

Waitrose Banbury
Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International
Statement of Community Involvement

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Statement of Community Involvement:
April 2015

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared on behalf of Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International by Forty Shillings to support the proposed development of a Waitrose food store on Southam Road, Banbury.
- 1.2 The project team has been working up plans for the site for several months. Initial ideas were tested with Cherwell District Council at an early stage and meetings have been held with the Cherwell District Council Planning Department.
- 1.3 The multi-million pound proposal will see an area of surplus land in front of the Mondelēz International (formerly Kraft) factory site on Southam Road developed.
- 1.4 Waitrose has a long-standing ambition to open a shop in Banbury and believe the plans brought forward by Barwood and Mondelēz offer an exciting and viable opportunity to achieve this.
- 1.5 Mondelēz wish to sell the land in order to generate capital to reinvest in the Banbury factory. Mondelēz International is one of the largest employers in Banbury with 700 permanent employees expected to be working on the site by the end of 2015.
- 1.6 The site offers Waitrose the right location to deliver the size of food store and parking required in order for it to be an attractive and viable option. Good links to the town centre and being easily accessible from both the east and west of the town are further advantages.
- 1.7 Mondelēz is proposing a joint venture investment with coffee producers, Douwe Egberts. The capital released from the sale of the site will generate funds for Mondelēz to invest in improvements, including upgrading staff facilities and offices.
- 1.8 Forty Shillings was instructed by Waitrose on behalf of Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International to support the community engagement programme.
- 1.9 The scope of this consultation exercise was to inform local residents and stakeholders about the development plans and to seek public feedback. The exercise complemented the consultations undertaken by other members of the project team who were liaising with technical consultants.
- 1.10 In addition to the Statement of Community Involvement, a full suite of documents has been submitted in support of the planning application including; Layout plans, Planning Statement, Retail Impact Assessment, Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment and a number of other technical reports.

2.0 Executive summary

- 2.1 In drawing up plans for the new Waitrose food store in Banbury, Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International have followed best practice and the guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Cherwell District Council Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.2 The consultation strategy has been to involve a wide range of interested parties. Our target groups for engagement included:
- Local residents
 - Community groups/leaders within Banbury and the surrounding villages
 - Political stakeholders
 - Cherwell District Council Planning and Development team
- 2.3 Our consultation strategy has included:
- Engagement with business groups and community stakeholders
 - Meetings with political stakeholders
 - A public exhibition
 - Distribution of a newsletter
 - Project website/information line/email address
- 2.4 The feedback from this consultation activity has informed the design process on an ongoing basis.
- 2.5 Meetings have taken place between specialist members of the project team liaising with technical consultees and council officers.
- 2.6 On Friday 6th March 2015 local community and political stakeholders were invited to a separate preview session. This was an opportunity for those people to meet the project team privately.
- 2.7 After the preview session we held a public exhibition on Friday 6th and Saturday 7th March 2015 to seek feedback on the proposals. This was publicised through local media editorial and advertorial and via a newsletter that was distributed to 23,630 households in Banbury. A dedicated project website was also established:
www.waitrosebanbury.co.uk.

A breakdown of the feedback received during the consultation is below:

- 1,216 people have completed the feedback form either via FREEPOST or online
- 84.76% support the plans to bring Waitrose to Banbury

- More than 300 people attended the exhibition

2.8 The public consultation raised a number of issues, which Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International have considered when finalising the plans for the Waitrose Banbury site.

Section 6 of this document includes a response to these concerns.

Section 7 of this document details the subsequent design changes made to the scheme as a result of the consultation.

3.0 The policy context

- 3.1 A core part of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which was published in March 2012 is to encourage community involvement in the planning process. In the Ministerial Statement at the start of the document, the Minister for Planning specifically highlights the importance of public involvement:

In order to fulfil its purpose of helping achieve sustainable development, planning must not simply be about scrutiny. Planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives.

This should be a collective enterprise. Yet, in recent years, planning has tended to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities. In part, this has been a result of targets being imposed, and decisions taken, by bodies remote from them. Dismantling the unaccountable regional apparatus and introducing neighbourhood planning addresses this.

