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# Statement of Community Involvement

PROPOSED LIDL FOODSTORE

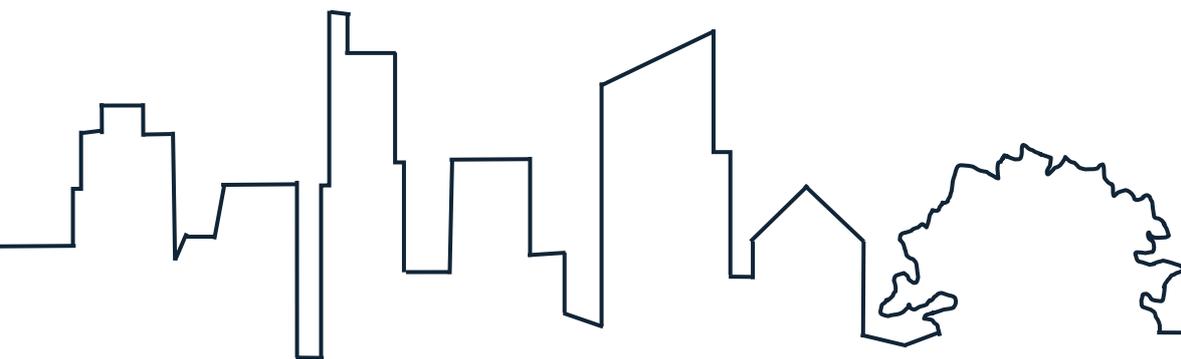
Site of the Former Porcupine Inn, Mottingham  
On behalf of Lidl Great Britain

April 2019

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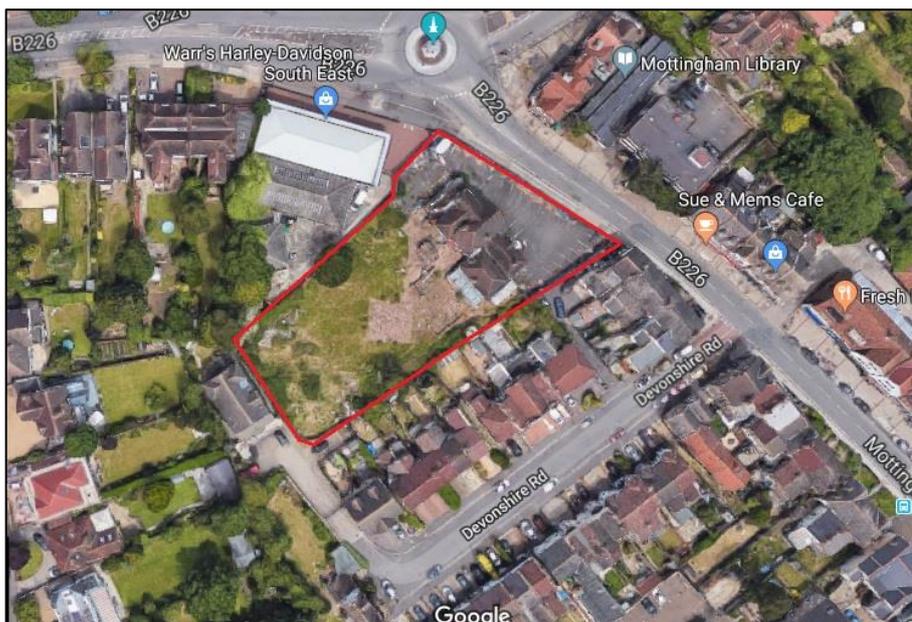
# I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Walsingham Planning on behalf of Lidl Great Britain (Lidl). It provides information on the publicity and community involvement in the development of proposals for a retail scheme, comprising a neighbourhood foodstore to be occupied by Lidl, at the site of the former Porcupine Inn, Mottingham Road, Mottingham.
- I.2 One of the core principles of national planning policy is to encourage early engagement of all stakeholders in the process of plan making and bringing forward development proposals.
- I.3 This Statement contains information on the consultation programme undertaken prior to the submission of the planning application to the Council. It explains the policy background guiding the programme, the methodology, the approach adopted, the response to the consultation and how the scheme has evolved as a consequence.
- I.4 This Statement describes the voluntary consultation activity undertaken by the applicant.

