

Asda/Uttometer
28 September 2020



Kerry Challoner
East Staffordshire Borough Council

Sent via email: dcsupport@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk

Dear Ms Challoner

Planning Application P/2019/01270
Erection of a single storey detached building to form a Class A1 foodstore, together with car parking, landscaping, lighting, fencing and associated works

We write, on behalf of Asda Stores Limited, further to your email of 25th August 2020. In this email you advised that the Council were publishing the White Young Green (WYG) review (dated June 2020) of the above application from a retail impact/sequential test point of view together with the response to that review by the applicants (dated 17th July 2020). You also advised that the *'Planning Manager has reviewed this application and is satisfied that the sequential and retail impact tests are met.'*

Asda maintain their objection to the above application and are surprised that the Council's Planning Manager is satisfied with the information regarding sequential and retail impact tests. The WYG review was thorough and highlighted many points of concern or point that required clarification. WYG make it very clear that it was not possible for them to draw conclusions on the two tests without further work and evidence being presented. Indeed, they conclude that on the basis of the information before them the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the sequential and impact tests.

The applicants' response does not fully address all the points raised by WYG particularly in relation to concerns about linked trips from the out of centre site, the qualitative benefits of the proposal, the change in the trade draw assumptions between October 2019 and April 2020. Given the significant issues raised by WYG Asda are surprised that the Council are not reverting to WYG to update their review. It would be advisable for WYG to be asked whether their concerns have been addressed fully so that they can now draw conclusions on the application.

We would also add that there is no assessment of the added effect that store closures during the COVID-19 lockdown will have on the health of the centres. The healthchecks provided in the application and referred to in the applicants' response of 17th July 2020 were carried out in September 2019, so exactly a year ago. The centres may have been irrevocably weakened by the lockdown and may now be even more vulnerable to the impact of out-of-centre retail development. We simply do not know at this stage. Before the effects of COVID-19 are known, it is difficult to predict how this has

affected the vitality and viability of the centres. Thus, we cannot see how the Council can conclude that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on vitality and viability of any of the centre before the full effects of the lockdown are known.

On a separate point, we note that the Asda objection is not referred to in paragraph 1.1.13 of the WYG review nor it is showing on the Council's website. We know that the objection has been received by yourself given subsequent correspondence and we would like to ensure that it is given due consideration.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt of this objection.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Sneedan MRTPI
Director