
Development Application

Report by Head of Planning Services

Case No:	0501658OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)
Proposal:	ERECTION OF FOODSTORE, PETROL FILLING STATION, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS
Location:	LAND AT THE CORNER OF STOCKING FEN ROAD AND ST MARY'S ROAD
Applicant:	TESCO STORES LTD AND ABBEY PROPERTIES CAMBRIDGE LTD
Grid Ref:	528393 285812
Date of Registration:	23.05.2005
Parish:	RAMSEY

Recommendation - Approve

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The site is divided into two parcels either side of High Lode and on the northern side of St Mary's Road towards the north of the Town and has a gross area of some 7.06 hectares including parts of the High Lode and adjoining highways. Whilst it is difficult to exactly determine the extent of land involved, the part of the site on the west side extends to some 5.1 hectares (net) and is partly flat open land but also accommodates a number of commercial enterprises and the part on the east side is some 0.94 hectares (net).
- 1.2 This outline application proposes the erection of a foodstore, a petrol filling station, residential development, community facilities and associated highways and infrastructure. Means of access – including a new roundabout - forms part of the application and a proposed footbridge links the two parts of the site over the High Lode. All other matters are reserved. The application forms indicate that a store of 3610 square metres (gross) and 2316 square metres (net) of retail space with 270 car parking spaces is proposed. The application was

accompanied by a Supporting Planning and Design Statement, a Retail Impact Assessment, a Transport Assessment, a Flood Risk Assessment, an indicative site layout, indicative elevations and an indicative Masterplan.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 PPS1 – Sustainable Development (2005)

2.2 PPS3 – Housing (2006)

2.3 PPS6 – Planning for Town Centres (2005)

2.4 PPG13 – Transport (2001)

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

3.1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)

Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- ◆ **P6/1** – Development-related provision
- ◆ **P10/3** – Market Towns – Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire – at Ramsey new proposals should encourage appropriate small to medium scale employment opportunities and provide limited and small scale new housing development appropriate to its role as a focus for the rural hinterland.

3.2 Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)

Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95

- ◆ **H38** – requires residential development sites adjoining potentially damaging noise pollution sources to implement adequate design solutions to produce acceptable ambient noise levels within the dwellings and their curtilages.
- ◆ **E3** – 16.6 hectares of land north of St Mary's Road is allocated for B1/B2/B8 uses, the 3 hectares of which adjacent to High Lode basin to be for B1 uses only.

- ◆ **S2** – requires shopping proposals to be satisfactory in terms of siting, design, car parking, servicing, accessibility, environmental impact, conservation, alternative use of the land and other relevant policies in the Plan.
- ◆ **R7** - Open play space provision standards in new housing schemes.

3.3 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)**

Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- ◆ **STR1** – states that residential development up to and including estate development may proceed in Market Towns.
- ◆ **STR3** – defines Ramsey as a market town.
- ◆ **HL4** – states that permissions for estate-scale development in Ramsey will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact upon the highway network.
- ◆ **HL5** – requires a good design and layout in all new housing development.
- ◆ **HL6** – states that housing development will be at densities of 30-50 dwellings/ha with high densities on sites in and close to town centres.
- ◆ **HL7** – seeks to maximise the re-use of previously developed land.
- ◆ **AH4** – requires 29% of dwellings on sites of 25 dwellings or more in Ramsey to be affordable.
- ◆ **OB1** – states that the nature and scale of obligations sought from development will be related to the size and the impact on infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.
- ◆ **OB2** – states that a financial contribution for the maintenance of open space may be required.

