



Altens, Aberdeen - Public Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

This document will be updated following the consultation event with any questions asked at that event not included below. It supplements the information, which is contained on the consultation boards, also available on the website.

The proposals

1. What are the proposals?

Aldi will be applying for detailed planning permission for the erection of a new discount foodstore, parking, access, landscaping and associated works.

The current Aldi proposal is for a small local scale foodstore with a gross floorspace of 1,896 sqm gross / 1,315 sqm net foodstore, with 109 parking bays. The final design may change depending on discussions with the planning authority and following feedback from this consultation exercise.

2. What type of planning application will be submitted?

A detailed planning application is proposed to be lodged in the coming weeks which will include the full detail of Aldi's proposals including the design and size of the building, its appearance, the site layout, car parking and pedestrian and vehicular accesses.

Due to the size of the proposals, the scheme is only a 'local' scale development in terms of the planning regulations. As a result, there is no statutory need to undertake pre-application consultation. This consultation is therefore a voluntary undertaking by Aldi to ensure that the local community is appropriately informed of the facts concerning their proposals and can make comments to help inform the final scheme, before they are lodged with the Council.

Please note – Comments made in respect of this pre-application consultation are not representations to Aberdeen City Council. There will be an opportunity to make representations to the Council when a formal planning application is made.

3. What's going to happen with the existing office building on the site?

The current site owner is in the process of demolishing the existing office building on site. Current activities include soft-strip of the building, prior to commencing demolition. Subject to on-going and future COVID-19 restrictions, this is anticipated to complete by Q2 2021.

4. I thought this site should be used only for employment uses?

Within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP), the site is located at the edge of the Altens Industrial Estate and is designated as a Business and Industrial Land under Policy B1 of the Local Development Plan. The policy supports the use of such land for typical employment uses such as offices.

The site is currently occupied by a vacant three-storey office block, which will shortly be demolished due to the limited interest in its re-occupation despite marketing since 2018. Due to this and also the large volume of vacant offices across the city, other land uses for the site were more recently considered, including for retail development.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) acknowledges that where existing business sites no longer meet

current needs and market expectations evidenced through, for example, an increase in vacancy rates, consideration should be given to reallocation of the site to enable a wider range of viable business or alternative uses.

5. What are the timescales for the proposals?

We are targeting a planning application submission in early 2021 and if planning permission is granted, we anticipate that construction on the store could begin in mid-2022 with the store opening in mid-2023.

6. What are the views of the Planning Authority?

The formal views of Aberdeen City Council, as Planning Authority, will only become clear once the planning application is submitted, which we anticipate will be in early 2021. In the meantime, we have engaged in pre-application discussions with planning officers at the Council regarding the proposals to agree the scope of the planning application submission.

The Proposed Aldi Store

7. How big will the store be?

The proposed store will be 1,896 sqm gross with 1,315 sq.m sales space. By comparison, the Aldi store at Beach Boulevard Retail Park has a sales area of 1,067 sq.m.

8. What are the typical servicing hours of an Aldi store?

Aldi have a unique servicing system, which minimises the noise created through the servicing of their store. This is so successful that the majority of their stores require no servicing restrictions at all despite close proximity to residential properties.

Aldi typically only receive one or two deliveries per day helping to minimize the impact from HGV's on both the road network and residential amenity.

Servicing hours will be discussed with the Planning Authority during the determination of the planning application and if restrictions are deemed necessary, they would be controlled via planning condition. The planning application will be supported by a Noise Statement to consider these matters further.

9. What are the proposed opening hours?

The store would be open 8am-10pm Monday to Saturday and 9am-8pm on Sundays.

10. How sustainable are the proposals?

The proposals have been carefully designed to meet, and exceed where possible, current building standards. The sustainability measures incorporated within the Aldi store include energy efficient light fittings and recycling of waste heat from the refrigeration systems. The proposals also include a reverse vending machine to allow Aldi to deliver a Deposit Return Scheme (referred to as 'DRS' on the Site Plan), as required by The Scottish Government to boost recycling levels across Scotland. More information on the Deposit Return scheme can be [found here](#).

11. Does Aldi work with any local suppliers?

Yes, Aldi work with a range of local suppliers from Aberdeen and the surrounding areas. This includes suppliers of bakery goods, meat and fish products, soft drinks, spirits and alcoholic products, many of whom supply Aldi across Scotland.

In addition, from Aldi's core range of 1,880 lines, over 450 products are sourced from Scotland. These Scottish products equate to 20% of sales in Scotland. The business was also recently awarded 'Scottish Sourcing Business of the Year' award at the Scotland Food and Drink Excellence Awards.

Retail Planning Policy Matters

12. Why does Aberdeen need another Aldi foodstore?

The Council's latest retail study from 2018 found that there is a lack of convenience foodstore provision serving the south of the city, including Cove and Loirston. This means that shoppers need to travel further to access less sustainable shopping locations, including to locations outwith the Aberdeen City Council area.

In addition, the closest Aldi stores to Altens are within Beach Boulevard Retail Park, Links Road or Cornhill Shopping Centre, Foresterhill Road which are both a considerable distance away. From our initial assessments, we believe that there is a local demand for an Aldi foodstore which would bring their award-winning offer to communities in the south of the city, including Altens, Cove, Kincorth and Torry.

