

MAELOR FOODS, PICKHILL LANE

FURTHER WCBC DISCUSSIONS – MAY 2018

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This note provides additional information to accompany applications (Ref: P/2017/1032, P/2017/1037 and P/2017/1038) submitted in December 2017 seeking to remove a condition associated with previous planning permissions at Maelor Foods. The condition currently restricts the number of birds that can be processed each week to 400,000.
- 1.2 The original applications were accompanied by a transport report which provided a more up to date review of the operation of the local highway network (including traffic data) and described the potential future operation of the Maelor Foods site should the condition be removed. A planning statement was also included as part of the overall submission.
- 1.3 The submission documents were reviewed by WCBC and initial comments were received in January 2018. Specifically, WCBC Highways requested a vehicle tracking assessment at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction and additional consideration of visibility splays at the site access. WCBC Planning also provided initial comments relating to the potential impact on amenity.
- 1.4 A submission was subsequently presented to WCBC Highways in February 2018 which provided a vehicle swept path assessment of key movements at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction and additional information relating to the existing site access visibility splays, based on recorded vehicle speeds. It also reiterated that activity on Pickhill Lane and at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction is associated with not just Maelor Foods, but the adjacent Lloyd Fraser logistics firm, and therefore future activity must be viewed with this local context.
- 1.5 A further response was provided by WCBC in March 2018 requesting additional vehicle tracking information and, although the information previously submitted regarding vehicle speeds and the site access visibility was acknowledged, consideration of how visibility issues might be overcome.
- 1.6 A meeting was coordinated in March 2018 with WCBC to discuss the application and the operation of the Maelor Foods site. Discussions focussed on the highways technical aspects (i.e. A525/Pickhill Lane junction operation and site access visibility) as well as potential impacts on amenity. In addition, the operation of the adjacent Lloyd Fraser site was discussed with WCBC in more detail which, as previously noted, has operated alongside activities at the Maelor Foods site and utilised the same main access. It was noted that Maelor Foods have acquired interests in the Lloyd Fraser site.

- 1.7 Following the meeting, discussions have been coordinated directly with WCBC Highways relating to possible improvements at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction, as well as improvements to the site access visibility. In addition, Maelor Foods have been formalising a Service Management Plan (including a Driver Charter) to best manage existing and future movements to and from the site to minimise any potential impact on the local network, including local residents.
- 1.8 This note summarises the further discussions and information that have been exchanged since the meeting in March 2018. It includes the following:
- Site access visibility improvements;
 - A525/Pickhill Lane junction improvements;
 - Indicative quantification of trip movements associated with the adjacent Lloyd Fraser site; and
 - A more formal Service Management Plan (including a Driver Charter) built around 'quiet delivery' principles.

2 SITE ACCESS

- 2.1 As previously noted, the existing main access junction has been used at the Maelor Foods site for the majority of its time whilst operating as The Milk Marketing Board, Dairy Crest, First Milk and now Maelor Foods. In addition to movements associated with Maelor Foods, it is understood that movements associated with the Lloyd Fraser site have previously made use of the main access junction. It has since accommodated regular, daily HGV movements with minimal conflict given the very low flows on Pickhill Lane.
- 2.2 Traffic flow and vehicle speed data has been presented to WCBC Highways (as requested) which demonstrates that flows on Pickhill Lane are very low throughout the day (approximately 1 vehicle per minute outside of peak times) and vehicle speeds are less than the 60mph signed limit. A copy of the data previously provided to WCBC Highways is included in **Appendix A**.
- 2.3 As part of more detailed discussions with WCBC Highways, it has been confirmed that the existing visibility splay to the north east (which was previously improved as part of the original poultry processing plant application) is acceptable and is in line with recorded vehicle speeds. However, despite the low flows reducing the potential for conflict, the visibility splay to the south west was still considered by WCBC Highways to represent a potential risk to road users given it is below the required standard.
- 2.4 Therefore, as suggested by WCBC Highways, Maelor Foods have entered into discussions with the adjacent land owner to agree in principle that a short section (approximately 45 metres) of the existing hedge that currently restricts visibility be relocated and maintained such that a splay of 110 metres can be provided from the site access to the south west. This would also require a minor amendment to the Maelor Foods site boundary fence which can be accommodated. **Drawing No. VN70805-D106** includes the required visibility splays from the main site access which has been presented to WCBC Highways. It has subsequently been confirmed by WCBC Highways that the provision of the required splays would represent a significant improvement.

