

# Asda petrol station given green light to sell alcohol

**Supermarket chain Asda has been given the go ahead to sell booze from an East Lothian petrol station as part of a new move to introduce alcohol sales across forecourts in the UK.**

Representatives of the firm said the Asda Express petrol station at Haddington retail park, was one of around 350 taken over by the company as part of a £2.3billion acquisition from Euro Garages.

And they said there were plans to create 'full convenience stores' on the sites.

A meeting of East Lothian Licensing Board heard the bid to sell booze would add to the convenience offered to customers using it in the future.

A spokesperson for Asda told the meeting: "The Express forecourt strategy is a brand new strand to the Asda business and what it is seeking to do is provide a value led convenience offer across the estate, some 350 petrol filling stations will become Asdas in due course."

He said Asda planned to replace what had in the past been a focus on tobacco, confectionery and car products in the forecourts with a 'full convenience store' including 'fresh, frozen, larder and household products with where space permits food to go'.

He added: "What they are seeking to do is have a small alcohol offer to complement the grocery offer."

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.

The board accepted that in this case the Haddington garage was not an excluded premises and was a convenience store which would be allowed to sell alcohol.

Councillor John McMillan, acting board chairperson, described Asda's management of the store as a 'safe pair of hands'.

He said: "I think the very fact this is a convenience store means there is no reason to refuse (the licence).

The board unanimously granted the licence.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter