

Planners refuse permission for drive through at Pilton Drive

On Wednesday the planning committee was recommended to approve a drive through Costa Coffee which was planned for a site next to the Morrisons filling station on the corner of Ferry Road and Pilton Drive.

But councillors did not accept the recommendation of officers, and refused permission.

Chas Booth, Green councillor for Leith and a member of the planning committee, said: "This proposal for a climate-busting drive-thru in Edinburgh, coming just weeks after the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow when the eyes of the world were on Scotland, was frankly an embarrassment. It would have increased climate emissions, caused local traffic problems and encouraged less sustainable means of travel. I'm very grateful to the majority of my fellow planning committee members who have rejected this application today. I hope the applicant will consider carefully how they can become part of the solution to the climate crisis, rather than exacerbating it, in the future."

Cllr George Gordon local ward councillor said: "As local ward councillor I am pleased the committee agreed with my rejection of this application. As I said during the meeting it is one of the worst junctions in my entire ward and subject to congestion at peak hours. Standing traffic is commonplace and the air quality and environment suffer as a result.

"I hope future applicants consider the council's drive to reduce carbon emissions and not to encourage short trips by car." Cllr Gordon said during the debate that the neighbourhood notifications only reached the management of the care home and thus did not lead to any formal objection which it might otherwise have done.

The Planning Convener commented that the council's Transport Policy is designed to reduce the number of short local journeys by car. He did not see how this application would help accord with that, and pointed out that there is already a café and disabled parking in the Morrison's Store.

Cllr Booth asked for clarity on works being conducted on the junction, but was told that these lie outwith the application site – although it was confirmed they are intended to reduce congestion at the T junction which already has traffic lights.

Local councillor George Gordon said during the debate that the development would cause more congestion at the junction, and approving the application would encourage car use. He said: "I don't think there has been sufficient notification to the local community. I move for objection." His motion was seconded by Cllr Booth who said the application was contrary to the City Mobility Plan and the council's guidance for businesses – meaning that road safety has to be addressed.

Cllr Mowat moved for approval of the application saying that the report did not show why it would be perverse to approve a drive through. She said: "Based on the evidence this is a small structure in a car park where car parking spaces will be

decreased. It does not say that there will be any significant increase in traffic. It would offer shoppers a choice. We would love the cycle links to be improved here but that is outwith the scope of the application. I am afraid I have to move for approval as we do not have sufficient reasons and policies are being stretched. I am not thrilled to do so but we do not have the evidence for refusal.”

Vice-Convener Cllr Child said that the council is trying to throw everything at the application to refuse it and it gave her no pleasure to support it, but any refusal would not be sustained through the appeal process.

Planning Convener, Cllr Gardiner said that he considered on the contrary there is a strong footing to reject the application. He said: “It is not the right way forward and I believe the council has the tools to refuse it.”

The Planning Committee spent more than an hour discussing the application and based on Local Development Plan, the City Mobility Plan, the council’s guidance for businesses and Scottish Planning Policy an amendment was tabled to refuse the application.

Planning permission was refused 7 votes to 3.

The [plans](#) show the proposed single storey café and drive through would be situated within the car park next to the roundabout within the Morrison’s site, and would be accessed by the same road – off Ferry Road by way of Pilton Drive. It might mean the removal of 51 parking spaces, but there would be two disabled spaces formed next to the drive through.

There is already a café in Morrison’s (something not lost on the Planning Convener) and a Starbucks at the Village on the opposite side of Ferry Road, and the nearest building is Ferryfield Nursing Home and also some nearby housing.

The council officers [reported](#) that due to the drive through

facility “there will be some new vehicle journeys”, and estimated these would number around 27 during the Saturday peak. There is no specific cycle parking being introduced at the coffee shop but the Edinburgh Design Guidance ensures that there will have to be some included on the site and councillors recognised that.

The report continued: “Public comments have raised pedestrian and cycle access to the existing supermarket site as being insufficient. However, there is no requirement for a new access to be formed to access the supermarket from the nearby core path/cycle route. Therefore, requiring such an access is not necessary and would be contrary to Planning Circular 4/1998 regarding the use of planning conditions.

“The proposal contributes to Active Travel by proposing a footpath for pedestrian and cycle access to the application site and will be set within a larger site that is already accessible by active travel modes.”

Councillors heard that fewer than 10% of the travel journeys to the coffee shop would be regarded as new journeys specifically to buy a coffee at the proposed store.

The proposal was to site the coffee shop and drive through in Morrison’s car park where minibuses owned by Pilton Equalities Partnership are normally parked – so this will not be a real loss for shoppers in terms of parking. In any case the loss of car parking appeared to be regarded by planners as a bit of a bonus during their presentation.

Some improvement roadworks to the junction are already planned – but these were not set out in detail, although they will take place in the New Year.

While the proposed development is near all forms of transport there would have to be a condition regarding provision of cycle parking on the site – which was not included in the original application.

