

MEMORANDUM

From:	Service Manager Environment	To:	Head of Community Well-being and Development
Our Ref:	P/2019/0546	Your Ref:	P/2019/0546
Date:	1 October 2019		

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995

Location: O. S Grid Ref: Former site of Brymbo Steelworks, Brymbo

Development: Outline planning permission for up to 450 dwellings (Class C3 use), provision of a primary school, small district centre comprising up to 1395 sq. m of class A1 retail, up to 372 sq.m of class A3 restaurant/ public house, up to 465 sq.m of class D1 use, multi-functional green infrastructure, including children's play area and informal open space, surface water attenuation, vehicle accesses, car parking engineering works, public footpaths and hard and soft landscaping, underground services, and all ancillary and enabling works, with all matters reserved except for vehicular access from Brymbo Road.

I refer to your consultation dated 29 July 2019 in respect of the above.

The former Brymbo steelworks site was redeveloped about 10 years ago and now supports approximately 500 dwellings. The new spine road linking Tanyfron to Brymbo was constructed approximately 3 years ago. Apart from a couple of schools and small shops there are quite limited facilities within the Brymbo and Tanyfron area.

The road infrastructure around the steelworks site appears to cope adequately with the existing traffic levels; however there are well known and significant traffic issues at the Heritage Way / A525 junction and at Junction 4 of the A483.

There is an existing bus route along Phoenix Drive which serves the existing residential estates; pedestrian access to Phoenix Drive is however poor due to the differing gradients.

The proposed site is split broadly into three separate areas, east, north and west of Phoenix Drive. There is scope to provide an adequate access into the north and east sites from various locations along Phoenix Drive. If planning permission is granted then further details of any proposed access will be required at reserved matters stage.

There are a number of future proposals to amend the design of Phoenix Drive at its northern most roundabout junction. I have no particular concern with these proposals but the full details must be considered at reserved matters stage.

Access to the western site is proposed from the Brymbo Road approximately 225m north west of the Lamberton Drive / Llewelyn Road roundabout that was constructed as part of the original redevelopment. Whilst existing traffic speeds have been measured at roughly 40mph, it is considered that vehicular speed may increase if significant lengths of hedgerow are removed to create visibility splays for the proposed access.

It is therefore recommended that any permission should include a requirement to extend the 40 mph traffic regulation order beyond the new access, to a position to be further agreed with the highway authority.

It is noted also that other significant sized residential areas on the steelworks site have been accessed via a roundabout. Given the size of this proposed development it is suggested that a roundabout may also be the preferred option in this instance in order to provide a consistent approach. Any permission should therefore include a condition requiring the means of proposed access to be further agreed with the highway authority.

The proposed pedestrian routes from the site appear to be quite arduous given the differing gradients in the locality. There appears to be limited provision for people with mobility issues – it is unclear whether the proposed steps also provide facility for people with mobility problems. Full details of proposed pedestrian / cycle routes will be required as part of any reserved matters application.

The proposed emergency access appears to access onto a private road /path which I am uncertain would be able to cater for emergency vehicles or indeed vehicles from the residential estate. Would an emergency access on to Brymbo Road be a more sensible option? Any permission should include a condition requiring the provision of an adequate emergency access into the site.

Although the site is potentially within walking distance of the bus stops on Phoenix Drive, the actual route is along footways of relatively steep gradients or the proposed steps. It would be preferable for any proposed estate road design to provide a circular route to enable a bus service to link into the site. Some consideration should be given to funding an extension to the bus service to include the proposed western residential area.

Active Travel provisions must be adequately considered. Any permission must therefore include a condition requiring a full study of potential active travel improvements.

Studies of the local infrastructure reveal no capacity issues at the proposed new access location on Brymbo Road, or the roundabout at Phoenix Drive / Heritage Way.

The assessment of Heritage Way/ A525 / A483 does however show increasingly significant issues as a result of the proposed development. Although the proposed introduction of traffic lights at the Heritage Way/A525 junction appear to improve traffic flows out of Heritage Way it is considered that this will detrimentally impact on the A525 as the problems at Heritage Way are intrinsically linked to the capacity issues at A525 and A483.

Junction 4 of the A483 is already well over capacity at peak times. The Welsh Government are currently undertaking a WelTAG Stage 2 study into improving The A483 from junctions 3 to 6. Until such time that the junction is upgraded it is not considered appropriate to be permitting the addition of significant additional traffic into an area already over capacity.

The developer has proposed that they make a contribution towards any improvement scheme at Junction 4. Until such a scheme has been drawn up and approved then it is impossible to predict what level of contribution is required.

Whilst I have no problem with the principal of the masterplan development any permission should include a pre commencement condition which prevents development of the whole site until the issues at junction 4 have been resolved to the satisfaction of Wrexham Council Chief Environment officer.

It may however be possible to support some initial phased development of the site which included the school, shops, leisure and some residential; subject to traffic generation levels being no more arduous than those previously consented at the site

Peter De Aherne

ap Service Manager Environment

