

# Planning Statement

Aldi, Prospect Retail Park, Whitstable

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**Report title:** Planning Letter

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**Reviewed by:** Tim Sturgess (Director)

**Date:** December 2023

**For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited**

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Avison Young and is submitted on behalf of ALDI Stores Limited (the applicant) in support of an application at ALDI, Prospect Retail Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SD (the Site). The Site is located within the administrative boundary of Canterbury City Council (CCC), who act as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The description of development is as follows:

*“Extension of plant area to the rear of the existing store.”*

1.2 The following documents have been submitted in support of this application:

- Application Form and Fee;
- Planning Statement (this document);
- Planning Drawings;
  - Site Location Plan (ref. 2221-SHE-25-02)
  - Proposed Location Plan (ref. 2221-SHE-25-03)
  - Existing Plant Area and Elevation (ref. 2221-SHE-25-10)
  - Proposed Plant Area and Elevation (ref. 2221-SHE-25-11)

1.3 This Planning Statement sets out the planning case for the development and is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** - describes the Site including within its immediate context;
- **Section 3** - identifies the relevant planning history for the Site;
- **Section 4** - sets out the development proposals in detail;
- **Section 5** - outlines the planning policy framework relevant to the determination of the application;
- **Section 6** - assesses the application against the relevant planning policy and guidance; and
- **Section 7** - draws together the conclusions of the report.

## 2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The Site is located within Prospect Retail Park, Whitstable, accessed from the A2990, just north of the Thanet Way (A299). A Site Location Plan, identifying the sites location, has been submitted alongside the application. As per the Site Location Plan, the works will be focussed to the south of the Site, behind the existing commercial units.
- 2.2 The Aldi Store occupies Unit 3 of Prospect Retail Park, with 4 other units all comprising two storey retail units. The Aldi Store is directly adjacent to the Unit 2, the M&S Foodhall. Beyond the 5 commercial units, the retail park contains significant areas of customer carparking and small parcels of landscaping. The Site is located within the coastal town of Whitstable and. The is site and retail park is allocated within the Local Plan Proposals Map 2017 as a Protected Employment Site, sandwiched between the A299 and the A2990. The nearest residential units lie across the A2290 on The Oaze, approx. 140m north of the Site.
- 2.3 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore classifies as having a low risk of flooding. The Site is not within a conservation area, nor does it contain any statutorily or locally listed buildings. There are no tree preservation orders on the Site.

### 3. Planning History

3.1 This section seeks to set out the relevant planning history for the site. CCC's online planning register identifies the relevant Site planning history as summarised below.

3.2 In July 2015 a hybrid planning application (ref. CA//14/02339) secured permission for the following works:

*"1) Application for full planning permission for 1 No. retail store (Use Class A1) and 2 No. food retail stores (Use Class A1), new pedestrian and vehicular access off the A2990 (Old Thanet Way) with associated circulation access roads, parking, service yard, sustainable drainage system, earthworks to create development platform, landscaping and artificial lighting to car park and service yards, and 2) Application for outline planning permission to provide a community hospital (Use Class C2), teaching care home (Use Class C2), extra care housing (Use Class C2) and motor vehicle dealership (sui-generis), provision of sustainable drainage system, earthworks to create development platform and parking."*

3.3 In October 2015 an amendment application (ref. CA//15/01696) secured a variation to Condition 22 of planning permission (ref. CA//14/02339) relating to:

*"...changing of the wording to allow no more than 30% of the net sales area of Unit D as identified on Drawing No 21213A/10 Rev A received 13 November 2014 to be used for the sale of convenience goods without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority."*

3.4 Subsequently, a number of minor applications to discharge conditions and apply for advertisement consent were granted between 2016 -2019.

## 4. Planning Application

4.1 The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the proposed development for which planning permission is sought and to set out the specification of the planning application.

### Description of Development

4.2 Planning permission is sought for the following description of development:

*“Extension of plant area to the rear of the existing store.”*

4.3 Detailed drawing of the proposals have been prepared by The Harris Partnership and accompany this application. The development proposals comprise:

- Removal of the existing plant cage and frame.
- Incorporation of new plant to facilitate that ongoing energy requirements of the store, including the Air Source Heat Pumps to increase efficiency.
- Minor extension to the plant cage and frame to accommodate the new plant.

4.4 Further details of the proposed development are included within the drawings that have been submitted alongside this application and prepared by The Harris Partnership.

## 5. Planning Policy Framework

5.1 The proposed development has been prepared in the context of relevant policy and guidance at the national, regional, and local levels. This section of the Planning Statement sets out the policy framework against which the scheme is subsequently assessed.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government, was last updated on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023, and sets out the Government's national policy for planning issues in a single, comprehensive document.

5.3 The (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It sets out the government's overarching planning policies for England and how they are to be applied. The core message of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

### **The Development Plan**

5.4 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises the Canterbury District Local Plan (2017).

5.5 The adopted Policies Map (2017) identifies the Site as being subject to the following specific policy designations:

- Wraik Hill / Chaucer Business Park Protected Employment Sites;
- Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay 7.2 Km Zone of Influence
- Thames, Medway & Swale Estuaries 6 Km Zone of Influence

5.6 The Site is not situated within a conservation area and there are no statutorily or locally listed buildings on the Site.

