

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**  
**DATE:** **20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**  
**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF PLANNING**  
**SUBJECT:** **RESERVED MATTERS – ERECTION OF A HEALTH CARE FACILITY ON LAND AT THE FORMER YSGOL BELMONT SCHOOL, MILL LANE, BUCKLEY, FLINTSHIRE.**  
**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **050284**  
**APPLICANT:** **HPC WALES**  
**SITE:** **LAND AT THE FORMER YSGOL BELMONT SCHOOL, MILL LANE, BUCKLEY, FLINTSHIRE.**  
**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **12/11/2012**  
**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR MRS. C. A. ELLIS**  
**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **BUCKLEY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **AT THE REQUEST OF MEMBERS GIVEN THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**  
**SITE VISIT:** **YES (AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIRMAN – REASON AS ABOVE)**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This Reserved Matters application is submitted following the grant of Outline Planning Permission for the development of this site for the purpose of providing a health care facility and associated parking and landscaping.
- 1.02 Members will recall that access was a matter approved at Outline Permission stage and therefore this submission seeks approval of matters relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (The Reserved Matters).
- 1.03 This application seeks approval of details to provide a 2 storey health care building. During the consideration of the application, issues in respect of design, visual impact, landscape and parking provisions

have been negotiated and resolved subject to the imposition of conditions as detailed elsewhere in this report.

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

2.01 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-

Conditions

1. Time limit on commencement.
2. In accord with approved plans.
3. Samples of all external materials of dwellings, hard surfaces, footpaths and driveways to be submitted and approved.
4. Implementation of approved landscaping scheme.
5. BREEAM "Interim Certificate" to be submitted before work commences.
6. BREEAM "Final Certificate" to be submitted before use commences.
7. No site clearance works during bird nesting season
8. Scheme for hours of working to be agreed.
9. Construction traffic management and routing scheme to be agreed. To include facility for wheel wash and measures to keep road free from mud arising from development site.
10. Foul and Surface waters to be drained separately.
11. No surface water to public system.
12. No land drainage waters to public system.
13. External lighting scheme to be agreed prior to commencement.
14. Tree and hedgerow protection to be agreed and installed prior to any other works.
15. Submission of a full travel plan prior to commencement. Implementation within 6 months of first use of building.

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01 Local Member

Councillor Mrs. C. A. Ellis

Requests Committee Determination.

Raises concerns in relation to traffic impact upon the adjacent school.

Adjacent Ward Members

Councillor R. Hampson

Requests Committee Determination.

Councillor R. Jones

No response at time of writing.

Councillor M. J. Peers

No response at time of writing.

Councillor D. Hutchinson

No response at time of writing

Councillor N. Phillips

No response at time of writing.

Councillor A. Woolley

Considers that bollards will be required along the pavement of Mill Lane and Liverpool Road to prevent vehicular parking.

Buckley Town Council

Offers the following observations;

- Suggests bollards at junction of access to Elfed School and Mill Lane to deter parking of vehicles dropping off and picking up passengers;
- Considers the increase in traffic at school opening and closing times will result in increased adverse impacts upon highway safety;
- Concerns relating to perceived increased traffic on road junctions adjacent to the site;
- Considers a traffic survey and site visit should be undertaken at peak usage times.

Head of Assets and Transportation

No objections. Considers the detailed design of the highway access is adequately addressed by those conditions already imposed upon the previous Outline planning permission. Requests a further condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Full Travel Plan.

Head of Public Protection

No adverse comments.

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

No adverse comments. Requests the imposition of conditions governing drainage flows and connections.

Environment Agency Wales

No adverse comments. Requests the imposition of a condition requiring the installation of oil and petrol interceptors as part of surface water drainage proposals.

Airbus

No adverse comments.

The Coal Authority

No adverse comments.

**4.00 PUBLICITY**

4.01 The application has been publicised by way of a press notice, site

notice and neighbour notification letters.

3No. responses have been received at the time of writing this report. Whilst these letters are broadly supportive of the principle of a new health facility in Buckley, they raise objections to the application proposal. The issues raised include;

- The site is not best suited to the proposed use in view of the inadequate existing highway infrastructure;
- The traffic likely to arise from the proposal will, in addition to already high volumes of traffic in the vicinity, result in increased congestion and risks to highway safety;
- Concerns in relation to the adequacy of visibility from likely access points;
- Loss of trees to the frontage of Liverpool Road;
- Pedestrian access near the junction of the school access with Mill Lane may give rise to vehicles using the area as a pick up and drop off point with consequent adverse impacts upon highway and pedestrian safety.

## **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 The site has an extensive planning history dating back to 1979 which relates primarily to the previous use of the site as a school. The only application of relevance in respect of the application proposals is the outline application below.

### **046261**

Outline planning permission for health care facility, access, parking and landscaping. - Permission 20/5/2010.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

- Policy STR1 - New Development
- Policy STR2 - Transport and Communications
- Policy GEN1 - General Requirements for Development
- Policy GEN2 - Development inside Settlement Boundaries
- Policy D1 - Design Quality, Location and Layout
- Policy D2 - Design
- Policy D3 - Landscaping
- Policy D4 - Outdoor Lighting
- Policy D5 - Crime prevention
- Policy TWH1 - Development affecting trees and woodland
- Policy TWH2 - Protection of hedgerows
- Policy L1 - Landscape Character
- Policy HE2 - Development affecting listed buildings and their Settings.
- Policy AC1 - Facilities for the disabled

- Policy AC2 - Pedestrian Provision & Public Rights of Way
- Policy AC3 - Cycling Provision
- Policy AC13 - Access and Traffic Impact
- Policy AC18 - Parking Provision and New Development
- Policy CF1 - Retention of existing facilities.
- Policy CF2 - Development of new facilities.
- Policy EWP1 - Sustainable Energy Generation.
- Policy EWP2 - Energy Efficiency in New Development
- Policy EWP3 - Renewable Energy in New Development
- Policy EWP9 - New Development & Waste Management Facilities.

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### 7.01 Introduction

The proposals seek approval for the erection of a modern, state of the art, primary health care facility on the site, together with associated car parking facilities and landscaping. The proposals include the creation of a new vehicular access point off Alltami Road.

7.02 The health care centre will provide a space which will enable a number of health care facilities to occupy a single space within the community. The scheme provides accommodation for General Practitioners, dental consulting rooms and associated complimentary therapies and Local Health Board facilities. The building also provides spacious waiting areas and office and administration space associated with these services.

### 7.03 Site Description

The site comprises land which was lastly occupied by the former Ysgol Belmont, now demolished. The site is located upon the junction of Liverpool Road to the east and Alltami Road to the north. These boundaries are marked by mature and established hedgerows. The western boundary of the site is marked by a chain link fence to the playing fields at the adjacent Elfed High School. The southern boundary of the site is marked by the access road, adjacent fence and a grouping of mature trees which line the access road. This access presently serves both Elfed High School and Buckley Leisure Centre. The site is flat across each axis and is reflective of the wider topography of the area as a whole.

7.04 The site is bounded to the east, beyond Liverpool Road, by an open area of common land within the settlement boundary. This coupled with the open playing fields to the west and the low rise nature of the existing development upon the site gives the site a very open character. A small grouping of dwellings lies to the immediate north of Alltami Road, sweeping around the junction with Liverpool Road, Further loosely grouped dwelling lie further to the west of the site beyond the playing fields. In addition to the buildings of the Elfed High School and Buckley Leisure Centre further to the South West, the land to the south is occupied by Hawkesbury Hall, a Grade II Listed

Building which is currently undergoing renovation as a private dwelling. Beyond this building are open fields associated with the school and with the exception of the Hall and a grouping of trees near the access, is also very open in character.

7.05 Proposed Development

The proposals provide for a building of 2 storeys in height at the frontage of the site to Liverpool Road, reducing in scale to single storey to the rear. 2 points of access to the building are proposed facing Mill Lane and Liverpool Road respectively. The access to Mill lane is pedestrian access only. Vehicular access is derived via a new access onto Alltami Road.

7.06 The building provides accommodation for 2 General Practitioners practices, with 12 consulting rooms provided in addition to ancillary support rooms. 7 consulting rooms are provided at ground floor level for Local Health Board care services, including district nurses and midwives. 2 dental consulting rooms are also provide in addition to a dental surgery suite. All patient service delivery rooms, reception facilities and waiting areas are located at ground floor level, with administration facilities for all of the services located at first floor level. A pharmacy facility is also proposed at ground floor level.

7.07 The proposals provide facilities for both patient and staff vehicle parking, amounting to some 108 car parking spaces and 48 cycle parking spaces. In addition, facilities are provided for the dropping off and picking up of patients within the proposed car parking area. Site landscaping is also proposed.

7.08 Principle of Development

The site is an undesignated area of open space within the settlement boundary of Buckley as defined within the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. There is a general presumption in favour of the principle of development within defined settlement boundaries subject to other policy and material planning considerations. Members will recall that the grant of outline planning permission has established that a proposal of this type is acceptable in principle.

7.09 The proposals comply with the policy context in respect of the principle of development and with regard to the location of new community facilities, in the form of a health centre, within settlement boundaries.

7.10 Main Planning Issues

It is considered that the main planning issues can be summarised as follows:-

- a) Design
- b) Highway Issues
- c) Landscape issues

7.11 Design

The proposed design and layout of this scheme has been the subject of negotiation and discussion over the course of the consideration of the application and has been amended in line with comments arising from the consultation process. The proposals were also presented for Design Review to the Design Commission for Wales (DCW). This review was held on the 26th September 2012 and the comments arising from this review have, in part, been responded to in the proposed design. A copy of the Design Review Report is appended for Members interest - see Appendix.

7.12 The design concept behind this building has been to create a building which not only meets the operational needs of the health service bodies proposed to occupy this space, but also creates a building which is sustainable and legible. The building is a contemporary design which incorporates single and 2 storey elements and is arranged in 4 distinct blocks around a central atrium. This proposed 'block' structure enables the arrangement of the functions proposed to be housed within the building to be located in practice specific blocks which assists with the legibility of the building and its use by patients. The G.P practices are housed with the 'wings of the building located to the north and south of the building. The patient accessible facilities of the Local Health Board and the reception facilities occupy the single storey link block between these wings with the Dental Practice and administration functions of the building housed within the 2 storey block fronting Liverpool Road. This arrangement of form enables the formation of a pseudo public square in the space between the blocks which services as the waiting space to the facilities.

7.13 In response to the comments of the Design Commission arising from the Design Review, the arrangement of dental facilities within the block fronting Liverpool Road to create a central waiting area within this block. This amendment serves to open the waiting atrium up to views from the interior of the building out towards Higher Common, thereby improving the visual connection with the surrounding landscape.

7.14 The breaking up of the mass of the building through the careful use of 1 and 2 storey elements successfully presents this building at a less intrusive scale than might otherwise be the case. The external appearance of the building utilises high quality detailing and materials in its composition. The use of render, brick, glazing, timber cladding and aluminium roofing all combine to soften the scale of the building, provide interest to the external elevations and, through the use of brick, provides a subtle reflection of the historical associations of the town. I am satisfied that this proposal represents a bold, modern but sympathetic design response to both the operational needs of the building and its setting.

- 7.15 The above mentioned materials and their application not only presents a visual demonstration of the fact that the building falls into distinct use areas, but also reflects the careful consideration given to the incorporation of sustainability principles and renewable energy into this scheme. Throughout the design process, regard has been had to the need for the building to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard overall and 'Excellent' in respect of requirement Ene1 – Energy. A range of options have been examined through the consideration of the approach to adopt in designing the building to achieve these requirements.
- 7.16 The scheme has sought to adopt a low embodied energy approach to its construction. A query was raised at Design Review as why aluminium roofing was proposed and opportunities for Sedum roofing not explored, this material was selected as the additional mass of construction foundations and walling necessary to support the weight of a Sedum roof would have elevated the embodied energy bound up the materials to form the supporting structure of the building.
- 7.17 An appraisal has been undertaken in respect of the most appropriate carbon reduction strategy to employ in connection with this scheme. This appraisal has concluded that, in addition to the low energy design characteristics and use of air source heat pumps as the primary means of heating space, the building will benefit most from utilising a Combined Heat and Power system to contribute to its electrical and heat needs. The proposed gas powered system will contribute towards 25% of the heat demand for the building and 10% of its electrical requirements whilst reducing anticipated carbon outputs by up to 20%.
- 7.18 Highways Issues  
Members will recall that access was a matter which was established at outline planning permission stage where it was established that vehicular access would be derived via a new vehicular access onto Alltami Road.
- 7.19 The application has been the subject of consultation with the Head of Assets and Transportation who has advised that the proposal is considered acceptable, subject to the imposition of conditions. Whilst the car parking provision identified in Paragraph 7.07 is below that required to comply with the Council's parking standards for a development of this type, the applicant had provided a report which outlines the relationship of the proposals to existing public transport services, together with providing an assessment of the scope of the site to be accessed by pedestrians. It is considered that this factor, in addition to supporting the sustainability credentials of the scheme through BREEAM, also serve to act as mitigation in the consideration of this proposal against the applicable parking guidelines. Members will appreciate that its standards are maximum standards, representing 200% provision and therefore, a balanced and

considered approach is appropriate in circumstances such as this. In order to ensure that the sustainable transport credentials of the scheme are fully implemented, a full travel plan will be required to be submitted and agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development with the scheme being fully implemented within 6 months on the date of the building coming into use.