3.4 **Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- ◆ **P1** – requires development to contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.
- ◆ **P2** – states development should contribute to the efficient use of natural resources.
- ◆ **P3** – states a development should contribute to the social and economic well-being of the District.
- ◆ **P5** – identifies Ramsey as a Market Town.
- ◆ **P9** – states that a mixed development should incorporate a compatible mix of uses where opportunities exist to foster more sustainable communities.
- ◆ **P11** – states that a development proposal should provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and of

meeting social and environmental requirements where necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

- ◆ **G2** – requires developments to respect and respond to the surrounding landscape.
- ◆ **B1** – requires a development to demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the area.
- ◆ **B3** – requires developments to be accessible, adaptable and secure.
- ◆ **B4** – states that a development should not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of an existing or future occupier within, adjoining or in the vicinity of a site.
- ◆ **H1** – supports major housing development within Ramsey.
- ◆ **H2** – advocates a density of 40-75 dwellings/ha within Market Towns.
- ◆ **E7** – states that a development for a large (500sqm/0.5 hectares) retail development should be limited to sites within the defined limits of market towns and, where they cannot be accommodated within a town centre, it should be demonstrated that the need exists for the development, no sequentially preferable site is suitable or available, there would be no significant adverse impact on the town centre and the site offers potential to maximise accessibility.
- ◆ **T2** – states that car and cycle parking should be limited to: a maximum of 1 car parking space per 14 square metres and a minimum of 1 cycle space per 100 square metres of retail (food) floorspace; a maximum of an average of 2 car parking spaces per dwelling plus up to 1 space per 4 units for visitors; and up to 1 car space per 4 seats and a minimum of 1 cycle space per 10 seats for public halls.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The history for the overall application site is complex as it relates to sites either side of the High Lode, various planning permissions and, evolving from that history, the adoption by the Council of the Ramsey Gateway Urban Design Framework in November 2004.
- 4.2 In simple terms there is already an extant development for a supermarket and other shopping on the Stocking Fen Road part of the site. This followed approvals in 1991(910200 & 910913) which were implemented by ground works, access road and drainage construction. Of importance are the issue of Certificates of Lawful Use and Proposed developments under s191 and 192 of the Act dated 22nd December 2000 (0001701CLUPD & 0001702CLUED). These confirm that the lawful use of part of the site is as a Class A1 development of food store and shops/offices with a floor space of 2140sq m and that the development had commenced by the carrying out of a material operation. On the same part of the site in March 2002 an outline planning permission was given for the consolidation of the permitted retail floorspace into a single foodstore of 2,044sq m (0101785). An application approved in April 2005 extended the time for reserved matters submissions and there is currently an undetermined reserved matters application for a detailed scheme

(0700843). A 2002 application for a 3400 sq m gross approx. foodstore and petrol filling station was withdrawn (0212720).

- 4.3 On the north-west side of High Lode and, again in simple terms, the history shows approval of industrial units, workplace homes and a nursery first given in May 1996 (ref 9401482OUT). A reserved matters submission for site access – a roundabout – was approved in May 1999 (9701708). A renewal of the outline permission was given in September 1999 (99000678) and subsequently varied in April 2002 to allow for the submission of reserved matters for a further three years (0102524).

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **Ramsey Town Council** - has **NO OBSERVATIONS** either in favour or against the proposal stating “Unable to reach agreement. Split vote.” **(copy attached)**
- 5.2 **Environmental Health Officer** – Ground contamination and remediation condition required.
- 5.3 **Local Highway Authority – NO OBJECTION** - clearly this development will have a significant impact on the town. However, a series of measures has been agreed which will enable the scheme to operate within highways capacity. This includes a linked signal control of Great Whyte and High Street; a £100K contribution towards public transport improvements; footbridge connecting the sites resulting in an improvement to the footpath network from this area to the town centre; £48k towards safety works on St Mary’s Road and a routing agreement for HCV traffic. The site access arrangements, including a new roundabout to serve the development west of High Lode, are acceptable.
- 5.4 **Middle Level Commissioners** - originally opposed the application. Its response to the latest information provided by on behalf of the applicant was awaited at the time this report was compiled.
- 5.5 **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue** – asks that adequate provision for fire hydrants be made.
- 5.6 **County Archaeology** – recommends an archaeological investigation be carried out before development commences
- 5.7 **Environment Agency – NO OBJECTION.**
- 5.8 **County Council Financial Planning Officer** – Adequate school capacity is available in the area but library and associated facilities in the town need improving and a £40,000 contribution is sought.
- 5.9 **Primary Care Trust** – seeks £487 per dwelling towards the necessary expansion of primary care premises capacity in Ramsey.
- 5.10 **Parks and Open Spaces Manager** – indicates that a LAP (£25,750:00 + maintenance of £8240:00) and LEAP (£41200:00 +

£12360:00) would be required together with a maintenance sum for open space at £40170:00 per hectare.

