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Report

SUBJECT: Planning application S/2007/2226- Erection of superstore
at Sunrise Way/Porton Road Solstice Park Amesbury

REPORT TO: Planning and Regulatory Panel

DATE: 20 May 2008

AUTHOR: Judy Howles Area Team Leader

Reason for Report:

To consider a full application for the erection of a 6131 sqm gross superstore with associated service yard, car park and vehicular access to Sunrise Way with separate pedestrian accesses to Sunrise Way and Porton Road. The Planning Statement submitted with the application indicates that the net floorspace is for 3,344 sq m, of which 2,415 sq m is for net convenience goods floorspace and 929 sq m for comparison goods.

It is also intended now to operate 'home shopping' i.e. internet shopping deliveries from the store.

The application site also includes the 2 roundabouts on Porton road (capacity is to be increased at the Sunrise Way roundabout) and two proposed pedestrian toucan crossings on Porton Road and a controlled crossing opposite the pedestrian access on Sunrise Way.

The application has been brought before the Planning and Regulatory Committee because:

1. The application constitutes a departure from saved policy E8A of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan; and



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



2. It is considered that the proposal is likely to have an effect outside of the boundaries of the Northern area of the district. The Northern Area Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Development Services (included in an amended version below) at the meeting on 8th May 2008 and the Northern Area Committee made the following recommendation:

Recommended to the Planning and Regulatory Panel –

(1) That, the above application be **APPROVED** for the following reasons:

- (i) There is an identified need for another supermarket within Amesbury and it is considered that there is no site to meet the identified need within the town centre .
- (ii) Taken together with the London Road site previously recommended to Planning & Regulatory Panel for approval , the cumulative impact would not damage the town centre by reason of the beneficial clawback in trade to Amesbury that would result and the town centre's role and future as a speciality retail centre. The proposal will therefore comply with saved policy G1 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan.
- (iii) The proposal would not be detrimental to employment as it would provide an equivalent number of jobs and a range of jobs . Furthermore, the cancellation of the proposed dualling of the A303 has reduced the attractiveness of Solstice Park to future employers.
- (iv) The design of the building complies with the design code of Solstice Park .
- (v) The proposal complies with DP6 of the approved Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan in that the financial contributions towards pedestrian/cycle route improvements, pedestrian crossings and a bus service promote sustainable travel to the sit, and address any concerns about the sustainability of the site and will be of benefit to Solstice Park.

The minutes from the Northern area had not been agreed at the time of writing and therefore the S106 provisions and conditions which Northern area wished to see attached to any planning approval will follow as late correspondence.

These are generally in accordance with the requirements of statutory consultees and includes a £150,000 contribution towards a pedestrian/cycle link to Bulford to be ring fenced until 2016.

Members should note that should they wish to vote to approve this application it would need to be referred to the Secretary of State (via GOSW) under the terms of the shopping directive and because it is a material departure from policy E8A.

The following is the report to Northern area updated to include late correspondence in italics
S/2007/2226

COMMITTEE REPORT

Members should note that should they wish to vote to approve this development the application would need to be brought before the councils planning and regulatory committee because it is considered that

The proposal would constitute a departure from policy E8A

The impact the proposed store would have would go beyond that of the Northern area boundaries. Members should also note that should the council wish to approve the application it would need to be referred to the Secretary of State under the terms of the Shopping Directive and because it is a material departure from policy E8A.

The advice from the council's legal officer is that the application must be referred to P & R in any event- i.e. whether members resolve to approve or refuse since it affects a wider area than just the Northern Area.

REASON FOR REPORT TO MEMBERS

HDS does not consider it prudent to exercise delegated powers.

SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Part of the Solstice Park site. The site is currently bare chalk, slopes down towards the north and has an access on its southern side off Sunrise Way.

The site boundaries, all unfenced are: to the north to the strategic landscape area which slopes north to solstice Park Avenue, to the west Porton Road and to the south- Sunrise Way. The land to the east is undeveloped.

THE PROPOSAL

To erect a 6131 sqm gross superstore with associated service yard, car park and vehicular access to Sunrise Way. Separate pedestrian accesses are to be provided to Sunrise Way and Porton Road. The Planning Statement submitted with the application indicates that the net floorspace is for 3,344 sq m, of which 2,415 sq m is for net convenience goods floorspace and 929 sq m for comparison goods.

It is also intended now to operate 'home shopping' i.e. internet shopping deliveries from the store.

The application site also includes the 2 roundabouts on Porton road (capacity is to be increased at the Sunrise Way roundabout) and two proposed pedestrian toucan crossings on Porton Road and a controlled crossing opposite the pedestrian access on Sunrise Way.

PLANNING HISTORY

For the whole of Solstice Park:

99/0721	Proposed comprehensive development of site for employment and leisure purposes (including within use class B1 B2 B8 C1 and D2) together with roads, footpaths, cycleways, landscaping, sewers, alteration of ground levels and associated works generally in accordance with the principles illustrated on approved development brief master plan L.269 – 14/1E	AC S106
26.1.00		

02/485	Section 73 application to vary condition No 3, 4, 14 and 20 on consent No. S/1999/721 to provide (1) Specified dates for the approval of reserved matters (2) To permit commencement of any approved earth works and landscaping scheme before works have	
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	commenced on the Folly Bottom Junction (3) To permit earth works and landscaping on land in excess of 22.75 hectares.	AC S106
02/1714	30.07.02 Reserved matters application to address planning conditions 7 & 8 on consent S/02/485 (structural landscaping)	AC
03/2481	03.02.03 Variation to planning condition 9 on consent ref s/2002/485 to permit Commencement of built development in advance of the implementation of the structural landscape planting.	AC S106
	01.06.04	
For this site:		
03/0029	Approval of Reserved Matters Proposed development of B1 uses together with detailed drainage Proposals and associated parking, landscaping and access roads At Solstice Park.	AC
	02.04.03	

CONSULTATIONS

WCC Highways- Following extensive discussions with the consultants acting on behalf of ASDA, I am writing to set out our final observations on this application.

Principle

In transport terms, you will be aware from previous discussions that I wish to lodge an 'in principle' objection to the proposal based on the proposed location of the store and the proposed layout. I am of course aware that Solstice Park is an allocated business park, which has been designated for B1, B2 or B8 uses. Aside from obviously not conforming to that allocation/permission, I do not believe that the site's location is conducive to non-car access having regard to both distance and barriers to movement. This is further compounded by the proposed siting of the building to the rear of the site. Contemporary guidance (and in my view good sense) would suggest it should be located to the SW of the plot so as to remove the barrier of the car park for public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists. The consultant has told us that it would "...not be possible..." to orientate the store as we have suggested for operational reasons, but I do not believe that a serious attempt has been made to explore the opportunity for improvement.

On that basis, I recommend that the application be refused for the following reason:

The proposed foodstore, located within a site allocated for employment purposes is remote from the community it is likely to serve to an extent that is not conducive to anything other than car borne customers. Furthermore, the proposed orientation and siting of the building at the rear of the site is such that it introduces a further barrier to non-car users by producing an avoidable conflict with cars entering exiting and circulating the proposed car park.

Detail

Having regard to detail and in terms of the transport impact of the development, a full transport assessment (accompanied by extensive modelling) has been undertaken by the developer. I have been party to a lengthy round of discussion, and on a without prejudice basis, have reached agreement on the detailed conclusions of the TA and the modelling. If your Members were minded to set aside the 'in principle' objection, I have set out below a number of issues that I believe are necessary and relevant conditions and/or planning obligations.

Conditions

Prior to the commencement of any development on site, and in general accordance with diagrams 0719/44_1_500, 0719/45B, 0719/7A and 0719/27A, a detailed scheme of works to cover access to the site by vehicles, pedestrians/cyclists and buses shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the measures are to include the vehicular site access, service yard, pedestrian/cycle crossing facility on Sunrise Way, bus facilities on Porton Road (both next to the site and to the north of London Road) and 2 pedestrian/cycle crossings on Porton Road. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and servicing of the site.

Prior to the commencement of any development on site, a comprehensive programme for the undertaking of the off-site highway works, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All necessary off-site highway works shall be provided and undertaken strictly in accordance with the approved programme or any changes to the programme as may subsequently have been agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring that the required infrastructure is provided at the appropriate times

Prior to the commencement of development, a comprehensive construction phase programme shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan will include the routing and timing of construction traffic, together with any necessary temporary access arrangements.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to mitigate any adverse environmental impact to neighbouring communities.

Prior to occupation of the site, a Travel Plan is to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable travel

Contributions (as agreed with the developer)

- 1) £55,000 per year for a period of 5 years (total £275,000) for a bus service which serves Amesbury and the store
- 2) £18,000 per year for a period of 3 years (total £54,000) for the Solstice Park bus
- 3) £25,000 towards improving pedestrian/cycle facilities on Porton Road in addition to the infrastructure shown on the plans
- 4) £50,000 towards providing a footway/cycleway towards Bulford or, if this proves not to be viable, for other pedestrian/cycle improvements which would benefit those travelling to the site

WCC Planning - The application site forms part of larger site identified within the Salisbury District Local Plan (Adopted June 2003) for employment uses (Policy E8A). It is a greenfield site, located outside of the urban area of Amesbury as defined by the Housing Policy Boundary shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map. The Planning Statement submitted with the application indicates that the net floorspace is for 3,344 sq m, of which 2,415 sq m is for net convenience goods floorspace and 929 sq m for comparison goods. To put some scale to the proposal, the convenience floorspace equates to 90% of the convenience sales floorspace of the Waitrose in Salisbury.

The principle set out in my letter of 30 October 2007, responding to the recent proposal by Tesco Stores Ltd (application ref. S/2007/1865) for a foodstore at Amesbury, about the need for an appropriate level of additional convenience retailing at Amesbury is also relevant to this proposal. This recognised that additional retail development could achieve greater levels of trade retention within Amesbury and generate more sustainable travel patterns by meeting shopping needs locally.

The application site is in an out of centre location and as such should meet the tests of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS 6), in line with Structure Plan Policy DP6. The Planning Statement has sought to address retail policy issues but only a very limited assessment has been carried out. The County Council does not consider that a sufficiently robust assessment of retail issues has been provided in support of the application, contrary to Paragraph 3.4 of PPS6 and as such further information from the applicant should be sought. Some detailed comments on the assessment are provided.

In summary, while it is accepted that additional retail development at Amesbury may be appropriate, the County Council is particularly concerned about the scale of this proposal and considers that the Planning Statement is not sufficiently robust to enable the proposal to be properly assessed. In addition, this proposal will result in the loss of an allocated employment site for retail use when other sites better related to the urban area may be available.

Additional Comments in light of amended information:

Thank you for your letter of 13 March 2008 informing Wiltshire County Council, as strategic planning authority, of the additional information submitted by Asda Stores Ltd in support of their full planning permission for a 6,131 square metre gross store. Wiltshire County Council as strategic planning authority responded to the application by letter on 14 December 2007. These comments should be read in conjunction with that letter.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to fully consider the additional information submitted on retail issues since the Revised Planning Statement was submitted earlier this year due to a number of pages missing from your website relating to Chapter 5 of the Revised Planning

Statement. I am in the process of obtaining a full copy. However, I am able to make the following comments in response to the covering email dated 19 March 2008 from Hannah Murray to Judith Howles, and the pages that I have seen.

Catchment Area Revisions

Despite the revisions made to the Catchment Area, this still does not adequately take into account competing centres and other main food shopping destinations and does not therefore appear to be an appropriate catchment for the town.

Sequential Approach

In terms of the potential to assemble a site around the former Co-op store, the sequential approach has not been properly applied. It is not acceptable to simply state that: "As



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

matters stand therefore the proposal is not in a position where it can be implemented” (Section 2, Email of 19 March). The fact that an application has been submitted, albeit not yet registered, clearly indicates that a sequentially preferable site is available and as such should be given due consideration. There is no clear evidence to indicate that a second town centre store would have an adverse effect on the existing Co-op or town centre as a whole and given that the Co-op is apparently significantly overtrading (Paragraph 5.41, Revised Planning Statement) should be able to withstand any impact.

The application for a central store shows that, subject to it being registered as valid and permission being granted, it may be possible to meet the need for further retailing at Amesbury through a more sequentially preferable site. Locating new retail development within the town centre is wholly consistent with Government policy on retailing as set out in Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) and will better enable the vitality and viability of the town centre to be promoted. The size of store proposed at 1,858 square metres net retail floorspace is considered to represent an appropriate scale of development for a town the size of Amesbury in accordance with paragraph 2.41 of PPS6.

General Comments

Although it is appreciated that the retail assessment submitted with the application has been revised, it still does not appear to adequately address all of the matters raised in my earlier letter. As such, the concerns raised previously still apply.

The County Council is particularly concerned about the loss of allocated employment land for retail use, for which potential exists to meet any need in a more sustainable town centre location. In addition, as you are no doubt aware, PPS6 in applying the sequential approach to site selection states that for out of centre sites preference should be given to sites “which are or will be well served by a choice means of transport and which are close to the centre and have a high likelihood of forming links with the centre” (paragraph 2.44). The proposal site is not particularly well related to the urban area of Amesbury and offers limited access to its residential population by walking or cycling. If an out of centre store is appropriate for Amesbury it is likely that other sites, as indicated by the Tesco application (S/2007/1865), could be available that are better integrated with the urban area of Amesbury and offer more potential for access by non car modes.

For the above reasons, the County Council as strategic planning authority raises an objection to the proposed development.

WCC Library/ Museum - No significant archaeological finds in evaluation trenches in 2000. Northern part of site has been infilled and southern cut to a depth of 3m. Therefore owing to amount of disturbance has no comment to make on the application.

English Heritage- no comments

Highways Agency – no objection subject to conditions relating to a travel plan and no petrol station. Content that the development will have no adverse impact upon the strategic road network.

Environmental Health Officer - 3 principal areas of concern are noise from the site- both during and after construction , dust generated by the development (ground conditions are predominantly chalky) and impact on air quality.

Recommendations are addressed by developer however further clarification is needed over what constitutes no noisy working . This information must be supplied to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority before any work commences on site. Further information is also required on the type and location of portable acoustic barriers this information must be supplied to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority before any work commences on site. Air quality recommendations are as developer proposes on pages 91 –93 (paras 7.84 to 7.88).

To revised Environmental Statement

1. - Proposals to mitigate noise (paras 6.115-6.126 must be adhered to at all times.

2. Exception at para 6.1117 to noisy working will only include internal fitting out unless otherwise agreed by LPA.
3. Para 6.118 needs further clarification as to the type of acoustic barriers and site hoardings. This needs to be clarified with LPA before start on site.
4. Proposals to mitigate dust in paras 7.90 – 7.93 must be adhered to at all times.
5. Do not consider there is a need for a noise assessment for the service yard as it is to be enclosed by 3m high walls.

Wessex Water Authority- S104 Agreement in place for sewers which have adequate capacity. Soakaways possible for SW drainage. Adequate water supplies available unless development requires abnormally high levels of potable water. Details of demand should be provided in due course.

Environment Agency - Requires SW drainage, water efficiency and pollution prevention conditions and informatics. On additional information- No objection to the development on the basis of the FRA submitted and are satisfied that surface water drainage information supplied is sufficient to discharge the suggested SW drainage condition. Highlighted previously the need for drainage calculations to incorporate climate change into the design and although the calculations incorporate a safety factor, no specific allowance has been made for this. for the lifetime of the development. EA do not accept liability for the calculations in the FRA. Needs conditions for detailed drainage scheme that incorporates such measures.

Natural England- originally objected. The development in combination with other plans and projects may result in a likely significant effect upon the Rover Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an appropriate assessment is required.
Objection withdrawn in light of in combination appropriate assessment.

Hampshire CC – HCC has formula for transport contributions. Requires a contribution of £171,350 towards mitigation of the impact of the development upon the highway network in Hampshire. This should be secured prior to occupation of the development.

Test Valley BC- no comment

English Heritage- Should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance.

Defence Estates Safeguarding

Buildings including superstructures e.g. aerials shall not exceed 11.5m above ground level
Trees shall not exceed 11.5m above ground level. Landscaping should not be designed to provide a habitat attractive to birds. Street lighting shall be in accordance with the Air Navigation Order.

No water features designed to be attractive to birds. Waste management to ensure timely removal of food waste to minimise the risk of bird strike. No safeguarding objections.

SWRDA- none received

Forward Planning -This application will have a significant impact on the vitality and viability of Amesbury, and if consented could undermine investment in the centre, and there is a need to protect existing employment allocations, therefore raise a **POLICY OBJECTION** to the proposal.

In accordance with Section 54A of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 and Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be **refused**

REPRESENTATIONS

Advertisement Yes/ - final expiry date (2nd advertisement) 10/04/08
Site Notice displayed Yes final expiry date 10/04/08
Departure Yes – if approved to E8A
Neighbour notification Yes

Third Party responses 58 letters of support, 9 letters of support subject to conditions 3 letters of objection and 4 of comment to original notification and advert

8 letters of support, 1 of objection and 1 letter of comment in response to the readvertisement
(plus one email purporting to be in support which did not originate from the alleged sender). The following issues are raised :

Supporters

Choice of supermarket in Amesbury and competition to the co-op is needed as coop also own store on Boscombe Road.

Store will be local shop for Butterfield Down and Stonehenge Estates and within walking distance of them.

Would reduce shoppers travelling to Salisbury or Andover.

Would attract travellers on A303 to break their journey and come into Amesbury- - existing shops in Amesbury could advertise their specialist services in ASDA store.

Would attract more shoppers to Amesbury providing it had no post office or pharmacy.

Will create jobs for local people.

Would provide service for those nearby who have no access to a car and so cannot travel to large supermarkets and would provide access to children's clothing in Amesbury without having to pay high bus fares.

Support - but bus stop needs to be redesigned to provide a lay by- even if this means fewer car parking spaces at the store.

Will improve local job opportunities, population in Amesbury is due to rise.

Need for a new store near Archers Gate. Store in this position will stop Amesbury Town centre being gridlocked with traffic.

Prefer ASDA as it will provide more choice as there are already Tesco stores in the area at Tidworth, Salisbury & Andover plus smaller metros.

Business park has failed to take off & ASDA will bring jobs.

Could alleviate traffic problems on Southampton Rd Salisbury as could attract shoppers from north of Salisbury to travel to Amesbury rather than Southampton Road.

1 letter supports both ASDA and Tesco applications.

Supporters subject to conditions:

Restrictions to opening hours- not 24 hrs- Somerfield already provide this service.

