



Planning Potential successfully secured planning permission for Aldi's new flagship store on the Isle of Sheppey, a relocation of their existing store in Sheerness which was dated and no longer fit for purpose.

Planning Potential were instructed by Aldi Stores Ltd. to secure permission for relocation of their existing store in Sheerness Town Centre to a new location in Queenborough to provide a larger, flagship store next to the South East regional distribution centre. The proposals enabled Aldi's continued presence on the Island for many years to come, whilst retaining and creating new local jobs.

Planning Potential initially led pre-application discussions with Swale Borough Council, outlining the constraints associated with Aldi's existing store reasons for relocation, as well as setting out the benefits of the relocated store including retention of the Aldi offer on the island. Justification was also provided in respect of developing the relocation site, which was a greenfield site, located out of centre and subject to an employment allocation.

Planning Potential managed the multi-disciplinary project team to ensure a comprehensive submission. We liaised and negotiated with Officers on Aldi's behalf, co-ordinating responses to issues raised, ensuring robust justification was provided on all matters including retail, highways, ecology, design and amenity, flooding and sustainability. We also undertook an extensive public engagement programme, which generated significant local support for the proposals. Officers recommended approval and the application was approved at committee.

The application was subject to legal challenge from a competitor, which resulted in the application being re-assessed by Swale under the continued threat of anti-competitive objections. We co-ordinated a robust submission to update on all matters, including a further bespoke retail impact analysis that considered a range of scenarios and potential impacts with and without Aldi continuing to trade on the Island. This was further informed by our deep understanding of local issues and trading patterns on the Island. Despite this, third-party consultants appointed by the council considered that potential impact could be unacceptable, and the application was recommended for refusal. We responded to this during our presentation to planning committee, and our bespoke assessment of local issues was recognised by members who understood that rather than having a negative impact, the proposals would help to boost the local economy. We worked closely with the engagement team to ensure that messaging was informed by the planning evidence.

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Thanks to the robustness of approach, extent of engagement that had been undertaken throughout the entire process and in the lead up to Committee, and as permission had previously been granted for the scheme, members recognised the benefits of the proposals for the Island and again resolved to grant planning permission.

The robust planning case and reasoned justification for granting planning permission further helped ensure that no further legal challenges were brought.

### Summary of achievements

- Coordination of pre-application discussions with the LPA
- Coordination of planning application preparation and submission, including project management of the consultant team
- Production of bespoke retail impact assessment
- Sustained efforts to build a strong relationship with the LPA and local stakeholders throughout the process
- Extensive and co-ordinated planning and communications approach, securing significant support from local politicians and the community
- Overturning Officers recommendation to secure resolution to grant at planning committee
- Successfully overcoming third-party challenge