

MEMORANDUM

From: Chief Officer, Environment & Technical **To:** Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory
FAO: Matthew Phillips

Our Ref: ET/DC/MM/P/2021/0680 **Your Ref:** P/2021/0680

Date: 16th September 2021

Land off Westminster Drive, Chester Road, Wrexham LL12 7AU
Outline application for primary school (appearance, landscaping and scale reserved).

Further to your email / consultation dated 14/07/2021 in respect of the above, I comment as follows:-

The application is for a new 315 pupil primary school, with an additional 45 pre-school age children in nursery, attending part time. The school is to replace the existing St Mary's RC school. Access points are proposed on Rhosnesni Lane and on Westminster Drive.

Trip Generation

The expected number of pupil trips by each mode has been estimated based on the results of a survey at the existing St Mary's RC school. It is agreed that because of under reporting of coach travel this has produced a robust estimate of the number travelling by private car. 34% were found to travel to school by sustainable modes and 66% by private car. The number of car trips expected during the school peak hours has been adjusted to account for siblings travelling together and for before and after school clubs. The peak car drop-offs is forecast to be 112 cars.

The number of coaches, minibuses and private hire vehicles are assumed to remain as at the existing school.

The school has 40 staff (33 full time) but it is agreed that they will generally travel outside of the school peak hour.

It is agreed that with a higher residential density the potential for walking to school may increase. In the short term, however, the location change may mean that pupils who previously walked will travel by car, crossing through the town centre.

Highway assessment

Junction surveys were undertaken in March 2021, from 08:00 - 09:00 and 2:30 - 4:00 at:

- A5152 Chester Rd/Rhosnesni Lane/Prices Lane/Cilcen Grove roundabout
- A5152 Chester Road, Westminster Dr & Foster Road junction

The traffic flows have been doubled to account for the reduction in traffic flows caused by Covid19 restrictions. This is based on AADT data from a DfT count site 500m from the surveyed roundabout, assuming that 'a reasonable assumption for peak hour traffic flows is around one tenth of the annual average daily traffic flows'. This is agreed to be a robust approach.

For the traffic assessment the estimate of car trips to drop off pupils has been reduced from 112 to 100 to account for mini-bus and private hire vehicles. It is assumed that all staff drive to school within the peak hour. For assessment purposes it is assumed that all traffic would use the busier access. Rhosnesni Lane access junction.

A robust assessment has been made for the Rhosnesni Lane access junction, showing that the junction will operate within capacity under a range of trip distribution scenarios.

Site Layout

Separate parking areas are proposed on the school site for coaches, staff, and parent pick-up/drop-off. Dedicated spaces are provided in the staff car park for minibus and private hire vehicle pick-up/drop off. There is a separate entrance and exit for coaches to avoid the need for reversing. Swept path analysis provided shows 15m bus can drive through the site, although it does overrun the painted traffic islands and uses the full width of the road to turn in and out of the site. This is a concern as this would be a daily multiple-occurrence and it should be redesigned before the application is determined.

The parent car park also has two access points, which could be used as a one-way system.

Wrexham County Borough Council Parking Standards (LPG16)

For schools, the WCBC parking standards set a maximum of 2 car spaces plus 1 car space per 25m² gross floor space. The school building is proposed to be 1450sqm, which would allow a maximum of 60 car parking spaces. A minimum of 10% of spaces must be provided to mobility standard. The cycle parking standard is 1 cycle space per 250m² gross floor space which equates to 6 spaces for this proposal.

The proposed car parking provision at the school is in excess of the maximum, although it has been calculated to address the needs of the school. If the excess parking is removed, an increase in on-street parking would be expected. The Transport Statement (TS) suggests that there is adequate availability of on-street parking in the vicinity of the school.

Car Park Management Plan

Coach Parking

The coach drop off and pick up area is separate from other vehicles. The TS states that a management regime for this is being discussed with the coach operators and that the Road Safety Officer has confirmed the proposal is acceptable.

Staff Car Park

The staff car park provides 37 standard spaces plus three mobility spaces (40 spaces in total). This has been based on one space per full-time member of staff, 1 space per 3 members of part-time staff, plus 2 additional spaces to accommodate future need. Electric vehicle charging is proposed in the three mobility spaces, which would then become shared use. LPG16 requires that two of the spaces must remain for the exclusive use of disabled persons. It is therefore suggested that some charging should be provided in standard spaces.

Also within the staff car park are three dedicated mini bus spaces and three mobility spaces for use by private hire vehicles transporting pupils. These are in addition to the staff parking and are agreed to meet the needs of the school.

Parent Car Park

The pupil drop off/pick up car park has 78 spaces. These are oversized to assist parents. Peak demand has been estimated to be 112, reducing to 100 with minibuses and private hire vehicles. The TS suggests that this may supply most of the parking required, especially on days when after school activities run. It also accepts that there will be some demand for on-street parking, as parents preference. This will be accommodated on Westminster Drive.

Servicing

Service vehicles will use the car park during day, the two access points mean there is no requirement for reversing.

School Trips

Coaches may use the coach parking or parent car park. There would be no need for coaches to reverse.

Westminster Drive

In order to facilitate on-street drop off/pick up by parents, waiting time restrictions are proposed on Westminster Drive. A parking survey has shown that there is adequate on-street parking availability in the vicinity of the school. It is agreed that the restrictions will allow for short term parking close to the school entrance without creating problems by displacing other parked vehicles.

Proposed Highway Infrastructure Improvements

A speed limit reduction to 20mph with supporting traffic calming measures are proposed along Rhosnesni Lane and Westminster Drive. This covers appropriate sections of road.

Both access points are to have school 'Keep Clear' markings along the site frontages. The proposed new and widened footways are appropriate to provide safe walking routes to school. Raised pedestrian crossings are provided outside the school across Rhosnesni Lane and Westminster Drive and a dropped kerb crossing of Chester Road south of Westminster Drive.

Travel Plan

A school travel plan has been submitted with the application, covering the whole school. Targets have been set for an initial three year period from opening, and are to be reviewed annually. Appropriate short and longer term targets of 5% and 10% increase in use of sustainable modes have been set. Appropriate measures have been identified for implementation through the travel plan to encourage uptake of sustainable travel options.

In addition, a number of infrastructure measures have been proposed to be implemented during construction to improve the environment for active travel.

Conclusion

As the new school building is located further from the town centre and within a more residential area there is likely to be a positive impact on the town centre traffic. In the initial few years if pupils are to transfer from one school to the other, there may be an increased in pupils being driven from one side of the town centre to the other to school.

It is acknowledged that it will take time for the traffic patterns to settle down, but on balance the evidence provided is sufficient to support the conclusion that in the longer term the re-location of the school to the new site can be supported in terms of the highway mitigation proposed and the travel plan proposals supporting this application. It is noted that the over provision of on-site parking would remove some of the parent/resident conflicts on the main carriageway.

The assessment has shown that the proposed access junction can accommodate the expected car traffic, however no assessment has been made of other nearby junctions.

The site layout provides separate parking for staff, parents and coaches and avoids the need for coaches to reverse. Parking provision is above the maximum stated in the WCBC parking guidelines. If this is reduced, there appears to be adequate on-street parking available.

An appropriate package of highway improvements has been proposed to provide suitable pedestrian routes to the school.

An appropriate framework school travel plan and Car Park Management Plan has been provided.

Further design details will be needed for the coach access/egress as it is not appropriate for there to be multiple daily occurrences of these vehicles straddling both sides of the road and overrunning traffic island, even if they are painted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. P. W.", is positioned above the title.

Chief Officer, Environment & Technical