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OVERVIEW REPORT

**PROPOSED FOODSTORE, BRETT
WORKS AND ADJOINING LAND,
HADLEIGH**

FEBRUARY 2008

Introduction

1. This document summarises the content of technical reports that support the planning application for a supermarket development, its associated servicing, access, car park, associated landscaping and the replacement of part of the Bridge Street car park and allotments on the Brett Works and adjoining land at Hadleigh.
2. The proposed foodstore would gain vehicular access from Bridge Street and have further pedestrian links to the High Street. The proposal site includes land currently occupied by the District Council car park on Bridge Street and the Bridge Street allotments.
3. This Statement draws from the various technical assessments and reports considering matters such as the need for a new supermarket and the form it should take; the appropriate location for it, the effect it will have on the town centre; how traffic to and from it will be accommodated; how accessible the site is by foot, bus and cycle; the landscape, ecological and environmental issues relating to the development; matters relating to archaeology and hydrology; the influences on the design of the store; and impact on the amenity of surrounding land use including that of the air quality and the noise environment.

The Proposed Store: Meeting Identified Needs

4. Babergh District Council adopted the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 in June 2006. This included an allocation of the Brett Works and adjoining land for a supermarket development. In allocating the site, the District Council has accepted that there is a need for a supermarket development within Hadleigh. Notwithstanding the District Council's identification of a quantitative and qualitative need for a supermarket development, an Addendum to the Retail Assessment submitted in support of the as yet undetermined 2003 application has been produced providing an update of the previous position.

The updated assessment has derived the available expenditure on convenience goods from Hadleigh area residents and deducted from it, the reasonable turnover of existing floorspace in the local area. This has demonstrated that there is a substantial, urgent, quantitative need for further convenience goods floorspace in Hadleigh. After allowing for a proportion of expenditure to continue to leave the local area, the Addendum to the Retail Assessment demonstrates sufficient need to support a net sales area of about 1,860m² which includes an element of comparison goods.

5. The Addendum and the original Retail Assessment consider the quality of existing provision and what would be necessary to achieve a much higher degree of expenditure retention in the local area. A foodstore that is able to provide competition to the existing Coop, and thus further choice, together with sufficient car parking to attract customers, particularly from the surrounding rural area, will serve to provide qualitative improvements. Such improvements were recognised by the Secretary of State's decision following the 2000/01 Inquiry which were reiterated by the Local Plan Inspector in his report published in November 2005. The Secretary of State at the Inquiry found that an extended Coop would not be able to meet the qualitative need for enhanced provision, particularly bearing in mind its lack of adequate associated car parking.
6. The accommodation of a greater amount of expenditure locally in a qualitatively appropriate facility will lead to substantial travel saving benefits. At present, a large number of residents, both from Hadleigh Town and the rural catchment area, travel to Ipswich or other major towns to undertake their main food shopping. A household survey undertaken in 2006 found that a total of 79% of catchment area residents do their main food shopping outside the local area.
7. The Secretary of State confirmed, following the 2000/01 Inquiry that:

“There was a quantitative shortfall of convenience floorspace in Hadleigh, as well as qualitative deficiency”.

and that:

“It was necessary to overcome these inadequacies, in order to meet policy objectives of less travel, for the sake of better provision for all members of the community and in the interest of sustaining a shopping environment in the town centre”.

8. These comments were reiterated within the Local Plan Inspector’s November 2005 report. The Local Plan Inspector states that:

“In my view there has been no significant change in circumstances or guidance in the replacement of PPG6, (on which the sequential test was based), within PPS6 sufficient to revisit the principle of a supermarket in this location”.

9. The Local Plan Inspector considered that the Council had reflected the importance and reasoning in the Secretary of State’s decision and within national guidance in allocating the Brett Works and adjoining land.
10. To not meet these important needs as fully as possible and thus help achieve their associated objectives would be to neglect responsibility for the wellbeing of the Hadleigh community.

Why the Brett Works Site is the most Appropriate

11. The range of identified needs dictates that a large store with associated parking facilities is required. The Secretary of State agreed with the 2000/01 Inquiry Inspector when she stated that:

“The store of the size and associated parking facilities proposed was the only viable option to address the current under provision of floorspace in Hadleigh”.

