

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE: **26TH OCTOBER 2022**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY)**

SUBJECT: **REDEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF FORMER UPM SHOTTON PAPER MILL SITE COMPRISING 82 HECTARES OF NEW PAPER FACTORY BUILDINGS AND PROCESSING PLANT AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, OFFICES, ACCESS AND PARKING**

APPLICATION NUMBER: **FUL/000011/22**

APPLICANT: **SHOTTON MILL LTD**

SITE: **SHOTTON PAPER MILL, WEIGHBRIDGE ROAD DEESIDE,**

APPLICATION VALID DATE: **12th MAY 2022**

LOCAL MEMBERS: **CLLR BERNIE ATTRIDGE**
CLLR DEBBIE OWEN
CLLR ROZ MANSELL

TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL: **CONNAHS QUAY TOWN COUNCIL**

REASON FOR COMMITTEE: **SITE EXCEEDS SIZE OF SCHEME OF DELIGATION**

SITE VISIT: **NO**

1.00 SUMMARY

1.01 This is a full application for the redevelopment and expansion of former UPM Shotton Paper Mill site comprising 82 hectares of new paper factory buildings and processing plant and associated landscaping, offices, access and parking at Shotton Paper Mill, Weighbridge Road Deeside.

- 1.02 Due to the scale and type of development as proposed this application falls within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA).
- 1.03 The scale of the proposal is significant with site area of 82 hectares of development and building heights ranging from between 5 metres to a maximum of 42 metres for the Paper mill. The development will have a striking visual presence and will be visible from a wide area. A comprehensive Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has been completed and the Council concurs with its findings.
- 1.04 The application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions outlined below and financial contributions towards the delivery of a footway/ cycleway along the frontage of Weighbridge Road connecting to NCN 568, the preparation of the Traffic Regulation Order and installation of an extension to the double yellow lines onto part of the Weighbridge Road frontage.

2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-

- 2.01 Financial contributions made via an upfront payment towards the delivery of a footway/ cycleway along the frontage of Weighbridge Road connecting to NCN 568, the preparation of the Traffic Regulation Order and installation of an extension to the double yellow lines onto part of the Weighbridge Road frontage.
- 2.02
1. Time limit for commencement.
 2. Compliance with the approved plans.
 3. Submission of contaminated land assessments and remediation.
 4. Submission of contaminated land verification report.
 5. Unidentified contamination.
 6. Submission of Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
 7. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground without prior approval.
 8. Submission of a Biosecurity Risk Assessment and Method Statement.
 9. No surface water from any increase in the roof area entering the public sewerage system.
 10. Discharge of trade effluent into the public sewerage system
 11. Submission of a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Scheme.
 12. Submission of a reptile mitigation scheme.
 13. Submission of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).
 14. Landscaping maintenance period.
 15. Means of access in accordance with plans.

16. Submission of detailed plans for means of access.
17. Means of access shall be completed to specification.
18. Access visibility splay to agreed specification.
19. Access visibility splay shall be made available and free from obstruction in perpetuity.
20. Facilities shall be provided and retained within the site for the loading, unloading, parking and turning of vehicles.
21. Facilities shall be provided and retained within the site for the parking / storage of bicycles.
22. Positive means to prevent the run-off of surface water from any part of the site onto the highway shall be provided.
23. Submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
24. Submission of a Full Travel Plan and Transport Implementation Strategy (TIS).
25. Submission of a photographic condition survey of the highway network.
26. Submission of a detailed scheme for footpath/cycleway improvements subject to a S278 agreement.
27. Submission of details of the proposed pipe bridge over Weighbridge road.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS

3.01 Local Members

No response's at the time of writing.

Connahs Quay Town Council

No response at the time of writing.

Highways Development Management

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a conditions and financial contributions to secure mitigation and improvements.

The financial contributions will be made towards the delivery of a footway/ cycleway along the frontage of Weighbridge Road and connecting to NCN 568, the preparation of the Traffic Regulation Order and installation of an extension to the double yellow lines onto part of the Weighbridge Road frontage.

Environmental Health

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a condition that requires the submission of a comprehensive contaminated land assessment and remediation.

