

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1560	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Advertisement Application		
Proposal:	Installation of a digital display screen positioned inside the store.		
Site:	The Co-operative Food, 35 - 37 High Street, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2HJ, ,		
Validation Date	17 Jun 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	18 Jul 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	1 Aug 2025
Target Date:	12 Aug 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	5 Aug 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1560

**The Co-operative Food, 35 - 37 High Street, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2HJ,
Installation of a digital display screen positioned inside the store.**

Ms Abbie Bannerman

LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

The Co-op Store is located in an unlisted building to the western side of Lindfield High Street, within the Conservation Area. It is a relatively modern, 20th century building which makes at best a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Area. The current proposal is for the installation of a digital display screen behind the shop window adjacent to the entrance doors. The size of the display is 556mm wide x 968mm high, and the total height including the stand will be 1800mm.

In many circumstances, the use of digital display screens within Conservation Areas will be considered contentious, as they may be considered to detract from the traditional character of an Area for reasons of their appearance, illumination, and moving images. However, in this particular case the unit, which in the context of the extensive shop windows to the Co-op is relatively modest in scale, is internally positioned behind a non-traditional shop frontage forming part of a relatively modern building, and would be seen against the backdrop of a brightly lit, active shop interior. The submitted planning statement confirms that the unit would only be switched on during shop hours, and that the level of illumination would be adjusted to suit ambient light levels. On balance it is not considered that an objection to the proposal on grounds of the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would therefore be sustainable.

The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Lindfield Parish Council objects to this application; considering that this bright, moving image screen is totally inappropriate given its high-profile location within the Village's Conservation Area and its potential distraction to drivers negotiating the hazardous Lewes Road / High Street junction. Further, that the display will appear even more unsuitable during the longer hours of darkness in the winter months, both in terms of its distraction and likely light pollution.

If it is to be allowed, its operation should be restricted to daylight hours, the display change intervals should be extended to greater than two minutes at a time, and its light output set at an appropriately subdued level.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks advert consent for the erection of an illuminated digital display screen inside the store.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

LF/003/93 - One illuminated fascia sign. Permission

07/02253/ADV - Replacement of existing fascia sign. Permission
10/00159/ADV - Illuminated external fascia sign and projection sign. Refused
10/00219/FUL - New external plant inside external secure enclosure with a protective barrier around. 2 no. new A/C units mounted on the rear wall. Shop-front to be re-decorated from brown to white. Permission
10/00936/ADV - Fascia sign externally illuminated by swan neck downlighters, Projection sign - non-illuminated. Permission
DM/18/1895 - Proposed illuminated fascia, illuminated CO-OP projector and 4 No. non illuminated wall mounted flat aluminium panels. Permission

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site lies within the built-up area of Lindfield as well as the Lindfield Conservation Area as defined in the District and Neighbourhood Plan.

The site is located towards the southern end of the Lindfield High Street, on the western side of the road and comprises of a shop, currently operated by The Co-Operative with flats above. The shop frontage consists of large windows with grey fenestration and grey fascia. Above the shop frontage is hanging tiles with white uPVC windows serving the flats.

The locality consists of both shops and dwellings along the high street of varying form, scale and designs.

The Co-operative opening hours are 7am - 11pm 7 days a week.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks advertisement consent for the erection of an illuminated digital display screen inside the store.

The display is to be located 1.40 metres to the side of the main doors to the shop and will have a width of 0.56 metres, depth of 0.08 metres, screen height of 0.96 metres and an overall height of 1.80 metres. The display will have a black aluminium frame and have a brightness of up to 700 cd/m² and will automatically adjust in response to ambient light conditions.

The display had been installed at the point of the site visit with the agent confirming that the display was installed in June.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Document and the Lindfield Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP21 - Transport
DP26 - Character and Design
DP35 - Conservation Areas

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

No relevant policies.

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2016)

No relevant policies.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant Policies:

DPN8 - Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB3 - Conservation Areas

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

NATIONAL POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024
Planning Practice Guidance
Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

ASSESSMENT

Section 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out that:

'3.—(1) A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

(a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
(b) any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

(a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;

(b) factors relevant to public safety include—

(i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

(ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.'

Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

'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.'

Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- *Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- *Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- *Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*

- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.*
Development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area.

New buildings of outstanding or innovative design may be acceptable in conservation areas provided that their impact would not cause material harm to the area.'

The Parish Council have objected to the proposal due to the location within the Conservation Area and create light pollution during darker hours.

The MSDC Conservation Officer has been consulted and provided comments included at the beginning of this report raising no objection. The display will be viewed in the context of the shop frontage which is of a non-traditional design. Additionally, it would be seen against the backdrop of the brightly lit, active shop interior. The display would only be in use during shop opening hours which can be secured with a suitably worded condition, as well the level of brightness adjusted to suit ambient light levels. Due to this, it is not considered that the proposed display would cause additional harm in terms of light pollution.

The proposal therefore complies with policy DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Public Safety

Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to transport and states that development proposals should protect the safety of road users and pedestrians.

The Parish Council have objected to the proposal for causing a distraction to drivers.

The digital display will be located within the shop which is set back from the public road. The brightness will be up to 700cd/m² which meets the WSCC Highways standing advice for illuminated signage which for a display of this size in an E3 zone advises for up to 800 cd/m². Additionally as the display will be set back from the public road and not within the main line of sight of a driver, therefore it is not considered to represent a hazard to public safety. Therefore, the proposal complies DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

CONCLUSION

The proposed digital display is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and location, would preserve the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area and not create a hazard to public safety. The proposal therefore is considered to comply with Policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Peter Davies