis. In this context, and having regard to the aforementioned acoustic fence, the ability to receive night time deliveries, on an infrequent basis, is considered to be acceptable.

3.4.39 Appropriate amenity levels during demolition and construction phase of the development shall be secured by conditions limiting works to between the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday; Saturdays 09:00 – 13:00 and no works on Sundays or Bank Holidays, and control of noise, vibration, dust and light pollution in accordance with submitted methodology statements.

3.4.40 Lighting

Impact of column mounted lighting to the external areas of the site has also been assessed by the Council's Public Protection consultee. Providing is implemented in accordance with the submitted scheme of mitigation, it is considered to pose no significant threat to residential amenity. Timely implementation of the scheme will be secured by condition.

3.4.41 Air quality

Two electric vehicle charging points will be provided within the western end of the car park; in accordance with the Council's strategic Planning Advisory Note on air quality.

3.4.42 Contaminated land

Threat from potential ground contamination can be considered by appropriate reports which will be secured by condition.

3.4.43 Drainage

Policy 9 requires incorporation of appropriate drainage measures, in order to demonstrate that it will not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding.

3.4.44 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted in support of the application identifies the site as located within Flood Zone 1 which, according to the Environment Agency data, attributes a less than 0.1% risk of fluvial flooding. Review of the FRA and drainage strategy by the Councils Drainage consultee and United Utilities confirms no objection to the proposal, providing foul and surface drainage measures are appropriately introduced. These requirements will be secured by condition.

3.4.45 Ecology

Policy 9 requires consideration of ecological matters, including protection / mitigation of important habitat.

3.4.46 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment support's the application. The same was considered under the aforementioned application for demolition. The appraisals demonstrate no significant ecological disturbance, including no identified presence of bats. No additional surveys are, therefore, required. Indeed through introduction of proposed landscape enhancement, a net gain in biodiversity will be achieved. Recommended avoidance and mitigation measures through demolition and construction phases will be secured by condition.

3.4.47 Design / Layout / Character and Appearance

Policy 11 requires a good standard of design and will be expected to enhance and reinforce the established character of the locality and demonstrate an understanding of the wider context towards making a positive contribution to the local area.

3.4.48 The layout of the site involves siting the car park to the front, adjacent to Furthergate and the store building adjacent to the rear boundary. Although this layout is contradictory to the pre-application response, which advocated the car park to the rear to avoid perception of a parking dominated street scene; the applicant submits that the design has been informed by the site constraints and their operational requirements, which would be compromised by an alternative layout. Moreover, easily identifiable car parking is considered important to the overall strategic objectives of the company. Whilst the layout is not considered an optimal urban design solution, it is not, on balance, considered demonstrably harmful, having regard to the sites context and its surroundings, including the green corridor adjacent to Furthergate which acts as an effective landscape break between the highway and the development. Appropriate hard and soft landscaping will feature across the site, further softening the visual impact of the development.

3.4.49 The green corridor referred to is within the applicants control, following agreement reached with the Council's Property Management team. An appropriate maintenance strategy of this area will be secured by condition, to ensure its enhancement.

3.4.50 The proposed building is single storey, of contemporary design. It features a single height glazed entrance positioned at the north western corner of the frontage. The western elevation will be full height curtain wall glazing. Remaining elevations will be steel clad in an appropriate contrasting cream / grey combination. The roof will be grey clad and mono pitched, sloping gently from south to north. Advertisements will feature along much of the frontage of the building. These will be considered under a separate application for Advertisement Consent. Design of the building appropriately responds to the sites characteristics and the wider commercial make-up of Furthergate.

3.4.51 Summary

This report assesses the full planning application for demolition of the existing building, erection of new Lidl store and associated works. In considering the proposal, a wide range of material considerations have been taken into account to inform a balanced recommendation.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Approve – subject to conditions which relate to the following matters:

