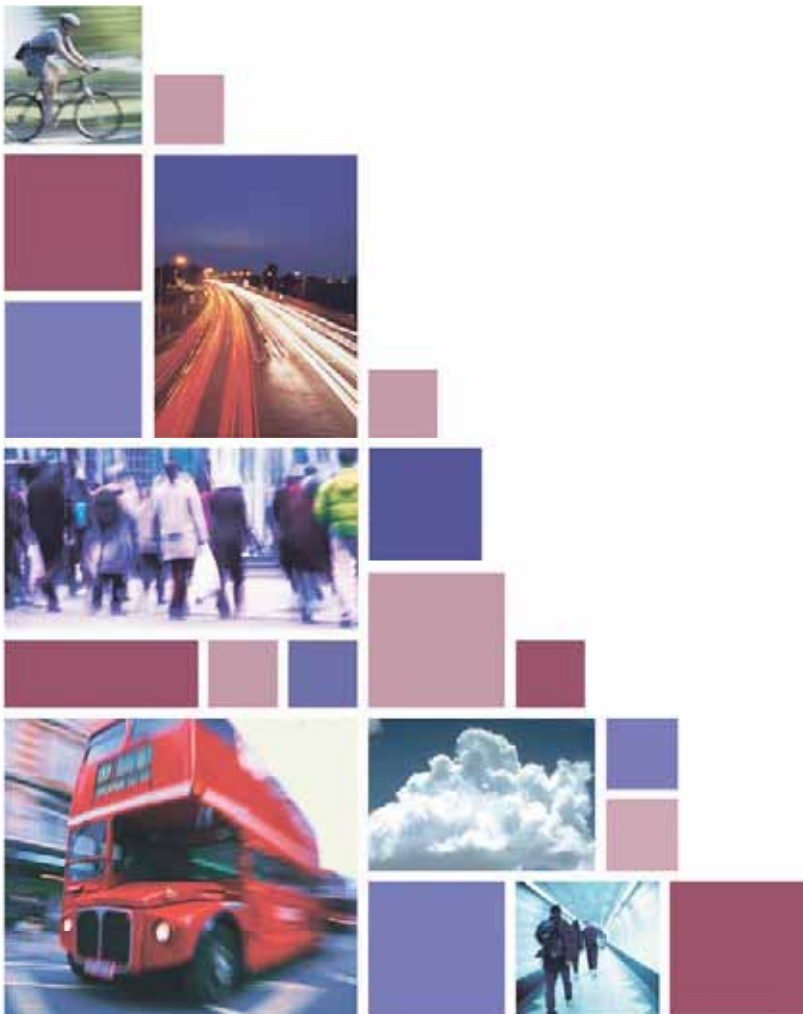


Land off Bangor Road,
Johnstown, Wrexham

Transport Sustainability
Evidence

of Benjamin Jackson,
Ashley Helme Associates Ltd



March 2016

Report Reference 1232/5/B

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Benjamin David Jackson. I hold a Bachelor of Engineering Honours Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master of Science Degree in Transportation Engineering and Planning, and I am a Member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
- 1.2 I am a Director of Ashley Helme Associates Ltd (AHA). I am responsible for the preparation and submission of highways and transportation information to accompany planning applications. I have extensive experience of the analysis of traffic behaviour and performance of highway networks, with emphasis placed on providing appropriately for the needs of all road users, issues of capacity and highway safety and transport sustainability.
- 1.3 I have over 15 years of experience covering a broad range of highways and transportation issues. I have provided advice to a wide range of clients including institutional funds, house builders, commercial property developers and private land owners. I have acted as an expert witness at planning inquiries and hearings.
- 1.4 I am appointed by Gladman Developments Ltd for the appeal against the refusal of planning permission by the planning authority Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) of the residential development proposed in the planning application ref P/2013/0545. The appeal development is on land off Bangor Road, Johnstown, Wrexham (henceforth referred to as the appeal Site).
- 1.5 The appeal development comprises the redevelopment of land for proposed mixed use development of up to 300 (use class C3) residential dwellings, 465sm (use class B1, B2 and B8) business, industrial, storage and distribution units, 235sm (use Class A1) retail, ecological enhancement, landscape, open space, highway improvement and associated works.
- 1.6 The single reason for refusal of the planning application states:

“By virtue of its unsustainable location outside of and divorced from any settlement limit as defined in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, the

development would not represent a logical extension to the settlement limit and (sic) would appear isolated in the rural landscape. The development would not maintain the existing settlement pattern or encourage alternative means of travel to the car and would not accord with the character and appearance of the locality. The development therefore conflicts with Policies PS1, PS2, PS4 , GDP1 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan."

- 1.7 In Chapter 2 of my evidence I identify what I consider to be the key highway/transport issues.
- 1.8 In Chapter 3 of my evidence I set out the policy context to this with respect to the key highway/transport issues, and the reason for refusal.
- 1.9 The WCBC decision notice suggests that the appeal Site would not encourage alternative means of travel to the car. I examine the alternative means of travel to the car that are available to/from the appeal Site in the following Chapters:
- Chapter 4: Walk,
 - Chapter 5: Cycle,
 - Chapter 6: Public transport.
- 1.10 My conclusions are presented in Chapter 7.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The Council's reason for refusal relates partly to issues of transport sustainability and accessibility by sustainable modes.

2.2 The Council's reason for refusal also relates to character and appearance of the development. This part of the reason for refusal is being addressed in the evidence of others. I will be focussing on the highways/ transportation aspects of the Council's reason for refusal.

