

**Proposed Lidl Foodstore  
Church Road North  
Wavertree**

**Planning Statement**  
On behalf of Lidl Great Britain Limited

April 2021



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Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Development Proposals	2
3. Planning Policy	7
4. Planning Statement	12
5. Development Plan Heritage Policy Assessment	18
6. NPPF Heritage Guidance Assessment	25
7. Conclusions	29

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Appendices

**Appendix 1**

Draft Local Labour Agreement

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Plan A (North West) Limited on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Limited (the Applicant) in support of an application for full planning permission for the development of a discount foodstore on Church Road North in Wavertree. The proposal is also accompanied by an application for Conservation Area Consent to demolish the existing building and structures.
  - 1.2. The Statement sets out the merits of the proposed development in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance, details how the proposal will regenerate a vacant site and will contribute to economic prosperity in Liverpool.
  - 1.3. The Statement addresses a range of planning matters and adopts the following structure:
    - Section 2: Details of the application site and proposed development;
    - Section 3: Planning policy review;
    - Section 4: Planning Statement;
    - Section 5: Assessment of the proposal against of Development Plan heritage policies;
    - Section 6: Assessment of the proposal against NPPF heritage guidance; and
    - Section 5: Conclusions.
  - 1.4. The planning application is accompanied by a number of technical reports and drawings, which should be read alongside this Statement. In addition, the Applicant has created a project website, which provides photographs and other imagery of the existing building and the proposed development in order to assist the understanding of the proposals, which can be accessed via the following link: [wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk](http://wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk)
  - 1.5. The preparation of this Statement and the accompanying reports has had regard to the pre-application discussions held with the Council in October 2019. However, the Council's written pre-application advice is yet to be received.
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## 2. Development Proposals

### Application Site

- 2.1. The application site comprises an existing vacant building and its associated external areas located at the junction of Church Road North and Childwall Road in Wavertree. The building was originally built as the Abbey Cinema in 1939 in an art deco design using materials and building techniques that were innovative at that time, to include a steel structure within a brick skin, with a reinforced concrete corner feature at its focal point.
- 2.2. However, the use of the building as a cinema ceased in 1979. The ground floor area was converted into a supermarket that was originally operated by Lennons, with Somerfield and Co-op taking occupation over the following 40-year period. A single storey rear extension was subsequently implemented in order to provide the supermarket with warehouse storage space and delivery facilities.
- 2.3. The upper floors have also been remodelled, first to provide squash courts, then in 1984 for use as a bingo hall and more recently as a snooker club, with a programme of substantial internal works being undertaken to meet operator requirements. However, all use of the upper floors ceased in 2013, with the accommodation essentially being abandoned. Whilst the Co-op continued to operate from the ground floor area, it too vacated the building in April 2020.
- 2.4. The original internal fabric of the former cinema building has been removed, destroyed, damaged or heavily adapted on all levels by previous occupiers, primarily through the conversion of the cinema to a supermarket approximately 40 years ago. Indeed, very little evidence of the former cinema remains, particularly at ground floor (entrance/stalls) level. The insertion of an extensive concrete floor infilling the cinema auditorium to create the bingo hall/snooker club has also necessitated substantial internal adaptations and alterations to the fabric of the original building.
- 2.5. Up-to-date surveys of the current physical condition of the building indicate that it has received very limited investment over the past decades, the effects of which are assessed in accompanying specialist reports.
- 2.6. The application site, therefore, currently comprises a vacant and dilapidated multi-storey building of approximately 3,144m<sup>2</sup> gross internal area set within a site of 0.51ha, which accommodates an external service yard and approximately 53 parking spaces. Vehicular access is taken from Church Road North, with pedestrian access available from Childwall Road and Church Road North. The site shares a boundary with neighbouring semi-detached residential dwellings to the south and east, with the road frontage to Church Road North and Childwall Road to the west and north respectively.
- 2.7. Picton Clock Tower is located across the highway to the north west, with a former historic gaol located across the highway to the north east. The site is located within Wavertree Village Conservation Area and Wavertree High Street District Centre (as currently designated), with there being a range of commercial and residential uses located within the surrounding area.

### Rationale for Redevelopment

- 2.8. The former site owner approached the Applicant to enquire whether it had an interest in acquiring the application site in 2019. On confirmation, matters were progressed and contracts subsequently exchanged in February 2020. However, the Applicant was prohibited from gaining access to the upper floors of the building or undertaking any
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internal specialist surveys prior to completion of the sale, May 2020.

- 2.9. As a result, whilst Lidl's name became associated with the site in Spring 2020, it has since been necessary to commission a wide range of specialist surveys of the building in order to better understand its physical condition and explore development potential. As referenced above, these surveys have found the building to have received limited investment over a period of decades, which has now left the building in a poor physical state.
  - 2.10. The accompanying Structural Survey Report has found the following key issues, amongst multiple others:
    - the curved corner feature of the building that faces towards Picton Clock Tower is in such poor physical condition that it cannot be retained;
    - structural steelwork is exposed and has significantly corroded;
    - the extensive roof of the original building is made from asbestos, which requires removal together with other asbestos within the building;
    - the external brickwork is extensively water damaged and unable to resist water penetration into the building or protect embedded structural steelwork;
    - the more recent single storey extension is subject to extensive water damage; and
    - key structural elements of the building have been damaged.
  - 2.11. Evidence of these issues, and others, is visually evident on even an inexperienced inspection of the building.
  - 2.12. As a result, the conclusion has been drawn that the existing building is not in a suitable physical condition to support re-occupation. Accordingly, Lidl is unable to simply take occupation and commence trading in place of Co-op. Instead, it is evident that a significant package of works is required to be undertaken just to make the building structurally secure, water-tight and safe.
  - 2.13. An exercise has, therefore, been undertaken in order to understand the level of investment required to bring the building back into a suitable, basic state to facilitate the re-occupation of the ground floor area only, with all upper floors of the building being stripped out and made safe and accessible. This exercise is presented in the accompanying Development Costs Report, which estimates that such basic works will require an investment of £4.18m at current prices. Substantial additional investment would be necessary to bring the upper floors into a suitable condition for occupation by a specific end user(s).
  - 2.14. The high cost of undertaking the works necessary to deliver a store within the existing building is prohibitive to Lidl and the discount retail business model in general. This is particularly the case when considering the significant development risks and ongoing maintenance costs, and the fact that the resultant store would be compromised in terms of its operational and energy efficiency. Lidl is, therefore, unable to commit such significant investment to this site. The accompanying Marketing Advice report informs that there are no alternative occupiers that could realistically occupy the building in a viable manner.
  - 2.15. It is concluded that the existing building has come to the end of its useable life, facilitated by the works that have been undertaken to adapt it for alternative uses and the lack of investment in its physical condition over the past 40-year period. The only viable option to deliver a Lidl store on this site is to demolish the existing building and erect a modern, purpose-built discount foodstore.
  - 2.16. The decision to propose the demolition of the existing building has not been taken lightly. On the contrary, the Applicant has spent approximately 12 months thoroughly investigating
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the condition of the building and appraising the options. As a result of these investigations, it has been concluded that there is a greater benefit to the local community in delivering the proposed investment in a new building that outweighs the effects resulting from the loss of the existing building, which has no prospect of re-use in its current physical condition. Indeed, the benefits derived from the proposed development are significant and wide-reaching (see Section 6 of this Statement) and should reasonably be preferred to the retention of an undesignated heritage asset that has reached the end of its useable life.

- 2.17. Lidl is, nevertheless, aware of a level of public support for the retention of the existing building and acknowledges the fact that the application site is located within a Conservation Area and adjacent to two Listed Buildings. An approach has, therefore, been adopted that seeks to mitigate adverse effects resulting from the loss of the existing building. However, it is aware that some aspects of the support for the retention of the building are based on inaccurate perceptions of the current condition of the building and the remaining fabric of the former cinema use.
- 2.18. Accordingly, it can be confirmed that the whole ground floor area of the cinema (entrance lobby, stalls etc) was effectively destroyed/removed when the building was converted to a supermarket just over 40 years ago. The auditorium was also enclosed from the edge of the lower balcony to the screen when the first-floor level was created, through the installation of a substantial concrete and steel structure, to create the squash courts and enable the occupation of the bingo/snooker hall. The cinema screen has been removed. Other works to support the use of the upper floors, to include the installation of lifts and air conditioning, has also resulted in extensive damage and alterations to the original building fabric. Evidence of the effect of these historic alterations is provided on the website created by the Applicant to help inform and assist public engagement:  
[wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk](http://wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk)

### **Proposed Development**

- 2.19. Lidl recognises the heritage and associated value of the existing building. As a result, it is not proposed to deliver a standard store on the site. Instead, a building of bespoke design is proposed, which takes design cues from the existing building and its art deco features.
- 2.20. The proposed Lidl store will comprise a 1,980m<sup>2</sup> gross Class E(a) retail store, served by a total of 70 parking spaces, to include 5 accessible and 5 parent and child spaces, and 2 Electric Vehicle Charging Points together with cycle parking facilities. Solar panels will be fitted to the building roof. Vehicular access to the site will continue to be taken from the existing site access from Church Road North, with separate pedestrian access points from both Childwall Road and Church Road North.
- 2.21. Further details about the design concept are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

### **Lidl 'Deep Discount' Format**

- 2.22. Lidl's history dates back to the 1930s when 'Lidl and Schwarz Grocery Wholesale' was founded in Germany. Since then, the Company has diversified into hypermarkets (known as 'Kaufland') and discount foodstores (known as 'Lidl'). Today, the Schwarz Group is the largest grocery retailers in Europe and the 4th largest global retailer. During the 1990s, Lidl commenced opening stores outside Germany, and are now found in 27 European countries, having recently opened their 11,000th store. The Lidl format is well established in the UK with the Company operating more than 800 stores, 13 Regional Distribution centres and employing over 25,000 people.
- 2.23. The Company philosophy is centred upon simplicity and offering customers everyday quality at the best possible prices. The Company's basic approach is equally straightforward, this being to provide modestly sized stores serving local needs at convenient locations that are close to residential areas. Lidl's operation is based on a
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traditional supermarket format with 'deeply discounted' prices and a limited range of 'own brand' goods. The ability to offer discounted prices to customers is achieved through economies of pan-European bulk purchasing, minimisation of distribution costs and the careful control of property and operational costs.

