

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Land at Merthyr Leisure Village

**Erection of a Drive Thru Coffee Unit
(Class A1 Use) and associated works**

February 2021



Summary

Proposal

Erection of a Drive Thru Coffee Unit (Class A1 Use) and associated works

Location

Land at Merthyr Leisure Village, Merthyr Tydfil

Date

February 2021

Project Reference

S20.223

Client

LEGAL & GENERAL LEISURE FUND TRUSTEE LIMITED
(No 04301197) and LEGAL & GENERAL PROPERTY
PARTNERS (LEISURE) LIMITED (No 04452915)

Product of

Asbri Planning Limited
Suite D
1'st floor
220 High Street
Swansea
SA1 1NW

01792 480535

Prepared by

Geraint Jones | Planner

Approved by

Matthew Gray | Associate

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Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of LEGAL & GENERAL LEISURE FUND TRUSTEE LIMITED (No 04301197) and LEGAL & GENERAL PROPERTY PARTNERS (LEISURE) LIMITED (No 04452915) in respect of the proposed erection of a drive thru coffee unit (Class A1 Use) and associated works at land at Merthyr Leisure Village, Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1.2 Magic Brands Corporation (a Starbucks franchise) has agreed to occupy and operate the unit subject to receipt of a satisfactory planning permission. The application is therefore not speculative.
- 1.3 Both the site owner and the intended occupier are committed to significant capital expenditure in order to provide a modern facility which will complement existing operations within the wider site.
- 1.4 The land subject of the application comprises a car parking area within the existing Leisure Village.
- 1.5 The development will result in the creation of 20 new jobs during a difficult economic period. This comprises a material consideration in the determination of the application.
- 1.6 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide a clear and logical document to assess all material planning considerations associated with the proposed development.
- 1.7 This report addresses the planning policy issues raised by the application, particularly in relation to policy contained within Planning Policy Wales, TAN's 4 & 23 and the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Local Development Plan. It comprises the following:
 - Section 2 - A brief description of the site and surrounding features.
 - Section 3 – A review of pre-application discussions
 - Section 4 – The proposed development.
 - Section 5 - Identifies the relevant national and LDP policies for appraising the proposed development.
 - Section 6 – Economic development considerations.
 - Section 7 – Appraisal of matters relevant to the determination of the application.
 - Section 8 – Conclusion.

Site Context

Site Description

- 2.1 The site relates to an area of land comprising approximately 39no. parking spaces situated within Merthyr Leisure Village. It occupies a position immediately north of the Superbowl building and south of the Leisure Centre. In terms of other uses in the wider site, Merthyr Leisure Village comprises Merthyr Leisure Centre, Vue Cinema, Superbowl, A3 Uses, Travelodge, a skate park, 5 a side football pitches and a Bowls Centre.
- 2.2 The site's position with immediate access to the above uses presents an ideal opportunity for a drive thru unit to serve those visiting Merthyr Leisure Village in order to complement existing facilities and provide a more comprehensive offer to visitors.
- 2.3 The site comprises an isolated island of parking spaces within a significantly larger car park which serves the Leisure Village.

Surroundings

- 2.4 The site lies approximately 600m south of Merthyr Town Centre which features an array of services and facilities including but not limited to: Tesco Superstore, post office and banks.
- 2.5 In regards to public transport, there is a bus stop positioned adjacent to Merthyr Leisure Centre, 130m northwest of the site. A number of services operate from this stop providing users with travel to destinations including: Cardiff, Aberdare and Treharris. Merthyr Railway station lies approximately 620m north of the site. The station is situated along the Merthyr Line which links Hirwaun and Cardiff Central.
- 2.6 Historic Wales' Environment Records identify that the site lies within close proximity to a number of historic assets, including Rhydycar Skew Bridge (CADW Ref: 15676), which is designated as a Grade II Listed Building. The Bridge lies approximately 250m to the south of the Leisure Village. Notwithstanding, it is screened from the application site by existing development, varying topography and trees. As such, development of the site as proposed will not impact upon the setting of the Listed Building.
- 2.7 A review of Natural Resources Wales' Development Advice Map highlights that the site lies within Flood Zone B. As such, it is an area known to have been flooded in the past, evidenced by sedimentary deposits. Notwithstanding, a Zone B designation is used as a precautionary approach to indicate where site levels should be checked

against the extreme flood level. Flooding should therefore not present a constraint in respect of achieving a planning permission.

Natural Resources Wales: Development Advice Map Extract



Planning History

- 2.8 Given the site's position within the wider Merthyr Leisure Village, it is pertinent to consider the planning history of the wider site as a whole. Notable permissions include:

Reference Number	Description	Decision
P/06/0242	Development of new leisure centre, bowls club, hotel, backpackers hotel, cinema, 10 pin bowling complex, pub, restaurant and residential units (maximum of 30 units) (Outline)	Approved 21 st August 2006
P/06/0585	Demolition of existing leisure centre, erection of new sports and leisure centre building with associated site access roads, service facilities, car parking and pedestrian routes, including site infrastructure for further commercial development.	Approved 22 nd December 2006
P/06/0633	Erection of new building comprising ten pin bowling suite, 9 screen cinema and restaurant and associated car parking and site infrastructure.	Approved 19 th January 2007

