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From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories: [REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0375 Site Address: Land off Broad Street Leek Staffordshire Comments by:
Liam Dawson
From:

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Submission: Support

Comments: I am wanting to express my support for the proposed drive-thru coffee shop development in Leek. I believe this development will bring significant benefits to the town, both economically and socially, while making productive use of a currently underutilised brownfield site.

Leek is a vibrant and historic market town that has for the most part managed to successfully balance heritage with progress. I believe the proposed development respects the local character while offering a modern facility that serves the needs of all residents, commuters, and visitors. The current state of the land, which previously housed a garage, and its adjacent location to another high-street brand suggest that this development would not be out of place or distract from the character of the town. Instead of damaging Leek's heritage, this investment would instead enhance the town's reputation as being forward-looking and one that supports sustainable growth in the interest of its residents and visitors.

Concerns have understandably been raised about potential traffic impacts and the site's proximity to a busy junction. However, modern drive-thru layouts and traffic management designs have evolved considerably in aiming to minimise disruption. With appropriate planning conditions and design measures in place, I have no doubt this could operate safely and efficiently without negatively affecting local traffic flow. Examples of this can be seen in neighbouring businesses who manage to operate safely without cause severe congestion. The nature of this business will also encourage a steady flow of traffic to enter and exit the land, the same which cannot be said for neighbouring businesses where the length of time a customer might stay is typically longer than a drive-thru. If there was however anything I would be concerned about it would be this, and so proper attention should be paid to ensure it is executed in the best way possible.

Regarding local businesses, larger chains could in fact help attract more visitors to Leek & people who might not otherwise stop in town but who could then explore the high street and independent shops as part of their visit. It's been proven before that independent offerings often coexist successfully, serving different needs and customer bases while still leaving room for growth. Take for example where on multiple occasions I have found myself in Leek on a Sunday only to realise that nearly all independent coffee shops were closed, despite clear demand for that

service to be available. Instead we may see positive competition in and around the local area as independent businesses diversify and improve their offerings to compete accordingly. This should not be seen as a negative but instead as something healthy that will help to push growth in Leek as a whole.

The proposed development would also create local jobs, supporting both young people and those seeking flexible work. Albeit not many roles are planned to be made available but this should not be overlooked as anything that helps local residents with securing work should be encouraged.

Concerns regarding light and noise pollution are also valid, however modern building designs and landscaping can effectively mitigate these issues through sensitive lighting and appropriate opening-hour management. The benefit of extended opening hours should also be recognised: it provides a safe, well-lit environment for travellers and workers, contributing to the town's overall infrastructure and convenience. Typical use cases for this type of business include providing a place for young people to socialise and study at times of the day where other public places would be closed, and a place for people to meet and catch up with friends or pop in to at the end of a long day. A place that provides services that support these activities would be great for the local area!

Importantly, this proposal makes use of a brownfield site – an environmentally responsible approach that avoids encroachment on green space. It also does not directly impact nor make changes to the layout or navigation of the existing historic town buildings, another bonus for using this site. Regenerating such sites helps improve the visual and functional quality of main routes into the town, projecting a positive image of investment in the area. I strongly believe that if anything the development will draw attention to surrounding plots of land which are in need of maintenance and will hopefully in turn spark further rejuvenation to one of the main routes into Leek.

In conclusion, this development represents an opportunity for Leek to strengthen its local infrastructure, generate employment, improve amenities, and attract visitors – all while utilising land responsibly. Proper planning and restrictions should be implemented to ensure concerns surrounding traffic management and architectural styling are met to ensure we gain a site that 'fits in' with the overall atmosphere in Leek.

Growth and preservation can, and should, work hand in hand. I urge the Council to approve the application and support this positive step in Leek's continued evolution.

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