Minimal lighting at night – current lighting proposed is too high

Do not want further delays from roundabout alterations

40 mph speed limit on Porton Road should be reduced prior to contraction work beginning.

Crossing is urgently needed but location of southern crossing is too close to entrances to mobile home parks- needs to be closer to Baptist centre.

Need ASDA bus stop at Beverley Hills entrance – no W & D bus along Porton Road.

HGV restrictions needed on Porton Road

Limitation to hours of construction – no Sundays

Restriction to delivery hours – restriction to parking of refrigerated vehicles. And restriction to use of reversing beepers.

Objectors

Lack of predicted car and lorry numbers – notes map containing percentages from different directions but no volumetric data of either total trips or how many are new or existing journeys.

Road to Bulford inadequate to cope.

Subsidised bus would not operate at weekends.

Bus stop is not by store entrance – would be better if bus came into the car park and stopped at store entrance.

Amesbury is in process of regeneration with several new shops- who would shop there if everything available out of town as ASDA.

Solstice Park is not a retail park and store will take trade away from Amesbury.

Contrary to government policy on town centres PPS6

One letter of objection with the ASDA reference number refers in its contents to the Distribution centre application

Comments

Need for access from Allington Track for cyclists without having to go onto A303 which is unsafe and clogged at bank holidays. This would also facilitate more cycling and less driving to Amesbury from Newton Tony.

Restrictions to opening hours, delivery hours, construction hours, HGV restrictions on Porton Road, Reduction of speed limit on Porton Road, crossings on Porton Road should be provided before construction work starts.

Lower lighting columns.

HGVs to access from north. .

As late correspondence 6 additional third party letters 3 in support 1 of comment 2 in objection (one of which is from agents for Somerfield- the annex to which is attached as an appendix)

- *Would be improvement to have large store within walking distance, as it is not always easy making our way in to Amesbury.*
- *Acknowledging clarification response re Meridian Way.*
- *Newspaper article identifies Salisbury as Tesco town with 58% share of the market- so reason for ASDA.*
- *. A supermarket on Solstice Park will have less of a negative impact on local residents than the former Gregory Transport site as it is separated from housing by the road network and the surround land is already earmarked or for office / employment use. A new supermarket being built on the former Gregory Transport site whether it be a Tescos or an Asda is likely to encourage other retailers to move into the redundant area on the other side of the road. This will create a similar out of town shopping area to Southampton Road in Salisbury thus adding to the draw away from the town, not to mention the ensuing traffic chaos and negative impact on the local residents. Amesbury town centre is only just building up again since the recent upheaval with the Co-op's move and the closure of Logans and a supermarket on the former Gregory site and will not help this process*
- *Recent polls also show that the local population are in favour of Asda over Tesco. The local Stonehenge Chamber of Trade poll resulted in 1,345 signatures for Asda and only 27 for Tesco. In addition an independent Populus poll in February showed that 91% of local people support Asda and 92% feel that Solstice Park is the right place for such a store to be built.*
- *Object as Amesbury is in the process of regeneration . work on pavements still in progress and still empty shops other than old coop store. ASDA would be bigger than anything in Amesbury and doubts that the 2 butchers and greengrocers would keep going if ASDA took shoppers out of town.*
- *Solstice Park is not a retail park. Urges that this application is not passed at the present time but other sites are looked for in Amesbury that will give competition to the coop.*
- *object to this application for the following reasons:*
- *Based on existing market shares there is insufficient quantitative need for the proposed store;*

- *The assessment of need undertaken by JLL, which assumes some clawback of expenditure, is flawed and does not adequately demonstrate quantitative need;*
- *Even if quantitative need could be satisfactorily demonstrated, the qualitative arguments on which it rests (that the clawback of expenditure would improve shopping provision for people in the Amesbury area and that there would be sustainability benefits through shorter journeys) must be weighed against the likely impact of the proposed store on Amesbury town centre, and in our view the impact will be significant;*
The potential of the former Co-op site has not been properly investigated

SWEP

believes that the proposal of a superstore on Solstice Park is at odds with the concept of a high quality business park and the original planning consent for employment use. We must protect existing employment land, we believe there is a serious risk that if this application were approved it would open the door for other retailers to locate to the site, creating another 'Southampton Road' situation.

As the only existing large scale employment site in the district, Solstice Park is of vital strategic importance to the future of the south Wiltshire economy. Solstice Park was envisaged as one of the largest mixed-use business parks in central Southern England, strategically located alongside the A303, providing outstanding links to London and the South West, and an attractive relocation site for large scale national and international organisations.

Currently there are very few large scale private sector employers in Salisbury District and SWEP has long since recognised the need to attract inward investment into the area, one the partnerships aims being the development of Salisbury as a thriving commercial hub. The development of a superstore would deter prominent companies from relocating to the site.

As a result of the Lyons Review, an independent study into the relocation of Government offices from London and the Greater South East, there are plans for the relocation of 20,000 posts. Salisbury District Council has been working in partnership with Wiltshire County Council to promote Wiltshire to government departments. South Wiltshire has a number of attractions in its favour including; excellent road and rail links to London, Bristol, Southampton and the South West, a strong local MOD presence, Salisbury Research Triangle and the outstanding quality of life on offer.

However the district's major weakness is the lack of suitable commercial properties, purpose built modern premises and sites. The size and location of the site presently makes Solstice Park the only feasible option to attract relocating Government departments to the district, and therefore the loss of a large part of the site would be very detrimental to the bid to attract such departments.

The Employment Land Review, produced by the SDC Economic Development team in June 2007, recognises that the majority of property on the market in the Salisbury District is small and that Solstice Park is the only existing location that can offer larger, purpose built property and development land. The ELR identifies Solstice Park as being strategically important for the district economy. It identifies the need for 30 hectares of new employment land in the district over the next 20 years, which does not include employment at Churchfields and Southampton Road that will be displaced through the Vision, and therefore there is a vital need to protect the sites we already have.

While the proposed development states that it will bring in 300 to 350 local jobs, most of these will be low skill and low paid and will not have as positive effect on the local economy than if the site were retained for B1 office purposes. There is also concern about the detrimental effect the development would have on Amesbury town centre.

SWEP recognises the need for improved supermarket facilities in Amesbury but believes it would be better located closer to the town centre. While take up of Solstice Park has not been as quick as originally envisaged, we would urge that patience be employed and consideration be given to the original concept of Solstice Park as a high quality business park.

Chairs of the Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Business, Salisbury City Centre Management and Salisbury Tourism Partnership. The business community of South Wiltshire has complete agreement that any planning application for Retail Use on Solstice Park should be rejected.

Stonehenge Chamber of Trade -

The Chamber has discussed the current supermarkets proposals at length. We feel it is clear that Amesbury needs better retail shopping. A supermarket such as Asda or Tesco would bring much needed employment, choice and competition to our current small supermarket.

Although both applications are out of the town centre we accept that this is the only real choice as the town centre doesn't have a suitable site. The growing population needs more facilities in jobs, leisure, retail and education. A new supermarket will fill two of these areas. It is becoming increasingly hard to understand objections from the Salisbury direction; this is a tremendous opportunity to help its neighbour. The increasing population of both communities will only put more strain on Salisbury's roads. Other towns in the County who have similar populations have far more choice for their residents.

As for which application we favour, our membership has decided that the Asda application is more favourable for Amesbury. There are continuing worries that a retail park would appear on

Solstice Park, but with Tesco on London Road and already a Focus DIY and possibly a Lidl, it seems a retail park is emerging on London Road, which is totally unsuitable for this volume of traffic. The Solstice Park site has all the highways in place and certainly wouldn't intrude on local residents. Although Solstice Park has no consent for retail, we shouldn't stop this tremendous opportunity to bring a new retail name to the area. The proposed site only takes up a small part of Solstice Park and can only add credibility to this area.

As for the town centre, we believe that we can work with Asda. Discussions with Asda have taken place, which we have found very encouraging, with proposals to promote the town centre within their store and the possibilities of linked trips for shoppers between themselves and the town. The future of Amesbury's town centre lies with specialist independent shops; this

is something we have seen in the last six months, with 5 of our 6 new shops being independents.

A second letter demonstrating that other areas in Wiltshire with similar populations have a greater number of supermarkets. Consider the future of Amesbury Town centre lies with specialist shops. ASDA will only take up a small amount of Solstice Park. It will bring much needed employment, choice and competition.

Salisbury & District Chamber of commerce

Believe ASDA is what is needed in Amesbury.

Solstice Park Marketing Agents- Alder King

Employment land take up at Solstice Park has been slow, but this has been mitigated by take up of non-B uses (support uses) such as petrol filling station, hotel and A3/A4 outlets. Asda would provide convenient food and convenience goods outlet to the business park workforce as well as local residents. Successful Business Park is B uses plus support uses.

Durrington Parish Council response: No objection. Were under impression no retail outlets would be permitted on Solstice Park.

Bulford Parish Council response: Have reservations on effect on pedestrian and vehicular traffic on road that connects Bulford with Folly Bottom. This lacks any form of pedestrian way. It is considered that the proposal should be dependant upon improvements to this length of road and the provision of pedestrian facilities at the roundabouts and connecting roads at Folly Bottom.

Amesbury Town Council – No objection subject to traffic analysis of London Road/ Countess Road junction, and Town Centre. Pedestrian crossings are very close together and would be better further north and south. Consideration be given to reducing speed limit on Porton Road to 30 mph.

Considered that the Local Plan and policy E8 do not take into consideration the new developments in Amesbury and the requirements of a growing population. Note that 75% of residents in Amesbury and surroundings do their main shop in Andover or Salisbury and the effects of global warming cannot be ignored.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1, Planning Policy
 - A. Loss of allocated Employment land.
 - B. Retailing and impact upon town centre.
2. Design
3. Transport & Traffic
4. Asda or Tesco?
5. Environmental Issues as covered in the Environmental Statement
6. Other issues raised by respondents.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policies E8A, of the adopted, Salisbury District Local Plan, Policy DP6 of the Wiltshire Structure plan 2016
 PPS 6 – Town centres
 Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan June 2003 – E8A, E16, D1, G1
 Retail and leisure needs survey (2006) GVA Grimley. (RLNS)
 Salisbury District Employment Land Review (2007)
 SWERDA/DTZ employment land supply appraisal Addendum for the Salisbury SSCT
 on <http://www.southwesteip.co.uk/downloads/documents/20070530121125.pdf>

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1 Planning Policy

There are three key issues of relevance to this application. They are the loss of employment land to retail use. the need for the development and the impact that it will have on Amesbury.

A Loss of allocated employment land.

The site forms part of the employment allocation E8A, now known as Solstice Park. This plot has consent for B1 office park (7483 sq m) (2003/0029 refers)

The employment land review (ELR) forecasts the land required to 2026 and has identified that 25- 30 ha of new employment land . This figure is over and above the 64ha of Solstice Park already allocated. The recently published panel report into the RSS has recommended that this be increased to 37 ha of employment land. This demonstrates that current employment land needs to be protected.

The ELR also identifies the site as being strategically important site for the whole of Salisbury's economy and not just the local community area that it is located in, and therefore given its strategic importance, should be retained for employment (B1, B2, B8) use. This is backed up by the RSS panel report which states that Amesbury will need to provide a continuing supporting role to Salisbury for the provision of employment land.

Evidence given to the EiP by SWERDA/DTZ in their employment land supply appraisal Addendum for the Salisbury SSCT identified that only 36ha of employment land was available compared with a demand of 37ha, therefore a shortfall of 1 ha. This assumed that the 18ha of Solstice Park would remain in employment generating use. Again, given the supporting role of Amesbury, it is important that all existing employment land is protected, so that this shortfall is not exacerbated and results in the allocation of more greenfield land elsewhere for employment use.

B. Retailing issues- the need for the development and its impact upon Amesbury town centre.

The Grimley report for SDC is attached in full as appendix 1`.

The supplementary letter produced in light of the (unregistered) application on the old coop site in the town centre is attached as appendix 2.

The response from the spatial planning manager at the County Council detailed under consultations above, is also material to this issue.

Relevant policy guidance is set out in PPS6, published in 2005. The Government indicated its intention to issue a revised policy statement on retailing and town centres during 2007, although this appears to have been delayed pending the conclusions of the ongoing Competition Commission.

However, although the Competition commission has reported, its recommendations have no statutory force and are therefore not a material consideration.

Paragraph 3.4 of PPS6 sets out the key policy requirements. Applicants are required to demonstrate:

- the need for the development;
- that the development is of an appropriate scale;
- that there are no more central sites for the development;
- that there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres; and
- that locations are accessible.

The guidance indicates that as a general rule, new developments should satisfy all the key policy tests and in reaching a decision Local Planning Authorities should also consider relevant local issues and other material considerations. The guidance indicates at paragraph 3.7 that the level of detail and type of evidence and analysis required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.

Need

Please see the attached report, 'Review of proposed foodstores in Amesbury', by GVA Grimley (appendix 1) for the full assessment of this proposal, on need and impact.

The RLNS originally identified turnover in Amesbury of 18.2m rising to 19.6 m in 2011, however GVA have accepted that these figures are an overestimate, and have revised the figures to 14.4m and 15.6m respectively. (Appendix 6 table 8 refers)

The deductions in the main report for committed floorspace also include an arithmetical error, which overstates the potential turnover of commitments. This generates a notional surplus of £7.7m, which if the old co-op were wholly occupied for convenience retailing, would largely accommodate the identified capacity. The turnover of the proposed Asda is £37.2 million and therefore is way in excess.

Scale

Although it has been demonstrated that the proposed turnover of the store is in excess of requirements, the guidance in PPS6 indicates that local planning authorities should also consider whether there are qualitative considerations that might provide additional justification for the development.

Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) has undertaken a planning statement on behalf of Asda Stores Ltd dated October 2007 updated January 2008, and further updated March 2008 after adjustments to the catchment area to exclude those areas west of Salisbury and Tidworth (which has a large Tesco) but to include areas to the east of Salisbury. Regrettably, despite requesting that trade diversion to Tesco at Tidworth be considered, this still fails to adequately address the impact of the Tesco store at Tidworth which is equidistant in travel time from much of Bulford as is this site. Asda has also recently opened in Andover and again, this has not been included in the figures.

In order to support the scale of additional floorspace, both (ASDA and Tesco) proposals rely on a significant increase in market share. Clearly there is no reason why Amesbury cannot or should not seek to increase its market share – the key issue is the impact arising from a larger store outside the town centre on the vitality and viability of the town centre. JLL, on behalf of Asda, has undertaken a 'ring fenced' capacity exercise which compares the likely turnover of existing convenience goods shopping facilities within the Amesbury catchment (using a notional 'benchmark' turnover) with total available expenditure within this area to suggest capacity of circa £74.1m of convenience goods expenditure within this area by 2011.

The JLL table shows the following distribution of main food shopping trips in the catchment :

Coop Amesbury (town centre)	23.3%
Tesco Southampton Road Salisbury	19.2%
Waitrose Salisbury	13.7%
Tesco Andover	9.6%
Sainsbury's Salisbury (city centre)	8.2%
Tesco Salisbury town Centre	5.5 %
Others- including Morrisons Devizes & Asda Frome	4.1%

This is acknowledged to be a relatively crude exercise, and it is clearly unrealistic to expect Amesbury to retain all of the available expenditure generated within this area. However, it must be acknowledged that a large food superstore as proposed by Asda would be capable of increasing Amesbury's market share within this area. The issue, as identified in the RLNS, is the impact of such a development on Amesbury Town Centre.

Given the level of main shopping that is taking place away from Amesbury Town Centre, it is evident that in the absence of any alternative option, a large modern foodstore would provide additional choice and competition to the Co-op in Amesbury Town Centre and by reducing the

need to travel for main food shopping, would be likely to reduce overall travel demand and achieve a more sustainable shopping pattern. Moreover, letters of representation from nearby residents have welcomed such a store within walking distance. In this respect the potential benefits of the proposals are not disputed. However, these benefits have to be considered against any alternative options and the impact of the proposals on Amesbury Town Centre.

What also has to be borne in mind is that on the scale proposed, Asda may well attract shoppers from a wider area, particularly Salisbury, not only because this operator is not currently represented locally, but also (as evidenced by letters of representation) owing to congestion on Southampton Road which may make Amesbury more attractive in travel time for food shopping although further in distance. Therefore the purported benefits of a reduction in travel out of the Amesbury area must be offset against potential travel into the Amesbury area.

Therefore the issue of scale is not only an adverse impact upon Amesbury town centre (even if it does claw back trade to the Amesbury area- the Grimley report demonstrates this will be at the expense of rather than benefit to the town centre) but also it weakens the sustainability argument if it attracts car borne trade from a wider area.

In relation to the catchment area JLL consider that the revisions they have made (principally the exclusion of Tidworth and some areas to the west of Salisbury) do not alter their conclusion that there is ample capacity to accommodate this store.

Sequential test

Para 2.44 PPS 6 states that

*“First, locations in appropriate existing centres where suitable sites or buildings for conversion are, or are likely to become, available **within the development plan document period**, taking account of an appropriate scale of development in relation to the role and function of the centre;*

Paragraph 3.13 indicates the sequential approach should be applied to all development proposals for sites that are not in an existing centre or allocated in an up to date development plan document. The relevant centres in which to search for sites will depend on the overall strategy in the development plan, the nature and scale of the development, and the catchment, which it seeks to serve. In this case the main focus of search would be Amesbury Town Centre.

The applicants have assumed in their statement that the old co-op store would not be reoccupied by a food retailer, but a planning application has been submitted but not yet registered by Frobisher retail for the demolition and redevelopment of the old co-op store for a larger food store. Although not registered this is a material consideration that needs to be taken into account when assessing this application as it can be argued that this demonstrates that there is an alternative site within the town centre. The most recent letter from the coop states that if Lidl is granted (which it has been in principle), Aldi are likely to withdraw their offer to reoccupy the former coop and the coop will not support the Frobisher scheme as the cumulative impact of Lidl and a new town centre supermarket would be so high as to damage its interests.

However, it is considered that an out of town supermarket would also impact upon the coop, if it diverted 40% of trade away from the town centre and furthermore would impact upon the town centre as a whole.

In addition the existing coop store has an A1 use and it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority would view any change of use away from A1 favourably owing to the prominent location of this building within the prime-shopping frontage of Salisbury Street, as such a change would be likely to be contrary to saved policy S1.

Therefore it is considered that this letter cannot therefore at present, be taken as evidence that a town centre site is not deliverable.

