

June 2021

Highway Assessment

Proposed Children's Day Nursery
Old Police Station
76 Chester Road
Gresford
LL12 8NH



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1. Introduction

Code Planning has been appointed to prepare a highway assessment to accompany a full planning application for the change of use of The Old Police Station, Chester Road, Gresford to a children's day nursery.

This report provides a highways development control assessment of the traffic safety aspects of the existing and proposed access and forms supplementary information to assist in the positive determination of the proposal.

2. Existing Site Layout

The site is located on the south east side of the B5445 Chester Road; a classified highway subject to a 30-mph speed limit.

The existing site was formerly a Police Station with car parking provided for three vehicles to the rear and delineated parking space for three vehicles to the front; although photographic evidence from google maps (see image below) clearly show that up to 5 cars can be accommodated in an informal arrangement across the front forecourt.



The existing site access is 3.8m wide and most of the forecourt area is block paved. Visibility at the existing access in both directions is obstructed by vegetation across the front boundary of the site; to the north east of the access there is a front boundary wall of the neighbouring dwelling set back 2.3m from the carriageway edge. There is also a boundary fence to the north east of the access covered with vegetation which is under the ownership of the applicant. To the south west there are trees and vegetation across most of the site frontage.

When exiting the existing access there is limited visibility in both directions. The images below demonstrate the restricted visibility in both directions from the existing access.



Visibility to the north east from 2.4m

Visibility in a north easterly direction from a 2.4m 'x' distance is limited to approximately 23m to the nearside edge of the adjoining carriageway.



Visibility to the south west from 2.4m

Visibility in a south westerly direction from a 2.4m 'x' distance is limited to approximately 14m to the nearside edge of the adjoining carriageway.

Visibility at the existing access is therefore below current design standards.

However, despite the substandard nature of the access, examination of the crash map accident record at Appendix B indicates no single recorded personal injury accident within 90m of the site within the last 22 years.

The road is therefore demonstrated to be inherently safe despite the shortfall in visibility at the existing access.

3. Development proposals

It is proposed to change the use of the site from a Police Station to a Children's Day Nursery with adequate parking provision and a significantly improved access. There will be no more than 39 children allowed at the nursery at any one time. Thirteen staff are required to meet the legal staff to child ratio.

It is proposed that the staff required will be transferring from the existing Homestead Nursery on Old Wrexham Road. Of these staff, 3 currently walk to work, two cycle to work and 8 arrive by vehicle (in 6 cars) as there are four staff who car-share. As such 6 vehicles are currently used by the staff to attend their place of work.

The existing nursery site on Old Wrexham Road is not well served by public transport.

Given the proximity of the proposed site to the centre of Gresford village it is likely to be more attractive for staff to walk to work from the immediate area. The site is also only a 30 second walk from a bus stop on the main Wrexham to Chester service (no 1) which operates every 20 minutes during the day.

The proposed site presents increased opportunity for staff to utilise public transport and offers vastly improved pedestrian provision supporting Welsh Government policy on increasing the use and availability of sustainable modes of transport.

The existing nursery provision operates between 8am and 6pm. Peak hours for drop off is between 8am and 9am and pick up between 5pm and 6pm

There is scope for children to be dropped off by appointment prior to the set operational hours from 730 am and there are currently two children taking advantage of the early start at the existing nursery on Old Wrexham Road.

Some children also arrive after 9am and others attend for afternoon sessions only. There is rarely more than 80 % occupancy of the nursery i.e. 32 children aged 0 -18 months old on site at any one time. Some of these are siblings, so get dropped off and picked up in the same vehicle.

Alterations to improve the existing access arrangements are proposed as part of the change of use. The alterations comprise the centralisation of the access to enable improved visibility splays in both directions to the nearside edge of the carriageway with any existing obstruction to visibility removed as part of the proposals. In addition, the existing boundary fence to the north east of the site will be reduced in length to align with the existing neighbouring boundary wall.