3 A525/PICKHILL LANE JUNCTION

- 3.1 As part of discussions with WCBC Highways, consideration has been given to the movement of HGVs at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction. It has previously been noted that the flows on both Pickhill Lane and the A525 are low throughout the day and visibility is currently provided in accordance with recorded vehicle speeds. In addition, the junction already accommodates large vehicle movements with no recorded accidents, and drivers are able to identify when to complete their manoeuvre and view movements at the junction accordingly.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding this information, it was agreed with WCBC Highways that some form of improvement to better accommodate large vehicle movements would be beneficial. **Drawing No. VN70805-D108** presents an improvement to the northern side of the junction with works delivered by Maelor Foods contained within the adopted highway (and subject to the appropriate highways agreements). This retains the junction location, existing visibility splays and priority arrangement but increases the radius so that the swept path of left and right turns from the A525 into Pickhill Lane do not encroach on adjacent lanes (as shown in **Drawing No. VN70805-TR104** and **Drawing No. VN70805-TR105**). This is a betterment over the existing operation and would be of benefit to all network users by facilitating the movement of large vehicles at this location.
- 3.3 As part of the junction improvement, it is considered that there are options to improve the overall road surfacing in the immediate vicinity (including surface treatments which have previously been provided at the junction), a refresh of white lining and on-carriageway 'SLOW' markings on the approaches, as well as any approach signage (including the existing 40mph gateway on the A525).
- 3.4 Although not specifically requested as part of the application, the improvement has been presented to WCBC Highways who have subsequently agreed that the changes would be seen as beneficial.

4 MAELOR AND LLOYD FRASER OPERATIONS

- 4.1 As noted in the previous submissions, activity on Pickhill Lane and at the junction with the A525 has been influenced by two separate sites; the Maelor Foods site (previously Cadbury's, Dairy Crest and First Milk) and Lloyd Fraser. This was acknowledged by WCBC at the meeting in March 2018, but it was noted that no details regarding historic vehicle movements had been presented to date for either Lloyd Fraser or operations before First Milk. It was subsequently agreed that the operation associated with Lloyd Fraser should be quantified (as far as is possible) to allow a more informed judgement to be made.
- 4.2 Previously, to assist in trying to present information regarding the HGV activity associated with Lloyd Fraser, research was conducted into the Vehicle Operator Licences (VOL) that were permitted at the site. The previous submissions to WCBC identified that the site was granted a VOL for 46 vehicles on the site from 2009 at a time when the Maelor site was operational.

- 4.3 Since the meeting in March 2018, further contact has been made with Lloyd Fraser who have provided additional information relating to their historic use of the site. **Appendix B** presents correspondence received from Lloyd Fraser indicating that the historic activity at the site associated with their dairy services business may have been in the region of 140-160 movements per day for their own HGVs, subcontractors and other deliveries. In addition, Lloyd Fraser have indicated that they operated a heavy servicing facility which may have resulted in an additional 20-40 movements including assorted vans and other commercial vehicles (i.e. some HGVs).
- 4.4 The information presented in **Appendix B** suggests that there may have been 140-160 HGV movements per day associated with the main Lloyd Fraser dairy services business. It is important to note this activity would have been at a time when the Maelor site was operating unrestricted, but with around 26 total HGV movements per day. Therefore, the combined activity on Pickhill Lane associated with both sites could potentially have been in the region of 166-186 HGV movements per day.
- 4.5 As noted in previous submissions, the HGV movements associated with potential future operations at Maelor Foods may be in the region of 72 HGVs per day. An indicative summary of historic activity and potential future activity is presented in **Table 1**.