Forestry Officer

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a condition that requires the submission of a comprehensive Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

Ecologist

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions that requires the submission of a reptile mitigation scheme and a Biodiversity Enhancement and management scheme

Economic Development

Business Development is supportive of the above proposals which will create 850 new jobs and safeguard 190 existing jobs and generate significant economic investment to Flintshire.

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to water entering the public sewerage system

Wales & West Utilities

No objection to the proposed development subject to an advisory note regarding WWU infrastructure in the area.

SP Energy

No objection to the proposed development subject to an advisory note regarding SP Energy infrastructure in the area.

Network Rail

No objection to the proposed development subject to an advisory note regarding Network Rail infrastructure in the area.

Natural Resources Wales

No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions in relation, Water Quality / Pollution Prevention, Groundwater and Land Contamination, and Biosecurity.

Welsh Government Transport

No objection to the proposed development, conflict with the Flintshire corridor scheme have been resolved.

Airbus

No objection to the proposed development.

4.00 PUBLICITY

- 4.01 Press Notice and Site Notice and Neighbour Notification undertaken. No responses received at the time of writing.

5.00 SITE HISTORY

- 5.01 The site consists of a paper mill which has been subject to numerous planning consents since opening in 1983. Certain operations are

continuing at the Site even though newsprint production has ceased. Recent planning applications include:

- FUL/000010/22 – Application for piling of the paper machine associated with the redevelopment and expansion of former UPM Shotton Paper Mill Site – Approved 9th August 2022
- 063522 – Prior Approval demolition of existing building for redevelopment – Prior Approval not required 29th September 2021

6.00 PLANNING POLICIES

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

STR1 – New Development

STR2: Transport and Communications

STR3: Employment

STR7 – Natural Environment

STR10: Resources

GEN1 – General Requirements for Development

GEN5: Environmental Assessment

D1 – Design Quality, Location & Layout

D2 – Design

D3 – Landscaping

D4 Outdoor Lighting

EM1: General Employment Land Allocations

EM3 - Development Zones and Principal Employment Areas

EM7: Bad Neighbour Industry

TWH1 – Development Affecting Trees & Woodlands

L1 – Landscape Character

WB1 – Species Protection

WB2 – Sites of International Importance

WB3 – Statutory Sites of National Importance

WB5: Undesignated Wildlife Habitats

WB6: Enhancement of Nature Conservation Interests

AC1: Facilities for the Disabled

AC2 Pedestrian Provision and Public Rights of Way

AC3 Cycling Provision

AC4 Travel Plans for Major Traffic Generating Developments

AC8 Buses

AC13 – Access & Traffic Impact

AC18 – Parking Provision & New Development

EWP12 – Pollution

EWP13 – Nuisance

EWP14 – Derelict and Contaminated Land

EWP17 – Flood Risk

Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPGN No. 8 – Nature Conservation and Development

SPGN No 3 – Landscaping

SPGN No 4 – Trees and Development

SPGN No 8 – Nature Conservation and Development
SPGN No. 11 – Parking Standards
SPGN No 29 – Management of Surface Water for New
Development

National

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11, February 2021
Future Wales – The National Plan 2040
Building Better Places (2020)
TAN 5: Nature Conservation & Planning
TAN 11: Noise
TAN 12: Design
TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk
TAN 18: Transport
TAN 21 – Waste
TAN 23 - Economic development

7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

Location

- 7.01 The overall Site comprises the operational Shotton Mill paper manufacturing facility, formerly owned and operated by UPM (the Main Site) together with adjoining vacant brownfield land (the Expansion Site, also known as the A4 land)
- 7.02 The Site is situated within the Deeside Industrial Park close to the Dee Estuary. The Dee Estuary is subject to a number of national and European wildlife designations. The Site is located within the Wrexham & Deeside National Growth Area.
- 7.03 The Site lies to the south of the A548 dual carriageway, with access to the A548 being via a local distributor road that serves the Deeside Industrial Park. The development includes the land lying between the operational paper mill and the A548.
Vehicular access to the Site is from a roundabout junction on the A548 via Weighbridge Road forming part of the Deeside Industrial Park. The A548 dual carriageway links to the A55.
- 7.04 The surrounding area of the Deeside Industrial Park is occupied by a number of large-scale manufacturing and energy generation facilities.

