

Proposed Retail Development, Bankwood Way, Birstall Community Consultation Statement

Lidl GB Ltd

May 2021

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Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|----------|
| 1.0 | Introduction | 1 |
| | Structure of Report | 1 |
| 2.0 | Planning Policy Context | 2 |
| | National Planning Policy | 2 |
| | Local Planning Policy | 2 |
| 3.0 | Process of Engagement | 3 |
| 4.0 | Public Consultation Findings | 4 |
| 5.0 | Responding to Feedback | 5 |
| | Highways, Access and Accessibility Issues | 5 |
| | Location of the Development | 6 |
| | Proposed Use | 6 |
| | Design and Landscaping | 7 |
| 6.0 | Conclusions | 9 |

Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultation Website

Appendix 2 Consultation Leaflet

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Community Consultation Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Lidl GB Ltd (“Lidl”). It accompanies a full planning application for the redevelopment of land off Bankwood Way, Birstall, for a Lidl foodstore and Home Bargains store.
- 1.2 A detailed summary of the application site and surrounding area, as well as a description of the proposed development, is provided in the accompanying Planning and Retail Statement, as well as the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 The purpose of this statement is to set out the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken in relation to the proposal, together with the feedback received and the response to this feedback.
- 1.4 This Statement should be read alongside the following documents which have also been prepared to accompany the application:
- Planning application drawings, including landscape details, prepared by SMR Architects;
 - Planning & Retail Statement, prepared by Lichfields;
 - Design and Access Statement, prepared by Lichfields;
 - Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, prepared by Bryan G Hall;
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by BEAM Consulting;
 - Noise Assessment, prepared by Environmental Noise Solutions Ltd;
 - Air Quality Impact Assessment, prepared by Miller Goodall Ltd;
 - Phase 1/Desk Top Contaminated Land Assessment and Coal Mining Risk Assessment, prepared by Curtins;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Tyler Grange; and
 - Arboricultural Survey, prepared by AWA.

Structure of Report

- 1.5 This Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2.0 provides the relevant planning policy context;
 - Section 3.0 describes the consultation exercise which has been undertaken to ensure that the local community has had the opportunity to comment on the proposals;
 - Section 4.0 summarises the findings from the consultation exercise;
 - Section 5.0 provides a response to feedback received; and
 - Section 6.0 presents and summarises the conclusions.

2.0 **Planning Policy Context**

2.1 This section provides an overview of national and local planning policy and guidance in relation to community involvement in the planning system.

National Planning Policy

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019) sets out the benefits of pre-application engagement in the context of local decision-making (paras. 39-46). It highlights that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application process for all parties. The NPPF sets out that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and statutory consultees should encourage developers to engage with them and provide advice in a timely manner through the pre-application process before applications are submitted.

2.3 The NPPF also identifies that LPAs have a key role to play in encouraging all applicants to engage with the local community before submitting their applications. Paragraph 40 states that Local Authorities should, where they consider it beneficial, “*encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.*”

2.4 In relation to design, the NPPF states that applications which have been the subject of effective engagement, and where feedback is incorporated, should be viewed positively:

“Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.” (paragraph 128)

Local Planning Policy

Kirklees Development Management Charter

2.5 Kirklees Council expects developers to undertake pre-application consultation for all major proposals where they are likely to have an impact on the local community and attract local interest.

2.6 Where pre-application consultation is undertaken, applicants should prepare a report summarising the type of consultation carried out, the key issues raised and how the scheme addresses these issues.

2.7 The Development Management Charter adds that it is important that ward members are effectively engaged in the pre-application process.

3.0 **Process of Engagement**

3.1 The applicant has been keen to ensure that the Government's objectives for community consultation have been embraced in this proposal. To this end, the local community has been consulted through a number of methods, as explained in this Statement. In undertaking the consultation, regard has been given to the Kirklees Development Management Charter.

3.2 The main focus of the community engagement process has been to undertake a digital consultation event in relation to the development proposals. This approach was considered appropriate in order to provide local residents with an opportunity to:

- Obtain further information about the proposals, without the need to attend a face to face exhibition in light of current COVID-19 restrictions; and
- Comment on the emerging development scheme proposed.

3.3 Further details of the digital community consultation event are set out below.

Consultation Website

3.4 A dedicated consultation website (www.lidl-birstall.com) was created in order to allow members of the public to view and comment on the detailed elements of the proposal online. The website was launched on 11th December 2020 and publicised via a leaflet drop to 16,000 homes and businesses in the Birstall area.

