Expiry Date - 16/07/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0634/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Downlands Retail Park Lyons Way Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Erection of 1 no. internally illuminated totem sign (including removal of existing totem sign) and rebranding of a second totem sign also to be internally illuminated.**

Date of site visit: 17.06.25

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The Application Site relates to Downlands Retail Park, on the north side of Worthing. The Site is located on Lyons Way, situated just off the A27.

The Retail Park provides 3 retail units, totalling approximately 6,250 sq. m of floorspace, with an associated customer car park comprising 402 spaces.

Downlands Retail Park is located within a wider established retail destination, with a number of other retailers in close vicinity, including a large Sainsbury's superstore and associated petrol filling station, Lyons Farm Retail Park, comprising of Wren Kitchens, The Gym Group and Boots, as well Pets at Home.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the Site is provided off Lyons Way, via the two traffic light junctions of the A27. The Site is served by bus routes, with Lyons Farm Sainsbury's bus stop, located 150 metres west of the retail park, serving routes 7, 16 and 7 Connect.

The Site is not located within a Conservation Area or within proximity to any statutorily listed buildings.

Proposal

The application seeks advertisement consent to display one new totem sign and for an existing totem to be re-branded with new tenant logos. One totem sign will also be removed.

• Removal of existing totem sign; • Installation of new totem sign, measuring 8000mm (H) x 2500 mm (W) x 400mm (D); double sided backlit at 100lux maintained between 7am and 11pm

• Rebranding of an existing totem sign, whereby the existing structure will be retained, with all cladding to be removed to incorporate updated tenant logos and the incoming occupier's branding- single sided backlit at 100lux maintained between 7am and 11pm

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Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0333/22- Construction of a drive-through coffee shop unit (Use Class E(a) and ancillary Sui Generis) and associated works within Downlands Retail Park car par APPROVED

Consultations:

South Down National Park Authority (summary)

Although the application site is located outside of the National Park, the Council has a statutory duty to consider the Purposes of the National Park when making its determination.

The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:
 To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage,
 To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special
qualities of their areas.

It is considered that the proposal will not impact the setting of the National Park as area is characterised as a retail destination and the proposal reflect the character of the area.

The submitted details state that the totems are proposed to include a single sided LED backlit signage box, with black steel trims, with lux levels in this low brightness environment at 100 lux, maintained between the hours of 07.00 and 23.00.

Due to its proximity to the Dark Sky Designation Zone E1b it is recommended that consideration be given to dark night skies, which are a special quality of the National Park.

The South Downs National Park is a designated International Dark Sky Reserve and dark skies, and tranquillity are a special quality of the National Park which need to be protected. Transition Zone E1b is an area that lie between dark zones and the urban environment and measure between 15 and 20 SQM.

Conditions in this zone will be variable but most rural areas will measure near to the 20 SQM darkness limit. While the skies are relatively brighter it is still important to reduce light pollution as these areas have the potential to become dark zones in the future.

Whilst there is likely to be pre-existing lighting associated with the employment uses in the locality, the SDNPA would encourage any new development to have a sensitive approach to light.

The South Downs National Park, Dark Skies Technical Advice Note Version 2 (2021) (TAN) gives guidance on illuminated advertisements and consideration should be given to National Park purposes and every effort taken to reduce light pollution.

As long as the development meets the guidance, as set out in the Dark Skies TAN, then the authority would raise no concerns.

Representations:

None

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SP3, DM5, DM6, DM8, DM13, DM15, DM22

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The NPPF states (in paragraph 141) that: *The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.*

A local planning authority shall exercise its powers in the interests of amenity and public safety.

Policy DM6 states that “express consent will only be granted for advertisements which respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and do not create a danger or hazard to public safety”.

Visual Amenity

The site is an established retail park to the north of the A27, the industrial park is entered via traffic lights. There is existing signage on the site. Due to imminent development of the site to provide a drive through coffee shop the existing totem sign requires removing and a new one is proposed closer to the road and corner. The proposal also involves rebranding of an existing sign adjacent to the existing retail units.

The site is large with road frontages and retail units. The replacement signage would not be unduly visible and the signage and illumination is appropriate. The design and level of illumination would not detract from the visual amenities of the area or harm the character of the wider area.

The new totem sign on the frontage would largely replace an existing totem sign. The proposed 8m high pylon sign would be black with tenant panels of orange, blue and red. The sign would be backlit illuminated to 100lux. The 8m high totem sign would be seen in the context of the retail park, other signage and signal controls. Although the sign would be prominent and illuminated this is considered acceptable in context with the building and helps to highlight the entrance more clearly.

The nearest properties are the residential dwellings on the south side of A27. This is an established site with illuminated signage. The level of signage and illumination is not significantly increased and would not have any additional impact on the visual amenities of adjacent residential occupiers.

The proposed signage would not adversely affect the character or visual amenities of the area.

The signage should be seen in context to the operating hours of the retail park and these signs would be operated 7am to 11pm. It is not therefore considered that the illumination of the signs would impact on the South Down dark skies.

Public Safety

The factors relevant to public safety include such matters as the safety of persons using any highway, and or whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign.

There are no implications arising from the proposals from a public or highway safety perspective.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Standard Conditions 1-6:-

7. Approved plans

8. Illumination only during hours 7am to 11pm

9. The existing totems shall be removed in full within one month of the installation of the new signage.

Informative

Expiry Date - 16/07/2025

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Jackie Fox Date: 09.07.25

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 15/07/2025