

*Assessment of Potential to deliver a Medium Sized Food Store – The Old Dairy
Site, Desborough*

Comment No 246 to the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan consultation suggested that the Old Dairy Site, Desborough, could be redeveloped as a medium sized food store. At the 22nd January 2019 Planning Policy Committee, it was agreed that officers would assess and investigate the Old Dairy site, Desborough, to establish whether it has potential to deliver a medium sized food store. The conclusions of this assessment are provided below.

The Old Dairy Site (also referred to as the car park adjacent 77 High Street, Desborough) has a site area of 2156m² (excluding the pharmacy and access road) or 2285m² (including the pharmacy but excluding the access road). Policy 12 (JCS) identified a need for a medium-sized food store (approximately 2000m² net) to serve the Rothwell / Desborough area. The area of land required to facilitate the delivery of a store of this size would appear larger than that which could be accommodated at the Old Dairy site when taking into account similar proposals¹ in the area which allow for loading bays, optional bakery, back-up storage, toilets and domestic areas.

The access road serving the indoor bowls club is private, but presumably belongs to the dairy site owner based on information contained within planning application KE/03/1019. This can be confirmed through further enquiries. Assuming this is the case, it may be possible to accommodate loading access to the rear of the site. Further feasibility work would need to be undertaken.

If the pharmacy were to be re-located or incorporated within the supermarket use, then there may be scope to deliver a supermarket with a reduced floor space of approximately 1500m² (a reduction of 25%). However, this does not allow for any additional vehicular circulation space or on-site parking provision. Whilst the site is located within the town centre boundary, most recent health checks (March 2016) highlighted that the location of car parks in the town was poor, and that the majority of trips to Desborough were undertaken by private car. This trend may continue without a significant modal shift, and whilst congestion/lack of parking were not key issues for disliking the town, the lack of parking provision on site for a medium sized food store will be an issue affecting the local area, particularly as the supermarket is planned to serve the Rothwell area also, which will attract inward commuting.

On balance, it is considered that this site would be insufficient in size to deliver a food store of the size identified within the JCS, and that a smaller supermarket would fail to address parking provisions needed or address the quantum of retail floor space needed.

¹ Planning application KET/2010/0826 for a supermarket and PFS proposed an A1 retail area of 3409m² and a net tradeable area of 1993m² (excluding the PFS floor area); KET/2010/0743 for a supermarket on the Lawrence's site proposed an A1 retail area of 2387m² with a net area of 1660m².