3.5 The website contained information on the site's context; detailed elements of the development (including the proposed site layout plan); the localised benefits of the development; and provided indicative CGI imagery. The website also provided an online survey, through which feedback on the proposals could be provided until 3 January 2021. People were also invited to obtain further information on the proposals via an email address (lidl-birstall@lichfields.uk).

3.6 Since the website went live it has attracted 1,600 unique visitors. Screenshots of the consultation website are included at **Appendix 1**.

Leaflet Drop

3.7 To supplement the digital consultation event, a consultation leaflet was delivered door-to-door to 16,000 homes and businesses in Birstall and the wider area between the 14th and 17th December 2020. Lichfields also wrote directly to Local Councillors prior to the commencement of the public consultation period to offer further information about the scheme and provide an opportunity to discuss the proposals in detail.

3.8 The consultation leaflet – which is appended at **Appendix 2** – provided an overview of the proposals and advised how further information could be found via the consultation website and email address.

Press Releases

3.9 Following the distribution of the consultation leaflets and the website going live, the proposals were covered by a number of local media outlets such as the Bradford Telegraph and Argus, Huddersfield Examiner Live and the Dewsbury Reporter. It is likely that this additional publicity will have promoted the proposed scheme to a wider audience and, as a result, directed more people to the consultation website.

4.0 Public Consultation Findings

4.1 A total of 389 responses were received in relation to the online survey (via the consultation website) and two responses were received by email.

4.2 The overall public response has been very positive, with the majority of respondents fully supportive of the principle of development. Responses to the online survey are summarised below.

Table 4.1 Summary of online survey

| 1. Are you generally in favour of the development of a new Lidl store and separate Home Bargains store at land off Bankwood Way, Birstall Retail Park? | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | Response % | Response Total |
| Yes, fully support | 80% | 312 |
| Yes, in part | 17% | 65 |
| No | 3% | 12 |

4.3 279 respondents provided additional comments relating to the proposal; most of which were positive. Feedback in support of the proposed retail scheme included:

“In this present climate with Covid I think it’s fantastic news. Creating up to 110 jobs is going to be a massive boost for people”

“Looks amazing! Good to see wasteland put to good use”

“A supermarket is urgently needed in that area of Birstall”

“Already shop at Lidl but have to travel to either Hunslet or Brighouse. This will be so much closer and convenient”

“Having lived in the area all of my 79 year life, I think this would be a brilliant addition to the current shopping attractions at junction 27. Other than M&S, we have no mainstream food suppliers in the area”

“I think it would be fantastic for the surrounding area and introduce much needed money into our local community economy”

“Looking forward to shopping at both Lidl and Home Bargains!”

“Building a supermarket and Home Bargains Store will ensure that local people have the opportunity for local employment in what has been a very hard year”

“Ideal place for a Lidl, plenty of parking and will complement the existing retail shops and restaurants”

“I love Lidl and Home Bargains. It would be a fantastic addition to the retail park”

5.0 Responding to Feedback

5.1 Whilst the vast majority of responses received showed support for the proposed development, analysis of all written comments has indicated that there are a number of key topics where issues have been raised and/or concerns expressed. The comments can be grouped together as follows:

- Highways, Access and Accessibility issues
- Location of the development
- Proposed Use
- Design and Landscaping

5.2 Each of these topics are considered below.

Highways, Access and Accessibility Issues

5.3 Although the majority of respondents welcomed the proposed Lidl store, many of the comments which expressed concern related to vehicular access and congestion/traffic issues in the local area.

5.4 Examples of comments include:

“My only concern would be the access road to this area is very congested as it is currently with McDonalds, Cinema, Smyths and other shops also need to be accessed by this one road”

“The area and surrounding retail park cannot cope with the current volumes of traffic, especially during busy periods. As long as this is taken into account and appropriate traffic management is implemented then this would mean I am fully in favour”

“My only concern is with the traffic at Junction 27 and the roundabouts, with traffic already backing out onto Gelderd Road from McDonald’s drive-thru on a weekend”

“The footfall and car traffic are terrible especially at the weekend”

“The plans do not address how people without cars will be able to get safely to the store”

“There needs to be some serious investigation on access to the immediate site and traffic as a whole in the area. From the picture, the main access is already a bad junction for traffic, especially when the cinema is open fully and at busy times at other areas of Junction 27”

“I have a minor concern about parking. I’m not sure how 186 parking spaces compares to similar sized retail development. A lot of places I go to don’t have enough car parking for the size of development”

5.5 The planning application is accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Travel Plan which both demonstrate that the application site is well located to encourage journeys by all modes of sustainable transport.