2.3 WCBC OBJECTIONS

2.3.1 WCBC contend that the location of the development would not encourage alternative means of travel to the car. It is considered that by 'alternative means of travel to the car' WCBC are referring to walk, cycle and public transport trips.

2.3.2 Walk

2.3.2.1 With regard to walk accessibility, the WCBC Case Officer's Report (CD5) states:

"There are no shops, churches, public houses, medical facilities etc. within a reasonable walking distance ... Occupiers of the development would need to access basic services inevitably by private cars."

2.3.2.2 The proposed development includes a retail unit so there is likely be a shop within walking distance of all proposed dwellings.

2.3.2.3 It is stated in Manual for Streets (MfS) that:

"Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot. However, this is not an upper limit and walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km." (MfS1 para 4.4.1)

2.4.2.4 I set out in Chapter 4 that there is a range of facilities within 2km of the Site, and that existing pedestrian infrastructure is available to access this range of facilities. I also set out that the appellant is willing to make a significant contribution to the enhancement of these existing pedestrian facilities by improving footway on Bangor Road.

2.4.3 Cycle

2.4.3.1 The WCBC Case Officer's Report (CD5) makes no specific direct reference to cycle accessibility to the Site. This is a significant omission as cycling is a key consideration when assessing the accessibility of any development proposal by sustainable modes. It is widely recognised that cycling has potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those under 5km, and to form part of a longer journey by public transport.

2.4.3.2 In Chapter 5 I describe the existing cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of the appeal Site, and consider if local roads are suitable for cycle journeys. I outline the extensive package of cycle infrastructure improvements that the appellant has agreed with the highway authority. I also identify a range of key services that would be accessible by appeal Site residents undertaking a cycle journey.

2.4.4 Public Transport

2.4.4.1 The WCBC Case Officer's Report (CD5) states:

"There are no shops, churches, public houses, medical facilities etc. within a reasonable walking distance or (sic) the site nor are there regular bus services to access these facilities."

2.4.4.2 The appellant has offered to provide a bus stop within the Site and to extend an existing bus service to serve this stop. The appellant has written confirmation from a local operator that they would be willing to extend an existing bus service.

2.4.4.3 I set out in Chapter 6 that existing bus services calling close to the appeal development provide access to key amenities and employment locations.

- 2.4.4.4 The WCBC Case Officer's Report (CD5) makes no reference to rail accessibility. Rail travel is a consideration when assessing the accessibility of the development by sustainable modes. The appeal Site is situated within 3.6km of the closest rail station. In Chapter 5, I set out that this provides opportunity for multi-modal access to employment and amenity centres.

2.5 Highways Consultation Response

- 2.5.1 The WCBC highways officer consultation response (CD4 p21-24) raises no objection to the appeal development. It states:

“Pedestrian and cycle provision will be enhanced to ensure that a safe route to Johnstown village can be established. Public Transport improvements will be introduced as part of a residential travel plan which will seek to encourage a modal shift away from private car use”.

- 2.5.2 The highways consultation response does not support the Case Officers Report assertion that residents will inevitably be required to access basic services by private car. The consultation response states that:

“A significant number of pedestrians are likely to use the proposed access road to leave the site via the roundabout and then walk along the footway adjoining B5426 Bangor Road”

The highway authority therefore acknowledges that residents of the appeal development are likely to undertake a significant number of walk trips.

2.6 KEY ISSUES

- 2.6.1 I consider the key questions to examine, from a highways and transportation point of view, to be:

- (i) Does the appeal scheme offer an acceptable level of connectivity with the wider pedestrian, cycle and local highway network?

- (ii) Is there a good range of existing amenities and employment locations within practical walking and cycling distances?
- (iii) Are there opportunities for residents of the appeal Site to undertake journeys by public transport?

2.6.2 I consider all of the above in detail within my evidence. To assist me in reaching my conclusions on each of the above issues raised by the Council, I examine the factual information relating to all of the above, including the appeal transport/highway proposals.

3 Policy Context

3.1 REASON FOR REFUSAL

3.1.1 The reason for refusal states that the appeal development conflicts with policies PS1, PS2, PS4, GDP1, and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Case Officer's Report also makes reference to para 4.4.3 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW).

3.1.2 The policies referenced by WCBC that are relevant to highways/transportation issues comprise:

- Wrexham UDP Policies PS4 and GDP1,
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) para 4.4.3.

3.1.3 In addition to the above, PPW Chapter 8: Transport, is also of relevance to the appeal development.

3.2 WREXHAM UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP)

3.2.1 Policy PS4 sets out how development should be located to encourage sustainable transport use. The policy states:

“Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.”

3.2.2 Policy GDP1 states:

“All new development should:-

...

d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.

e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.

...”

3.3 PLANNING POLICY WALES (PPW)

3.3.1 Para 4.4.3 of PPW states:

“In contributing to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals, planning policies, decisions and proposals should:

...

- ***Locate developments so as to minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car (Section 4.7 and Chapter 8).***

...

- ***Foster improvements to transport facilities and services which maintain or improve accessibility to services and facilities, secure employment, economic and environmental objectives, and improve safety and amenity. In general, developments likely to support the achievement of an integrated transport system should be encouraged (Section 4.7 and Chapter 8).***

- ***Foster social inclusion by ensuring that full advantage is taken of the opportunities to secure a more accessible environment for everyone that the development of land and buildings provides. This includes helping to ensure that development is accessible by means other than the private car (Section 4.7 and 4.11.11).***

...”

