



**MORRISONS**

North Dorset District Council  
Development Control Services  
Nordon  
Salisbury Road  
Blandford Forum  
DT11 7LL

FAO: Hannah Smith

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013

Dear Ms Smith

LPA Ref. 2/2011/1439/PLNG: Land off Blandford Heights / Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset

We write in respect of the above planning application which relates to the development of land off Blandford Heights / Shaftesbury Lane for a mixed use development including an Asda superstore (Use Class A1) of 3,860sq.m (2,331sq.m net sales) and 2,300sq.m of employment floorspace consisting of 36 employment units (1,561sq.m GIA).

Morrisons owns and has operated a town centre retail store at West Street, in Blandford Forum town centre since November 2008. The store makes a valuable contribution to the town centre, playing an important role in the retail hierarchy by providing for the convenience shopping needs of the town.

As a key stakeholder in the town centre Morrisons has considerable interest in ensuring the vitality and vitality of Blandford Forum and has been monitoring the progression of the above planning application.

Morrisons was pleased to note the Officer's recommendation for refusal at the previous committee (26.03.13) and so did not consider it necessary to make a representation earlier. However, we are surprised and disappointed that the Committee is now minded to approve the planning application against officer recommendation, subject to mitigation measures. We observe from the 26.03.13 Committee Report, analysis by the Councils retail consultants, MWA, and application submitted by the applicant the following:

- The Morrisons store acts as an anchor store in the town centre
- The proposal would directly impact on the town centre, in particular the Morrisons store and the convenience sector.

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- It is predicted that the Morrisons store will experience a reduction in convenience goods trade of approximately £3.0m equating to a cumulative impact of 23.8%.
- It is predicted that the town centre will experience a reduction of £3.79m equating to a cumulative impact of 21.9%.
- The proposals would also impact on comparison goods within the centre with a predicted trade draw of 35%, suggesting a diversion of £1.3m from the town centre by 2016.
- The Committee Report concludes that the proposed mitigation measures would not be capable of mitigating the cumulative significant adverse impact on the town centre.


From our 4.5 years of trading experience in Blandford Forum and having regard to the above, we share the officer's assessment of the application in the Committee Report. We agree with the adverse predictions, if not the detailed extent of impact expressed, that the proposed Asda superstore, in addition to the recently approved Tesco extension at Stour Park less than 1 mile from the town centre, will have a significant adverse impact on the town centre.

Despite the proposed mitigation measures, which do not appear to be resolved, deliverable or wholly related to the impact of the development, Morrisons considers that the proposed out-of-centre store, which includes a third of floorspace for the sale of non-grocery comparison goods, is of such a scale that it will have a significant impact on Morrisons' in-centre trade and turnover and will compete directly with the town centres' retail offer, which, due to its size, is particularly vulnerable to an out-of-centre retail development of this scale.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal poses a significant threat to the vitality and viability of Blandford Forum town centre and should be refused.

We urge the Committee to consider the points raised above and refuse permission for this harmful development proposal.

Yours sincerely

  
 David Bevan  
 Development Executive  
 Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC