

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

**DATE:** **23rd NOVEMBER 2022**

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

**SUBJECT:** **DEMOLITION AND ERECTION OF NEW POULTRY BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **062255**

**APPLICANT:** **MR S AKRILL**

**SITE:** **RACECOURSE POULTRY FARM, BABELL ROAD, PANTASAPH**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2021**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR S COPPLE**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **YSCEIFIOG TOWN COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT**

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

**1.00 SUMMARY**

This is a full planning application to expand Racecourse Poultry Farm through the demolition and replacement of 8 no. existing buildings with the erection of 3 no. larger buildings. The new buildings will accommodate up to 171,000 bird places an increase of 56,600 birds from the 114,400 that is currently permitted at the farm. In addition, the proposal includes the following associated infrastructure:

- Feed silos;
- Biosecurity link corridors to include control rooms;
- Site office;

- Site car parking;
- Gas tanks;
- Clean water storage tank;
- Dirty water storage tank;
- Pumphouse;
- Generator;
- Attenuation pond;
- Switch room;
- Substation;

- 1.01 The 3 no. poultry buildings will measure approximately 24.3m x 109.7m (80ft x 360ft), with an eaves height of 2.40m and a ridge height of 5.80m. The development will be served by 6 no. feed bins which will be located at the west gable end of the buildings.
- 1.02 The scale and type of development proposed is such that the proposal falls within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Regulations and has the potential to have significant environmental impacts. The applicant has provided significant information with regards to pollution control and ammonia/manure management to address any possible concerns. In addition, matters including highway safety, landscape character and impact on heritage assets have been assessed and mitigated for.
- 1.03 The proposal will provide a betterment in many areas to the current operation and built form that exists on the site. The proposal is considered acceptable in both local and national planning policy contexts. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out at Paragraph 2.01.

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

**2.01 Conditions**

1. Time Limit on Commencement
2. Compliance with Approved Plans
3. Materials
4. Manure Management Plan
5. Air Quality Assessment
6. Noise Assessment

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

**Local Member** - Councillor S Copple: No objections to the proposal

**Ysceifiog Town Council:** No objection but request that the following is given consideration:

- Introduction of parking restrictions on the Babel Road for vehicles entering or leaving the farm (to reduce the impact of disturbance to adjacent residents) and;
- That the stockpiling of hen manure from the farm on fields adjacent to residential property is to be stopped.

**CADW:** No objection to the proposed development regarding the scheduled monuments. The application is supported with a Heritage Assessment and states that because the proposed buildings are larger than the existing buildings there would be some increase in visual impact in views from the scheduled monument. However, it is noted that the changes will not alter the way that the scheduled monument is experienced, understood and appreciated. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed development will not increase any adverse impact of the poultry farm on the setting of the scheduled monument.

**Community and Business Protection:** Confirms that no land contamination assessment is required and therefore there are no observations to be made, nor is a condition requiring the assessment of land contamination required. Initial concerns with regards to noise and air pollution but these have been overcome through the submission of additional information and can be adequately conditioned

**Natural Resources Wales:** Initially raised concerns with regards to the lack of information supplied with the application. The applicant has provided significant details with regards to protected species, ammonia levels and manure management. Based on the inclusion of the mitigation measures as proposed NRW withdraw their objection and are satisfied with the proposal.

**Conservation:** The Councils Conservation Officer confirms that the site is located adjacent to Bryn y Gwnt, which is a Building of Local Interest (BLI), and there is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) on the opposite side of the road (Offa's Dyke: Section N & S of the Circle on Holywell Racecourse and Circle and Round Barrow). Conservation do not consider that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on either the BLI or SAM.

**Highway Development Control:** Additional information has been provided by the applicant and subject to the inclusion of conditions the application is considered acceptable from a highways perspective.

#### **4.00 PUBLICITY**

21 Neighbour Notifications were sent to neighbouring properties and a Site Notice was displayed. The application was also publicised by way of Press Notice.

At the time of writing two responses have been received largely in support of the development. These are summarised as follows:

1. the replacement would improve the visual aspect of the site; and
2. to protect the privacy of the dwelling, reduce noise and odour from the site a planting scheme including mature trees, bushes and hedges along the

border in included.