- 2.24. A Lidl store offers a range of around 2,500 products all at discount prices. Items sold include:
- A range of own-branded dry groceries, frozen foods and tertiary branded wines and spirits;
  - A small range of fresh and frozen pre-packaged meat, but no specialist butchery or delicatessen counter;
  - A range of fruit and vegetables, mainly pre-packaged;
  - Pre-packaged sliced bread as well as a new selection of artisan bread and cakes baked on the premises; and
  - A basic range of non-food household items accounting for up to 20% of the sales area.
- 2.25. The Lidl business model differs from that of many other supermarket traders, primarily through the heavily discounted pricing structure and the very limited range of goods on offer. At around 2,500 product lines per store, the range of goods is significantly smaller than those offered by other leading retailers. For example, modern superstores offer well in excess of 20,000 product lines. Lidl also operates on far lower profit margins than the major foodstore operators and, due to their efficient productive approach, savings made operationally are passed on to the customer.
- 2.26. Moreover, Lidl does not compete in the same market as many independent or specialist traders such as confectioners, greengrocers or butchers, and Lidl do not sell cigarettes or single confectionery items, do not include pharmacies or post offices and no meat or fish preparation takes place on the premises.
- 2.27. The proposed Lidl store will have distinctive trading characteristics, which are largely complementary to traditional high street convenience stores. Indeed, deep discounters rarely provide a one-stop shopping experience and, as such, customers also tend to use other shops and facilities in the locality to supplement their deep discount shop.
- 2.28. Lidl stores are clearly popular with their customers, as they offer high quality goods at very low prices. This high quality is reflected in the wide range of award-winning products on offer, ranging from wines and spirits to cheeses and meats to cereals and biscuits to cleaning products.

## **Development Operational Matters**

### Hours of Operation

- 2.29. The store's opening hours will be 7am to 10pm Monday to Saturdays, including Bank/Public Holidays, and for a six-hour period between 10am and 6pm on Sundays.

### Deliveries and Waste Management

- 2.30. The store will typically receive up to two deliveries per day, which will be sourced from the regional distribution hub near Runcorn. Delivery vehicles pass through the store car park, to the delivery area, and reverse down a ramp to a dock leveller, which ensures that the bed of the trailer is the same height as the store floor level. A curtain is then closed around the rear of the trailer to form a seal between it and the building, with goods being simply rolled from the trailer into the building in an efficient and comparatively quiet manner.
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- 2.31. All waste generated by the store will be separated into recycling, store returns, general waste etc and stored internally ready for collection. Lidl's daily delivery vehicle will then take all waste away from the store for recycling or disposal at the distribution centre. It typically takes 45 to 60 minutes to unload the delivery vehicle and to re-pack it with waste products and recycling.

#### Trolley Management

- 2.32. Lidl will control the use of shopping trolleys by a coin deposit system. Trolleys will be stored in a freestanding trolley bay located within the car park close to the store entrance and customers will be required to make a deposit in order to release a secured trolley from the trolley bay. This deposit will be returned when customers return the trolley to the trolley bay and leave it securely. Lidl's experience at existing stores confirm that this system is an effective means of ensuring trolleys do not leave the site and, also, are returned to the trolley bay and secured appropriately.

#### Car Park Management

- 2.33. The Lidl customer car park will be available to use free of charge for their customers. The use of the car park will be controlled by an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system, which will restrict the free parking to a period of 90 minutes, which is more than sufficient time for customers to undertake a shop at the store and visit other shops and services in the District Centre. It is proposed that the details of the ANPR system are agreed by condition.

#### Cycle Parking

- 2.34. It is proposed to provide 4 Sheffield-type cycle stands, with capacity for 8 customer bikes, within a covered shelter located adjacent to the shopfront, where they will be accessible for users, and benefit from high levels of natural surveillance. Members of Lidl staff will be permitted to securely park their bicycle within the store warehouse area, with the warehouse having capacity to accommodate multiple bicycles.

#### Job Creation

- 2.35. The store will require up to 30 members of staff (20 Full Time Equivalent) in order to operate in the most efficient manner. Both full and part-time roles will be offered, with part-time hours ranging from 9 – 36 hours. Lidl does not offer zero-hour contracts. The range of positions will, therefore, offer flexibility in the number of hours worked, and are expected to appeal to a wide range of job seekers.
- 2.36. The Applicant will engage with Liverpool in Work to encourage local job seekers to apply for positions at the store, with a draft Local Labour Agreement enclosed (**Appendix 1**) that sets out the proposed commitment. It is expected that the majority, if not all, of the members of staff at the store will be local people living in the local area. The recruitment process will commence 4-6 months prior to store opening to ensure that all staff gain sufficient training and experience at a nearby existing store prior to the opening of the proposed new store.
- 2.37. All staff will benefit from Lidl's commitment to paying the Real Living Wage, as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, training and genuine opportunities for career progression within the Company. Indeed, many of Lidl's non-sales staff started employment on the shop floor and have progressed to other roles in the company, with a wide range of roles being available, in principle, on a global scale. The current Chief Executive of Lidl Great Britain Ltd is testament to this commitment, having started work on the shop floor and progressing through the business to his present position.
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### 3. Planning Policy

- 3.1. This section of the Statement identifies the key planning policies and other guidance that is relevant to determination of this application.

#### National Guidance

- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in February 2019 and represents the most up-to-date national planning guidance. It does not change the status of the Development Plan, but offers guidance which should be considered as a material consideration in determining planning applications (paragraph 2).
- 3.3. The NPPF is fundamentally based upon the achievement of sustainable development, through economic, social and environmental objectives (paragraph 8). Paragraph 9 confirms that the pursuit of sustainable development is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which means (paragraph 11):

*‘Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*

- *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole’.*

- 3.4. In terms of ‘decision-making’, paragraph 38 at Chapter 4 advises local planning authorities to ‘*approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area*’.
- 3.5. Paragraph 54 advises that ‘*Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations*’, provided that they would meet the tests set out at paragraph 56.
- 3.6. Chapter 6 encourages the building of a strong and competitive economy, with paragraph 80 stating that ‘*planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity*’. The encouragement offered to economic development does not seek to distinguish between different types of economic development, instead offering support for all.
- 3.7. Chapter 7 has regard to town centres. Paragraph 86 confirms that the sequential test should be applied to planning applications for main town centre uses ‘*which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date development plan*’. It is confirmed that the preferred location for main town centre uses will be within existing town centres. Paragraph 89 sets out the approach towards retail impact assessment, confirming that such assessment is only required in support of proposals located outside town centres.
- 3.8. At paragraph 117, the Framework encourages planning decisions to ‘*promote the effective*
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*use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses' and to 'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land' (paragraph 118).*

- 3.9. Paragraph 124 confirms that *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development'* with paragraph 127 providing guidance on the matters to be taken into consideration when assessing design and making planning decisions.
- 3.10. With regard to development proposals that affect heritage assets, paragraph 189 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals, with the level of detail provided being proportionate to the asset's significance and *'no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact'*.
- 3.11. Paragraph 193 indicates that harm to a heritage asset should be measured in terms of *'total loss', 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm'*. Where a proposal will lead to the total loss or substantial harm to a heritage asset, paragraph 195 advises that it should be refused unless that harm is outweighed by substantial public benefits. Paragraph 196 advises that, where harm is less than substantial, it should be balanced against the public benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 200 confirms that proposals that preserve the setting of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