PPS 6 advises that in applying the sequential approach, developers and operators should be able to demonstrate that they have been flexible about their proposed business model in terms of its scale, format, car parking provision and scope for disaggregation. Local

Authorities should be realistic in considering whether sites are suitable, viable, and available, and take into account genuine difficulties, which the Applicant can demonstrate are likely to occur in operating its business model from the sequentially preferable site.

Confirmation was been received from the co-op that they were willing to let the whole store to a convenience food retailer, although the situation may have changed since the resolution to grant Lidl.

It is still clear that there is a sequentially preferable site in the town centre, which will mop up the identified capacity in the RLNS and meets the town centre first principles set out in PPS6.

It is therefore considered that this site has not been sufficiently explored by the applicants, nor has the possibility of a town centre site through disaggregation- for example of food/non food.

As part of the preferred options that are currently out for public consultation and the preferred option in the report is for the promotion of a new supermarket for Amesbury in the town centre. This is in direct response to the issues and options responses, which were as follows:

Question	Agree / strongly agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
An out of town supermarket is needed in Amesbury	32%	40%	28%
An out of town supermarket would add to the decline of Amesbury town centre	46%	38%	16%
We should try and find a site for a new supermarket in Amesbury town centre	40%	42%	18%

Therefore the LDF process may allocate a site for a supermarket in Amesbury town centre, commensurate with its role.

Para 3.19 of PPS 6 states

Where it is argued that otherwise sequentially-preferable sites are not appropriate for the particular development proposed, applicants should provide clear evidence to demonstrate why such sites are not practicable alternatives in terms of: Availability: the sites are unavailable now and are unlikely to become available for development within a reasonable period of time (determined on the merits of a particular case). Where such sites become available unexpectedly after receipt of the application the local planning authority should take this into account in their assessment of the application;

Therefore even if it is accepted that there is a need for a food superstore in Amesbury, of the size proposed, it has not been demonstrated that there is no sequentially preferable site within or on the edge of the centre, bearing in mind the advice in PPS6, it is evident that the applicant has not thoroughly examined the potential for redevelopment of the former Co-op store. The potential future of the former Co-op store has a bearing on the need and impact issues raised by the food superstore proposals,

Impact

As shown in the attached Grimley Report, (appendix1) the impact of the proposed Asda if assessed using the date put forward by G L Hearn (on behalf of Tesco) the impact of the proposed Asda store on Amesbury's convenience goods sector would be about 48%. This compares with the Tesco impact of 33%. Grimley conclude that using their figures the impact for each is approximately 40% or more.

Councillors also raised at the Northern Area Committee in December about the possibility of Amesbury increasing its market share. In order to make it worth the while of a retailer to increase the market share, they would have to propose a large store, like the Asda proposal. The knock on effect of increasing the market share would be the impact that this new store

would have on the existing town centre.

Para 3.22 of PPS 6 is also of relevance. It states that “in particular, local planning authorities should consider the impact of the development on the centre or centres likely to be affected, taking account of:

- the **likely effect on future public or private sector investment** needed to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre or centres;
- the likely impact of the proposed development on **trade/turnover and on the vitality and viability** of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development
- changes to the **range of services** provided by centres that could be affected;
- **likely impact on the number of vacant properties** in the primary shopping area;
- potential changes to the **quality, attractiveness, physical condition and character of the centre** or centres and to its role in the economic and social life of the community; and
- the implications of proposed leisure and entertainment uses for the evening and nighttime economy of the centre (see also paragraph 2.24).”

Grimley report for SDC (attached in full as appendix 1)

5.1 A new large food superstore, as proposed by Tesco and Asda, is potentially supportable based on a significant increase in Amesbury’s market share. Consistent with our conclusions in the RLNS, we are satisfied that either proposal would be capable of increasing the level of trade retention in Amesbury, and would trade successfully. We have also previously acknowledged that a new large foodstore would provide additional choice and competition to the existing retail offer, and by reducing the need to travel would lead to potentially more sustainable shopping patterns.

5.2 There is no reason why Amesbury Town Centre cannot and should not aspire to increase its market share. However, we have highlighted that a large food superstore outside the town centre would be likely to lead to a significant impact on the vitality and viability of Amesbury Town Centre. It is also necessary to thoroughly examine whether there are any more central opportunities in Amesbury Town Centre which could contribute to meeting an identified need.

5.3 Depending on the future of the former Co-op store in Amesbury Town Centre, and the Council’s determination of the current application for a discount foodstore submitted by Lidl on land at London Road, these proposals would be likely to address the modest capacity identified based on Amesbury’s current market share and provide additional choice competition to the Co-op store. Clearly in policy terms a replacement foodstore in the former Co-op unit will be the preferred option and would contribute to meeting identified needs. If this option is not available, permitting an out-of-centre discount foodstore may be acceptable in policy terms, and would provide for additional choice and competition without leading to a significant impact on Amesbury Town Centre.

5.4 Tesco and Asda estimate the impact of their proposals on the convenience goods sector of Amesbury at between 33% - 37%. Based on the most up-to-date estimate of

Amesbury's current turnover, estimated by Tesco at £15.3m, the impact of the Asda store would be significantly higher, i.e. well in excess of 40% on the basis that this proposal incorporates a higher proportion of convenience goods floorspace and Asda have assumed a higher store turnover. In practice we consider the impact of either store will be likely to be circa 35-40% but could be higher.

- 5.5 At these levels of impact, we anticipate the new Co-op store in Amesbury Town Centre would still be likely to trade at or about company average and we would not expect this store to be at risk of closure. Clearly the cumulative impact of one or both of the current proposals, in addition to a replacement foodstore in the former Co-op unit (and/or a discount retailer such as Lidl located outside the town centre) would lead to a much more pronounced impact on this store, although in our experience it is still unlikely that it would be vulnerable to closure.
- 5.6 However, we remain concerned that the impact of either proposal on Amesbury's convenience retail sector would be significant, and that the consequences of a large full line superstore would be a more broad based impact on both the Co-op store and other local retailers who are likely to benefit from linked trips generated by this town centre 'anchor'. In contrast to the more modest impact of a discount food retailer, as previously advised, either of the large food superstore proposals would be likely to include a range of in-store facilities and to largely replicate the every day convenience and services offer of Amesbury Town Centre.
- 5.7 We acknowledge that these concerns need to be balanced against the additional choice and competition and more sustainable shopping patterns which could be achieved by one of the current proposals. In our view in purely retail planning terms we consider the potential harm to Amesbury Town Centre would outweigh these benefits, although we recognise this is essentially a planning judgement which officers and members of the Council need to reach.
- 5.8 However, we would strongly recommend that further investigations are made to establish the future of the former Co-op unit in the town centre, and that any consideration of the current food superstore proposals also needs to have regard to the Council's position on the other discount foodstore proposals in Amesbury. The Council should carefully consider the opportunities to accommodate further convenience retailing in the town centre, and to have regard to the potential cumulative impact of the current proposals and any other proposals before the Council at the current time.
- 5.9 In the event that the Council decides to support a large food superstore in Amesbury, we do not consider there is any clear retail planning basis to differentiate between the two sites or operators, although the Asda proposals are indicated as having a significantly

higher convenience impact. We have not considered other planning policy considerations or material considerations, which may have a bearing on the decision of the Council.

5.10 In the event that the Council resolves to approve a new food superstore in Amesbury, we recommend that the Council determines which proposal it is minded to support, and the planning grounds for doing so, and explores the use of planning conditions governing the size/mix of store, range of in-store facilities etc. to minimise impact on Amesbury Town Centre.

JLL have commented that GVA Grimley do not consider that the approval of either the Tesco or Asda proposals would result in the closure of the coop in Amesbury Town Centre, which therefore indicates there is excess trading at the coop which could be reduced enabling it to better meet the qualitative needs of Amesbury. They also consider GVA Grimley have not considered that over 3 times as many shoppers would be able to be retained in Amesbury. If only 10% of those made trips to Amesbury Town centre to meet their other retail and service needs this would be to more than replace the effect on the coop.

It is considered that the reuse of the town centre site and the potential for land assembly of a larger site than the just the old coop store itself has not been adequately considered by ASDA. A smaller ASDA store in the town centre would provide the benefits put forward for the larger out of town store, competition, choice, without diverting trade from the town centre. Whilst Asda say they will advertise the town centre shops in their store, the distance between the store and the town centre is too far for linked trips and so a special journey would be needed. If the town centre were not 'on the way home' from Asda, why would anyone make a special journey to Amesbury Town Centre? What has it got that is not available elsewhere? If this proposal which includes both food and non food shopping (essentially a 'one stop shop') the comparison and fresh food shopping currently taking place in the town centre with linked trips to the coop would not necessarily still take place in Amesbury. Either it would take place within the store itself, which whilst it would be expenditure in Amesbury – would be expenditure lost to the town centre, or it would take place elsewhere in locations convenient to the shopper's lifestyle such as close to his/her workplace.

JLL comment in relation to accessibility that bus route 8 (which serves Amesbury, Bulford, Tidworth and Andover) does not serve Archers Gate or the developments to the south of Amesbury. This is incorrect. It travels along Boscombe Road, thence to the town centre and thence via London Road and Bulford. It therefore provides access to Amesbury Town Centre from both Bulford to the north and the Boscombe Down area to the south.

The supplementary letter from GVA Grimley makes it clear that

In the case of the current out-of-centre food superstore proposals, submitted by Tesco and Asda, we have previously advised that the impact of either proposal is likely to be in the region of 40% on the convenience retail sector of Amesbury Town Centre. At these levels of impact, we anticipate that the new Co-Op Store in the town centre would still be likely to trade at or about company average and would not expect the store to close, although we still remain concerned about the consequence of this level of impact for the vitality and viability of Amesbury Town Centre. The consequence of the partial or total reoccupation of the former Co-Op unit in Amesbury Town Centre would be to reduce, to some extent, the current strong turnover of the Co-Op Store and as a consequence the impact of a large out-of-town centre on this town centre anchor store would be more pronounced although we still anticipate the store would be unlikely to close or be seriously affected in these circumstances.

In the event that the proposal to redevelop the former Co-Op Store to provide a larger unit for a quality foodstore operator like Sainsbury's was approved and implemented, for reasons outlined previously we consider this option would meet the quantitative and qualitative need and would be likely to secure an increase in market share and claw back trade into Amesbury Town Centre in line with national policy guidance. In these circumstances, the policy justification for supporting an out-of-centre large new superstore would be significantly diminished, based on the absence of need and the potential availability of a sequentially preferable site.

We also consider that in the event that the Council concludes the 'Sainsbury's' proposal can be regarded as suitable, viable and available, there must be a significant prospect that the grant of planning permission for a large out-of-centre superstore would be likely to prejudice this investment. We consider that it is extremely unlikely that a retailer like Sainsbury's would be prepared to commit to this development with the prospect of a large out-of-centre food superstore remaining. The prospect of prejudice to such a significant new town centre investment would further undermine the case for an out-of-centre food superstore in this scenario.

If the Council was minded to approve both the current out-of-centre food superstore proposals, and assuming the applications were not "called in" and both operators proceeded to build and open new stores, there would be a significant "mutual impact" between the stores themselves. Both stores would be likely to trade significantly below the retailers normal expectations, and in practice in our view the prospects of both operators building and opening new stores in the circumstances would be remote. However, in the unlikely event of both proposals being permitted and not called in by the Secretary of State, and ultimately being built and occupied, their cumulative impact on Amesbury Town Centre would be significantly above the 40% figure estimated for a single store.

At this level of impact, we consider the impact on the Co-Op, and 'knock on' effects on other retailers in Amesbury would be very significant, and would be likely to seriously undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre. In these circumstances, if the Council were minded to support an out-of-centre superstore, we would strongly advise against resolving to permit both.

NAC has resolved to approve the Lidl proposal. Therefore an element of the trade currently leaking from the Amesbury catchment may be clawed back – though not to the town centre. . The location of the Lidl store is such that linked trips with either the Tesco or Asda proposals would be possible with the former more convenient (on the same side of the road) than the latter.

2. Design

The Design Forum considered the scheme at pre application stage. It commented:

The proposed store is a standard value-engineered retail 'box' which while functional, lacks any spark of individuality and imagination

Listening to the presentation, the Forum was encouraged by the apparent commitment of ASDA to sustainable development and noted the references to features incorporated into other new stores to offset their carbon emissions. However, the plans presented for the scheme did not reveal any tangible evidence of sustainable design and construction measures that would go beyond the normal statutory minima. The Forum did not doubt the claims in relation to other new stores but felt that the recital of vague aspirations betrayed a lack of real commitment to sustainability. Given the unconstrained nature of the site in actual and planning policy terms, sustainability measures could be much more ambitious and visible, for example, a green roof and/or onsite renewable energy technology.

The site layout is indicative of a 'standards' approach and is considered unimaginative. In particular, the combination of the extent of the car park's coverage, the prominence of its siting between the main access into the site and the store and the lack of space allocated within it for tree and shrub planting was disappointing. The perspective images only served to confirm the car park's appearance as an unbroken expanse of asphalt

The standard covering for the main pedestrian walkway through the car park to the store's entrance was felt to be particularly dull and depressing. The Forum felt that more generous and regularly spaced planting, including (but not limited to) trees, is required to better blend the development into the landscape. A more considered siting of the store could, in itself, help to obscure much of the car park from wider views by allowing some spaces to be located to the side and/or rear of it. Furthermore, all the parking spaces could be visually fragmented into smaller pockets and softened with a much more generous landscaping scheme.

Some changes to the building design- principally with reference to materials and the design of the covered walkway have been made in light of its comments, however the site layout, with its expanse of parking to the front of the building, unrelieved by sufficient planting to break it up, remains unchanged.

The design of the building and its materials now follow the design code for Solstice Park. However, the building is to a standard Asda format and does not specifically address the site particularly in terms of its location on the site. The applicants have sought to justify the siting of the building in terms of how a standard Asda store would fit on the site rather than critically look at how Asda's requirements could be amended to more successfully address the site and site the building in the south west corner- closest to the pedestrian access. The design of the car park, despite revisions to introduce a pedestrian access from the Sunrise Way roundabout at the south west corner of the site, is still an expanse of tarmac, unrelieved by much planting, the majority of landscaping being around the perimeter. This is an exposed site and with the building located to the eastern side will remain exposed to westerly winds, with the potential for litter blow etc;

It is therefore considered that insufficient landscaping proposed will result in a development visually detrimental to the locality and the location of the store on the site will be pedestrian-unfriendly and relate poorly to the offices immediately to the south. .

3. Transport and Traffic

A transport assessment has been prepared and revised in light of comments from WCC Asda depots are in Bristol and Didcot and therefore it can reasonably assumed that the majority of HGV traffic will approach from the north, from the A303 . The Highways Agency raises no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.

Although local supplies may approach from the south via Porton Road, WCC Highways have not raised objection on this basis and the transport modelling demonstrates no adverse traffic impact.

It is proposed to install two light controlled crossings on Porton Road to address pedestrian access to the site from the housing estates to the south and west. Whilst, the northernmost crossing is very much on the pedestrian desire line from Butterfield Down, it is unlikely that residents of the Stonehenge estate will seek to cross Porton road twice. They are more likely to drive to the site. or walk along the verge on the eastern side of the road where there is currently no footway (although there is room to accommodate one, except across the frontage of Littleholme.) It is considered that this merits further consideration, since once the H9 link road junction with the A345 is put in, Porton Road will become the route of preference between the A345 and the A303 Solstice Park junction and to install two crossings within a short distance of one another on a through route does not make sense. However WCC highways have advised by email that it could well be a time consuming process to try to "acquire" this land and though it may be desirable, it is not worth pursuing at this time since it is difficult to tell where the highway boundary actually is from the plans and the planting and fence at Littlehome appear long established. Whilst it could be that it has encroached, it is not impossible that the houses either side may have had some work done and the highway authority may have asked them to set back to enable widening of the road at some point.

What this does demonstrate is that the Asda proposal is essentially on the 'wrong' side of Porton Road, since the majority of residential development and hence pedestrian traffic will be from the west.

WCC highways object to the proposal on the basis that it will attract car borne traffic.

Asda are prepared to contribute to the existing Solstice Park link bus to the town centre and have proposed a bus service which will be funded for 5 years and run around the estates of Amesbury to serve the store. This will only run on the earlier part of the day and will not enter the site but drop the passengers off on Porton road from where they will have to walk through the car park. When this was queried, the applicants advised that to enter the site and turn around takes time and would mean it would not be possible to run a regular interval service with one bus. This rather negates the purpose of providing the bus in the first place since it will be inconvenient and unattractive to passengers- the car will take you nearer the door to the store. It is analogous to a bus not stopping to pick up passengers in order to adhere to the timetable. Consideration has not been given to amending the route in order to achieve the desired frequency or to providing another bus (the latter has cost implications). This, in conjunction with the siting of the store with the car park in the foreground, so that the store lies on the further side of the site, pays lip service to the concept of attracting shoppers by means other than the private car and leads to WCC highways recommending refusal for the reason that the proposed foodstore, located within a site allocated for employment purposes is remote from the community it is likely to serve to an extent that is not conducive to anything other than car borne customers. Furthermore, the proposed orientation and siting of the building at the rear of the site is such that it introduces a further barrier to non-car users by producing an avoidable conflict with cars entering exiting and circulating the proposed car park.

*Applicant's transport consultant has written a letter to WCC highways (attached as appendix)
He takes issue with reason for refusal 4 in particular the wording
Not conducive to **anything other than car borne customers** (his emphasis)
Increases offer for funding of Bulford footpath/cycle link from £50,000 to £150,000*

4. Asda or Tesco?

There have been a number of letters of representation preferring Asda to Tesco in that the store is not currently represented in the area. Other letters consider it could reduce traffic on Southampton road. (Salisbury).