3.3.2 Section 4.7 states:

“4.7.4 Local planning authorities should assess the extent to which their development plan settlement strategies and new development are consistent with minimising the need to travel and increasing accessibility by modes other than the private car. A broad balance between housing and employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas should be promoted to minimise the need for long distance commuting. Local authorities should adopt policies to locate major generators of travel demand such as housing, employment, retailing, leisure and recreation, and community facilities including libraries,

schools and hospitals within existing urban areas or in other locations which are, or can be, well served by public transport, or can be reached by walking or cycling. ... Wherever possible, developments should be located at major public transport nodes or interchanges. Higher density development, including residential development, should be encouraged near public transport nodes or near corridors well served by public transport (or with the potential to be so served)."

3.3.3 Para 8.4 states:

"The Welsh Government supports a transport hierarchy in relation to new development that establishes priorities in such a way that, wherever possible, they are accessible in the first instance by walking and cycling, then by public transport and then finally by private motor vehicles. Careful consideration needs to be given to the allocation of new sites which are likely to generate significant levels of movement in Local Development Plans to ensure that access provisions which promote walking and cycling, as well as by public transport are included from the outset. Similarly, the Welsh Government expects that Design and Access Statements give consideration to accessing developments by modes other than private motor vehicles."

3.3.4 Para 8.5 states:

"Land use planning can help to achieve the Welsh Government's objectives for transport through:

- reducing the need to travel, especially by private car, by locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling;*
- locating development near other related uses to encourage multi-purpose trips and reduce the length of journeys;*
- improving accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
- ensuring that transport is accessible to all, taking into account the needs of disabled and other less mobile people;*
- promoting walking and cycling;*
- supporting the provision of high quality public transport;*
- supporting traffic management measures;*
- promoting sustainable transport options for freight and commerce;*

- *supporting sustainable travel options in rural areas;*
- *supporting necessary infrastructure improvements; and*
- *ensuring that, as far as possible, transport infrastructure does not contribute to land take, urban sprawl or neighbourhood severance.”*

4 Walk

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The WCBC Case Officers report contends that there is a lack of amenities within walking distance of the Site. Consequently, I examine the pedestrian connectivity of the appeal development to local facilities in this chapter.

4.2 EXISTING PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

4.2.1 The Site is bounded by B5426 Bangor Road to the south and Hafod Road to the east and pedestrian access to the proposed development is proposed on both Bangor Road and Hafod Road. The appeal development pedestrian access arrangements are discussed further in Section 4.3.

4.2.2 There is existing footway on the north side of Bangor Road along the Site frontage. The existing footway is circa 1.0m – 1.4m wide and there is no street lighting. There is no footway on the south side of Bangor Road opposite the Site frontage.

4.2.3 Bangor Road passes under a railway bridge circa 130m west of the Site boundary and the footway narrows to circa 1.0m for a short distance in this location. To the west of the railway bridge there is footway on both sides of Bangor Road and street lighting is present.

4.2.4 There is no existing footway or street lighting on Hafod Road.

4.2.5 Bangor Road and Hafod Road are subject to a derestricted speed limit along the Site frontage. Circa 90m west of the Site frontage the speed limit on Bangor Road changes from derestricted to 30mph. Circa 40m west of the rail bridge Bangor Road is subject to a 20mph speed limit

4.2.6 Improvements to the existing pedestrian infrastructure on Bangor Road and Hafod Road are proposed and this set out in Section 4.3 below.

4.2.7 **Public Rights of Way**

4.2.7.1 There is a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in the vicinity of the Site as shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/1 (Appendix A).

4.2.7.2 Existing PROW routes passing through the Site comprise:

- PROW 117: along the Site's western boundary,
- PROW 28: along the Site's northwestern boundary, 'following on' from PROW 117 and continuing northwards within the northern area of the Site, leading to Hafod Road,
- PROW 29: between Bangor Road and Hafod Road, within the southeastern area of the Site.

Thus, existing PROW located within the Site/along the Site boundary provide pedestrian link opportunities between Bangor Road and Hafod Road.

4.2.7.3 These in-Site PROW are complemented by further nearby PROW located outside the Site, as follows and indicated on 1232/BDJ/1:

- PROW 24: providing a route in a north/northeastern direction from PROW 28 to PROW 25 adjacent to the railway line,
- PROW 31: provides a route from Hafod Road to the east, across the A483,
- PROW 25 & 116: north-south along the eastern side of the railway line, intersecting with PROW 24,
- PROW 27: east-west route on the western side of the railway line, including along Glasfryn and incorporating a link to a tunnel under the rail line.

4.2.7.4 Additional to the PROW illustrated on Figure 1232/BDJ/1, there is observed to be existing pedestrian use of a walk link route between PROW 24 and the tunnel under the rail line; this is also indicated on Figure 1232/BDJ/1 and referenced as 'observed pedestrian activity link route'. It is recognised that this crosses third party land and is not designated as a PROW; nevertheless, this is observed to presently be used by

pedestrians, and as such is included for the derivation of the walk isochrones (refer Section 4.4).

4.2.7.5 To the west of the Site there is a railway line. In the locality of the Site there are pedestrian routes across the railway line as follows:

- To the west of the Site: tunnel under the rail line, between PROW 27 & 116,
- To the south: Bangor Road is routed beneath the railway line, and has a footway alongside the carriageway.
- To the north: A pedestrian bridge crossing of the railway line, which provides links to the wider PROW network for leisure walking.

4.2.7.6 Since the planning application was submitted, an uncontrolled at grade pedestrian crossing of the railway line has been closed. The uncontrolled crossing was for PROW 24. All of the railway line crossing points in the vicinity of the Site/Johnstown are now grade separated.