12. This too was reiterated within the Local Plan Inspector's 2005 report that was published following the Local Plan Inquiry held between 28th September 2004 and 25th April 2005. The Brett Works and adjoining land has now been allocated within the Local Plan and is therefore the District Council's preferred site for a supermarket development. The only alternative would be to accommodate the need for further convenience goods floorspace through the reoccupation of vacant shops within the town centre. Disaggregation of the requirement into a number of smaller shop units would not however meet the identified need or deliver the potential benefits that a foodstore of the scale proposed is able.
13. Previously, the Aldham Mill Hill site had been the subject of a proposal for a supermarket development. This was however firmly rejected by the Secretary of State following the 2000/01 Inquiry Inspector's report.

Enhancing the Town Centre's Health and Vitality

14. Whilst the proposed development will divert some trade from the Coop store, this will not cause a harmful adverse affect on the town centre's health and vitality. The considerable number of residents (particularly from the rural area) that will be attracted into the town by the new foodstore, will lead to a substantial amount of additional trade for non-food shops in the town. At present, only about 3% of residents from the catchment area outside the Hadleigh urban area undertake main food shopping within the town's Coop supermarket.
15. With 79% of all catchment area residents travelling outside of the area to do their main food shopping, the retention of a significant number of these shoppers together with the location of the store close to the town centre, has the potential to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre through the generation of additional footfall and potentially additional trade through the creation of both direct link trips and divorced trips to Hadleigh High Street (see the Addendum Retail Statement for further explanation).

16. The proposed supermarket will provide confidence in the town, encouraging new businesses into the area. A new store will provide a quality, main food shopping facility, while existing smaller shops in the centre will continue to fulfil their top up and specialist functions, with most benefiting from the substantially increased attraction of catchment area shoppers to the town. The overall health and vitality of Hadleigh Town Centre would not be damaged, it would be enhanced.

A Site Accessible to All

17. A Transport Assessment has considered the accessibility issues relating to the proposed development. It has found that an acceptable junction can be developed at Bridge Street. The High Street / Calais Street / Bridge Street junction would also operate within capacity with no detrimental impact on the highway network.
18. The proposal is for 209 car parking spaces which includes 16 parent and child spaces and 16 disabled spaces in accordance with Government Guidance.
19. The store's location has also been shown to be accessible by non-car modes including by bus, cycle and on foot. The ability to walk from the site via Church Walk or Pound Lane to the town centre ensures the potential for high levels of pedestrian accessibility. A further pedestrian link to the high street is to be created adjacent to 109 High Street (The Cinch Building). This would only be open during daylight hours.
20. Two pedestrian crossings are proposed. One to the west of the Hadleigh Bridge and a second at the northern end of the high street near the High Street / Calais Street / Bridge Street junction. The inclusion of these pedestrian crossings will ensure that they are adequate facilities to cater for pedestrians moving along the road network in the vicinity of the proposed junction.

21. Virtually all of the supermarket's goods are delivered from Tesco's own distribution depots. This substantially reduces the number of deliveries per day and ensures that routing agreements, eg. from the north on Bridge Street, ie. Gallows Hill can be enforced. It is anticipated that there will be approximately six to seven Tesco delivery vehicles per day. The Transport Assessment concludes that a safe access junction can be delivered and that the site itself is considered to be highly accessible by foot, cycle and bus.

Landscape Character and the Environment

22. A Landscape Report has reviewed the opportunity of accommodating the proposed development here in terms of the landscape context. It has found that the proposal can satisfactorily be accommodated in terms of views from the opposite river bank and from the adjacent meadowland to the north and the more distant views from Constitution Hill.
23. The landscape scheme proposed seeks to enhance the existing corridor of vegetation along the Brett River, along with the habitat associated with the scrub and fen meadowland located adjacent to the store development.
24. The Landscape Report draws upon a number of ecological studies of the site and meadowland to the north. This has found that with the kind of landscape solution possible and as outlined in the report, that there would be an enhancement of ecological interest in the area.
25. The Landscape Report also addresses how the new access road can be screened and how the allotments that are required to accommodate the partly relocated District Council car park and access road are to be relocated.

