

Asda applies for licence to sell alcohol from East Lothian petrol station

Supermarket chain Asda has applied to sell booze from a petrol station despite failing to find any customers who said they relied on its shop for groceries.

The company behind the Asda Express store in the petrol station at Haddington retail park, aims to argue it is seen as a 'principal source' for groceries or fuel by a significant number of people in the area.

However a survey of customers carried out in November last year reported that while 12.9% agreed they would be disadvantaged or inconvenienced if they could not buy fuel from the service station, the proportion who said they would miss out on groceries was 0%.

In their application for a licence to sell alcohol from East Lothian Licensing Board the firm which carried out the survey on behalf of Asda said: "The results show that a statistically significant proportion of persons (12.9%) see and treat this service station as the principal source from which they, in ordinary course, purchase groceries and fuel and would properly consider themselves materially disadvantaged or inconvenienced were these retail facilities to no longer be provided from said premises."

Petrol stations are generally considered 'excluded premises;

which cannot sell alcohol unless it is proven customers would be disadvantaged by losing access to groceries or fuel at it.

Haddington Retail Park, which opened at the Gateside entrance into the town four years ago, has a Food Warehouse, Home Bargains and Aldi supermarket alongside the petrol station and a Costa drive thru.

More than 800 customers were questioned during the survey with around 171 described as the 'population of interest' who lived locally and used the garage.

The survey also asked if they would buy alcohol if it was available at the petrol station with 71.8% saying they were likely to with four out of five of them adding the purchase would be in addition to what they would normally buy at other shops rather than replacing a store purchase.

The application for a licence to sell alcohol from the garage will be heard by the licensing board on Thursday.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter