

CO-OP, RHOSTYLLEN (1689)

TRANSPORT ISSUES NOTE – NOVEMBER 2016

Introduction

This Transport Statement will consider the impact of a proposed extension to the storage area at an existing Co-op convenience store at 50 Wrexham Road in Rhostyllen. The proposals will not increase the sales area at the convenience store and as such is unlikely to increase the custom at the store. The planning application reference is P/2016/0876.

At present, the convenience store has 9 marked car parking spaces. The increase in the building size will reduce this allocation to 7 car parking spaces.

Background

The proposal for a new storage unit is fundamentally to improve the Co-op's operational management and to be environmental health compliant. As part of the proposed improvements the applicant is also seeking to improve the management of car parking and the store's internal and external operations.

The proposal is for a storage unit and does not comprise a net increase in floorspace and will not create additional car parking need. The rationalisation of car parking and new external storage space will include the loss of two parking spaces, the relocation of one disabled space and an improved, secure storage area.

The site currently provides 9 parking spaces (including 2 disabled spaces) to the south and east of the store. The main car park is accessed off Wrexham Road. The 2 disabled spaces are located to the east and accessed off Eldon Grove in a constrained location and is next to an ATM.

Deliveries are brought into store via the ramp and customer entrance. Goods are stored in-store, which constrains the safe movement of customers around aisles. Once the goods are unloaded the trolley cages are moved and stored in front of the store (to the west) adjacent to existing parking spaces. The current external storage area and parking layout creates conflict between two busy areas of activity to the east and west.

The applicant is therefore seeking to improve the potential conflict between staff and customers on foot and in vehicles between these locations. The removal of the 2 parking spaces would mean that customer parking is restricted to the more appropriate southern and western part of the site, accessed from Wrexham Road, and therefore creating better separation between the areas of activity. A disabled parking space will be relocated to the western edge of the site. This will reduce vehicle access off Eldon Grove. An overall improvement will therefore be achieved in highway safety terms.

The store is located in a sustainable location in the village of Rhostyllen, in a primarily residential area. Local and national planning policy encourages the use of sustainable transport modes. There are regular bus services operating along Wrexham Road and Henblas Road. The nearest bus stops are located opposite the Black Lion Inn which are around a minute's walk from the Co-op store.

Co-operative Food stores are small local convenience stores which cater for the local community and their day to day needs. Customers typically make short trips to the store of less than 10 minutes and the customer base is largely those within walking distance (84% of customers are within 2km, of which 59% are within 1km of the store). To this end, many Co-op stores have no car parking. For stores where car parking is provided and can cater for passing-trade, visits by vehicle are in reality self-regulating. That is to say, that customers travelling by car choose not to visit a store when they know it's likely to be busy and on approach do not stop if the car park is visibly full.

There are parking and access management measures in place at the store and it is our understanding that there is no evidence to demonstrate that there are any highway safety issues at this location, as the following note will support.

Highways Officer Response

The professional highways officer at Wrexham Council has objected to the proposals. The response is as follows:

'The site is located at the junction of Wrexham Road and Eldon Grove. The existing shop appears to be approximately 300 square metres although this is not specified on the planning application. For a shop of this with an A1 class use. WCBC LPGN 16 recommends 20 car parking spaces are provided, the existing shop has just 9.

The proposed erection of a storage unit reduces parking provision by a further 2, a 22% reduction in an area where there are known parking problems.

I therefore recommend that the application is refused for the following reason:

The proposal would result in the loss of vehicle parking facilities and would therefore encourage parking on the highway, with the consequent risk of additional anger to all road users of the road and interference with the free flow of traffic.'

Issue of Car Parking

In order to respond to the highways officer's response, the applicant has commissioned a formal car parking survey at the store and the surrounding area to establish the actual parking demand at the store.

This took place on a typical weekday on Wednesday 16th November 2016. The survey recorded the number of spaces occupied at the store during its trading day from 6am to 10pm. The survey also noted whether anyone parked off site on Wrexham Road, Henblas Drive or Eldon Grove and visited the store. There are waiting restrictions around the junction of Wrexham Road and Eldon Grove although drivers can park a little further along Eldon Grove and on Henblas Drive to the west. As such, whilst the area of around 50 metres of the Co-op cannot be parked on beyond that point unrestricted car parking is available.

The survey results are shown in the Appendix to this note for each 15-minute period between 6am and 10pm. This shows the number of occupied standard bays, the disabled bays and on the surrounding roads. A summary showing the highest demand in each two hourly period is shown in Table 1 below:

Time	Spaces Occupied	Demand Off Site
6am to 8am	4	0
8am to 10am	5	1
10am to Noon	5	1
Noon to 2pm	5	1
2pm to 4pm	4	1
4pm to 6pm	9	0
6pm to 8pm	4	1
8pm to 10pm	3	1

Table 1 – Summary of Car Parking Demand at The Site

As can be seen, only one particular period shows a car parking demand exceeding the reduced car parking allocation of 7 car parking spaces. This occurs during the 4pm to 6pm period. Further consideration of the detailed survey reveals that the car parking demand at the Co-op only exceeds the 7 space allocation in one 15 minute period that being between 16.45pm and 5pm where the 7 standard bays are occupied as well as the 2 disabled spaces.

As such, during the vast majority of a typical trading day the number of spaces proposed once the extension has been completed will be more than sufficient to accommodate the demand from the existing customer base at the Co-op.

The customers who shop in the store will be fully aware that the car parking allocation has been reduced from 9 to 7 spaces and know that if they drive to the store at busy times then they may struggle to find a space during the late afternoon period. However, this store caters for a very local catchment with, one imagines, most of the custom being from a walk-in catchment surrounding the site. The store is therefore in a sustainable location which is borne out by the enclosed survey which confirms that the for majority of the day the car park is barely half full.

The car parking demand in our view would be self-regulating and would not generate any material off site parking demand.

Croft have been commissioned on over 30 recent Co-op projects, some of which have been extensions and have involved a consideration of car parking demand. In our experience the provision of 7 car parking spaces at these types of store is fairly commonplace where the stores are located in suburban residential areas.

Conclusion

In summary, the car parking allocation of 7 parking spaces at the existing Co-op site in Rhostyllen will be sufficient to cater for the parking demand at the site. An overall improvement will also be achieved in highway safety terms through the rationalisation of the external storage and car parking area. As such, there should be no highways objection to the planning application.

Appendix (Car Parking Survey)