

Highways Technical Note

Proposed Aldi Foodstore Relocation, Preston Street, Whitehaven

12th April 2024

Introduction

This Highways Technical Note (HTN) has been prepared by Andrew Moseley Associates (AMA) in response to further comments received from Cumberland Council (CC) (dated 19th January 2024) regarding the proposed relocation of the Aldi Whitehaven foodstore to land located to the east of Preston Street, planning reference 4/23/2314/0F1.

DCC Comments and Applicant's Responses

For ease of reference, this Note provides responses to each outstanding matter in the same order as Cumberland Council Highways Consultation Response, a copy of which is attached in **Appendix A**. All other matters are now considered agreed and accepted.

DCC Comment 1

Any changes to the NCN72 site access arrangements and boundary wall details

I note the proposal for the boundary walls to be 600mm high. This will improve visibility of the store and also visibility for footway users to reduce conflict along the frontage, but does not improve the 'through' visibility on the cycle route along the northern boundary of the store.

AMA Response 1

AMA have reviewed this request, and it is proposed to lower the existing boundary wall along the northern boundary of the site from 2.2m to 1.5m to improve through visibility. It is considered that if the boundary wall was to be lowered below 1.5m, a pedestrian site safety assessment would identify risks associated with pedestrians / cyclists tripping or falling over the wall. Aldi intend to mitigate all risks to pedestrians and cyclists wherever possible, and, therefore, this proposal is considered to provide an appropriate resolution to DCC's request.

DCC Comment 2

Footway access to the NCN72 path

Noted, but if possible, an access off the path to create a more direct route to the store entrance would be an advantage and this is a good opportunity if it can be included.

AMA Response 2

This suggestion would not only result in a significant loss of car parking, but it would also introduce a conflict point between HGVs and users of the NCN Route 72 which the current layout does not pose. The perceived benefit of routing the NCN route into the site is outweighed by the increased highways safety risk it would cause; the current proposed layout has been designed to ensure that there are no highways safety risks associated with HGVs accessing and egressing the store, with servicing taking place to the rear of the store. The benefit of routing the path into the site is also considered negligible when taking into account the small time saving benefit it would give users; it would reduce users journey length by approximately 100m which equates to a time saving benefit of less than 1 minute.

The proposed site layout incorporates a shared pedestrian / cycle path from Preston Street into the store. This is considered to provide a direct route from the existing NCN Route 72 path into the store via the proposed internal crossing points.

Furthermore, it is not considered reasonable to create, what over time would become, a Public Right of Way (PRoW) through a private site. Over time, this would become an established route which may lead to liability risks on Aldi's part, and as discussed above, only a very small time and distance saving benefit would be achieved. On that basis, it is not proposed to incorporate a route through the Aldi site to accommodate pedestrians / cyclists from the NCN Route, and no further consideration of this point is considered necessary based on the factors set out above.

DCC Comment 3

Additional Active Travel Observations and Comments

Firstly, I have been made aware of further information on the LCWIP proposals in the locality. An LTN 1/20 compliant 2-way segregated cycle route linking the harbour to the NCN72 route at the site is being planned using Preston Street as the route to the harbour. This is a 'Priority 1 Route' in the LCWIP and the intention is that this route will provide a high quality sustainable travel option to and from the harbour and town centre to the C2C route and other local and regional destinations. This route will also provide a critical link to provide safe and convenient walking, cycling and wheeling trips to and from the new store connecting the town centre and surrounding areas to the NCN72 and other routes and destinations. A parallel (walking and cycling) signal controlled crossing is proposed just to the north of the store entrance (inline with the entry to the NCN72 path) to facilitate crossing Preston Street.

As mentioned in the Travel Plan, 'cycling has the potential to substitute for short car trips'. The TP also states that the store is 'reasonable cycling distance' from areas of population. However, apart from those cycling in from the south, the cycle route northwards would be on-road at present. This current provision is not conducive to attract cycle journeys to the store. To meet sustainable travel targets and attract customers to walk and cycle from the town centre and offices at Albion Square for example, it is essential that the signal controlled crossing is provided so the proposed safe off-carriageway route is accessible. Therefore, the LHA consider it a relevant and necessary improvement as part of this application and we request that the applicant make a financial contribution towards of £60k (the estimated scheme cost to deliver a parallel crossing) to be paid prior to trading.

Secondly, I have been reminded of the existing sub-standard nature of the NCN72 cycleway adjoining the red-line boundary to the north of the site. This section running beside the site has been squeezed in to the existing site constraints and is only 2.4m wide, where best practice says it should be 3m wide. In addition the boundary wall is higher than ideal, restricting through and intervisibility along this section with its two sharp corners. The opportunity exists now to widen this path into the site slightly and also improve user experience by lowering / replacing the boundary wall (to 600mm). This will create a higher quality and more pleasant user experience. As well as benefiting the local and long distance cyclists, this route will be used by locals using the store so will enhance their overall experience as well and possibly encourage its use as a means of accessing the store by sustainable means.

We feel that the parallel cycle / pedestrian crossing and improving the existing cycleway adjacent to the site are measures that should be an intrinsic part of the Travel Plan which will help deliver the targets. The LHA welcome further discussion on the matters discussed above.

AMA Response 3

In the interests of promoting and encouraging sustainable travel, Aldi would be happy to contribute the sum of £50,000 towards the provision of a parallel (walking and cycling) signal controlled crossing, to the north of the proposed store entrance, to facilitate crossing Preston Street.

Conclusion

Based on the information contained in this Note, it is considered that the proposed relocation would not result in any detrimental highways impact on capacity or road safety and that there are no traffic or transportation reasons as to why planning permission could not be granted.

Appended Documents

Appendix A – Cumberland Council Highways Consultation Response

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Copeland area Planning Department, Cumberland Council

For the attention of Christopher Harrison

Date: 20 February 2024

Your reference: 4/23/2314/0F1

Dear Christopher Harrison

CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATION

Appn: 4/23/2314/0F1
Site Address: LAND AT PRESTON STREET, PRESTON STREET, WHITEHAVEN
Proposal: ERECTION OF A DISCOUNT FOOD STORE WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, PARKING, HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

Thank you for your consultation on 23 January 2024 regarding the above Planning Application.

Cumberland Council as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) has reviewed the additional information submitted (Highways Technical Note 19 Jan 2024) in response to my previous observations which are summarised below:

Local Highway Authority response:

1. *Additional parking (car and cycle) as considered necessary*
 - I note that the store is essentially an extension to the existing in terms of customer base, and that the evidence does suggest just a marginal increase. Due to the marginal nature of any impact from insufficient parking, and that any over flow parking is likely to take place in adjacent stores and not the highway (it is not likely that customers will park on the highway due to waiting restrictions), the possible shortfall is not considered to have a material impact on the highway or highway conditions.
2. *Additional cycle parking facilities.*
 - The LHA welcomes the revision to the Travel Plan
3. *S278 details*
 - I note the confirmation that a S278 will be entered into with the LHA. Details and extents can be agreed in due course through the S278 process.
4. *Dropped kerb crossing detail and locations on a plan at site access.*
 - The addition of dropped kerb crossing points noted and welcomed.

5. *Details of the reinstatement locations of the footways etc*

- Footway reinstatement proposals acknowledged. Details can be agreed through the S278 process.

6. *Any changes to the NCN72 site access arrangements and boundary wall details*

- I note the proposal for the boundary walls to be 600mm high. This will improve visibility of the store and also visibility for footway users to reduce conflict along the frontage, but does not improve the 'through' visibility on the cycle route along the northern boundary of the store.

7. *Footway access to the NCN72 path.*

- Noted, but if possible, an access off the path to create a more direct route to the store entrance would be an advantage and this is a good opportunity if it can be included.

8. *Response to the S106 financial contribution request for a bus shelter*

- This decision is disappointing for existing and future customers.

Additional Active Travel Observations and Comments

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This route will also provide a critical link to provide safe and convenient walking, cycling and wheeling trips to and from the new store connecting the town centre and surrounding areas to the NCN72 and other routes and destinations. A parallel (walking and cycling) signal controlled crossing is proposed just to the north of the store entrance (inline with the entry to the NCN72 path) to facilitate crossing Preston Street .

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The TP also states that the store is '*reasonable cycling distance*' from areas of population. However, apart from those cycling in from the south, the cycle route northwards would be on-road at present. This current provision is not conducive to attract cycle journeys to the store. To meet sustainable travel targets and attract customers to walk and cycle from the town centre and offices at Albion Square for example, it is essential that the signal controlled crossing is provided so the proposed safe off-carriageway route is accessible.

Therefore, the LHA consider it a relevant and necessary improvement as part of this application and we request that the applicant make a financial contribution towards of £60k (the estimated scheme cost to deliver a parallel crossing) to be paid prior to trading.

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This will create a higher quality and more pleasant user experience. As well as benefiting the local and long distance cyclists, this route will be used by locals using the store so will enhance their overall experience as well and possibly encourage its use as a means of accessing the store by sustainable means.

We feel that the parallel cycle / pedestrian crossing and improving the existing cycleway adjacent to the site are measures that should be an intrinsic part of the Travel Plan which will help deliver the targets. The LHA welcome further discussion on the matters discussed above.

Yours sincerely

Shamus Giles

Lead Officer - Flood & Development Management