

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

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

**SUBJECT:** **FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE (AMRI) FACILITY AT AIRBUS, CHESTER ROAD, BROUGHTON.**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **057898**

**APPLICANT:** **WELSH GOVERNMENT**

**SITE:** **LAND AT CHESTER ROAD BROUGHTON CH4 0DR**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR W MULLIN**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **BROUGHTON & BRETTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO DELEGATION SCHEME**

**SITE VISIT:** **NO**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This full application proposes the erection of an Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute (AMRI) facility, on land at Chester Road (A5104), Broughton.
- 1.02 The application is being reported to the Planning & Development Control Committee for formal determination, as the scale of the development proposed, exceeds, the threshold within the Council's delegation scheme.

**2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION,**

## **SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-**

- 2.01
1. Time limit on commencement.
  2. In accordance with approved plans.
  3. Samples of construction materials to be submitted and approved.
  4. No development to commence until a bird hazard management plan has been submitted and approved.
  5. No development to commence until a Construction Management Strategy has been submitted and approved.
  6. No development to commence until a Lighting Scheme to be submitted and approved.
  7. No development to commence until an assessment of capacity of existing drainage system to cater for the proposed development has been undertaken. Infrastructure works to be undertaken if required prior to commencement of development.
  8. No development to commence until an integrated drainage scheme for the site has been submitted and approved.
  9. Hard/soft Landscaping Scheme to be submitted/approved.
  10. Implementation of landscaping.
  11. Finished Floor Levels of building to be set no lower than 6.10 m Above Ordnance Datum.
  12. No development to commence until noise management plan has been submitted and approved.

## **3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

### 3.01 Local Member

Councillor W Mullin

No response received at time of preparing report.

### Broughton & Bretton Community Council

No objections. Ensure however that the statutory consultation process takes place with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Review request for a new interchange – current infrastructure cannot cope with future increase in traffic.

### Head of Assets and Transportation

No objection and do not intend to make a recommendation on highway grounds.

### Head of Public Protection

No objection subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a noise management plan to minimise impact of development on residential properties during construction phase.

### Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru

No objection subject to the imposition of a Grampian condition to prevent commencement of development until any required off site infrastructure works have been completed

#### Natural Resources Wales

Following the submission of a Flood Consequences Assessment, (FCA) raise no objection to the development subject to the imposition of a condition in respect of the setting of Finished Floor Levels of the building and the registration of future occupiers for Natural Resource' Wales' Flood Warning Service.

#### Airbus

Request the imposition of conditions in respect of wildlife habitats, landscaping and lighting in order to comply with airport safeguarding criteria given the proximity of the site to Hawarden Airport.

### **4.00 PUBLICITY**

- 4.01 Press Notice, Site, Notice, Neighbour Notification  
No responses received at time of preparing report.

### **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

- 5.01 **048785**  
New traffic signal controlled access at gate 3 of Airbus UK North factory with changes to R1 roundabout/highway and other associated works – Permitted 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011.

### **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

- 6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan  
Policy STR1 – New Development.  
Policy STR3 – Employment.  
Policy STR8 – Built Environment.  
Policy GEN1 – General Requirements for Development.  
Policy D1 – Design Quality.  
Policy D2 – Location & Layout.  
Policy D3 – Design.  
Policy D4 – Landscaping.  
Policy AC13 – Access & Traffic Impact.  
Policy AC18 – Parking Provision.  
Policy EM3 – Development Zones and Principal Employment Areas  
Policy EM5 – Policy EM5 – Expansion of Existing Concerns  
Policy EWP17 – Flood Risk

#### Additional Guidance

Technical Advice Note 11 – Noise.  
Technical Advice Note 12 – Design.

Technical Advice Note 15 – Development & Flood Risk.

Technical Advice Note 23 – Economic Development.

The proposal **would** generally comply with the above policies.

