

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Planning Application: 12/02935/FUL, Haywards Heath Station, Haywards Heath

Division: Development Management

Lead Officer: Steve Ashdown

Date Assessment completed: 13th December 2012

1. SCOPING

1.1 What is the purpose of the application?

The application seeks consent for the demolition of existing buildings to Perrymount Road, the erection of a new supermarket, restaurant/café and other smaller retail units, with associated car parking, a multi storey car park for station users, highways alterations including a new access off Claire Road and refurbishment works to the station buildings, with associated landscaping.

The application in part responds to Local Plan policy HH8, which allocates the site for a comprehensive mixed used development including significantly enhanced passenger facilities, a new car park, residential units and other mixed uses.

1.2 Who does the application affect?

Having reference to the relevant protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, the disabled could be affected by the proposed development. In addition, this should be extended to those groups that have general mobility issues, including people with push chairs and the frail and elderly.

The above group have been identified by officers of the Council.

2. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

2.1 Current situation

At present access to the station is taken from a level forecourt, which allows vehicular drop off's and provides 6 short stay parking spaces. 2 disabled parking spaces are provided at the far end of the forecourt. There is no covered walkway from these spaces to the station entrance.

Users of the existing station car park either have to use an open stair case to access the forecourt, due to the change of levels, or walk a circuitous route down the car park access road and then round into the forecourt. Again this is uncovered.

Users accessing the station having alighted buses in Perrymount Road, have to cross the existing station car park access road before managing to reach the station forecourt. Given that this access serves the car park and also the taxi feeder rank, it can be particularly busy at certain peak times.

2.2 Application proposals

The application will result in the existing access from the Commercial Square roundabout to the car park closing and replaced with a supermarket building. Additional vehicular access to the a new station car park will provided off a new Claire Road loop from Perrymount Road.

Access from the car park to the station forecourt will be down a newly created pedestrian link (between the car park and supermarket), which will be partially covered and step free.

The station forecourt will be slightly reconfigured to accommodate the entire taxi rank, with 2 disabled parking bays re-provided in their existing positions. A new station building canopy will wrap around the forecourt as far as these disabled spaces to offer some protection from the elements.

2.3 Application consultation

As part of the application process, the Council advertise the proposal and seek comments from interested parties and the statutory consultees. The East Grinstead and District Access Group are a non-statutory consultee who are a provided with a weekly list of planning applications. They have a remit to comment on planning applications of interest, where they believe there are issues relating to accessibility. In respect of this application, no comments have been received.

2.4 Relevant Background

Within Policy HH8 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, which deals specifically with the redevelopment of the station site, its states that one of the requirements for permission is as follows;

(d) the provision of facilities for wheelchair access and the secure storage of cycles;

It needs to be remembered that the scope of the development proposals is more limited than originally conceived with the Local Plan and subsequent Master Plan SPD, however this does not in itself impact on the appropriateness of the scheme from an equalities perspective.

2.5 Equality assessment

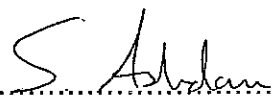
The proposed scheme makes a number of alterations to the access arrangements to the station and its forecourt. The provision of the new pedestrian link from the re-sited car park directly onto the station forecourt, which will be DDA compliant, is a significant improvement over the existing arrangements, even if the car park is sited slightly further away. The more direct, step free access will assist the disabled or the mobility impaired user greatly.

The new extended canopy to the station frontage, which will wrap round to the disabled parking spaces on the forecourt will provide some additional protection from the elements to the disabled and mobility impaired alike, assisting their access to the station itself.


The closing of the station car park entrance from the Commercial Square roundabout will allow people alighting buses in Perrymount Road to access the station forecourt

without having to cross any roads, which is a significant safety benefit to those that are disabled and mobility impaired.

In light of the above and for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and duties directed to the Council under paragraph 149, it is not considered that the development proposed within planning application 12/02935/FUL discriminates against any of the seven protected characteristics listed within the Act.

Signed..... 

Date..... 13/12/12

Signed..... 

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