Five dedicated parking spaces for parents/carers using the business are proposed to the front of the site. A further three parking spaces to the front will be dedicated staff parking spaces with a further three parking spaces for staff provided to the rear of the site - as shown on the submitted plans.

4. Traffic Generation / Parking Accumulation

Traffic generation will amount to a maximum of 6 staff vehicles entering the site before 8am and leaving the site once the last child has been picked up prior to 6pm. There may be some very occasional need for staff to make additional journeys from the site during operational hours but this will be few and far between.

A maximum of 39 vehicles will enter and leave the site to drop children off, mainly between 8 am and 9:30 am although this will peak between 8 and 9 am. Similarly, a maximum of 39 vehicles will enter and exit the site when picking up children generally between 4 pm and 6 pm but peaking between 5 am and 6 am.

Given the significant improvements to visibility resulting from the proposed centralised access there can be no justifiable highway reason to object to traffic generation at the site.

The use of a minibus between the existing Homestead nursery and the proposed new nursery had previously been suggested. That idea has now been reviewed and it has been confirmed that there is no longer an intention to provide such a service and that there will be no additional traffic on Old Wrexham Road as a result of this proposal.

To provide a robust assessment of parking requirements for parental drop off and pick up it is assumed that all 39 parents will drop off children between the hours of 8 am and 9 am and 5 pm till 6 pm, peak hours.

The parking accumulation table for the proposals, see below, replicates the format of that used by transport consultants at a planning appeal (P/2012/0830) at the new Coop site on the Red Lion public house car

park at the top of Marford Hill; the only difference being the anticipated duration of time using the car park; shopping proposals involving a longer duration of stay than the nursery proposals at The Old Police Station. The parking accumulation format was fully accepted by the Welsh Government Planning Inspector when allowing the appeal.

The duration of stay for the current application is less due to the nature of the proposed business operation. Parents are using the service typically on their way to or from work and do not want to spend too long dropping off and collecting their children. The duration of stay is further reduced by the use of a phone app which allows parents to advise staff when the child is to be dropped off and collected, thereby allowing staff time to prepare and ensure the stay is kept to an absolute minimum.

	Arrivals	Parking Demand	Spaces	
Time	Arrivals Vehicles	Average 3 minutes stay	Average 5 minutes stay	Average 7 minutes stay
0800 -0900	39	2 (1.95)	4 (3.25)	5 (4.55)
1700 - 1800	39	2 (1.95)	4 (3.25)	5 (4.55)

Table 1 - Parking accumulation related to duration of stay for 100% occupancy

As can be seen from the above table, even when using the maximum number of possible vehicles and an elongated 7 minutes duration stay there is an average demand for no more than 5 spaces at peak hour.

In reality, with an 80% occupation rate spread (32 children) and collection and drop off generally spread across 90-minute periods, parking demand for the business will be more than met by the provision 5 dedicated visitor spaces. See Table 2 below.

	Arrivals	Parking Demand	Spaces	
Time	Arrival Vehicles	Average 3 minutes stay	Average 5 minutes stay	Average 7 minutes stay
0800 - 0900	32	2 (1.6)	3 (2.6)	4 (3.7)
1700 - 1800	32	2 (1.6)	3 (2.6)	4 (3.7)

Table 2 - Parking accumulation related to duration of stay for 80% occupancy

It is proposed to provide 11 car parking spaces within the curtilage of the site; 6 spaces will be dedicated to staff parking and 5 spaces will be provided specifically for customers – see plan at Appendix C; each space will be 2.4 x 5m and have adequate turning and manoeuvrability in order that vehicles may enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

The plan at Appendix C demonstrates 3 staff spaces to the rear and three staff spaces to the front. Each space will be dedicated solely to staff and will be marked up on site as such. Spaces 4 and 5 will be managed under a parking management plan. Should staff to the rear of the building require to exit the site then the cars at 4 and 5 can move temporarily to another space to allow access. There will be plenty of space available in the car park to allow for this during the vast majority of the working day. It is standard planning practice to apply a condition requiring a site-specific Car Parking Management Plan to ensure that car parking is adequately managed.