P/08/0014	Erection of 1no. restaurant (Class A3) with car parking, access and associated works (Reserved Matters)	Approved 16 th April 2008
P/08/0217	Erection of restaurant and associated works	Approved 8 th September 2008
P/08/0269	Erection of public house and associated works (Reserved Matters)	Approved 8 th September 2008
P/08/0338	Erection of café and associated	Approved 27 th October 2008
P/09/0193	Erection of McDonald's Restaurant/drive thru, car parking, access and associated works.	Approved 9 th October 2009
P/09/0242	Erection of public house and associated works (Reserved Matters)	Approved 20 th November 2009
P/10/0329	Erection of a public house/restaurant, car parking and associated works	Approved 10 th February 2011

- 2.9 The above table illustrates that Merthyr Leisure Village has been subject of a number of planning applications comprising varying uses. It is clear that A3 (Food and Drink) uses within the area are acceptable by virtue of planning permissions P/06/0242, P/06/0633, P/08/0014, P/08/0217, P/08/0269, P/08/0338, P/09/0242 and P/10/0329 as per the above table.
- 2.10 Furthermore, the precedent for the acceptability of drive thru operations is established via planning permission P/09/0193 which allowed for a McDonalds restaurant.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.1 The proposed development was subject to pre-application discussions with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in March 2020 (Ref: PA/20/0029). The pre-application submission comprised an indicative layout plan, supporting statement and illustrations of typical Starbucks drive thru designs. A summary of the Council's response is provided below:

Principle of Development

- 3.2 *The development would be located within the settlement boundary and Primary Growth area where the majority of new development is supported by Policy SW4 (Settlement Boundaries) of the adopted LDP. The drive thru unit would be positioned in a well-established built environment on previously developed land and would complement the existing food and drink establishments within the vicinity of the site. The development would result in significant job creation. **Therefore, the principle of developing the site is supported** (our emphasis).*

Design Approach

- 3.3 *Having regard to the built context, the construction of a modern building incorporating timber and metal cladding finishes would not likely have an adverse impact on the character of the area.*

Retail Considerations

- 3.4 *Given that the development is situated outside of a town centre, the proposal will be subject to an assessment of need and a strict application of the sequential test. The proposal would only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it would avoid causing harm to the town centre. In addition, Policy EcW6 (Out-of-town Retailing Areas) indicates that proposals in out-of-town locations should demonstrate that there is an additional need for the proposal which cannot be provided in the town centre.*
- 3.5 *It is accepted that it would be difficult to locate a drive thru facility within a town centre due to the limited availability of vacant land and the existing highway restrictions i.e pedestrianised areas.*
- 3.6 *Evidence should be provided that the vast majority of trade will be drawn from those already visiting Merthyr Leisure Village to demonstrate that the development would not draw trade from the town centre.*

Highway Implications

- 3.7 *Given the loss of car parking spaces as a result of the proposed development, any future application should be accompanied by a car parking capacity study to demonstrate the surplus of parking.*

Ecological Impacts and Enhancements

- 3.8 *Given that the site currently comprises hardstanding, there is an opportunity for biodiversity enhancements to be achieved through the use of soft landscaping.*

Historic Environment

- 3.9 *The surrounding buildings, topography and trees/vegetation screen the development from nearby historic assets. Furthermore, the development would be set within an urbanised context where it would be seen in close relation to a number of modern buildings of varying styles that form part of the Leisure Village. As such, the development would likely have a negligible impact on the landscape qualities of the area and would not impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings or the Town Centre Conservation Area, given the separation distances and level of screening.*

Conclusion

- 3.10 The pre application comments can be considered overwhelmingly positive in respect of the principle of the proposed development and design considerations. Highways matters are comprehensively addressed in the Transport Statement which forms part of the application package.

The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of a drive thru coffee unit (Class A1 use) to be occupied by Starbucks.
- 4.2 The principal considerations that will form this chapter will be the character of the development including access, appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and community safety - each of which will be dealt with in turn below.

Access

- 4.3 Given that the site currently comprises vehicular parking spaces, access to the wider site will be unaltered as a result of the proposal to which this Statement relates.
- 4.4 The development will result in the loss of 35no. parking spaces. Notwithstanding, it is evidenced within the Transport Statement that there is an over provision of parking within the Leisure Village.
- 4.5 Due to the over provision of parking spaces serving the Leisure Park, no dedicated parking is proposed as part of the development other than the introduction of two disabled spaces – to be located at front of the unit.

Appearance

- 4.6 As illustrated on the accompanying landscape visuals, the unit will be contemporary in design and reflect the Starbucks EMEA model as introduced into the UK in July 2020.
- 4.7 The contemporary design will compliment the surrounding built context within Merthyr Leisure Village and indeed enhance it. The positive response to the proposed visuals were confirmed by the Council in pre-application discussions.
- 4.8 Following discussions with the Council at the pre application stage, green wall imagery has been introduced to the scheme in order to enable an active and interesting elevation when entering the site. The imagery has been informally discussed with the Council with positive feedback received.

Landscaping

- 4.9 In addition to the green wall imagery, elements of landscaping will be provided around the unit in order to ensure a pleasant environment for those using the facility.

Layout

- 4.10 The proposed layout plan illustrates that the proposed drive thru unit will be positioned north of the existing Superbowl building. The building itself will occupy a central position whilst the drive thru lane will extend along the east of the site, to the rear of the building and out to the west.

Scale

- 4.11 In regard to scale, the unit will be modest in size measuring just 175m² in area. It will be engineered to be largely one storey in height which is reflective of the surrounding built context in Merthyr Leisure Village - notably the McDonald's, Harvester and Subway.

Community Safety

- 4.12 Technical Advice Note 12: Design suggests community safety can be achieved via design solutions that can aid crime prevention. These include providing natural surveillance, improving safety by reducing conflicts in uses, and promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- 4.13 In this regard the proposed development will increase the level of natural surveillance which will be beneficial to the end user and neighbouring occupiers.

Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by national planning guidance, together with the adopted Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted in January 2019.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

- 5.2 The latest edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is Edition 10 which was published in December 2018. PPW, sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is the overarching national planning guidance which informs lower tier guidance such as local planning authority development plans. PPW is supported by 21 Technical Advice Notes or TANs, which deal with specific technical areas of planning.
- 5.3 PPW together with the numerous TANs translate the Welsh Government's commitment to achieving sustainability in Wales. Maintaining that a *"well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places."*
- 5.4 One of the ways this is achieved is through local planning authority development plans. Planning applications must be considered in the light of the strategy and policies within these adopted development plans and planning decisions should be made in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.

Sustainable Land Use

- 5.5 Paragraph 1.2 establishes the primary objective of PPW as ensuring that *"the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015."*
- 5.6 In accordance with the above, PPW outlines that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for an area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 1.21 states:

"Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Development plans must show how places are expected to change to accommodate development needs over the plan period."

- 5.7 Planning Policy Wales aims to promote a prosperous and resource efficient Wales within which choices that are considered resource efficient *"are promoted which have financial benefits both now and over the lifetime of development."*
- 5.8 In achieving the objectives of PPW and accompanying Acts, the use of previously developed land (when suitable for development) is preferred to greenfield land. Paragraph 3.51 states; *"In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome."*
- 5.9 Further to the above, Paragraph 3.52 states; *"Planning authorities should work with landowners to ensure that suitably located previously developed sites are brought forward for development and to secure a coherent approach to their development."*

Economic Development

- 5.10 Paragraph 5.4.1 states that *"the planning system should ensure that the growth of output and employment in Wales as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic uses."*
- 5.11 In accordance with the above, Paragraph 5.4.4 emphasises that planning authorities, wherever possible, *"should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration."*
- 5.12 The importance of evidence-based decision making is stressed in Paragraph 5.4.7; *"development plans and development management decisions should be based on up-to-date local and sub-regional evidence."*
- 5.13 PPW believes that the most effective form of planning for the economy requires *"planning authorities to work strategically and co-operatively directing development and investment to the most efficient and most sustainable locations, regardless of which local authority area they are in."*

Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development (2014)

- 5.14 TAN 23 defines economic development broadly so that it can include any form of development that generates wealth, jobs and income.
- 5.15 Paragraphs 1.2.1-2 highlight that the economic benefits of proposals and market needs should be fully considered when determining planning applications:

1.2.1 - The economic benefits associated with development may be geographically spread out far beyond the area where the development is located. As a consequence it is essential that the planning system recognises, and gives due weight to, the economic benefits associated with new development.

1.2.2 PPW advises that planning for economic land uses should aim to provide the land that the market requires, unless there are good reasons to the contrary. Where markets work well, this will help maximise economic efficiency and growth.

5.16 Further to the above, paragraph 1.2.5 states:

Local planning authorities should recognise market signals and have regard to the need to guide economic development to the most appropriate locations, rather than prevent or discourage such development.

5.17 Paragraph 2.1.5 states that where a planning authority is considering a site allocation or planning application that could cause harm to the environment or social cohesion, it should ask three questions in order to help clarity and balance the economic, social and environmental issues. These are:

Alternatives: If the land is not made available (the site is not allocated, or the application is refused), is it likely that the demand could be met on a site where development would cause less harm, and if so where?

Jobs Accommodated: How many direct jobs will be based at the site?

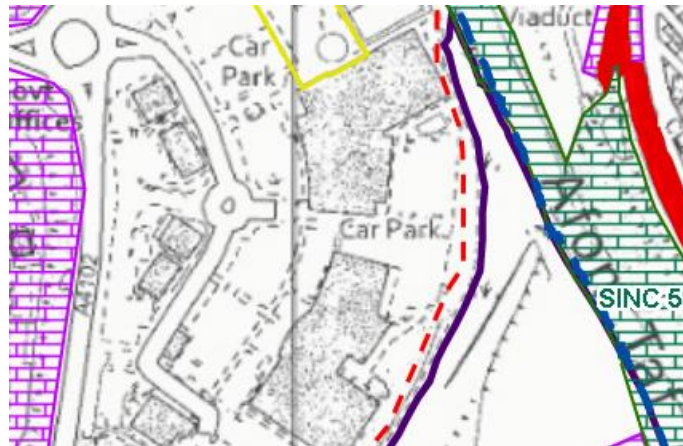
Special Merit: Would the development make any special contribution to policy objectives?

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Local Development Plan

5.18 The statutory development plan for the purposes of Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Local Development Plan adopted by the Council in January 2020.

5.19 A review of the LDP Proposals Map reveals that the site is situated within the defined settlement boundary. As such, is in an area where development is normally permitted. In addition, it is positioned in the West Merthyr Urban Character Area - identified on the Proposals Map and detailed within CADW's "Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character".

