

## Pre Application Consultation

### The Co-op

### Former Crown Hotel site, High Street, Boston Spa, Yorkshire

This briefing outlines proposals for a planning application being prepared by The Co-op for the site of the former Crown Hotel, High Street, Boston Spa, Yorkshire.

#### About the application

The former Crown Hotel closed in 2012. Since then the site has been vacant. The application will propose the conversion of the existing building with change of use to retail. The ground floor of the existing building would accommodate the retail floor of approximately 2000 square feet (185 m<sup>2</sup>), the 'back of house' facility including chill/freeze, storage, in-house bakery and admin/staff rest space of in total approximately 1600 square feet (148 m<sup>2</sup>). The upper floor of the existing building would be void.



Proposals are currently in draft and subject to change as they are developed, however as things currently stand:

- Customer access will be from the rear of the store off Church Street.
- Vehicular access will be from Church Street, utilising the entrance to the former Crown Hotel car park (as at present). Car parking and goods access will be to the rear (south). Church Street has no-waiting restrictions from the junction with High Street to several metres south of the car park entrance. Parking on High Street is restricted from the corner of Church Street east as far as 1 hours limited waiting marked bays which start in front of the former Crown Hotel.
- Refuse and delivery cage storage will be inside the building. Refuse disposal by the Co-op is on a 'back-hauling' basis – in other words delivery vehicles take away refuse thus minimising trips.
- Car parking will provide for approximately 16 vehicles including two disabled spaces, as well as delivery vehicle access and cycle parking.
- ATM facilities (without charge) are part of the proposed store.

Please note that the information given here is correct at the time of writing but may be subject to change in the formal application for planning consent.

### **Listed Building Status, Asset of Community Value and Neighbourhood Plan**

The site of the former Crown Hotel is a Grade 2 Listed building. The external appearance and architectural features of the building will be conserved in the planning application on works to the premises. Signage, which will be subject to a separate planning application, will be discrete and in keeping with the appearance and street scene (most likely as a hanging sign in the form of the Co-op logo in the position of the current hanging sign).

In September 2015 The Crown Hotel was listed by Leeds City Council as an 'asset of community value'. In the time that has passed no proposals have been developed for alternative uses and the site owners have accordingly advanced the process of negotiating alternative use. ACV listing is a material planning consideration but judgements have made clear precedent that it is not of itself a reason to deny otherwise acceptable planning permission.

The draft Boston Spa Neighbourhood Plan identifies the former Crown Hotel site as being within the "hub of the village", which is cited as the appropriate location of retail premises.

### **The operation of the store**

The Co-op operates around 3,000 stores across the UK, the great majority of which are small neighbourhood supermarkets/convenience stores. This trend reflects the change in shopping habits that has taken place over recent years and which is continuing. Consumers are now less inclined toward one big 'weekly shop', preferring several smaller visits and/or online ordering. The Cooperative Food focuses on fresh produce, including on-site bakeries, with an emphasis on ethically grown/traded produce. The Co-op has a mutual ownership model based on members rather than shareholders.

Employment in The Co-operative Food stores varies. Stores such as that proposed Boston Spa generally employ between 20 and 25 people. The Co-op has a recruitment policy that hires and offers training opportunities to people within the local community.

Deliveries to Co-op stores such as that proposed for Boston Spa are not normally made by HGV but by smaller lorries and light goods vans. Transport plans, including delivery schedules, for Co-op stores are normally agreed with the planning authority on a site-by-site basis. An impact assessment for the road network has been prepared as part of the application which demonstrates no overall change.

The opening hours of the store will be proposed as 6am till 11pm. No changes are planned to the Co-op stores in locations near Boston Spa.

### **Benefits to the community**

Stores planned by The Co-op are put through a careful commercial market analysis of the area. The Co-op is confident that demand exists for a new store. **The proposed new store will offer increased local choice of food retail to people in Boston Spa.** The retail offer of a Co-op convenience store is significantly different from the existing offer in Boston Spa and does not represent direct competition to existing food retail.

The store will be in walking distance for many people in the area and the site will have cycle parking. **Experience of existing stores operated by The Co-op suggests that around 60% of customers walk or cycle to the stores.** The store would reduce the need for car-borne shopping trips further afield and so would improve local sustainability. A Co-op convenience store in Boston Spa will also be **of great value to those residents who do not have access to private car transport.**

Approval of planning consent would bring the former Crown Hotel site back into use, **avoid a prominent site in the village becoming increasingly derelict and prevent the deterioration in the condition of a Grade II listed building.**

The Co-op is a community retailer. As well as its mutual ownership model and commitment to ethical trading. The Co-op has a track record of acting as a good neighbour and functioning as part of the community. The Co-operative Food stores stocking policies are determined locally, they **contribute to local charitable causes, food banks, host community notices and so on.** The Co-op launched a new membership scheme in June 2016. This scheme contributes 1% from the sale of all own-brand purchases to 3 local charities, which are selected by customers. 5% of the cost of all own-brand purchases will also be returned to customers to spend on future shopping trips. The wider community will therefore directly benefit from the proposed new store. The suggestion of appropriate causes by local elected and community representatives would be welcomed.

### **Making comments on the pre-application consultation**

Should you have any queries concerning this briefing you can take them up by contacting Instinctif Partners. Either by:

Emailing: [john.howarth@instinctif.com](mailto:john.howarth@instinctif.com)

Or by phoning 0191 267 6287 and speaking to John Howarth

Instinctif Partners are independent consultants who perform public and stakeholder engagement. Comments made in pre-application consultations and subsequent representations are reported to the clients, in this case The Co-op, in general terms but names of individual members of the public are not used. All suggestions and views are welcome.

Pre-application consultations do not prevent anyone from commenting on an application for planning consent once it is submitted.

Thank you for reading this briefing.

JH 22.5.2017