

Winnersh, Wokingham

Aldi Stores Ltd.

● Planning ● Engagement



Planning permission secured following a public inquiry for a new Aldi foodstore in Winnersh, overcoming a fundamental Environment Agency objection on flood risk grounds.

Demonstrating our ability to lead high-risk inquiry-based planning, combining technical flood risk evidence, retail policy expertise and strategic advocacy to secure consent.

The Challenge

The proposal was for a new 1,300 square metre Aldi foodstore on a site within Flood Zone 3b, adjacent to an existing retail and commercial area. The Environment Agency objected on the basis that the development was incompatible with policy relating to the functional floodplain.

Despite an extant permission for a car showroom, the objection resulted in the application being Called-In by the Secretary of State, requiring determination through a full public inquiry and raising significant policy, technical and delivery risk.

Without clear strategic leadership and robust technical evidence, the scheme risked refusal at inquiry and loss of a deliverable retail opportunity. The decision provided industry-wide clarification on flood risk policy in Flood Zone 3b.

Our Approach

- Led pre-application discussions and managed a multidisciplinary consultant team
- Prepared Retail Impact and Sequential Site Assessments supporting the planning application
- Coordinated specialist flood risk design, including raised store levels and undercroft storage voids
- Ran a community engagement exercise achieving 93% support from over 400 respondents
- Managed the Call-In Inquiry, including instruction of Counsel and expert witness evidence
- Presented and defended the case on flood risk, retail impact and policy interpretation at Inquiry

The Outcome

- Planning permission granted following Secretary of State Call-In and public inquiry
- Environment Agency flood risk objection overturned through evidence-based argument
- Inspector and Secretary of State confirmed holistic interpretation of NPPF and PPG flood policy