- 3 year implementation period
- Implementation of deconstruction / demolition in accordance with submitted methodology
- Prior to commencement of construction, submission of a Construction Method Statement
- Prior to commencement of construction, submission of technical design of junction improvement to Furthergate / St. Clements St and to the Cherry St egress
- Prior to commencement of construction, submission of a scheme for the maintenance and connectivity through the green corridor along Furthergate
- Visibility splays to remain unobstructed
- Prior to implementation of the use, submission of a covered storage area for PTW and cycle spaces
- Implementation of agreed Travel Plan
- Implementation of agreed lighting scheme and mitigation methods
- Control of trading hours to between Monday to Saturday: 07:00 – 22:00 hours and Sundays and Bank Holidays 10:00 – 17:00 hours
- Provision of two electric vehicle charging points
- Boundary treatments, including acoustic fence, to be implemented prior to commencement of use
- Prior to commencement of construction, submission of a Contaminated Land Report
- Prior to commencement of approved use, submission of a Validation Report demonstrating effective contaminated land remediation.
- Unexpected contamination
- Prior to commencement of construction, submission of a surface water drainage scheme
- Foul and surface water to be drained on separate systems
- Implementation of recommended ecological appraisal methodology

- Prior to commencement of approved use, implementation of all agreed hard landscaping and implementation of all soft landscaping within first available planting season after completion of the development
- Limitation of the premises to the approved A1 use and no alternative use without express consent
- No sub-division or mezzanine of the building without express consent

5 PLANNING HISTORY

5.5 No relevant planning history

6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Arboricultural Officer
No response offered.

6.2 Drainage Section
No objection subject to implementation of separate foul and surface water drainage scheme; by condition.

6.3 Environmental Services
No objection.

6.4 Public Protection
Noise / Dust / Vibration
Recommended conditions:

- Opening hours limited to between 07:00 – 22:00 Monday – Friday and 10:00 – 17:00 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays
- Site working hours to be limited to between 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 – 13:00 on Saturday. No works on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- Implementation of the 'Deconstruction / Demolition Method Statement' control measures.
- Deliveries to the premises to be restricted to between 07:00 – 22:00 Monday – Sunday. This condition is considered unreasonable, on account of the fall-back position of an unrestricted B2 industrial use of the site.

6.4.1 *Air Quality*
Recommended conditions:

- Submission of a report detailing the siting and type of the two electric vehicle charging points proposed
- An assessment of the air quality impact undertaken
- Details of appropriate mitigation identified

These conditions are considered unnecessary on account of the agreed provision of the two charging points which are considered to accord with the aims and objectives of the Council's 'Planning Advisory Note: Air Quality (PAN)'; in acknowledgement of the PAN's advisory status.

6.4.2 *Contaminated Land*

Recommended conditions:

- Submission of detailed proposals for site investigations.
- Submission of validation of remedial measures.
- Unexpected contamination.

6.5 Highways Authority

Concern expressed as to the right turn from St. Clements Street onto Furthergate, on account of the 4 lane oncoming carriageway; notwithstanding proposed junction improvements. Acceptance of a secondary egress onto Cherry Street.

Recommended conditions:

- Submission of Construction Method Statement.
- Submission of junction improvements and secondary egress technical design
- Submission of maintenance and pedestrian connectivity strategy through green corridor along Furthergate
- Visibility splays to remain unobstructed
- Submission of covered PTW and cycle spaces.

6.6 Capita Ecology

No response offered.

6.7 Lancashire Constabulary

Recommended crime prevention measures incorporated into the development.

6.8 United Utilities

No objections, subject to submission of a surface water drainage scheme and foul and surface water to be drained separately; by condition.

6.9 Public consultation has taken place with 185 letters posted to neighbouring addresses, a press notice published on 8th December 2018 and display of three site notices on 8th November 2018. In response, 2 letters of objection have been received which are shown within summary of representations below.

7 CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Blackledge, Planner – Development Management.

8 DATE PREPARED: 10th May 2019.

9 SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Objection Asda Stores, Grimshaw Park, Blackburn

Re: Application 10/18/1094 | Demolition of existing building and the erection of a Lidl store (Use Class A1) with associated works including improved access, parking area and landscaping | Furthergate Works, St Clements Street, Blackburn, BB1 1AB

On behalf of Asda Stores Limited ("Asda") we object to the above application for planning permission for an out-of-centre store submitted to Blackburn with Darwen Council ("the Council") by Lidl UK GmbH.

Asda operate a store approximately 300m from the edge of Blackburn town centre. The Asda store is located at Grimshaw Retail Park and is a popular destination for food and groceries shopping.

The application is for a new out-of-centre store on an operational employment site, measuring 1,796 sqm (GIA) that will be operated by Lidl. The application site is approximately 1km to the east of Blackburn town centre.

