

Design & Access Statement

Design and Access Statement for the Proposed New Lidl Food Store,
Briton Ferry Road,
Neath
January 2022

(prepared on behalf of Lidl)



Introduction

Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Ltd to support a full planning application for the proposed new Lidl store at Briton Ferry Road. The site relating to this application is located off Briton Ferry Road A474.

The supporting information submitted within the application site sets out the rationale of the proposal to replace an existing store. This existing store is too small to meet customer expectations and is constrained in terms of size. In addition, the existing store is inefficient in regards to warehouse operations. Proposals for the new store strive to alleviate the problems presented by the existing store.

Given Lidl's commitment to invest in Neath, the proposed development will, if consented, be constructed at the earliest opportunity. As a direct consequence of this, it will boost the local area's retail offering.

The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to explain the approach of the design that has been adopted in the application submitted.

This document provides information on the proposals and has been put together for the local planning authority, elected members, statutory and non-statutory consultees, and local residents. The Design and Access Statement aims to provide information and construct an analysis of the application site. It will also show the surrounding areas and the positive links between the proposed site and the existing surroundings. Furthermore it identifies all the constraints and opportunities relating to the development of the site, along with key design principles.

This Design and Access Statement responds to the requirements of Planning Policy Wales:

"The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales".

The Design and Access Statement has been formatted to conform to the guidance notes of the Design Commission for Wales: Design and Access Statement in Wales (2017) and will be addressing the following items:

- 1) Design Context
- 2) Site Context
- 3) Design Proposals
- 4) Access Proposals
- 5) Sustainability

The Design and Access Statement should be analysed in conjunction with:

1. The submitted Full Planning Application drawings National Policy and Best Practice Advice and Guidance, outlining the importance of these guidelines and form the context for our design proposals
2. Local Council Policy, including supplementary guidance

Planning Policy Appraisal

This section of the report outlines the planning policy framework relevant to the planning application. It sets out the policy context at both national and local levels focusing in particular on those policies relating to design and access.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales was adopted in February 2021 and sets out the framework and direction of development in Wales for the next 20 years. Policies of particular relevance to the application Site and proposals are summarised below:

1) Policy 6 'Town Centre First' states: "Significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities must be located within town and city centres. They should have good access by public transport to and from the whole town or city and, where appropriate, the wider region. A sequential approach must be used to inform the identification of the best location for these developments and they should be identified in Strategic and Local Development Plans."

1.1). The supporting text notes that "This policy applies to developments of a significant scale, which can broadly be defined as where the facility will serve a town, city or region-wide catchment." and so arguably does not apply to the proposed development which actually results in a net reduction of retail floorspace.

1.2) Policy 9 'Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure' notes the importance of enhancing ecosystems, biodiversity and green infrastructure when considering approaches to development proposals through nature-based methods.

1.3) Policy 12 'Regional Connectivity' refers to improving the connectivity in urban areas by integrating active and sustainable travel and public transport. Active travel is encouraged in all new developments in the form of walking and cycling to promote a reduction in the reliance of the private car.

Local Development Plan

The Neath Port Talbot LDP (2011-2026) was adopted on 27th January 2016. The LDP came into force upon its adoption. The Neath Port Talbot LDP is the primary planning policy document for the County Borough. It sets out the planning policies and land use allocations that will shape the future of the County Borough area and will guide development management decisions. The LDP replaces the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Development Plan (2008). Within the LDP, the site falls within development limits within the town centre but is unallocated for any particular use, it is not within a conservation area.

Overarching Policies within the LDP include;

- **SP1 - Strategic Policy Climate Change**
- **SP2 - Strategic Policy Health**
- **SP3 - Strategic Policy Sustainable Communities**
- **SC1 – Settlement Limits SC2 – Protection of Existing Community Facilities**
- **SP4 - Strategic Policy Infrastructure**

Policies SP1 to SP4 and associated detailed policies are overarching policies relating to matters considered to be of primary importance for the whole County Borough. They set out measures that will be implemented through all themes and topic areas of the LDP.

Policy BE1 Design

“All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places”.