In part, people have been put off from getting involved because planning policy itself has become so elaborate and forbidding – the preserve of specialists, rather than people in communities.

This National Planning Policy Framework changes that. By replacing over a thousand pages of national policy with around fifty, written simply and clearly, we are allowing people and communities back into planning.

- 3.2 The NPPF encourages applicants to engage in pre-application consultation with the local community. In paragraphs 188-191, the NPPF states:

Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications.

The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage. Wherever possible, parallel processing of other consents should be encouraged to help speed up the process and resolve any issues as early as possible.

- 3.3 Significantly, the NPPF also emphasises the need for planning to take into account the needs of business and calls on local planning authorities to “*work closely with the business community to understand their changing needs and identify and address barriers to investment, including a lack of housing, infrastructure or viability. (para 160)*”
- 3.4 Cherwell District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) came into effect in 24 July 2006. The Statement of Community Involvement forms part of the Draft Local Development Framework 2011-2031 and all documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework process have to meet the minimum standards of community involvement that it sets out.

Cherwell District Council is committed to working in partnership with the wide range of organisations and communities in Cherwell. The main benefits of undertaking effective and meaningful consultation within the planning process are:

- *strengthening the evidence base for plans, strategies and planning decisions – stakeholders and local communities can bring a different perspective to planning and should be valued for their expertise, opinions and insight;*
- *community commitment to the future development of an area – local people can be encouraged to make a difference to their area, with long term benefits;*
- *promoting regeneration and investment – by publicising proposals and inviting people to get involved the Council will demonstrate its commitment to improving areas and through joint working achieve better quality outcomes; and*

- *fostering ownership and strengthening delivery – involving local communities at an early stage ('frontloading') of document preparation will help resolve issues, thereby avoiding the need for lengthy independent examinations.*

3.5 This guidance has helped inform our consultation and engagement plan.

4.0 Our consultation strategy

- 4.1 Our objective has been to involve a wide range of interested parties and to seek their feedback on initial development plans to assess public attitudes towards the development proposal and to identify ways in which the scheme could be improved.

Our target groups for engagement included:

- Local residents
- Community groups/leaders within Banbury and the surrounding villages
- Political stakeholders
- Cherwell District Council Planning and Development team

4.2 Programme of engagement

A programme of community engagement was agreed to involve these target groups and to seek feedback through dialogue and response forms. The engagement programme included:

- Stakeholder audit
- Distribution of 23,630 newsletters locally
- Adverts and editorial in local media
- A stakeholder event previewing them the public exhibition
- A public exhibition
- A project website
- Freepost feedback forms and online have your say survey
- An information line and email address for the project

Stakeholders

Prior to commencing engagement, we undertook stakeholder mapping exercise to identify the area and stakeholders likely to have an interest in the proposal.

Barwood Capital, Mondelēz International and Waitrose follow best practice guidelines regarding community involvement and have maintained open lines of communication and engaged with neighbours throughout the consultation process.

A private preview meeting was held with key stakeholders at Banbury Town Hall, Bridge Street, OX16 5QB from

12.30pm to 1.30pm on Friday 6th March 2015. Stakeholders included the MP, members of Banbury Town Council and Cherwell District Council, community groups, including Banbury & District Chamber of Commerce, Banbury Civic Society and the Rotary Club of Banbury.

The team were advised that councillors would not be attending the preview session and would instead attend the public session. Eleven stakeholders attended, including representatives from Banbury & District Chamber of Commerce and Banbury Civic Society.

Newsletters

A newsletter was distributed on 24th and 25^h February 2015 to 23,630 households to inform residents of Banbury and the surrounding area about Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International's development plan for the site. (See Annex 1)

Local stakeholders, traders and interested groups were also sent individual letters inviting them to preview the exhibition from the project management team. (See Annex1)

Project website

A dedicated project website - www.waitrosebanbury.co.uk - provided an additional mechanism for residents to register views on the development proposals. (See Annex 1)

Information line and email address

An information phone line (020 8786 6130) and email us at: info@waitrosebanbury.co.uk was also set up to ensure the team could respond to any inquiries.

