

Land North of Byrn Lane, Wrexham (P/2023/0497) – Highways Note

1. This note is drafted by Carter Jonas regarding the above hybrid planning application which was validated on 19 July 2023 and is pending determination. These proposals cover the strategic allocation “KSS3” within Wrexham County Borough Council’s (“WCBC”) adopted Local Development Plan (“LDP”). The Applicant is Net World Sport.
2. There are currently three outstanding highways points on the application:
 - a. A response from WCBC Highways Officers on additional transport information provided by Cora IHT on 08 April 2024.
 - b. A response from WCBC on Active Travel
 - c. Agreement of an approach for highway contributions
3. This note presents the Applicant's proposed approach for resolving point 2c above, representing a reasonable contribution from KSS3 towards strategic highways improvements required within the LDP. We would urge WCBC to agree to this.
4. KSS3 represents an important extension to the Wrexham Industrial Estate (WIE), delivering over a million sq. ft of employment generating uses and a substantial benefit to the Wrexham economy. The LDP recognises that there is strong demand for new employment floorspace within the WIE and Net World Sport’s proposals are addressing this. Net World Sport has a track record of delivery, notably completing and occupying their flagship headquarter building within the WIE.

Background

5. During preparation of the LDP, a Statement of Common Ground was produced by the promoters of KSS2, a residential-led strategic allocation split into “North” and “South” sites, and WCBC. This was accompanied by the “VISSIM Modelling” produced by Vectos which modelled the highways impact from KSS2 and KSS3 cumulatively and identified mitigation from any harm arising to the wider highways network. No cost were identified for this mitigation and none of the above had input from the Applicant. The Applicant does not have access to the underlying data within the VISSIM model.
6. The KSS2 “North” site (P/2019/0005) was brought to Planning Committee in July 2020 with the Officers Report and associated Addendum reporting the following strategic highways improvements, noting the VISSIM modelling. The application was rejected at Committee and is subject to appeal.

Mitigation	Timing
Signalisation of the A534 / Blackwood Way roundabout as well as an additional 100m long west-bound approach lane and an additional circulatory lane on the southern quadrant of the A5156 / A534 / Holt Road roundabout	Required when 710 dwellings are occupied on KSS2, assumed to be 250 dwellings on the northern part of KSS2 (i.e. the application site) and 460 dwellings on the southern part) and approximately half of KSS3 has been developed
Spine road through KSS2 from the A5156 / A534 Holt Road to Cefn Road	Required for the number of dwellings occupied in KSS2 to exceed 710, again assumed to be 250 dwellings on the northern part of KSS2 and 460 on the southern part
An additional 100m long south bound approach lane, additional circulatory lane on the northern quadrant and signalisation of the A5156 / A534 / Holt Road	Required when the remainder of KSS2 is built out and for KSS3 to be fully developed

7. During email correspondence in early 2024, WCBC referenced that a different approach to the Officers Report was presented during Planning Committee. Within this, unless evidence suggested otherwise, KSS3 was deemed solely responsible for a scheme for the part signalisation of the Wrexham Road / Borrass Hall Lane / Industrial Estate Road / Sandy Land Junction ("A534 / Blackwood Way roundabout" in the table above). All arms of the roundabout would be signalised except for Sandy Lane. WCBC held this position at a more recent highways meeting on 21.08.24.
8. Furthermore, at the same meeting, WCBC requested that the developers of KSS3 and KSS2 work together to establish a common baseline for highways modelling and identify a scheme of mitigation (including cost and responsibility for delivery) for key junctions impacted by both allocations.
9. In essence, responsibility for identifying, quantifying, and apportioning cost for delivering this mitigation would lie with the developers; each of whom have different objectives, programmes, and positions to maintain. It is highly unlikely that agreement would be reached and, even if achieved, this will not be possible until all parties agree. Some of these developers may not need or wish to engage in this process in the short term, creating further uncertainty for delivery. Net World Sport has a track record of delivery in Wrexham and has similar ambitions to progress quickly with KSS3.
10. It is not reasonable for WCBC to expect such coordination at this stage of the planning process and this issue should have been resolved during preparation of the LDP.
11. Finally, at the same meeting, WCBC referenced an agreement made during determination of the Kingsmoor application (P/2023/0280) to improve the A483 Gresford Interchange Roundabout to mitigate their impact. WCBC required the Kingsmoor applicant to contribute £25,000 towards this and suggested that the KSS2 and KSS3 developers do similar. Verbally, overall cost was estimated at £100,000 but this has not been evidenced.