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council LDP Proposals Map Extract



5.20 The following Policies contained within the LDP are relevant to the proposed development:

Policy Ref	In relation to
<i>Improving our Social Well-being</i>	
SW4	Settlement Boundaries
SW11	Sustainable Design and Placemaking
SW12	Improving the Transport Network
<i>Improving our Cultural Well-being</i>	
CW1	Historic Environment
<i>Improving our Environmental Well-being</i>	
EnW5	Landscape Protection
<i>Improving our Economic Well-being</i>	
EcW3	Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retail Provision
EcW4	Retail Allocation
EcW6	Out-of-Town Retailing Areas

5.21 In respect of Settlement Boundaries, Policy SW4 states:

“To encourage development within urban areas, support the re-use of previously developed land, and to protect and support the functioning of our rural economy and the countryside, settlement boundaries will be defined as follows: Primary Growth Area:

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Trefechan

Other Growth Areas:

- *Troedyrhiw*
- *Aberfan and Merthyr Vale*
- *Quakers Yard, Edwardsville, Treharris and Trelewis*
- *Bedlinog*

Outside defined settlement boundaries, proposals will be regarded as 'countryside development' and will not be permitted unless the development:-

- *is for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;*
- *is associated with rural enterprises or the winning and working of minerals;*
- *is for the re-use, adaptation, or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings;*
- *supports the expansion of an existing business in the countryside;*
- *is for tourism, recreation or leisure facilities or complementary development where the need for a countryside location is fully justified;*
- *is for the provision of public utilities, infrastructure or waste management facilities that cannot reasonably be located elsewhere;*
- *is required for the reclamation or treatment of unstable or contaminated land;*
- *is for renewable energy in accordance with Policy EcW8;*
- *is for affordable housing in accordance with Policy SW5;*
- *or is low-impact One Planet Development.*

Where 'countryside development' is acceptable in principle, the proposal must also satisfy other relevant plan policies."

5.22 Policy EcW6 is in relation to Out-of-Town Retailing Areas and stipulates:

"Proposals for retail development on new sites or existing retail areas in out-of-town locations, including changes of use, extensions, the merger or subdivision of existing units or amendments to existing planning conditions relating to the sale of goods will only be permitted where:

- *It can be demonstrated that there is an additional need for the proposal which cannot be provided within an existing town or local retail centre, and*
- *The proposal would not either individually or cumulatively with*

other existing or consented developments have an unacceptable impact on the trade, turnover, vitality and viability of the town or local centres."

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.23 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance documents endorsed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council are considered relevant to this application:

- Guidance Note No.4 – Sustainable Design

Sustainable Economic Development

- 6.1 Sustainable development is identified in PPW as a golden thread running through the planning system.
- 6.2 The application site comprises previously developed land within Merthyr Leisure Village. As such, it is brownfield in nature and within the settlement boundary. This application proposes the development of it in order to provide a drive thru to be occupied by Starbucks.
- 6.3 The pre-app response issued by the LPA (Ref: PA/20/0029) confirms that the principle of development is supported by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.4 The proposed development will comprise a positive use of underutilised land. Economic benefits will be achieved by way of job creation in the form of 20 positions.
- 6.5 The site is located in a highly sustainable and accessible location. Given existing occupiers and operations from the Leisure Village, the proposed development will compliment and enhance the wider site.
- 6.6 It is considered important for the image of the site in general that it is in occupation and providing the employment generation and leisure facilities which it has the potential to provide. This is particularly the case in the context of the lack of drive thru coffee facilities within it.
- 6.7 Terms have been agreed for the site to be developed immediately upon receipt of a satisfactory planning permission and discharge of pre-commencement conditions. As such, it is not speculative and the economic benefits can be delivered swiftly.
- 6.8 It is likely that the overwhelming majority of staff will be locally based and benefit from a training and employment programme. Therefore, should the application be approved, the development will make a positive contribution towards local employment provision.
- 6.9 Further to the above, the Covid-19 health crisis has had a direct impact upon the property market through the disruption of both existing property transactions and proposed development and construction projects. The full 'demand-side' impact upon the wider economy is yet to unfold. Notwithstanding, the Bank of England and Office of Budget Responsibility have both predicted that the UK could face its deepest recession in over 200 years.
- 6.10 The following is of note in respect of the UK economy and retail sector looking forward:

- The UK economy is expected to shrink by 11.3% this year and not return to its pre-crisis size until the end of 2022.
- The government's independent forecaster, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects the number of unemployed people to surge to 2.6 million by the middle of next year.
- The unemployment rate to expected to reach 7.5%, its highest level since the financial crisis in 2009.
- The OBR said the coronavirus pandemic had *"delivered the largest peacetime shock to the global economy on record"*, while recent restrictions across the UK had taken *"the wind out of an already flagging recovery"*.
- The OBR also predicted a 2% decline in the UK's economic output while driving up inflation, unemployment and public borrowing.
- In July 2020, the Centre for Retail Research identified – *"Our new forecast is that total retail sales in 2020 will fall overall by -4.6% compared to 2019 (or a reduction of £17,281m). The level of retail sales will not regain last year's level (2019) until 2022."*
- In respect of bricks and mortar retailers, the prediction states – *"The Centre for Retail Research forecasts that the lockdown will have a severe impact on the retail sector, most of which was in a poor state even before coronavirus. It will survive a long lockdown only with great difficulty. Department store groups, fashion and footwear, large general stores as well as the smaller independents are most vulnerable. We estimate that in 2020, a total of 20,622 stores will close (against 16,073 in 2019) and job losses will rise to 235,704 people (against 143,128 last year)."*

6.11 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development comprises sustainable economic development which will enable sustainable economic growth in an appropriate location during uncertain times.