These representations are based on four main points, which are discussed in more detail below, and are summarised as follows:

1. The applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with *Policy CS4: Protection and Re-Use of Employment Sites*;
2. The layout and design of the proposed store is not of sufficient high-quality fronting onto a major transport route;
3. The applicant has failed to provide an appropriate sequential assessment and has not demonstrated that the proposal meets the sequential test; and,
4. The trading philosophy of Lidl is not a material consideration when the application is seeking consent for a "Use Class A1" unit which could be operated by any retailer.

Planning Policy Position

The starting point for the consideration of the acceptability of a development is its accordance with the development plan. If a development is in accordance with the plan, and the plan is up-to-date, then the decision should be to grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF does not change the statutory basis on which planning decisions are founded. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 remains the key decision-making principle.

The statutory development plan comprises the Core Strategy (January 2011), Local Plan 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (December 2015), and Adopted Proposals Map (December 2015).

Policy CS4: Protection and Re-Use of Employment Sites of the Core Strategy states:

'The development for other uses of land in use for employment purposes will not be permitted unless the current use causes an unacceptable loss of amenity for surrounding uses, or it is demonstrated that the land is no longer capable of beneficial use for employment purposes within the life of the Core Strategy.'

Where it can be demonstrated that the employment use is causing loss of amenity or not capable of being redeveloped for employment, Policy CS4 goes on to permit different employment uses, community uses or residential development subject to other policies in the plan. It does not refer to retail use.

Policy CS16: Form and Design of New Development of the Core Strategy requires new development to be of a high standard of design, and to respect and reinforce local character. It goes on to say that development in prominent location, in areas of major change and on transport gateways will be required to demonstrate high standards of design.

Policy CS12: Retail Development of the Core Strategy says that Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres will be the focus for all major and a significant proportion of minor retail development, including "destination" retailing, over the life of the Core Strategy. If towards the end of the strategy period, sites to meet identified needs are not available within the Town Centres, development will be located according to the following sequential test:

- i. First, edge-of-centre sites
- ii. Second, within or on the edge of neighbourhood centres
- iii. Third, in locations elsewhere within the urban area that are easily accessible by non-car means

Policy 8: Development and People of the Local Plan 2 says that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will secure a satisfactory level of amenity for surrounding uses with reference to noise.

Loss of Employment Site

The applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with *Policy CS4: Protection and Re-Use of Employment Sites* and being contrary to the development plan, the application should be refused on this basis alone.

The requirements of Policy CS4 are clear. The applicant must demonstrate that:

- The current Fix Auto operation is causing an unacceptable loss of amenity to surrounding uses; or,
- That the site is no longer of beneficial use for employment purposes by Fix Auto or another employment use within the life of the Core Strategy (i.e. for the next 7-12 years).

With regards to the first point, the site has been operating for employment purposes for many years. Fix Auto, formerly known as Gillibrands, has been trading from Furthergate Works since 1859. No evidence has been provided with the application to suggest that the current operation is causing an unacceptable loss of amenity to surrounding uses. Indeed, the Council should easily be able to identify whether any complaints have been received from nearby residents for instance. As such, it has not been demonstrated that the current operation is causing an unacceptable loss of amenity to surrounding uses, and in this regard the application does not comply with Policy CS4.

The applicant has tried to suggest that the Lidl store would have less of an impact on the amenity of the surrounding uses, but this is completely irrelevant as Policy CS4 does not require a comparison between the existing and proposed use. Even if this were the case this assumption is seriously questionable given that foodstores can have their own amenity issues especially with regards to goods deliveries, and it is not overlooked that the proposed service yard is alarmingly close to the nearest residential properties. Indeed, the applicants own noise assessment identifies an adverse impact from deliveries, and this is with mitigation, but tries to play down this fact because there is just a single delivery per day.

With regards to the second point, whilst the applicant suggest that Fix Auto are looking to relocate elsewhere, it is fundamental to reiterate that they are nevertheless still operating from this site, employing 23 people. It is also unclear whether their relocation is dependent on the success of Lidl gaining a retail consent on the site. If this argument was to be relied upon by the applicant, it would surely need to be evidenced that Fix Auto would be relocating irrespective of this application. However, even if Fix Auto located elsewhere, the applicant would still need to demonstrate that another employment operator would not be willing to take up the site, and this has not been done. As such, it has not been demonstrated that the site is no longer of beneficial use for employment purposes, and in this regard the application does not comply with Policy CS4.