The proposed plan will include an undertaking that no more than 6 staff vehicles will be allowed to park on site at any one time; although given that the thirteen current staff use only 6 vehicles to get to work this may be considered unnecessary.

Given Welsh Government desire to reduce levels of parking in favour of encouraging greater use of sustainable modes of transport (public transport / cycling / walking) it is considered that the provision of 6 staff

parking spaces qualifies as more than adequate provision in this instance.

In the response to the current planning application P/2020/0703 on this site, the highways officer confirmed that the WCBC document LPGN 16 recommends just 7 spaces for a development of this nature. It is also noteworthy that the document itself states that this is a maximum provision and it should not be used as a minimum standard.

That said we note the concerns of the highway officer and have therefore provided 11 spaces within the site – more than 50% greater than the maximum recommended by the council's own guidance.

5. Visibility

An improved access will be created by centralising the existing access point. This will enable visibility splays of 2.4 x 43m in both directions to the nearside edge of the carriageway as required by the highway department and in full accordance with Welsh Government guidelines 'Manual for Streets'. Any obstruction to visibility will be removed.

Access improvements would result in the loss of some of the existing vegetation across the full site frontage although much of it should be retained. It is hoped that three of the trees on the site can also be retained; the only tree that is proposed to be removed appears dead.

The boundary fence to the north east of the site will be reduced in length so as to align with the existing boundary wall of the neighbouring property. Land required for visibility is entirely under the control of the applicant or the Highways Authority.

6. Conclusion

Code Planning has been appointed to advise on the traffic and transportation issues raised by WCBC Highway Officers in relation to a proposed new development at the Old Police Station in Gresford. Development proposals comprise the change of use of the site to a children's day nursery to cater for a maximum of 39 children at one-time.

In his response to the submitted planning application (see Appendix A) the WCBC highway officer requested the following information:

- A revised layout plan indicating the full extent of the proposed splays from the widened access in both directions;
- Anticipated daily vehicle movements of staff and parent vehicles; and
- The number of cars likely to be on site at any one time.

The attached plan shown at Appendix C demonstrates adequate visibility in full accordance with Welsh Government guidelines is achievable from a revised and improved access location.

The anticipated vehicle movements and car parking demand demonstrates that even on the rare occasion that the nursery is operating at 100% capacity that there will be adequate parking and manoeuvring space available on site.

From the peak hour parking demand table (Table 1, Section 4) it is clear that maximum demand for parents is for 5 spaces and for 6 staff spaces at one time. Should the need arise for staff parked to the rear of the building to exit the site during the working day then

car park usage will be delivered in an effective manner by use of a Car Park Management Plan.

It is therefore considered that the proposal will have no material impact on highway safety and the personal injury accident assessment has concluded that there are no specific areas of concern in the vicinity of the site. The provision of an improved access to centre of the site boundary offers enhancement to highway safety.

Given the above there it is considered that there can be no justifiable objections to the proposal on highway grounds.

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM



From: Chief Officer, Environment & Technical **To:** Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory

Our Ref: ET/DC/P/2020/0703

Your Ref: MRJ/P/2020/0703

Date: 12th May 2021

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995

Location: O. S Grid Ref: 352 547 Gresford Police Station, 76 Chester Road, Gresford, Wrexham.

Development: Change of use of Police Station to a day nursery.

I refer to your consultation / email dated 11/05/2021 including revised site layout plan in respect of the above.

Access

The proposed development site is located on Chester Road which is a busy classified road subject to a 30mph speed limit.

Assuming typical speeds of 30mph, Manual for Streets would normally require any proposed / existing access to provide visibility splays of 2.4 x 43m in both directions measured to the nearside edge of the adjoining highway.

