
Hawick Community Council



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2 March 2016

Ms Louise McGeoch
Clerk of the Local Review Body
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS
TD6 0SA

Dear Ms McGeoch

Redevelopment Site Hawick (zR08 – Commercial Road)

As Chair of the Community Council in Hawick I was very disappointed in the initial decision not to grant planning permission for the proposed Aldi store in Commercial Road, Hawick. What we as a town have now been left with is a complete eyesore of a building site which apparently has not attracted any other interest whatsoever and given that the site is on the northbound traffic corridor how does that encourage people to remotely want to visit Hawick.

Hawick has suffered lately with a catalogue of redundancies and indeed closures relative to various manufacturing establishments in the town and along with the town's Elected Members, we are striving to maintain morale in the town and this was even exacerbated with the flooding in the town since the beginning of December. What we need to do now is desperately bring some good news which I associate with this proposed development of Aldi and thereby bring associated employment to the town whether in the building of the store or the workforce thereafter.

I am aware too recently that one of our MSPs has a proposal to create an Enterprise Zone for Hawick which would be available to businesses who wish to invest in the town and hopefully this too if successful would send out a clear message that Hawick is open for business and more crucially would mean more employment and more investment. I therefore am of the belief that the proposed new store would tailor in nicely with this foresight for the town

It is certainly apparent to me in the current financial climate there is certainly no demand for the provision of more housing in the town. For instance I myself live in front of a new development of a few years old of 16 houses and to date only four are occupied so therefore indicative to me that they will be on the market for a considerably longer time. I am also aware of quite a few other sites in the town designated for housing but in some cases these have never even been remotely commenced.

It is even more disheartening that only recently Aldi announced their expansion nationally and in a newspaper a couple of weeks ago I noted that in Scotland 8 new stores are to be opened but of course Hawick is not included. Aldi is recognised as the major retailer currently in the UK so with the best interests of Hawick at heart, that is why this would be such a boost for the town.

I refer above to the proposed store being on the northbound A7 corridor and with Lidl and Sainsburys already in the vicinity, in my mind Aldi would therefore completely add to and extend the modern day shopping experience for both locals and visitors alike, where people could drive to park their cars. Myself and the rest of the Community Council appreciate that "High Streets" are not as operational now and the nature of shopping has dramatically changed over recent years but another store such as Aldi would help keep some economy in the town and equally attract people to visit.

Another point in favour of this potential store is that is that their business model states that they work with the best local producers to bring top quality products to their stores and such being the case, a store in Hawick could thereby have an economical knock-on effect with surrounding producers thus helping the local economy even more.

I am not aware who will be dealing with this appeal but I would certainly recommend that rather than just look at plans, etc, it would be advisable and important for the Councillors dealing with this to actually carry out a site visit and see for themselves the nature of this situation.

I have already communicated with the Planning Department at Scottish Borders Council in a letter dated 11 November 2015 more addressing the planning issues but should be grateful if you would consider this further communication in tandem with the earlier letter. Not just myself but the rest of the Community Council has the town's interests at heart and try very hard to bring something back to the town and consider that this new development of Aldi would go in some small way to achieving this.

Yours sincerely

Marion Short

Chair