4.3 **PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE**

4.3.1 The appeal Site access arrangements are shown on Drg 1232/13/B (Appendix B) and are agreed with WCBC. The Site access comprises a roundabout junction on Bangor Road, with 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway on both sides of the access road. Drg 1232/13/B also shows a shared footway/cycleway on the north side of Bangor Road along the appeal Site frontage.

4.3.2 An independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) has undertaken for the Site access arrangements, and submitted to the local highway authority. It is agreed in the highways Statement of Common Ground that the recommendations of the RSA can be addressed at detailed design stage.

4.3.3 Drg 1232/18/B (Appendix C) presents the agreed footway improvement scheme on Bangor Road to the west of the appeal Site. The scheme involves some realignment and narrowing of Bangor Road to create a continuous 2.0m wide footway between

the western end of the Site frontage and the existing conventional footway to the west of the railway Bridge.

4.3.4 It is proposed that street lighting is provided on Bangor Road along the Site frontage and long the widened footway between the Site and the railway bridge. The improvements shown on Drg Nos 1232/13/B and 1232/18/B provide good linkage between the Site and existing pedestrian infrastructure in Johnstown.

4.3.5 Drg 1232/20 (Appendix D) presents a shared footway/cycleway scheme on Hafod Road along the Site frontage. This is agreed with WCBC.

4.3.6 The works set out above are a significant improvement over the existing situation, providing very good opportunity for walk trips to be undertaken on Bangor Road and Hafod Road.

4.4 WALK ISOCHRONES AND LOCAL AMENITIES

4.4.1 It is established and acknowledged that walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level, and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly under 2km. The DfT National Travel Survey of 2012 confirms that **77% of all trips less than a mile (1.6km)** were carried out on foot (refer extract in Appendix E). The 'walkable neighbourhood' concept is set out in Manual for Streets (MfS) 1 and endorsed in MfS2. MfS1 explains that:

"Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot. However, this is not an upper limit and walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km." (MfS1 para 4.4.1)

4.4.2 It is useful to construct walk isochrones for the appeal Site to establish the locations and amenities within the local area that could be accessible to residents of the appeal scheme on foot.

4.4.3 The CIHT provides guidance about journeys on foot. It does not provide a definitive view of distances, but does suggest a preferred maximum distance of 2000m for walk commuting trips. An 800m distance corresponds to a walk time of about 10 minutes, based upon typical normal walking speed. Figure 1232/BDJ/2 (Appendix F) presents the appeal development 800m, 1000m and 2000m walk isochrones, (ie reflecting 10, 12.5 and 25 minute walk journeys), and taking account of the existing pedestrian infrastructure and also the proposed pedestrian links between the appeal Site and local footpaths.

4.4.4 Figure 1232/BDJ/3 (Appendix G) shows the location of the appeal Site in the context of local amenities. It also shows a 1000m walk isochrone. Figure 1232/BDJ/3 confirms that there are amenities within 1000m of the appeal Site comprising:

- Bus stops,
- Infant school
- Junior School,
- Bowls club,
- Recreation ground,
- Play areas,
- Community Centre,
- Barbers shop,
- Salon.

4.4.5 Figure 1232/BDJ/4 (Appendix H) shows the main pedestrian links between the Site and Johnstown. I acknowledge that the PROW between the Site and the PROW 27, via the railway underpass, may not be suitable during hours of darkness as lighting is not present on PROW 24 or the link between PROW 24 and PROW 27. However, there is an alternative route with lighting along Bangor Road. Distances between the Site and other amenities within Johnstown that are within walking distance of the Site comprise:

	VIA BANGOR ROAD OR PROW 27	VIA BANGOR ROAD ONLY
• Salon (Nail and Beauty Salon),	1100m	1100m
• Church	1100m	1100m

• Convenience Store (Premier)	1300m	1350m
• Salon (Blush)	1300m	1370m
• Tea Room (Dorothys)	1310m	1380m
• Pharmacy	1320m	1390m
• Takeaway (The Trawler Fish Bar)	1330m	1400m
• Dentist	1340m	1410m
• Supermarket, ATM (Co-operative)	1350m	1350m
• Public house (The New Inn)	1370m	1440m
• Post office/convenience store	1430m	1450m
• Church	1430m	1450m
• Public house (The Grapes)	1510m	1550m
• Florist (The Bloom Room)	1510m	1550m
• Laundrette	1510m	1550m

These amenities are all within 1 mile (1.6km) of the Site. As set out in para 4.4.1, the DfT National Travel Survey of 2012 confirms that 77% of all trips less than a mile (1.6km) were carried out on foot. It is clear from the National Travel Survey that for distances less than 1 mile (1.6km) the majority of journeys are made by foot. Review of the above amenities shows that there is a good range of facilities within 1 mile including a primary school, shops (including a convenience store), churches, public houses and a pharmacy. Therefore, I am satisfied that there is a good range of amenities that are located within distances that will encourage residents of the appeal Site to undertake walk trips to access these facilities.

4.4.6 Vauxhall Industrial Estate is located within a 2000m walk of the appeal development. In addition there are employment opportunities at many of the amenities shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/3. The appeal development includes 700sm of commercial uses providing opportunity within very close proximity to the residential dwellings. I conclude that there are employment locations within a reasonable walk distance of the appeal Site.

4.4.7 Consequently, I am satisfied that the appeal Site affords good opportunity for residents of the appeal development to walk to locations of employment.