Time Line	Maelor Site HGVs	Lloyd Fraser Site HGVs	Total HGVs
First Milk Operation (c.2012)	26	140/160	166/186
Maelor Foods Operation (c.2018)	72	0	72
Difference	+43	-140/-160	-97/-117

Table 1: Indicative Historic Daily HGV Activity on Pickhill Lane

- 4.6 The indicative summary presented in **Table 1** demonstrates that although activity associated with production at Maelor Foods will increase compared to First Milk operations, the overall activity on Pickhill Lane may be lower than previous levels. In addition, the figures in **Table 1** do not account for activity at the Maelor site associated with operations before First Milk. Again, as part of ongoing research, information has been provided by First Milk indicating that when the site was operated before them by Dairy Crest, their packing operation could well have been far greater and therefore HGV movements would also have been greater. A copy of the correspondence is presented in **Appendix C**.
- 4.7 Although the potential future operation is likely to be less than historic operations (based on the information provided by Lloyd Fraser and First Milk), it should be noted that Maelor Foods have the ability to actively control vehicle arrivals and departures given that the majority of vehicles are their own, or their parent company Salisbury Poultry based in Bilston, and the fact that they have acquired interests in the Lloyd Fraser site. This provides the opportunity to manage vehicle movements which is discussed further in the next section.

5 SERVICE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Local Context

- 5.1 WCBC Planning have commented on the potential impact on amenity if the condition restricting the number of birds that can be processed each week is removed. At the meeting in March 2018, specific reference was made to the increase in the number of HGVs passing the three existing residential properties on Pickhill Lane.
- 5.2 The previous submissions initially sought to quantify the additional number of HGVs associated with the Maelor Foods site, including an indicative assessment of the overall percentage impact on Pickhill Lane and the A525 based on current traffic flows. This has now been supplemented with additional information relating to other historic activity on Pickhill Lane which suggests that potential future activity may well be lower overall (approximately 100-120 HGVs lower). It is therefore important that the potential impact on amenity is viewed in this context.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding this commentary, it was previously suggested that activity to and from the site can be positively managed so that the impact in any one hour is minimised. As previously discussed, this can be practically implemented given that the majority of HGVs accessing the site are owned by either Maelor Foods or their parent company Salisbury Poultry.
- 5.4 For information, although the Maelor site can currently operate 24hrs per day, 7 days per week, the majority of activity is managed to occur during the interpeak period (i.e. a 6hrs window between 0900-1500hrs). On average, the 29 HGV movements per day associated with the permitted operation would equate to 4-5 HGV movements per hour over this period (a vehicle every 12-15 minutes) but in practice some hours may have slightly more with other hours slightly less. It should be noted that there are also occasional movements outside of core delivery hours (i.e. 2000-0600hrs) which are limited to single HGV movements.
- 5.5 The previous submissions highlighted the potential increase in HGV movements associated with the removal of condition and identified that activity is likely to be managed over a longer period (i.e. 16hrs rather than 6hrs). On average, the potential 72 HGV movements per day would equate to 4-5 HGV movements per hour over this period (a vehicle every 12-15 minutes) but as with the permitted operation, Maelor Foods will still have the flexibility to manage the majority of movements to be during the interpeak period. Whilst this may increase HGV activity for some hours during the interpeak when compared with the permitted operation, it ensures that HGV movements outside of the core delivery hours will continue to be limited to single HGV movements.
- 5.6 Based on the information previously presented, it is evident that the potential operation of Maelor Foods will not result in a constant flow of HGVs and there will still be times throughout the day when there are no vehicle movements on Pickhill Lane given the nature of the link.

- 5.7 In addition to managing activity, it should be noted that the three properties on Pickhill Lane have a combined frontage of approximately 70 metres. When considering the HGV movements to and from the site, it is likely that a vehicle will have passed the properties within approximately 10 seconds, minimising the amount of time that any vehicle is in the immediate vicinity. The existing properties are also set back from the road approximately 10 metres, there are boundary treatments (i.e. hedge and other vegetation, fence and wall), each property has double glazing and there are private garden spaces approximately 20m from the road, screened by the properties.
- 5.8 Within the Maelor Foods site, it is considered that the layout already incorporates a range of measures to manage vehicle movements and minimise any potential impact on amenity associated with HGVs on Pickhill Lane. The main site access is wide and avoids the need for vehicles to have to wait before entering the site. The service yard within the site is located to the east of the Maelor Foods site with the main building acting as a screen and a second weighbridge is provided within the site to avoid vehicles having to wait at the site access at certain times of day. In addition, the site is screened by a fence and vegetation along the boundary.
- 5.9 Overall, the local characteristics and on-site measures already combine to minimise potential impacts on amenity associated with operation at the site. In addition, it is considered that the potential future impacts on amenity must be viewed along with the information that HGV activity on Pickhill Lane has been much higher.

