



We work with ALDI providing integrated planning and communications support for their property team. When policy officers insisted a proposed new store on a designated employment site be recommended for refusal, we had already done the groundwork to secure planning consent.

ALDI's proposed site in Hampden Park was designated for employment use. The site shares a boundary with local homes and is next to one of Europe's busiest signal controlled railway crossings, which is closed for 42 minutes of every hour.

When policy officers and their external advisors sought to consistently undermine ALDI's proposals, we combined our planning and communications expertise to challenge officers and ensure the benefits of ALDI were at the forefront of councillors' minds.

Before submitting a planning application, the project team took the initiative to visit residents in their homes, drop in on local traders, present to area panels, circulate an information leaflet and contact local politicians. Working together, the team and local people developed an understanding of how highways issues could be overcome and the site best adapted.

Despite our best endeavours, the officers' committee report recommended refusal, but we were confident that members knew how the store's employment and investment benefits could be delivered in a timely fashion and outweigh any potential future commercial opportunities.

When a procedural matter prevented ALDI from speaking at committee and officers couldn't help, we liaised directly with the planning committee chair to change procedure and ensure ALDI could speak alongside supportive community members.

Following a tenacious planning process and exemplary consultation, ALDI's proposal was unanimously approved by committee in December 2014.

Summary of achievements

- Use of local support and political influence to overturn the officer's recommendation
- Successfully changing committee protocol
- Community relations established and strengthened throughout the planning process
- Array of supporters in attendance and speaking at committee
- Support from the local MP, culminating in a letter read out at Committee
- Winning unanimous support for a food store on a designated employment site