## **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 050925 – Replacement poultry building – Approved 01.08.2013.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

### 6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

- STR1 New Development
- GEN1 General Requirements for Development
- GEN3 Development in the open countryside
- GEN5 Environment Assessment
- L1 Landscape Character
- D1 Design quality, location and layout
- D2 Design
- D3 Landscaping
- TWH2 Protection of Hedgerows
- AC13 Access and Traffic Impact
- AC18 Parking provision and new development
- RE2 New Agricultural and Forestry Buildings
- RE3 Intensive Livestock Units

### 6.02 National Planning Policies

- Planning Policy Wales (11th Edition, February 2021)
- Future of Wales: The National Plan 2040
- Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning
- Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Community
- Technical Advice Note 11 – Noise
- Technical Advice 12 – Design
- Technical Advice 18 – Transport
- Technical Advice 23 – Economic Development
- Technical Advice 24 – Historic Environment

## **7.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### 7.01 Proposal and Site Description

The application site known as Racecourse Poultry Farm is an existing farm of 2.1 hectares (5.2 acres) situated approximately 1.2km south of the village of Gorsedd.

7.02 The site is accessed off Babel Road and is surrounded to the south, east and west by open countryside. Two detached dwellings are located to the north and north-west of the site with sporadic individual dwellings in the wider locality.

- 7.03 The proposal seeks to expand Racecourse Poultry Farm through the demolition and replacement of 8 no. existing buildings with the erection of 3 no. larger buildings. The new buildings will accommodate up to 171,000 bird places which equates to an increase of 56,600 birds from the 114,400 that is currently permitted at the farm.
- 7.04 In addition, the proposal includes the following associated infrastructure:
- Feed silos;
  - Biosecurity link corridors to include control rooms;
  - Site office;
  - Site car parking;
  - Gas tanks;
  - Clean water storage tank;
  - Dirty water storage tank;
  - Pumphouse;
  - Generator;
  - Attenuation pond;
  - Switch room;
  - Substation;
- 7.05 The 3 No. poultry buildings will measure approximately 24.3m x 109.7m (80ft x 360ft), with an eaves height of 2.40m and a ridge height of 5.80m. The development will be served by 6 no. feed bins which will be located at the west gable end of the buildings.
- 7.06 The replacement buildings are to be built in a typical modern construction consisting of dwarf concrete walls supported on strip foundations with an internal concrete floor poured over continuous DPM. The insulated roof will be insulated to 200mm fibre glass, with the walls containing 100mm insulation to achieve a U-value not less than 0.4 W/m<sup>2</sup> °C thus eliminating condensation on the inner linings and minimising solar heat gain.
- 7.07 The buildings will be clad with trapezoidal sheet cladding for the walls and roof. The finished colour of the side and gable walls and roof will be grey. The feed bins will be galvanised and the same colour to match the buildings. At the gable ends, timber weatherboard cladding will be used.
- 7.08 The proposed buildings will have pan feeders, non-drip nipple drinkers and modern thermostatically controlled hot water fuelled space heaters to heat the building which will be fuelled by gas. The ventilation in the proposed buildings will be thermostatically controlled with a combination of 16 offset ridge chimneys and 6 gable fans.
- 7.09 The system will be alarmed for high and low temperatures, feeding system failure and power failure and will be linked to an 'auto dial' computer system which alerts personnel via mobile phone to any system failures. A backup generator will also be available in the event of failure in power supply. The proposed units will produce

standard birds, based on a 40-day growing cycle, with 5-7 days at the end of each cycle for cleanout and preparation of the buildings for the incoming flock. On average, there will be 7 crops per annum.

7.10 The use of the proposed buildings is for the rearing of day-old broiler chickens through to finished table weight.

7.11 The scale and type of development proposed mean that this application falls within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

7.12 Main Issues:

The main issues to be considered in determination of this planning application relate to:-

- a) Principle of the development
- b) Highways
- c) Heritage
- d) Landscape
- e) Flood Risk & Drainage (Surface and Foul)
- f) Ecology
- g) Ammonia
- h) Noise, Odour & Dust

7.13 Principle of the Development.

The application site Poultry Farm has an extant and long history associated with agricultural purposes. Policies RE2 and RE3 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan are the most appropriate policies to consider this application against. In particular Policy RE3 which relates to intensive livestock farming states:

Development associated with the intensive rearing or accommodation of livestock, including the extension or conversion of existing buildings, will be permitted only if:

- it is located at least 400 metres away from a settlement boundary or protected building unless satisfactory mitigation measures can be implemented;
- it is designed and sited so as to minimise any environmental impact including the character and appearance of the site and surroundings; and
- the highway network (including site access and egress) is adequate to safely cater for the type and volume of traffic generated by the proposal.

7.14 There is little national guidance on this form of development. PPW generally adopts a positive approach towards a thriving agricultural sector. However, on p123 there is a section stating 'Rising levels of airborne pollution: 'SoNaRR reports increases in air pollution across a range of pollutants from urbanisation, road traffic and intensification of agriculture.' Matters of pollution are considered in full later in the report but are considered acceptable.

- 7.15 TAN6 has a section on livestock units but it is mostly about a 400m buffer between such development and neighboring land uses / protected buildings. But, this proposal is based on redevelopment / expansion of existing facility rather than a new facility and therefore the proposal is considered acceptable.
- 7.16 It is understood that the UK poultry industry provides an integrated supply chain; breeding, farming and food manufacturing. Poultry is half the meat eaten in the UK and is growing. It is on course to grow 1 billion birds every year. The gross value-added contribution (GVA) is £5.5 billion per year and the tax contribution to the Exchequer is over £1.2 billion per year. The industry directly employs over 38,000 people and it does not receive subsidies through the common agricultural policy.
- 7.17 With the continued focus on COVID-19, Brexit, food tariffs and prices, food security and reducing food miles, the efficient volume production of quality UK bred and reared chickens has become a clear driver for the poultry industry.
- 7.18 As the existing buildings have outlived their usefulness, there is a need to replace them with modern alternatives. The site is located outside of any settlement boundary, within an area where agriculture and agricultural processes are common and to be promoted. Matters including Highway Safety, Ecological Impacts and Historical Assets are all dealt with later in the report but in terms of principle the application is compliant with those considerations. Therefore, the principle of redevelopment of the modern efficient units is acceptable.
- 7.19 Highways  
The site is accessed off a minor road leading to Gorsedd to the North and Babel to the South. To the North, this road meets with the A5026 which is the main route between the North Wales Expressway and Holywell. The North Wales Expressway is a main access route across North Wales and provides access to the English/Welsh border and then onto the M56 to the East, whilst to the West provides access to Colwyn Bay and further North West Wales.
- 7.20 All traffic to the Poultry Farm will come from destinations served by the A55 (North Wales Expressway) and then via A5026 to the north of the site.
- 7.21 Public Footpath 89 abuts the site but appears unaffected by the development. The path must be protected and free from interference from the construction.
- 7.22 The data on crashmap.co.uk shows that no incidents have been recorded within the vicinity of the site. On this basis, there is no evidence to suggest there is an existing road safety issue and no specific road safety mitigation measures are required as a result of the development proposals.
- 7.23 The existing facility generates a total of 90 HGV/tractor & trailer trips per crop (180 two-way movements) over a 7-week flock cycle whilst the proposed broiler unit will generate 117 HGV/tractor & trailer trips per crop (234 two-way movements) over a flock cycle of 7 weeks.

- 7.24 It is considered that the increase in traffic movements over a 7-week flock cycle would not result in a detrimental impact on the capacity or safety of the existing highway network.
- 7.25 For the reasons outlined above, the proposals satisfy policies AC13 and AC18 of the adopted Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.26 Heritage  
The site is located adjacent to Bryn y Gwynt, which is a Building of Local Interest (BLI), and there is Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) on the opposite side of the road (approx. 140m away), reference FL006, Offa's Dyke: Section N & S of the Circle on Holywell Racecourse, and Circle and Round Barrow.
- 7.27 In addition, there are 6 listed buildings located within the Pantasaph Conservation Area, approximately 650m to 700m north-east of the site.
- 7.28 The EA concluded that the proposed development will not have any impact on the setting of the scheduled monument. However, 3 proposed buildings are larger than the 8 buildings they would replace, resulting in a slightly increased visual impact in views from the scheduled monument. The slightly increased visual impact would not alter the way that the scheduled monument is experienced, understood and appreciate.
- 7.29 As such, it is considered that the existing buildings already have a negative impact on the Schedule Ancient Monument, but the replacement buildings would not have any further detrimental impact than what exists.
- 7.30 The listed buildings within Pantasaph Conservation Area are sufficiently remote to ensure there will be no harm to the listed buildings or their settings from the development.
- 7.31 It is accepted that there is no identified archaeological remains within the proposed development site. This view is confirmed by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. In having regard to the above, the proposals satisfy policies HE1 and HE6 of the adopted Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.32 Landscape  
There are no statutory landscape designations surrounding the site. The application site is set within a landscape of predominantly large open arable fields and grassland with scattered trees, field hedgerows and drains.
- 7.33 The site falls within National Landscape Character Area 12 – Clwydian Range as defined in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. It is accepted that there would be a temporary detrimental impact on landscape character during construction, but this is reversible.
- 7.34 The operational impacts on the landscape character would be minor and localized due to the 3 replacement buildings being larger than the existing 8 buildings. This

change would be for the duration of the development but must be considered against the impact of the existing built form development.