Local newspaper editorial and advertorial

Information about the plans and the exhibition were made available to local newspapers through advertising and editorial coverage.

A press release was issued to local media on 5th March 2015 with coverage appearing in the printed and online editions of the Banbury Guardian, Banbury Cake/Oxford Mail,

Oxford Times and Banbury Living as well as on local radio stations BBC Radio Oxford, Banbury Sound and Jack FM.

An update on the feedback received to date and encouraging people to complete forms online was issued to local media after the exhibition generating further press coverage.

An advert was placed in the 5th March 2015 edition of the Banbury Guardian (weekly paper distribution 14, 500 and readership 43, 000).

Public exhibition

A public exhibition, showing Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International's development proposals for the site, was held on Friday 6th March 2015 from 2pm to 6pm and 7th March 2015 from 10am to 1pm at Banbury Town Hall.

Attendance was recorded with the use of a manual clicker. More than 300 people attended over the two days.

A banner and A-frame outside the Town Hall promoted the exhibition to passersby.

Residents were encouraged to provide feedback through the response form.

Members of the project team and technical specialists were available to answer any questions.

- 4.3 Copies of the consultation materials are contained in Annex 1. More detailed feedback is set out overleaf.

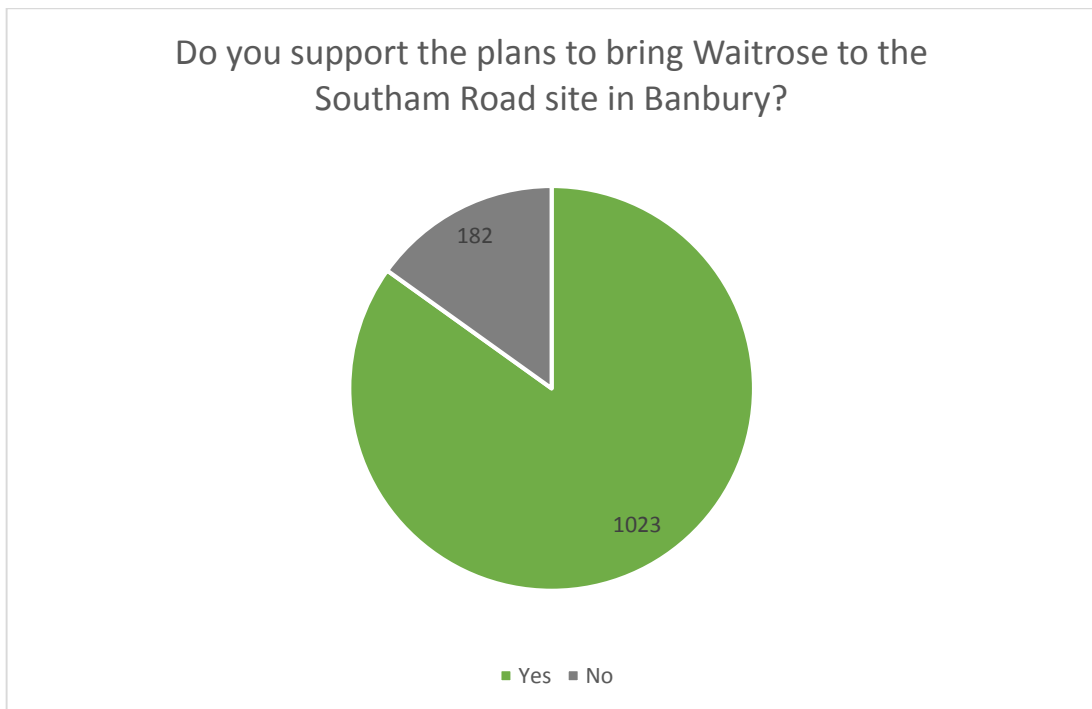
5.0 Feedback from the public engagement

5.1 1,218 response forms from members of the Banbury community were received by the closing date of Wednesday 18th March 2015. The results of the survey are presented in the charts below:

Contact details		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Name:	99.49%	1170
Address:	97.44%	1146
City/Town:	71.89%	846
County:	22.91%	270
Postal Code:	94.63%	1113
Email Address:	63.97%	753
Phone Number:	50.60%	596
	<i>answered question</i>	1176
	<i>skipped question</i>	42