4.5 **SUMMARY**

- 4.5.1 The encouragement of walk journeys is recognised as important principle of the appeal scheme.
- 4.5.2 The improvements shown on Drg Nos 1232/13/B and 1232/18/B provide good linkage between the Site and existing pedestrian infrastructure in Johnstown. These improvements are agreed with WCBC.
- 4.5.3 I have demonstrated that there are amenities that will meet the everyday needs of residents of the appeal Site and that these amenities are located within distances that will encourage residents of the appeal Site to undertake walk trips. I have also demonstrated that there are employment locations within walking distance of the appeal Site.
- 4.5.4 I am satisfied that the appeal Site affords good opportunity for residents to walk to a range of amenities and locations of employment. Consequently, I can find no basis of support for the Council's claim that the appeal Site is poorly located for local amenities, and that there is inadequate accessibility by walk mode.

5 Cycle

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The WCBC Case Officer's Report states:

“There are no shops, churches, public houses, medical facilities etc. within a reasonable walking distance of the site nor are there regular bus services to access these facilities. Occupiers of the development would need to access basic services inevitably by private cars.”

5.1.2 The WCBC Case Officer's Report makes no reference to cycling. However, it is widely recognised that cycling has potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those under 5km, and to form part of a longer journey by public transport. The WCBC report does not mention cycling.

5.1.3 The CIHT guidance 'Cycle Friendly Infrastructure' (1996) states that:

“Most journeys are short. Three quarters of journeys by all modes are less than five miles (8km) and half under two miles (3.2km) (DOT 1993, table 2a). These are distances that can be cycled comfortably by a reasonably fit person.”(para 2.3)

5.2 EXISTING CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

5.2.1 Figure 1232/BDJ/5 (Appendix J) shows the existing cycle routes in the vicinity of the Site. There are 2no routes in the vicinity of the Site. These are labelled on Figure 1232/BDJ/5 as Route 1 and Route 2.

5.2.2 Hafod Road forms part of Route 1. Route 1 connects Wrexham Town Centre, to the north of the Site, and Ruabon, to the south of the Site. In the vicinity of the Site, Route 1 comprises a signed on-road route. Part of Route 1 is within Erddig country park and marked by Sustrans as a traffic-free route, although observations of this route suggest that there may be some vehicular traffic along part of the route, as it is used to access the country park car park.

5.2.3 Route 2 connects Johnstown and Wrexham town centres. The route is a signed on-road route and there are on-road cycle lane markings between Johnstown and A483.

5.3 PROPOSED CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

5.3.1 As set out in Chapter 4 the proposed development includes improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure on Bangor Road and Hafod Road, along the Site frontage. The improvements comprise:

- Introduce 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway along the Site frontage on the north side of Bangor Road,
- Introduce 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway along the Site frontage on the west side of Hafod Road,
- Introduce 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway on both sides of the Site access road.

5.3.2 The above improvements are shown on Drg 1232/20 (Appendix D), and are **agreed** with the highway authority.

5.3.3 In addition to the improvements set out above, it is proposed to introduce cycle signage in the vicinity of the Site, through Nant Parc estate and towards Vauxhall Industrial Estate. The proposed routes are shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/5 (Appendix J) and are agreed with the highway authority. The signed cycle routes will comprise a combination of shared footway/cycleway and on roads subject to a 20mph or 30mph limit.

5.3.4 The proposed route through Nant Parc provides a connection between the Site and Route 2. It also provides a connection between Route 1 and Route 2, which is of benefit to the wider community.

5.3.5 The proposed route to Vauxhall Industrial Estate provides a direct cycle link between the appeal Site and the employment opportunities at the Industrial Estate.

5.4 CYCLE ISOCHRONES

5.4.1 It is useful to construct cycle isochrones for the appeal Site to establish the locations and amenities within the local area that could be accessible to residents of the appeal scheme by cycle.

5.4.2 Figure 1232/BDJ/6 (Appendix K) indicates the 2km and 5km cycle isochrones for the Site, reflecting typically 10 minute and 25 minute journeys. Review of Figure 1232/BDJ/6 shows that all of Johnstown and part of Rhosllanerchrugog and Ruabon are within a 2km cycle ride of the Site. In addition, all of Rhosllanerchrugog, Rhostyllen, Ruabon, Plas Madoc, and part of Wrexham and Cefn-mawr are within 5km cycle ride of the appeal development. Wrexham town centre is just beyond a 5km cycle journey from the Site. This provides opportunity for residents of the development to undertake trips by cycle to a full range of amenity and employment destinations within these areas.

5.4.3 Cycle Routes to Key Destinations

5.4.3.1 The most direct cycle route to many of the amenities in Johnstown set out in Chapter 4 is via Bangor Road. As set out above, the appeal development will deliver a shared footway/cycleway along the main access road and along Site frontage. Circa 90m west of the Site frontage the speed limit on Bangor Road changes from derestricted to 30mph. Circa 40m west of the rail bridge Bangor Road is subject to a 20mph speed limit. It is proposed to extend the existing 30mph limit to the Site boundary. This would mean that the entire route along Bangor Road between the Site and High Street comprises shared footway/cycleway, or roads that are subject to a 30mph or 20mph speed limit.

5.4.3.2 The proposed signed cycle route through Nant Park estate provides an alternative route to many key amenities and provides a link to the infant school and playing fields.

5.4.3.3 The closest secondary schools to the Site are Ysgol y Grango, and Ysgol Rhiwabon which are both situated circa 3.2km from the Site and is therefore within comfortable cycling distance of the Site.