- 5.11 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – No comments at this time but would want to be consulted at reserved matters stage.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **THIRTEEN** individual representations were made. **TEN** in **FAVOUR** and **THREE**, two of whom were commercial interests, **OBJECTING** on the grounds of insufficient capacity for the proposed foodstore and detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre, and restriction of access for commercial vehicles. A town meeting was also held in 2005 at which approx 100 people attended. In a show of hands vote approximately 2/3rds supported the scheme.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 7.1 The main issues to consider in relation to this application are: the principle of the proposed uses on this site; highway matters; and S.106 Obligations.

Principle of the proposed uses

- 7.2 The part of the site to the north-west of High Lode forms part of a B1/B2/B8 employment allocation in the Local Plan 1995. The part of the site to the south-east abutting Stocking Fen Road forms part of a 'Recent Employment Completions/Outstanding Major Employment Commitments' in the Local Plan 1995. Not being B1/B2/B8 uses, the proposed foodstore, petrol filling, residential development and community facilities would be a departure from the Local Plan. The question is therefore whether there are any material planning considerations which justify supporting the scheme as a departure from the Plan. As a departure application, if the Panel was minded to support the scheme, the application would need to be referred to Council and then, if supported by Council, Go-East.
- 7.3 This site forms part of the 'Ramsey Gateway' and, in November 2004, this Council adopted as Interim Planning Guidance the 'Ramsey Gateway Urban Design Framework' after public consultation. The area was also identified as an opportunity site in the Ramsey Action Plan under the theme of creating sustainable development. The framework supports the enhancement of this area as the 'gateway' to the town and envisaged a foodstore and mainly residential development on the part of the site west of High Lode and Mixed Use on the part of the application site east of High Lode. The vision is to:
- ◆ Create a high quality development/gateway on an important approach to Ramsey;
 - ◆ Regenerate derelict land, vacant buildings and industrial uses to enhance the approach to the town and make the best use of brownfield land;
 - ◆ Encourage unneighbourly employment uses to relocate to more appropriate sites;

- ◆ Ensure a transition between the urban area and the open countryside and maintain and enhance views;
- ◆ To promote high quality landscaping and screening around and within the site to improve the setting of the development and enhance biodiversity;
- ◆ To achieve a comprehensive mixed use development that could provide local employment, housing, retail and community facilities;
- ◆ Encourage employment development to come forward on allocated land bringing new jobs and prosperity to the town;
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for a new foodstore to meet the identified need for larger, high quality, main food shopping facilities in Ramsey and reducing the outflow of expenditure;
- ◆ Provide for residential development on small-scale estates to meet local needs;
- ◆ Provide a series of beneficial community facilities such as a children's pre-school nursery and a new community centre;
- ◆ Enhance the recreational and tourism potential of the area;
- ◆ Encourage sustainable forms of development and transport;
- ◆ Improve accessibility between the area and the town centre;
- ◆ Integrate public transport facilities with the town centre; and,
- ◆ Encourage single points of access from a new roundabout on St Mary's Road with the Rivermill site being accessed using the existing arrangements from Stocking Fen Road.

7.4 The land has been allocated for employment since 1995 and there has been little interest in building-out the allocation due to the associated infrastructure costs needed to develop the site, and the poor road infrastructure in the Ramsey area. The proposed foodstore will in itself provide employment and, by providing a fundamental part of the road access into the site, the development would help kick-start the development of the remainder of the employment allocation to the north-west. This mixed-use proposal, including a new community hall and with good connections to the town centre, provides the opportunity to enhance the approach into the town and the area around High Lode and provide much needed community facilities. The proposal and the proposed planning obligations are considered to fulfil a large part of the vision for the 'Ramsey Gateway'. Two particular issues which merit further comment are the possible retention of the scrap yard on the western side of High Lode and the size and siting of the proposed foodstore.

