

### **Representations**

Two neighbour representations have been received raising the following (summarised) points:

- Poor design.
- Objection to pedestrian walk way due to loss of privacy, light and noise pollution, and anti-social behaviour.
- Access is not suitable.
- Highway issues

A representation has been received from 'Tesco' raising the following (summarised) points:

- The application is contrary to the NPPF on retail development.
- Material submitted is not sufficiently robust to demonstrate the development should be permitted contrary to the Government's town centre first policy.
- Question retail statement and consider it provides an over-estimation of trade diversion, does not address loss of linked trips to the town centre, and overestimates the potential of the new store to divert trade from existing stores in the catchment.
- It would lead to a significant adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- There are sequentially preferable sites such as Maidstone East/former Royal Mail sorting office.

A further letter of representation has been received from Solum Regeneration who are a partnership between Network Rail and Kier Property working towards a scheme to deliver a new supermarket, substantial non-food retail, a new station with station car parking and improvements to the public realm. The letter is accompanied by a letter from Network Rail and southeastern. The purpose of these late submissions is to provide an update with regard to the redevelopment of the Maidstone East site and to quash the rumours that the sorting office is no longer available. It is stated that a planning application is due to be submitted fairly soon.

### **Officer Comment**

These issues have already been raised through representations on the planning application and are considered in the main report.

In terms of retail impact, as outlined in the main report, following advice from external consultants, the Council does not disagree with the assertions in the impact assessment. However, it is considered that the proposed development does not comply with the Council's strategy for future retail development in Maidstone, does not follow the sequential approach required by local and national policy, and would have a significant adverse impact on planned investment in Maidstone town centre, which would put at risk the Council's strategy to secure new retail development on the Maidstone East site and elsewhere within the town centre.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

My recommendation remains unchanged:

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION