

**Redditch Borough Council
Planning Committee**

**Committee Updates
5th December 2024**

23/01388/FUL 131 - 135 Birchfield Road, Redditch

Public Consultation:

A further 2 letters of objection have been received since publication of the committee report, raising the following concerns:

- There are already convenience stores in the vicinity
- Site would be better as flats or a car park for existing residents
- An additional store will attract more people from, outside the area making Feckenham Road a 'rat run'
- increased traffic flow & impacts on pedestrian safety on Feckenham & Birchfield Roads particularly morning 8am to 9am, & afternoons 3pm to 4pm during school term time. There are 2 schools on Feckenham Road - Vaynor 438 pupils aged 4-9 years & 68 staff; - Walkwood 664 pupils aged 9-13 years & 71 staff making their way to & from school daily. Delivery vehicles to & from proposed site, access & egress to parking, volume of traffic & impact on traffic flow at this restricted junction will I fear have significant & detrimental impact on the safety of the public & in particular children & families.

Additionally, a report on traffic use of the Birchfield Road/Feckenham Rad junction by Headless Cross Residents Group has been submitted by Cllr Woodall. The report identifies that the traffic survey information submitted by the applicant was carried out during the month of August, outside of school termtime. The group carried out its own survey between 08:00-09:30 and 14:00-15:45 on 3rd December and has submitted the results.

Headless Cross Residents Group report states that the traffic turning onto Feckenham Road from Birchfield Rd peaks during school drop off time then falls away after 08:30; traffic moving away from the school peaks after 8:45 AM. During a 90 minute period over 500 cars passed through the junction. The report states that data shows a peak in activity at 08:30. A total of 481 vehicles moved through the junction between 14:00-15:45.

The reports states that vehicles parked at the junction between 08:00-09:30 varied between 5 and 7 (mostly 7 vehicles). Although not measured the report estimates that vehicles were at or above the speed limit. The reports states that this is a busy junction congested with traffic and parked cars. The Headless Cross Residents Group strongly believes the convenience store will lead to traffic jams, restricted access to residential properties and an increased threat of accidents.

The Group recommends that the application be refused risk of congestion, accident and disruption and due to an increase in vehicle emissions.

If the application is approved, the group requests the following mitigation measures: traffic calming (pelican crossings); further traffic calming on Birchfield Road to mitigate the speed of traffic accessing the junction; introduction of permit holders parking for Birchfield Road, Plymouth Road, Rectory Road, Charles Street, Milepit Lane plus Chapel Street and the Meedway,

Updated Comments - Tree Officer:

To confirm the amendments to the planting on the landscaping scheme are acceptable and address the issues raised.

The landscape scheme will provide a good level of structure and seasonal interest to the site and is a major improvement in terms of what landscaping currently exists on the site.

Updated Comments – Highways Officer:

I have assessed the information submitted, based on the analysis of the information submitted by the applicant and the ward councillor the Highway Authority are still of the opinion that there would not be an unacceptable / severe impact and therefore there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained.

As previously confirmed:

- Deliveries to the store will not be carried during the AM & PM peaks or during the beginning and end of school hrs. (reference technical note Technical Note 1 - Response to WCC Observations by Bancroft Consulting July 2024)
- The traffic to be generated by the proposed development will not have a severe impact on the highway, since as highlighted by the calculation **70% of the trips will be pass-by trips which are already located on the highway network.**
- A **Road Safety Audit** has been carried by the applicant and verified by WCC which raised **no highway concerns** with the location of the proposed development, vehicular access or the T-junction.
- With regards to vehicles being displaced onto the road, the proposed development has provided car parking in accordance with WCC car parking standards. **Parking restrictions are also in force along Birchfield Rd and Feckenham Rd** which will deter parking on street. Should parking occur on the double yellow lines or on the pavement then this would be a police matter.
- There is a fall-back position for the applicant which enables the site to be converted into a convenience store without any changes.

