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## Aldi discount store at Windsor Garden Centre and Update on Borough Local Plan

### Aldi discount store

- The Application

Aldi recently submitted the following Application which can be viewed here: [Aldi application 20/01145/FULL](#)

**20/01145/FULL | The demolition of the existing buildings and structures, and the construction of a Class A1 discount food store with associated access, car parking and landscaping. | Windsor Garden Centre (previously Wyevale Garden Centre) Dedworth Road Windsor SL4 4LH**

Residents have until Monday 29 June to submit comments to RBWM Planning. It is important that local residents make their views known.

- OGFRA position

Aldi claim that their store has unique characteristics as a 'discount store' and that this constitutes very special circumstances that could allow development on this Green Belt site. However, whilst many residents may welcome the availability of a 'discount store' in the Windsor/Maidenhead area, this is not relevant from a planning perspective.

As previously advised the 'Wyevale' site is part of the proposed AL21 site allocation in the Borough Local Plan (see Update on Borough Local Plan below). OGFRA and other bodies have argued strongly that the AL21 (and adjoining AL22) site allocations should be removed from the BLP and OGFRA will be objecting to the proposed retail store.

- OGFRA Objection

The OGFRA objection will cover a range of policy and other considerations. The main points are summarised below and if you wish to object to the Aldi store you may base your objections on OGFRA's or write your own.

- **Conflict with Green Belt Policies:** the site is in the Green Belt, and the construction of the proposed retail store is an inappropriate development in such a location and contrary to both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current RBWM planning policies. There are no very special circumstances to justify the location of a large retail store in the Green Belt.

Although of a similar size to the current Garden Centre (which is generally an acceptable use in Green Belts), the proposed retail store has entirely different characteristics, patterns and intensity of use. Aldi argues that it could move into the existing garden centre without requiring planning permission, but it would be totally impractical to do so - and Aldi's ambitions need to be subject to the proper planning process.



- **Pre-emptive of BLP Examination:** The garden centre site lies within the proposed AL21 site allocation in the Borough Local Plan – which has been put forward for approximately 450 residential units, a strategic public open space, football and rugby pitches and educational facilities (but no mention of retail facilities). The Examination of the Borough Local Plan was paused in 2018 and the Inspector has only just announced that she intends to recommence Hearings later this year. The AL21 (and adjoining AL22) site allocations have received a considerable amount of opposition from OGFRA and other bodies/residents and it is by no means certain that the Council's proposals to develop this large area of Green Belt land will be successful. The application is premature and the submitted BLP should carry very little weight.
- **Traffic issues:** the proposed retail store would generate significantly more traffic than the existing garden centre business as it will attract more customers and will have extended opening hours. Aldi's proposed opening hours are 8am to 10pm Mondays to Saturdays and 10am to 5pm on Sundays whereas the Garden Centre operates from 9am to 5pm (6pm in summer) Mondays to Saturdays, and 10am to 4pm on Sundays. It is also expected that deliveries will extend outside these hours (with the only access being through the car park). The existing Tesco Superstore located just 500m along the Dedworth Road has more limited hours and independent access for deliveries.

Surprisingly the applicants do not propose to alter the existing vehicle access as the site's junction with Dedworth Road is potentially dangerous (particularly turning right), and there would be a significant impact on surrounding roads including the main A308 road between Windsor and Maidenhead. RBWM recognises that there are already significant traffic issues on the A308 'corridor' and is participating in a government funded study to consider necessary improvements to this key route and associated infrastructure. The additional traffic generated by the proposed store cannot be justified until the study is complete, the impact of the many proposed developments along this section of the A308 are fully assessed and clear proposals are in place for the required improvements. The 'traffic chaos' caused by the recent opening of an Aldi store in High Wycombe demonstrates the need for a comprehensive assessment of traffic impacts.

Imagine further that AL21 remains in the Borough Local Plan and Wates was able to proceed with its plans for the rest of the site (as outlined above) and Aldi had been allowed to build a supermarket. The result truly would be chaos – with all traffic generated from the bulk of the site having adjacent points of access/entry on a narrow stretch of the Dedworth Road.