Policy TR2 asserts that development proposals will only be permitted where the following criteria are satisfied:

- The development does not compromise the safe and effective use of the highway network or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation
 - Appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities are provided and the access arrangements for the site allow for the safe manoeuvring of service vehicles associated with the planned use
 - The development is accessible by a range of travel means, including public transport and safe cycle and pedestrian routes
 - Transport Statement and Travel Plans are provided for developments that are likely to create significant traffic generation
-

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

Planning Policy Wales sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Chapter of the document titled 'Planning for Retail and Town Centres', describes the Welsh Government's objectives for these centres. The proposed food store complies with a number of the objectives listed in this section, as it will provide a secure, accessible, efficient, competitive and innovative retail provision for the local community. It will also enhance the vitality of the area, as the new larger store will improve the attractiveness and character of the area which will help to draw in trade and therefore contribute to the viability of the local community.

The development is suitably scaled to be no larger than necessary to address identified storage and staff needs and improve the existing store. Moreover, the extended store will be better equipped to meet Lidl's operational requirements, modern day staff requirements and better serve local shopping needs.

The proposed sales floor space is modest and is not anticipated to lead to any material change in existing shopping patterns. The store will continue to trade on a like for like basis with other large food stores; the majority of which lie out of centre. Based on a quantitative assessment of trading effects no significant adverse impact on in centre turnover and trade is anticipated.

The proposed development is not likely to lead to any significant adverse impact on existing/ committed or planned investment in, or the vitality and viability of, Neath town centre.

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)

Policy D4 states that transport assessments should be secured for developments that generate significant levels of movement or are likely to have significant effects on existing patterns of movement. It also provides a threshold of over 1000 m² gross floor area for retail food development, above which a transport assessment will be required.

Please see the Transport Statement submitted with the application for further details.

Introduction

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to explain the design process behind the development proposals and provide justification for the scheme.

The Design and Access Statement forms an integral part of the full planning application submission and should be read in conjunction with other supporting documentation.

The Design and Access Statement provides important and detailed information about the scheme and has been written for a wide target audience, including the Local Planning Authority, Local Residents, Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees and Elected Members.

The document takes the reader through the various design stages of the scheme and specifically, provides information relating to the following elements:

Assessment

An analysis of the application site and its surroundings both in physical, social and economic terms. It is also important to consider the planning policy context relevant to the site's redevelopment.

Involvement

Information is provided on the groups and people that have been consulted on the development and that have influenced the final design of the scheme.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the information collected at the "Assessment" and "Involvement" stages takes place. Based on this information, the Design and Access Statement provides an identification of the constraints and opportunities relating to the redevelopment of the site, and identification of the key development principles.

The Site - Assessment

Current Site

The application site extends to approximately 2.76 Acres /1.11Hectares. The principle frontage is onto the vehicle parking adjacent to Briton Ferry Road. The topography of the site is predominantly flat with a small incline to the south boundary.

At present the application site currently has a Lidl store as well as Pound Stretcher and gym with customer parking. Proposals are made for the new Lidl store and new car park



Aerial Image of the existing site with the existing buildings

The Site - Assessment

Access

The existing vehicle access into the site is from Briton Ferry Road, which allows a compliant ingress and egress. The site is accessible via sustainable modes of travel with infrastructure to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements between the site and local residential areas. Pedestrian walkway/ crossing facilities will be provided where possible within the site. Convenient access to public transport services is provided in the form of bus stops located either side of Briton Ferry Road in both directions and, within an appropriate 200m walk of the site.

Boundaries of the site are defined and comprise of:

- North boundary – Retail & Leisure
- East boundary – Residential & Education
- Southern boundary – Retail & Residential
- Western boundary – Industrial

The Site - Assessment

Architectural Context



View looking towards the site (from the West)



View looking towards the site (from the North)



View looking towards the site (from the East)



View of the current access road

Design and Access Key Principles - Evaluation

Introduction

Based on local, regional and national guidance relating to design it is possible to identify several key design and access principles that the redevelopment of the site should adhere to in order to promote quality in the design and layout of the scheme:

Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement

Existing stepped pedestrian routes will be removed and replaced with a new pathway allowing access directly from Briton Ferry Road.

Proposed new disabled spaces and new parent and child spaces will be located close to the entrance of the new build store. The site will accommodate 151 parking spaces, including 11 parent and child, 9 disabled and 2 electric vehicle spaces. Cycle parking will be provided close to the store entrance in order to provide convenience for customers travelling by bicycle.

Proposals for the proposed unit places the delivery bay at the back of the site. The Lidl service vehicle delivers 1 -2 times per day and proposals include a dedicated ramp to the loading bay.

Access by Public Transport

The site benefits from good access to public transport including the local bus network.

External Spaces and Landscaping

Proposals include a new landscaping scheme incorporating soft landscaping along Briton Ferry Road, the details will be designed in conjunction with a Landscape Architect. The landscaped boundaries will act as a visual barrier along Briton Ferry Road and present some screening opportunities, providing a visually appealing scheme for both residents and retail users.

As an open plan site, open views are offered across the car park which increases the natural surveillance improving the feeling of safety and promoting safe vehicular and pedestrian access in and around the site.

Activity

The proposed new main store entrance will be located opposite the Briton Ferry Road. It will be accessible via the car park and via Briton Ferry Road, ensuring a good level of activity. An active frontage will ensure an increased sense of well-being by opening the site up to provide a good level of natural surveillance.

Orientation of Retail Unit

The orientation of the proposed retail unit allows for maximum views across the site utilising a glazed shop front, whilst managing to minimise the impact on the local surrounding area. The proposals for the delivery area is at the rear of the store to allow safe manoeuvre of the HGV.

Design Response

Introduction

In this section of the Design and Access Statement we outline the design approach adopted having regard to information gathered in the previous Assessment and Evaluation stages. Clearly the proposed use, scale, access requirements and existing context provide some parameters within which the design should be based. For example, consideration should be given to proposed materials and ensure that the proposals will reflect the existing palette to aid continuity.

Lidl Design Response

Lidl are committed to providing a pleasant shopping and working experience for all customers and staff. The Lidl retail philosophy is centred on simplicity and maximum efficiency which allows huge savings to be passed onto the customer. By working through the design principles and formulating the design response, Lidl are committed to providing a modern, attractive and functional store that offers a pleasant environment for both customers and staff, improves the retail offer locally and offers the highest quality goods at the lowest price.

Connectivity & Integration

It is important that the retail development has an identity which compliments the existing surrounding area, a modern sustainable palette of materials is to be utilised.

The existing Lidl store emulates a contemporary and modern style whilst the simple palette of materials complements nearby buildings. In terms of the existing building, grey and white rendered walls, columns and plinths mimic the surrounding buildings. Proposals for the new store seek to enhance this palette to create a cohesive form, with white and grey cladding. New glazing doors and windows will also allow light to permeate the building. The natural light allowance into the sales area will also provide a view of the store from Briton Ferry Road for motorists and pedestrians. The visual appearance from Briton Ferry Road will be largely enhanced by the regeneration of the existing site.

Internal Environment

Lidl stores also offer wide shopping aisles with goods displayed at low level. This ensures ease of access to these items for all customers including wheelchair users, the elderly and parents with young children in prams and pushchairs.

Design Response - Proposed Site Layout

Proposed Site Plan



Design Response - Proposed Elevations

Proposed Elevations

Modern proposed glazing is included to the main elevations to promote an attractive view, both into and out of the store. This also will achieve maximum natural light to the sales area. A feature canopy along the glazed elevation will form the major visual focus when viewed from Briton Ferry Road. The loading bay will have a flat roof, this will be concealed from view and facilitate safe service access. The walling will be finished in white and grey cladding, the applications in two contrasting colours promotes a strong horizontal emphasis, helping the building blend with its surroundings.