### **Development Plan Policy**

- 3.12. The saved policies of the **Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** continue to form the basis of decision-taking in Liverpool. The saved policies that are relevant to the proposed development are set out below.
  - 3.13. The UDP Proposals Map identifies the application site as being located within a defined town centre and also within a Conservation Area.
  - 3.14. Policy GEN 3 confirms that the Plan seeks to protect and enhance the built environment by preserving and enhancing important buildings and areas and encouraging a high standard of design and landscaping in developments.
  - 3.15. Policy GEN5 presents the strategic approach towards retail development and encourages the provision of shopping facilities within designated town centres.
  - 3.16. Policy GEN8 seeks to protect the environment by encouraging development on brownfield sites, controlling pollution, encouraging recycling and efficient waste disposal and preventing flooding.
  - 3.17. Policy HD5 advises that development affecting the setting of a listed building must preserve the setting and important views of the building, with the matters that will be taken into consideration including the design and siting of new development, control over use and the preservation of trees and landscape features.
  - 3.18. Policy HD8 confirms that the Council will take positive action to secure the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas and will seek support and funding from all available sources for the repair of buildings and environmental improvements.
  - 3.19. Policy HD9 states that there will be a *'presumption in favour of the preservation of any building, part of a building or structure in a conservation area which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area'*. Where a building or structure is proposed for demolition, proposals will be assessed against the following:
    - i. *the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and its contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area;*
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- ii. *the condition of the building and the cost of repairing or maintaining it;*
    - iii. *the adequacy of the efforts made to retain the building in use; and*
    - iv. *the contribution of any new proposal to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*
  - 3.20. Policy HD11 advises that development proposals within a conservation area that fail to preserve or enhance its character will be resisted. It also advises that proposals for new development will be assessed against the following:
    - i. *the development is of a high standard of design and materials, appropriate to their setting and context, which respect the character and appearance of the conservation area;*
    - ii. *the development pays special attention to conserving the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character and does not introduce changes which would detract from the character or appearance of the area;*
    - iii. *the proposal protects important views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area;*
    - iv. *the proposal does not lead to the loss of open space or landscape features (trees and hedges) important to the character or appearance of the area;*
    - v. *the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, noise or environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area; and*
    - vi. *the proposal has a satisfactory means of access and provides for car parking in a way which is sympathetic to the appearance of the conservation area.*
  - 3.21. Policy HD18 presents a range of general design criteria that new developments will be assessed against, to include:
    - the appropriateness of the height, scale and massing of the proposal to the locality;
    - the provision of boundary and surface treatments that relate to the surroundings;
    - the appropriate positioning of external plant and equipment;
    - the impact on the amenity and privacy of neighbouring residents; and
    - the provision of suitable refuse storage and collection facilities.
  - 3.22. Policy HD19 promotes the provision of a fully accessible environment for all members of society.
  - 3.23. Policy HD20 has regard to crime prevention and encourages new development to incorporate measures to reduce opportunities for crime and to make proper provision for personal safety.
  - 3.24. Policy HD21 promotes energy conservation and confirms that new development will be expected to minimise the overall demand for energy of the development.
  - 3.25. Policy HD23 confirms that new development proposals should make provision for tree planting, landscaping and boundary treatments.
  - 3.26. Wavertree High Street is identified as a District Centre by Policy S5, where retail development should be focussed.
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- 3.27. Policy S6 states that new development within District Centres will be permitted provided that:
- i. the design and scale is appropriate to the particular centre;*
  - ii. highway, traffic and servicing issues are addressed to the satisfaction of the local planning authority;*
  - iii. residential amenity is not adversely affected.*
- 3.28. Policy S7 also has regard to development within District Centres and confirms that the Council seek to co-ordinate public and private sector initiatives in order to secure the refurbishment, expansion and redevelopment of existing retail premises, environmental and transport infrastructure improvements, the re-use of vacant upper floors and the retention of larger development sites for retail development.
- 3.29. Policy T12 confirms that new developments will be required to meet the minimum operational parking needs on-site with additional parking provided up to a maximum standard subject to matters relevant to each individual site.
- 3.30. Policy EP2 supports the remediation of contaminated land to the requisite standard, with Policy EP11 offering resistance to proposals that result in unacceptable levels of air, water, noise or other forms of pollution.
- 3.31. The Council has commenced the preparation of **Liverpool Local Plan**, which will replace the UDP. The draft Local Plan was submitted for examination in May 2018. The examination hearing sessions were completed in October 2020, with the Inspector indicating when closing the Examination that consultation on Main Modifications is expected to be undertaken in early 2021 with the Inspector's report potentially being issued in March or April 2021. However, consultation on the Main Modifications is yet to commence. Draft policies that are relevant to the development proposals are identified below.
- 3.32. The Submission Draft Policies Map identifies the application site as continuing to be located within a defined town centre and within a conservation area.
- 3.33. Draft Policy STP1 identifies the Council's priorities for sustainable growth in Liverpool, which include prioritising retail investment in District Centres.
- 3.34. Draft Policy STP2 encourages new development to avoid impacts on the environment, or to mitigate impacts where they cannot be avoided. In pursuit of this, development on previously developed land is encouraged, with remediation of any contamination to be undertaken, where necessary. The policy also supports development that is accessible by sustainable transport, responds to climate change and that avoids flood risks and impacts on air quality. Proposals will be expected to conserve and enhance heritage assets.
- 3.35. Draft Policy SP1 sets out the local retail hierarchy in Liverpool, with Wavertree High Street being designated as a Local Centre, which are defined in the Reasoned Justification as typically comprising a group of local shops and services, including one or more smaller foodstore, that provide for the day-to-day needs of the local community.
- 3.36. Draft Policy SP2 confirms that retail proposals within a Local Centre will be permitted provided that the design of the proposal is acceptable and that its scale is appropriate to the role and function of the particular centre. The policy also requires proposals to be acceptable in terms of highways and traffic impacts and servicing arrangements.
- 3.37. Draft Policy SP3 sets out as range of design criteria against which proposals will be assessed.
- 3.38. Draft Policies UD1, UD2, UD4 and UD5 provide guidance on design requirements, explaining
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how new development will be expected to contribute to the local character in an appropriate manner, meet the requirements of a range of needs and respond to climate change and sustainability objectives.

- 3.39. Draft Policy HD1 confirms the Council's approach towards the assessment of development proposals that affect the City's heritage assets, to include Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Support is offered to proposals that conserve and, where appropriate, enhance such assets. It is confirmed that harm to assets will be permitted only where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.
- 3.40. Draft Policy GI7 requires new development to make provision for appropriate tree planting and soft landscaping and confirms the relevant standards that proposals will be expected to meet.
- 3.41. Draft Policy R1 confirms that proposals that generate unacceptable levels of air, light or noise pollution will be resisted unless appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to reduce the impact to an acceptable level.
- 3.42. Draft Policies TP5 and TP6 require new development to have a positive impact on access by bicycle and on foot.
- 3.43. Policy Draft TP8 sets out the parking and servicing requirements for new development and the standard that it will be expected to achieve.

#### **Other Non-Statutory Documents**

- 3.44. Whilst the application site is located within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area, which was designated in 1980, a character appraisal has not been prepared by the Local Planning Authority.

#### **Summary**

- 3.45. The review of relevant planning policies indicates that the saved Policies of Liverpool UDP continue to form the basis of planning decision taking, supported by NPPF guidance. Whilst the preparation of Liverpool Local Plan has commenced, the Council has itself advised that its draft status limits the weight that can be attached to emerging policies.
  - 3.46. Both the adopted and emerging Plans, and the NPPF, present a themed policy approach towards the assessment of the proposal and, therefore, the proposal is assessed against the requirements of the relevant planning policies on a themed basis in the following sections of this Statement.
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## 4. Planning Statement

- 4.1. The merits of the proposed development are assessed below in accordance with the requirements of current planning policy identified in the previous sections. The merits are assessed on a themed basis in order to demonstrate compliance with both adopted and emerging Development Plan policies and national guidance.

### Principle of Development

- 4.2. The application site comprises previously development land located within an urban area and, therefore, is an acceptable location to deliver new development in principle.
- 4.3. Furthermore, being within Wavertree High Street District Centre (as currently designated), the application site comprises a preferred location to accommodate new retail development. As a result, the sequential test and retail impact test are automatically satisfied in favour of the proposed development.
- 4.4. Therefore, when also taking account of the fact that the site has been occupied by a foodstore use for approximately 40 years and comprises an established food retail destination, the principle of food retailing from this site is both long-established and policy compliant.
- 4.5. With regard to the requirements of UDP Policy S6, it is demonstrated in the accompanying Transport Assessment that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation, its impact on the traffic network and the proposed means of servicing the Lidl store. It is also demonstrated below that the proposal is fully compatible with its neighbouring uses.
- 4.6. Whilst UDP Policy S6 (and draft Local Plan Policy SP2) also requires the scale of a proposal to be appropriate to the role and function of the centre within which it is located, the test of scale was deleted from national policy several years ago. Accordingly, this UDP policy requirement is out-of-date with the NPPF. Nevertheless, the ground floor area of the existing building that was last occupied by Co-op extends to 2,160m<sup>2</sup>, which exceeds the scale of the proposed 1,980m<sup>2</sup> gross Lidl store by 9%. Accordingly, if the scale of the Co-op is deemed to have been appropriate to the role and function of the District Centre, then the same conclusion must be drawn with regard to the proposed Lidl store.
- 4.7. The proposed development seeks to redevelop existing retail premises within a District Centre for retail use. It, therefore, satisfies the objectives of Policy S7.
- 4.8. The design merits of the proposal are assessed in Section 6 alongside heritage considerations and supported by the accompanying Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement. Other requirements of UDP Policy HD18 are addressed under the sub-headings below.
- 4.9. The application site is, therefore, an acceptable location, in principle, to deliver a discount foodstore of the nature and scale proposed in accordance with the primary objectives of adopted and emerging Development Plan policy and national guidance.