5.6 The Transport Assessment finds that the local highway network will continue to operate satisfactorily following the delivery of the proposed development. It also finds that, subject to the delivery of the change of priority scheme at the Woodhead Road / Bankwood Way junction and the installation of directional signage within the site, the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network is acceptable, and less than that associated with the site’s extant planning permission (ref: 2018/60/92563/E).

- 5.7 Since the community consultation event concluded, revisions to the scheme's layout has resulted in the reduction of proposed car parking spaces. The submitted scheme now seeks to deliver a total of 175 car parking spaces (including sufficient provision of accessible spaces, electric vehicle spaces and P&C spaces). Nonetheless, the revised parking provision of 175 spaces is considered acceptable by the Transport Assessment.
- 5.8 The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be independently assessed by Kirklees Council's Highways Officers upon submission of the application.

Location of the Development

- 5.9 A small number of comments were received regarding the out-of-centre location of the proposed retail development. Comments received include:

"I think it is a good idea but have some reservations to the effect it will have on the local Birstall village centre"

"A Home Bargains and Lidl is not in keeping with the area. A retail park accessible only by car should have alternative retail units. Surely Lidl and Home Bargains should be near town centres"

"I live in Gildersome and would welcome a development that accords with the recently adopted Kirklees Local Plan. However, it would have been preferred if such stores were either located in the Birstall, Batley or Morley town centres rather than out of centre as it would add to the viability and vitality of the existing historic town centres"

- 5.10 The Local Plan Policies Map shows that the application site is located within a designated Priority Employment Area (PEA) (ref: PEA46). Policy LP8 (Safeguarding Employment Land and Premises) states that proposals for development for employment generating uses in such areas will be supported where there is no conflict with the established employment uses in the area. The Local Plan Glossary states that enterprises which provide jobs (i.e. retail, hotel, assembly and leisure) are to be considered as employment generating uses. Indeed, the proposals will generate 110 additional full time and part time jobs.
- 5.11 Furthermore, in-line with the NPPF and discussions with the Council, consideration has been given to a number of potential alternative sites located within or on the edge of the defined town centres of Batley, Birstall and Morley. In total, 5 sites have been assessed, as well as a number of vacant town centre units, to ascertain their suitability and availability to accommodate the proposed development scheme. For a number of reasons (i.e. size, ownership etc.), however, there are no sequentially preferable alternative sites which could accommodate the proposed development. The subject application is, therefore, considered to be compliant with the sequential approach to site selection set out within the NPPF.
- 5.12 For more information on the points raised above, please refer to the Planning and Retail Statement which accompanies this application.

Proposed Use

- 5.13 Some comments were received regarding the addition of further supermarket provision within the area; these include:

"Do we really need another supermarket? Home Bargains with an outdoor garden centre would be better and a leisure facility like a Bowling Alley. More for the family would be better"

“Why build another Lidl when one is being built in Batley. There’s one in Dewsbury. There are plenty supermarkets nearby”

“This is a missed opportunity to create further leisure options to complement the showcase cinema [...] Why build another Lidl when one is being built in Batley. There’s one in Dewsbury. There are plenty supermarkets nearby, and pound shops and discount stores. Do we not have enough regurgitations of Lidl, Aldi, Home Bargains, B&M, Greggs, Poundland, The Range, WH Smith, Wilkinson’s, TKmax all accessibly locally?”

- 5.14 The proposed development will regenerate a vacant, brownfield site, bringing it back into a beneficial use whilst substantially improving the appearance of the local area. The proposed Lidl store would also enhance the existing foodstore provision serving residents in the locality, and Birstall in particular, where existing convenience provision is limited. It would reduce the need for local residents to travel to stores further afield, including by private car, facilitating more sustainable travel patterns and retaining more spending in the local area.

