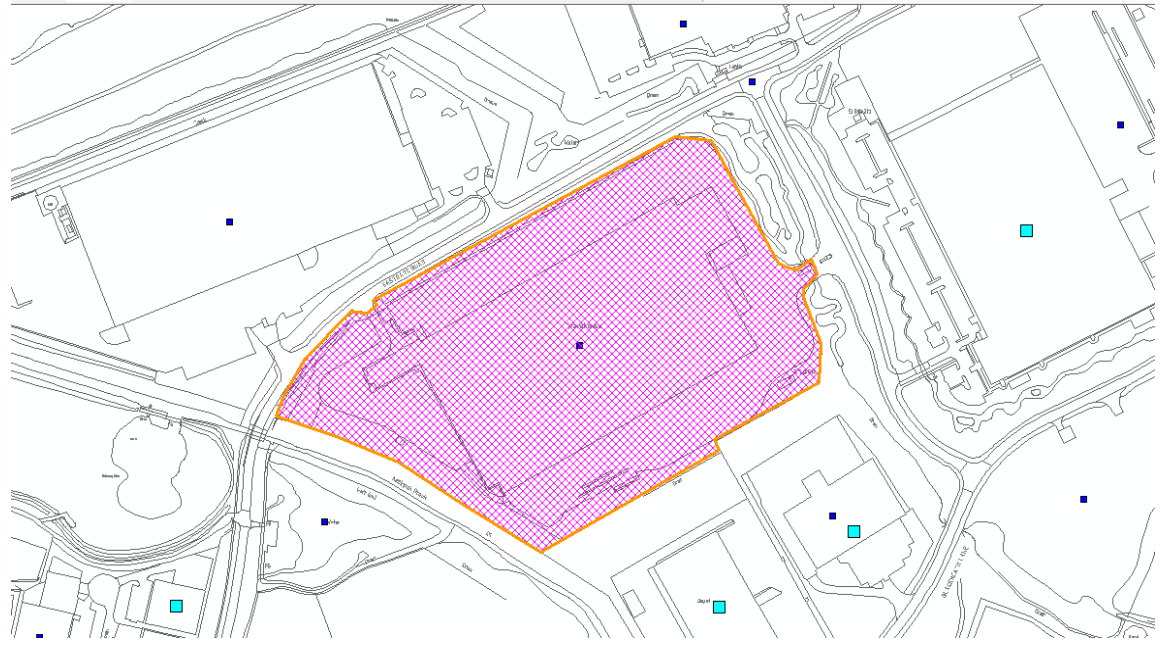


APPLICATION NO:	15/00152/FUL
LOCATION:	LIDL Distribution Centre, Blackheath Lane, Manor Park, Runcorn
PROPOSAL:	Proposed extension of existing B8 (storage and distribution) warehouse including ancillary works to hardstanding, car parking and site access.
WARD:	Daresbury
PARISH:	Daresbury
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Mr C Monkman
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	
Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	Primarily Employment Area
DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:	No
REPRESENTATIONS:	None
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to objection of Environment Agency being withdrawn and subject to conditions.
SITE MAP	
	

1. APPLICATION SITE

The Site and Surroundings

Site of approximately 8.1 hectares. Site comprises the Lidl Regional Distribution Centre (RDC), car parking, access routes and areas of

hardstanding falling within the Manor Park Employment Area. The site is fronted by Eastgate Road and Blackheath Lane to the north and east. Green Wood lies to the south.

Planning History

None directly relevant.

Background

Full planning consent is sought for the development of the site in order to allow Lidl to expand their warehouse and distribution operations to meet growing consumer demand across the North West and North Wales, which the RDC serves. Most notably, the additional floorspace will assist Lidl in the storage of frozen goods. The proposed works will allow Lidl to continue operating at the site without need for relocation and it is expected that the additional floorspace and proposed alterations will secure the existing 310 full and part time jobs and generate 25 new jobs.

2. THE APPLICATION

Proposal Description

This application seeks full planning permission for an 'extension to existing B8 (Storage and Distribution) warehouse including ancillary works to hardstanding, car parking and site access'.

The following works are proposed as part of this planning application:

- An extension to south eastern corner of the RDC forming a new freezer storage chamber and associated buffer rooms. This will provide an additional 2,741sq.m floorspace.
- A new single-storey refrigeration plant room and enclosure alongside cat ladder access to a new flat roof and roof mounted refrigeration units. This will adjoin the proposed extension at the southern elevation of the RDC and will provide 203sqm floorspace.
- Erection of a flat roof over a new container platform extending from under the eaves of the main warehouse at its north eastern corner including new/extended finger docks. A new access ramp will also be provided.
- External alterations to the existing pedestrian access to the waste management area and cold hall platform.
- An extension to the existing substation with a new concrete pad foundation.
- Construction of a new external fire egress staircase including the removal of four car parking spaces.