The recommendations highlighted below by the Headless Cross Residents Group within the traffic report - includes highway comments:

Highway Officer response in **bold** to Headless Cross Residents Group Recommendations

The Headless Cross Residents Group make the following recommendations

1. That the application for a planned convenience store on the Masala Club site be rejected on the grounds that there is a clear risk of congestion, accident and disruption - **these concerns were covered in the highway comments..**
2. We also recommend rejection on the grounds that the environment will be subject to increased vehicle emissions by placing a convenience store on this junction
3. However if the committee is minded still to approve the application we believe the following mitigations are essential to minimise the risk and inconvenience to residents
 - a. The introduction of traffic calming measures such as Pelican Crossings to mitigate the impact of increased traffic on the safety of pedestrians – **not highlighted by the**

road safety audit.

b. The introduction of further traffic calming measures on Birchfield road to mitigate the speed of traffic accessing the junction - **not highlighted by the road safety audit.**

c. The introduction of a permit holders parking scheme for Birchfield Rd, Plymouth Road, Rectory Rd, Charles street and Milepit Lane – **no displacement of vehicles highlighted, therefore not considered.**

d. We would also ask the committee to consider a similar scheme extending to Chapel Street and the Meedway - **no displacement of vehicles highlighted, therefore not considered.**

Unilateral Undertaking

The proposed unilateral undertaking is currently being reviewed by WCC.

Assessment

The matters raised in the further public consultation comments received have been largely addressed in the main report and are summarised below:

- the site currently benefits from a Class E use and as such can be used as a convenience store without the need for any planning permission.
- An alternative use as flats or a car park is not part of the application submitted for determination and therefore is not a matter for consideration in the determination of the planning application.
- Traffic and highway related matters have been fully assessed in the comments submitted by the Highway Authority. The road safety audit submitted with the application and verified by the Highway Authority has not identified the need for any traffic calming measures as requested by the Headless Cross Residents Group. Any request for residents parking permits is not a planning matter to be considered as part of the determination of this planning application. Instead it would be a matter to be addressed by Worcestershire County Council separate from this planning application. The Highway Authority has confirmed that no sever highway impact would result from the development and there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained. The Technical Note 1 - Response to WCC Observations by Bancroft Consulting July 2024 identifies that operators of these smaller foodstores will generally arrange for deliveries and collections to made well outside of peak periods when vehicle and pedestrian movement is at a minimum. A condition is proposed to control HGV deliveries with regard to the Technical Note. The list of proposed conditions has been updated to reflect this. The Highway matters are considered acceptable subject to conditions and a s106 Legal Obligation.

Following receipt of comments from the Tree Officer, the landscaping scheme is considered acceptable and can be secured by planning condition.

The formal submission of the Unilateral Undertaking is awaited and as a result delegated authority is sought as set out in the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be **DELEGATED** to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services to GRANT planning permission subject to:

a) The satisfactory completion of a S106 planning obligation (unilateral undertaking) ensuring a £30,000 financial contribution towards the provision of a signalised toucan crossing located on Birchfield Road in the vicinity of the proposed development:

And

b) And that DELEGATED POWERS be granted to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services to agree the final scope and detailed wording and numbering of conditions and informatives as summarised below:

- Timing
- Materials
- Landscaping details/implementation/maintenance
- Security related measures (cash point / rear access)
- **Control HGV deliveries with regard to the submitted Technical Note 1 - Response to WCC Observations by Bancroft Consulting July 2024**
- Monday to Sunday (including Bank Holidays).
- Acoustic screening
- Travel Plan Statement using Modeshift STARS Business
- Pedestrian visibility splays
- Vehicular access
- Cycle parking
- Provision of access, parking, turning facilities
- Vehicular visibility splays
- Existing access closure
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Demolition & Construction Phase Nuisance Management Plan
- External Lighting
- Surface water drainage
- Bird/bat boxes