Design and Landscaping

- 5.15 A small number of comments were received in relation to the design and landscaping of the proposed development; these include:

“I would like to see an improvement on walkability in the design”

“Could you please consider designing the stores with sustainability in mind – plastic free isles, refill stations, bottle returns etc”

“Please have electric vehicle charging points at the new shops”

Design

- 5.16 The design and layout of the final proposals has been reached following an iterative process where a number of options have been tested. Both stores will comprise a high quality, contemporary design which reflects the design styles of the wider shopping park, whilst a comprehensive landscaping scheme will enhance the site’s appearance further and benefit its assimilation into the streetscene.
- 5.17 Full details of the proposed development’s design are set out within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Landscaping

- 5.18 A Landscape Masterplan (ref. R/2459/1A) supports this application and demonstrates that a comprehensive landscaping scheme will be implemented across the site in order to enhance the development’s appearance and its assimilation into the wider retail and leisure park.
- 5.19 As shown on the Landscape Masterplan, soft landscaping will be provided in the form of new trees, ornamental shrub planting and turf at the site’s northern frontage onto Bankwood Way. A number of existing trees, hedges and vegetation will also be retained in these locations, as well as across parts of the site’s east, south and west boundaries (where possible). The proposed and retained landscaping features will soften the development and ensure it sits well within its setting.
- 5.20 Hard landscaping will also be used to differentiate between different parts of the site – tarmac surfacing will be used across the vehicular accesses, pedestrian links and car parking areas, with block paving around the entrances to both stores.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

- 5.21 The proposed development will include 1 rapid 50kW charging point which is capable of charging two cars at once and is equipped with multiple connections to suit different makes of vehicle. Typical fast chargers take 3-4 hours to charge a small electric vehicle, whereas the 50kW rapid charger proposed at the site will charge the same car from flat in 30 minutes.

Parking Provision

- 5.22 In total, 175 car parking spaces are proposed, including 10 accessible spaces, 2 electric vehicle charging spaces and 9 parent and child spaces. Kirklees Council do not have any parking standards and instead expect applicants to demonstrate that the proposed parking provision is appropriate. The accompanying Transport Assessment finds that, following a car parking accumulation exercise, the proposed 175-space car park is sufficient to accommodate likely demand, as the proposed layout allows for good circulation of vehicles as well as having a good level of spare provision (15%) for periods of increased demand.

Pedestrian Routes

- 5.23 Dedicated pedestrian routes are provided throughout the site. These routes and crossings will provide coherent pathways through the site. Sensitive pedestrian circulation areas will be defined by bollards which will defend the pedestrian realm against intrusion from cars whilst maintaining permeability for all other users.

Sustainability

- 5.24 Lidl is committed to achieving low energy sustainable development through both the day-to-day running of its stores and designing sustainability initiatives within its buildings. As a group, Lidl operates a corporate environmental policy which represents a conscious effort to reduce carbon emissions through store design and operating procedures.
- 5.25 Lidl undertake careful planning of store stock levels, stock availability and deliveries to the foodstore to ensure unnecessary journeys are avoided and the maximum number of products possible are delivered per litre of fuel used. In addition, Lidl will optimise each delivery by returning all waste to the distribution depot on the lorry's return journey, and there are no separate waste collections made their stores. An Integrated Waste Management Policy, which complies with relevant legislation and minimises the impact of the foodstore on the environment, will be used with high packaging recoverability as a result of Lidl's efficient delivery and stocking system.
- 5.26 The Lidl store will also operate with a high standard of energy efficiency and perform well in excess of building regulation requirements.
- 5.27 Home Bargains aims to minimise the environmental impact of its stores, both in the stores themselves and as part of the wider supply chain. Home Bargains has established a number of corporate sustainability objectives; for example, by installing energy efficient LED lighting in its stores and, wherever possible, encouraging suppliers to reuse packaging.
- 5.28 Section 7.0 of the accompanying Design and Access Statement provides the sustainability procedures and development targets set by both Lidl and Home Bargains. It demonstrates that both buildings will operate with a high standard of energy efficiency to effectively limit carbon dioxide emissions.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This statement has summarised the consultation undertaken in relation to the proposal for a new Lidl foodstore and Home Bargains store at Bankwood Way, Birstall.
- 6.2 To inform the community of the proposals during the current COVID-19 restrictions, a range of digital and non-digital consultation methods have been undertaken, including:
- The launch of an online survey and consultation website, which was also reported in a number of local publications;
 - A leaflet drop to 16,000 residential properties and businesses within Birstall and the wider area; and
 - The applicant wrote directly to Local Councillors;
- 6.3 389 responses were subsequently received from members of the public via the online survey, along with two emails. The results of the online survey were very positive, with:
- 80% of respondents fully supportive of the principle of the proposed development;
 - 17% of respondents partially supportive of the principle of the proposed development; and
 - The majority of additional comments received being generally positive and supportive.
- 6.4 A number of comments were made on specific issues, including: highways and access/accessibility; the out-of-centre location of the proposed development; the need for additional retail provision in the local area; and the scheme's proposed design and landscaping.
- 6.5 The issues have all been considered and addressed both above and in more detail within other reports prepared to accompany the application.
- 6.6 The next step in the ongoing process of consultation will comprise a statutory consultation exercise undertaken by the Local Planning Authority upon validation of the planning application. In the meantime, the consultation website remains 'live' for as long as the application remains extant.
- 6.7 The applicant remains committed to listening to and working with the local community through the planning and consultation process.