## 2 CONTEXT

### THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the former public house on site and the erection of an AI retail foodstore with associated car parking, reconfigured site access, landscaping, servicing and other associated works. The foodstore will be occupied by Lidl.
- 2.2 The proposed foodstore will measure 1,380 sq.m GIA with a sales area of 749 sq.m.
- 2.3 The proposal includes the provision of 33 car parking spaces. Two of these spaces will be reserved for the use of less able-bodied customers and two spaces will be designated for parents with children. These spaces will be situated in close proximity to the store lobby. Six spaces will also be reserved for the use of electric vehicles.
- 2.4 A total of 26 cycle parking spaces will be positioned across the site. Twenty spaces will be positioned adjacent to the store lobby for the use of customers, and a further six spaces will be provided to the rear of the service yard for staff.
- 2.5 The location of the site is shown below.



Source: Google Maps, 2019

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

- 2.6 Planning shapes the places where people work, live and learn, so it is right that people should be able to take an active part in the planning process. With localism at the top of the Government's agenda, community involvement is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (2019)**

- 2.7 The NPPF sets out the Government's overarching policy towards community involvement in planning. Paragraph 39 of the Framework explains the guiding principle, which is that:

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

- 2.8 The NPPF also urges local planning authorities to encourage applicants to engage with the local community before submitting an application (paragraph 40).

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES (2010)**

- 2.9 Careful note has been taken of the document entitled: Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes, which was authored by Planning Aid and the Royal Town Planning Institute and published in 2010.

### 3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION - METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 This section of the Statement summarises the community engagement strategy employed by the applicant, with regards to the proposed development scheme.

#### LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

- 3.2 The applicant identified the residential catchment area around the application site. This included just over 12,000 local households.
- 3.3 Following the identification of the catchment area, each address was sent a leaflet, which introduced the proposal to the residents and identified Lidl as the intended occupier of the neighbourhood foodstore and the key benefits of the proposed development. The leaflet also referred residents to a bespoke website which has been set up by Lidl, to provide the latest plans and information about the development scheme ([www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk](http://www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk)).
- 3.4 The leaflet sought residents' feedback on the proposed development, which could either be provided online via the website, or by returning the leaflet to Lidl (using a prepaid envelope). The leaflet asked for a response to two questions, as follows: (1) Whether residents support the principle of the development; and (2) Whether residents think that a new Lidl foodstore would be a benefit to the area. Furthermore, the leaflet provided the opportunity for residents to provide miscellaneous comments on the application proposal. A copy of the leaflet is provided at **Appendix I**.

#### MEETINGS

- 3.5 Lidl also attended meetings with individual interested parties, to provide further information about the scheme and discuss particular concerns. In this regard, representatives from Lidl and Walsingham Planning met with local ward councillors in November 2018. Lidl also sought to arrange a meeting with the Mottingham Residents Association (MRA), given the interest that the Association has in the application site, but the MRA declined Lidl's invitation to meet.

## **WEBSITE**

- 3.6 As mentioned above, the applicant has created a consultation website [www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk](http://www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk) which consists of plans of the proposed development, and a weblink to an online survey.
- 3.7 The website went live on 31 January 2019. The website will be updated with latest news on the proposals and any changes to the scheme when the planning application has been submitted.

## **ONLINE SURVEY**

- 3.8 An online survey was created on 1 February 2019. The survey allows people to express their opinion on the proposed development and submit their comments (either anonymously or with contact details).

## **OPEN DIALOGUE**

- 3.9 Contact details for the development team are available on the scheme website. Local residents with a particular interest in the proposals can continue to liaise with the applicant.

## 4 CONSULTATION FINDINGS

4.1 The findings of the public consultation exercise are set out below. As explained in **Section 3**, around 12,000 leaflets were distributed to the local community. It is notable that a substantial 1,401 feedback forms were sent back to Lidl in the post, in addition to considerable interest generated online (amounting to 312 petition signatories and around 150 respondents to an online survey). This represents a good rate of response to the consultation exercise (over 15 per cent) and is testament to the local interest in the scheme.

### LEAFLET FEEDBACK FORMS

4.2 At the time of submission of the planning application, Lidl had received **1,401** returned feedback forms, in response to the consultation leaflet. It is notable from the outset that the overwhelming feedback response was positive, with 1,030 forms noting support for the application scheme (74 per cent), and only 357 forms (25 per cent) expressing concern, whilst 14 responses were undecided (1 per cent).

4.3 This result is interesting because typically residents who oppose a scheme are more likely to take proactive action and return a feedback form, whilst those who support a proposal can be apathetic and take no action. Thus, the fact that well over 1,000 local residents chose to return the feedback form stating their support for the scheme, demonstrates strong interest within the local community, and keen support for the development scheme.