Conversely, it is considered that this is a good location for employment uses. It has operated as such for many years; it is adjacent to a Secondary Employment Area; and not far from a Primary Employment Area. Most importantly, the site has significantly benefitted from the recent highways works directly connecting the site to the A678, an accessibility corridor leading to Junction 6 of the M65 motorway.

Furthermore, even if the applicant could demonstrate compliance with these parts of Policy CS4, the policy goes on to permit different employment uses, community uses or residential development subject to other policies in the plan. It does not refer to retail use.

Unacceptable Layout and Design

The layout and design of the proposed store is not of sufficient high-quality, fronting onto a major transport route and is contrary to Policy CS16. Indeed, the applicants themselves describe the scheme as "standardised" in terms of size, form, massing, materiality, signage, boundary treatments and landscaping (paragraph 7.35, Planning Statement).

The application site occupies a prominent location on the A678, an important route into and out of Blackburn. The existing Fix Auto unit creates a strong building line framing the well-maintained and planted landscaped corridor alongside the A678, with the car parking area tucked away behind the unit. This is precisely why the Council suggested that parking and servicing may benefit from being located to the rear of the site and the store building to the front of the site to better represent the

prevailing pattern of development in the area and help to avoid undermining the environmental enhancements.

Despite this, the proposed Lidl store is set as far back as is possible to do so from the site frontage, whilst leaving a 3m access strip at the rear of the unit. A wide expanse of tarmac is shown adjoining the landscaped corridor alongside the A678 and would do very little in the way of reinforcing the local character of the area, and this is despite the Council's justified recommendations. The applicant has chosen not to follow the Council's recommendations and with weak reasons for choosing to do so it remains to be shown that a scheme with a car park at the rear is not a workable solution.

Likewise, the elevational treatment along the A678 is dominated by large expanses of cladding and large advertisements, with the service yard also facing the street, and it is notable that the most interesting façade does not address the public realm. On the other hand, on the opposite side of the A678 the Blackburn Enterprise Centre is articulated with a range of quality materials (timber, brick and cladding) with a high proportion of glazing and has an interesting form immediately adjacent to the A678, positively contributing to the street scene.

In this regard it is worth reiterating Policy CS16 which requires new development to be of a high standard of design, and to respect and reinforce local character. Development in prominent location, in areas of major change and on transport gateways such as this, will be required to demonstrate high standards of design. This proposal fails to do that and is therefore contrary to Policy CS16.

Inadequate Sequential Assessment

Firstly, before we address the inadequate sequential assessment, it is worth pointing out that the Core Strategy was adopted on the basis that the focus of all major retail development would take place within the Town Centres, and given the scale of this proposal it is considered a major retail development.

That said, the NPPF is also relevant and requires a sequential assessment looking at town centres and edge-of-centre sites. As such, the applicant has provided a sequential assessment with the application. However, the applicant has failed to provide an appropriate sequential assessment and has not demonstrated that the proposal meets the sequential test. The issue is that the Primary Catchment Area is based on a 0-5-minute off-peak drive time which is inappropriately small in this instance given the size of the proposed store, Lidl's growing popularity and the fact that there is expected to be trade drawn from other discounters more than 10-minutes' drive away (e.g. Aldi, Ewood Park). A PCA based on a 10-minute drive time is more representative of the distances people may be willing to drive to the store. A search on Google shows other centres (namely Whalley Banks and Bolton Road) within a 10-minute off-peak drive time of the application site which have not been included in the assessment. By excluding these centres, the sequential assessment is materially flawed. These centres need to at least be considered as failure to do so makes it impossible for the local planning authority to come to a robust and sound decision on whether the application passes the sequential test and any decision would be open to scrutiny.

Lidl Trading Philosophy

The trading philosophy of Lidl is not a material consideration when the application is seeking consent for a "Use Class A1" unit which could be operated by any retailer, unless there were restrictive conditions.

The applicant suggests that Lidl's trading policy differs from a traditional supermarket by selling from a limited range of own brand goods from modest-sized stores. However, whilst this may have been the original philosophy of the 'deep discounter' it is evident that there has been a slow but steady change towards that of a traditional supermarket when considering the main shop offer, increasing store sizes, increasing proportion of comparison goods, and the sale of labelled goods. Indeed, it is worth remembering that this application seeks consent for a 1,104 sqm net foodstore, which cannot be considered to be modest.