Proposed Floor Plan



Design Response

Crime & Safety

The proposed development has been designed in line with guidance set out in 'Secure by Design'. This sets out six key principles, which are as follows:

1. Integrated Approval;
2. Environmental Quality and Sense of Ownership;
3. Natural Surveillance;
4. Access and footpaths;
5. Open space provisions and management;
6. Lighting

The primary tool for providing a safe environment is through careful built design. Providing for natural surveillance is recognised as being a basic requirement and therefore the proposed development ensures natural surveillance over the whole site. Natural surveillance also helps to prevent anti-social behaviour and increases people's perception of safety.

Sustainability & Energy Efficiency

Introduction

Considering the current focus of Government and society on creating sustainable and energy efficient new developments, the issue has been at the forefront of the design process. Careful consideration has been given to the merits of making the building more efficient during the construction and operational phases of the proposed new build.

The modern design of the store, which benefits from simple clean lines, means it is 'greener' than pseudo-traditional designs. This is on the basis that fewer more sustainable materials are used and the construction time is shortened and more efficient.

The materials applied to the building are low maintenance and in the majority of cases require no further applications. Quality facing materials are to be utilised on the proposed new store.

To ensure that the Lidl store does not waste energy through unnecessary lighting, all internal and external lighting would be remotely operated. This means that the lighting within ancillary areas uses sensors to turn on when someone enters the room and turns off after a specified period of inactivity. The lighting on the sales floor drops to one third the normal level when the alarm is set at the end of the day one hour after store closing only returning when the alarm is deactivated in the morning one hour before store opening.

A system of 180.12kWp Photo Voltaic (PV) panels consisting of 468 PV modules are proposed on the roof of the store to generate on-site renewable energy for use in the store.

Energy efficiency is a long term lifecycle issue, which should not only be addressed in the short term build such as through materials but also, in the long term through the operation and maintenance costs.



Sustainability & Energy Efficiency

Protection of Natures Resources

The key to achieving sustainable development is to ensure prudent use of land and resources. This section details how Lidl have taken account of this during the design of the development.

Lidl have used materials that are highly rated within the Green Guide specification in the construction of this development.

Element	Construction	Rating
Roof	Steel construction with metal composite insulated panels with integral single ply membrane.	A
Walls	Insulated Cladding panels fixed to steel.	A+
Glazing	Windows, Double glazed with Aluminum Frame.	A

Protection of Nature’s Resources

Lidl is committed to training its staff on waste reduction and appropriate recycling and waste segregation. This training has enabled Lidl to achieve significant reductions in the amount of waste being taken from its stores to landfill sites

Should reserved matters approval be granted for the proposed scheme, preference will be given to local suppliers, where possible, thus enabling the reduction of energy emissions from vehicles.

In terms of water usage, Lidl have several objectives which govern the Water use on site, these include;

1. Water is fully metered.
 2. Water usage monitored on a monthly basis.
 3. Water usage target of 13m³ per month.
 4. Installation of low water use fittings.
 5. All new toilets have dual-flush controls installed.
-

Sustainability & Energy Efficiency

Energy

Lidl food stores are widely recognized as having a lower energy consumption than supermarket benchmarks with energy usage restricted to lighting, selective local heating and a small amount of refrigeration.

In order to achieve an energy efficient design, it is required to ensure optimum use of energy throughout a building's life. In this section, each component of the building will be discussed in terms of its energy efficiency.

A system of 180.12kWp Photo Voltaic (PV) panels consisting of 468 PV modules are proposed on the roof of the store to generate on-site renewable energy for use in the store.

Materials

In the construction of the proposed food store, Lidl is committed to using materials that are highly rated within the BREEAM 'Green Guide'. This tool provides information relating to the environmental performance of building materials. Materials with a 'Green Guide' ranking of A or A+, will be chosen by Lidl where possible, thus having least environmental impact.

The materials applied to the building are low maintenance and, in most cases, require no further applications over time. Quality facing materials are to be encompassed on the elevations. The guttering and down pipes are a natural zinc finish and therefore do not require re-painting or maintenance.

Where appropriate, Lidl will seek to obtain building materials from suppliers that possess an accredited Environmental Management Systems (EMS) or similar standard. In doing so, this will ensure that the environmental impact from the use of such materials will have been fully considered throughout the procurement process.