### Heritage Effects

- 4.10. The accompanying Heritage Statement provides a detailed assessment of the impact of the development proposals on local heritage assets, and is supported by an assessment of the proposals against development plan heritage policies and NPPF guidance at Sections 5 and 6 of this Statement respectively. A review of the public benefits derived from the proposals
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is presented at Section 7. It is demonstrated that the proposal will cause '*less than substantial*' harm to heritage assets and that this harm will be outweighed by the wide-ranging public benefits derived from the proposed development.

### Energy Conservation

- 4.11. Lidl is firmly committed to delivering a modern, energy efficient and operationally efficient building. Accordingly, the proposed store seeks to maximise opportunities to reduce energy consumption, use energy efficient materials and equipment and enhance operational efficiency, in addition to qualitatively enhancing the shopping environment.
  - 4.12. A key feature of the store will be its shop front, which will have a large expanse of glazing in order to allow daylight to illuminate the shop floor and enhance the quality of the shopping environment, whilst also reducing energy consumption on internal lighting. This proposed design will also enhance the appearance of the store, create animation and provide natural surveillance over the store car park and cycle parking.
  - 4.13. All internal lighting will be remotely operated using sensors, with lights turning on when someone approaches the sensor and off after a set period of inactivity. The lighting on the sales floor will reduce to one third of the normal level outside trading hours and will be turned off at the end of the working day. External lighting will be controlled by timers and remote sensors. The timers ensure that the lighting can only come on during certain times of the day, with the remote sensors ensuring that lights only turn on when natural day light falls below a pre-set limit.
  - 4.14. Lidl stores use modern materials and sustainable construction techniques which help reduce construction time and building waste. For example, the store will be partially clad in composite rainscreen panels, which are fully weather resistant and require no maintenance. The panels also offer excellent thermal insulation and low thermal transmission properties, thereby saving on heating and cooling costs, and are fully recyclable or re-usable. The use of this product also contributes to a faster build time.
  - 4.15. It is the case that Lidl strive to specify highly energy efficient plant and equipment to operate the store. This includes air source heat pumps to provide heating and hot water and the operational refrigeration plant and equipment. For example, all refrigeration equipment will have a Class A energy rating. Furthermore, water efficient fixtures and fittings will be installed, such as aerated/low flow taps and dual flush WCs. An array of solar panels will be fitted to the roof to generate renewable energy to meet the store's demands.
  - 4.16. It is proposed to install an Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) that will provide rapid (30 mins) charging facilities for two vehicles at a time. The Proposed Site Layout plan identifies the location of the EVCP, which will be made available for use prior to the supermarket first opening for trade.
  - 4.17. Trips to the store by bicycle will be encouraged through the provision of customer cycle parking facilities adjacent to the glazed shop front, as shown on the proposed site layout plan, where they will benefit from high levels of natural surveillance and external lighting.
  - 4.18. A Travel Plan will be implemented to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of travel to reduce reliance upon travelling by car and, therefore, reduce emissions. Lidl has extensive experience of successfully implementing and operating travel plans from its stores and will actively implement measures and encourage members of staff to travel to and from work by non-car modes or to car share with colleagues.
  - 4.19. Lidl also prefers to employ members of staff from the local area in order to encourage a sense of pride and ownership in their place of work and to foster relationships between the store and the local community. It is, therefore, expected that the majority of staff will live within the local area and be able to travel to work by non-car modes. This objective will be
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supported through the provision of staff cycle parking facilities within the warehouse area and the presence of bus stops on both Church Road North and Childwall Road adjacent to the application site.

- 4.20. Environmental Best Practice is a core consideration in every aspect of Lidl's business, with the Company choosing to deal with contractors, suppliers and organisations that share the same ideals. For example, the refrigeration plant boasts low carbon emission ratings and operates without the need for CFC's meaning less harm to the environment. As a result of this commitment, Lidl is one of the first retailers in the UK to fully replace the refrigerant in all stores with a more environmentally friendly option that has zero ozone depletion potential. The proposed store will take a step further by utilising propane as a natural refrigerant, which has no negative effects on the environment.
- 4.21. Lidl pioneered the reuse of plastic shopping bags and has been encouraging customers to re-use bags since the company entered the UK market in 1994.
- 4.22. Overall, the new Lidl building is expected to achieve a Class A Energy Performance Certificate rating.

### **Waste Management**

- 4.23. Lidl is extremely conscious of waste produced and actively targets waste reduction across all of its activities, with actions taken to ensure that food is produced, sold and consumed in a manner that benefits producers, consumers and the planet. These measures include:
    - Reducing the overall volume of food waste, whilst also redirecting the waste that is generated to charity partners to help address food poverty or to anaerobic digestion to generate sustainable energy;
    - Reducing plastic packaging, increasing the recyclability of necessary plastic packaging and making it easier for customers to avoid waste and recycle more;
    - Supporting a supply chain that shares the same high values and partnering with organisations that seek to address issues caused by waste on a global scale.
  - 4.24. Lidl's commitment to waste minimisation runs far beyond the efficient management of waste generated by an individual store, whether that be the recycling of cardboard or plastics, or its pioneering role in encouraging the re-use of carrier bags. The company has taken a strong approach towards reducing food, operational and packaging waste, alongside other social and environmental objectives, with targets set for future improvement.
  - 4.25. With regard to operational waste management generated by the proposed store, the store will typically receive up to two deliveries per day, which will be sourced from the Regional Distribution Centre near Runcorn. When stock has been unloaded, waste materials will be loaded onto the delivery vehicle to be returned to the Regional Distribution Centre for recycling and disposal alongside any other store returns, such as stock transfers, pallets, bread crates and milk trolleys. It typically takes 45 to 60 minutes to unload the delivery vehicle at a store and to re-pack it with waste products and recycling.
  - 4.26. Prior to being loaded onto the vehicle, all waste will have been separated into its constituent parts in-store, with cardboard being compressed into bales up to 400% of the original volume and plastics separated and bagged. No waste is stored externally. Lidl has an extensive recycling policy, with approximately 90% of waste being diverted away from landfill sites.
  - 4.27. Waste management controls will also be employed during the construction phase, with Lidl typically appointing a principal contractor with experience of building Lidl stores. This ensures that the build process runs in a smooth and efficient manner that has lower
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potential for errors to occur and which generates less wastage. Contractors will be required to implement an effective waste management process, re-using and recycling materials where appropriate and minimising wastage during the construction phase.

### **Managing Environmental Impacts**

- 4.28. The accompanying technical reports provide an assessment of potential environmental impacts that may influence, or be influenced by, the development proposals.
- 4.29. The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy confirms that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, so has a low risk of flooding. The proposed drainage scheme will deliver material betterment over the existing surface water drainage arrangement.
- 4.30. The application is supported by an Air Quality Assessment, which demonstrates that the proposed development will not lead to an unacceptable risk from air pollution or to any breach in national objectives and is, therefore, compliant with relevant national policy.
- 4.31. Desktop and intrusive site investigations have been undertaken in order to determine the potential for land contamination to be present. However, the investigations indicate that it is unlikely that contamination is present at levels that would threaten human health or groundwater resources. Gas monitoring has confirmed that gas protection measures will not be required.
- 4.32. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal confirms that the existing buildings/site has limited ecological value, with there being no evidence of any protected species on site. Nevertheless, a more detailed assessment of the presence of bats has been undertaken due to the presence of features that might allow bats access to the building. However, the Bat Survey found there to be no evidence of bats using the existing building, with the only bats observed commuting past the site or foraging in neighbouring gardens. The proposed development is, therefore, highly unlikely to have an adverse impact upon any protected species.

### **Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses**

- 4.33. The proposed store will generally be positioned within the footprint of the existing building, which, in principle, ensures that its relationship with neighbouring uses will not change significantly to the existing position.
  - 4.34. In terms of general noise generated by the coming and going of customers, the planning application is supported by a noise assessment that considers the potential impact on neighbours resulting from the use of the car park. The assessment concludes that amenity impacts resulting from such activities will fall within acceptable limits. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the proposed store will be open to customers between 7am and 10pm Monday to Saturday and for a six-hour period between 10am and 6pm on Sundays. The proposal will attract customers and, therefore, generate activity within the car park during day-time hours only. The store's opening hours can be controlled by condition.
  - 4.35. The noise assessment also considers potential noise impacts generated by the proposed external plant. The plant compound will be located on the roof of the building, above the shopfront and checkout area. In this position, the design of the building will ensure that the plant area is fully enclosed, with the building forming an acoustic barrier to mitigate impacts on neighbours. This is confirmed in the noise assessment, which concludes that the plant noise will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers during the day or night.
  - 4.36. With regard to delivery noise, the noise impact assessment advises that deliveries may be undertaken during the daytime (0700 to 2300 hours) without resulting in an unacceptable amenity impact, subject to a 2.4m high acoustic barrier being erected along the length of the delivery dock and part of the southern site boundary. Night-time deliveries are,
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however, expected to result in unacceptable amenity impacts and, therefore, should be prohibited by an appropriate planning condition.

