

Development Management
Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham, LL11 1AY

Date: 11 January 2017
Ref: 32187/Rhostyllen/Rhian Stratton

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Dear Sir / Madam

Full Planning Application for: Erection of Type C Storage Unit and external improvements
At: 50 Wrexham Road, Rhostyllen, LL14 4DH
Applicant name: The Co-operative Group
Planning Application ref: P/2016/0876

This statement has been prepared to provide clarification on the matters raised during the planning committee on 3rd January 2017. It should be read in conjunction with all of the material submitted as part of this application, including the Planning Statement, Transport Statement and Parking Survey results as well as the letters of support from customers and the local community.

This response covers the following matters:

1. **Parking provision**
2. **Parking surveys (evidence)**
3. **Highways**
4. **Previous planning application (2007) and differences with the new application (2016)**
5. **Estate management**
6. **Appearance**
7. **General upkeep**
8. **Summary and conclusion**

Each matter is now addressed in turn.

1. **Parking provision**

The site currently provides 9 parking spaces inclusive of 2 disabled spaces. 7 of the spaces are located off Wrexham Road. The 2 disabled spaces are located off Eldon Grove, next to the vehicle egress point. The Co-op has chosen to provide parking on this site for the benefit of its customers, but is under no legal or planning obligation to provide or retain any spaces. The spaces could therefore be removed at any time, and this is a material consideration relevant to the determination of the impact.

To facilitate the provision of a storage space and reduce the conflict between customers and staff moving goods across the site, it is proposed to remove the 2 spaces off Eldon Grove. The proposals would relocate a disabled parking space to the western edge, to a safer, more convenient location.

Moving the trolley cages away from the front of the store would free up one of the parking spaces (proposed to be retained), which is currently often constrained/unavailable. Moving vehicular movement away from Eldon Grove will also improve highways safety.

The Council's parking standards are a guide and not policy and in any case are expressed as a maximum standard. The maximum parking standards are more appropriately applied to large superstores, not local convenience stores. Planning policy requires local authorities to minimise parking provision in local, accessible and sustainable locations, such as the one at Rhostyllen.

As stated earlier, **there is no obligation to provide any parking on this site and that which is provided is a benefit offered by the applicant.**

The 2 spaces off Eldon Grove can be removed irrespective of this application.

2. Parking surveys (evidence)

Two parking surveys have been undertaken in 2016 for this store. The first was carried out by the applicant in November 2016 which confirms that for the majority of the day the car park is not at capacity.

The results of the survey are attached to this statement (results showing each 15 minute survey period between 6am and 10pm). The results conclude that only during one 15 minute period is the existing parking provision at full capacity between 16:45 and 17:00. For the majority of the day the proposed parking provision of 7 spaces would therefore be entirely adequate.

Another parking survey of the Co-op store was undertaken by a separate, independent surveyor, in conjunction with an application by New River Retail for a site in Minera in June 2016. The Co-op Rhostyllen was surveyed as an example of a typical parking requirement for a store of this size off a main road. **The conclusions of this independent survey are consistent with the findings of the applicant's survey.**

It should also be noted that as the store is located in a convenient, accessible location, many of the Co-op's customers walk to the store. **Local people who have used the store and who often drive past will acknowledge that the store tends to be busiest at the peak hour of 5pm, and not at other times, which the evidence supports.** For this short period, if a parking space is not available people will choose to continue their journey and not stop. This is commonly accepted as a sensible, self-regulating shopper trend.

3. Highways

In recent years investment has been made by the authority to improve highways management in this area. Parking restrictions have been put in place and improvements are evident. As noted by the planning committee on 3rd January, these improvements have been made since a previous (yet different) planning application was refused in 2007.

Accident data confirms that there have been no serious incidents at this location in recent years. 3 accidents are recorded in the last 5 years, all of them classified as 'slight'.

A planning application by the National Trust for a large residential development on the opposite side of Wrexham Road has been approved. This could deliver further highways improvements along Wrexham Road. It could also provide a new roundabout at the junction of Wrexham Road / Eldon Grove, where the Co-op is

located. **There may be scope for the highways authority and the Co-op to agree on an improved highways layout in the future.** However, as there is no imminent start to this development it could be many years from being implemented. In the interim the Co-op must seek to secure its store's immediate future and the local jobs it provides.

4. Previous planning application (2007) and differences with the new application (2016)

A planning application was submitted in 2007 for an extension to the store, which would increase its net sales area and trading capacity. The nature of the 2007 application is fundamentally different to that which is now being proposed. The increase in sales floorspace meant that an increase in parking and vehicle trip generation was at that time considered.

This is not the case with this new application, which will not increase net sales area or vehicle trip generation. **The two applications cannot be compared in this regard.** As noted earlier, since 2007 (nearly 10 years ago) there have also been considerable investment and improvements to highways management in the area.

The 2016 application also includes a provision for 3 new cycle stands, which will further promote sustainable travel for customers and staff.

5. Estate management

The matter of estate management was raised at the 3rd January planning committee. The Co-op can confirm the following:

- The Co-op is a tenant of the property and has a lease agreement with the landowner for the shop (which is only part of the building).
- The Co-op first took up occupation of the building in 2000 and their demise has not changed or been reduced in the intervening period.
- The rear of the building and adjoining areas are outside of the Co-op demise, and are therefore controlled by the landlord. Any changes to those areas have been made by the landlord or agreed by the LPA and are not associated with or known by the Co-op.