Appraisal

7.1 In this section, an appraisal of the proposed development is provided. The following observations set the context for the appraisal:

- The application site comprises brownfield land which is highly accessible.
- The pre-application response (ref: PA/20/0029) states that the principle of developing the site as proposed is supported by the Local Planning Authority.
- The application site currently comprises an isolated island of car parking (39no. spaces) within a much larger car park. The proposed development will not result in an unacceptable loss of parking provision.
- The site is accessible by a range of transportation options, including public transport.
- It sits in a wider area that is dominated by leisure and food/drink uses. The proposed development will compliment existing uses and diversify the offer within the Leisure Village as a whole.
- The Leisure Park does not benefit from a drive thru coffee unit. The proposed use will therefore not be in competition with existing operators.
- The application is tailored to the specific requirements of Starbucks, the intended occupier. It is not speculative.
- The proposed Starbucks operation will result in economic benefits in the form of the creation of 20 jobs.

7.2 This chapter will identify the main issues relevant the determination of the application and assess the scheme against relevant planning policy framework. These matters are considered to be as follows:

- The **principle of development** in terms of land use planning policy and sustainable development;
- The impact of the development on the **character and appearance** of the surrounding area
- The impact of the development in terms of **access and traffic generation**;
- The impact of the development on the **historic environment**;
- Other material considerations

Principle of Development

7.3 Whilst it has already been stated that the pre-app response (Ref: PA/20/0029) recognises that the principle of developing the site is supported, the forthcoming paragraphs will demonstrate the

acceptability of the proposal in terms of land use planning policy and sustainable development.

- 7.4 The redevelopment of brownfield sites within sustainable locations is supported by both national and local policies. Paragraph 3.51 of PPW advocates a search sequence for development opportunities which starts with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within defined settlements. The site is currently comprised of parking spaces. Therefore, it accords with PPW's definition of 'previously developed land'.
- 7.5 The re-use of previously developed land within settlement boundaries is supported by the Adopted LDP. The site lies within the settlement boundary for Merthyr Tydfil, which is identified as a Primary Growth Area. Therefore, the town is to be subject to the majority of new development in the Authority. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policy SW4 (Settlement Boundaries) of the adopted LDP.
- 7.6 Given that the site is situated outside of a town centre location, a pertinent policy to consider is EcW6 (Out of Town Retailing Areas). It establishes two criteria against which proposals will be assessed. These comprise the need for the development and its impact on vitality and viability of existing centres. Both criteria will be discussed in turn below:

Need

- 7.7 The client and operator has identified a lack of Starbucks drive thru provision within the surrounding area. The below table identifies their nearest units, distance from the application site and a description of the facilities (See Plan in **Appendix 1**):

Facility Name	Distance from Subject Site	Description of Facilities
Starbucks, University of South Wales, Treforest Campus	17km to the south	Situated within a University of Wales Building Does not include drive thru provision and only accessible to students
Starbucks, Coryton Roundabout	25km to the south	Drive thru unit

Starbucks, Village Hotel	25km to the northeast	Situated within the Village Hotel Does not include drive thru provision
Starbucks, Tyglass Centre	26km to the south	Situated within Llanishen Unit 4, Tyglass Centre Does not include drive thru provision
Starbucks, 28 Gwent Square, Cwmbran	26km to the southeast	Situated within a pedestrianised shopping centre Does not include drive thru provision

- 7.8 The table identifies that there are no Starbucks units within 17km of the application site. The nearest facility at the University of South Wales Campus is situated within a University building - it does not include drive thru provision and is likely only accessible by students/members of staff.
- 7.9 The nearest drive thru unit is positioned 25km to the south at Coryton Roundabout. As such, there is a clear shortfall of Starbucks drive thru provision in the area and the proposed development will meet the need for additional outlets identified by the operator.
- 7.10 In respect of other national operator coffee provision, the below table identifies the nearest facilities to the site (See Plan in **Appendix 2**):

Facility Name	Distance from Subject Site	Description of Facilities
Costa Coffee, 6- 7 New Market Walk, Merthyr	700m to the north	Situated within pedestrianised shopping area Does not include drive thru provision
Costa Coffee, Cyfarthfa Retail Park, Merthyr	1.5km to the north	Serves visitors to Cyfarthfa Retail Park Does not include drive thru provision
Costa Coffee, Riverside Retail Park, Aberdare	5km to the west	Serves visitors to Riverside Retail Park Does not include drive thru provision

Costa Coffee, Festival Park, Ebbw Vale	12km to the east	Serves visitors to the Festival Retail Park Does not include drive thru provision
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- 7.11 None of the above facilities offer drive thru provision. As such, they offer an altogether different service and experience to the proposed development. The overwhelming majority of customers of drive thru facilities comprise motorists on the network (i.e. passby trips), as opposed to walk past visitors who overwhelmingly visit units which do not include drive thru provision. There is a clear differentiation between the customers serviced by drive thru units and walk to units.
- 7.12 It should be emphasised that a number of the above facilities are situated in out of centre locations including various retail parks. Consequently, the principle of coffee units within out of centre locations in the Merthyr area has been evidenced as acceptable and regular.
- 7.13 In light of the above, it is clear that there is a lack of Starbucks drive thru provision which the proposed development will address. As such, the scheme will address an identified need in accordance with the first criterion of Policy EcW6.