- 4.37. All internal and external lighting within the store and car park will be controlled by the store's Building Management System. External lighting will be controlled by timers and remote sensors. The timers ensure that the lighting can only come on during certain times of the day, with the remote sensors ensuring that lights only turn on when natural day light falls below a pre-set limit. The System will permit all external lighting to switch on 1 hour before store opening (to assist the arrival of staff) and switch off 1 hour after store closing (to assist staff departures). However, such lighting will only actually automatically switch on if natural light levels are sufficiently low.
- 4.38. Accordingly, internal and external lighting (including signage) will not be illuminated overnight at any time and will only be illuminated during the daytime if natural light levels fall below the pre-set sensor limit. Lighting associated with the proposal is, therefore, highly unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 4.39. It is, therefore, demonstrated that noise and activity generated by the proposed use will not result in any unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, subject to appropriate mitigation and controls, which can be secured by planning conditions.

### **Accessibility**

- 4.40. The accompanying Transport Assessment confirms that the application site is accessible by a choice of modes of travel, with a network of footways and cycle paths linking the site to surrounding residential areas and public transport nodes. It also demonstrates that the proposed development will not result in an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.
- 4.41. The proposal will provide 70 car parking spaces, to include 5 accessible spaces, 5 parent and child spaces and two electric vehicle charging points. It is also proposed to provide 4 cycle stands adjacent to the shopfront, where they will be accessible for users and benefit from high levels of natural surveillance. The 4 stands will provide 8 cycle parking spaces for customer use. Members of staff will be permitted to securely park their bicycle within the store warehouse area, with the warehouse having capacity to accommodate in excess of 10 bicycles. The proposals will, therefore, satisfy (and exceed) the Council's cycle parking standards.
- 4.42. The accompanying Travel Plan confirms how the Applicant will encourage journeys to and from the foodstore by non-car modes.
- 4.43. It has, therefore, been demonstrated that the proposed development is genuinely accessible by a choice of modes of travel. Furthermore, the Applicant will encourage journeys to be made by non-car modes and electric vehicles. The proposal will not result in an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.
- 4.44. The proposals will also be accessible for customers of all levels of mobility and DDA compliant. Measures will include the provision of level thresholds to the buildings, safe pedestrian routes across the car park with pedestrian priority, tactile paving and the location of the mobility parking spaces adjacent to the store entrance in a low trafficked environment to assist access to and from the Lidl store.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

- 4.45. The accompanying Tree Survey has found that the small number of existing semi-mature trees located within the application site are low quality (Category U) with limited life expectancy as a result of their poor location. In addition to the tree cover, raised planters that are located primarily along the road frontage accommodate a number of low growing shrubs. The existing landscaping has limited biodiversity value and makes little
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contribution towards the character of the area.

- 4.46. It is proposed to remove all existing vegetation and implement a scheme of new soft landscaping, which will comprise blocks of dense planting on the site perimeter. Plant species are proposed that will create variety and enhance biodiversity.

### **Conclusion**

- 4.47. This Planning Statement, together with the other reports accompanying the planning application, demonstrates that the proposed development fully satisfies the requirements of relevant planning policies. Therefore, in accordance with the NPPF and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the Local Planning Authority should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards the proposal.

## 5. Development Plan Heritage Policy Assessment

- 5.1. The application site is located within Conservation Area and in close proximity to two Listed buildings. As a result, it is necessary to consider the effects upon the heritage assets that may result from both the loss of the existing building and the introduction of the proposed building. An assessment of the proposal against the Development Plan policies that apply to these matters is presented below. A separate assessment of the proposals against NPPF heritage guidance is presented in Section 6.

### Loss of the Existing Building

- 5.2. Policy HD9 advises that proposals for the demolition of existing buildings within a Conservation Area will be assessed against the following:

- *the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and its contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area;*
- *the condition of the building and the cost of repairing or maintaining it;*
- *the adequacy of the efforts made to retain the building in use; and*
- *the contribution of any new proposal to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

- 5.3. These matters are considered in turn below.

#### Contribution of Existing Building to the Conservation Area

- 5.4. Whilst the Wavertree Village Conservation Area was designated in 1980, a character appraisal for the Area has not been prepared. Therefore, other than the fact that the application site has been include within the Conservation Area boundary, there is no existing review of the character of the Conservation Area or the contribution that the application site makes towards it.
- 5.5. Nevertheless, the accompanying Heritage Statement provides an assessment of the significance of the setting of the existing building. It is acknowledged that the building is large and visible, but that views of it include the mass of the poorer quality elevations. This detracts from the contribution it makes towards the character of the area. Overall, the Statement considers that the positive contributions that the building makes towards the local character are counter-balanced by negative impacts resulting from the changes and adaptations to the building and its poor overall condition. It is concluded that the building, therefore, makes a neutral contribution overall to the character of the Conservation Area.

#### Building Condition and Cost of Repair

- 5.6. As detailed at Section 2, the existing building is in a poor state of repair with there being an extensive list of essential works to the buildings structural fabric that are required in order to bring it back into a basic useable condition (i.e. structurally secure, water-tight and safe for occupation). The scope of works and associated costs are set out in the accompanying Structural Report and Development Costs Report, which are corroborated by the photographic evidence available on the project website: [wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk](http://wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk)
- 5.7. The need for such an extensive programme of works to be undertaken in order to make the building re-useable is unavoidable. The deteriorating condition of key structural elements must be addressed otherwise they will deteriorate further and potentially at an exponential
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rate. Indeed, a substantial package of works is required to address the existing water ingress issues that have caused the corrosion of the structural steelwork and reinforced concrete beams, the spalling of structural concrete and corrosion of concrete reinforcement bars. There is also an absolute need to remove approximately 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of asbestos within the building, to include the full roof covering of the original building.

- 5.8. It is also necessary to remove the curved art deco corner façade, which is a key feature of the building. The Structural Report advises that all three floors of this feature are in such poor structural condition that its retention is not feasible. Accordingly, the key external feature of the building must be removed and completely re-built. Together with other substantial works, the need for an extensive scope of rebuilding and repair should have a significant implication upon how the heritage impacts are considered.
- 5.9. The Development Costs Report estimates that investment of £4.18m is required in order to bring the existing building back into a basic useable condition. This cost is substantial and significantly exceeds the cost of delivering a typical new build discount foodstore.
- 5.10. Furthermore, there is an inherent risk associated with refurbishment projects, as it is impossible to fully understand the scope of works until extensive investigative works have been undertaken, typically during the construction phase. For example, at this stage, whilst reasonable allowances have been made to shotblast and treat all structural steelwork, until that steelwork is fully revealed (most is embedded in brick columns), the extent of corrosion will not be known, and it may be the case that sections must be replaced.
- 5.11. In addition to the basic build costs, additional investment will be required to fit-out the internal areas to facilitate occupation. However, such costs will vary by occupier so cannot be accurately taken into account at this stage. Further investment will also be required for ongoing maintenance, with the Structural Report indicating that measures to prevent water penetration may not be successful due to method of construction and materials used in the original build, and the inability to stop the corrosion of steelwork.
- 5.12. Taking these issues into account, on the assumption that Lidl's proposed investment could hypothetically be directed towards delivering a discount foodstore on the ground floor of the existing building, a new use for the upper floors of the building would need to deliver a capital investment in excess of £1m, excluding fit out costs, just to enable the required basic programme of works to commence. However, as the Marketing Report concludes, there are unlikely to be any end users that could viably sustain this initial investment, fit out and ongoing maintenance costs.
- 5.13. Evidence, therefore, confirms that the re-use of the existing building is not viable as a result of the poor existing physical condition of the building and the substantial investment required in order to facilitate its re-use.

#### Adequacy of Efforts to Retain the Building

- 5.14. The existing building is almost 90 years old and was originally constructed as a cinema. However, the cinema use ceased approximately 40 years ago, with a substantial package of works being subsequently implemented to facilitate the use of the ground floor area as a supermarket and, later, the use of the upper floors as squash courts, a bingo hall and, more recently, a snooker club. Accordingly, efforts were made to assist the re-occupation of the building following the closure of the cinema.
  - 5.15. However, the conversion works undertaken 40 years ago resulted in the removal of almost all of the internal fabric of the former cinema use at ground floor level, with substantial works also being undertaken above ground floor level to install a new first floor level across the cinema auditorium and to create a series of terraces from the two cinema balconies. A false ceiling has also been installed alongside an air conditioning system and other works.
  - 5.16. Internally, the historic works undertaken to convert the building have paid little respect to
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the original features of the building. Indeed, physical evidence indicates that the historic value of the former art deco cinema's interior was effectively lost up to 40 years ago.