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### 7.01 Introduction

This full application which has been submitted by Welsh Government, proposes the erection of a 6000m<sup>2</sup> building for use as an Advanced Manufacturing Research Institute (AMRI) on land at Chester Road (A5104), Broughton

### 7.02 Site/Surroundings

The site the subject of this application falls outside any recognised settlement boundary as defined in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (FUDP). It amounts to approximately 3 hectares in area, and sits between Chester Road and the Airbus factory to the north of the site, commercial development to the west, with the recently constructed access road to Gate 3 of the factory defining the eastern edge of the site.

### 7.03 Proposed Development

The plans submitted as part of this application propose the erection of a detached building measuring approximately 80 m x 60 m x 20 m (high), to be constructed having concrete, metal and glazed panel external walls. It is proposed that the building is used as a centre of excellence in the fields of aerospace, automotive and process engineering and electronics with 170 full time posts being proposed. Vehicular access to serve the development is proposed from the recently constructed access road to Gate 3 of the Airbus factory.

### 7.04 The application is accompanied by:-

- A Design & Access Statement.
- A Transport Statement & Travel Plan.
- A Flood Consequences Assessment.
- A Drainage Statement.
- A Noise Statement.
- A Phase 1 Ecology Assessment.
- A Preliminary Geo-Technical Appraisal.
- An Economic Impact Assessment.
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### 7.05 Main Planning Considerations

It is considered that the main issues to be taken into account in determination of this application are:-

- The principle of development.
- The impact on the character of the surrounding area and the

- privacy/amenity of occupiers of nearby residential properties.
- Adequacy of access/parking.
- Drainage.
- Impact on airport safety.

7.06 In commenting in detail in response to the Main Planning Considerations outlined above, I wish to advise as follows:-

7.07 Principle of Development

Notwithstanding that the site falls outside any defined settlement boundary in the UDP, the character of the site and surroundings are to a large extent urban. This urbanising effect is principally due to the residential, retail and employment development focussed along Chester Road and Broughton Retail Park.

7.08 The Airbus factory and Hawarden Airport are included in the Airport Development Zone (ADZ) designation in the UDP, by virtue of Policy EM3. The ADZ abuts the site of the proposed research facility and then extends north-westwards from the site to include Hawarden Industrial Estate and the UDP employment allocations EM1(1) Chester Aerospace Park and EM1(2) Hawarden Park extension.

7.09 Whilst it is acknowledged that the research facility being proposed, does not currently fall within the ADZ, in my view it appears logical to consider employment development on the site given that a) it is abutting this zone, b) the proposed use is complimentary to the nearby airport uses, and c) the site although currently undeveloped sits within an area of urban development and has defensible boundaries provided by the recently constructed access road which would limit further expansion in an easterly direction.

7.10 It is understood that the proposal would be built and owned by Welsh Government and would operate on the basis of a joint tenancy between Airbus UK and The University of Sheffield's Advanced Research Centre. It is therefore my view, that consideration of this application should be undertaken having regard to Policy EM5 of the UDP which makes provision for the expansion of existing employment operations.

7.11 Having regard to the specific criteria listed in Policy EM5 it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle as :-

- a) the site abuts the boundary of existing operations at Airbus
  - b) the proposal is both subsidiary and complimentary to existing operations undertaken at Airbus
- Criteria c d e & f of this policy however relate to site specific design principles which are addressed in paragraph 7.14 – 7.21 of this report.

7.12 For Members information the site has also been advanced as a

candidate site as part of the Local Development Plan process (BR0U005 ) for employment related development and if Members are mindful to support the principle of development at this location, it would appear appropriate to include the site as part of a wider ADZ in the emerging Local Development Plan.

7.13 The economic benefits from job creation associated with the development and contribution in positioning Flintshire as a centre for advanced manufacturing on a local, regional and national scale are duly noted. The proposed facility is also recognised as being of particular importance to the County in accordance with the aims of para 7.4.2 of Planning Policy Wales which advises that Local Planning Authorities seek to support the development of innovative business and technology clusters. It is also recognised that the site falls within the boundary of the Deeside Enterprise Zone. As such the proposed development is reflective of the economic importance of this area within the growth hub recognised in the Wales Spatial Plan.