- 7.35 There would be no loss of distinctive landscape features, such as the field vegetation beyond the building platform and hard-standing areas, or field boundaries.
- 7.36 To address the localized change to the landscape, hedgerows and banks would be restored where they are sparse or eroded. There would be new native hedge bank creation and local hedge species planting on the northern boundary to the site. To break up the length of the building's groups of field maple, whitebeam, oak and fruiting trees would be planted.
- 7.37 For the reasons outlined above the impact on landscape character is limited. The proposals satisfy policy L1 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.38 Flood Risk and Drainage (Surface Water & Foul)  
The proposed development is located entirely within Flood Zone A and B in accordance with TAN15 which indicates that the risk of flooding from rivers and sea is low. Therefore, the Annual Exceedance Probability of the site flooding is less than 0.1%. As the site is classified as Flood Zone A or B, a Flood Consequences Assessment is not required.
- 7.39 Foul and surface water drainage arrangements are separated. There is currently a Surface Water Drainage system that terminates at a storage tank, and a Foul Drainage system that terminates with a cesspit.
- 7.40 Calculation of total Nitrogen and Phosphate produced from the proposed poultry unit and all other sources of nutrient imported or produced on the holding are crucial to considering the environmental impacts of the development. The applicant has provided a manure management plan and associated nutrient management plan which have been assessed by Natural Resources Wales. It is considered that subject to the imposition of the mitigation measures as proposed the details are acceptable.
- 7.41 All foul (dirty) water will be directed to a sealed containment system, negating any potential for ground or surface water pollution. Dirty water will be removed from the storage tank via a vacuum tanker and taken off site by a registered contractor for water treatment.
- 7.42 A sustainable surface water management strategy has been designed to eliminate any risk of surface water flooding at the proposed development for rainfall events with Annual Exceedance Probability of 1.0% or higher, including the latest climate change allowance.
- 7.43 Surface water will be contained and directed to an attenuation basin for storage and controlled release. There is an existing brook approximately 650m to the east

of the site. Discharge of controlled runoff to the brook shall be considered via an existing ditch leading to the ditch.

7.44 For the reasons outlined above the impact on flood risk and drainage is limited. The proposals satisfy policies GEN1 and EWP17 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

7.45 Ecology

The habitats within and bordering the development site and construction zone comprise bare ground, buildings and short managed grassland. The grassland comprises nutrient enriched improved grassland with some areas of species poor semi-improved grassland. The site is bounded by intact species-poor hedges on all sides and there are trees scattered across the site

7.46 The surrounding land use is predominantly arable and pasture with the soil in the area being mainly calcareous and PH 8 alkaline.

7.47 There was evidence of nesting birds and breeding birds in the trees and hedgerows on site. Also, the existing building and trees do not have potential for roosting bats. However, hedgerows provide linear foraging corridors for bats.

7.48 Therefore, to avoid a detrimental impact on bats using the site, there shall be no increased light spillage on to the hedges or boundary trees with bat roost features. Lighting will be restricted to the interior of the site and should be kept to a low level and should be adequately conditioned.

7.49 Clearance of potential reptile habitats should be undertaken between mid-March and mid-June on a warm (above 13oC), dry day and with little wind. This is because the majority of amphibians would be in breeding ponds/standing water and therefore less likely to be in terrestrial refuges.

7.50 For the reasons outlined above the impact on protected species is considered to have adequately considered and mitigated against. The proposals satisfy policies WB1 and WB5 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

7.51 Ammonia

Agricultural units have the potential to impact protected sites through aerial emissions (ammonia and nitrogen deposition). NRW assesses the air quality impact a unit may have on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within a screening distance of 5km of the unit.

7.52 The detailed atmospheric modelling report submitted in support of the proposal ('A Report on the Modelling of the Dispersion and Deposition of Ammonia from the Existing and Proposed Broiler Chicken Rearing Houses at Racecourse Farm, Pantasaph in Flintshire.' by AS Modelling & Data Ltd. dated 13th August 2020) indicates that the poultry unit will exceed the 1% process contribution for Comin Helygain A Glaswelltiroedd Treffynnon SSSI/Mynydd Helgain SAC.