This raises valid points in that although the Asda planning statement identifies an overlarge catchment area, (even with the revised changes- which exclude Tidworth) which in terms of local knowledge is unrealistic, conversely it excludes the northern part of Salisbury, whose residents may well choose to travel to Amesbury for supermarket shopping rather than queue

in traffic on Southampton Road. Whilst the travel distance may be greater, the travel time may be less. The council's retail consultants view is that:

- 4.1 It remains to be seen whether in the light of the recommendations of the competition commission the forthcoming revised national policy statement on planning for town centres (PPS6) will place more significance on competition, and suggest more weight may be given to the identity of potential operators. In this case neither retailer is currently represented in Amesbury, and therefore either proposal would provide choice and competition to the existing retail offer (notably Co-op). Both are successful retailers and either store would be likely to trade well.
- 4.2 Given that Tesco is already represented in Salisbury, and is one of the stores currently serving the Amesbury area, there may be some differences between the trading patterns of the two proposals. In particular a new Tesco of the size proposed in Amesbury would be likely to retain a higher proportion of trade currently lost to Tesco in Salisbury. Conversely, Asda, which is not currently represented in the area, may potentially attract trade from further afield, and be capable of attracting trade from the Salisbury catchment.
- 4.3 However, in terms of the key planning issues i.e. need and impact on Amesbury, the consequences of these differences are unlikely to be significant. Therefore leaving aside any significant differences between the proposals in terms of their net sales floorspace and food/non-food split, we would not recommend that the Council attaches any particular significance in planning terms to the identity of the operator.

It should also be remembered that planning permission goes with the land- not the applicant and that an A1 use could be operated by any retailer.

Asda have indicated that they will not be incorporating any sub units such as a post office or pharmacy. It would be possible to condition any permission to prevent any such units being incorporated in future. This would reduce the impact on those town centre uses.

Asda have also now opened a store in Andover which delivers to Amesbury and Salisbury (source Asda website) so although the nearest store is some distance away, it is possible to obtain the Asda brand, if a customer wishes, in a sustainable manner.

5. Environmental issues

The application was subject to an environmental statement for reason of potential transfrontier significant effects. The issues covered were ;

Planning policy & land use

Transport & traffic

Noise

Air quality

Landscape and visual impact assessment

Water resources

Ground conditions

Socio economic impacts

Archaeology

Ecology

The ES sets the scene of the proposal, compliance with the Solstice Park Design code, reason for the siting of the store (though this is not convincing), the intention to open 24 hours, no movement of material on or off site, although a small amount of cut & fill will be needed, the likely start on site following the grant of any planning permission and the programming of the off site highway works (to be agreed with WCC highways).

The ES had to be modified to address the potential impacts of the development since they were initially only demonstrated post mitigation, without identifying what the unmitigated effects could be and who would be responsible for carrying out the mitigation. These effects relate principally – but not solely to potential pollution, noise dust and impact upon the water environment both during construction and subsequently during the operation of the store.

Planning Policy, land use and alternative development

The issues are covered in the planning policy section of the report above. The ES identifies a town centre site (the old coop) but advises that it is too small to offer a qualitative difference to the existing coop and therefore would be unlikely to claw back trade from the out of town stores patronised by Amesbury residents. . This is a rather simplistic argument since those third parties writing in support of the proposal have mainly been concerned with having a choice of retailer, rather than a bigger store, which currently is not available in Amesbury, where the coop is the only supermarket. As noted in the consultation response from WCC Strategic Planning- there has been insufficient analysis of the town centre site and how Asda could adapt its product to what is currently available in the town centre as advised by PPS6. . There is currently permission for offices on the application site. This has not been taken up so far, but accords with 'saved' policy E8a which this proposal does not.

Transport & traffic

This is covered in both the ES and 2 supplementary transport assessments.

The traffic flow modelling has been carried out in consultation with WCC and is considered to be satisfactory. This considered volume, speed, time of day and composition of traffic and took into account both the store and the highway improvements proposed. It identified that local traffic will divert from other foodstores, thus reducing journey lengths from nearby residential development who may currently travel south to Salisbury. Revisions to the service

yard have been made to accommodate home shopping' (i.e. from the internet) . Currently this operates from Andover Asda and delivers to Amesbury and Salisbury (source Asda website) . The traffic modelling shows most traffic will approach from Bulford (from the north) and Porton Road/Pendragon Way to the south and predicts a 20% increase in traffic on Porton Road. This road, which is currently subject to a 40 mph limit, will not become so busy as a result of this development as to sever the east and west sides but it does identify the need to provide facilities to enable the road to be crossed safely. 2 controlled crossing points are proposed.

The quality of pedestrian, cycling and bus access to the site were also examined.

The ES considers pedestrian access to be good, and this has been enhanced by the provision of a pedestrian /cycle entrance on the corner of Sunrise Way with an associated toucan crossing - along the 'desire line' to access the store from the south. However, the footpath links to nearby residential development is deficient. Firstly, there is a lack of a footway on the eastern side of Porton Road and although two controlled crossing points are proposed to get over this problem- it will be inconvenient to users to cross the road twice, they may well try and walk down the verge- but more likely will get in the car as this 'gap' is a deterrent to safe walking.

The S106 for Solstice Park does include a clause (6.16) requiring best endeavours to secure a footpath link through from the Stonehenge Estate (end of Purvis Close) into the planned footpath/cycleway on the southern boundary of Solstice Park. This would facilitate safer access from the Stonehenge Estate to this site, but in the past such a link has been opposed locally in connection a planning application at the end of Purvis Close .The footpath/cycleway along the southern boundary of Solstice Park is currently unsurfaced (mown) as it does not link with any development yet. This alternative walking route from the Stonehenge Estate (avoiding Porton Road) has not been considered as part of the traffic modelling for this application. The Amesbury Property Company has also sought to provide a link to this footpath from the Beverly Hills Park but this has been declined by Beverly Hills Park.

Secondly, although there is a footpath link down the slope on the northern side of the site to the Solstice Park Services, where there are eating facilities, it is steep, but as the proposed store includes a café, there would seem to be little potential for linked trips on foot.

Mention is made of a footpath/ cycle link to Bulford as the C road currently has no footways. This would be a hilly route and WCC Highways have not supported this in the past and although the development could generate a commuted sum towards such provision, (£ 50,000 is proposed) it would not wholly pay for it and therefore would be unlikely to deliver this before the store opened. *An increased offer of £150,000 has now been made which makes this route more achievable..*

The accession plan shows the walking distance radius from the store. As most of the land to the east is currently undeveloped, this demonstrates that the store would be poorly located in relation to residential development within walking distance.

There is currently no bus route past the site. The nearest bus goes from Amesbury to Bulford (and onward to Tidworth & Andover) over the Solstice Park Bridge. This bus only travels via Boscombe Road mornings, evenings and Sundays. During the day Mon- Sat Boscombe Road is served by a different service.

As part of the proposal a half hour frequency bus route around the residential areas of Amesbury is proposed, to be funded at £55,000 p.a, for 5 years and to run Mon – Fri between the hours of 09.00 –15.00. However, this will not deliver its passengers to the door of Asda, but to a bus stop on Porton Road from which passengers will have to cross the car park, albeit within a covered walkway .I n addition there is already a bus provided which links Solstice Park with Amesbury Town centre as part of the existing S106 Agreement- an agreement which also includes travel planning and contributions from each occupier towards a 'sustainable transport account'. A £54,000 contribution towards this bus would be required by WCC.

Asda propose a travel plan for its employees. There is already a travel plan for the whole Solstice Park site and it would seem sensible to link into that. .

The traffic impacts from the development are therefore considered not to be significantly detrimental, although the potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflict along Porton Road will inevitably increase, and may do so in any event once the Amesbury link road through Archers Gate is joined to the A345, which is not a matter for this development to address. The

proposed bus service could indeed, be beneficial to those estates in Amesbury not currently served by public transport, though ironically, the bus would not be ideal for shopping at the proposed Asda owing to the distance from the bus stop to the store.

The construction traffic impacts must be considered against those for the consented office scheme, to which they are substantially similar.

The traffic and transport effects are listed in a summary table which concludes after mitigation- namely improved road geometry, three controlled crossings (2 on Porton road – one on Sunrise Way) measures to encourage non car use – such as travel planning and cycle stands, provision of a new bus service and offsite highway works that the impacts would not be significant.

Whilst, this may be the case, what is also demonstrated is that insufficient thought has been given to accessing the store by means other than the private car.

Noise

This was assessed both in respect to during construction and during operation. The site is distant from residential properties, there being vacant land to the east and commercial development to the south and west. Traffic and operating noise was assessed at 57 Carpenters Drive (said to be the nearest residential dwelling but actually that is Fairview Park – the showmen's' quarters) and was found to be within acceptable levels.

Proposed mitigation of construction noise will be: restricting working hours with no noisy working on Saturday afternoons, Sundays or Bank Holidays, site hoardings and portable acoustic barriers. Although there will be an increase in HGV traffic on Porton Road during the construction phase, so there would be with the consented office scheme.

The noise from construction will essentially be short term.

The noise from 24-hour store operation will be long term, but the site is at some distance from residential property and so the effect of plant & machinery has been assessed not to be significant.

Restricting hours of delivery could, however, help mitigate offsite disturbance along approach roads.

Air quality

The site does not lie within an air quality management area.

The principal issue during the construction phase relates to earthworks and the machinery undertaking these. The site is bare chalk prone to windblow, so dust and particulates, loose materials and vehicle movements need to be controlled. Hours of working have already been mentioned in connection with noise above, but conditions requiring dust suppression, siting of plant compound (away from sensitive receptors) no fires, and a construction method statement setting out clearly a protocol for site operation such as no idling engines, vehicles to meet road emission standards, wheel washing to reduce transport of dust etc off the site would be needed to mitigate the effects to a level where they were no longer significant. These are matters that can be addressed by condition.

The air quality issues in the operational phase will arise from car borne customers in terms of vehicle numbers, and a lesser extent from delivery vehicles. The service yard is sited away from the store entrance, but will be visible from it through the recycling area.

Mitigation is therefore through travel planning.

Landscape and visual impact assessment

Photographs are provided which clearly demonstrate the site is most visible from the north and east- especially from a distance. From the north it is elevated above a planted bank. The landscaping scheme drawings clearly show that even after 5 -7 years tree growth the store will still be very visible. Does this matter? The consented office scheme on this site was designed to be visible as three glass buildings rising above the landscaped bank. However, that was part of the design concept.

The strategic landscaping is already in place and the store has been designed in isolation from it. It is a standard product, with the exterior roof profile and materials changed to conform to the Solstice Park design code. It has not been designed specifically for the site as it lies

across the contours (requiring cut and fill) rather than along them. By reason of its siting, which does not align with the office buildings at the Crescent to the south, It will appear as a large bulk of a building, standing in isolation as the car park is sited to the west between the store and the road, and will not read as part of the development to the south.

The requirement for a pedestrian access in the southwest corner has reduced the landscaping in that area and the width of landscaping on the western and southern boundaries is rather sparse. The service yard with associated plant and sprinkler water tank is on the southern side and will be visible from Sunrise Way. The store turns its back on the Crescent Offices. However, that is a local, rather than a wider landscape impact.

Specimen trees are proposed along the Porton Road boundary but care must be taken with species (non fruit bearing and not to grow taller than the proposed building) owing to the proximity of Boscombe Down airfield.

The car park will be unrelieved tarmac with only small ground cover bays at the end of the rows and a covered walkway through the middle to link to the bus stop. This will be bleak and further serve to isolate the building. Although this walkway has now been redesigned to reflect the store canopy and look less like a trolley bay, it is still an incongruous feature, which, if the bus were to enter the site, would not be necessary and could be replaced by planting. Trees within the car park would help soften the impact, but essentially in landscape terms, the building is poorly placed on the site in relation to the existing and proposed neighbouring development.

In terms of views from the A303 and the Solstice Park junction and services which are the last built development adjacent A303 before entering the world heritage area, the store will have no greater visual impact than the consented offices, but is an inferior product and a building of bulk. The site does not lie within any landscape designation and although there are barrows in proximity to the site, the development will not impact upon them. Furthermore when viewed from the north this site is seen with the large structures at Boscombe Down as a backdrop.

From the East the store will, in time, be masked by further development, but in the interim will present a wall and the side of the back of house area and the poor relationship with the offices at the Crescent will be apparent.

At night, the visual impact of the development may be greater by reason of internal and external lighting and the proposed advertising signs (as shown). It is conceded in the ES that before further development takes place on Solstice Park the impact will be adverse but this will reduce as the sites around are developed so the long-term impact will be neutral.

Despite these conclusions of the ES, it is considered that the adverse landscape impact of the current site layout, particularly locally, is sufficient to warrant refusal on those grounds.

Water resources

This splits into effects during construction for which mitigation relates to pollution prevention measures, need to prevent run off and foul drainage to site compound; and operational effects which relate to water use, run off and pollution prevention from the car park and service yard, roof drainage etc;

The Environment Agency has raised no objection to the drainage scheme (to soakaways with interceptors on the parking/service areas) subject to conditions. It is therefore considered that any impacts can be mitigated by condition.

Owing to the potential in combination effect of the proposal upon the River Avon Sac, an appropriate assessment was undertaken (appendix 3) This enabled Natural England to withdraw its objection. It also identified that any necessary mitigation measures in respect of the water environment and noise & dust could be addressed by condition.

Ground conditions

The ground is chalk, which has been reprofiled, and more cut & fill (though limited) is proposed. To mitigate the impact of dust it will be necessary to condition that the measures detailed in paras 7.90 – 7.93 are adhered to. The potential for pollution of the groundwater can, as mentioned above be mitigated and such mitigation safeguarded by condition.

Socio economic impacts

The impacts examined were population, employment, retail provision, and crime & public safety.

This identified that Amesbury serves a wider area as a service centre and also that the population of the area is younger than Salisbury District as a whole with more aged 20 –44 and more infants, which the ES considers reflects the presence of garrisons in the area. It notes that further growth is envisaged in Amesbury.

In terms of employment it is noted that unemployment is low, but the level of qualifications in the area is also low. A higher proportion drive to work than in the district as a whole. It notes that further growth is envisaged in Amesbury .In terms of impact the construction period will provide local employment (around 150 temporary jobs) for the duration of the contract and the store when operating will provide around 300 –350 jobs (many part time) resulting in a net employment benefit.

However, this fails to take into account the number of jobs that could be generated should the consented office scheme be implemented, which may be broadly similar in number, but may be of a higher skill level with fewer at unsocial hours. It also does not take into account retail jobs, which may be lost in the town centre as a result of the proposal. Therefore it is considered that to say the impact is beneficial is flawed. It should be considered as neutral at best.

The ES looks at the retail provision in the area including convenience stores. It identifies that these are principally used for 'top up' shopping.

It supplies figures to show that 91.2% of the non food shopping trips are to outside Amesbury with 72.1% being to Salisbury city centre and argues that the proposal is likely to claw some of this expenditure back to Amesbury. It recognises that owing to the presence of Focus, this is not the case with DIY where a higher proportion is retained in Amesbury. However, what it does not mention is that clawback will be to the proposed store, not Amesbury Town Centre, and could potentially affect the limited comparison (non food) shopping facilities that currently exist there. For example following the grant of permission for Focus, the 2 stores in Amesbury Town Centre that (partly) sold similar DIY goods have both closed.

The ES considers there is no site in the town centre of sufficient size, arguing that the old coop site and car park could not accommodate a store of 1400 sqm- (the unregistered Frobisher proposal is 1858 sqm) and does not appear to have considered land assembly. It argues that no other site is sequentially preferable and looks at the proposed Archers Gate local centre but concludes that as the S106 restricts the total retail area to 2100 sq m and any unit to 700 sqm, it is unsuitable. No investigation appears to have been carried out as to whether the S106 could be varied to join 2 units (this would give a size of 1400 sqm – the size identified by Asda in their submission to the competition commission as being the minimum size for one stop shopping). Whilst this site is out of town it would be more sustainable than a site on a business park such as is currently proposed. The ES does not take into account either the impact that the proposal could have on the willingness to invest in the proposed local centre, bearing mind that a local centre was proposed at Butterfield down as part of the original planning permission but has never come to fruition. .

It is admitted that the proposal does not comply with the land uses in the approved Solstice Park masterplan but claims it is a compatible use and argues that as it operates 24 hours, it will bring an element of night time activity to the park. It neglects to observe that a 24-hour filling station with associated shop already exists.

In terms of potential crime from such operation, it is claimed that fewer employees will walk to work at night and that the shop and car park will both be well lit and therefore that this will result in a negligible impact in terms of crime, although it is accepted there may be a small increase in crime during the construction period.

Archaeology

An evaluation was carried out prior to work starting on the Solstice Park site and work has taken place prior to and as part of the reprofiling during which some finds were made. As the site is already reprofiled there is limited archaeological potential and WCC library and Museum service has not requested any further work. The effect on the cultural heritage overall is therefore considered to be minor adverse or neutral.

Ecology

Again the site is reprofiled bare chalk. Ecological Surveys have taken place but the current condition of the site means that any development, if the right species are planted in the landscaped areas has the potential to be beneficial. However, the requirements of Defence Estates, who do not wish to encourage birds close to an airfield, must be taken into account in the choice of species.

In the context of off site ecology, in particular the River Avon system habitat, the greatest potential for damage arises during the construction phase. A construction Environmental management plan (to be agreed with the LPA before commencement) is proposed. Carrying this forward into the Appropriate Assessment, it is considered that any effects can be mitigated by the imposition of suitable conditions to reduce the risk of pollution so the impact is very low.

Lighting

A separate lighting assessment was included. The proposals for the car park lighting are currently unacceptable in that the columns are too high for this elevated site, and will result in excessive light spill, despite this site being in an area where there are 8m high street lighting columns. This is a matter, that were members minded to approve the development, could be addressed by amended plans.

Other issues raised

A letter of representation raises the issue of cycle and pedestrian access from Allington track without having to negotiate the A303. There is currently a route from Allington Track across to byway 1 and from there bridleway 29 enters Solstice Park. This is an unsurfaced route and it is intended that the section through the open space area on the eastern boundary of Solstice Park would remain so. No plans have been put forward to surface it all, but should members consider this to be important, further advice from WCC highways could be sought.

A speed limit reduction on Porton Road is a matter for the highway authority WCC to consider, but is not currently proposed. The proposed crossings , being close together , should have an impact on the speed of traffic .

CONCLUSION

In terms of the location of the site, it is on the edge of the town, not within easy walking distance of the town centre and on land allocated for employment purposes, which forms part of a larger business park – Solstice Park.

Although there are residential areas within walking distance it sits on their eastern side, with undeveloped land beyond. Whilst it is clear that this, or the Tesco application both have the potential to claw back trade to the Amesbury area, or even increase its market share, this will not necessarily increase the market share of the town centre, and the adverse impact of an

out of town supermarket on the town centre outweighs the benefits of this clawback in trade and reduction in travel that could result.

Since the original Grimley report was written, an additional report was written addressing the issues raised in relation to the submission of an application on the old coop site- with particularly reference to the Lidl application, which NAC has now resolved to approve subject to legal agreements. Lidl is a deep discounter and a different type of store to Asda. Nevertheless, the Lidl approval will clawback some of the trade currently lost to Amesbury.