Scrap Yard

7.5 There is an existing scrap yard located on the western side of High Lode. It has always been hoped that this site would be redeveloped as part of the scheme. Whilst the yard continues to form part of the application and part of the site on which residential development is envisaged, the owner is seemingly not currently prepared to include his site as part of the scheme. This presents the possibility that, if the development is approved, this potentially unneighbourly use could continue surrounded by new development and would not allow the same enhancements of the area around High Lode to be achieved as would be achieved by the comprehensive redevelopment of the whole

area. Whilst extremely regrettable, the benefits of the scheme, even with the scrap yard remaining in situ, are considered to be reason to support it. Environmental Health is satisfied that appropriate attenuation measures can be put in place to adequately protect the amenity of the occupiers of the new dwellings on the site. A landscaped cordon is proposed around the yard, potentially incorporating a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), until such time as the scrap yard is removed. Such a cordon has two benefits. Firstly, it ensures that the necessary attenuation measures can be put in place. Secondly, it acts as an incentive to secure the removal of the scrap yard by enabling the development of the cordon area (but retaining the LEAP) as well as the scrap yard site as soon as the yard is removed. The applicants are prepared to enter into an Agreement in this regard – see below under S.106 Matters heading.

Foodstore

- 7.6 There is permission for a 2000 square metre gross approximately foodstore on the Rivermill part of the site. Locating a foodstore here would forego the opportunity to create a high quality, domestic-scale environment and vibrancy outside of business hours around High Lode that the Urban Design Framework is seeking to achieve. In 2003, CB Hillier Parker concluded that there is an identified need for a larger, better quality foodstore in Ramsey and found no alternative more centrally located opportunity sites that could accommodate this need. They concluded that a store of circa 3400 sq m would not seriously undermine the existing convenience sector within the town centre, but recognised that it may have an impact on stores outside the town centre. They also indicated the high levels of expenditure leakage from Ramsey to other foodstores further afield as a result of the deficiencies of the existing food shopping provision within the town. Coupled with the benefits of improvements to the High Lode area by siting the foodstore on the west side of High Lode, the proposed linkages between the proposed foodstore detailed under the S.106 matters heading below, and the sense in siting the store between the residential development and the remainder of the employment allocation, a foodstore of the proposed size on land to the west of High Lode is considered acceptable.

Highway Matters

- 7.7 The means of access forms part of the application. Other highway matters including the internal layout, parking provision etc. are reserved for subsequent approval. The Local Highway Authority raises no objections to the principles of the proposed site access arrangements (including a new roundabout to serve the development west of High Lode) and, whilst acknowledging that the development will have a significant impact on the town, considers that it will operate within capacity subject to the obligations detailed below and a Green Travel Plan for the residential development.

Section 106 Matters

7.8 As part of the proposal the applicants are proposing the following obligations:

- a. £100K towards the cost of extending an existing bus service from the town centre to the new store;
- b. The provision of linked signal controls at the Great Whyte and High Street junction, linked to the pedestrian crossing to the west of the junction on the High Street, to also include minor alignment works to kerb edging and resurfacing works;
- c. A new combined pedestrian/cycle route between the foodstore and the Rivermill site, to include a bridge across High Lode between Foot Drove and Rivermill;
- d. A contribution of £48K towards highway safety improvements on St Mary's Road;
- e. The provision of a HGV routing agreement for delivery vehicles serving the foodstore to avoid the town centre;
- f. Agreement to carry out no further works in relation to the permissions for the foodstores on land at Rivermill;
- g. The transfer of land at Rivermill to the District Council suitable for the provision of a community centre, and the erection of or funding for a community centre of circa 2500 sq m gross to include a hall, kitchen, toilet facilities and office space with associated outdoor space and potential for future upgrade and expansion;
- h. The provision of affordable housing at a level of 29% of the total number of residential units;
- i. The provision and subsequent transferral of equipped play areas to include a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and a Local Area of Play (LAP);
- j. A contribution of £20K towards the ongoing maintenance and repair of the Play Areas and a further contribution towards the maintenance of other landscaped public spaces;
- k. A contribution of £5K towards the enhancement of the moorings along High Lode in the vicinity of the site to include mooring facilities and access from the river to Horse Drove;
- l. A contribution via Cambridgeshire County Council of £20K towards the cost of library and associated facilities;
- m. A contribution of £485 per dwelling towards health care facilities via Primary Health Care Trust;
- n. Agreement that there shall be no residential development within the proposed landscaped attenuation zone prior to the cessation of the car breakers use on the land adjacent to High Lode; and
- o. An obligation to use all reasonable endeavours to promote and secure confirmation of a Section 247 Order to provide alternative access to land fronting Horse Drive. Such obligation to include pursuing any objections by way of preparing evidence for and attending a public inquiry.