Visibility from the existing / proposed access serving the site is inadequate in both directions providing splays of approximately 2.4 x 23m to the north east and 2.4 x 14m to the south west measured to the nearside edge of the adjoining highway. Visibility is impeded in both directions by the existing vegetation.

The latest submitted layout plan does not show the full extent of the proposed visibility splay in the north easterly direction and appears to indicate that the proposed splay cuts across 3rd party land which I assume the applicant has no control of. The proposed visibility splay indicated in the south westerly direction (dashed blue line) appears to be around 2.4 x 22m measured to the nearside edge which would be considered inadequate. The submitted highways statement suggests that the vegetation fronting the site will be kept low (maximum 700mm) to maximize visibility. However, the applicant has not

demonstrated the maximum available visibility splay in this direction on the submitted layout plan.

I would normally therefore be unable to support any proposed development that is likely to result in any significant increase in vehicle movements through this substandard access. It is considered likely that the proposed change of use to a nursery will result in a significant increase in vehicle movements at the site compared with its previous use.

I would recommend that the applicant provides a revised layout plan indicating the full extent of the proposed splays from the widened access in both directions.

The existing access is approximately 3.9m wide and is surfaced with hard bound materials. I would normally recommend a minimum shared access width of 4.5m (preferably 4.8m) for such a development. The existing access width is considered inadequate to serve as a shared access. The submitted layout plan indicates widening of the existing access to 4.8m which is considered acceptable. The applicant would need to apply for s.184 consent to widen the dropped kerb fronting the site to serve the new access.

Traffic Generation

It is considered likely that the proposed change of use to a nursery will result in a significant increase in vehicle movements at the site compared with its previous use.

No details of the anticipated daily vehicle movements (ie/ staff / parent vehicles) appear to have been provided. Details of the maximum number of cars likely to be on site at any one time would also be required. I would recommend that this information is provided.

I understand that it is proposed to utilize a mini-bus to transport possibly staff / children between the proposed site and the existing Homestead Nursery. However, I understand that such an arrangement could not be conditioned / enforced and is unlikely to be supported by the Planning Authority.

It is unclear as to what anticipated increase in vehicle movements to the existing nursery will occur along Old Wrexham Road by staff / parents. This information needs to be clarified.

Parking & Turning Provision

The existing site appears to provide approximately 3 parking spaces at the rear and 3 parking spaces at the front of the building with turning.

Based on the proposed floor area ie/ 125m², LPGN 16 would normally require a maximum of 7 spaces.

The submitted Travel Plan appears to indicate that 11 staff would be employed at the site and 6 of these staff would travel to work by car. The latest site layout plan indicates that it is proposed to provide 11 parking spaces at the site which exceeds LPGN 16 requirements. However, garage spaces are not taken into account in respect of current LPGN 16 parking

provision guidance. In addition, two of the proposed spaces at the front of the site do not have the required minimum 6m clearance behind for manoeuvrability / turning, This would equate to only 7 spaces being provided with the current layout.

However, this would only leave 1 space on site for visitors / parents to park assuming all 6 staff cars are present. Given the proposed nursery has the capacity for up to 30 children, it would be considered likely that more than 1 car (parents) could potentially arrive at the site requiring parking at drop off and collection times.

No details of the anticipated daily vehicle movements (ie/ staff / parent vehicles) appear to have been provided. Details of the maximum number of cars likely to be on site at any one time would also be required. **I would recommend that this information is provided.**

Any potential shortfall in parking provision at the site is likely to result in vehicles parking along Chester Road or nearby streets which would be considered contrary to through traffic interests generally and a likely source of danger to road users.