- 5.17. Externally, it is also evident that the building has been subject to limited investment in its maintenance. As a result, water has penetrated the building in countless locations, causing brickwork to crack and fail, steelwork to corrode and concrete to spall. Indeed, from anecdotal evidence, it is understood that it was common for buckets to be placed throughout the Co-op store to collect water that had penetrated through the building. In a similar vein, there is evidence of buckets and guttering being used internally to collect water within the former snooker club.
- 5.18. It is, therefore, apparent that the efforts have been made to retain the building in use following the closure of the cinema. However, it has not been possible to secure a long term, viable use of the upper floors of the building, and the ground floor use has not proven to be sufficiently viable to deliver the essential investment in the fabric of the building to prolong its useable life span.
- 5.19. This situation is not unusual. During the golden age of the cinema in the 1930s and 1940s, multiple purpose built cinemas were built, most utilising the latest building construction techniques available at the time. However, the rise in popularity of television saw a continual decline in cinema audiences, with many closing down in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Those that did survive did so on a temporary basis until the advent of the cinema multiplex in the early 2000's. Indeed, there are a number of local examples whereby former cinemas have stood vacant for many years in an ever-deteriorating physical condition and with very limited, if any, prospect for re-occupation in a viable manner.
- 5.20. The Applicant acquired the site in April 2020. Whilst it was aware that the condition of the building was poor, it was prohibited from undertaking the necessary surveys to fully understand the true physical condition of the building. As part of the Applicant's consideration of the available options, it has commissioned commercial agents to provide advice on the potential uses that could theoretically occupy the upper floors and the likely capital return. The objective of this exercise was to determine whether bringing the existing building back into use, with a foodstore at ground floor and other uses(s) above, would be viable. The advice received is presented in the accompanying Marketing Report, which concludes that:  
  
*'There is limited demand for commercial premises in the area and the level of rent for leisure or community use, and the likely lengthy marketing void and rental concessions required, does not support refurbishment or redevelopment of the existing building'.*
- 5.21. This advice, when considered alongside the Development Cost Report, indicates that it is highly unlikely that an occupier for the upper floors of the building exists that would be capable of addressing the gap of at least £1m in viability (excluding any fit-out costs) to retain the existing building.

#### Contribution of the Proposal

- 5.22. The contribution that the proposed new build development will make towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is assessed in the accompanying Heritage Statement and reviewed below in the context of UDP Policy HD11. It is concluded that the proposed retail building will have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area as a whole, with a number of aspects being positive.

#### Policy HD9 Conclusion

- 5.23. In the context of UDP Policy HD9, it is, therefore, concluded that the overall contribution that the existing building makes to the character of the Wavertree Village Conservation Area is neutral, comprising a balance of positive and negative aspects.
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- 5.24. Whilst the demolition of the building is expected to result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, it is evident that the investment required just to make the building safe, water-tight and useable is significant. Furthermore, key elements of the building, particularly the corner feature, are in such poor condition that they cannot be viably repaired, and an element of demolition is, therefore, unavoidable.
- 5.25. The proposed new building seeks to mitigate the impact resulting from the loss of the existing building through design, with a bespoke design proposed that reflects the form and appearance of the existing building. Overall, the introduction of the proposal is also expected to result in a neutral impact on heritage assets.

### **Introduction of the Proposed Building**

- 5.26. UDP Policy HD11 confirms that proposals for new development within a Conservation Area will be assessed against the following criteria:
- *the development is of a high standard of design and materials, appropriate to their setting and context, which respect the character and appearance of the conservation area;*
  - *the development pays special attention to conserving the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character and does not introduce changes which would detract from the character or appearance of the area;*
  - *the proposal protects important views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area;*
  - *the proposal does not lead to the loss of open space or landscape features (trees and hedges) important to the character or appearance of the area;*
  - *the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, noise or environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area; and*
  - *the proposal has a satisfactory means of access and provides for car parking in a way which is sympathetic to the appearance of the conservation area.*
- 5.27. The proposal is assessed against each criterion below.

#### High Design Standard

- 5.28. The proposed development comprises a bespoke building that has been designed to relate to the setting and context of the application site. The proposed design takes direct cues from the design and appearance of the existing building and its art deco styling. These cues include materials and architectural details, such as recessed brick 'zip' detail to external columns, in addition to the curved glazing feature at the store entrance, with the proposal overall aiming to offer a similar design language to the existing building. Further details of the proposals are presented in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and on the Applicant's project website: [wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk](http://wavertree.expansion.lidl.co.uk)
- 5.29. The Heritage Statement provides an assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the surrounding heritage assets, concluding that it will have a neutral impact on the conservation area and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. This is achieved as a result of the high standard of design proposed.

#### Conservation of Essential Elements

- 5.30. The key design element of the existing building comprises the curved corner feature. The Structural Report has, however, identified this feature as being subject to significant deterioration and water damage, which has adversely impacted upon the integrity of the
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steel and concrete structure. This is visually evident from the spalling of the concrete, corrosion of steel reinforcement bars and the external condition of the building, where the tiled façade has delaminated.

- 5.31. The Structural Report concludes that *‘the full height of the reinforced concrete in the feature window is in such disrepair that the structural frame for this element would require reconstruction of its full height’* (section 3.2). Accordingly, it is not possible to conserve this existing key element of the existing building under any scenario.
- 5.32. In order to mitigate the loss of this feature, the proposed new store design seeks to deliver a curved corner feature in full height glazing to identify the entrance to the building and provide a visual focus for the scheme in the same manner as the existing feature. The proposed feature also offers a vertical emphasis with art deco styling and is complemented by protruding brick columns with recessed pattern detailing and brick corbelling, which all add to the design quality. The proposed design approach, therefore, seeks to mitigate the unavoidable loss of the key feature of the existing building.

#### Introduction of Change that Detracts from the Character and Appearance

- 5.33. The scale and mass of the existing building have a strong influence upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in the vicinity of the application site. However, this influence is not necessarily positive. As detailed in the Heritage Statement (Section 2.1), only the over-bearing, poor quality elevations of the existing building are seen on the approach towards the Conservation Area. The poor condition of the existing building also detracts from the local character.
- 5.34. The proposed building will have a significantly reduced height and mass compared to the existing building. This is considered to be a positive change, which will better reveal Picton Clock Tower as the primary heritage asset and landmark within the Conservation Area. The reduced building scale will also enhance the approach towards the Conservation Area along Church Road North and Childwall Road, removing the poor-quality elevations from views, with the proposed building being of an equivalent height to neighbouring dwellings, enhancing the amenity of the occupiers.
- 5.35. The proposals will also introduce a new, modern building of high-quality design and appropriate materials, that will uplift the appearance of the area in a manner that is sympathetic to the local character as a result of the design quality proposed. When compared to the existing dilapidated condition and physical appearance of the existing building, which can be expected to deteriorate further without substantial investment, the proposal will undoubtedly enhance the appearance of the of the Conservation Area.
- 5.36. In addition, the proposal will attract shoppers to the District Centre, who will create vibrancy and activity and animate the local character. Increased pedestrian activity will positively change the local character. More people using the District Centre will also enhance the potential for wider investment and improvements to its character and appearance. Indeed, the proposal could act as a catalyst for investment by generating footfall and creating opportunities for other local businesses to expand their customer base. With enhanced viability, investment in the physical environment will be more likely in principle, and more likely to be of sufficient quality to successfully enhance the character and appearance of the local area.
- 5.37. Therefore, the proposal will introduce change that will directly enhance the character and appearance of the application site and its surroundings, whilst also having potential to indirectly encourage positive change elsewhere within the Conservation Area.

#### Protection of Important Views

- 5.38. In the absence of a character appraisal of the Conservation Area, there are no views in the Conservation Area that are confirmed by the Local Planning Authority to be of importance.
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- 5.39. Nevertheless, the view of Picton Clock Tower from along the High Street comprises a key view within the Conservation Area. The existing cinema building on the application site is not apparent in more distant views of the Clock Tower, only being gradually revealed the approach towards it. It is the side elevation to Childwall Road that is gradually revealed, which presents a solid brick mass that is of limited value to the view. Indeed, the significant mass of the former cinema building currently competes with, and detracts from, the setting of the Listed Clock Tower.
- 5.40. The reduced mass of the proposed building will ensure that the Clock Tower is the key feature in views along the High Street. It will also ensure that views into the Conservation Area are enhanced on the approaches from Church Road North and Childwall Road. Views within and of the heritage assets will, therefore, be enhanced.

#### Loss of Open Space or Important Landscape Features

- 5.41. The proposed development will not result in the loss of any open space or important landscape features and will not, therefore, have an unacceptable heritage impact in this regard.

#### Compatibility with Character of Area

- 5.42. The application site is located within Wavertree High Street District Centre, where planning policies at all levels seek to focus the delivery of new retail development. The principle of the proposed development in this location, therefore, receives unequivocal policy support.
- 5.43. Furthermore, the application site has accommodated a foodstore operation for a period of approximately 40 years. Indeed, the site has been in active use as a supermarket for the same period of time as it was a cinema.
- 5.44. The proposal is, therefore, inherently compatible with the character of the area.

#### Access and Parking

- 5.45. The function of the proposed development in terms of how it is accessed, and its parking provision, is similar to the function of the site established by other supermarket operators over the past 40 years. All vehicles will enter and exit the site from a priority junction to Church Road North, with a separate pedestrian access taken from the Childwall Road frontage. Customer car parking will be located along the site boundary with the highway, set behind a brick wall on the site boundary, which is again identical to the existing position.
- 5.46. The proposed building will, however, have a smaller footprint compared to the existing, which enables more on-site car parking to be accommodated. As a result, the proposals will provide 70 parking spaces in total, which is 17 more than the existing offer. The accompanying Transport Assessment demonstrates that this level of provision is sufficient to meet the operational requirements of the proposal. The parking facility will be available free of charge for a period of 90 minutes, which will allow Lidl customers to also visit other shops and services in the District Centre alongside their food shopping. The car park facility will, therefore, support the function of the District Centre as a whole.