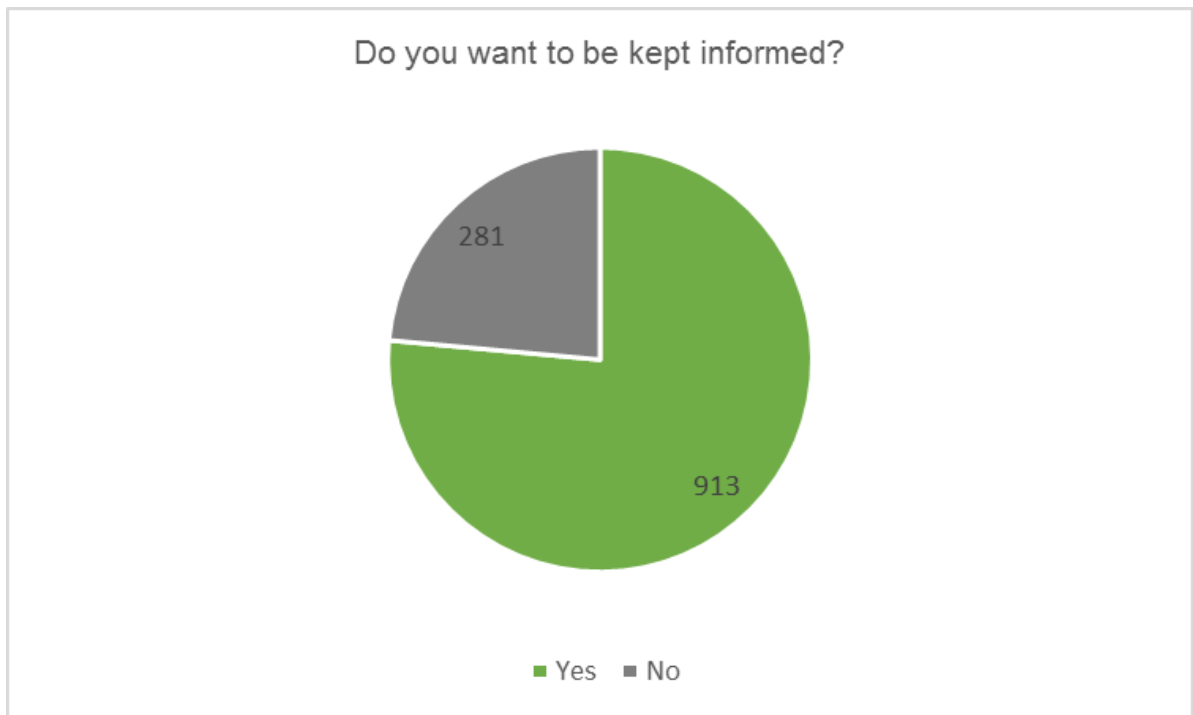
5.2 Question 1) Do you support the plans to bring Waitrose to the Southam Road site in Banbury?

Do you support the plans to bring Waitrose to the Southam Road site in Banbury?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	84.76%	1023
No	15.10%	182
	<i>answered question</i>	1207
	<i>skipped question</i>	11