- 5.4.3.4 There are numerous possible routes between the Site and Ysgol y Grango. The majority of the roads along these routes are subject to a 20mph speed limit, or are designated/proposed cycle routes. This provides good opportunity for residents of the Site to cycle to the secondary school.
- 5.4.3.5 The route between the Site and Ysgol Rhiwabon is entirely along a signed cycle route (Route 1, refer Figure 1232/BDJ/5, Appendix J).
- 5.4.3.6 Ruabon rail station is circa 3km to the south of the Site, and the majority of the route between the Site and the rail station is via a signed on-road route (Route 1, refer Figure 1232/BDJ/5, Appendix J). Cycles are permitted on most of the services calling at Ruabon. Residents of the proposed development have opportunity to undertake journeys to/from the Site by combination of cycle and rail. The services calling at Ruabon station are discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.5 SUMMARY

I have set out that the existing roads within Johnstown provide conditions conducive to cycling, with the majority of roads being subject to a 20mph speed limit. There are existing cycle routes in the vicinity of the appeal Site that provide access to Wrexham and to Ruabon. The proposed development includes proposals to upgrade cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of the appeal Site, which is of benefit of residents, employees and visitors of the appeal development, as well as providing a link between existing cycle routes. This provides a very good context for journeys to/from the appeal Site to be undertaken by cycle.

6 Public Transport

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The WCBC Case Officer's Report (CD5) states:

“There are no shops, churches, public houses, medical facilities etc. within a reasonable walking distance or (sic) the site nor are there regular bus services to access these facilities.”

6.1.2 The appeal development is accessible by bus, and the appeal development includes proposals to enhance bus accessibility.

6.2 BUS

6.2.1 Existing Bus Stop Infrastructure

6.2.1.1 There are existing bus stops on Heol Orsaf and Snowdon Drive within 800m of the appeal Site, as shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/7 (Appendix L). The closest stops are on Heol Orsaf, circa 625m from the appeal Site centroid. The existing bus stops on Heol Orsaf and Snowdon Drive comprise a flag and pole at the southbound stops and unmarked northbound stops.

6.2.1.2 The number 6 bus service calls at the bus stops Heol Orsaf and Snowdon Drive. The number 6 provides hourly service in each direction between Wrexham and Ruabon. The latest (at the time of preparing my evidence) timetable for this service is included in my Appendix M.

6.2.2 Existing Bus Services

6.2.2.1 Review of the timetable in Appendix M confirms that there are services calling at the appeal Site that arrive/depart Wrexham at typical commuting times. These are:

DEPART HEOL ORSAF

ARRIVE WREXHAM BUS STATION

0727

0744

0827

0844

DEPART WREXHAM BUS STATION

ARRIVE HEOL ORSAF

1645

1701

The number 6 service provides a relatively short journey time of 16-17 minutes between the Heol Orsaf and Wrexham.

- 6.2.2.2 I acknowledge that the last return journey from Wrexham may be too early for some commuters, as it departs before 1700. However, there are alternative services calling circa 1200m (a 15 minute walk from the Site) that provide alternative return journeys. These comprise:

SERVICE NO	DEPART WREXHAM	ARRIVE JOHNSTOWN
5	1700	1710
4	1705	1719
2	1707	1719
5C	1710	1720
5	1720	1730
2C	1722	1734
J50	1725	1735
T3	1725	1738
5C	1730	1740
J50	1735	1745
4	1735	1749
2A	1737	1749
5	1740	1750
5C	1750	1800
2C	1752	1804
5	1800	1810

In addition there are regular services throughout the evening between Wrexham and Johnstown, until circa 2300. Therefore, there is opportunity for residents of the appeal Site to commute to/from Wrexham by bus.

- 6.2.2.3 There is also opportunity for people employed at the appeal Site to commute to the Site by bus. The bus services arriving at Heol Orsaf at typical commuting times comprise:

DEPART WREXHAM BUS STATION	ARRIVE HEOL ORSAF
0745	0801
0845	0901
DEPART RUABON	ARRIVE HEOL ORSAF
0814	0827
DEPART HEOL ORSAF	ARRIVE WREXHAM BUS STATION
1727	1744
DEPART HEOL ORSAF	ARRIVE RUABON
1701	1714

- 6.2.2.4 The number 6 service call at Pont Adam circa 400m from Ysgol Rhiwabon Secondary School. The journey time between Heol Orsaf and Pont Adam is 13 minutes. The Ysgol Rhiwabon school day is from 0850 to 1505. There is an after school club which operates until 1705, providing students with access to computers and staff support with homework. There are also various extracurricular activities that generally run until 1600 or 1605.

- 6.2.2.5 The bus services between Heol Orsaf and Pont Adam providing links to Ysgol Rhiwabon comprise:

DEPART HEOL ORSAF	ARRIVE PONT ADAM
0801	0814
DEPART PONT ADAM	ARRIVE HEOL ORSAF
1514	1527
1614	1627
1614	1727

The above services provide opportunity for journeys between the appeal Site and Ysgol Rhiwabon to be undertaken by bus, for both the normal school day and for after-school activities.

6.2.2.6 The number 6 bus service also provides a link between the appeal Site and amenities in Ruabon. Many of the amenities in Ruabon are concentrated around High Street. The journey time between Heol Orsaf and Ruabon High Street is circa 12 minutes. Here are key amenities within very close proximity to Ruabon High Street bus stops comprising:

- Ruabon Library,
- Medical Centre,
- Bank (HSBC),
- A range of shops and salons.

6.2.2.7 The number 6 service calls at Wrexham bus station. The journey time between the appeal Site and Heol Orsaf and the bus station is circa 16-17 minutes. Wrexham bus station is situated in Wrexham town centre providing access to a wide range of amenities and leisure opportunities. The bus service also calls within 800m of Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

6.2.2.8 In addition to the bus stops within 800m of the appeal Site, there are further bus stops on Ruabon Road within 1200m (a 15 minute walk) of the appeal Site as shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/7 (Appendix L). The frequencies and routes of services calling on

Ruabon Road summarised in Table 1232/BDJ/1 (Appendix N). These routes provide direct bus services to a wide range of destinations, including for example, Oswestry, Cefn Mawr, Langollen, Acrefair, and Barmouth. This provides opportunity to access to a very wide range of amenity and employment locations.