#### Policy HD11 Conclusion

- 5.47. It has been demonstrated that the proposal satisfies the requirements of Policy HD11. A building of suitably high-quality design is proposed, with the detailed design being directly informed by the character and appearance of the existing building and its wider setting. Specific design cues seek to mitigate the loss of the existing building, with the proposal also delivering a number of advantages over the existing building and providing an appropriate response to local heritage assets, enhancing their value where possible. The requirements of Policy HD11 have, therefore, been satisfied in a positive manner.
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**Impact on the Character and Setting of Listed Buildings**

- 5.48. In addition to impact of the proposal upon the Conservation Area, as assessed above, UDP Policy HD5 advises that development affecting the setting of a listed building must preserve the setting and important views of the building. Matters that will be taken into consideration include the design and siting of new development, control over use and the preservation of trees and landscape features.
- 5.49. The requirements of Policy HD5 have been addressed above in the context of Policies HD9 and HD11, supported by the Heritage Statement, which concludes that the impact of both the loss of the existing building and the introduction of the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the setting of any Listed Building.

**Conclusion**

- 5.50. It can be concluded that the proposals satisfy the specific requirements of the relevant heritage policies set out in the Development Plan. Whilst the proposal will introduce change within a Conservation area and within the setting of Listed Buildings, it will not result in substantial harm to the value of those interests. Where a proposal will result in less than substantial harm, it is appropriate to consider the public benefits that it will deliver in the context of NPPF guidance. This assessment is presented in the following section, which should be read alongside the Heritage Statement.
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## 6. NPPF Heritage Guidance Assessment

- 6.1. The proposed development will result in the loss of a non-designated building located within a Conservation Area and the introduction of a new building. The heritage implications resulting from the proposal have been assessed in Section 5 and the accompanying Heritage Statement, with it being concluded that they would not result in substantial harm to a heritage asset.
- 6.2. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that, where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits derived from the development proposal. The public benefits derived from the proposed development are, therefore, set out below in accordance with the three dimensions of sustainable development.

### Economic Benefits

- 6.3. Both the adopted Liverpool UDP and emerging Local Plan offer **inherent support for retail development that will protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres**. The application site is located within Wavertree High Street District Centre and, therefore, occupies a preferred location for retail development. **The proposed foodstore will form an integral part of the District Centre** and will bring a number of positive direct and indirect impacts upon the vitality and viability of the District Centre.
  - 6.4. The proposal will deliver much needed in-centre investment by a Top 4 global food retailer on a site that is vacant and does not currently create any existing jobs or deliver any other economic benefits. The proposed investment will **extend the diversity of uses in the District Centre and the range and choice of goods it offers**, thereby making the Centre a more attractive shopping destination. Indeed, the proposed store will **form the anchor retail use in the Centre**.
  - 6.5. By attracting shoppers directly to the proposed Lidl store, the proposal will **increase footfall in the District Centre**. However, the Lidl store will not represent a ‘one-stop’ shopping destination, with the store’s offer being limited to approximately 2,500 products lines, the vast majority of which will comprise own brand goods. As a result, **shoppers at the store are likely to also visit other shops and services** to meet their daily or weekly shopping needs. Other shops, services and businesses within Wavertree District Centre, such as newsagents, chemists, butchers, post offices and cafes, will be well-positioned to offer good and services that the Lidl store will not offer.
  - 6.6. Accordingly, the proposed store will directly and indirectly generate increased footfall in the District Centre, providing existing businesses with the opportunity to attract more customers and enhance their economic viability. This increased viability will also attract new businesses to Wavertree, which will, in turn, further enhance footfall and viability. In short, **the District Centre will be better able to attract and sustain business growth and economic activity**.
  - 6.7. The redevelopment of the site will allow the layout to make best-use of the available space, with a 70-space shopper car park and cycle parking facilities being proposed. The District Centre currently has limited off-street car parking provision, so the proposed Lidl car park, which will be available free of charge for a period of up to 90 minutes, will support the Centre as a whole and help to **ease congestion caused by on-street parking**.
  - 6.8. Enhancing the vitality and viability of Wavertree District Centre and the way it functions is clearly in the public interest and, therefore, the significant positive contribution the proposed retail development will make towards sustaining the health of the town centre is
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a considerable public benefit.

- 6.9. In addition to this, the proposal will **reverse the adverse economic effects resulting from the closure of the Co-op store**, which has left the local community without a local main food shopping destination. The Lidl store will re-provide this essential facility, bringing increased choice and competition to the benefit of local consumers.
- 6.10. Furthermore, the **deep discount format has been recognised as bringing wide range of benefits to local communities**. Indeed, Lidl appeal cases offer significant support to the benefits that a Lidl store can bring to deprived areas through increased choice, high quality offer and discounted prices. The benefits are not limited to deprived areas, however, with Lidl stores throughout the Country experiencing increased custom as a result of the rising cost of food.
- 6.11. **The proposed store will also create jobs**, with up to 30 members of staff (20 FTE) needed in order to operate the store in an efficient manner. Both full and part-time roles will be offered, with part-time hours ranging from 9 – 36 hours. Lidl do not offer zero-hour contracts. The range of positions will, therefore, offer flexibility in the number of hours worked, and are expected to appeal to a wide range of job seekers.
- 6.12. All staff will benefit from Lidl's commitment to paying the **Real Living Wage** (currently £9.50/hour), as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, which exceeds the national minimum wage. Staff will be provided with **training and genuine opportunities for career progression** within the Company. Indeed, many of Lidl's non-sales staff started employment on the shop floor and have progressed to other roles in the company, with a wide range of roles being available, in principle, on a global scale. The current Chief Executive of Lidl Great Britain Ltd is testament to this commitment, having started work on the shop floor and progressing through the business to his present position. All staff will also have the benefit of **job security**.
- 6.13. The economic benefits of the proposal are, therefore, considerable and will directly and indirectly benefit wide sections of the local community.

### **Environmental Benefits**

- 6.14. The existing building within the application site was originally erected as a cinema, which opened in 1939. However, the cinema use ceased in 1979 and for the next 41 years, the building was occupied at ground floor level as a supermarket, with a bingo hall first occupying the upper floors, followed by a snooker club. A substantial programme of works was implemented in order to convert the former cinema to the supermarket and bingo/snooker club, to include the removal and alteration of significant internal building fabric associated with the cinema use. The most significant of these works are at ground floor level, with the majority of the original cinema building fabric having been completely removed.
  - 6.15. It is evident from physical inspection that the building has been subject to limited, if any, maintenance or investment for a number of decades. As a result, a catalogue of issues has mounted up, which require substantial investment to rectify. Further details of these issues are provided in the Structural Appraisal that accompanied this planning application. Overall, it is evident that the physical condition of the building is so poor that a level of investment in excess of £4.18m is expected to be required just to bring the existing building into a useable condition (i.e. structurally sound and watertight, but excluding any fitout costs for an end user). Such costs are extremely prohibitive to the future use of the building, with it being highly unlikely that an end user(s) could be identified that could sustain the high costs of the necessary works in a viable manner. Accordingly, there is **no known optimum viable use for the existing building**.
  - 6.16. In the absence of a viable use of the existing building, it is highly likely that the physical condition of the building will deteriorate further, potentially at an exponential rate. Such
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outcomes are not uncommon, with there being several local examples of former cinema buildings being incapable of supporting viable re-use and, therefore, standing vacant and unused in the long term.

- 6.17. The proposed development provides a **deliverable solution that will prevent the application site from becoming a problem site**. It is in the public interest to grasp this opportunity.
  - 6.18. The proposals will deliver a new, high quality building. The proposed building is of a non-standard, bespoke design that seeks to appropriately respond to the historic cinema use and reflect the contribution it makes towards the character of the area. The scale and mass of the proposed building has, however, been reduced compared to the existing in order to create a positive relationship with neighbouring residential dwellings, which are currently over-whelmed by the mass of the existing structure, the shadows it casts and the natural light it blocks. The **amenity of neighbouring occupiers will be enhanced**.
  - 6.19. It is significant that the applicant proposed to deliver a bespoke building of high-quality design, not a standard store. Accordingly, notwithstanding the balance of public benefits outweighing the less than substantial heritage impact, **the Applicant still seeks to mitigate the heritage impact as much as possible**.
  - 6.20. The scale and mass of the proposed building will also ensure that **Picton Clock Tower, a Grade II Listed Building, benefits from increased visibility and legibility**. This is an appropriate design response.
  - 6.21. The proposed building will **be energy efficient and operationally efficient, with opportunities to reduce energy consumption, use energy efficient materials and equipment, generate renewable energy and enhance operational efficiency being maximised**. Significantly, the proposals will utilise the building in an efficient manner. This cannot be said of the existing building, which comprises a significant internal volume above ground floor level, whereby Lidl's theoretical occupation of the ground floor area would leave a large void at upper levels for which there is no viable use.
  - 6.22. The re-use of the existing building is likely to consume more energy, not only in terms of the substantial programme of works required to address the existing physical issues in order to bring it back into useable condition, but also the long-term management and maintenance of the structure. In comparison, the proposed building will **satisfy and exceed building regulations requirements for reducing the consumption of fuel and power** and will require very limited ongoing maintenance.
  - 6.23. It has been demonstrated, above, how the proposal has direct and indirect potential to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of Wavertree High Street District Centre in economic terms. However, this could also stimulate investment in the local environment, with landlords/owners being encouraged to enhance the physical quality of accommodation available, delivering an **overall enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area**.
  - 6.24. The planning application is accompanied by a range of professional reports that detail the existing environmental conditions on the site and how matters of concern will be addressed to the public's benefit. It is demonstrated that the proposed development will **reduce the need to travel by car**. The application site represents a highly accessible and sustainable location that is within easy walking distance for many residents and readily accessible by bus. Furthermore, the proposal will encourage trips on foot and by bicycle, thereby making a valid contribution towards **reducing vehicle emissions and providing a genuine choice of modes of travel**. This will be further assisted by the provision of two Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
  - 6.25. The proposed development will, therefore, deliver a range of environmental benefits that will benefit the local area and wider sustainability and climate change objectives.
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## Social Benefits