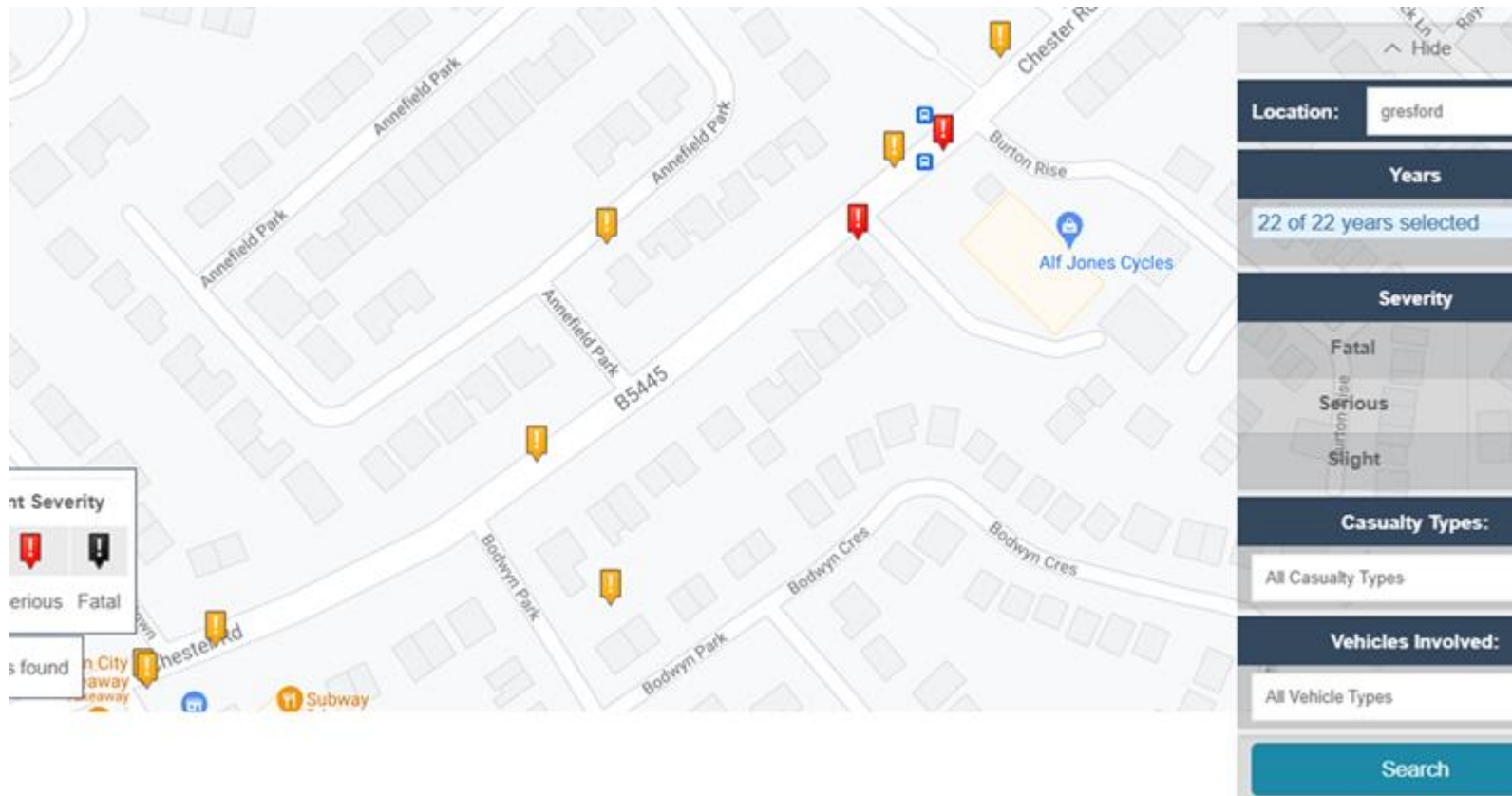
Unless the applicant can satisfactorily address the issues raised then it would be difficult to support the proposed development.

Supplementary Notes

The applicant's attention should be drawn to item nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the supplementary notes.

Chief Officer, Environment & Technical

APPENDIX B



CRASHMAP PLAN - B5445 CHESTER ROAD, GRESFORD

APPENDIX C