7.14 It is however considered that the issue of job creation/technological advancement needs to be carefully balanced against the impact of development on the character of the locality and the amenity of the occupiers of nearby residential properties

7.15 Impact on Character of Site / Surroundings / Amenity

As previously highlighted there is a mix of industrial/retail and residential development in proximity to the application site. Whilst the building the subject of this application is of a contemporary design and would be approximately 20 m high, it would in visual terms act of an important focal point within this area, relating to and softening the impact of the existing Airbus factory which acts as a backdrop to the development. This would it is considered help to assimilate development into the site and wider surroundings.

7.16 A fundamental consideration in determination of this application is ensuring that the privacy/amenity of the occupiers of nearby residential properties are safeguarded. The nearest residential properties to the site are Springfield Farm on the southern side of Chester Road and Holmfield to the east of the new access to Gate 3 of the Airbus Factory. Springfield Farm is set back from the road behind a screen of trees and hedgerows, whilst Holmfield is separated from the site by the access road, surface water lagoon and landscaping bund created at gate 3 of the Airbus factory. The relative distances from these properties to the site of approximately 70 m & 90 m would, it is considered, be acceptable subject to the imposition of a noise management plan to minimise impact of development on the privacy/amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings during the construction phase.

7.17 Adequacy of Access/Parking

The Highway Development Control Manager raises no objection to the development proposed as it would not lead to any adverse impact on the existing transport network.

7.19 Adequacy of Drainage/Flood Protection

For Members information the site is located within a C1 Flood Zone where in accordance with Technical Advice Note 15 – Development & Flood Risk it comprises an area of the flood plain which are developed and served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences. Within a C1 Flood Zone general industrial, employment and commercial development which is classified as “less vulnerable development” can be considered subject to justification tests including appropriate mitigation.

7.20 Consultation on the submitted FCA has been undertaken with Natural Resources Wales. As a result there is no objection to the development by NRW subject to the (a) the imposition of condition to ensure that the floor level of the proposed building is set by 6.10 AOD to provide mitigation against potential flooding of the site and (b) registration to Natural Resources Wales’ Flood Warning Service.

7.21 Consultation has also been undertaken with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. Who have advised that there is a need to undertake further hydraulic modelling of the existing drainage network to confirm adequate capacity to serve the proposed development but are agreeable to this aspect of the development. They do not however object to the principle of development subject being covered by the imposition of a “Grampian Condition” which would require the upgrading of the necessary infrastructure if required prior to the commencement of development.

It is therefore considered that there are suitable drainage and flood risk mitigation measures which are capable of being imposed on the development to ensure there are no adverse drainage or flood risk issues.

7.22 Impact on Airport Safety

Consultation on the application has been undertaken with Airbus given the proximity of the proposed development to Hawarden Airport. Airbus have confirmed that there is no objection to the principle of development, subject to the need to control aspects of the proposed scheme to avoid conflict with safeguarding criteria. This would include planting proposals, a Construction Management Strategy and proposed lighting and can be covered by conditions if Members are mindful to support the application.

**8.00 CONCLUSION**

8.01 In conclusion, it is my view that the general principle of employment development is supported as a complimentary use adjacent to the existing Airbus factory at Chester Road, Broughton. The

contemporary design of the proposed building is considered acceptable in the context of existing employment / commercial development at this location and there is no objection from the Highway Development Control Manager. Although located within a C1 Flood Zone, there is no objection from NRW and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water subject to the imposition of conditions.

8.02 It is also acknowledged that from an economic development perspective, that a number of highly skilled jobs are proposed which is welcomed in the current economic climate, and this is a significant factor in support of the application.

8.03 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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