



Planning Potential worked with Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority to bring forward a redevelopment of the existing Aldi store in Lewes, to meet customer expectations and overcome various operational constraints.

The Aldi store in Lewes is an important part of the retail offer for the community and is in an edge-of-centre location. Due to the compact nature of the store and car park, the retail environment was no longer meeting customer expectations and there were several operational constraints. In order to provide a store that could better meet customers' expectations Aldi reviewed all available options to make improvements. The outcome of this exercise was that the only way to improve matters would be to extend the site area. This was done through the purchase of some adjacent small-scale business units. The combined site offered the potential to deliver a larger store, with more customer car parking, and an enhanced environment for customers and colleagues.

## Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority

Planning Potential worked with Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNP) to bring forward a suitable redevelopment of the existing store and address concerns about the loss of the existing business units. The application process was supported with extensive public consultation and the scheme proposals were presented to the Town Council on two separate occasions. In order to provide certainty to all parties, Planning Potential signed a Planning Performance Agreement with the SDNP.

The bespoke store design resulted from an iterative process involving the consultant team, officers from the SDNP and the SDNP Design Review Panel. The design balances the location of the store within the SDNP and the requirement to foster economic growth and contribute to the social well-being of the local community through the provision of key services and facilities.

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## Committee

With an officer recommendation for approval, the application was considered by the SDNP Planning Committee in March 2020. This was the first major commercial scheme to be determined at committee following the adoption of the South Downs Local Plan. In discussing the application, councillors recognised the engagement that had taken place with officers and the local community and the willingness of Aldi to work with the SDNP to develop a bespoke building. Members approved the application unanimously.

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