Impact on the Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres.

- 7.14 Policy EcW3: Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retailing Provision states that outside of designated centres, proposals will be subject to an assessment of need and application of the sequential test to demonstrate that there will be no harm to the vitality and viability of town/local centres. The application is therefore accompanied by a Sequential Assessment prepared by Asbri Planning which demonstrates that there are no more available, suitable or viable sites within the town centre which could accommodate the proposed development.
- 7.15 Given the drive thru nature of the development, a significant portion of trade will be drawn from those already visiting Merthyr Leisure Village. This is evidenced by the Transport Statement prepared by Dynamic Transport Planning which states:

The TRICS database has been utilised to generate anticipated vehicle movements associated with the proposed development for a weekday and Saturday peak-hour periods. Due to the nature of the development

proposals, it should also be noted that the majority of trips will be drawn from traffic already travelling along the surrounding local highway network or within the Leisure Village.

During the busiest peak-hour, the assessment demonstrates that there would be a maximum of 18 new two-way trips associated with the development proposals. As such, the drive-thru coffee shop would not lead to a severe impact on the operation and safety of the surrounding local highway network.

- 7.16 The proposed development will therefore complement the existing leisure and food/drink uses at the wider site and diversify the offer within the Leisure Village as a whole. The operation will not constitute a destination in its own right.
- 7.17 Given that the Sequential Assessment demonstrates that the scheme cannot be sited within the town centre, in addition to the vast majority of users comprising vehicle users already being on the highway network/visiting the Leisure Village, the development will not result in harm to the vitality and viability of Merthyr Town Centre.
- 7.18 Specifically, in respect of retail impact, TAN 4 is clear in requiring impact assessments for applications which propose 2,500 sqm floorspace and above. At 178 sqm, the proposed development comprises just 7% of the threshold figure. It is therefore clear that the proposed development has limited potential in the extreme to result in any detrimental impact on nearby centres.
- 7.19 Further to the above, the overwhelming use of drive thru facilities by motorists already on the road network (as opposed to dedicated trips) further dampens any potential impact on nearby centres.
- 7.20 In accordance with the above, and specifically in respect of retail impact, such an assessment would be an inappropriate request given the scale of the unit proposed and indeed the drive thru nature of it. Notwithstanding, it has been evidenced that the proposed development will not result in any unacceptable levels of impact on nearby centres. Accordingly, the proposed development satisfies the second criterion of Policy EcW6 (Out of Town Retailing Areas).
- 7.21 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policies SW4 (Settlement Boundaries) and EcW6 (Out of Town Retailing Areas) of the adopted LDP. The principle of development is firmly established in accordance with the pre application response received from the

Council.

Character and Appearance

- 7.22 In order to discuss the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, a pertinent policy to consider is Policy SW11 (Sustainable Design and Placemaking). It identifies twelve criteria which developments should adopt in order to contribute to the creation of attractive and sustainable places through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. These will be discussed in turn below.

Criterion 1 – Appropriate to its local context

- 7.23 The site is situated within Merthyr Leisure Village which is occupied by a diverse range of buildings in terms of height, scale and design. The largely one storey unit proposed measures just 175m². It will be modest in comparison to other surrounding buildings such as the Superbowl, Cinema and Leisure Centre. Notwithstanding, there are a number of other units in the Leisure Village which are of similar scale to the proposed development including McDonald's, Harvester and Subway.
- 7.24 In respect of design, the elevation treatments will be contemporary and feature a high level of fenestration, glass and cladding. Similar design characteristics can be found elsewhere in the Leisure Village including the Leisure Centre immediately north of the site.
- 7.25 In light of the above, the proposed development will be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density in accordance with criterion 1 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 2 – Integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape

- 7.26 The proposed development will make use of an isolated car parking island situated immediately north of the Superbowl building. The land offers little visually to the existing street scene. The development of a contemporary drive through unit of high-quality design and appearance will therefore enhance the character and appearance of the site in accordance with criterion 2 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 3 - Not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design

- 7.27 There are no sensitive receptors located within a distance of the application site where they could be realistically impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 7.28 Further to this, given that the site is located in an isolated position immediately north of the Superbowl which has no windows on its northern elevation, there will be no unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact.
- 7.29 The proposed development includes a visual on the elevation viewed when entering the site showing planting in order to appear as a green wall. In addition, details of planned landscaped areas are provided around the unit to ensure a pleasant environment for customers.
- 7.30 The development is therefore in accordance with criterion 3 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 4 - Contribute to the provision of green infrastructure, including open space in accordance with the Council's standards, sustainable drainage systems where appropriate, and ensure that the County Borough's network of green infrastructure is accessible and connected

- 7.31 Given the scale of the development, there is no requirement for open space provision.
- 7.32 Notwithstanding, the development will be subject to a SuDS Approval Body application ensuring that sustainable drainage systems are adopted. As such, the proposal is compliant with criterion 4 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 5 - Allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards

- 7.33 Given that the site is located centrally within a wider site, access to the Leisure Village will be unchanged as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.34 The development will result in the net loss of 37no. parking spaces via including the conversion of 2no. spaces to provide disabled provision. Notwithstanding, it is evidenced in the Transport Statement which forms part of the submission package that there is an over provision of parking within the Village.