Archaeology and Hydrology

26. A Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment has been undertaken of the site and the land area required for the access. The site lies within an area of archaeological interest as designated by Babergh District Council. However,

no matters of significance are anticipated. Pre-determination investigations are not considered appropriate. The Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service has agreed that archaeological investigations will need to be agreed with the local authority before any development commences and that such a programme of investigation would only be required following determination.

27. A River Brett Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken. This has been produced in the context of detailed discussion with the Environment Agency and takes account of guidance in PPS25. An accurate hydraulic model has been agreed with the EA and accounts for climate change requirements. The FRA finds that subject to the store being located on the eastern part of the site and that the recommended mitigation measures are put in place, there is no reason to resist development here. Whilst part of the car park and the access to Bridge Street may be the subject of flooding, there will be no impact on the storage capacity of the land area and the proposals will improve the run off rates associated with the land area and also the flood flow across the site.
28. The Flood Risk Assessment has addressed previous comments made by the Environment Agency and has in principle agreement.

Towards an Appropriate Store Design

29. The design rationale for the store has evolved from a careful study and appreciation of the proposal's context. The essence of the proposal takes a Tesco concept store and breaks down the elements of the building expressing its differing uses, eg. sales area and support. By providing uses onto the public space, small scale elements of the building have been created which help to link it with the existing town.
30. The design concept includes the following elements:
- Natural light into the store at high level.

- A second store entrance facing Church Walk / Pound Lane.
 - Glazing and feature panels.
 - Reconfiguration of the standard store footprint.
 - Change of materials to produce a contemporary vernacular.
31. A Companion Design and Access Statement has been produced which details the process undertaken in order to determine an appropriate design for the site. The Design and Access Statement describes how this has evolved and how the store is integrated into the existing urban fabric of Hadleigh and how the design and layout can enhance this part of the town centre. This includes taking account of advice from CABI, English Heritage and Babergh District Council Officers.

The Surrounding Amenity

32. An Environmental Noise Assessment has been produced and is submitted in support of the planning application. This considers noise generated through increased traffic flows on the surrounding road network, traffic flow on the access road, activity within the store service yard, use of the store car park and mechanical and plant services associated with the store itself.
33. The conclusions to the report propose a 3.5m acoustic screen to the north of the service yard, a 1.8m high acoustic screen running between the new access road and the front of no. 17 Bridge Street and an acoustic screen of a minimum height of 1.8m adjacent to the remaining unit located on the Hadleigh Hall boundary. The inclusion of these acoustic screens as part of the development proposals will ensure that there will be an insignificant impact on the residential amenity of adjoining properties.
34. The increased traffic flows on the surrounding road network will not generate a significant impact by reason of noise. The supporting Air Quality Assessment comes to a similar conclusion in respect of air quality. It finds

that the increased traffic flows will result in only a slight change to the air quality environment. The analysis concludes that the increased traffic flows on the existing roads will lead to extremely small changes in the concentration of pollutants. The impact is considered to be slightly adverse but still well below the air quality objectives for the area.

Conformity with the Development Plan

35. An assessment has been made against all the relevant policy. This has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent and in general conformity with the Local Plan.
36. As previously described, this planning application was submitted in response to the allocation of the Brett Works and adjoining land for a supermarket development. This allocation consists of 13 criteria.
37. The Addendum to the Retail Statement identifies these and points to where detail can be found in other supporting documents.

Conclusions

38. Bearing in mind the content of the supporting assessments and statements as is briefly summarised in this Overview Report. It is considered that Tesco's proposed supermarket should be granted planning permission. Doing so will address urgent quantitative and qualitative need for additional food retailing in Hadleigh which leads to savings in car use, greater reliance on more sustainable forms of travel, improvements in choice, providing greater local competition, helping to address social inclusion issues, enhancing the town centre's health and improving local employment opportunities. It can achieve all this whilst positively enhancing the character of the area affected through the replacement of buildings having little or no architectural merit with a building that represents a truly contemporary and innovative design approach.