Points a-d (sustainable transport measures) are in accordance with the requirements of the Local Highway Authority.

Point e (HGV routeing agreement) is considered necessary to protect the amenity of Ramsey residents.

Point f (revocation of permissions) is clearly necessary to ensure that only one foodstore is built on the site.

Point g (community centre) is considered to be a reasonable and necessary community benefit arising out of the development in lieu of the formal recreation space that would normally be required for a residential scheme of this scale.

Point h (affordable housing) meets the current planning policy for residential development in Ramsey.

Point i (provision of play equipment) meets the requirements, as expressed in 2006, of the Council's Parks Manager.

Point j (maintenance of play equipment) accords with the contribution sought, as expressed in 2006, of the Council's Parks Manager.

Point k (moorings) will help enhance the area around High Lode.

Point l (library) proposes only half of the £40K the County Council was seeking.

Point m (health care) proposes £485 per dwelling compared to the Primary Care Trust requirement, at 2006 prices, of £487.

Point n (landscaped attenuation zone) is necessary for the reasons stated above.

Point o (Section 247 Order) is appropriate to achieve the improvements to the High Lode area.

7.9 With the exception of the library contribution (where £20K rather than the £40K requested by the County Council), the applicant has agreed to all those obligations that could reasonably be required of the development. The proposed contributions are considered to adequately control the development and mitigate its impact, and are therefore considered acceptable.

7.10 The proposed obligations are to be considered by a S.106 Advisory Group and its recommendation will be reported at the meeting.

Conclusion

7.11 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal and proposed obligations would fulfil a large part of the vision for the 'Ramsey Gateway', particularly (but not only) if the scrap yard is ultimately removed. Furthermore, by providing a fundamental part of the road infrastructure in the form of a new roundabout to serve the site, the development would help to kick-start the development of the remainder of the employment allocation. The application is therefore considered to be acceptable as a departure from the development

plan. Before any permission is issued, it will however be important to ensure that the latest information submitted on behalf of the applicants addresses the original concerns of the Middle Level Commissioners.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is therefore recommended that the Development Control Panel indicates that it is minded to SUPPORT the scheme; the application is referred to Council and then, if supported by Council, is referred to Go-East.

8.2 Should Go-East decide not to call-in for their own determination, then the outline permission be GRANTED subject to the satisfactory completion of the related Section 106 Agreement and subject to conditions to include the following:

- 01017 - Details reserved minus access**
- 01002 - Plans and particulars in writing**
- 01003 - Reserved matters within three years**
- 01006 - Dates for commencement**
- Nonstand - Details to comply with Masterplan**
- Nonstand - Size and use of store**
- Nonstand - Phasing**
- Nonstand - Delivery of road infrastructure**
- Nonstand - Green Travel Plan**
- 11003 - Investigation archaeology programme**
- Nonstand - Fire hydrants**
- Nonstand - Ground contamination remediation**
- Nonstand - Highway matters**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File Reference: 0501658OUT
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995

CONTACT OFFICER - A Moffat, Development Control Officer
☎ 01480 388460