Furthermore, the application relies on Lidl's trading policy to suggest a limitation on the impact of the store, but in fact the application is for Class A1 retail which could in theory be occupied by any retailer. Lidl's trading philosophy should not therefore be a material consideration in this instance.

However, in the event of the Council being minded to support the development, suitable planning conditions should be applied to ensure that the character of the development is controlled. Planning considerations should be applied to the foodstore to restrict the range of goods and ensure that the unit is operated by a discount food retailer as proposed and cannot sell a wider range of goods than suggested without further recourse to the Council. In particular, the Council should place restrictions on the range of fresh food counters to be included in the store. Such conditions need to be robust and enforceable.

Other Material Consideration

It is noted that the Marks and Spencer store within Blackburn Town Centre, will be the largest impacted within a centre. Given the reported struggles faced by Marks and Spencer in recent years, and the closure of many of its stores, it is considered that this impact could be detrimental to this Town Centre store which is a material consideration that should be given significant weight.


Policy 8: Development and People of the Local Plan 2 says that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will secure a satisfactory level of amenity for surrounding uses with reference to noise. The applicants own noise assessment identifies an adverse noise impact from deliveries on the nearest residents, and this is with mitigation. The noise assessment tries to play down this fact by suggesting that there would just be a single delivery per day however the fact remains that the proposal will not secure a satisfactory level of amenity for nearby residents, and there is likewise no guarantee, without a restrictive condition, that there would only be a single delivery per day.

Conclusions

The Planning Acts make clear the weight to be accorded to the development plan policies. In particular Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal does not comply with Policy CS4 of the adopted Core Strategy, which seeks to protect and re-use employment sites or Policy CS9 which requires development to be of a high standard of design. Other material considerations do not indicate that that the application should be considered



other than in accordance with the development plan. The application should therefore be refused on this basis.

The applicant has also failed to provide a sound sequential assessment. In the absence of clear evidence in the form of an appropriate sequential assessment the Council are not able to conclude that the sequential test is passed. In this regard, it is worth remembering paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework which says:

"Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the considerations in paragraph 89, it should be refused."

Accordingly, the application should be refused planning permission.

We trust these comments will be taken into account in determination of the planning application.

Yours faithfully

Objection Asda Stores, Grimshaw Park, Blackburn Rec – 31/01/2019

Dear Nick,

10/18/1094 I Demolition of existing building and the erection of a Lidl store (Use Class A1) with associated works including improved access, parking area and landscaping I Furthergate Works, St Clement Street, Blackburn, BB1 1AB.

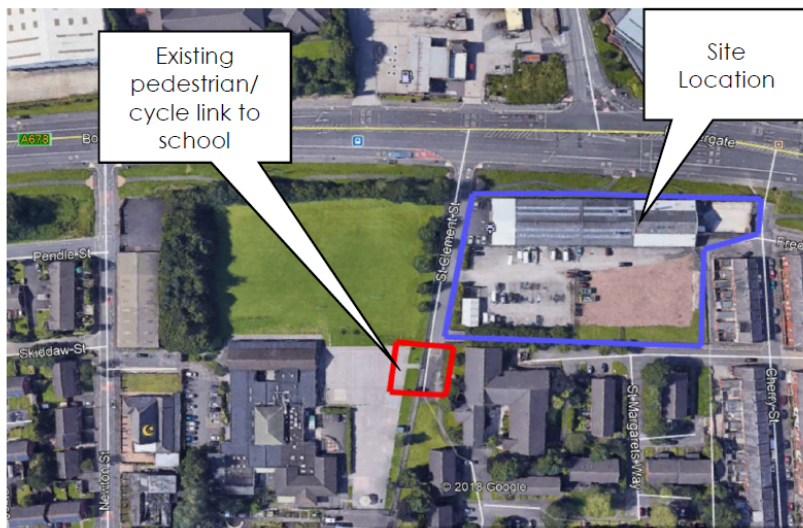
On behalf of ASDA Stores Ltd. (ASDA), TPS Transport Consultants Ltd (TPS) has reviewed the Transport Assessment, prepared by SCP, to accompany the above application for a Lidl foodstore on St Clement Street, Blackburn. Our review has sought to determine whether the development proposals will enable the continued satisfactory operation of the road network, whilst ensuring that road safety is not detrimentally affected.