In the context of this proposal, whether there is an application on the old coop site in the town centre or not, the site must still be examined to assess whether there is a realistic possibility of its coming forward. It is considered that this has not been adequately addressed by Asda and that if this application were approved – it would impact on the town centre to a degree that would deter further investment – not only on the old coop site, but throughout, including smaller shops.

Therefore in light of the impact the proposal could have upon the town centre refusal is recommended.

The impact upon strategic employment land supply is considered significant and refusal is also recommended on this basis.

In addition it is considered that the location of the store on the site itself, for design & layout reasons relates poorly to the office development to the south, adversely impacts upon the landscape and makes poor provision for non car users.

RECOMMENDATION:/REFUSE For the following reasons

1. The proposal is contrary to policy DP6 of the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2016 and government guidance given in PPS6- Planning for Town Centres in that this is a proposal for a foodstore in an out of town centre location which would have a significantly detrimental impact upon the vitality and viability of Amesbury Town Centre, and if consented, could undermine investment in the town centre. Furthermore, it has not been adequately demonstrated that a more central site is not available given the requirement in PPS6 for a retailer to show flexibility as to store formats when considering sequentially preferable sites.
2. The proposal is considered contrary to 'saved' policy E8A of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan and the RSS panel report in that it would result in the loss of a strategically important employment site not just for the Stonehenge local community area in which it is located, but for the whole of Salisbury District 's economy, in that Amesbury will need to provide a continuing supporting role to Salisbury for the provision of employment land.
3. The proposed development by reason of its siting. layout, and lack of landscaping within the site would relate poorly to nearby development and have an adverse visual impact on the locality and on the wider landscape, especially when viewed from the north, contrary to saved policies D1 and G1 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan,
4. The proposed foodstore, located within a site allocated for employment purposes is remote from the community it is likely to serve to an extent that is not conducive to anything other than car borne customers, contrary to the aims of PPG13 and PPS1 . Furthermore, the proposed orientation and siting of the building at the rear of the site is such that it introduces a further barrier to non-car users by producing an avoidable conflict with cars entering exiting and circulating the proposed car park contrary to saved policy G1 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan.

SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Review of proposed Food Superstores,
Amesbury
January 2008

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Signed:

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 GVA Grimley was instructed in October 2007 to carry out an independent review of two proposals for food superstores in Amesbury.
- 1.2 In accordance with our terms of reference, we are instructed to review the retail policy issues raised by these proposals, based on the information submitted by the Applicants and drawing on the Salisbury Retail and Leisure Needs Study (RLNS) 2006 undertaken by GVA Grimley on behalf of the District Council.
- 1.3 We have not reviewed other planning policy issues raised by the proposals, such as design, access, highways and employment land; nor have we considered the weight which the District Council may wish to attach to other material considerations in determining the proposals.
- 1.4 This report is structured as follows:-
- In the next section we consider the scale and form of retail floorspace proposed.
 - In Section 3 we summarise the key policy tests which the proposals are required to meet.
 - In Section 4 we review the proposals against the key policy tests.
 - In Section 5 we summarise our initial conclusions and recommendations.

2. THE PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Both proposals are for the development of food superstores with associated parking on sites outside Amesbury Town Centre.
- 2.2 The proposed Tesco store is on a site on the northern edge of Amesbury on the London Road. The proposal is for a food superstore with a gross floorspace of 5,564sq.m, estimated to comprise 1,950sq.m net convenience goods sales and 1,022sq.m net comparison goods sales floorspace. The store is to be served by circa 358 car parking spaces.
- 2.3 The Asda proposals are for the development of a food superstore on Plot C1, Solstice Park. The proposed store comprises circa 6,131sq.m gross, and is estimated to comprise circa 2,415sq.m net convenience goods sales floorspace and 929sq.m net comparison goods sales floorspace. The Asda store is to be served by circa 360 car parking spaces.
- 2.4 Based on the information provided, the Asda store would comprise more convenience goods sales floorspace than the Tesco and is larger overall in terms of net sales (3,344sq.m net compared with 2,972sq.m net). However, it is not clear whether these figures are intended to be restricted by way of planning condition. This would need to be established with the Applicants before any weight could be attached to the difference in net sales floorspace/composition between the schemes.
- 2.5 It remains to be seen whether in the light of the recommendations of the competition commission the forthcoming revised national policy statement on planning for town centres (PPS6) will place more significance on competition, and suggest more weight may be given to the identity of potential operators. In this case neither retailer is currently represented in Amesbury, and therefore either proposal would provide choice and competition to the existing retail offer (notably Co-op). Both are successful retailers and either store would be likely to trade well.
- 2.6 Given that Tesco is already represented in Salisbury, and is one of the stores currently serving the Amesbury area, there may be some differences between the trading patterns of the two proposals. In particular a new Tesco of the size proposed in Amesbury would be likely to retain a higher proportion of trade currently lost to Tesco in Salisbury. Conversely, Asda which is not currently represented in the area, may potentially attract trade from further afield, and be capable of attracting trade from the Salisbury catchment.

- 2.7 However, in terms of the key planning issues i.e. need and impact on Amesbury, the consequences of these differences are unlikely to be significant. Therefore leaving aside any significant differences between the proposals in terms of their net sales floorspace and food/non-food split, we would not recommend that the Council attaches any particular significance in planning terms to the identity of the operator. We consider that the proposals raise similar retail planning issues, which we review in the following sections.

3. KEY POLICY TESTS

3.1 Relevant policy guidance is set out in PPS6, published in 2005. The Government indicated its intention to issue a revised policy statement on retailing and town centres during 2007, although this appears to have been delayed pending the conclusions of the ongoing Competition Commission.

3.2 Paragraph 3.4 of PPS6 sets out the key policy requirements. Applicants are required to demonstrate:

- the need for the development;
- that the development is of an appropriate scale;
- that there are no more central sites for the development;
- that there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres; and
- that locations are accessible.

3.3 The guidance indicates that as a general rule, new developments should satisfy all the key policy tests and in reaching a decision Local Planning Authorities should also consider relevant local issues and other material considerations. The guidance indicates at paragraph 3.7 that the level of detail and type of evidence and analysis required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.

3.4 We expand on the key tests below.

Assessing Need

3.5 Both proposals are appropriately defined as 'out of centre' in policy terms, and as such paragraph 3.9 indicates that need must be demonstrated where such proposals are not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy.

3.6 The guidance indicates that wherever possible, quantitative need assessments should be based on the assessment carried out for the development plan document, updated as required, and should relate to the class of goods to be sold from the development. The guidance indicates that local planning authorities should also consider whether there are qualitative considerations that might provide additional justification for the development.

Securing the Appropriate Scale of Development

- 3.7 The guidance indicates that an indicative upper limit for the scale of development which is likely to be acceptable in particular centres may be set out in development plan documents. Where this is not the case, or where a development plan document is out of date, the guidance indicates the factors to be considered in determining the appropriate scale of development include the role and function of the centre within the wider hierarchy and catchment served.

Sequential Approach

- 3.8 Paragraph 3.13 indicates the sequential approach should be applied to all development proposals for sites that are not in an existing centre or allocated in an up to date development plan document. The relevant centres in which to search for sites will depend on the overall strategy in the development plan, the nature and scale of the development, and the catchment which it seeks to serve. In this case the main focus of search would be Amesbury Town Centre.
- 3.9 In applying the sequential approach, developers and operators should be able to demonstrate that they have been flexible about their proposed business model in terms of its scale, format, car parking provision and scope for disaggregation. Local Authorities should be realistic in considering whether sites are suitable, viable, and available, and take into account genuine difficulties which the Applicant can demonstrate are likely to occur in operating its business model from the sequentially preferable site.
- 3.10 For retail proposals in out of centre locations which comprise a group of retail units, Applicants should consider the degree to which the constituent units within the proposal could be accommodated on more centrally located sites. A single retailer should not be expected to split their proposed development into separate sites where flexibility and the scope for disaggregation have been demonstrated. Where it is argued that sequentially preferable sites are not appropriate, Applicants should provide clear evidence in terms of availability, suitability and viability.
- 3.11 In this case the retailers have a clearly defined business model i.e. a large foodstore, which has certain operational requirements in terms of servicing and parking requirements. If there is a proven need for a large foodstore, we consider it is legitimate to confine the search for alternative sites to those sites which are genuinely suitable, viable and available to meet these requirements, subject to the policy requirements to demonstrate flexibility.

- 3.12 Both assessments give some consideration to the availability of alternative sites within and on the edge of Amesbury Town Centre. Both assessments conclude that the sites are appropriately defined as out-of-centre in policy terms, and that if the need for a large modern food superstore is accepted, there are no alternative town centre or edge of centre sites which could be regarded as being suitable, viable or available within a reasonable timescale on which such a need could be accommodated.

Impact

- 3.13 PPS6 (Paragraph 3.20) requires impact assessments to be undertaken for any application for retail use in an out of centre location which is not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy. Such assessments should have regard to, inter alia:

- the extent to which the development would put at risk a strategy for the area or town centre;
- the effect on future public or private sector investment needed to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre;
- the impact on the trade/turnover and vitality and viability of existing centres; and
- the impact on vacant properties in the primary shopping area.

- 3.14 The guidance indicates the level and type of evidence and analysis required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Impact assessments should be provided for all retail and leisure developments over 2,500 sq.m gross but may occasionally be necessary for smaller developments such as those likely to have a significant impact on smaller centres, depending on the relative size and nature of the development in relation to the centre. Clearly both proposals require proper consideration of impact issues.

Accessibility

- 3.15 PPS6 requires that when considering new developments, local authorities should consider accessibility by a choice of means of transport including public transport, walking, cycling and the car. Local authorities should consider the distance of proposed developments from existing or proposed public transport facilities and the frequency/capacity of services and whether access is easy, safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people. Local planning authorities should assess the extent to which developers have tailored their approach to meet the Government's objectives, for example through the preparation of

accessibility analysis, transport assessments, travel plans and the promotion of opportunities to reduce car journeys.

- 3.16 Local planning authorities should also consider whether the proposal would have an impact on the overall distance travelled by car.

Other Material Considerations

- 3.17 Local Authorities may take into account other considerations including physical regeneration, employment, economic growth and social inclusion.

Conditions

- 3.18 PPS6 advises that local planning authorities should consider using planning conditions to ensure the character of a development cannot subsequently be changed to create a form of development that the local planning authority would originally have refused. PPS6 advises that where appropriate, conditions should be used to:-

- Prevent developments from being subdivided into a large number of smaller shops or units;
- Ensure that ancillary elements remain ancillary to the main development;
- Limit any internal alterations to increase the amount of gross floorspace by specifying the maximum floorspace permitted (including for example the addition of mezzanine floors); and
- Limit the range of goods sold and control the mix of convenience and comparison goods.

- 3.19 No specific conditions are proposed in the respective Applicants' retail assessments. However, a breakdown of net sales floorspace, and convenience/comparison goods floorspace has been used in order to assess the proposals, and in the event that planning permission was granted for a food superstore we would recommend that consideration is given to the use of conditions to this effect.

4. REVIEW OF THE PROPOSALS

4.1 As both proposals involve a foodstore located on an out-of-centre site, both Applicants acknowledge the policy requirement to demonstrate need for the scale and form of development proposed; that a sequential approach has been taken to site selection, having regard to the requirements for flexibility etc, and that careful consideration has been given to impact. The policy also requires consideration of accessibility, together with other planning considerations, including where relevant the loss of employment sites.

(i) Need

4.2 Both proposals are supported by retail/planning statements. Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) has undertaken a planning statement on behalf of Asda Stores Ltd dated October 2007, which considers issues of need, alternative sites and impact. GL Hearn (GLH) has undertaken a similar assessment on behalf of the proposed Tesco store, and its report dated 10th September also considers matters of need, scale, the sequential approach and impact.

4.3 Both assessments draw on the RLNS, and conclude that this study understates the capacity for additional convenience retailing in Amesbury Town Centre. The JLL assessment concludes that the study understates capacity on the basis of an error in the level of commitments incorporated in Amesbury. The GLH assessment draws similar conclusions, and concludes that after accounting for this error there is some additional capacity arising in Amesbury based on current market shares. Both Applicants assume that the former Co-op store would not be reoccupied by another convenience goods retailer.

4.4 We have reviewed the Amesbury convenience capacity modelling set out in the RLNS, and have identified two errors in the analysis. First, the inclusion of an erroneous market share in the capacity analysis for Amesbury appears to have led to an overestimate of its convenience goods turnover. The RLNS identifies a 2006 turnover of circa £18.2m rising £19.6m in 2011. Based on the correct survey data, we estimate that these figures should be £14.4m and £15.6m respectively, suggesting the study significantly overstates the potential available turnover in Amesbury based on the survey used at the time.

4.5 The second issue which warrants clarification is the deductions to allow for committed floorspace. The RLNS makes an allowance of £13m for committed floorspace, which appears to include an arithmetical error which overstates the potential turnover of commitments. The

only Amesbury commitment identified at the time was the new Co-op store estimated at 1,395sq.m net additional convenience goods floorspace, which at the Co-op company average turnover equates to a turnover of circa £7.3m. On this basis, employing the correct convenience turnover for Amesbury at 2011, of £15.6m, and taking benchmark sales of existing floorspace at circa £7.9m generates a notional surplus of £7.7m.

- 4.6 On this basis, taking the average turnover of the new Co-op store at circa £7.3m, if this store was in addition to the full reoccupation of the former Co-op store for convenience retailing, by a retailer with a similar turnover, it would largely accommodate the identified capacity. If the former Co-op store was only part reoccupied by a convenience goods retailer, this would generate a notional capacity of circa £3.1m of convenience goods expenditure by 2011 i.e. sufficient to accommodate the likely turnover of a discount foodstore in addition to the part reoccupation of the Co-op unit.
- 4.7 It is evident based on our reworking of the RLNS figures that there is some identified capacity for additional convenience goods shopping floorspace in Amesbury based on current market shares. The scale of capacity depends on the future of the former Co-op store. However, it is equally evident that while the level of capacity identified could accommodate another small supermarket/discount foodstore (subject to the future of the former Co-op unit), it would not support a new food superstore with a convenience goods turnover estimated by JLL on behalf of Asda at £37.1 and by GLH on behalf of Tesco at circa £27.5m.
- 4.8 In order to support this scale of additional floorspace, both proposals therefore rely on a significant increase in market share. Clearly there is no reason why Amesbury cannot or should not seek to increase its market share – the key issue is the impact arising from a larger store outside the town centre on the vitality and viability of the town centre. JLL, on behalf of Asda, has undertaken a 'ring fenced' capacity exercise which compares the likely turnover of existing convenience goods shopping facilities within the Amesbury catchment (using a notional 'benchmark' turnover) with total available expenditure within this area to suggest capacity of circa £74.1m of convenience goods expenditure within this area by 2011.
- 4.9 This is acknowledged to be a relatively crude exercise, and it is clearly unrealistic to expect Amesbury to retain all of the available expenditure generated within this area. However, we acknowledge that a large food superstore as proposed by Asda would be capable of increasing Amesbury's market share within this area. The issue, as identified in the RLNS, is the impact of such a development on Amesbury Town Centre.
- 4.10 GLH, on behalf of Tesco, also rely on a significant increase in market share in order to generate capacity. Unlike JLL, they have carried out their own independent household

interview survey and undertaken a more detailed assessment of current shopping patterns. This suggests that following the opening of the replacement Co-op store Amesbury's market share has apparently fallen (although the difference identified could readily be accounted for by the margins of error inherent in such surveys). GLH highlight they have employed a larger sample size than the survey which underpin the RLNS, and in our view any difference between the market shares is more likely to be accounted for by this factor than any actual decline in Amesbury following the opening of the replacement store.

- 4.11 On the basis of their more detailed analysis using the new survey data, GLH identify residual capacity in Amesbury in 2007 of circa £5.16m of convenience goods expenditure. This assumes no replacement convenience store for the former Co-op, which would go some way to meeting the identified capacity. On this basis, the revised GLH assessment broadly concurs with our own reworked capacity assessment i.e. that at constant market shares there is limited capacity of further convenience goods floorspace in Amesbury, if the former Co-op store were to be reoccupied by an alternative convenience operator.
- 4.12 GLH argue that it is inappropriate to assess capacity based solely on Amesbury's current, low market share, and has reworked its assessment on the assumption that Amesbury attracts 75% of available expenditure within core Zone 1. GLH assume that overall, Amesbury would be able to increase its market share from 22% to 48% of available convenience goods expenditure within the catchment area. On this basis, GLH identifies there would be residual convenience expenditure of circa £25.6m at 2009 which would be sufficient to support the estimated convenience goods turnover of the proposed Tesco store.
- 4.13 Of the two assessments, we consider the GLH approach employs a more robust methodology and is underpinned by a more detailed household interview survey. However, in essence, both assessments are based on the assumption that Amesbury is able to achieve a significant increase in market share as a consequence of the development of a new large food superstore as proposed. We do not dispute this conclusion. It is evident that the RLNS itself identifies that a large modern food superstore in Amesbury would be capable of achieving a significant increase in market share, by clawing back expenditure lost to competing food superstores in Salisbury and elsewhere.
- 4.14 It is also evident that in the absence of any alternative option, a large modern foodstore would provide additional choice and competition to the Co-op in Amesbury Town Centre and by reducing the need to travel for main food shopping, would be likely to reduce overall travel demand and achieve a more sustainable shopping pattern. In this respect the potential benefits of the proposals are not disputed. However, these benefits have to be considered

against any alternative options and the impact of the proposals on Amesbury Town Centre, which we consider later.

(ii) Sequential Site Assessments

- 4.15 We concur with the Applicants that if it is accepted that there is a need for a food superstore in Amesbury, of the size proposed, there is no sequentially preferable site within or on the edge of the centre. However, it is evident that neither applicant has thoroughly examined the potential for redevelopment of the former Co-op store. We understand that to date this has been marketed on the basis of a partial reoccupation by a convenience store, but the option of more comprehensive redevelopment has not been discounted. We consider the future of the former Co-op store has a bearing on the need and impact issues raised by the food superstore proposals, which we consider later.