- 6.26. The proposed deep discount foodstore format has been recognised as bringing wide range of benefits to local communities. Indeed, Lidl appeal cases offer significant support to the benefits that a Lidl store can bring through **increased choice, high quality offer and discounted prices**. The offer will include a range of **affordable healthy eating options**, which will assist households to eat well on a range of budgets.
- 6.27. The proposed store will particularly benefit local residents that do not have access to a private car and who have found it challenging to meet their day-to-day and weekly shopping needs following the closure of the Co-op store in April 2020. The proposal is located within walking distance from a substantial number of homes, and is readily accessible by bicycle and public transport, and will **reduce the need for local households to travel outside the local area to meet their shopping requirements**.
- 6.28. Lidl is keen for its stores to **function as part of the local community** and to support local charities and initiatives. Such actions can include **working with local charities, food banks, community cafes and soup kitchens to distribute food surpluses at a store to those in need**.
- 6.29. As detailed above, the proposal has potential to **create 30 employment opportunities**, with a range of working hours being offered that will be attractive to local job seekers. With Lidl offering generous rates of pay, training, opportunities for career progression and job security, the proposal can enhance the livelihoods of those securing employment at the store.
- 6.30. **Lidl will engage with Liverpool in Work to ensure that local job seekers are actively encouraged to apply for a position at the store**. It is expected that the majority, if not all, of the members of staff at the store will be local people living in the local area. The recruitment process will commence 4-6 months prior to store opening to ensure that all staff gain sufficient training and experience at a nearby existing store prior to the opening of the proposed new store.
- 6.31. The proposal, therefore, offers distinct social benefits to shoppers from all sections of the local community, to local job seekers and to vulnerable members of the community in need of support.

## Conclusion

- 6.32. It has been concluded that the loss of the existing building on the application site will result in *'less than substantial harm'* to the heritage value of the Conservation Area within which it is located. However, it is proposed to mitigate this harm by the design and appearance of the proposed building and the public benefits that will be derived directly and indirectly by the proposed discount foodstore.
- 6.33. It has been demonstrated that the proposal will deliver economic, physical and social benefits to the public and that, cumulatively, these benefits will be substantial. The benefits will also be wider ranging, with neighbouring residents, local businesses, job seekers and local charities expected to benefit from the proposals, in addition to local shoppers. The harm to heritage assets that is necessary in order to bring the application site back into use is, therefore, successfully mitigated by the delivery of that use, thereby satisfying the requirements of Development Plan policies and the NPPF.
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## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application made on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Ltd to deliver a new discount foodstore on a site at the junction of Church Road North and Childwall Road, adjacent to Picton Clock Tower, in Wavertree High Street District Centre.
  - 7.2. The application site accommodates a vacant building that was originally erected as the Abbey Cinema in 1939. However, the cinema closed down 40 years later, and the building was subsequently converted into a supermarket at ground floor level, with squash courts, a bingo hall and, more recently, a snooker club occupying the upper floors. The conversion works resulted in the significant destruction, alteration and adaption of the original internal fabric of the building. This will have been evident to shoppers at the supermarket, with the ground floor conversion works to accommodate the Lennons supermarket obliterating the original cinema foyer and stalls, and the creation of an upper floor infilling the auditorium void between the balcony and the screen. The use of the upper floors of the building ceased several years ago, with the ground floor supermarket, most recently operated by Co-op, closing in April 2020.
  - 7.3. Since it gained control of the site in May 2020, the Applicant has engaged in a process of investigating the physical condition of the building and exploring the options for the re-use or redevelopment of the building and site. This exercise has revealed that the physical condition of the former cinema building is very poor, with the structural steel being subject to extensive corrosion and the reinforced concrete structure of the main curved corner feature above the entrance being unviable to repair and requiring demolition, amongst multiple other issues. Expert advice indicates that investment in excess of £4.18m is required just to make the existing building safe, watertight and useable, with additional investment required to fit out the building for an end user(s) and to support a programme of on-going maintenance.
  - 7.4. Lidl is unable to sustain the level of investment required in isolation, and commercial agents have advised that it is highly unlikely that an occupier for the upper floors can be secured that could fill the significant gap in financial viability. As a result, it has been concluded that there is no optimum viable use for the existing building. Demolition is, therefore, proposed in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the site to deliver a new Lidl discount foodstore.
  - 7.5. The proposed building will have a bespoke design that seeks to mitigate impacts upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, which comprises a Conservation Area and accommodates a number of Listed Buildings. It is demonstrated by the accompanying Heritage Statement and herein that the proposal satisfies the requirements of heritage policies set out in the Development Plan.
  - 7.6. It is also demonstrated that the proposal will deliver a wide range of direct and indirect public benefits for local people and businesses. These include enhancing the vitality and viability of Wavertree High Street District Centre by generating footfall and stimulating conditions for business growth and investment, which could encourage wider investment that enhances the character of the Conservation Area. Overall, the compelling public benefits that can be secured by the proposal more than outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the demolition of the existing building.
  - 7.7. The application is supported by a range of specialist technical reports that provide a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the impacts of the proposal. It is demonstrated that no unacceptable impacts will result, either on the local highway network, on the environment or natural resources, or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal
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will deliver sustainable development that is energy efficient and responds to climate change in an appropriate and meaningful manner.

- 7.8. When considered as a whole, the planning balance weighs in favour of the proposals, which will deliver a range of economic, environmental and social benefits, without any unacceptable adverse consequences. Therefore, in accordance with the NPPF and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the Local Planning Authority should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards the proposals and seek to grant planning permission without delay.
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# Appendix 1

## **Local Employment Agreement – Lidl and <<Local Planning Authority>>**

For the purposes of this Plan the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

**“Operator”** means Lidl Great Britain Ltd and its successors in title.

**“Council”** means <<Local Planning Authority>>.

**“Partners”** means the Operator and the Council plus other parties whose nomination and appointment shall be agreed between the Operator and the Council.

**“Store”** means the retail premises authorised by the Planning Permission.

**“Pre-Opening Training and Recruitment Plan (POTP)”** means the Initial Training & Recruitment Plan Monitoring including pre-employment training and support initiatives targeted at providing a qualified and suitable stream of applicants for new jobs at the Store and any subsequent vacancies.

**“Operational Training and Recruitment Plan (OTRP)”** means the Post-Opening Training Recruitment Plan Monitoring.

**“Long term unemployment”** means anyone unemployed for at least 6 months.

**“Local ward unemployment”** means unemployment in neighbouring wards of the development and may include other key priority wards in the local area.

**“Local unemployment”** means unemployment throughout the <<Local Planning Authority Administrative Area>>.

### **The Agreement**

1. The Operator shall give the Council three (3) months prior written notice of the date on which the Store is to be opened to the public for trading.
2. The stores Pre-Opening Training & Recruitment Plan shall be submitted in draft on commencement of store development on the site with willingness from the operator to adjust /amend the training plan/recruitment plan following feedback from partners, where this is viable (to be agreed by both the Council and the operator). Comments and amendments will be made in a timely fashion with final approval being agreed within six (6) weeks of the original submission (or such other periods as the Council may approve in writing).
3. The Operator shall provide Jobcentre Plus with two (2) months prior written notice of the date on which it will begin recruitment for the Store and will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that 20% of all in-store positions are allocated to be filled by the long term unemployed. The operator will liaise with the Council and Jobcentre Plus during the recruitment programme with a view to achieving a figure of 20%.

4. The Operator shall liaise and consult (and take due regard to such consultation responses) with the Council's <<Economic Regeneration Team>> and Jobcentre Plus and other appropriate partner(s) nominated by the Council ("the Partners") and work together with these partners to promote available opportunities and where possible, pre-employment training and support targeted to providing a qualified and suitable stream of applicants for all new jobs created at the Store and any subsequent vacancies. (Partners may include training providers, <<TBC>>).
5. Within two (2) months following the Store opening date the Operator shall provide the Council's <<Economic Regeneration Team>> with an analysis of the Pre-Opening Training Plan (POTP) including particulars of all jobseekers offered employment at the store, including those accepting the offer and those rejecting it. On completion of recruitment the operator will provide the Council with a document detailing the geographical extent of recruitment, including a separate post code analysis and targets met listed in paragraph 2.
6. Within the six (6) month period following the delivery of the completed Pre-Opening Training Plan (POTP) the operator shall submit the Operational Training and Recruitment Plan (OTRP) to the <<Economic Regeneration Team>> at the Council to inform the partners on how the store is maintaining ongoing local recruitment and training opportunities.
7. The OTRP will aim to ensure the operator continues to liaise with the Council, Jobcentre Plus and partners to actively promote ongoing vacancies across the <<Local Planning Authority Administrative Area>>, including wards known to have high unemployment / worklessness.