- Existing blue external cladding panels to be replaced with new panelling to match existing.
- Existing office windows will be removed and replaced.
- A new T-junction in lieu of the existing roundabout with revised vehicle priorities including alterations to the existing road layout, kerb lines, speed humps, turning radii, lamp posts and fire hydrants. Proposed works will entail new, white line demarcation, directional signage, road markings, yellow lining indicating pedestrian circulation route, zebra crossing, wheel guides, trief kerbs, pedestrian bollards, vehicular bollards.
- The 16 HGV parking bays opposite the entrance will be relocated to the southern boundary. There is also room for an additional single HGV space at the southern boundary. The proposed relocation and additional single HGV space will result in the loss of the existing redundant fuelling area.
- The fixing/ relocation of 4 external storage containers to be located adjacent to the new HGV spaces.

Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Statement and Ecological Appraisal.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

The government has published its finalised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, previously NPPG) to complement the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site is designated as within a Primarily Employment Area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The following National and Council Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are of particular relevance: -

Unitary Development Plan

BE1 General Requirements for Development
BE2 Quality of Design
GE21 Species Protection
PR16 Development and Flood Risk
E3 Primarily Employment Areas
E5 New Industrial and Commercial Development
TP6 Cycling Provision as part of New Development
TP12 Car Parking

Halton Core Strategy (2013)

CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy
CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CS18 High Quality Design
CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk

Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management
WM9 Sustainable Waste Design and Layout for New Development

Relevant SPDs

Design of New Commercial and Industrial Development SPD is of particular relevance

4. CONSULTATIONS

HBC Highways– No Objection in principle

HBC Open Spaces – No Objection in principle

Environment Agency – Objection due to absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This issue is addressed later within this report.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

None to report.

6. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The main structure of the RDC encompasses an ancillary B1 (office) use, however the majority of floorspace is occupied by a B8 (storage and distribution) use. The B8 use comprises of a large warehouse area, waste management area, charging station, chillers and racking areas. In total the RDC has a gross internal floor area of 37,996sq.m, of which 36,061sq.m is provided by the warehouse and 1,935sq.m is office floorspace. A small substation, plant and gas metre cupboard are also clustered together at the south side of yard. In terms of appearance, all new structures proposed on site will be designed to match the existing external finish of the RDC. Furthermore, all works are to be carried out whilst the RDC is kept operational.

The site lies entirely within an area designated as a Primarily Employment Area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. In accordance with saved UDP Policy E3 the principle of development falling within use class B8 with ancillary B1 uses is therefore considered acceptable in principle. The proposed works will allow Lidl to continue operating at the site without need for relocation and it is expected that the additional floorspace and proposed alterations will secure the existing 310 full and part time jobs and generate 25 new jobs. It is considered that significant weight can be given to the merits of the scheme in terms of job protection and creation for the local area.

Design and Character

The overall layout has been determined to maximise the efficiency of the operations based on LIDL's operational requirements.

The design of the proposed extension is considered to be suitably in-keeping with the remainder of the warehouse. The elevations will be faced with a coloured metal cladding and the curved roof over the main warehouse will be extended over the proposed extension. The roof will be coated with a dark grey PVC single membrane system with new domed skylights, all to match the existing. The existing 'Lidl' sign will be repositioned from its existing siting to the new extension. The existing container platforms will be extended and covered by a new flat roof under the eaves of the main warehouse with 4 skylights installed in the roof. The pallet of materials and colours used to finish the proposed features are designed carefully to match the existing warehouse. The extension to the generator room and other alterations have all been designed to match and harmonise with the existing.

Despite a relatively large scale extension and other widescale external alterations it is not considered that the appearance of the existing RDC will be

significantly affected by the proposed works as the proposed extensions and external works will be viewed in the context of an existing substantial storage and distribution centre.

As such the proposed works are considered to accord with the with saved UDP Policies E5 and BE2, Core Strategy Policy CS18 and the guidance set out in the Design of New Commercial & Industrial Development SPD (2006).

Highways, Parking and Servicing

The application is supported by a detailed technical note to review staff numbers and parking, to ensure that the revised site layout provides sufficient parking to accommodate staff and HGVs both currently and in the future.