Proposed Development

- 7.05 The proposed development comprises a major new paper production facility. The Paper Mill will produce paper for containerboard (paper reels), containerboard (flat sheets), cardboard containers (boxes), and tissue products.

- 7.06 The proposals will utilise some of the existing built development on site. Some buildings will be retained and used for a different purpose and are discussed below. The existing buildings and plant that would be retained are primarily concerned with the reception, cleaning and preparation for use as feedstock of raw recycled paper, and energy generation. In addition, exiting plant will be relocated to make way for new development.
- 7.07 New development with the main paper mill site will consist of:
- Paper Machine Building will have four floors and will house the Paper Machine and other plant and machinery, along with officers and control rooms
 - Corrugating Machine Building will house the Corrugating Machine and is the largest proposed building on the Site
 - New Warehouse and Dispatch Area
 - Starch Process and Storage Building
 - Effluent Treatment Facility
 - Old Corrugated Cardboard Recycling Building
- 7.08 New development within the expansion site will consist of:
- Tissue Machine Buildings comprising of three parallel, identical buildings producing jumbo rolls of tissue.
 - Reel Storage Building
 - Pulp Storage Building
 - Converter Building
 - Finished Goods Warehouse
- 7.09 In addition, number of other structures are required to support the main site operations:
- 8 x Tanks (35 metres high);
 - 2 x Tanks (20 metres high);
 - 3 x Weighbridge ;
 - 3 x Gatehouses; and
 - 3 x Truck Driver WC.

Main Planning Considerations

- 7.10 The main planning considerations are:
- Principle of development
 - Landscape, Visual and Arboricultural Impact
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Contaminated Land
 - Ecology
 - Air Quality
 - Waste
 - Hydrology and Flood risk
 - Traffic & Transport
 - Heritage

Principle of development

- 7.11 The site lies within a Principal Employment Area / Deeside Development Zone by virtue of policy EM3 of the adopted UDP. The northern half of the site is also allocated for employment development by virtue of EM1.10. As such the propose redevelopment and expansion is considered acceptable in principle.

Within the Deposit LDP, the site is still located within the Principal Employment Area (PE2). However, the previous employment allocation of the expansion land has not been carried over into the LDP as the Employment Land Study, which formed part of the Plans evidence base, identified that the site was held for expansion space, rather than being available for freestanding employment proposals.

Landscape, Visual and Arboricultural Impact

- 7.12 The application is supported by an Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment comprising of Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement (ES). The application is also supported by an Arboricultural Report
- 7.13 The Tree Constraints Plans show the extent of existing tree cover on and adjacent to the Main Site and Expansion Site and mainly comprise of 'Category C' trees (93%) of limited arboricultural merit. The remainder of the trees are 'Category B' specimens that are of merit but not significant in terms of the criteria in BS5837:2012, otherwise they would be Category A.
- 7.14 The individual trees and small groups of trees are dwarfed by the scale of the built existing development and only where trees are present in large groups are they significant enough to compete as structural landscape elements. Paragraph 3.2 of the Arboricultural Report refers to G30, G31 and W3 as being notable arboricultural features and Category B. The woodland, W3, provides screening around the Eiregrid Converter Station and will not be affected by the proposed development. G30 and G31 comprise of a landscape and wildlife corridor along Weighbridge Road and are to be substantially retained within the proposed layout and will become more important as a landscape corridor separating the built development on the Main Site and Extension Site.
- 7.15 Chapter 7.9 of the LVIA predicts that the development's impact on landscape character would be minimal as a result of existing industrial development.
- 7.16 In terms of visual effects the LVIA acknowledges that the development under consideration will have a 'Major adverse effect' at

Viewpoint K, on receptors (motorists) using the A548 during the construction and operational phases. It is stated that receptors at Viewpoint B (Burton Mere) are likely to experience a 'Moderate effect on visual amenity during operations' but this is due to the operation of the CHP plant that is subject to a separate Development of National Significance application.