4.4 Indeed, residents noted the following key benefits of the proposed scheme on the feedback forms:

- *Job creation;*
- *Will increase competition locally;*
- *Accessible site that is easy to walk to, especially for Mottingham's elderly residents;*
- *Better use of land than former public house (which attracted anti-social behaviour);*
- *Will improve consumer choice and;*
- *Redevelopment of vacant site.*

- 4.5 Meanwhile, with regards to the feedback forms that expressed concern, the main issues raised can be summarised as: loss of the former public house; detriment to ‘village feel’ of Mottingham; traffic congestion; the potential impact on other local shops; and effect on the war memorial.
- 4.6 It is understood that these matters are all potential issues with regards to a planning application on the site, and as such the application submission is accompanied by a full Transport Assessment, a Viability Assessment demonstrating the lack of demand for the former pub use, a Planning Statement and also a Heritage Statement to address these concerns. The applicant is satisfied that the submitted assessments robustly show that the proposed scheme will not have a material impact on traffic flow around the site; that there will be only a positive impact for other local shops in the area (in terms of new footfall and spin-off benefits generated by the new foodstore); and that the scheme will not impact upon the significance of the War Memorial and its setting. Conversely, the redevelopment of the vacant site is expected to enhance the setting of the War Memorial and improve the vitality and vibrancy of the local centre.
- 4.7 Furthermore, whilst the proposed scheme necessarily involves the loss of the former public house, the application submission provides further information to explain why it is unviable to reopen the former Porcupine Inn. Notwithstanding this, recognising local interest in the site and its history, the applicant now proposes to provide an Interpretation Board near the new store entrance, to commemorate the trading history of the Porcupine Inn and it is considered that this will be a fitting tribute to the former public house.

## ONLINE PETITION

- 4.8 In addition to the hundreds of positive feedback forms received, as described above, a significant number of local residents and businesses have registered support through the online petition and by contacting Lidl directly. To date, Lidl’s online petition has received **312** signatures in support of the Mottingham proposals.
- 4.9 Many of those who have signed the online petition have left additional comments of support in relation to the proposal. A small selection of the comments is set out below. All of the comments can be found by reviewing the GoPetition website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gopetition.com/signatures/support-lidl-in-mottingham-2.html>

- *“a store would be most welcome, will make a change from "takeaways", approx 6 in Mottingham Village” (01.02.19)*
- *“I shop at Lidl but currently have to travel to Lewisham or Bromley Town Centre - this will help” (01.02.19)*
- *“It would be great to have a local Lidl. I don't drive and the quality and value for money that Lidl provides is better than other local supermarkets. I fully support this plan” (01.02.19)*
- *“Mottingham and surrounding area is crying out for this store. The site has been an eyesore for years” (01.02.19)*
- *“About time! Get rid of that awful eyesore and derelict pub and let's have some quality investment into the area, decent top up shopping and most importantly local job creation! It can only improve the village. The sooner the better!” (01.02.19)*
- *“Great idea for the community” (02.02.19)*
- *“I live in Mottingham, and I think the addition of a Lidl would only benefit the area. I think it would bring money, jobs and (hopefully) more young families to Mottingham” (02.02.19)*
- *“A positive use for an otherwise derelict piece of land. Yes those who remember the pub will think fondly on it but I would rather we have a productive building that benefits the community (up to 40 jobs says it all)” (02.02.19)*
- *“Whilst the loss of the Porcupine is sad, I do not think a pub will invigorate the area and improve footfall like a useful supermarket would” (03.02.19)*
- *“The planned building fits in well with the surroundings and would give a much needed boost to Mottingham village life” (04.02.19)*
- *“This will be a great asset to the area” (05.02.19)*
- *“Need this ASAP” (13.02.19)*
- *“It's convenient and close to me and I would like to apply for a job” (22.02.19)*

## **ONLINE SURVEY**

- 4.10 It is recognised that the online petition only provides an opportunity to register a positive ‘vote’, and so the website also included an online survey, in which both positive and negative opinions could be registered. The online poll consists of two questions. The survey is not

intended to be in-depth, and merely presents a snapshot of opinion amongst users of the website.