7.35 In accordance with the above, the proposed development will not result in a detrimental impact on parking availability in the area. Given the abundance of parking spaces in the wider site, no traditional parking is proposed as part of the development other than disabled parking spaces adjacent to the unit entrance.

7.36 To ensure that the development is accessible to the widest range of potential customers possible, two disabled spaces are proposed to the front of the unit ensuring accessibility for those with mobility concerns in accordance with criterion 5 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 6 - Incorporate a range of inclusive/adaptable design specifications, a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to meet identified local needs

7.37 Criterion 6 relates to residential development. As such, it is not relevant to the proposed development.

Criterion 7 - Incorporate resource efficient/adaptable buildings and layouts using sustainable design and construction techniques; and
Criterion 8 - minimise the demand for energy and utilise renewable energy resources

7.38 Starbucks are hugely experienced operators of outlets such as that proposed by way of the application to which this Statement relates. They adopt modern construction techniques in accordance with the latest Building Regulation Standards which will enable the development to be energy efficient.

7.39 The proposed development comprises the EMEA design which was introduced to the UK market in July 2020 and therefore includes comprehensive sustainable credentials.

7.40 The scheme is therefore compliant with criteria 7 and 8 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 9 - Provide and protect relevant utility services and infrastructure without causing any unacceptable environmental impacts

7.41 Given the scale of the development and its siting within an existing built environment, it is not envisaged that required utility services will result in an environmental impact in accordance with criterion 8 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 10 - Incorporate measures to improve ground and surface water quality wherever possible

- 7.42 The application will be subject to an application to the SuDS Approval Body. Therefore, will aim to adopt sustainable drainage system.
- 7.43 Notwithstanding, it should be emphasised that the site currently comprises hardstanding. Consequently, the existing management of ground and surface water is limited. The proposed development presents an opportunity to improve ground and surface water quality through sustainable drainage systems, in accordance with criterion 10 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 11 - Provide adequate facilities and space for waste collections and recycling

- 7.44 The layout will incorporate minimum space standards and adequate facilities for waste collections and recycling in accordance with criterion 11 of Policy SW11.

Criterion 12 - promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour

- 7.45 As identified in paragraph 4.13, the development will increase the level of natural surveillance in an area which is currently subject to limited overlooking. It will result in a benefit to neighbouring occupiers in this regard.
- 7.46 The proposed development is therefore compliant with the twelfth and final criterion of Policy SW11 (Sustainable Design and Placemaking) and will result in a positive impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Access and Traffic Generation

- 7.47 Access to the proposed development will be achieved via existing infrastructure which serves the Leisure Village. The scheme will complement surrounding uses and will not constitute a destination in its own right. It will therefore not result in a significant increase in vehicular trips to the wider site.
- 7.48 The above is evidenced by the Transport Statement prepared by Dynamic Transport Planning which forms part of the submission package.

- 7.49 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will result in the net loss of 37no. parking spaces, it should be emphasised that there is an overprovision serving the wider site. As such, the development will not result in an adverse impact on the parking provision in Merthyr Leisure Village or existing tenants within it. To that end, the Transport Statement identifies:

Finally, a parking accumulation assessment shows that there is currently a significant level of surplus parking provision across Merthyr Leisure Village, with around 210 spaces remaining free during Saturday's busiest period. It has therefore been demonstrated that the parking spaces lost by the proposals together with the parking demand associated with the drive-through would be comfortably accommodated within existing parking provision across the wider site, complimented by a conversion of existing parking provision to 2 no. mobility standard bays.

- 7.50 In light of the above, the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network is considered to be acceptable.

Historic Environment

- 7.51 It should be noted that the site is situated within the West Merthyr, including Heolgerrig and Gellideg Urban Character Area. CADW's 'Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character' identifies that much of the land in this area to the west of the Taff lay within the original lease for the Cyfarthfa Ironworks. The character of the buildings in the wider Urban Character Area comprise farmhouses, purpose-built terraces of industrial workers housing and public housing.
- 7.52 As confirmed by the pre-app response, the surrounding buildings, topography and trees/vegetation screen the development from nearby historic assets. Furthermore, it would be set within an urbanised context where it would be seen in close relation to a number of modern buildings of varying styles that form part of the Leisure Village. As such, the proposed development would likely have no impact on the landscape qualities of the area and would not impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings or the Town Centre Conservation Area.

- 7.53 The proposed development will therefore not negatively impact on historical assets in accordance with Policies CW1 (Historic Environment) and EnW5 (Landscape Protection) of the adopted LDP.

Other Material Considerations

Economic Considerations

- 7.54 Economic considerations are detailed within Section 6 of this statement and will not be repeated for the avoidance of duplication. Notwithstanding, it is reiterated that once operational, it is anticipated that 20 jobs will be created.
- 7.55 Furthermore, short term job creation in the construction sector would comprise an additional benefit during the build out phase of the project. The economic benefits associated with the development comprise a material consideration which should be taken into account in the determination of the development in accordance with paragraph 5.4.4 of PPW.

Conclusion

- 7.56 It has been comprehensively evidenced that the proposal will result in significant economic benefits in the form of job creation. Further to this, there is a clear need for the proposed development. A sequential assessment has been undertaken which identifies that there are no preferable sites which are suitable, viable or available in relevant centres. All other material considerations are comprehensively and satisfactorily satisfied via supporting documents. To that end, it is concluded that the proposal complies with planning policy at a local and national level.

Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of LEGAL & GENERAL LEISURE FUND TRUSTEE LIMITED (No 04301197) and LEGAL & GENERAL PROPERTY PARTNERS (LEISURE) LIMITED (No 04452915) in respect of the proposed erection of a drive thru coffee unit (Class A1 use) and associated works at land at Merthyr Leisure Village.
- 8.2 The proposal will result in significant economic benefits in the form of the creation of 20 jobs which is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Particularly given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on employment and businesses. Pre application discussions with the Council have been positive in respect of the principle of the proposed development.
- 8.3 The drive thru operation will act as a complimentary use to the surrounding facilities and therefore diversify the offer available in the Leisure Village.
- 8.4 It has been comprehensively evidenced that the proposal will result in significant economic benefits in the form of job creation. Further to this, there is a clear need for the proposed development. A sequential assessment has been undertaken which identifies that there are no preferable sites which are suitable, viable or available in relevant centres. To that end, it is concluded that the proposal complies with planning policy at a local and national level.
- 8.5 PPW is clear in setting the context for the determination of planning applications with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Further to this and as highlighted in Section 6 of this Statement, PPW is clear in its intent to support proposals which comprise sustainable economic development. Accordingly, there should be a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for the application to which this Statement relates.
- 8.6 Notwithstanding the above, a comprehensive appraisal of the proposed development is provided in Section 7 of this statement which demonstrates the acceptability of the development in terms of the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, highways implications and the historic environment.

APPENDIX 1 - STARBUCKS LOCATIONS

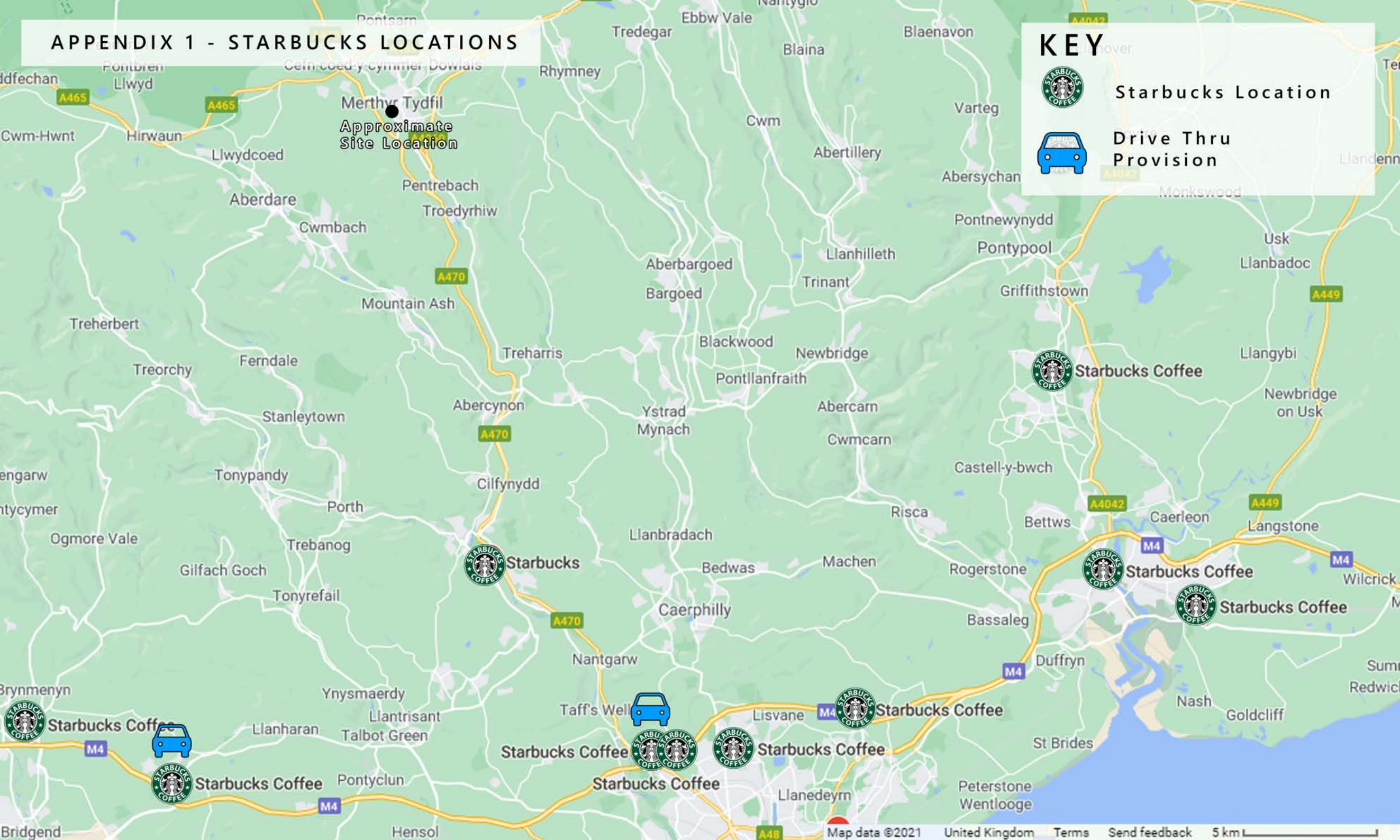
KEY



Starbucks Location



Drive Thru Provision



APPENDIX 2 - OTHER NATIONAL OPERATORS

KEY



Costa Locations



Drive Thru Provision