- 7.17 Taking into account the scale of development the proposal would result in limited tree felling. The retention and augmentation of the critical tree groups along the north of the Extension Site and at the edge of the Existing Development along the north of Weighbridge Road will help screen and break up the development.
- 7.18 As such is it considered that the proposed visual impact of the development would be acceptable, subject to a the imposition of a planning condition that requires the submission of a comprehensive Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the site and third party land used for mitigation. This would bolster the existing landscaping, in particular providing further screening to viewpoints B and K.

Contaminated Land

- 7.19 The proposed development site has an extensive history of potentially contaminative land uses and within the ground in an area adjacent to Weighbridge Road, included within the proposed site, is a Permeable Reactive Barrier (PRB), installed during the 1990s to remediate and prevent contamination of groundwater. The PRB is associated with contamination attributable to hydrocarbon contamination and an historical steel works which once operated at/adjacent to the proposed development site. It is also understood that a part of the site has been used to dispose wastes in the past and may be landfill.
- 7.20 It will be necessary to secure the assessment and remediation of land contamination by condition. The condition would need to secure land contamination assessments prior to the commencement of the development and remediation works prior to the first use or occupation of the development.
- 7.21 Taking all the above into consideration, the concerns relating to contaminated land can be dealt with via the imposition of conditions, As such is it considered that the proposed development is compliant UDP planning policy EWP 12 and EWP14.

Ecology

- 7.22 The Dee Estuary SSSI/SPA/Ramsar/SAC is just to the north of the application site while the River Dee SSSI/SAC over 1km to the south and west. The Dee Estuary is designated for its wintering bird populations (SPA/Ramsar site) and for its estuarine habitats (SAC).

The River Dee SSSI/SAC is primarily designated for its migratory fish e.g. Atlantic Salmon but also for Otter. The Shotton Lagoon and reed beds SSSI is 230m to the south west and Burton Mere and Wetlands RSPB reserve (includes Inner Marsh Farm SSSI) is some 900m to the north, both contribute towards breeding and wintering bird populations of the Dee Estuary and form part of the Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar designations. The application is supported by Baseline Ecological Report

- 7.23 Chapter 10 of the ES provides the baseline ecological conditions at Shotton Paper Mill and provides an evaluation of the ecological resources that occur within the site or have potential to be affected by operations within it. The chapter describes in detail the potential ecological impacts resulting from the proposed scheme and describes the mitigation and avoidance measures that are required to reduce the magnitude of these effects.
- 7.24 Desktop studies and field surveys have been carried out in 2021 and 2022. The ecological assessment has identified residual impacts of habitat loss and fragmentation upon open mosaic habitat and reed beds of up to county value that cannot be ameliorated in the short-term. The expansion land is characterized by open mosaic habitat and neutral grassland. Common lizards have been recorded on site and reptile avoidance and mitigation measures are proposed
- 7.25 The landscape plan sets out habitat restoration and new planting to ensure connections around the perimeter of the site are maintained e.g. commuting routes for bats. A small proportion of the Open Mosaic habitat will be reinstated/recreated along the northern boundary of expansion land. Reed bed loss from within the existing development will be recreated at lagoon 3 and woodlands to the west of the site will be managed to improve structural and species diversity.
- 7.26 The CEMP will include Biodiversity Management with details of tree and hedgerow protection, any invasive species management, species and habitats protection, avoidance and mitigation measures during construction. A specific Biodiversity Management Plan will also be prepared to cover specific construction impacts as well as the long term establishment and management of habitats created and will presumably link to the Landscape Masterplan and the proposed species specific mitigation strategies
- 7.27 In addition to those measures to avoid impacts on the designated site features, the submission of a reptile mitigation scheme and a Biodiversity Enhancement and management scheme are also secured via condition.
- 7.28 Taking all the above into consideration, the ecological concerns can be dealt with via the agreement measures along with the imposition

of conditions, As such is it considered that the proposed development is compliant UDP planning policies WB1-6.