- 4.11 The survey asks firstly whether residents support the proposed development in principle. Secondly, the survey asks whether residents think a new Lidl foodstore would be a benefit to the local area. As at the time of submission of the planning application, the first question had received 152 responses and the second question had received 140 responses. There is a relatively equitable distribution of responses, with 49 per cent of residents voting in favour of the scheme with regards to question 1 (and 41 per cent of residents voting against it), and 51 per cent of residents voting in favour of the scheme with regards to question 2 (and 38 per cent voting against it). Some residents remain undecided on the proposals at this stage (representing around 10 per cent of the vote).
- 4.12 The snapshot survey therefore indicates that a greater proportion of residents support the scheme, than object to it, although there is not a large margin between the two viewpoints. It is notable, however, that the survey did not attract as large a response rate as the other methods of consultation, and so it not representative on its own.

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESULTS

- 4.13 There has been a substantial response to the consultation process, across three different platforms. In **Table 4.1** below, the responses received from the feedback forms, petition and online survey are totalled to provide an indication of the overall public opinion on the proposals. It is possible that some residents responded more than once (for example, they may have sent a feedback form, and signed the petition) and so the total figures provided should be regarded as indicative only.

**Table 4.1 – Summary of Consultation Responses**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Feedback Forms</b>	1,030	357	14	1,401
<b>Online Petition</b>	312	-	-	312
<b>Online Survey (Qu. 1)</b>	75	62	15	152
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,865</b>
<b>Total %</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>

- 4.14 **Table 4.1** shows the substantial level of response that has been received to the consultation exercise, and also highlights that the overwhelming response has been positive, representing **76 per cent** of total responses received.
- 4.15 It is also notable that the level of support demonstrated for the scheme has increased substantially since the previous Lidl application on the site, which was consulted upon and submitted during the course of 2013. Following a public exhibition in 2013, 90 per cent of feedback forms received expressed concerns with the scheme. Six years later, the situation has been reversed, and almost 80 per cent of feedback has been positive, demonstrating that the local community is now keen to see the site redeveloped, and welcomes Lidl's proposals.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 National planning policy encourages promoters of development proposals to engage with the local community at an early stage. Through the process set out in this Statement and in accordance with national planning policy, the development proposals have been widely publicised.
- 5.2 The pre-application consultation exercise undertaken by Lidl has provided valuable feedback, and an awareness of the local community's thoughts on the proposals. It has given the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate why the scheme will have a positive impact on the local area, and an opportunity to take on board constructive feedback to inform the final scheme design.
- 5.3 Overall, the consultation exercise has revealed that there is a groundswell of local support for the proposals, and that residents are keen now to see redevelopment of the vacant site and the delivery of a new local foodstore and jobs for the community. Indeed, Lidl is encouraged by the strong level of support registered by local residents, which has been much higher than that received when Lidl submitted its previous application in 2013, and appears to mark an upturn in support for Lidl's development proposals. Whilst some residents understandably still have some concerns, the applicant has taken these responses on board and had sought to address the outstanding issues raised within its application submission.
- 5.4 The applicant has taken all of the responses and suggestions into consideration within the planning submission and wishes to continue to engage with residents to ensure the scheme maximises its potential benefits for the local community.

## **APPENDIX I**



www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk



Lidl Mottingham – Have Your Say

We will shortly be submitting a planning application for a new Lidl foodstore on the former Porcupine Pub site on Mottingham Road and would like to hear your thoughts.

The food store will have a number of benefits for the local area including creating up to 40 full-time and part-time jobs for local people, attracting more investment into Mottingham and a discount supermarket to increase shopping choice for the local area.

The foodstore would benefit the local economy and would enhance the vitality and viability of Mottingham Local Centre, in line with planning policy.

There is more information about the development on our website at [www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk](http://www.mottingham.lidl.co.uk)

## Please make your opinion count.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS.

Title 1 ..... Title 2 .....

Name 1 ..... Name 2 .....

.....

Signature 1 ..... Signature 2 .....

Address .....

.....

Town .....

Postcode .....

Email 1: .....

Email 2 .....

Do you support the proposed development in principle?

Yes

No

Do you think a new Lidl food store would be a benefit to the area?

Yes

No

Alternatively you can sign our support petition at [www.gopetition.com/petitions/lidl-mottingham.html](http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/lidl-mottingham.html)

We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback card, please find enclosed a prepaid envelope so you can send it back to us hassle free.

Optional comments: .....

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By submitting this form you consent to your data being uploaded to GoPetition and used to lobby local Councillors and the London Borough of Bromley Council.

Your data will not be used for any other purpose. If you have already signed the online petition, you do not need to complete this questionnaire or sign the petition again.

However, please encourage friends, neighbours and family members (over the age of 18 and living within Mottingham or surrounding areas) to complete a questionnaire or sign the petition.