**Draft Response to proposed Aldi site – Waterbrook Park (with copies to Planning Officers)**

**Do you support this proposal in principle?**

No – given its impact on local convenience stores in the SWAN area, the environment, increased traffic flows which will reduce connectivity in the area and lack of public transport access

**What do you think about the proposals?**

**Positive**

The store will help to serve bulk food shopping needs. However, to avoid unnecessary journeys for one-off purchases, smaller convenience stores may be a preferred option within the Finberry/Bridgefield residential developments as an aid to community development

It will enhance consumer choice in the wider South/East Ashford area

It is unlikely to further erode the town centre’s offer

Job creation – although one might reasonably expect more than 50 jobs to be created in a store of 2,300 square metres

**Negative**

The Aldi product is distinct from the larger supermarkets which typically provide many more lines but It will create competition for our established local convenience stores which are seen by residents as key hubs within the SWAN community.

Noise, especially in the evening, is already reported as a growing concern for residents living close to the A2070

Its location will mean an increased number of journeys by car to the site unless public transport is enhanced. As far as we can see, service providers have no plans to open up the existing bus lane to extend the route from Finberry

The likelihood is that if this development goes ahead in addition to other commercial and logistics activity on the Waterbrook Park site and other commercial and residential developments in South Willesborough and Newtown (former Railway Works development), through roads will become much more congested. This will have a negative impact on the SWAN residents’ connectivity with the town and its major transport links (motorway/International station etc)

Developer contributions to improve traffic flow over the hump back bridge on Crowbridge Road have been agreed as part of the former Railway Works development and other developments. In the event that the Railway Works development does not go ahead, the bridge will become a dangerous bottleneck.

Orbital Park, Crowbridge Road and Newtown Road would be the most direct route between the 2 Aldi stores in the town. We believe it would be in Aldi’s interest to pay attention to the bridge and to assist the community by funding speed indicator devices on the 3 stretches of road

We understand a bridleway runs through the site which should be preserved as should some of the existing trees in the vicinity of the store

Light pollution will need to be addressed

**General comments**

If the development is approved, SWAN Councillors would like to see a positive commitment by Aldi to support the Ashford Plastic free pledge, eg a plastic free aisle and/or positive action to support local businesses eg beeswax wraps available as an alternative to cling film