Response

12. The proposals already include embedded highways measures which are the Applicant's responsibility to deliver. These will help mitigate any highways impact from the proposed development but also support placemaking within the scheme:
 - a. Delivery of an improved roundabout and access at Bryn Lane, Industrial Estate Road, Ash Road North, Abenbury Road. This will support deliver of the second phase of development and requires a seven figure investment.
 - b. Delivery of a new access off Bryn Lane to facilitate deliver of Phase 1 (for which detailed planning permission is sought within the hybrid planning application)
 - c. Active Travel improvements and contribution
 - d. Generous estate spine road width at 7.3m for vehicles, with 2m either side for cycles and a 2m footpath for pedestrian. This is above the typical provision for 3m footway/cycleways that are usually used on one side of the road. It was important to the design rationale of the site is for the estate road to be reasonably spaced to allow the buildings to be set back from the main vehicular access and to also provide strong cycleways throughout the site to encourage sustainable transport. The Applicant has chosen to deliver a wider spine road which, although representing a higher build cost, supports better placemaking.
 - e. Internal estate roads designed to adoptable standards, however Net World Sport currently intends to retain ownership of these rather than seeking adoption by the Local Authority. Therefore, there would be no maintenance burden on WCBC.
13. It is also noted that the Transport Assessment Addendum submitted as part of the planning application confirms that no highways impacts will be caused through developing the first phase. Therefore, no contributions should be payable until an appropriate point during the second phase

of development. Similarly, the Transport Assessments for KSS2 include similar trigger points prior to which no highways harm occurs.

14. To establish the impact between KSS2 and KSS3, Cora IHT have undertaken additional transport modelling to factor in trip generation from both schemes, reflecting the trigger points outlined above. A Technical Note is included alongside this Covering Note. This modelling has included reviewing the Transport Assessment submitted as part of KSS2 “North”, KSS3, and for public consultation launched on KSS2 “South” in April & May 2024. The latter document should be considered draft as this has not been submitted formally for planning but represents the best information available to understand this developer’s approach.
15. This modelling allows for the full development impact to be understood and a normalisation between differing methodologies to take place, particularly between how KSS2 North and South approach trips to the Wrexham Industrial Estate. Should the Council wish to interrogate this discrepancy further, it must be through requiring collaboration between the KSS2 North and South developers prior to the determination of those applications.
16. Noting the constraints explained within Paragraphs 5 and 8-10, the modelling represents a reasonable approach to arrive a total trip generation from each scheme at the key junctions. In absence of a costed scheme produced by WCBC, a reasonable approach has been undertaken to arrive at the cost for works using professional judgement and, using the trip generation, the costs are divided proportionally. The modelling also resolves the potential for duplications of trips within the Transport Assessments.
17. Ultimately, the division of cost is as below. The apportionment between KSS2 North and South is a matter for those developers. This represents a reasonable contribution from the Applicant towards strategic highways infrastructure and should be sufficient to confirm that highways impact from KSS3, from Phase 2 onwards where harm arises, is mitigatable. Further discussion is required between the Applicant and WCBC to agree any detailed trigger points for payments on KSS3, however this should be deferred until after the principle of the overall cost has been agreed.

Table 3: Highway Contribution Summary

Highway / Transport Improvements	Cost (£'000)	
	KSS2	KSS3
Gresford Roundabout	50	25
A534 / Wrexham Golf Club Access / KSS2 Roundabout	411	158
A534 / Borrass Hall Lane / Sandy Lane Roundabout Junction	181	315
Total	643	498

18. Should the Council be concerned of any future shortfall of funding beyond the contributions above to deliver these works, it has the opportunity to produce an evidenced Supplementary Planning Document to considers the full cost of strategic highways infrastructure minus the contribution made by KSS3 above. This could also form part of the next Local Development Plan. The Council can then levy an evidenced cost against future planning applications to pool contributions fairly.