Appliances, Chilled Cabinets and Display Cases

Refrigerated units within the retail store are typically accessed using transparent doors to reduce the required frequency of openings. Open front refrigeration units are fitted with night blinds to reduce cooling requirements when the store is not open.

Fridges, dishwashers and any other white goods that are installed for staff use are sized appropriately for their intended use and have an energy rating of at least "A".

Lidl stores use manually operated "dock leveling" plates which are used in conjunction with a sloped loading ramp.

Glazing

As part of the refurbishment of the existing building, proposals for glazing to the main elevations are to be incorporated. Glazing will be used modestly around the building, and this allows natural light into the store reducing the need for artificial lighting. The windows have an aluminium frame which can be recycled at the end of its operational life. This material is also durable, having some of the longest replacement intervals according to the Green Guide.

The development optimises the window selection to maximise daylight, minimize heat loss, reduce solar gains and provide acceptable noise insulation and aims for an area weighted average U-value no greater than 1.1 W/m2K. All windows will be double glazed, with a minimum of 6mm thick glass and a 12mm gap.

Lighting

All lighting is connected to the Building Management System (BMS). The lighting within the sales area is controlled by timers, the other areas of the store use lights controlled by motion sensors. External lighting utilises a combination of light sensors and timers in order to minimize energy consumption through seasonal variations. Lighting levels vary depending upon the activity i.e. 1 hour after the store closing lighting levels reduce to only 30% and vice versa.

Heating

All Lidl stores use Air conditioning systems that provide both heat and cool air. This allows the building to be effectively controlled with the same management system.

The small amount of hot water required will be provided by electric water heating to reduce losses from water storage.

Furthermore, Lidl will ensure that the food store will exceed the minimum Buildings Regulations standards for thermal performance, thereby reducing the heating requirements of the building. All windows will be double glazed, with a minimum of 6mm glass and 12mm gap between glazing panels to minimise heat loss from the building.

Area	Temp
Sales Floor	+19 °C
Welfare / Checkouts	+21 °C
Warehouse	+13 °C

Sustainability & Energy Efficiency

Air

The retail development is considered unlikely to give rise to any significant air quality issues. Techniques are applied during the construction period to minimize the potential for dust and local air pollutants. Best practice is used to control dust on construction sites.

Efforts are also made to reduce impact on air quality within the building. To achieve this, the development's finishings are designed to be of low impact to human health. These include the use of low impact paints, where practical, including water-based paints that have low volatile organic compounds.

Air leakage through draughts at joints in the building such as windows, doors and poorly fitted cladding causes variations with the building's temperature. It takes a significant amount of energy to control these leaks with measures to reduce such leaks being incorporated into the building design.

The amount of openings within the building envelope have been kept to a minimum to reduce the areas where air leakage could occur. Appropriate seals will be used to reduce these draughts to a minimum. The roof space and any draughts created from the cladding around the roof space will not affect the temperature within the building.

Noise

During operation of the development, every effort is made to ensure noise does not compromise the health and well being of building occupants as well as other potentially sensitive receptors.

Noise impacts to the surrounding receptors would be minimized through the appropriate layout and the installation of a landscape buffer. The Lidl store receives 1 -2 deliveries per day, which will usually be before the store opens, to ensure fresh stock is replenished daily.

Lighting

Impacts from lighting have been addressed during the design of the development. Light pollution emanating from the building at night may impede the view of the night sky and cause glare effects, both of which present potential harmful physiological and ecological effects. Lidl developments minimise light obstruction, including light trespass and sky glow by following appropriate guidance from the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

Community Sustainability

Job Creation

Lidl primarily seek to serve the immediate local community in which they are located, both in terms of their discounted shopping offer and in terms of employment. Lidl seek to employ up to 40 full and part time staff so that they can offer a friendly and familiar staffing service to their customers. Lidl employ most of their staff from the local area.

In addition, there may also be opportunities for temporary and indirect employment as a result of the proposals. The opportunity may exist to recruit local labour during the construction of the store, thus providing further short-term employment opportunities.

