

MEMORANDUM

From:	Chief Officer, Environment & Technical	To:	Head of Economy & Planning
		FAO:	Sharon Holman
Our Ref:	ET/DC/MM/P/2023/0384v2	Your Ref:	P/2023/0384
Date:	6 November 2023		

Erection of a freestanding restaurant with drive thru facility Land at Argos Car Park, Plas Coch, Wrexham

Further to your email dated 28 September 2023 in respect of the above, please see comments as follows: -

Proposal and Planning History

The proposal is for a drive through restaurant on Plas Coch Retail Park in Wrexham. This is a resubmission of the planning application made under P/2019/0919, which was refused in 2021 and appealed under CAS-01515-G4Y1D3, with the appeal concluding in January 2023.

The original reasons for refusal included:

- Exacerbating the existing capacity issues on the highway network during weekday peak times and at the weekend.
- The loss of 70 parking spaces serving the existing retail uses, which would create a significant shortfall of off-street parking for the existing retail units.

The inspector reviewing the appeal concluded that the proposal accorded to the relevant highway policies however the appeal was dismissed on other non – transport related grounds.

A planning application was re-submitted for the proposal in July 2023. Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) Highways reviewed the proposal in a response dated 11 August 2023 (ref: ET/DC/MM/P/2023/0384). The July 2023 planning application included a Transport Assessment (TA) dated December 2020 which had been previously reviewed by WCBC Highways for planning application P/2019/0919 in a response dated 22 April 2021 (ref: ET/DC/MM/P/2019/0919).

The WCBC Highways response dated 11 August 2023 concluded that further information was required for approval. This included:

- **Traffic Surveys** - WCBC Highways request that the junctions are resurveyed (in a neutral month) and a review is undertaken on the traffic volume changes. This would include queue length surveys.
- **Parking Surveys** - WCBC Highways request that the parking surveys previously undertaken are resurveyed and that the Transport Assessment and proposals are updated accordingly.
- **Committed/Planned Developments** - WCBC request that the assessed committed/planned developments are updated.
- **Junction Modelling** - Following review of 2023 traffic survey data all of the junctions previously assessed would need to be re-assessed (all scenarios) using 2023 traffic data and the updated committed/planned developments.

- **Collision Data Review** - Collision data would need to be reviewed for the past five (available) years.
- **Staff** - The applicant should clarify typically how many staff would be working in the restaurant on a weekday and weekend at any one time.
- **Sustainable Travel** - A review of sustainable travel should be included in the updated TA.
- **Transport Assessment** – It is expected that all the above information would be included in a revised Transport Assessment.

Further to the above information it also stated that:

- A S278 condition is required for all highway works and a S38 condition is required for adopted highway works associated with the development.
- The Construction Management Plan dated May 2019 should be updated and submitted in advance of any construction works.
- The highway improvements set out in the Designers Response to the Road Safety Audit must be undertaken before the restaurant begins trading.

Further information has now been supplied by the applicant. Please see comments as follows:

Transport Assessment

An Addendum Transport Assessment (TA) dated September 2023 (re: ADL/CC/4171/22B) has been submitted by the applicant. The Addendum TA has been prepared in response to WCBC Highways consultation comments (dated 11 August 2023).

Note: The Addendum Transport Assessment (TA) incorrectly references “Berse Road Roundabout” and “Plas Coch Roundabout”. On reviewing the Addendum TA and associated documents WCBC Highways assume that the applicant is actually referring to the Plas Coch Roundabout (A541 Mold Road/B5101 Berse Road/B5101 Plas Coch Road roundabout) and the B5101 Plas Coch Road/Maes Glyndwr/Retail Park roundabout respectively.

For the avoidance of doubt, it has been assumed that when the applicant refers to “Berse Road Roundabout” this is the roundabout known as Plas Coch Roundabout and when the applicant refers to “Plas Coch Roundabout” this is the B5101 Plas Coch Road/Maes Glyndwr/Retail Park roundabout.

Sustainable Travel Access

As requested by WCBC Highways the Addendum TA included a review of sustainable travel.

The Addendum TA reviews pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and notes the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and Designers Response which has been submitted with this application and the previous application. The RSA has identified where improvements are required to pedestrian crossings and the findings have been incorporated into the proposal. As previously noted, the highway improvements set out in the Designers Response to the RSA must be undertaken before the restaurant begins trading.

The applicant has included a new signalised pedestrian crossing on Plas Coch Road (as shown in drawing 8104_1004 Rev C) as part of the proposed development.

The Addendum TA acknowledges that WCBC completed a consultation in August 2023 on active travel measures on Mold Road and that this included signalised pedestrian crossings on all arms of the Plas Coch Roundabout (the chapter refers to this as the Berse Road Roundabout).

The applicant suggests that either:

- The applicant constructs the proposed pedestrian crossing on Plas Coch Road “as shown on ADL drawing.” or
- The applicant provides a contribution for the cost of the crossing on Plas Coch Road (only) under a S106 agreement and WCBC build out their preferred scheme as part of the wider cope of works at the roundabout.

