

BRYMBO: TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Summary.

It is important to note that the two current applications are enabling developments to generate sufficient cash to complete the long-planned Brymbo Spine Road. This will provide a direct link for the community of Brymbo onto the existing Brymbo Link Road. This connection is fully accepted as being both vital for the community and overdue in its provision.

Planning permission has already been granted for this new road link, which will have the positive effect of removing traffic from Mount Hill and the B5101 (New Road and Kent Road) where the width and alignment is less satisfactory and where roadside residences and parked cars hinder safe movement.

The scale of the new development is the minimum necessary to generate sufficient funds to construct the road and is partly on land already permitted for industrial development which would no longer be constructed.

Background and Existing Assessments

There have been three formal traffic assessments carried out in connection with the former Brymbo Steelworks Reclamation and Redevelopment Scheme:

1997: Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (as part of the original planning application, subsequently approved in November 1997).

Conclusion - that any new traffic generated by the development proposals (housing and employment) would simply return traffic levels to similar to those which existed prior to the Steelworks closure.

2003: Parkman. This related to assessment of various combinations of development to present a typical 'worst case' scenario.

2005: Savell Bird & Axon (as part of George Wimpey detailed submission for housing on the Western, Central and Southern Modules).

Key Conclusions - Counts indicated that there had been no significant changes in flows since the 1997 assessment.

The development proposals would have an imperceptible impact on the local highway network.

The Current Proposals

1. Supermarket:

The proposed supermarket would occupy land which currently has the benefit of planning permission for industrial development. When implemented, this industrial development would generate additional traffic flows into and out of the area, particularly at peak times when pressure on the existing network would be at its maximum. The change of use to a supermarket would eliminate the traffic generation associated with such development on this land and therefore reduce any potential impacts.

The alternative, proposed supermarket will satisfy a demonstrated local shortfall in provision (see Retail Impact Assessment accompanying the planning application). At present, the communities of Brymbo and Tan y Fron do not have access to a supermarket without embarking on a journey (which would generally be by car) out of the immediate area. By offering a local supermarket, which meets the vast majority of regular needs, the number of such trips to pre-existing supermarkets on the periphery of Wrexham town with the subsequent activity on the road network and junctions, will be significantly reduced.

It is suggested that there will be a net benefit in terms of both traffic numbers and peak traffic flows as a result.

2. Housing:

As the housing application is only in outline, the number of properties to be introduced is uncertain at this stage. The site extends to some 5.6 acres (developable) so at a density of 12 dwellings/acre the proposal would relate to approx 65-70 dwellings.

In the context of the former steelworks redevelopment, this relatively small scale proposal represents the only potential development which falls outside the originally envisaged development area. Whilst intended uses may have been modified in certain areas (and may well be further modified in the future), it was always the intention to see the whole of the former steelworks site developed. Assessments relating to this overall development at the outset envisaged no significant impact in terms of traffic generation.

The local road network had been substantially improved at the time of the construction of the new Billet Mill with the formation of the link road between the site and the Ruthin Road. The numbers of employees passing to and from the site when fully operational (particularly at peak times) far exceeded anything which is currently envisaged.

In the intervening years, other small scale housing developments in the area have been proposed and approved and their associated traffic assimilated into the existing flows with no apparent problems. Additional traffic assessments were not considered necessary in these cases.

Conclusions

The underlying intention of the two current (enabling) planning applications is to secure the provision of the Spine Road linking the village of Brymbo to Tan y Fron, to the new housing developments (and future uses) on the steelworks site and ultimately to Wrexham and the wider road network.

The overall impact is likely to be minimal with the supermarket development effectively removing traffic from the very same network as it offers a local facility which currently requires road journeys. Also, the existing permitted use of the land is for industrial development which, if implemented as previously envisaged, would be likely to add traffic at peak hours. This is not the case with the supermarket where more even flows would result and would generally not be at peak hours.

The housing development is the minimum necessary to generate funds to complete the road network and represents only a small scale intensification of development. The land proposed is served by a highway network which was designed for a very substantial flow when the steelworks was running at its peak.

Of major significance is that the completion of the Spine Road will significantly ease pressure on the current access roads to Brymbo via both Ty Cerrig and The Lodge (B5101 and Mount Hill).