13. Won't the proposals have a significant impact on nearby centres?

The proposed catchment for the Aldi store is approximately a 7 minute drivetime from the store location. This means customers are likely to drive up to 7 minutes to reach this store and is the area which Aldi are therefore seeking to service.

Within this general area, Aldi have been looking for site for a number of years, and if they were able to secure a site in an allocated retail centre they would happily locate there. However they have been unable to identify any other sites which are available or suitable to accommodate the development and associated car parking, servicing arrangements etc. This is despite looking for a number of years.

A comprehensive Retail Impact Assessment has been undertaken which considers the impact of the proposals. This will be submitted as part of the planning application. This exercise has found that nearby centres including Torry, Kincorth, and Cove contain a limited choice of food retailers, and those which are present are small convenience stores, rather than large supermarkets.

In retailing terms, it is an accepted concept that in terms of trade diversions that Aldi would only compete with similar retailers, this is known as 'like competes with like'. This means that any trade diversions would be derived from similarly sized stores in terms of scale and offer. This would be operators like Tesco and Lidl on Wellington Road, or even Asda at Portlethen. As a result, the existing small shops in the nearby town and neighbourhood centres will be unaffected by the proposals.

Finally, we have undertaken town centre healthchecks (December 2020) of these nearby centres which have confirmed that vacancy rates are low, and that the centres are performing well and showing good signs of vitality and viability.

Employment

14. How many jobs will be created? / What is the level of investment (£m)? / How do I apply for a job?

We anticipate that the new foodstore will create up to 35 direct full and part-time employment opportunities for local people. The development will also provide in-direct spin off benefits for Aldi's suppliers, with many based in Scotland.

In terms of their own operations, Aldi pays above average wages within the industry and the company regularly seeks to employ staff locally for its new stores. Aldi run two of the most successful graduate and apprenticeship schemes in the UK.

The proposals collectively represent a +£3.81 m investment into the area by Aldi.

In terms of applying for jobs, the proposals are still in their early stages and it is only once they are successfully through the planning process that there will be opportunities to apply for the new positions. Aldi would advertise these nearer the time of their planned opening.

Environmental Matters

15. Will there be any detrimental impact on the amenity of residential properties nearby?

The nearest residential are located on the other side of the A956 Wellington Road. As a result, we do not believe that their amenity will be impacted by this development. Indeed, due to the current allocation for employment uses, the retail land use is expected to significantly reduce potential noise output from the site when compared to the potential for noise from those uses.

Existing features of the site, including the established boundary landscaping and the presence of the A956 Wellington Road to the immediate west of the site are also relevant factors in relation to noise impacts. Moreover, Aldi have a unique delivery system that reduces any noise associated with the activity and typically only receive one to two service deliveries a day, thereby further minimising any impact that might arise.

16. Will there be an impact on the existing trees and landscaping?

The proposals seek to work with the existing established boundary landscaping on the site as far as possible, with new soft landscaping treatments added to compensate for the removal of any existing trees.

The planning application will be supported by a tree survey undertaken by a qualified arboriculturalist.

Transport

17. How much traffic will the new Aldi store generate?

A proportion of customers are expected to come from vehicles already passing the site i.e. they will visit the store as part of a longer journey, for example going to or coming from work at the start or end of the day, or on the way home from the school run. In addition, a number of vehicle trips will be diverted from shopping at other retail stores both in and out of the catchment. The existing office building is much bigger than the proposed Aldi, a comparison of trips generated between the office and the proposed store will be presented within the Transport Assessment associated with the application.

18. Is there enough parking?

109 spaces will be provided including 78 standard spaces, 7 disabled spaces, 9 parent and child bays, 4 electrical vehicle charging spaces and 11 staff bays. This is the typical provision for all Aldi stores and is predicted to be more than adequate for the store. The parking levels are compliant with guidance set out by Aberdeen City Council.

19. How can I reach the store using public transport?

Buses are available on Hareness Road, Wellington Road and Abbotswell Crescent that can all be reached within a 5-minute walk. Bus stops are served by regular First Bus and Stagecoach services, which provide connections to residential areas surrounding the proposed store and into Aberdeen City Centre.

20. What pedestrian and cycle routes are available from the store?

Footways are available along all the surrounding roads, including controlled and uncontrolled crossing points, giving easy access to bus stops and surrounding residential areas. As part of the development proposals the footpath running along the western store perimeter will be upgraded and formalised.

National Cycle Routes 1 and 195 can be reached within a 10-minute cycle and Core Routes 103 and 79 connect to the proposed Aldi.

21. How will the amount of traffic generated be kept to a minimum?

There is good access to cycle routes and upgraded or extended footpaths will reduce need to travel to the store by car. 8 cycle parking spaces will be provided for customers at the store entrance. Staff will be encouraged to travel sustainably or car share. Additionally, Aldi stores only require 1 or 2 HGV deliveries per day helping to minimize the impact from HGV's on both the road network and residential amenity.

22. Will the store benefit from Electric Vehicle Charging Points?

The proposals include 4, free to use electric vehicle charging points within the customer car park. The electrical vehicle charging spaces are located close to the store entrance and will allow customers to charge their vehicles while shopping. A further 13 spaces will be 'future proofed' for easy conversion. The demand will be monitored and if required, Aldi will implement more.

23. Why is a new access road and junction required?

The existing junction will be used for HGV accessing the service yard. A new junction on Altens Farm Road allows customer vehicles to be kept separate from these.