5.2 Question 2) Do you want to be kept informed?

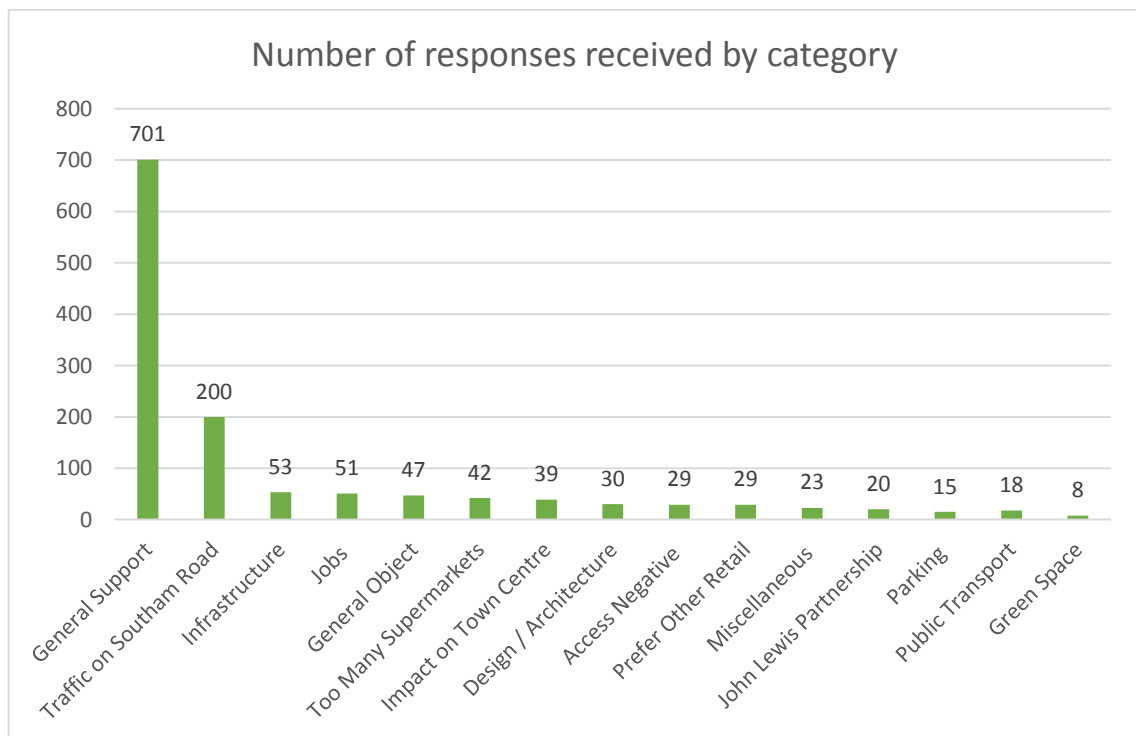
Do you want to be kept informed?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	76.47%	913
No	23.53%	281
	<i>answered question</i>	1194
	<i>skipped question</i>	24



5.3 **Question 3) Please include any additional comments below:**

Please include any additional comments below	
Answer Options	Response Count
<i>answered question</i>	935
<i>skipped question</i>	283

5.4 The categories of comments received is shown in the below graph. A full list of comments is provided in Annex 3



6.0 Responding to the public consultation

6.1 In response to the public consultation, Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International and their project advisors have reviewed the comments that have been submitted (annex 3). The main points raised at meetings with stakeholders, the public exhibition and through the response forms are listed below:

- **General Support:** A large majority of the comments received supported the proposal and general endorsement for the Waitrose Banbury plans. The prospect of more jobs and John Lewis Partnership were widely mentioned.
- **Negative community impact:** However, a very small minority of responses received indicated that there would be a detrimental impact on Banbury Town Centre and some felt that there were already too many large supermarkets in Banbury.
- **Traffic on Southam Road:** There was concern that additional traffic from the proposed food store on Southam Road, which was considered to already be congested, would be detrimental.

Below is a table of the main concerns raised throughout the public consultation with our response:

Concerns Raised:	Our response
<p>Has the impact of more traffic on the already heavily congested Southam Road been taken into consideration?</p> <p><i>*Approx. 200 responses</i></p>	<p>Barwood’s transport consultant, PBA, has undertaken vehicle surveys and prepared a Transport Assessment having first agreed the scope of this exercise with Oxfordshire County Council.</p> <p>It is considered that the majority of vehicles travelling to and from the proposed development will already be on surrounding roads travelling to existing food stores.</p> <p>Therefore, there will be a redistribution of traffic on the local road network and the impacts of any new traffic attracted to the development site has been assessed within the Transport Assessment which demonstrates that no mitigation is required at local roads and junctions.</p> <p>Circa 220 car parking spaces will be provided, including accessible and parent and child spaces.</p>