- **Air quality and noise.** The proposed development and associated increase in traffic will exacerbate existing noise and air pollution on roads in the area and have a detrimental impact on surrounding residential and business properties, including the Cardinal Clinic and The Old Farmhouse (which are immediately adjacent to the proposed site). The Cardinal Clinic is an independent psychiatric hospital founded in 1976 and the site was chosen because of the peace and tranquillity afforded by its location which is important for the treatment and wellbeing of its patients. The Old Farmhouse is an important Grade II\* listed building dating back to 15th Century - Historic England in its response to the BLPSV-Proposed Changes consultation noted that the "site allocation AL21 fails to provide adequate protection for this high grade listed asset". The position of the loading/unloading bay on the western boundary of the



site is immediately adjacent to The Old Farmhouse and outpatient and consulting rooms for the Cardinal Clinic and will have a serious impact on these businesses.

- **Flooding.** The Garden Centre site and adjacent land were seriously flooded in 2014 and Environment Agency maps reveal that the land is susceptible to surface water flooding, but this risk is ignored by the applicant (nor is any account taken of the potential impact of climate change). We also consider that the site should not be looked at in isolation, and further assessment of flood risk of the whole of the AL21 site allocation should be made.

The public consultation conducted by Aldi reveals the desire of many residents to have access to an Aldi store, but this is not a legitimate reason to grant planning approval for this site and for the reasons stated above this is not the right location.

- How to respond

You can send your comments by email to [planning@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:planning@rbwm.gov.uk) or by post to Customer Service Centre, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1RF.

Be sure to include the Application No. 20/01145/FULL .

You may also wish to let your and Borough and Parish councillors know your views (see details in Annex).

## Update on Borough Local Plan

- Examination to resume

As advised in our January Update we anticipated that Examination of the Borough Local Plan could resume with further Hearings from late Spring 2020 onwards. The Inspector has just announced that she intends to move forward in line with the Government's advice on operation of the planning system during the COVID-19 pandemic. We summarise the Update from the Inspector below:

- the Inspector has decided to publish her Matters Issues and Questions (MIQs) for Stage 2 of the Examination. View the [MIQs](#) and her [explanatory Guidance Note](#).
- the Inspector has invited written statements in response to her MIQs by Friday 7 August 2020 and set an earlier deadline of Friday 3 July 2020 for participants to notify the Programme Officer about whether they wish to appear at hearings if they have a right to do so.
- Hearing dates are yet to be set, but any necessary events are likely to commence in the Autumn. At present, face to face hearings are not possible and so, unless the advice changes, these would take the form of virtual/digital events assisted by technology.
- this material, other Examination documentation and correspondence between the Inspector and the Council will be hosted on the Council's examination webpage [Examination Webpage](#)
- you can view the representations made in response to the 2019 BLP Submission Version – Proposed Changes Consultation here [Representations BLPSV-Proposed Changes](#) .



- Next steps

OGFRA will be reviewing the MIQs and preparing a written response to the Inspector. We will provide further Guidance to residents on this in due course.

15 June 2020



## Local Borough and Parish Council Councillors

### Borough Councillors

Bray	David Coppinger Leo Walters	<a href="mailto:cllr.coppinger@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.coppinger@rbwm.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:cllr.walters@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.walters@rbwm.gov.uk</a>
Clewer & Dedworth West	Wisdom Da Costa Jon Davey	<a href="mailto:cllr.dacosta@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.dacosta@rbwm.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:cllr.Davey@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.Davey@rbwm.gov.uk</a>
Clewer & Dedworth East	Carole Da Costa Helen Price	<a href="mailto:cllr.c.dacosta@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.c.dacosta@rbwm.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:cllr.Price@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.Price@rbwm.gov.uk</a>

### Bray Parish Councillors

Oakley Green & Fifield	Nicola Marsh	<a href="mailto:Nicola.Marsh@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk">Nicola.Marsh@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Dedworth Ward	Nick Pellew Julie-Ann Glover	<a href="mailto:Nick.Pellew@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk">Nick.Pellew@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Julie-Ann.Glover@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk">Julie-Ann.Glover@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>