(iii) Impact

- 4.16 The RLNS study concluded a broadbrush assessment of the impact of a new food superstore in Amesbury. The study considers two scenarios – a 1,800 sq.m net store and a 2,500 sq.m net store and indicates impacts ranging from 33% to 37% depending on the size of the store. The convenience goods floorspace component of both proposals falls within the range assessed in the RLNS.
- 4.17 The RLNS did not specifically consider the impact of the non-food element of any new food superstore. The main focus of the study was on the convenience goods impact, bearing in mind the key role which the convenience goods sector performs in underpinning the vitality and viability of Amesbury.
- 4.18 The impact assessment included within the RLNS incorporated the assumption that the convenience goods turnover of Amesbury Town Centre at 2011 would be circa £19.6m, which for the reasons outlined above represents an overestimate of the centre's turnover. Accounting for the error identified in the market shares used in the RLNS, the indicated convenience goods turnover of Amesbury is more likely to be in the order of circa £15m (as estimated by GLH on behalf of Tesco), based on a more up-to-date household survey which incorporates the opening of the replacement Co-op store.
- 4.19 GLH estimate the convenience goods turnover of the proposed Tesco would be £27.5m of which circa £5m, or 18% of the store's turnover, would be diverted from existing convenience retailers in Amesbury. Using GLH's assumption of Amesbury's current convenience goods

turnover of £15.31, this represents an impact of circa 33% on the town's convenience sector, with the assumption that most impact could fall on the Co-op. While significant, GLH highlight that at this level the new Co-op store in the town centre would still be expected to trade above its company average level.

- 4.20 JLL, on behalf of Asda, identify the store's convenience turnover at £37.2m i.e. nearly £10m more than the proposed Tesco. This reflects the higher convenience goods sales floorspace in the proposed Asda, and the higher turnover per sq.m figure employed. JLL estimate that £7.3m of the proposed store's turnover (just under 20%) would be diverted from convenience goods retailers in Amesbury. Using the RLNS estimate of Amesbury's turnover at £19.7m JLL estimate the Asda would have a 37% impact on Amesbury's convenience goods retailers. Using the more up-to-date GLH estimate of Amesbury's turnover at £15.3m, at the same level of trade diversion used by JLL the implied impact on Amesbury's convenience goods sector would be considerably higher, at circa 48%.
- 4.21 In practice notwithstanding the difference between the proposals in terms of net convenience goods sales area and sales per sq.m assumptions, assuming the more up-to-date turnover estimate for Amesbury represents the best available figure, we would expect either proposal to have an impact of circa 40% or more on the convenience goods sector of Amesbury. We anticipate the impact on Amesbury's non-food sector would be less significant, given the limited non-food offer of the town at present.
- 4.22 As identified in the RLNS, we consider at these levels of impact there would be a concern in respect of the overall vitality and viability of Amesbury Town Centre arising as a consequence of the impact on the main anchor store and on linked trips generated by this store to other local facilities which would be likely to be provided in a large food superstore. Most of the direct impact of a new out of centre superstore would fall on the Co-op, and this store is unlikely to close even at the levels predicted.
- 4.23 However, there would be a wider impact on other convenience retailers, both as a consequence of the direct effect of the 'instore' facilities to be provided (e.g. bakery, wet fish, butchers etc.) and the indirect effect of lost linked trips arising from the impact on Co-op.

(iv) Other Retail Considerations

- 4.24 We concur with both Applicants that even as a consequence of the levels of impact predicted, the new Co-op in Amesbury could continue to trade at or around its company average. We would not anticipate this store's closure as a consequence of the levels of impact predicted. However, we consider at the levels of impact predicted there would be a significant adverse

effect on Amesbury's vitality and viability, reducing the overall vitality and viability of the centre and leading to a broad impact on a range of other convenience retailers and services in the town which would be likely to be replicated at a large out-of-centre food superstore.

- 4.25 We have previously recommended that the Council investigates the prospects of a replacement foodstore operator taking the former Co-op unit. While this would not accommodate a superstore of the size proposed by the Applicants, the potential to accommodate a supermarket by redevelopment of the store and adjoining car park has not been ruled out. If this was a realistic option, it would be necessary to consider the additional implications of the food superstore proposals on this option, and the extent to which this would help to meet identified needs and provide further choice and competition.
- 4.26 The provision of another foodstore operator in the town centre, potentially occupied by a discount food retailer or a quality supermarket, would clearly have an impact on the current turnover of Co-op, and as a consequence the cumulative impact of a large out-of-centre food superstore on the viability of this unit would be more significant.
- 4.27 In the event that there is a realistic option to secure another supermarket in Amesbury Town Centre, to provide additional choice and competition to the Co-op, it would also be relevant to consider what if any risk a large out-of-centre food superstore would pose to securing such investment. In these circumstances we consider both the Applicants and, if necessary, the Council should investigate the future of this unit further before determining the current out-of-centre proposals.
- 4.28 On a related point, we have previously advised the Council in respect of proposals by Lidl for a discount foodstore outside Amesbury Town Centre. We concluded that there is likely to be capacity for this scale of additional convenience retailing in Amesbury, and that this type of development would provide a qualitatively different offer and would not give rise to the levels of impact and concerns which we have highlighted in the case of the current proposals. However, given the potential of the former Co-op store to accommodate this capacity we, advised that the Council should explore the availability of the former Co-op store before determining the Lidl proposals.
- 4.29 If following these investigations the Council concludes that the Lidl proposals are acceptable and resolves to grant planning permission for this development, it will be necessary to consider the cumulative impact of these proposals and the large food superstore proposals currently before the Council. At the levels of impact predicted in the case of the current food superstore proposals, if these levels of impact were over and above the more modest impact of a discount food operator our concerns would be compounded.

- 4.30 Given the importance of this issue, we recommend that the Council should investigate with the Co-op the current situation regarding the availability of this unit, and establish whether there is any realistic prospect of reoccupation of the entire unit and/or redevelopment of a larger site to accommodate a new foodstore capable of making a significant contribution to meeting the identified quantitative capacity and qualitative needs in the area.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The current proposals by Tesco and Asda are for large out-of-centre food superstores selling a mix of convenience and comparison goods.
- 5.2 We have reworked the retail capacity analysis undertaken as part of the RLNS. At current market shares we conclude that there is some modest quantitative capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace in Amesbury, although this identified capacity would not come close to supporting the scale of additional convenience goods floorspace included in the current proposals. Depending on the future of the former Co-op store in the town centre, there may be capacity to support a more modest supermarket or discount foodstore based on constant market shares,
- 5.3 A new large food superstore, as proposed by Tesco and Asda, is potentially supportable based on a significant increase in Amesbury's market share. Consistent with our conclusions in the RLNS, we are satisfied that either proposal would be capable of increasing the level of trade retention in Amesbury, and would trade successfully. We have also previously acknowledged that a new large foodstore would provide additional choice and competition to the existing retail offer, and by reducing the need to travel would lead to potentially more sustainable shopping patterns.
- 5.4 There is no reason why Amesbury Town Centre cannot and should not aspire to increase its market share. However, we have highlighted that a large food superstore outside the town centre would be likely to lead to a significant impact on the vitality and viability of Amesbury Town Centre. It is also necessary to thoroughly examine whether there are any more central opportunities in Amesbury Town Centre which could contribute to meeting an identified need.
- 5.5 Depending on the future of the former Co-op store in Amesbury Town Centre, and the Council's determination of the current application for a discount foodstore submitted by Lidl on land at London Road, these proposals would be likely to address the modest capacity identified based on Amesbury's current market share and provide additional choice competition to the Co-op store. Clearly in policy terms a replacement foodstore in the former Co-op unit will be the preferred option and would contribute to meeting identified needs. If this option is not available, permitting an out-of-centre discount foodstore may be acceptable in policy terms, and would provide for additional choice and competition without leading to a significant impact on Amesbury Town Centre.

- 5.6 Tesco and Asda estimate the impact of their proposals on the convenience goods sector of Amesbury at between 33% - 37%. Based on the most up-to-date estimate of Amesbury's current turnover, estimated by Tesco at £15.3m, the impact of the Asda store would be significantly higher, i.e. well in excess of 40% on the basis that this proposal incorporates a higher proportion of convenience goods floorspace and Asda have assumed a higher store turnover. In practice we consider the impact of either store will be likely to be circa 35-40% but could be higher.
- 5.7 At these levels of impact, we anticipate the new Co-op store in Amesbury Town Centre would still be likely to trade at or about company average and we would not expect this store to be at risk of closure. Clearly the cumulative impact of one or both of the current proposals, in addition to a replacement foodstore in the former Co-op unit (and/or a discount retailer such as Lidl located outside the town centre) would lead to a much more pronounced impact on this store, although in our experience it is still unlikely that it would be vulnerable to closure.
- 5.8 However, we remain concerned that the impact of either proposal on Amesbury's convenience retail sector would be significant, and that the consequences of a large full line superstore would be a more broad based impact on both the Co-op store and other local retailers who are likely to benefit from linked trips generated by this town centre 'anchor'. In contrast to the more modest impact of a discount food retailer, as previously advised, either of the large food superstore proposals would be likely to include a range of in-store facilities and to largely replicate the every day convenience and services offer of Amesbury Town Centre.
- 5.9 We acknowledge that these concerns need to be balanced against the additional choice and competition and more sustainable shopping patterns which could be achieved by one of the current proposals. In our view in purely retail planning terms we consider the potential harm to Amesbury Town Centre would outweigh these benefits, although we recognise this is essentially a planning judgement which officers and members of the Council need to reach.
- 5.10 However, we would strongly recommend that further investigations are made to establish the future of the former Co-op unit in the town centre, and that any consideration of the current food superstore proposals also needs to have regard to the Council's position on the other discount foodstore proposals in Amesbury. The Council should carefully consider the opportunities to accommodate further convenience retailing in the town centre, and to have regard to the potential cumulative impact of the current proposals and any other proposals before the Council at the current time.
- 5.11 In the event that the Council decides to support a large food superstore in Amesbury, we do not consider there is any clear retail planning basis to differentiate between the two sites or

operators, although the Asda proposals are indicated as having a significantly higher convenience impact. We have not considered other planning policy considerations or material considerations which may have a bearing on the decision of the Council.

- 5.12 In the event that the Council resolves to approve a new food superstore in Amesbury, we recommend that the Council determines which proposal it is minded to support, and the planning grounds for doing so, and explores the use of planning conditions governing the size/mix of store, range of in-store facilities etc. to minimise impact on Amesbury Town Centre.

Appendix 2

CJBG/smr/02A729630

13 March 2008

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DRAFT

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Dear Sarah

AMESBURY – SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE ON RETAIL MATTERS

Further to our review of the proposed Lidl Foodstore dated November 2007, and subsequent review of the Tesco/Asda Food Superstore proposals which we completed in January 2008 you have requested our supplementary views on a number of further matters which have arisen since then, in order to inform your recommendation and deliberations in respect of the current Amesbury proposals.

Specifically, you have requested clarification of the implications of the current application received to redevelop the former Co-op Store in Amesbury Town Centre, which we understand is to comprise a development of a new foodstore for Sainsbury's comprising 3,082 sq.m gross (1,858 sq.m net), and the deliverability of this option. You also requested clarification of the cumulative effects of the Council permitting all or a combination of the current out of centre proposals and, in the event that the Council resolved to approve more than one of the current out of centre stores and these were not 'called in', the probability of two stores actually being built.

The context for this advice is well rehearsed and on the basis of our review of the various Applicants' supporting statements, there is a degree of consensus emerging in respect of the baseline and impact issues emerging to date. Specifically, it is broadly common ground that the new Co-Op Store in Amesbury is trading very strongly and on current market shares there is expenditure capacity for reoccupation of the former Co-Op Store if this was a viable/available option.

We have previously concluded that if this store is only partially reoccupied by a smaller convenience operator or a retailer achieving a low turnover there is likely to be sufficient capacity based on constant market shares for a discount foodstore type operation such as Lidl in the Amesbury area, and have concluded that the impact of such a store is unlikely to materially affect the vitality and viability of Amesbury. If the former Co-Op Store was to be reoccupied or redeveloped for a similar size store capable of accommodating the requirements of a discount type food operator, this would go some way to meeting an identified need and provide choice/competition to the Co-op within the town centre, which is the preferred option in national policy terms.

As far as the current proposals for large out-of-centre food superstores are concerned, it is common ground that a store of this size is not supportable based on Amesbury's current market share, but there is a realistic expectation of a new large food superstore being able to increase the amount of trade retained in the Amesbury area, with the attendant benefits of increased choice/competition. The issue is the impact of such a development and, in the light of the latest proposals for the former Co-Op Store, whether a large quality foodstore could be accommodated in the town centre in line with policy guidance.

In common with the Applicants, we estimate the impact of a large food superstore outside Amesbury is likely to be circa 40% although the estimates vary depending on the turnover of the new store, the assumed turnover of the existing retailers in Amesbury and detailed trading assumptions. Assuming the impact of a single store is of this order of magnitude, our overall conclusion is that such a development would lead to a significant adverse impact on Amesbury Town Centre, but would be unlikely in itself to lead to the closure of the Co-Op Store. Failure to do so would potentially leave a decision to allow an out-of-centre proposal open to a 'call in' by the Secretary of State.

It follows from our analysis that in order to reach a decision on the current out-of-centre proposals, the Council needs to consider carefully the suitability, viability and availability of the former Co-Op Store and potentially adjoining properties and the potential to contribute to meeting identified needs within Amesbury Town Centre in accordance with national planning policy guidance. There is a clear requirement for both the Applicants promoting out-of-centre stores, and the Council to consider carefully the potential of this option before supporting less central options.

To date, there appears to have been little progress made towards securing a replacement convenience operator for the former Co-Op Store. We understand the original intention was to subdivide the unit and secure a replacement convenience operator for part of the unit which for the reasons outlined above would in our view still leave some surplus capacity even based on Amesbury's current market share, and would not provide effective choice and competition to the new Co-Op Store. There have been discussions between the Co-Op and Aldi in respect of the potential reoccupation of this unit for a discount foodstore. More recently an application has been submitted for a foodstore comprising 1,858 sq.m net sales floorspace, which would be likely to comprise circa 1,600 sq.m net convenience goods floorspace. We understand that this proposal would involve the acquisition of adjoining land, including a Council owned car park although we do not have full details of the proposals.

We have previously advised that the Council needs to have thoroughly examined the potential of this town centre opportunity to accommodate a replacement foodstore, or redevelopment for a larger store, before supporting any of the current out-of-centre proposals. We have reviewed the comments submitted by Lidl dated 8th February 2008 and the previous comments of Atisreal which consider the suitability, viability and availability of this unit for their requirements, and their views on the likelihood of the reoccupation of the unit by Aldi, or redevelopment for Sainsbury's. We understand that indications have been given by Co-Op at the unit and/or site could be available for an alternative convenience retail occupier, although from the evidence available to us there appears to be a significant degree of uncertainty as to the genuine availability and suitability of this unit for a discount foodstore.

In our view the examples provided elsewhere where the Co-Op appears to have sought to oppose the development of competing foodstores in similar situations, and the apparent contradictory evidence as to its intentions for the Amesbury Store do not in themselves justify discounting this option at the current time. However, we consider the Council needs

to seek a clear commitment from the Co-Op as to its intentions for this unit in order to reach a decision as to whether this unit or wider site is likely to be suitable, viable and available to either an alternative discount foodstore, or to a larger quality supermarket, before it is able to support any of the current out-of-centre proposals.

If, on further investigation, the Council concludes that the former Co-Op Store would be suitable, viable and available for occupation by Aldi or another alternative discount foodstore this would meet the qualitative need for choice and competition and provide the benefits of a discount foodstore identified by Lidl. It would also go some way to meeting the identified capacity in Amesbury, based on current market shares, and reduce the level of over trading in the new Co-Op Store. In these circumstances, we consider the case for supporting an out-of-centre discount foodstore as proposed by Lidl would be significantly reduced.

In the case of a proposal for redevelopment of the former Co-Op Store, as part of a larger scheme to provide a store to accommodate a Sainsbury's, we have reviewed the comments of Atisreal in their letter dated 19th February 2008 and concur with their conclusion that, if viable, such a store would be likely to increase Amesbury's market share by changing the perception of Amesbury and providing a significant quantitative and qualitative improvement in the town's retail offer. This would substantially address the overtrading of the new Co-Op Store, but would be unlikely to seriously undermine its vitality and viability. The overall consequence of this option, if the Sainsbury's proposals are concluded to be suitable, viable and available, would be to provide materially improved convenience shopping facilities in Amesbury Town Centre, provide choice and competition, and to help to claw back into the town centre trade lost to competing large foodstores.

Subject to the realism of this option, and the Council's satisfying itself that it could genuinely be regarded as suitable, viable and available, we consider that such an option would largely meet a quantitative and qualitative need in Amesbury, and would materially reduce the justification for supporting any further out-of-centre convenience shopping provision in the area, in the current time. We are not able to comment on the realism of this option without undertaking a detailed audit of the planning/highways issues involved and the owners/developers/retailers intentions and commitments. However, such a proposal would inevitably be complex and problematical in planning/implementation terms.

While we consider the potential redevelopment of the former Co-Op Store for a Sainsbury's supermarket would meet an identified need, this option would still potentially leave a role for a discount foodstore operator in Amesbury. The Sainsbury's proposals would meet any identified quantitative need, but we acknowledge that a discount foodstore would provide additional choice and would to some extent be complementary to the roles of the new Co-Op and a new Sainsbury's store. In the context of the likely performance of the town centre Co-Op and new Sainsbury's store in this scenario, we consider the impact of an out-of-centre discount superstore as proposed by Lidl would be unlikely in itself to seriously undermine the viability of either store.

In the context of the significant improvement to the performance of the town centre as a whole, we consider the impact of the proposal would be relatively modest.

In the case of the current out-of-centre food superstore proposals, submitted by Tesco and Asda, we have previously advised that the impact of either proposal is likely to be in the region of 40% on the convenience retail sector of Amesbury Town Centre. At these levels of impact, we anticipate that the new Co-Op Store in the town centre would still be likely to trade at or about company average and would not expect the store to close, although we still remain concerned about the consequence of this level of impact for the vitality and viability

of Amesbury Town Centre. The consequence of the partial or total reoccupation of the former Co-Op unit in Amesbury Town Centre would be to reduce, to some extent, the current strong turnover of the Co-Op Store and as a consequence the impact of a large out-of-town centre on this town centre anchor store would be more pronounced although we still anticipate the store would be unlikely to close or be seriously affected in these circumstances.