	<p>The site will have a dedicated access route for deliveries to separate them for customer vehicle movements. It is proposed that service vehicles will arrive from the east via the M40 Junction 11.</p>
<p>How will residents with no transport or disabilities be able to reach the store?</p> <p><i>*Approx. 40 responses</i></p>	<p>There are bus stops a short walk away from the site.</p> <p>A pick up point with bench seats has been included in the proposed design.</p> <p>Approx. five covered cycle hoops will be provided for customers near the Waitrose entrance plus additional cycle parking for staff located elsewhere. These requirements are set by Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.</p> <p>The proposal does not seek to remove the existing Public Footpath that lies on the northern boundary of the Cemetery. Existing footways are provided on both sides of Southam Road for access into the town centre and to the north. The footway on the west side of Southam Road is also a cycleway. These links are considered to be adequate to serve the proposal.</p>
<p>Access to and from the site will be difficult as you will turning into a very busy road. Is there a plan in place to alleviate this i.e. roundabouts or traffic lights?</p> <p><i>*Approx. 53 responses</i></p>	<p>Barwood Capital has instructed PBA as specialist transportation consultants to consider the traffic impact of the proposed Waitrose store on the local highway network. These detailed considerations are set out in a Transport Assessment (TA) which will be considered by OCC Highways upon the submission of the planning application.</p> <p>The TA considers the most appropriate form for the junction arrangement with Southam Road, for which full details are provided as part of the detailed planning application. The application is also accompanied by a Road Safety Audit (RSA) for both vehicular junctions, and a Designer's Response to the RSA.</p> <p>For the reasons as set out in the TA, PBA consider that the proposed access</p>

	<p>arrangement is suitable to serve the proposed Waitrose store and meet OCC's requirements The car park access has been designed such that there is no need to alter the junction of Marley Way with Southam Road.</p>
<p>There are already large supermarkets in close proximity of each other out of town. Would you not benefit more from being in the Town Centre?</p> <p><i>*Approx. 39 responses</i></p>	<p>Waitrose has been keen to invest in a new store in Banbury for several years. Waitrose has investigated a number of sites within Banbury Town Centre and edge of centre.</p> <p>In particular, very careful consideration has been given to the Spiceball redevelopment site. However, Waitrose have confirmed that this site cannot accommodate a food store that would meet their requirements. Features such as multi-level car parking represent 'scheme deficiencies' which compromise confidence for Waitrose investing in a new area.</p> <p>The site at Southam Road is the only site in Banbury that is suitable and available for Waitrose to invest in a new food store in Banbury. If planning permission is denied to the scheme at Southam Road, Waitrose will not undertake investment in a food store elsewhere in the town.</p> <p>A new supermarket of this scale will principally trade against the main supermarkets in Banbury, who are all located outside of the Town Centre. A retail impact assessment accompanies the application and demonstrates that the proposed food store will not have a significant impact upon the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. Indeed it is hoped that the new food store will encourage people who currently do not shop in Banbury with the possibility of continuing into Banbury Town Centre.</p>
<p>Isn't Waitrose too expensive for many residents to shop there?</p>	<p>Waitrose price matches with Tesco on all branded products, excluding promotions.</p>

<p><i>*Approx. 39 responses</i></p>	<p>The store will include the 'essential Waitrose' range, which offers hundreds of everyday shopping items at everyday affordable prices.</p> <p>Waitrose provides hundreds of instore and online offers every month, including 'buy one get one free' promotions.</p>
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*A full list of comments is provided in Annex 3.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International is proposing a multi-million pound investment in Banbury – a Waitrose food store in Banbury.
- 7.2 Barwood Capital and Mondelēz International have undertaken extensive consultation with local residents, community and stakeholder groups in line with local and national planning policy and best practice. This has included a stakeholder preview exhibition, a project website, newsletters and public exhibition.
- 7.3 The feedback from this engagement has informed the design process as the scheme has evolved. It is worth noting that the consultation demonstrated:
- 1,218 people have completed the questionnaire to date although responses are still being received
 - 84.76% support the plans to bring Waitrose to Banbury
- 7.4 The application that has been submitted proposes further amendments in response to comments that have been made by local residents and community groups.

Annex 1: Communication materials - please see separate documents

Annex 2: Images of exhibition - please see separate documents

Annex 3: Residents' comments - please see separate documents

Annex 4: Press coverage - Please see separate documents