6.2.2.9 Typical journey times between Johnstown and locations served by buses calling on Ruabon Road comprise:

- Wrexham 10-14 mins
- Acrefair 12-15 mins
- Cefn Mawr 15-28 mins
- Llangollen 20-24 mins
- Chirk 28-31mins
- Oswestry 50 mins

6.2.2.10 The range of destinations and the journey times of bus services within a 1200m (15 minute) walk provide opportunity for residents of the proposed development to access a wide range of destinations by bus, with relatively short journey times.

6.2.3 Improvements to Bus Stops and Services

6.2.3.1 It is proposed to provide a bus stop(s) within the Site as part of the appeal development and to make a financial contribution to provide a bus service that calls within the appeal Site. The final consultation response from the highway authority (CD4, p21-p24) states:

“The applicant has held discussion with local bus operators about servicing the site. It will therefore be vital that a circular route through the proposed estate is provided. Further details of bus routes, locations of bus stops and bus stop kerbs can be provided at reserved matters or through the Travel Plan. It is considered reasonable to request the developer contributes towards the diversion of a bus service into the Site.”

6.2.3.2 The highway authority suggested the following condition:

“No part of the development shall commence until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The travel plan shall include provisions for the pump priming of the local bus services to ensure the Site is adequately served by public transport. The development shall be used in strict accordance with the details as are approved.”

6.2.3.3 The contribution towards a bus service can be dealt with through a S106 contribution. My company has undertaken discussions with the GHA coaches regarding extending the No6 bus service route to call at the appeal Site (refer Appendix P). GHA stated that existing services can be diverted into the appeal Site with the introduction of an additional vehicle. An additional vehicle could be provided to serve the appeal Site, at a cost of circa £40,000 per annum. The appellant proposes a S106 contribution of £200,000 towards bus services which would provide a service for a period of 5 years.

6.3 **RAIL**

6.3.1 The closest rail station to the appeal Site is Ruabon, which is circa 3km from the Site. I explore the opportunity to access the rail station by various transport modes below.

6.3.2 **Existing Services**

6.3.2.1 The main daytime services calling at Ruabon comprise the following:

- Holyhead – Chester – Wrexham General – Ruabon – Shrewsbury – Hereford – Newport – Cardiff Central, (via various local stations),
- Holyhead – Chester – Wrexham General – Ruabon – Shrewsbury – Telford Central – Wolverhampton – Birmingham New Street – Birmingham International, (via various local stations)

6.3.2.2 Each of the above services typically operates on a 120 minute frequency, combining to create an hourly service between Shrewsbury and Holyhead. The timetable is included in Appendix Q. Typical journey times between Ruabon and major destinations served by direct trains comprise:

- Wrexham General 7 minutes,
- Chester 25 minutes,

- Shrewsbury 32 minutes,
- Telford Central 56 minutes,
- Wolverhampton 74 minutes,
- Hereford 88 minutes,
- Birmingham New Street 95 minutes,
- Birmingham International 108 minutes,
- Newport 140 minutes,
- Cardiff 155 minutes.

6.3.3 Access to Rail Station by Cycle

Figure 1232/BDJ/5 (Appendix J) shows that there is a direct signed cycle route between the appeal Site and Ruabon rail station. The cycling distance from the appeal Site is circa 3km. Cycles are permitted on most services calling at Ruabon rail station providing good opportunity for journeys between the appeal Site and key employment and amenity destinations to be undertaken by combination of rail and cycle.

6.3.4 Access to Rail Station by Bus

6.3.4.1 The number 6 service calls circa 400m (a 5 minute walk) from Ruabon station on High Street. The journey time between Heol Orsaf and Ruabon High Street is circa 11 minutes. Additionally, the 2C, 5 and T3 services calling on Ruabon Road within 1200m of the appeal Site also call directly outside Ruabon station, with a journey time of between 5 and 8 minutes.

6.3.4.2 The number 6 bus service and all bus services in Table 1232/BDJ/1 call at Wrexham Bus Station, which is within a short walk of Wrexham Central and Wrexham General rail stations. It is therefore possible for residents of the appeal development to access these rail stations by bus.

6.4 SUMMARY

6.4.1 It is established that a range of destinations are accessible from the appeal Site by public transport, including amenity and employment locations.

- 6.4.2 The appeal development includes measures to improve public transport. It is proposed to provide a bus stop(s) within the appeal Site as part of the appeal development and to make a financial contribution to provide a bus service that calls within the Site.

7 Summary and Conclusions

7.1 I am appointed by Gladman Developments Ltd for the appeal against the refusal of planning permission by the planning authority Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) of the residential development proposed in the planning application ref P/2013/0545. The appeal development is on land off Bangor Road, Johnstown, Wrexham (henceforth referred to as the appeal Site).

7.2 The single reason for refusal of the planning application states:

“By virtue of its unsustainable location outside of and divorced from any settlement limit as defined in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, the development would not represent a logical extension to the settlement limit and (sic) would appear isolated in the rural landscape. The development would not maintain the existing settlement pattern or encourage alternative means of travel to the car and would not accord with the character and appearance of the locality. The development therefore conflicts with Policies PS1, PS2, PS4, GDP1 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.”