Following our review of the Transport Assessment we have several concerns regarding the highways impact of the proposals. These concerns form the basis of ASDA's formal objection to the application and are summarised below.

Planning History and Development Proposals

The development proposals consist of the demolition of the existing accident repair centre (B2 use) on the site, and the construction of an A1 foodstore to be occupied by Lidl, with an RFA of 1,104sqm. The proposals include 101 car parking spaces, with servicing via the customer car park. The development site fronts onto the A678 (Furthergate), which is a key route into Blackburn, and takes access from St Clement Street, to the west of the site.

Figure 1 – Location of existing pedestrian and cycling link into the school from St Clement Street



(Source: Google)

Servicing

The TA includes a swept path analysis drawing to demonstrate the movements of HGV vehicles servicing the foodstore, but the swept path analysis provided only demonstrates left-in and left-out movements to and from Furthergate with no confirmation of the intended servicing routes. Furthermore, in order to undertake the left turn into St Clement Street, the HGV is required to overrun the centerline.

The TA suggests that 'this is not a significant issue', however the development proposals result in an intensification of use of St Clement Street and we would, therefore, suggest that there will be an increased risk of conflict between HGVs, customers and school related traffic.

Furthermore, the TA does not detail when servicing will be undertaken. We would suggest that a condition is imposed which restricts deliveries to outside store (and school) opening hours. We would also request that confirmation of servicing routes and / or further swept path analysis drawings are provided to demonstrate additional movements can be undertaken satisfactorily.

Car Parking

As is stated within the TA, a total of 101 parking spaces are to be provided as part of the development proposals, which is compliant with the Blackburn and Darwen Council policy. Although the parking provision is compliant with Council policy, the parking accumulation section of the TA shows that the maximum accumulation would not exceed 51, meaning approximately 50% spare capacity at any given time, which will allow for increased demand at particular times of the year (e.g. Christmas and Easter).

The consultant has then stated that the car park – “*will be able to cater adequately for the customers traffic with the added school pick-up / drop-off activity of the nearby St Thomas School*”. The TA goes on to state that the car park will be monitored so as to establish whether school traffic is having a negative effect on the customer car parking, and if so, Lidl reserves the right to restrict parking to customers only.

No further detail on likely levels of parking associated with the school is included, neither is consideration given to the implications if parking for the school could not be accommodated within the Lidl car park. The Council cannot, therefore, have confidence that parking issues on St Clement Street will not occur. The TA should be revised to include a detailed assessment of existing school related parking on St Clements Street (and on the existing accident repair centre, if applicable). This should then be used to undertake a revised car park accumulation assessment, which combines the school and Lidl parking demand, with consideration given to the maximum anticipated demand during busier periods.

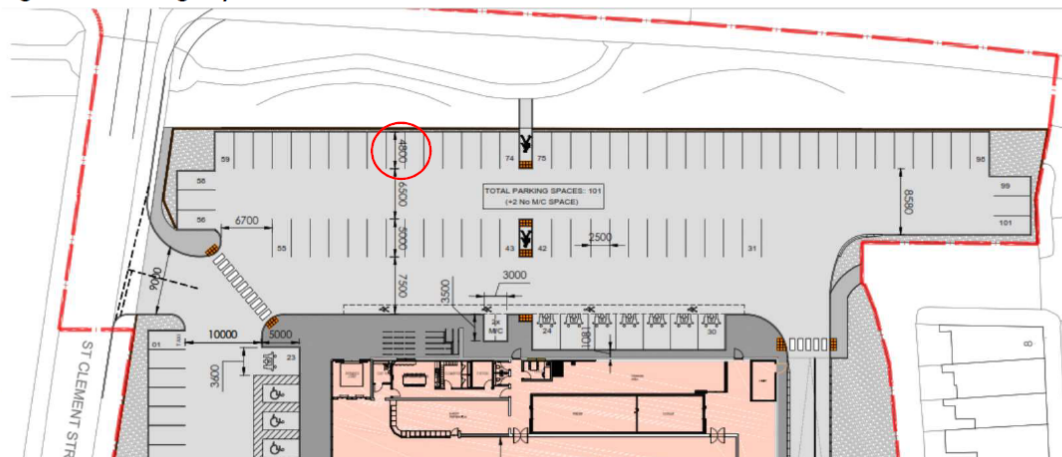
Further details should be provided as to how parking associated with the school will be managed if it can no longer be accommodated within the Lidl carpark (in the future). There are no parking restrictions currently on St Clement Street, in the vicinity of the site access, and there is nothing to stop school related parking occurring here (as seen in **Figure 2** below). This would not only impact on the movement of customer vehicles but would also preclude servicing of the store, based on the swept path analysis submitted.