In the event that the proposal to redevelop the former Co-Op Store to provide a larger unit for a quality foodstore operator like Sainsbury's was approved and implemented, for reasons outlined previously we consider this option would meet the quantitative and qualitative need and would be likely to secure an increase in market share and claw back trade into Amesbury Town Centre in line with national policy guidance. In these circumstances, the policy justification for supporting an out-of-centre large new superstore would be significantly diminished, based on the absence of need and the potential availability of a sequentially preferable site.

We also consider that in the event that the Council concludes the 'Sainsbury's' proposal can be regarded as suitable, viable and available, there must be a significant prospect that the grant of planning permission for a large out-of-centre superstore would be likely to prejudice this investment. We consider that it is extremely unlikely that a retailer like Sainsbury's would be prepared to commit to this development with the prospect of a large out-of-centre food superstore remaining. The prospect of prejudice to such a significant new town centre investment would further undermine the case for an out-of-centre food superstore in this scenario.

Finally, we have been asked to consider the issue of cumulative impact, and implications of the Council deciding to permit more than one of the current out-of-centre foodstore proposals. For reasons outlined above, we consider it is impossible to divorce this issue from the question of the potential re-occupation or redevelopment of the former Co-Op Store as this fundamentally affects the need and policy justification for any out-of-centre store, and also has a material bearing on the impact arguments.

If the Council concludes that there are no realistic options for re-occupation of the former Co-Op Store in its entirety, or redevelopment for a larger foodstore, we consider the impact of an out-of-centre discount foodstore as proposed by Lidl would be relatively insignificant. The Co-Op Store would be likely to continue to trade above average and the impact on other convenience retailers in the centre would be extremely limited. The impact of a large out-of-centre food superstore, as proposed by Tesco and Asda, would be circa 40%, and while the new Co-Op Store would still be likely to trade at or above company average in this scenario we consider the level of impact would be likely to lead to a pronounced adverse affect on Amesbury's vitality and viability.

We have not previously considered the cumulative impact of permitting both large out-of-centre food superstore proposals, and/or the Lidl proposal. Dealing first with the cumulative impact of allowing one out-of-centre foodstore and the Lidl proposals, this would clearly lead to a level of impact above the circa 40% projected in the case of the food superstore proposals alone. There would be some element of "mutual impact" between the new food superstore and discount foodstore and for the reasons outlined previously, we consider the impact of the discount foodstore itself is unlikely to be significant. If a non food superstore and discount foodstore were permitted and developed this would compound our concern about the overall impact on the convenience retail sector of Amesbury based on its current representation (i.e. the new Co-op store) and could prejudice securing new investment in a replacement operator or wider redevelopment of the former Co-Op Store (if this proves a realistic option).

If the Council was minded to approve both the current out-of-centre food superstore proposals, and assuming the applications were not "called in" and both operators proceeded to build and open new stores, there would be a significant "mutual impact" between the stores themselves. Both stores would be likely to trade significantly below the retailers normal expectations, and in practice in our view the prospects of both operators building and opening new stores in the circumstances would be remote. However, in the unlikely event of both proposals being permitted and not called in by the Secretary of State, and ultimately being built and occupied, their cumulative impact on Amesbury Town Centre would be significantly above the 40% figure estimated for a single store.

At this level of impact, we consider the impact on the Co-Op, and 'knock on' effects on other retailers in Amesbury would be very significant, and would be likely to seriously undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre. In these circumstances, if the Council was minded to support an out-of-centre superstore, we would strongly advise against resolving to permit both.

I trust this clarifies our advice on this issue, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you need to discuss.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

CHRIS GODDARD
Executive Director
For and On Behalf of GVA Grimley Ltd

22nd April 2008
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A Madge Esq
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Wiltshire,
SP1 3AH

Salisbury District Planning Department	
Rec. 23 APR 2008	
Acknowledged	-----
Copy to	-----
Action	----- <i>AM</i> -----

GL HEARN 

Dear Mr Madge,

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS ON BEHALF OF TESCO STORES LTD AND GREGORY
DISTRIBUTION LTD REFERENCE: S/2007/1865 & S/2008/572**

**Proposed Retail Store (Class A1 Use), Associated Car Parking, Landscaping,
Alterations to Access and Direction of Freestanding Wind Turbine on Land and
Buildings at 140 London Road, Amesbury, SP4 7EQ**

I refer to the helpful meeting with yourself and Sarah Hughes on 17th April 2008, when we discussed the above two planning applications, which you advised should be considered at the 8th May committee at the same time as the planning application for a Food Store submitted on behalf of Asda. You advised that you would need to complete your committee report by no later than the 25th April, hence I trust the timing of this letter is helpful, being in advance of that date.

In respect of both Tesco applications, which of course are essentially for the same development and supported by the same documents, it is helpful that there are no outstanding issues relating to the submitted Environmental Statement and there are no outstanding issues relating to matters of detailed design, layout or landscaping associated with the scheme.

I also confirm for the avoidance of doubt that the proposed Tesco Store would not include either a pharmacy or a post office and if you considered it necessary, we would have no objections to imposition of a condition to that effect.

Your email (18/04/08) asked for clarification on security measures for the car park. Tesco Stores Ltd has confirmed that there would be security at the site and they would provide measures to secure the car park if it is being abused out of opening hours. If it was considered necessary we would accept an appropriate planning condition.

While you have yet to complete your report to committee in respect of the two Tesco planning applications, you advise that there are two issues which lead you to recommend refusal and one other outstanding matter. The two issues are:

Retail impact on the town centre

Employment policy

The outstanding issue is the response of the County Highway Authority in respect of highway matters.

We discussed all three and I trust that my clarification was helpful and could lead you to reconsider in respect of retail impact and employment and that the expected response of the County Highway Authority will resolve the third issue.

RETAIL MATTERS

Retail Need

The retail planning context for consideration of the Tesco planning applications must now include the resolution by SDC to grant planning permission for the Lidl discount store on land at the Minton Distribution Park to the north east of the Tesco site. That resolution requires a prior Section 106 Agreement restricting the range and type of goods to a discount operation.

If the Section 106 Agreement is signed and the permission issued and if Lidl trade from this site, then SDC will have approved a discount store for Amesbury, but not addressed the fundamental retail need acknowledged by all parties, namely the need for a major food store to address significant leakage to other towns.

The Sequential Approach

The SDC decision, in respect of Lidl, has also removed the uncertainty about the availability of the town centre site, at the former Co-op store and adjoining land, including Salisbury District Council car park. That site is now not available. Aldi has confirmed that the approval for a Lidl at the Minton site means that they have withdrawn any interest in pursuing a discount store in the town centre within the former Co-op building, whether or not indeed this opportunity was, realistically, available to them.

The submitted planning application by Frobisher on behalf of J Sainsbury, in respect of a site including the former co-op store, SDC town centre car park and adjoining third party land is still unregistered and Frobisher have appealed against the SDC requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment. There is currently, therefore, no registered planning application in respect of a small food store in the town centre, but more importantly the letter from the Co-operative Group (CGP) to SDC 10th April 2008 confirms beyond doubt that the Frobisher scheme could not proceed as the Co-op land will not be made available. The statement from Ruairidh Jackson, Head of Planning and Property Strategy for CGP cannot be more clear:

"Finally, please also be aware that if Lidl is approved and Aldi withdraw the offer for our site, we will not remain willing to support the Frobisher scheme as a cumulative impact of both the Lidl and a new Sainsbury's on our store in the town centre is so high as to severely damage our interests".

At our meeting, Sarah Hughes referred to a SDC intention to promote an allocation for a food store within Amesbury town centre to include the former Co-op store site and the Council car park as part of the emerging LDF. Sarah advised that, that intention might be argued by SDC as indicating that a sequentially preferable site could be available when considering the Tesco applications. I repeat my concern about that approach and that any conclusion by SDC of such a future potential allocation could be argued, now, to demonstrate that this is realistically available, suitable and viable alternative site in the context of determinations by SDC of the Tesco scheme.

It would not be credible for SDC at a Committee in May 2008 (or even subsequently) to advance the argument that the town centre site comprising the Co-op store (not supported by the Co-op), a Council owned and well used car park and other third party land is a sequentially preferable site for a major food store to address the identified retail need, which would be satisfied by a Tesco food store.

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As recently as 10th April 2008, in determining the Lidl food store application for an out of centre site to the north east of the Tesco scheme, SDC determined that this town centre site was not a realistic option, i.e. not a realistic option in the context of a Lidl food store in out of centre location. There were no statements to members in April 2008 about a potential food store site being allocated in the town centre through the emerging LDF.

Notwithstanding the fact that this proposed town centre site would be of insufficient size to provide a food store of adequate scale to address the retail need, there is no certainty that a store of even a smaller scale would be approved, having regard to matters of detailed design, the Conservation Area context and highway/transportation issues. With the clear and unequivocal objection from the CGP, the major land owner involved, such a proposal would require the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers with no certainty of a CPO being successful. The SDC handling of the Lidl planning application, effectively allowing an out of centre discount store when the Co-op indicated they were willing to facilitate either a small supermarket or a discount store in the town centre would surely be a material consideration in a decision in respect of any CPO against the wishes of CGP.

In summary, if SDC were to advance the town centre Co-op/SDC car park/third party site as a sequentially preferable location in the context of the proposed Tesco store, any such judgement would be flawed and clearly contrary to the stance already taken by SDC in respect of the Lidl application.

Retail Impact

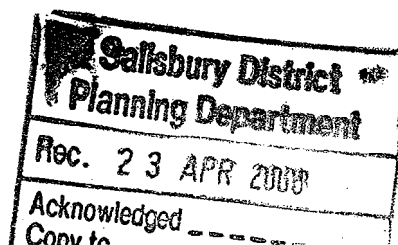
I appreciate that your "officer view" is informed by the GVA Grimley (GVAG) retail advice and I repeat my concern that you ensure members are provided with accurate advice in respect of all matters, including retail impact, if they wish to be informed on any differences between the Tesco and Asda schemes.

The GVAG advice to SDC January 2008 accepted the GL Hearn impact assessment of some 33% (32.5%) on the town's convenience sector (at 2009), with the assumption that most impact could fall on the Co-op. They also advised in the same report that the Asda stores convenience turnover would be nearly £10m more than the proposed Tesco, reflecting the higher convenience goods sales floor space in the proposed Asda. GVAG made their own assessment of impact for Asda, based on the more up to date GLH estimates of Amesbury's turnover, and concluded that the Asda impact on the Amesbury convenience goods sector would be considerably higher at some 48%.

The impact figure of 40% therefore that has been adopted by GVAG, and by SDC in the Lidl Committee report, represents an average of the two impact figures and should not be used as a figure to represent the likely impact of a Tesco store on Amesbury town centre convenience goods retailers. The correct figure accepted by GVAG is some 32.5% or as rounded by GVAG, 33%, at 2009.

It is accepted by GVAG, and all other parties in respect of these retail schemes, that the anticipated impact on Amesbury's non food sector (comparison goods) would be less significant given the limited non food offer of the town at present.

Following the SDC resolution to approve the Lidl food store, it is necessary to consider cumulative impact. The GVAG advice to the Council, accepted by SDC, is that the impact of the Lidl discount food store "on other convenience retailers in the centre would be extremely limited". On that basis, the cumulative impact of a Tesco food store and the Lidl store would be very little different to the assessed and agreed impact of the Tesco store alone, i.e. some 33%. Again it should be noted that the GVAG assessment of an Asda food store alone is some 48%.



We have consistently advised in respect of the Tesco proposal for Amesbury that SDC and Amesbury have a clear choice, either to accept some impact on Amesbury's town centre, but with the advantage of a modern food store in Amesbury, or accept the status quo. The overwhelming public response in respect of the food store applications is welcoming a new food store to address the leakage and provide Amesbury with the shopping provision it needs. Approving the Lidl discount store has not addressed this retail need and does not solve the problem. Rejecting a Tesco store will effectively maintain the status quo as there is no realistic prospect of the town centre site being made available for a food store, and even if it was, it would not be of sufficient scale to address the leakage i.e. to address the retail need.

SDC Committee Members should be prepared to take this important decision for Amesbury. Public preferences for one retailer over another must not be a material consideration and clearly the judgement by your Members will be on the basis of which site and scheme is acceptable. That should lead to approval of the Tesco scheme. It is accepted that there will be some impact on the town centre though GVAG confirm that it would not cause the closure of the existing Co-op store, even allowing for the Lidl proposal. The appropriate impact figure to consider (for convenience goods) is not 40%, but it is 32.5% in respect of Tesco and 48% in respect of Asda. There is a significant and material difference in impact on the town centre convenience goods turnover between the two proposals.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY E16

At our meeting I expressed my concern that your conclusions in respect of employment policy are clearly at odds with the interpretation of the same policy in the Committee report 10th April 2008 in respect of Lidl. You indicated that the use of the Gregory site and adjoining land for a food store would be contrary to your Policy E16 and hence a reason for refusal.

I referred you to the Committee report in respect of Lidl "Section 4 Employment Land", which concluded for an existing employment site, but which is not "allocated" as an employment site within the local plan (identical to the Tesco site) that:

"It is considered that the proposed development is an acceptable alternative employment use that provides a similar number and range of job opportunities".

As stated in the supporting documentation to the Tesco scheme, the new store will provide a new source of employment within Amesbury, with the provision of between 200-220 full time equivalent jobs, with usual employee numbers between 317-340 full and part time. We have also confirmed that the former Gregory Transport Depot, which comprises about half of the area of the application site, is an eyesore and is almost derelict and all existing commercial premises within the remainder of the site are being relocated to improved or purpose built premises nearby. The Great Western Ambulance Depot is due to be declared surplus for operational reasons and is to be relocated to new premises on Solstice Park.

Sarah Hughes also referred to employment land supply figures as a reason to refuse the application, on the basis that use of the site for a food store would thereby require additional new employment land. Such an objection is again inconsistent when no objection was raised in the context of the Lidl application on an existing employment site at the Minton depot on adjoining land.

The LPA has 36.65 ha of employment land committed (refer paragraph 6.3.17 of the GL Hearn revised ES) and needs to find only 0.35 ha in the whole Salisbury district in the period up to 2026 to meet the RSS requirement of 37 ha. Clearly the large allocation at Solstice Park is an important part of this long term employment reserve.

Based on the decision by SDC to approve the Lidl application, and with that decision informed by officers advice in respect of employment land policy relating to that site, it is inconceivable that SDC could appropriately base an objection to the Tesco scheme on this site in the context of the same policy considerations. The proposed Tesco development will provide acceptable alternative employment use that provides a greater number of job opportunities.

The existing job opportunities are not lost, as all commercial operations are being relocated within the vicinity.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

You confirmed our understanding that the Highways Agency has no objections to the Tesco scheme and I advised you that Tony Chapman of ADL anticipates that the County Highway Authority should provide you with a formal response in respect of the Tesco scheme this week. The only outstanding issue still being assessed by County Highways is the A345/London Road junction where the amended design is being fed into the VISSIM model. We are hopeful that their consideration of revised modelling will confirm its acceptability. We understand there are no other outstanding issues and I set out below a summary of the highway works and contributions which would form the basis of a Section 106 Agreement in respect of the Tesco scheme:

Highway Works

1. New roundabout on London Road to provide access to the development proposals.
2. New bus lay-by and two new bus shelters on London Road with real time bus information.
3. Provision of new cycle/foot way across the site frontage linking into the new cycle way to be provided by Lidl to the east of the site.
4. Improvements to the Countess Road signals to improve the capacity, geometry and pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction. Pedestrian crossing points will be added to the Countess Road, London Road and The Centre. The signal controller would be replaced with the latest signal technology with Mova 6 to provide the latest vehicle activated control system.

Contributions

1. £50,000 towards improving pedestrian and cycle facilities between the store and the town centre.
2. £275,000 to fund the provision of a new circular bus service 6 days a week for 5 years, linking the new store with the town centre, Solstice Park and Archers Gate.

Accessibility by Non-Car Modes

At our meeting, I referred to information which was submitted in support of the Asda application by Cottee Transport Planning assessing the number of people within associated catchments for both Asda and Tesco based on walking, cycling and bus journey times. In particular I referred you to drawing 0719/34a and 35a and the associated "Accession Population Comparison Table - Town Centre Link". This purported to make a comparison between population within certain walking, cycling and bus journey time distances of the Tesco and Asda stores and we would caution SDC on making any judgement in respect of either scheme based on this information. The Note to the Table indicates that the figures are based on applying 4 people per dwelling to each development, whereas you confirmed at our meeting that an appropriate figure would be some 2.36 persons per dwelling. The population figures presented by Cottee are not accepted even if the ratio is corrected.

The Tesco site is accessible by non car modes and located within the housing development boundary and adjoining existing housing in Amesbury.

Salisbury District Planning Department
Rec. 23 APR 2008
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Summary

In refusing planning permission for housing and employment development on the Gregory Site in 2005, SDC recognised the potential of the site to accommodate a range of uses, including retail development. The resolution to approve the Lidl store in an out of centre location does not address the recognised need for a major food store to address leakage from the Amesbury catchment area.

If members wish to address the recognised retail need and support the views of the resident population, then planning permission should be granted now for a food store. It would not be credible to refuse the Tesco scheme on the basis that the retail need might be met at some time in the future, on the site of the former Co-op store, council car park and third party land. The Council has rejected that site as a realistic sequentially preferable site for a smaller (discount) food store as recently as 10th April 2008.

The Council's resolution to approve Lidl was also based on the Council's judgement that such a proposal was not in conflict with Policy E16 and it would be inconsistent and indefensible to use Policy E16 as a reason to refuse the Tesco scheme.

The proposed Tesco site is previously developed land, a brown field site, including a derelict transport depot which has been vacant since 2000 and is an eye sore. All existing commercial operations on the remainder of the site are being relocated to better premises and the scheme will ensure the provision of between 200-220 full time equivalent jobs, with the usual employee numbers between 317-340 full and part time.

Amesbury needs a food store which will address the existing significant leakage of shopping trips from its catchment area. Of the competing proposals the Tesco scheme should be approved as:-

- It is closer to the town centre.
- It is not an allocated employment site.
- There would be less impact on the town centre convenience goods trade and less impact on the town centre as a whole.
- The scheme is deliverable.

Tesco Stores Ltd and Gregory Distribution are prepared to enter into an appropriate Section 106 Agreement covering the matters referred to above in relation to highway works and financial contributions and the proposed scheme is entirely deliverable. We confirm the acceptability to Tesco Stores Ltd of a condition precluding a pharmacy or post office and we would be pleased to discuss any other appropriate planning conditions.