This will need to be discussed and agreed between WCBC and the applicant.

It is noted that no assessment has been undertaken on walking or cycling times to or from the proposed development. This would generally be expected in a sustainable travel chapter.

The chapter reviewed public transport accessibility. It is noted that there are three bus stops within 400m of the proposed development. Wrexham General Railway Station is within 800m of the site.

It is agreed that the site is reasonably accessible by public transport and accessible by walking and cycling with the proposed improvements in place.

Collision Data Analysis

As requested by WCBC Highways the applicant has reviewed collision data for the past five (available) years.

It is not clear if the nature or casualty types were reviewed which would generally be expected in a review of collision data. Crashmap.co.uk data suggests that the “serious” injury incident involved a child pedestrian and there was a further “slight” injury incident involving a pedestrian.

Traffic Surveys

WCBC Highways requested in the 11 August 2023 response that all the junctions should be resurveyed, and a review should be undertaken on the traffic volume changes.

The Addendum TA references a recent planning applicant (P/2019/0923) which as part of a traffic data assessment compared 2019 traffic survey data with counts undertaken in 2023 for the A483 J5 Roundabout and the Plas Coch Roundabout. The assessment found that both AM and PM peak traffic levels had decreased.

It is agreed that this is acceptable logic to use 2019 data in this instance.

Committed Developments

The Addendum TA has assessed committed and planned developments (as requested by WCBC).

It is stated that no TA or Transport Statement (TS) was available for Glyndwr University (P/2021/0094) so the applicant has used TRICS to determine likely traffic levels.

The TRICS inputs and outputs have been reviewed. The TRICS assessment undertaken by the applicant has used very broad thresholds for the size of development compared to what would be expected by WCBC.

For comparison WCBC have undertaken a TRICS assessment for the development and conclude that **the TRICS assessment undertaken by the applicant is acceptable.**

Junction Assessments

It is understood that after reviewing TEMPRO/NTM growth factors against committed development traffic flow increases and with reference to traffic decreases between 2019 and 2023 (from traffic data review exercise in P/2019/0923) the applicant suggested using only the committed developments and the 2019 traffic survey data for the baseline traffic assessment.

The applicant has also reviewed used the TEMPRO/NTM growth factor for the baseline assessment (rather than the committed development) in a sensitivity test.

In this instance this approach is accepted however the applicant should note that TEMPRO/NTM growth factors can be adapted to take account of committed developments.

2036 has been used for the future year assessment. WCBC would have expected junction assessments for the proposed opening year of the proposed development however accept that using 2036 could be seen as a robust assessment.

Modelling inputs and outputs including the LinSig modelling files have been provided by the applicant. On review of the LinSig models a number of issues with model inputs have been identified by WCBC. These will be shared with the applicant, and **it is recommended that the LinSig models are updated and re-run.**

The Traffic Impact Assessment in Addendum TA Section 4.4 considers the impact of traffic associated with the proposal on the A483 J5 roundabout, Plas Coch Roundabout and the B5101 Plas Coch Road/Maes Glyndwr/Retail Park roundabout.

This assessment should be undertaken considering the impact on each arm of each roundabout and not for the whole junction which the applicant has done. However it is acknowledged that the applicant has modelled two of these junctions as detailed above.

Car Parking

There are no changes to the parking provision submitted for the 2019 application which is to provide 29 car parking spaces and 2 reserve bays for drive thru customers.

The applicant states in the Addendum TA that since traffic levels have generally decreased (in AM and PM peak hours) this would likely suggest a reduction in parking demand.

WCBC Highways have no information regarding existing parking demand at Plas Coch Retail Park however did undertake some high-level observations on a Saturday in October. Based on this WCBC Highways would tend to agree that there is adequate existing parking provision and that there is unlikely to be any large impact by the net reduction in parking spaces.

The applicant has provided parking survey information for the car park on site and the adjacent car park outside The Range.

WCBC Highways accept the car parking assessment.

Staff

The applicant has clarified in the TA Addendum that there would be 20 staff typically working in the restaurant during a peak shift.

The TA addendum states that McDonald's staff car ownership tends to be very low particularly in areas where a site is accessible by non-car modes and there is a large student population. It is understood that staff parking demand has been included in the parking assessment.

A staff travel plan should be conditioned and submitted in advance of occupation of the site.

Conclusion

The actions are required for approval:

- Update the LinSig modelling files as per WCBC comments and re-run the models.

Further to the above:

- The applicant must arrange for discussions with WCBC to agree on the proposed pedestrian crossing or S106 agreement.
- A S278 condition is required for all highway works and a S38 condition is required for adopted highway works associated with the development.
- The Construction Management Plan dated May 2019 should be updated and submitted in advance of any construction works.

- The highway improvements set out in the Designers Response to the Road Safety Audit must be undertaken before the restaurant begins trading.
- A staff Travel Plan should be conditioned and should be submitted in advance of occupation of the development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Bailey', is positioned above the title. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chief Officer, Environment & Technical