This concludes that staff vehicle parking will marginally reduce as a result of the development work, and HGV parking will increase slightly. Both changes are relatively minor and considered insignificant in the context of the wider facility. Accounting for an increase in staff numbers, the surveys demonstrate that even at maximum demand, there will be ample car parking provision on site.

With regards to staff travel patterns, 40 cycle stands are available for staff along with associated facilities such as showers and locker rooms. Approximately 20 members of staff are known to travel by bicycle to the site on a daily basis. As part of the proposed works, renovation of the existing showers, lockers and changing rooms will take place, thus potentially further encouraging cycling as a sustainable mode of transport to the distribution centre.

On this basis, and having regard to the proposed layout alterations it is considered that adequate provision can be made for highway circulation, servicing and parking and the Council's Highways Engineers raises no objection.

Ecology

The application submission includes a Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal. This report is based on fieldwork undertaken in February 2014 which included a desk study and site walkover. The site is assessed as having a low nature conservation value. The impact of development on all the species identified in the appraisal, including Water Vole, is considered to be low.

Although the impact on Great Crested Newt is assessed as being low, they are considered the only protected species potentially at risk from the proposed works. Although the pond located just outside the north east corner of the site has not been subject to a formal Habitats Suitability Index assessment, its physical features indicate that it could be a suitable breeding site. It is therefore suggested that Reasonable Avoidance Measures are implemented in the form of Temporary Amphibian Fencing during

construction. This can be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition.

The Council's Open Spaces Officer has confirmed that the proposed reasonable avoidance measure of a length of temporary amphibian fencing to be erected just outside of the boundary fencing is acceptable. He also confirms that the surrounding network of ponds and ditches is known to support a population of water voles however we do not have any recent recordings of Water Vole activity in the area adjacent to the current proposal. The effect of the proposed development on Water Vole, if they were present, is considered to be minimal.

Flood Risk

The majority of land within the Manor Park Industrial Estate, including the application site, lies within Zone 3a and 3b on Halton Borough Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Map (2011) and the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Map. Given that the site is considered to be at a high risk of flooding a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with this application.

The Environment Agency has confirmed their opinion that the current FRA is not considered to comply with current requirements and, in particular, that it fails to demonstrate what impacts any loss of floodplain will have on flood risk elsewhere.

It is considered that this objection is likely to be resolved by way of update to the FRA which is underway and therefore capable of resolution. In order to avoid unnecessary delay in determining the planning application it is requested that authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee to approve the application subject to formal confirmation that the Environment Agency withdraws its objection and subject to any additional conditions they request. Members will be updated orally of any progress at the Committee.

Waste Prevention/Management

Policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are applicable to this application. In terms of waste prevention, a construction management plan will deal with issues of this nature and based on the development cost, the developer would be required to produce a Site Waste Management Plan. In terms of waste management, the application includes provision for the better management of waste within the site and it is considered that there is sufficient space for the storage of waste including separated recyclable materials as well as access to enable collection.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The review of the National Planning Policy Framework shows that there is a real focus on the need for sustainable economic development. National policy

is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development, that economic growth is a high priority and that planning should encourage sustainable growth.

The site is currently occupied by Lidl UK GmbH Regional Distribution Centre (RDC). The majority of the RDC comprises a B8 land use whilst the remainder provides ancillary B1 (office) use. Lidl currently employs 220 members of staff in the warehouse and 90 members of staff in its offices. Securing planning consent for the application proposals is predicted to generate 25 jobs at the site and would make more efficient use of the site's occupied employment use.

Whilst a potential issue relating to Flood Risk has arisen through the application process and remains outstanding it is considered that this can be adequately resolved.

The scheme is considered to offer a good quality of development suited to the character of the site and the wider area. The proposed works are considered to accord with Governments policy objectives and the requirements and that the aspirations of UDP and Core Strategy policy and the Design of New Commercial and Industrial Development SPD are met.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

(a) Approve subject to the Environment Agency confirming that they withdraw their objection and:

(b) Conditions relating to the following:

1. Standard 3 year permission (BE1)
2. Condition specifying plans (BE1)
3. Materials condition, requiring building and hardsurfacing materials to match the existing building/ hardsurfacing or in accordance with details submitted to and agreed in writing (BE2)
4. Submission and agreement of a scheme of temporary amphibian fencing (GE21)
5. Submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan including wheel cleansing facilities (BE1)
6. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
7. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
8. Any additional conditions recommended by the Environment Agency (PR16/ CS23)

(c) That if the objection of the Environment Agency is not withdrawn within a reasonable period of time, authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Committee to refuse the application.

9. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.