

**Sainsbury Applications TM/14/03560/FL & TM/14/03570/FL
Henry Simmonds PH, 4 Wrotham Rd, Borough Green.**

After prolonged discussion of all the issues at our Emergency PC Meeting on 24th October, and at our November meeting on 3rd November, and mindful of overwhelming Public Consultation and Opinion, the Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds set out below:

1. Financial impact on existing Rural Service Centre (PPS4)
2. Out of town (village) centre development
3. Loss of Nominated Community Asset
4. Traffic Growth
5. Highway safety on a dangerous junction.
6. Cumulative impact on existing adjacent AQMA, possible leading to extended AQMA
7. Strong Public Opinion

We would also like the hearing deferred until Officers have had a full opportunity to investigate invocation of an Article 4 Direction requiring a full application. Whilst the general view of those consulted was that the development would destroy our existing retail centre, the Sainsbury view that this would generate an economic benefit and increase footfall generally. Unfortunately the only way to test Sainsbury's hypothesis is to allow the change of use, and if Sainsbury's are wrong, the experiment has failed and we have lost our retail centre, and T&MBC have lost their Rural Service Centre.

For that reason, BGPC believe that an Article 4 Direction would require Sainsbury to submit a full application where the full rigour of the Planning Process applied. This is simply too important an application for it to be approved on what is actually a technical loophole, and we believe Article 4 exists for that exact purpose.

We set out in greater detail below the reasons for the above conclusions.

1 & 2. Financial Impact & Out of Centre Development

NPPF 26 When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m). This should include assessment of:

- the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to

five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to ten years from the time the application is made.

NPPF 23. Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;

NPPF 27. Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the above factors, it should be refused.

PPS 4 EC.1 (c) & (f) are particularly apt in this case, and there are elements of the T&MBC Core Strategy that require this application to be refused on the grounds of the damage to the sustainability and viability of this community

3. Loss of an Asset of Community Value.

This public house has been allowed to run down over many years, starved of investment and innovation by the owner. Its situation, catchment area, and proximity to the station mean that it should be a goldmine. The loss of this Public House will mean that the Rural Service Centre of Borough Green will have just one public house, and a wine bar of dubious reputation to serve the needs of the immediate village and the surrounding area, some 16,000 people. A single public house cannot supply the choice that the area requires. A public house in a rural area is not just a place to drink, it is one of the engines of social cohesion, knitting together the various strands of the community, a seedbed where charitable and other informal local events gel and grow.

NPPF 70 requires delivery of the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should protect against that loss.

4 & 5. Traffic Impact, Parking and Highway Safety

The applicant avers that there will be no impact on the Local Retail Centre, because their market position is aimed at preventing trips to out of town centres such as Sevenoaks and elsewhere, so is clearly attracting car drivers. But their Transport Plan suggest their customers will have no traffic impact because they will be walking.

We believe there is a Highway formula for calculating retail parking spaces based on the retail floorspace, but the applicant is suggesting a far lower car usage. Put simply we do not believe

the 10 parking spaces to be adequate for the level of customers needed to make this a financially viable enterprise.

The applicant proposes using the existing access, which feeds directly onto an existing very busy junction on a moderately blind bend/hillbrow. This junction, Station Approach, already handles many distinct phases of traffic through the day, contributing to the recorded 9000 vehicles per day on the A227 Wrotham Rd. As well as the through traffic, the Station Approach houses the busy Co-op store generating traffic all day, the commuter traffic during rush hours, the traffic from the Roman Court business centre, and sheltered accommodation, and Primary School parents who are allowed to use the Station carpark. There are taxi companies and a takeaway restaurant . Immediately adjacent to the entrance is a pedestrian crossing, and 75m to the north is the crossroads of the Bourne Trading Estate, and the Fairfield Estate incorporating the A-Z factory, where an application is set to add 41 houses to the existing sole road access the another 240 properties.

6. Air Quality

The proposed development is immediately adjacent to the Borough Green AQMA, and it is inconceivable that the attracted traffic and the consequent added congestion cannot increase Air Quality problems. MEDE-DPD Policy SQ4 clearly forbids development that has a *cumulative* impact on an existing AQMA, or that could trigger a new one. This satisfies both conditions, and must be refused on those grounds alone. The cumulative impact of this and other developments satisfies the legislation.

7. Public Opinion.

In order to ensure that a balanced view was solicited, BGPC advised local groups on the wording of a consultation, ensuring that both sides of the argument were presented to those canvassed. There was a bias introduced by allowing the Sainsbury view two benefits, and placing their support vote first. Despite these adjustments there are 1000+ signatures against the Sainsbury proposal, and none in favour. We must report 3 members of the public who supported the proposal, but declined to sign, but deemed their views relevant. We attach a copy of the consultation as material evidence.