Air Quality

- 7.29 The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment which reviews the effects of the proposed development on air quality (arising from combustion processes, traffic and construction dust) and odour on the receiving environment surrounding the Site. In summary, the FCA shows that the risks and consequences of flooding are manageable to an acceptable level. The operational phase impacts from the development combustion are considered to be negligible. Monitoring of the effects during the construction phase would be incorporated into the conditioned Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

Waste

- 7.30 The proposed development has been designed to optimise the use of recycled materials and minimise waste generated on-site. The proposed development would make efficient and effective use of existing recycling and energy recovery infrastructure in particular the biomass Plant, the MRF, and the paper and card recycling buildings to complement the new paper processing plant. The proposal make a contribution to national and local objectives in moving the management of waste up the waste hierarchy, away from landfill.

Hydrology and Flood risk

- 7.31 The site lies partially within Zone C1 as defined by the Development Advice Map (DAM) referred to in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development & Flood Risk (2004). According to the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP), the site lies marginally within the Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 (Sea) outlines.
- 7.32 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which reviews the risk of flooding posed to the site from various sources. In summary, the FCA shows that the risks and consequences of flooding are manageable to an acceptable level.
- 7.33 The proposed development design includes a number of incorporated mitigation measures that reduce the risk posed to the water environment and also provide betterment against the previous operational. With the implementation of the mitigation measures no significant residual effects to the water environment, including both the Shotton Lagoon and Reedbeds and the Dee Estuary, are considered likely.

Traffic & Transport

- 7.34 A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan support the application and have considered the impact of the development on three junctions. It has compared the historic use of the site with the expected impact of the proposed development of the site to provide a net impact on each of the junctions.
- 7.35 The supporting documents show that the impact of the development on the local highway network are not insignificant but are within the expected level for the industrial area. The Transport Assessment also concludes that proposed development of the site has the opportunity to provide an improvement in accessibility of the area with the development improvements to the active travel modes in the area, and to provide an employment opportunity and economic gain to the area and should be encouraged. A number of sustainable travel measures will be implemented to ensure the impact of the development is mitigated.
- 7.36 The proposed mitigation and improvements fall within the ownership of the applicant, highways land and land owned by Flintshire County Council. The proposed measures will be secured via in imposition of conditions and a contribution by means of an upfront payment.

Heritage

- 7.37 The application site is not directly adjacent to any Listed Buildings or historic parks and gardens. The scale of this development is such that consideration of any negative impact upon assets further afield must be deliberated.
- 7.38 The applicant has undertaken a Historic Environment Desk-based Assessments which identified no historic assets that were at risk of harm to their significance as a result of changes to setting due to the proposed development. In all cases, the intervening distances and lack of any material intervisibility between the historic assets within 2 km of the Site negated the potential for the proposed development to adversely affect their significance. Aside from this lack of intervisibility, the historic assets within proximity to the Site are either directly connected to the industrial heritage of Connah's Quay or have been present within its development as an industrial town for much of the modern historical period.
- 7.39 Taking all the above into consideration the impact of the proposed new paper mill is not felt to give rise to any significant impact on the setting of historical assets close to the site.

8.00 CONCLUSION

- 8.01 This application seeks planning permission for the redevelopment and expansion of Shotton Paper Mill to provide a new modernised paper mill facility. The development consists of 82 hectares of new paper factory buildings and processing plant along with associated landscaping, offices, access and parking.
- 8.02 The scale and nature of the proposal is such that the development falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA regulations.
- 8.03 The application site is located within Deeside Industrial Park and benefit from an existing use as a paper mill, along with an allocation for further industrial development.
- 8.04 Construction and operational phases of the development could give rise to environmental impacts. The application is supported by comprehensive studies and evidence to prove that subject to appropriate mitigation there will be no noticeable impact arising from the development.
- 8.05 Whilst the scale of the development cannot be underestimated, particularly the building heights, the site lies within existing industrial units and within the context of Deeside Industrial Park. Careful incorporation of design choices and layout will minimise any impact on the wider landscape or historical assets.
- 8.06 For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the proposal satisfies planning policy and I therefore recommend that planning permission is granted subject to the imposition of conditions and financial contributions as set out within paragraph 2.01 of this report.
- 8.07 Other Considerations

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

The Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Planning Application & Supporting Documents

National & Local Planning Policy

Responses to Consultation

Responses to Publicity

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