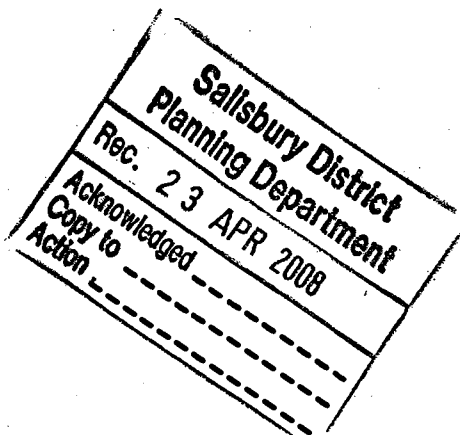
We would be pleased to meet to discuss any of the above or indeed any other outstanding matters if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



MIKE BEESE
PLANNING DIRECTOR
mike_beese@glhearn.com

cc - T Robinson
S Gregory
J Gregory



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email: info@cottee-tp.co.uk

By email & post

Our Ref: MC / 0719

2nd May 2008

Mr Allan Creedy
Environmental Services Department,
Wiltshire County Council,
County Hall,
Bythesea Road,
Trowbridge,
Wiltshire.
BA14 8JD

Dear Mr Creedy,

Plot C1 Solstice Park Amesbury - Application Number S/2007/2226

I write in regards the proposed reason for refusal number 4 relating to accessibility.

The reason for refusal includes the phrase "...not conducive to **anything other than car borne customers** contrary to the aims of PPG13 and PS1." My emphasis.

This cannot be the case and in my view is an unreasonable and unrealistic position for Wiltshire County Council (WCC) to adopt given the improvements proposed and evidence provided in the TA, Supplementary TA and other communications with WCC over the past 9 months.

As you are aware my company has been discussing accessibility issues with your team since before the application was submitted. I have been involved in detailed dialogue with your colleague Mike Crook in regards improvements to the scheme and it has been modified in line with our discussions which have involved an iterative approach to the exchange of ideas and the submission of various draft plans in reaching the scheme before Members.

In particular, you will be aware of the dedicated footway/cycleway including a crossing on Sunrise Way to provide a good quality connection for residents directly to the store entrance. This was discussed at length with your colleague and is additional to the new crossings on Porton Road. The Supplementary TA shows the comprehensive cycle connections available locally. In the committee report the route between residents on the eastern side of Porton Rd and the site is discussed and it is suggested that they wouldn't walk to the store because they would need to cross Porton Rd twice. This is unrealistic since the extra walk distance for residents on the eastern side of Porton Rd is only 19m and crossing facilities are provided. To suggest that people would walk along an uneven narrow verge rather than walk an extra 19m defies logic. In any event a contribution towards a pedestrian footway on the eastern side has been put forward in order that the council can deliver a footway on the eastern side. Plans showing the walk distances were provided to you on the 17th January 2008.

The suggestion that the development is not conducive to anything other than car travel is completely at odds with the fact that the site is within walking distance of a very large resident and employment population. A reasonable walk distance to a store for food shopping is around 1km. From the analysis undertaken in the TA this includes local residential areas and anticipated

employment population totalling around **9500 people (para 5.12 of the TA)**. This is a very large population and given the high quality pedestrian and crossing routes provided linking the store with the residential and employment areas, for WCC /SDC to claim that only car borne trade will occur, is highly unrealistic. The same argument applies to cyclists except larger populations are involved, again as detailed in the TA.

As you know we have held detailed discussions with your public transport colleague to devise a suitable bus route, bus contribution and frequency/timing of service. Following further discussions ASDA proposed an additional contribution to the Solstice Park bus to cover the peak hours. I attach an extract of our meeting note sent to you on the 12th August which discussed the proposed ASDA bus route:

"2.Discussions took place on how to best serve the site by bus. PG advised that the best solution would be to run a new service (a route was discussed and provisionally agreed) 0900-1500 at a cost of approximately £50k per annum over 5 years. This is likely to be the absolute cost with the service provider retaining the fares. PG advised that such a service could be commercially viable after that time. I agreed to draw up the route and submit to PG. He will then forward to Wilts and Dorset Bus Company for a quote. The costs would be dealt with via a S106 agreement. The bus would be a 30 seater low floor vehicle. PG mentioned that it would be good to reintroduce a bus on Antrobus Road. A bus stop plus shelter and real time information display would be required. DT should be contacted to find out more information on this."

The committee report refers to the walk distance to the bus stop and suggests that the car park represents a barrier to pedestrian movement. This is unreasonable. The bus stop is located 108m i.e. about a third of the maximum recommended 300m in the document 'Planning for Public Transport in Development' and one quarter of the 400m distance indicated in RPG10 Annex A. In addition, there is a dedicated covered walk way between the bus stop and the store entrance. Furthermore, there is a bus shelter, ramp and low floor kerbs to assist disabled access. It is therefore unreasonable for WCC to conclude that the scheme will not involve anything other than car borne trade.

For the avoidance of doubt the full package of accessibility related measures are set out below:

- 1) £55,000 per year for a period of 5 years (total £275,000) for an ASDA bus service.
- 2) £18,000 for a period of 3 years (total £54,000) for the Solstice Park bus.
- 3) £25,000 towards improving pedestrian/cycle facilities on Porton Road in addition to the infrastructure shown on the plans.
- 4) £50,000 towards providing a footway/cycleway towards Bulford or, if this proves not to be viable, for other pedestrian/cycle improvements which would benefit those travelling to the site.
- 5) Three new pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities, two on Porton Rd and one on Sunrise Way.
- 6) New bus stops on Porton Rd to serve the development and local residents and a covered walkway between the store entrance to the bus stop on Porton Rd.
- 7) Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities linking the site with the local residential areas.
- 8) Covered cycle parking on site.
- 9) A Travel Plan to encourage non car travel linked with the Solstice Park Travel Plan.

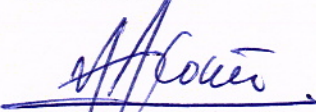
Based upon the above comprehensive proposals to enhance the non car accessibility of the site, I consider it is very likely that the site will attract a substantial number of non car trips.

Notwithstanding the concerns associated with the lack of balance given by WCC to the consideration of the accessibility enhancements, during my discussions with Mike Crook he

requested that the £50,000 contribution towards the Bulford Link could be used for other pedestrian/cycle improvements locally. His reasoning was that he was not wholly convinced that the full funding could be achieved, and that viability could be an issue. My client has given further consideration to his point and since the reason for refusal is concerned principally with accessibility, they are prepared to **increase the contribution by £100,000 to £150,000** to ensure that the link can be established. As you will recall the Supplementary TA included justification for the link at Appendix C. ASDA consider that £150,000 will be sufficient to fund the construction of the link.

Please communicate my concerns regarding the lack of balance afforded to my client's accessibility proposals to Members, the reasoning behind this, and the fact that they propose to increase the funding for the Bulford Link to give a much improved chance of delivery.

Yours sincerely,



MIKE COTTEE
Managing Director

E-mail: mike@cottee-tp.co.uk

- cc. Judy Howles – Salisbury DC (letter by post and email)
- cc. Cliff Whitley - Solstice Park (letter by email)
- cc. Hannah Murray/John Littman - Jones Lang LaSalle (letter by email)
- cc. Tony Marsh – HGP Architects (letter by email)
- cc. David Howson – Cottee TP (letter by email)
- cc. Barney Harle – Asda Stores Ltd (letter by email)
- cc. Sue Smales – Asda Stores Ltd (letter by email)

Direct email: rebecca.leaman@tymconsult.com

Your ref: S/2007/2226

Our ref: PSF/A/07/05832

Somerfield Store No: 2346

7 May 2008

Development Control
Planning Office
Salisbury District Council
61 Wyndham Road
Salisbury
SP1 3AH

FAO: Mrs J Howles

Dear Sir/Madam,

PROPOSED ASDA STORE, SOLSTICE PARK, AMESBURY (PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: S/2007/2226)

Roger Tym and Partners (RTP) act on behalf of Somerfield Stores Limited, who operates a store at Mid Summer Place, Solstice Park, Amesbury. We understand that an application has been submitted at Solstice Park for a retail store of some 6,076 sqm gross (65,400 sqft gross).

We submitted a holding objection on the 17 April 2008 in order to allow us to fully examine an assessment by GVA Grimley, undertaken on behalf of the Council, of the Asda application and an application by Tesco for a foodstore at another site in Amesbury.

Having considered both GVA Grimley's assessment and the planning statement submitted in support of the application by Jones Lang LaSalle, we wish to object to this application for the following reasons:

- Based on existing market shares there is insufficient quantitative need for the proposed store;
- The assessment of need undertaken by JLL, which assumes some clawback of expenditure, is flawed and does not adequately demonstrate quantitative need;
- Even if quantitative need could be satisfactorily demonstrated, the qualitative arguments on which it rests (that the clawback of expenditure would improve shopping provision for people in the Amesbury area and that there would be sustainability benefits through shorter journeys) must be weighed against the likely impact of the proposed store on Amesbury town centre, and in our view the impact will be significant;
- The potential of the former Co-op site has not been properly investigated.

ROGER TYM & PARTNERS
Planners and Development Economists

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Truro and Glasgow

A list of our partners is available for inspection
at any of our offices

BY EMAIL AND POST

We set our concerns in detail in an annex to this letter. We would be grateful if you would if you acknowledge this letter as an objection duly made and contact Rebecca Leaman of this office if you have any further queries.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Tym & Partners

Encs

cc Nick Sealy, Somerfield Stores Ltd

ANNEX

Policy Context

1. In reviewing the planning policy background, it is clear that the site for the proposed Asda store is 'out-of-centre' as defined by PPS6. On this basis, the key retail considerations that the applicants must address are as follows:
 - Whether there is a demonstrable need for the proposal;
 - Whether sequentially preferable sites are available;
 - Whether the proposal would undermine the vitality and viability of existing centres.
2. We have analysed the planning statement prepared (revised January 2008) by Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), which has been submitted as part of the Asda planning application, and the GVA Grimley review of proposed food stores in Amesbury (January 2008). In the light of this information, we can now comment on whether the key three considerations (as outlined above) have satisfactorily addressed.

Need

3. PPS6 indicates that need must be demonstrated for any application for a main town centre use which would be in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan document strategy. This is one such proposal. There are two elements to the consideration of need: quantitative and qualitative.
4. Dealing first with quantitative need, the JLL assessment contends that at current market shares there is capacity for just under 1,000sqm net new convenience floorspace. GVA Grimley, on behalf of the Council, also identified some capacity (having made some corrections to their district-wide retail study undertaken in 2006), and although they note that the amount of floorspace is dependent on whether a town centre unit recently vacated by Co-op is taken up, they note that in any case there is insufficient capacity for the proposed Asda store. GVA Grimley rightly note, therefore, that there is insufficient capacity for a store of the size proposed by Asda, based on current market shares.
5. JLL undertake their own analysis of need, which implies a greater market share for Amesbury. However, it has two major failings. First, the catchment on which it is based is crudely drawn and an entirely artificial construct. It is based on postcode sectors, and therefore bears little relation to realistic travel patterns and the draw of nearby centres and major stores. Second, it then 'ring fences' the available spend, assuming that it is all spent within the artificially defined catchment. It is quite wrong to assume that none of the available expenditure will be drawn to centres and stores outside the catchment. For example, the catchment includes an area just west to Salisbury, which is considerably closer to Salisbury than Amesbury. It is therefore unrealistic to expect all the available expenditure to be spent within this defined area. GVA Grimley make exactly this point in their review of the JLL analysis.
6. But even if the quantitative need analysis was robust, the justification for the proposed clawback of trade, that is, the increase in market share of the Amesbury area, is based on what JLL consider to be the qualitative benefits of the scheme: first that there would be an improvement in shopping provision for people in the Amesbury catchment, and second that there would be sustainability benefits through, presumably, shorter journeys. However, this can only provide sufficient justification if there is little or no impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres. In our view the proposed store will have a substantial impact on Amesbury town centre, for reasons we set out below.

Sequential Approach

7. PPS6 indicates that sequential approach to site selection should be applied to all development proposals for sites that are not in an existing centre nor allocated in an up-to-date development plan document. This is one such development proposal.
8. JLL dismiss this site on the basis that it would not meet the quantitative and qualitative need they identify, but as we note above we do not accept their assessment of quantitative need. Moreover, the qualitative benefits to which they refer must be weighed against the impact of the proposed scheme. Finally, JLL do not explain why the improvements in shopping provision on which they

partly justify their scheme could be provided through a smaller store on the site of the former Co-op site.

9. We are not satisfied, therefore, that the applicant has satisfactorily addressed the potential of the site of the former Co-op site, particularly bearing in mind the advice in PPS6 which indicates that retailers should be flexible about their business model in terms of the scale of their development, the format of their development, car parking provision and the scope for disaggregation.

Impact

10. In considering the impact of the proposed Asda store, simply demonstrating need does not mean that the proposed food store will have no impact on Amesbury town centre. In any case, as highlighted above, we question the validity of the quantitative need analysis undertaken by JLL. We therefore welcome the assessment of impact by JLL in the planning statement submitted in support of the application.
11. Para 5.45 of the JLL planning statement acknowledges that the proposed store will 'undoubtedly reduce the turnover of the town centre' before going on to use GVA Grimley's estimate of impact on the town centre, some 37%. This is a very substantial impact by any standard, but surprisingly JLL see the question as simply 'whether it [the proposed new Asda store] would likely lead to store closures'. However, paragraph 4.4 of PPS6 highlights a number of other factors which should also be considered when measuring the vitality and viability of town centres. To argue that no stores will close, and thus that the vacancy rate will not increase, is too simplistic. If other factors are considered it seems very likely that there will be a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the centre. For instance, shop rents are likely to decrease as demand for units falls and pedestrian flows are likely to decrease as customers are attracted to the proposed Asda store. In our view, therefore, the JLL study has failed to properly address impact.
12. Whilst we agree there would be less of an impact on the comparison goods sector, with the greatest impact on convenience goods sales at the Co-op, there is still likely to be an impact on this sector, given that the proposed Asda store will have a non-food element. This will increase the probability of it becoming a one-stop-shop and therefore likely to reduce the number of linked trips in the town centre (between the Co-op and non-food stores in the centre).
13. We are also concerned about the impact the proposed store would have on the old Co-op site and the prospect of this unit being reoccupied by or redeveloped for a convenience store. This site would become significantly less attractive to a potential occupier if a large out of centre food store was granted, and may well remain empty for some time, with a negative impact on the environmental quality of the centre
14. Overall, we agree with the GVA Grimley assessment, which expresses concern about the overall impact the proposed store will have on the vitality and viability of Amesbury town centre, believing the proposed store would have a significant impact on the health of Amesbury town centre.

Summary and Conclusions

15. Having reviewed the planning statement by JLL submitted in support of the application and the GVA Grimley assessment undertaken for the Council, we have the following concerns:
 - Based on existing market shares there is insufficient quantitative need for the proposed store;
 - The assessment of need undertaken by JLL, which assumes some clawback of expenditure, is flawed and does not adequately demonstrate quantitative need;
 - Even if quantitative need could be satisfactorily demonstrated, the qualitative arguments on which it rests (that the clawback of expenditure would improve shopping provision for people in the Amesbury area and that there would be sustainability benefits through shorter journeys) must be weighed against the likely impact of the proposed store on Amesbury town centre, and in our view the impact will be significant;
 - The potential of the former Co-op site has not been properly investigated.

Katherine Ashley

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Sent: 06 May 2008 15:36
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rob@robertkey.com
Subject: Asda and Tesco planning applications S/2007/2226 and S/2008/0572

6th May 2008

Reference planning applications:
S/2007/2226 Asda Supermarket, Amesbury.
S/2008/0572 Tesco Supermarket, Amesbury.

Dear Sirs,

On Thursday 8th May planning decisions will be made by the Northern Area Committee which will have a major impact on the future of retail business conducted in Amesbury.

Since a new Tesco opened in Tidworth and with the opening of Asda in Andover, many residents of the Amesbury area now travel to these stores to carry out a weekly shop. I have spoken with many of my customers on the issue of supermarkets and most will tell you that a trip to either of these two towns is favoured over a trip to the Supermarkets in Salisbury, mainly because of traffic congestion on Southampton Road and Castle Street making for much longer journey times to the stores in Salisbury.

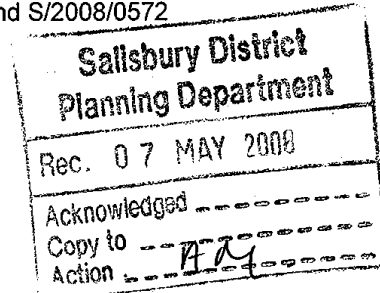
A town the size of Amesbury should have a choice of supermarkets so that local people are not forced to travel further a field, in addition, keeping shoppers local should mean that the retail outlets of the town in general will benefit from an increase in the number of people who shop locally instead of leaving our town to shop further a field. This in turn should attract new business to the town and help regenerate the town centre as a whole.

With reference to the town centre, the continued insistence that the old co-op site in Salisbury Street should be occupied with a store which includes a high percentage of food retail is no longer relevant. After the recent approval of a Lidl store on London Road, Amesbury, this decision to allow a store, which could have easily been located in the old co-op site, to develop elsewhere, means that the goalposts have been moved and any bearing the previous old co-op site conditions had on planning applications for food stores in Amesbury should now be effectively ignored.

With current requirements for a massive amount of new housing in the coming years would it not make more sense to allow a supermarket development on Solstice Park while setting aside the assorted mix of brown field sites on London Road for new housing. The impact on London Road of a supermarket and the associated high volume of traffic means a poorer quality of life for those living in the area of London Road, while in-fill housing would not only improve the area, but also have less impact on the local residents and London Road as a whole.

It does not take too much common sense to stand in either of the two proposed areas of development and see which one of the two applications is better situated for access, ease of use, impact on local roads and residents and over-all practicality for all those that wish to use a large supermarket. With this in mind it is clear to see why people I have spoken to favour the Solstice Park option.

I realise that a planning decision could be made to grant or refuse either



or both applications, but in my discussions with the people of Amesbury it is clear that most favour the idea of a new Supermarket in the town and that most favour the Solstice Park application, I only hope that you as the planning committee take on board local opinion from both residents and local businesses and conclude with an outcome which enables the town of Amesbury to go forward with a commercial development which allows the town to cater for the residents future needs while minimising impact on those same residents.

Mark Clemas
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**Salisbury District
Planning Department**
Rec. 07 MAY 2000
Acknowledged
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Action _____