7.3 Based on the above reason for refusal, I consider the key questions to examine, from a highways and transportation point of view, to be:

- (i) Does the appeal scheme offer an acceptable level of connectivity with the wider pedestrian, cycle and local highway network?
- (ii) Is there a good range of existing amenities and employment locations within practical walking and cycling distances?
- (iii) Are there opportunities for residents of the appeal Site to undertake journeys by public transport?

7.4 I am satisfied that the appeal scheme offers an acceptable level of connectivity with the wider pedestrian, cycle and local highway network. The appeal development includes improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities and this is shown on Drg Nos 1232/13/B and 1232/18/B. These improvements include:

- 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway on both sides of the appeal Site access road,
- 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway on the north side of Bangor Road along the appeal Site frontage,
- 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway on the west side of Hafod Road along the appeal Site frontage,
- Footway improvement scheme on Bangor Road to the west of the appeal Site,
- Provision of cycle signage in the Nant Park estate and on route to Vauxhall Industrial Estate.

These works are agreed with WCBC.

7.5 I have considered the amenities available within a practical walking distance of the appeal Site. Figure 1232/BDJ/3 (Appendix G) shows the location of the appeal Site in the context of local amenities. It also shows a 1000m walk isochrones which assumes that the pedestrian link on Bangor Road is used to access local amenities. Figure 1232/BDJ/3 confirms that there are amenities within 1000m of the appeal Site comprising:

- Bus stops,
- Infant school
- Junior School,
- Bowls club,
- Recreation ground,
- Play areas,
- Community Centre,
- Barbers shop,
- Salon.

7.6 Other amenities within Johnstown that are within walking distance of the appeal Site comprise:

	VIA BANGOR ROAD OR PROW 27	VIA BANGOR ROAD ONLY
• Salon (Nail and Beauty Salon),	1100m	1100m
• Church	1100m	1100m
• Convenience Store (Premier)	1300m	1350m
• Salon (Blush)	1300m	1370m
• Tea Room (Dorothys)	1310m	1380m
• Pharmacy	1320m	1390m
• Takeaway (The Trawler Fish Bar)	1330m	1400m
• Dentist	1340m	1410m
• Supermarket, ATM (Co-operative)	1350m	1350m
• Public house (The New Inn)	1370m	1440m
• Post office/convenience store	1430m	1450m
• Church	1430m	1450m
• Public house (The Grapes)	1510m	1550m
• Florist (The Bloom Room)	1510m	1550m
• Laundrette	1510m	1550m

7.7 The DfT National Travel Survey of 2012 confirms that 77% of all trips less than a mile (1.6km) were carried out on foot. It is clear from the National Travel Survey that for distances less than 1 mile (1.6km) the majority of journeys are made by foot. Review of the above amenities shows that there is a good range of facilities within 1 mile including a primary school, shops (including a convenience store), churches, public houses and a pharmacy. Therefore, I am satisfied that there is a good range of amenities that are located within distances that will encourage residents of the appeal Site to undertake walk trips to access these facilities.

7.8 Vauxhall Industrial Estate is located within a 2000m walk of the appeal development. In addition there are employment opportunities at many of the amenities shown on Figure 1232/BDJ/3. The appeal development also includes 700sm of commercial uses providing opportunity within very close proximity to the residential dwellings.

- 7.9 Figure 1232/BDJ/6 (Appendix K) indicates the 2km and 5km cycle isochrones for the appeal Site, reflecting typically 10 minute and 25 minute journeys. Review of Figure 1232/BDJ/6 shows that all of Johnstown and part of Rhosllanerchrugog and Ruabon are within a 2km cycle ride of the appeal Site. In addition, all of Rhosllanerchrugog, Rhostyllen, Ruabon, Plas Madoc, and part of Wrexham and Cefn-Mawr are within 5km cycle ride of the appeal development. Wrexham town centre is just beyond a 5km cycle journey from the appeal Site. This provides opportunity for residents of the development to undertake trips by cycle to a full range of amenity and employment destinations within these areas.
- 7.10 I am satisfied that the appeal Site affords good opportunity for residents to walk and cycle to a range of amenities and locations of employment.
- 7.11 The closest bus stops to the appeal development are on Heol Orsaf circa 625m from the appeal development. An hourly service between Wrexham and Ruabon calls at stops close to the appeal Site, providing regular journeys to and from Wrexham and Ruabon. It also provides good opportunity for bus journeys to be undertaken between the appeal Site and Ysgol Rhiwabon Secondary School. A range of bus services call on Ruabon Road, within circa 1200m of the providing direct journeys to a very wide range of amenity and employment locations, such as Oswestry, Cefn-Mawr, Chirk, Langollen and Acrefair.
- 7.12 It is proposed to introduce a bus service to serve the appeal development, and this has been agreed with the local operator.
- 7.13 The closest rail station to the appeal Site is Ruabon, which is circa 3km from the Site. There is good opportunity for journeys to/from the appeal Site by bus and cycle. Wrexham Central and Wrexham General rail stations are within a short walk of Wrexham Bus Station. All bus service calling close to the appeal Site call at Wrexham bus station, providing good opportunity to access the rail stations by bus.
- 7.14 I am satisfied that the appeal Site affords good opportunity for residents to undertake journeys by public transport.

7.12 CONCLUSIONS

Taking account of the above, I am satisfied that my evidence demonstrates that the appeal development is an accessible site and that residents will have opportunity to undertake walk, cycle, and public transport trips. I conclude that there is no basis of support for the council's assertion that the development will not encourage journeys by foot, cycle and public transport. Consequently, I am satisfied that the appeal development is acceptable on highways/transport grounds and there is no justifiable reason why planning permission should not be granted.