Figure 2 – No existing parking restriction on St Clement Street



(Source: Google)

In regards to the layout of parking within the site, the TA states that 'car parking spaces are 2.5m wide by 5.2m in length, in accordance with the operator's standard requirements for new stores and BwDC car parking standards', however, the site layout plan does not reflect this. The site layout plan shows spaces varying in width and those along the frontage are identified as 4.8m in length, as shown in **Figure 3**; we would request then, that the plan is updated accordingly.



Indeed, guidance provided by the Department for Transport's TAG UNIT M.12 'Data Sources and Surveys' identifies neutral months as those that "avoids main and local holiday periods, local school holidays and half terms, and other abnormal traffic periods." Observations of highway network operation and traffic data is not, therefore, representative and cannot be used to accurately assess the impact of the development proposals; We would therefore request that traffic data is recollected for the Saturday period for a neutral month and time (i.e. not within school holidays).

Capacity Assessment

Furthermore, there appears to be no flow diagram relating to passby trips (only new trip distribution is included). In light of this, we have been unable to relate the flow diagrams and thus the model inputs to the trip generation calculations in the report. We cannot, therefore, be confident that the capacity assessments accurately reflect the development impact. We would, request that the inconsistencies are addressed in the flow diagrams so that the impact of the development's trips can be traced throughout the immediate highway network, in particular the adjacent junctions.

Furthermore, we would request that queue length data is used to validate the models and is made available, with a view to understanding how queuing back from the adjacent junctions impacts on the St Clement Street junction. The TA suggests that queue length surveys have been undertaken but no evidence of this is provided within the submitted document.

Summary

Following our review of the Transport Assessment, prepared by SCP to support the planning application for a Lidl foodstore on St Clement Street, Blackburn, we would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- More detail is required to establish current levels of school parking on St Clement Street (and the site, if applicable) and an accumulation assessment should be undertaken to demonstrate



whether this can be accommodated within the Lidl carpark during the busiest periods, and, if this provision is later removed, what impact resultant on-street parking would have on the ability of customers and servicing vehicles to access the store;

- No swept path analysis is provided to demonstrate vehicles turning right-in and right-out of the development site, no justification for this is provided. Given that servicing will take place via the customer car park, we would suggest a condition is imposed alongside any consent, to restrict servicing to outside store (and school) opening hours;
- The traffic data for the Saturday assessment was collected during the October half term school holidays, meaning that this data cannot be assumed to be representative of a neutral period. We would, therefore, request that traffic data should be recollected. Furthermore, queue length data should be made available, so the interaction between neighboring junctions and St Clement Street can be understood; and
- Inconsistencies are present within the flow diagrams relating to the development trips at the adjacent junctions surrounding the site; we would recommend this to be amended and the revised flow diagrams made available for review.

Given the above, it is considered that the Transport Assessment currently provides insufficient detail regarding development traffic movements, servicing and car parking, particularly. The highway authority cannot, therefore, arrive at a sound decision on the impact of the development proposals at this stage and, therefore, the application should be refused on highway grounds.

Comment Peter Weddle, Fix Auto Blackburn, Furthergate Works, St Clement Street, Blackburn Rec 01/03/2019

I am writing to you as the owner of the above planning application site and as the owner of the business, T.Gillibrand (Blackburn) Ltd t/a Fix Auto Blackburn, which currently operates from the site.

I can confirm that we have been considering our on-going occupation of the site for a long period of time and that it is our intention to relocate the business from the site.

I can also confirm that we have been in discussions with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council regarding alternative sites and that it is our intention to continue the business's operation within the town.

The Lidl proposal will help to facilitate the relocation of the business to premises which better meets our future needs.

Hopefully this letter assists the Council in providing clarity over this position. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to let me know.