- 7.53 Notwithstanding the above, the proposed new units would improve Ammonia levels through the new efficient modern agricultural buildings. As such there is betterment from the proposals that the impact that currently exists. It is also noted that the application proposes other mitigating measures and the justification of the use of heat exchangers. Accordingly, it is considered that the details are acceptable.
- 7.54 Noise, Odour & Dust  
Noise generated from the buildings is likely to be from the birds and the unit's ventilation scheme.
- 7.55 The birds are permanently housed (and not in a free-range system where outdoor roaming may occur during daylight hours) and the buildings are insulated, therefore noise levels are considered too low to assess.
- 7.56 The noise emissions of the replacement poultry unit's ventilation scheme during the day, evening and night will be low, and there will be an overall decrease in the overall extract fan noise emissions compared to the existing units. This is subject to Attenuators being fitted to the roof and west gable end fans that meet the insertion losses and the construction of a 2m high close boarded timber fence to mitigate the noise impact to the nearest dwellings.
- 7.57 The following sources have been identified as contributing to a potential medium - high risk odour source from:
- Compound feed selection
  - Feed delivery and storage
  - Ventilation techniques
  - Litter conditions and management
  - Carcass storage and disposal
  - Drinking water systems
  - Final depletion
  - Cleanout (litter removal)
  - Dirty water generation and storage (washout)
  - Litter/manure
  - Dust build up
- 7.58 Odour levels are all expected to be significantly less than current levels generated. However, at one of the receptors along Babell Road, the predicted odour concentrations exceed the Environment Agency's benchmark but are below the range where UKWIR research suggests that a significant proportion of complaints occur. Overall, the scheme will result in considerable betterment compared to existing provisions.
- 7.59 The main sources of dust are the birds, their food and the floor litter. The particles of dust inside the building are emitted to the atmosphere via the ventilation system.

7.60 The impact of undertaking the proposed development would result in a reduction of total dust deposition at the three closest receptors. However, beyond these three closest receptors, the predicted total dust deposition rates are expected to be slightly higher reflecting the impact of greater bird numbers and the use of high-speed ridge fans to provide ventilation. It is considered that these levels can be managed through the imposition of a condition requiring that a management plan for the control of dust levels be submitted and approved.

7.61 Design

The 3 no. poultry buildings will measure approximately 24.3m x 109.7m (80ft x 360ft), with an eaves height of 2.40m and a ridge height of 5.80m. The development will be served by 6 no. feed bins which will be located at the west gable end of the buildings.

7.62 The replacement buildings are to be built in a typical modern construction consisting of dwarf concrete walls supported on strip foundations with an internal concrete floor poured over continuous DPM. The insulated roof will be insulated to 200mm fibre glass, with the walls containing 100mm insulation to achieve a U-value not less than 0.4 W/m<sup>2</sup> °C thus eliminating condensation on the inner linings and minimising solar heat gain. The buildings will be clad with trapezoidal sheet cladding for the walls and roof. The finished colour of the side and gable walls and roof will be grey. The feed bins will be galvanised and the same colour to match the buildings. At the gable ends, timber weatherboard cladding will be used.

7.63 The new buildings would be built on the same footprint of the existing buildings. Whilst the agricultural building would have a utilitarian appearance, they would be an improvement on the 8 individual buildings and to the overall appearance of the site.

7.64 For the reasons outlined above the design is considered to be an improvement on the existing built form across the site and it is considered that the proposals satisfy policies L1 and L2 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

**8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.01 This application seeks planning permission for the proposed demolition of existing buildings at Poultry Farm, Pantasaph and the erection of three new buildings with associated infrastructure. The new development will facilitate an increase in the total number of birds housed at the site to a total of 171,000.

8.02 Whilst the scale of the development is significant, consideration needs to be given to the existing operation of the site and the functionality of the now outdated buildings.

8.03 The development has the potential to give rise to significant environmental impacts including pollution, landscape character and highway safety. However, the applicant has engaged with the Council and statutory consultees to overcome any concerns and the proposal is considered compliant with both local and national planning policy. I therefore recommend accordingly.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning Application & Supporting Documents  
National & Local Planning Policy  
Responses to Consultation Responses to Publicity

**Contact Officer: Claire Morter**

**Telephone: 01352 703299**

**Email: [claire.e.morter@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:claire.e.morter@flintshire.gov.uk)**