Draft Service Management Plan

- 5.10 Notwithstanding the local context, it is recognised by Maelor Foods that there may be further opportunities to manage site operations such that the potential impacts on amenity are limited. Maelor Foods have subsequently prepared a draft Service Management Plan which formalises the existing arrangements at the site and seeks to further manage HGV movements so that they are accommodated safely with minimal noise and environmental impact. This references guidance from the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and 'quiet deliveries' good practice guidance. The draft plan is included in **Appendix D**.
- 5.11 As a starting point, a Driver Charter has been prepared (see **Appendix E**) which will be provided to all drivers, suppliers and carriers emphasising the key principles. In addition, all staff involved in delivery activity will be briefed and trained appropriately in accordance with the code of practice.
- 5.12 As previously noted, it is proposed to make better use of a delivery booking system and develop closer working relationships with suppliers to improve the efficiency of movement between the site and surrounding farms. Coordination of arrivals will ensure that vehicles can enter the site promptly with minimal delay, with infrastructure already provided at the site access so that vehicles do not need to wait to enter (as previously noted).

- 5.13 Once within the site, all vehicles will manoeuvre with as little noise as possible. Drivers will be encouraged to employ driving techniques which comprise of engaging gears quietly, keeping engine revs to a minimum, applying brakes gently and closing doors quietly. Adequate signage and instruction will be provided to drivers within the site.
- 5.14 When unloading, a quiet operation strategy will be employed which again is likely to consist of low revving of engines, no slamming of doors, voices kept at a low volume and vehicle radios to be silenced. Vehicles will utilise the loading facilities located away from Pickhill Lane, with care taken to minimise contact with trailer walls, lift guardrails and any other obstructions. Engines and any refrigeration units will be switched off once the vehicle is in the unloading position and all delivery areas will be kept in a manner which will allow for the efficient movement of goods with minimal delay and disruption. Tonal reversing alarms will be turned off (if required) or modified for white noise.
- 5.15 The Service Management Plan will be monitored by staff at Maelor Foods with a feedback process incorporated to consider improvements (where appropriate). It is also proposed to maintain dialogue with existing residents. The strategy will ensure that the number of vehicles present on the site at any one time can be practically managed throughout the day and over time, with consideration to be given to the use of newer and quieter delivery vehicles and equipment (where possible).
- 5.16 Overall, it is considered that the Service Management Plan can positively influence operations at the site to minimise any potential impact on the local community with flexibility built in to the draft plan to facilitate further improvements to site operations.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This note summarises the various discussions and exchanges of information with WCBC relating to removal of condition applications associated with the Maelor Foods site in Wrexham.
- 6.2 Previously, WCBC noted that the main site access visibility did not meet the required standards. Following the presentation of information to WCBC, and as a result of an agreement in principle with the adjacent land owner, it is possible to improve the visibility to the south west of the site access. This has been confirmed as a significant benefit by WCBC Highways.
- 6.3 Although not specifically requested by WCBC Highways, an improvement is proposed at the A525/Pickhill Lane junction that makes a modification to the northern radius of the junction. This work can be completed within existing adopted highway and facilitates the movement of large vehicles at the junction. The improvement has been discussed with WCBC Highways and it has been confirmed that it would be beneficial to all road users on the A525 and Pickhill Lane.

- 6.4 As requested, the historic movements associated with the Lloyd Fraser site have been estimated using information provided by previous site management. This highlights that HGV activity on Pickhill Lane may have been in the region of 166-186 HGV movements per day associated with operations at the Maelor Foods site and Lloyd Fraser. Given that Maelor Foods have now acquired interests in the Lloyd Fraser site, there is effectively only one operator generating HGV movements, and therefore the increased production at Maelor Foods may not actually increase the overall level of activity on Pickhill Lane and at the A525 junction compared to previous operations.
- 6.5 Despite the fact that HGV movements on Pickhill Lane may be lower, it is recognised by Maelor Foods that they can positively influence how HGVs arrive and depart the site such that any potential impact on amenity is minimised. A Service Management Plan will be implemented by Maelor Foods including a Driver Charter which all drivers (both at Maelor Foods and associated suppliers) will be required to adhere to. This builds upon physical measures already built in to the site layout which manage activity and minimises potential impacts on amenity.
- 6.6 Overall, it is considered that the activity associated with the removal of condition at the Maelor Foods site, would not adversely affect the operation of the local highway network and the potential impact on amenity can be mitigated using methods that will minimise, manage, or remove potential disturbance to local residents.