### **Canterbury District Draft Local Plan to 2045**

5.7 CCC is in the process of reviewing the current Canterbury Local Plan. The Local Plan Review will set out the planning framework for the borough for the period up to 2038.

5.8 The Regulation 18 consultation closed on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023, with the Council intending to publish the final draft Local Plan in late 2023, however this is yet to be published. The draft policies contained within the draft Local Plan are afforded limit weight in assessment of this application in accordance with the NPPF.

## 6. Planning Assessment

6.1 This section provides an assessment of the proposed development against the planning policies summarised above. The key consideration in assessing the proposed planning application are as follows: Principle of Plant Extension; Noise, Sustainability; and Design.

### **Principle of Plant Extension**

- 6.2 Canterbury Local Plan Policy DBE2 (Renewable Energy) states that in determining applications for micro-generation equipment, the City Council will expect applicants to; avoid significant adverse impact (visual, noise and amenity); give weight to the environmental, social and economic benefits; minimise the visual impacts; ensure there are no significant impact on residential amenity, ensure that the installation does not have adverse environmental impacts, no impact on heritage or landscapes of significant setting; and the protection of agricultural land.
- 6.3 Furthermore, the Canterbury draft Local Plan, Policy DS25 (Renewable Energy and Carbon Sequestration) states that proposals for the utilisation, distribution and development of renewable and low-carbon sources of energy of all scales, including freestanding installations, will be encouraged.
- 6.4 The proposed development includes the extension of plant to the rear of the Aldi Store. The works will be located in the service yard to the rear of the three commercial units, this in turn is located greater than a 100m from any other use, as well as being hidden by the existing commercial stores and the Thanet Way. This ensures that there will be no impact on the neighbouring amenity. Given that there are no nearby heritage assets, nor landscapes of significance or protected industrial land, it is understood that the proposals comply within Local Plan Policy DBE2.
- 6.5 The proposals also seek to provide additional air-source heat pumps to enable more efficient energy production on site, this seeks to align with wider sustainability goals within the district and aligns with parts of Local Plan Policy DBE2, as well as draft Local Plan Policy DS25.

### **Noise**

- 6.6 Local Plan Policy DBE2(a) also states that the development of renewable or micro-generation equipment is required to avoid any significant impact on noise. This is further supported by Local Plan Policy DBE3(i) (Principles of Design) which outlines that development proposals will have to have consideration of the impacts of polluting elements, such as noise.



- 6.7 Draft Local Plan Policy DM17 (Noise Pollution and Tranquillity) states that where appropriate, new developments should integrate noise insulation for future residents to ensure the ongoing viability of existing surrounding uses is not comprised.
- 6.8 Given the application is a considerable distance from any alternative use (approx. 100m) and even further distance from any residential uses, as well as being shielded by the existing commercial units, there would be no significant noise impact from a minor increase to existing plant. The site's location, directly adjacent to the Thanet Way dual carriageway further mitigates any potential impact. As such, the proposals comply with Local Plan policies DBE2 and DBE3 in relation to noise.

### **Sustainability**

- 6.9 Canterbury Local Plan Policy DBE1 (Sustainable Design and Construction) states that all development should respond to the objectives of sustainable development, through the conservation of resources such as energy. Supporting Paragraph 8.12 goes onto to outline that renewable resources should be sought in new development, with air source heat pumps being one of the most common forms.
- 6.10 Local Plan Policy CC2 (Reducing Carbon Emissions from New Development) also encourages development to incorporate measures to reduce carbon emissions, citing a desire to minimise energy consumption.
- 6.11 The proposals seek to increase the existing air source heat pump capacity through the provision of additional units. This is recognized as a method of increasing the level of renewable energy onsite whilst contributing to wider sustainability goals. As such, the proposals comply with both Local and Draft Local Plan policy mentioned above.

### **Design**

- 6.12 Local Plan Policy DBE3(a) (Principles of Design) outlines that development proposals should have consideration of the character, setting and context of the site and the way that the development is integrated into the landscape.
- 6.13 Given the sites location to the rear of the commercial units, largely hidden from view and publicly inaccessible, there is a distinct lack of character within the vicinity. As such, the proposals will have a negligible impact on the character, setting or context of the site and therefore accord with Local Plan Policy DBE3(a).

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of the full planning application, on behalf of Aldi Stores Limited, for the extension of plant area to the rear of the existing store, at Unit 3, Prospect Retail Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SD.
- 7.2 To summarise, the proposed development would result in an increase in the energy efficiency of the existing store, contributing to wider sustainability goals in the District. It is anticipated that the additional plant will futureproof the existing store and strengthen Aldi's presence as an established foodstore within the area.
- 7.3 The proposals are understood to have negligible impacts on design, noise and amenity, given that the site is shielded by the existing retail units, it is a considerable distance from any neighbouring uses, and it lies directly adjacent to the Thanet Way dual carriageway.
- 7.4 Overall, the proposals demonstrate compliance with the relevant national, strategic and local planning policy. We therefore respectfully request that Canterbury District Council grant planning permission for the proposal.

# Contact details

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