Appendix 1 Consultation Website



LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

Welcome

Site Context

Planning Context

The Proposals

The Benefits

Have Your Say

What Happens Next



Welcome

We are pleased to provide details of a new retail scheme proposed in Birstall at land off Bankwood Way, adjacent to the Showcase Cinema at Birstall Retail Park.

The proposed development is for a new Lidl foodstore and a separate Home Bargains store and accompanying outside garden centre. The site is currently derelict, and the proposed development would deliver a high-quality retail scheme; complementing the existing retail provision at Birstall Retail Park whilst improving shopping choice and competition locally.

We are keen to [hear your views](#). Please complete a questionnaire and provide any comments you may have.

About Lidl

Lidl GB Ltd has been developing stores throughout the UK since 1994 and currently operate over 800 stores nationwide. The Lidl retail philosophy is focused on simplicity and maximum efficiency at every stage of the business, from supplier to customer, enabling the company to sell high quality products at Lidl's low prices.

This proposal is the latest in a significant development programme which will deliver hundreds of new jobs and millions of pounds of investment in Kirklees.

About Home Bargains

Home Bargains is one of the UK's fastest growing discount retailers. The business currently has more than 550 stores throughout the UK and plans to expand to over 1,000 stores employing over 40,000 staff. The business' ethos is to 'sell the best branded products at the lowest possible price'.

Home Bargains' principal range includes health and beauty products, medicines, baby products, household products, toys and games, pet food, home furnishings and ornaments, seasonal products, ancillary food and drink products and a limited clothing range.





LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

- Welcome
- Site Context
- Planning Context
- The Proposals
- The Benefits
- Have Your Say
- What Happens Next

Site Context

The site extends to 1.53 hectares and is currently vacant. The former business units have now been demolished after having failed to attract sufficient long-term occupiers. Paradigm House, a 2 storey office building, is located adjacent to the northern corner of the site.

The site is located within an established retail and leisure area. The Showcase Cinema is located to the north of the site and a number of restaurants and retail outlets are located to the west. The site benefits from excellent highways accessibility and public transport services operate on Gelderd Road less than 200m from the site.





LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

[Welcome](#)

[Site Context](#)

[Planning Context](#)

[The Proposals](#)

[The Benefits](#)

[Have Your Say](#)

[What Happens Next](#)

Planning Context

The site already benefits from outline planning permission for four retail units at the site (ref: 2018/92563). Kirklees Council has therefore already confirmed that it considers that retail development is acceptable in principle in this location. The development now being proposed by Lidl is of a smaller scale than that which was approved in the recent outline planning permission.

A series of assessments were undertaken to support the recent outline planning application. These concluded that the previous proposals would not have a significant adverse impact on any existing retailers or centres in the nearby area and that there were no suitable alternative sites. Following this and given that Lidl's proposals are for a lower quantum of floorspace, it is considered that the proposed Lidl development will not have a significant adverse impact on any existing retailers or centres in the local area.

The site is allocated in the Kirklees Local Plan as a Priority Employment Area. The Council has previously stated that retail development comprises an 'employment generating use' and is therefore an appropriate form of development at this site.



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LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

Welcome

Site Context

Planning Context

The Proposals

The Benefits

Have Your Say

What Happens Next

The Proposals

A new Lidl store and separate Home Bargains store with associated garden centre are proposed. Access would be available via the existing access off Bankwood Way and via a new access off Woodhead Road.

The proposals include:



A new 2,231 sqm gross (1,414 sqm sales area) Lidl store



A separate Home Bargains store of circa 2,322 sqm (gross) with associated 650 sqm gross garden centre



A high quality contemporary design;



186 car parking spaces including 10 accessible spaces, 2 electric vehicle charging spaces, and 8 parent and child spaces;



Attractive hard and soft landscaping



A stepped and ramped footpath link from Woodhead Road.





LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

Welcome

Site Context

Planning Context

The Proposals

The Benefits

Have Your Say

What Happens Next

The Benefits

The proposed development will deliver the following benefits for the area:



Creation of 110 additional full time and part time jobs across both stores with a range of roles available, plus further jobs during the construction period



Providing free short stay parking for customers, including electric vehicle charging points



Enhancing the existing retail provision available to local residents at an already established retail and leisure destination;



A high quality, contemporary store design



Enhancing the visual appearance of the area by bringing the derelict brownfield site into active use

Lidl recently increased the wages of all hourly-paid staff, ensuring that employees remain amongst the best paid in the industry. Hourly paid customer assistants earn from £9.30 and up to £11.70 per hour. Lidl does not operate zero-hour contracts.

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BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

Welcome

Site Context

Planning Context

The Proposals

The Benefits

Have Your Say

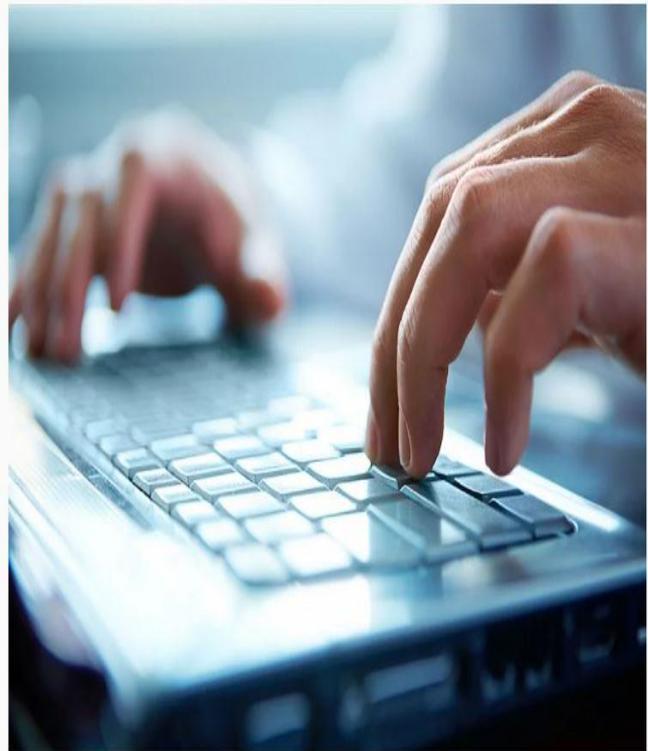
What Happens Next

Have Your Say

Please complete the short questionnaire to provide us your views on the proposals. All comments should be made by:

3rd January 2021

If you have any other queries at all, then please email us on lidl-birstall@lichfields.uk



[Complete Short Questionnaire](#)

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LAND OFF BANKWOOD WAY BIRSTALL RETAIL PARK

[Welcome](#)

[Site Context](#)

[Planning Context](#)

[The Proposals](#)

[The Benefits](#)

[Have Your Say](#)

[What Happens Next](#)

What Happens Next?

The image below illustrates how the development could look once completed. The design and appearance of the scheme could change following this consultation or indeed following comments from the Council after the application has been submitted.

Any comments received will be carefully considered before the proposals are finalised. Following consideration of feedback received from this consultation exercise, it is envisaged that a planning application for the proposed development will be submitted in **late January 2021**. Thereafter, the Council will undertake further statutory consultation before determining the application.



Appendix 2 Consultation Leaflet

Proposal for New Lidl Store and Home Bargains Store

Land off Bankwood Way, Birstall Retail Park, Birstall



A planning application will soon be submitted for a new Lidl store and a separate Home Bargains store with accompanying outside garden centre at Bankwood Way (former Centre 27 Business Park) within Birstall Retail Park. Before we do this we would welcome your feedback on the plans.





How the development could look

The Proposal

The current proposals are for a new Lidl store and a separate Home Bargains store with accompanying outside garden centre, access, landscaping and parking. The site benefits from planning permission for four retail units and the new proposals do not seek to increase the amount of retail floorspace above the current permission. The new stores will complement the existing shops and services at Birstall. They will also improve the visual appearance of the area by bringing the vacant site back into active use.

The proposed development will provide:

- A new Lidl store
- A new separate Home Bargains store and associated garden centre
- Up to 110 jobs for local people
- 186 parking spaces, including electric vehicle charging spaces

Further information can be found online at: www.lidl-birstall.com

The proposal will form part of a new planning application which will be submitted to Kirklees Council shortly. The planning application will provide further details of the proposed new stores.



We welcome your views on this proposal. An online questionnaire and further information can be found at: www.lidl-birstall.com
All comments should be made by: **Sunday 3rd January 2021**

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