This confirms that since their records show in 2000, the Co-op has not changed or reduced the size of their area of operation. The only changes made have been within the parameters of their existing store. These changes have been made to provide storage and facilities to cater for the growing needs of Co-op customers. The offer that the Co-op provides has increased to suit the shopping habits of local residents (which is consistent with changing shopper trends across the country over recent years and is evidenced in the 2015 Co-operative Group Convenience Report *'Back to the Future: 50 Years of Convenience Retailing'*).

This has resulted in the store moving from a CTN range (Confectionary, Tobacco, News), essentially the traditional corner shop, to a full local convenience offer which provides fresh produce.

The implications are that the store requires additional back up storage facility (such as fridges / ambient storage) and an on-site bakery facility to support the fresh food range. The store also operates the local Post Office and its associated storage requirements.

6. Appearance

Further to discussion with Cllr Pritchard on Monday 9th January and a request to change the materials proposed, the Co-op has confirmed in writing with the LPA that **the building will be constructed using a facing brick to match those of the existing retail building (i.e. red brick) and this can be attached as a condition**. This represents a further improvement to the proposed development.

7. General upkeep

The provision of the storage unit off Eldon Grove will enable the Co-op to better manage and improve the general upkeep and appearance of the external area. The trolley cages and empty goods boxes which are currently kept in front of the store (and can at times restrict the access to around 1 or 2 of the parking spaces) will be relocated to the new, secure storage area, which represents a significant improvement to the existing situation.

8. Summary and conclusion

The material submitted with this application has addressed all relevant policy requirements. The LPA has considered the application and recommended it for approval, as they have rightly concluded that the benefits of the proposal and the investment in and retention of this store on balance outweigh the highways concerns, which the submitted evidence has shown to be minimal.

Further to the planning committee meeting on 3rd January 2016 this response provides clarification on the matters raised and discussed by the committee. Each matter has been addressed in turn and further discussion has been held with the local ward member which has resulted in additional improvements to the scheme being agreed.

The purpose of this application is to enable the Co-op to better provide their existing offer and continue to provide fresh food produce. The improvements are necessary to the operational management of the store, to ensuring the Co-op are compliant with relevant updates to legislation, and they will also improve the visual amenity of the site.

Without the improvements proposed, the Co-op will be unable to sustain the current offer, forcing the store to reduce its offer and lose the fresh food produce currently available, making it less competitive and ultimately unviable, which puts the store and local jobs at risk. The store is also due an internal refit, but this investment cannot be made without the external improvements first being implemented.

The Co-operative Group is an ethical business and its members are at the heart of the organisation. Its customer and staff are highly valued. The improvements are required to create a safer environment for staff and customers – the proposals will enable this to happen.

The Co-op store is a meeting place for a close-knit local community. Numerous supporting representations have been submitted to the LPA, acknowledging the issues that need to be addressed and supporting the plans for improvement.

For the reasons above we kindly request that members of the planning committee acknowledge the significant benefits that the proposals will deliver and the amendments made since the last Committee meeting and support this application.

Rhostyllen Parking Survey

Wednesday 16th November 2016

Produced by Road Data Services Ltd

Time	Normal Spaces Occupied	Disabled Area	Disabled Bay	Vehicles parking off site and visiting
	Number of vehicles parked in each zone			
6:00	0	0	0	0
6:15	1	0	0	0
6:30	2	0	0	0
6:45	1	1	0	0
7:00	3	1	0	0
7:15	3	1	0	0
7:30	2	0	0	0
7:45	1	0	0	0
8:00	1	1	0	1
8:15	3	0	0	0
8:30	2	0	0	0
8:45	3	0	0	0
9:00	6	0	0	0
9:15	3	1	0	0
9:30	4	0	0	1
9:45	2	1	0	0
10:00	4	0	1	1
10:15	3	0	0	0
10:30	1	0	1	0
10:45	4	0	0	0
11:00	1	0	0	0
11:15	2	0	0	1
11:30	1	0	0	0
11:45	3	1	0	0
12:00	4	0	1	1
12:15	5	0	0	0
12:30	4	0	1	0
12:45	3	0	0	0
13:00	2	0	0	0
13:15	3	0	0	0
13:30	2	0	0	0
13:45	2	0	0	0
14:00	1	0	0	0
14:15	2	0	0	0
14:30	1	0	1	1
14:45	3	1	1	0
15:00	4	0	0	0
15:15	3	1	1	0
15:30	3	1	0	0
15:45	3	0	1	0
16:00	3	1	0	0
16:15	3	1	0	0
16:30	5	1	1	0
16:45	7	2	0	0
17:00	5	0	0	1
17:15	4	2	1	0
17:30	5	1	0	0
17:45	5	0	0	0
18:00	4	0	0	0
18:15	3	1	0	0
18:30	3	1	1	0
18:45	3	0	1	0
19:00	2	0	0	1
19:15	1	0	0	0
19:30	4	0	1	0
19:45	3	1	0	0
20:00	1	0	0	0
20:15	3	0	0	1
20:30	2	0	0	0
20:45	2	0	0	0
21:00	3	0	0	0
21:15	1	0	0	1
21:30	1	1	0	0
21:45	2	0	0	0
22:00	1	1	0	0

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