Crime Prevention

Consultation with a Police Liaison Officer would take place to determine the scope of works necessary to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity occurring on the site. This will address many aspects of crime, but primarily focus on the safety and security of the staff on site and the security of the building at night. Various design measures would be taken to promote the security of the site. CCTV would be installed on entrances and around the perimeter of the site. The lighting strategy would also be configured to reduce the potential for crime.

Limited Assortment Discount

The Limited Assortment Discount retail store would provide a community benefit also. Lidl's business model allows the store to provide greater discount rates on the goods they stock in comparison to mainstream supermarkets. The proximity of the Lidl store to the residential development will improve the customer experience by providing a high-quality modern store and offering its full product range.

Accessibility & Highway Safety

Introduction

This section details the two aspects of access, that is access in the sense of vehicular and pedestrian access to the site, but also inclusive access, considering movement within the existing site itself. It is important to note that these issues are not independent and have been considered together whilst preparing the design response. Furthermore, highway safety is also considered in this section.

Inclusive Access

A poorly designed scheme can lead to the exclusion of communities or individuals. This proposal has adopted the principles of inclusive design as set out in best practice guidance. This has resulted in a layout for the site that:

- Can be used safely and easily by as many people as possible without undue effort, separation or special treatment;
- Values and embraces diversity and difference;
- Consists of a high-quality design;
- Allocates appropriate space for people;
- Achieves a safe, comfortable and healthy environment; and
- Ensures ease of use, comprehension and understanding;

Design Principles

- The design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development are as follows:

Sensitivity to the surrounding context, as a crucial principle of the design, has been followed where possible. New landscaping to the edges of the site will refresh the existing site boundaries. In addition, the streetscape along Briton Ferry Road will be enhanced, with new landscaping also added to the site parameters here too. Small pockets of rain gardens in the site provide opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the area, providing areas of refuge within the site for wildlife.

- The steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account are demonstrated below:

The orientation of the building towards the south/west boundary improves visibility across the site. Furthermore, the removal of the Poundstretcher and the Gym will also enhance this aspect. The formation of an open space was a design driver for the development of the site. Less enclosed, the new Lidl Store will provide open views to both the east and south boundaries.

- The policy and approach adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account are explained further on page 5 of this document.
- The specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed below:

Pedestrian safety was another key design driver. Taking advantage of the existing site access and observing the route of the HGV Truck into site, was key in designing the layout of the site car park. The new vehicular site access follows the current HGV route, slightly shifted within the site to accommodate the new design. HGV Tracking was produced early in the design stages and added to identify the route of the truck and its movement in and out of the site.

Community Sustainability

Sustainable Access

Whilst car use will be a popular way to access the store, the site also ensures excellent access to public transport including the bus network. Cycling and walking present the most sustainable mode of travel to the site over short journeys and given the site is prominently located near large residential catchment areas it is anticipated that most visitors will use this method of accessing the store.

Construction with regard for the Community

The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a voluntary Code of Considerate Practice, which is adopted by participating construction companies and everyone involved on the construction site. The scheme is designed to promote socially responsible construction projects. Lidl is committed to the principles within the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) and would implement a strategy which should meet the requirements of the scheme. As part of this process, the scheme requires that the Local Community is engaged prior to and during construction to ensure that impacts upon the surrounding Community are minimised.

Conclusion

The proposed new Lidl store strives to reduce environmental impact, both through design and through the commitment of Lidl to follow best practice to reduce pollution during the construction phase.

In addition to sustainable design, there are several inherent attributions of sustainability in the proposals:

- The development will provide a local convenient service to the residents within Neath and the nearby surrounding area.
- The proposals are within an accessible location by means of transport other than the private car, including local bus services and safe pedestrian and cycle routes;

The information provided clearly demonstrates that the new store can be regarded as energy efficient and will also deliver sustainability within the local community.

References

Supplementary documents that have been used to develop the scheme proposals include:-

- National Planning Policy Wales
- The Neath Port Talbot LDP
- CDM requirements and future maintenance



York Place Studio,
8 Britannia Street,
Leeds,
LS1 2DZ,
t: 0113 244 3457
e: admin@htcarchitects.co.uk
w: www.htcarchitects.co.uk