7.20 Concerns have also been raised in respect of the potential for vehicles to park up adjacent to the pedestrian entrance at the junction of Mill Lane and Liverpool Road with consequent impacts upon both highway safety and the safety of other pedestrian users of the adjacent access to Elfed High School and Buckley Leisure Centre, especially at peak morning and afternoon times.

7.21 In considering this issue, a number of factors should be borne in mind;

1. This junction has a lesser degree of usage presently than it did at the time that Ysgol Belmont was operational at the site.
2. All vehicular traffic associated with the proposals will be accessing the site via the vehicular access provided onto Alltami Road. Therefore there will be no increase in the use of this junction which can be attributed to the proposals.
3. There is a light controlled crossing adjacent to the area of concern upon Liverpool Road to assist in the free movement of pedestrians around this road junction. This has associated areas clearly marked upon the road where parking and stopping is prohibited. These prohibited areas extend to the junction with the school and leisure centre entrance and therefore across the frontage of the proposed pedestrian access to the health centre. Therefore, any instances of vehicles seeking to 'drop off' here are enforceable by the police.

7.22 Consideration has been given to relocating the proposed bollards to the edge of footway at this location. However, this would have the unfortunate effect of acting as an impediment to visibility at the junction and therefore would adversely affect the safety of highway users at the junction and upon the adjacent roads and would not therefore be an appropriate response to the issue. Furthermore, I am mindful that the planning process should not be seen as a means of reinforcing other control provisions where they exist via other legislation. The controlling of vehicular parking adjacent to this junction is already addressed via the prohibitive road markings. Should further parking restrictions be deemed necessary, these can be addressed by the Local Highway Authority via an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order. Such an order is not deemed necessary at this time.

7.23 Taking all of these factors into account, I do not consider that the

scheme requires amendment in response to these concerns.

7.24 Landscape

The proposal seeks to retain the hedgerow boundaries to this site and seeks, where possible to retain those trees which form part of such boundaries. Concerns were raised that the proposals would result in the loss of the mature trees within the western boundary of the Liverpool Road frontage of the site. Whilst the concern raised at Design Review in this regard has been noted, modification of the scheme to facilitate the retention of these trees has not proved possible. This is due to the fact that there is insufficient depth of the site to enable the building to be moved back into the site, thereby giving adequate separation from the trees to allow their retention. The scheme is designed such that an element of expansion space for further consulting rooms to the west is built into the site layout. This takes account of the projected growth of population within Buckley which this centre is designed to serve.

7.25 However, I consider that the loss of these trees is adequately compensated by the 9No. new trees to be planted along the boundary of the site adjacent to the proposed car park and within the landscaping areas proposed to both the site boundaries and the car park area itself. Furthermore, the existing hedgerows to the north and east are proposed to be the subject of reinforcing planting and, in the area closest to the proposed pedestrian access at Mill Lane, a new section hedgerow is to be planted.

7.26 I propose to condition the implementation and management of the proposed landscaping scheme, and also propose to condition the requirement for protective fencing to the retained hedgerows and trees. In the interest of managing the impact of the development overall in the wider landscape, samples of the proposed materials will be required to be submitted and agreed and no external lighting is permitted to be installed without a scheme for the same having been submitted and agreed in order to ensure that the site does not contribute excessive degrees of light into the night time landscape of the area.

7.27 Other matters

In response to consultation, both Dwr Cymru and Environment Agency Wales (EAW) have raised no objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the proposed drainage schemes for both foul and surface waters. The EAW have also requested that a condition requiring the installation of petrol interceptors be imposed.

7.28 Members will recall that the grant of outline planning permission included conditions as per the request of EAW and also requested that a comprehensive drainage scheme be submitted and agreed prior to works commencement. The scheme submitted with this application is considered acceptable to Dwr Cymru who request conditions

advising of the need to ensure that foul and surface water is drained separately and no surface or land waters shall be permitted into the adopted system. I propose to condition accordingly. In view of the fact that the EAW response replicates existing provisions, there is no need to impose such a condition upon any subsequent grant of Reserved Matters approval.

## **8.00 CONCLUSION**

- 8.01 The proposals are supported by the applicable policy context and the proposed design and layout represents a form of development which the Council would expect to see provided in a location within the settlement boundary of a principal settlement such as Buckley.
- 8.02 In considering this planning application 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.

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