

**Proposed Discount Foodstore
Squires Gate Industrial Estate
Highways Objection**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2014 a Supplementary Note was prepared as part of a planning application for a Discount Foodstore on the site of Westgate House, on Westgate Road, off Squires Gate Lane, in Fylde.
- 1.2 That Supplementary Note provided a comparison of the accessibility of the Westgate House site with the site of a proposed Discount Foodstore on the Squires Gate Lane Industrial Estate being promoted as a development on the adjacent Retail Park (which it is not).
- 1.3 The Note also identified that whilst the applicants claimed that the development would be sustainable and would encourage alternative modes of travel for staff and customers, the scheme proposed 30 reserved parking spaces for staff, which with around 30 staff in total being on duty in a Discount Foodstore of this size at any time would be a space for every member of staff, even though a high percentage of the workforce of such stores usually walk to work or use public transport. This was hardly likely to encourage alternative mode use.
- 1.4 The Note also identified that the scheme proposed a link from the existing Retail Park car park onto the Industrial Estate access road. No proposals to control the use of this link were proposed. This was clearly intended to be a second access to the Retail Park car park, presumably intended to relieve congestion at busy times within the car park. There would be no benefit to general highway users arising from this link and regardless of the likely use of the link road, its use had not been assessed.
- 1.5 The Note was copied to Blackpool Council, as part of an objection to the Retail Park Discount Foodstore, under cover of hollissvincent's letter of 15 July 2015.

2. Additional Information

- 2.1 At the time of preparation of the previous Supplementary Note, the Blackpool Highways Department had responded in November 2014 on the application advising that its supporting information was inadequate and there was, therefore, a highways objection to the application.
- 2.2 We now see that additional information was submitted to the highways department in December 2014 which was commented on in Mr Patel's email to Mr Johnston of

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3rd February 2015. This additional information has not been made available to anyone that may have an interest in the scheme and cannot, therefore, be commented on. This makes a mockery of the public consultation process.

- 2.3 The comments made on this additional information, plus amended drawings, show that the previously indicated 30 staff parking spaces are now to be available to the general public and there is to be no control of the link from the Retail Car Park to the Industrial Estate.
- 2.4 Our previous assumption that this was just a thinly veiled attempt at providing a second access to the retail park has been confirmed.
- 2.5 It would seem that this additional information still did not provide any assessment of the effects the development would have on key junctions, and the highways response of 3rd February 2015 still maintained an objection to the scheme.
- 2.6 Nothing has been added to the public access planning file since February 2015 other than our client's objection to the development. The Committee Report, however, refers to discussions having taken place which has now resulted in there being no Highways Objection to the scheme.
- 2.7 These discussions must have involved the submission of more information yet nothing has been made available to parties that have an interest in the scheme and the effects it could have on free-flow of traffic into Blackpool. We consider this to be unreasonable.
- 2.8 Furthermore, it can be assumed that there has still been no assessment of the effects of the scheme on key junctions, this apparently being because it would have involved the assessment of two junctions!
- 2.9 We would have thought that even if it was considered that the public should not be advised of this information and given the opportunity to comment on it, the Members could be expected to ask the simple question?

“How with this scheme affect traffic on Squires Gate Lane?”

The answer from the Highways Department could be nothing other than:

“We don't know”

- 2.10 All the traffic generated by the foodstore could use the existing Retail Park junction. All the traffic generated by the foodstore plus all the traffic generated by the Retail Park could use the Industrial Estate access. In reality the real situation would be somewhere in-between but without assessing the effects of this situation,

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with sensitivity tests looking at the worst cases, it cannot be said that the effects of the development have been assessed and it has been demonstrated that the development will not have an effect on traffic conditions in the area.

- 2.11 It is unreasonable that an application should be considered without this basic information being provided and all the work being available for comment by interested parties.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 It is clear that the proposed development is no more than the expansion of the Retail Park into the designated Employment Area, and the creation of an additional access that can be used by all visitors to the Retail Park, with no incentives to use alternative modes of travel.
- 3.2 The application is completely contrary to the policies of the Planning Authority.
- 3.3 The process by which additional information has been submitted but not made available to interested parties to comment on is not reasonable.

J Lowe
Partner
Turner Lowe Associates
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