

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

**DATE:** **5<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2020**

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

**SUBJECT:** **FULL APPLICATION- PART DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS, NEW SINGLE-STOREY EXTENSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL ALONGSIDE EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT WORKS AND REMODELLING OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS, CONSTRUCTION OF TWO-STOREY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT AND SINGLE-STOREY COMMUNITY HUB BUILDING, ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, SITE WORKS AND LANDSCAPING.**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **061316**

**APPLICANT:** **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SITE:** **QUEENSFERRY CAMPUS, CHESTER ROAD WEST, QUEENSFERRY**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR D E WISINGER**  
**COUNCILLOR R DAVIES**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **QUEENSFERRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SIZE OF DEVELOPMENT**

**SITE VISIT:** **No**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

1.01 This is a full application for development consisting of the part demolition of existing school buildings, new single-storey extension to primary school alongside external refurbishment works and remodelling of existing school buildings, construction of two-storey Pupil Referral Unit and single-storey community hub building,

associated car parking, site works and landscaping at 'Queensferry Campus', Chester Road West, Queensferry.

**1.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE CHIEF OFFICER OF PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY**

Agreement is sought from the Planning Committee to delegate their decision making authority to the Chief Officer. The application has been brought before the Planning Committee at the earliest opportunity due to the need for a swift determination. However, due to the restrictions placed on visiting sites due to the COVID 19 pandemic the required statutory site notices displayed on site have not been erected for the minimum amount of time. As such it is requested that the committee delegate authority to the Chief Officer to determine the application subject to the conditions listed below on the provision that the site notice does not give rise to any other issue not covered by this report.

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

- 2.01
1. Time Limit
  2. Approved plans
  3. Materials
  4. Finished Floor Levels
  5. Biosecurity risk assessment to be submitted
  6. Remediation strategy required if contamination not previously identified discovered
  7. Bat Survey recommendations to be carried out
  8. Foul Water drainage scheme

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01 Local Member

Councillor D Wisinger  
Requests delegated decision

Councillor R Davies  
Request delegated decision

Queensferry Community Council  
No response at time of writing

Highways Development Control

The proposed demolition and redevelopment site is served from existing accesses but is otherwise remote from the highway. The potential levels of traffic generation on highways serving the site are unlikely to exceed those previously generated by the former John Summers High School use of the site. The submitted travel plans are considered appropriate for use.

There is no requirement for conditions to protect the local highway network

Community and Business Protection

No Adverse Comments

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

Request conditions and advisory notes

Natural Resources Wales

Requests conditions and advisory notes

Coal Authority

We are pleased to note that the applicant has now provided the LPA with the full Report: Phase I and Phase II Geoenvironmental Site Assessment, April 2020 prepared by E3P, which includes borehole logs / plans showing the position where the boreholes were drilled together with our comments made as part of the pre-application consultation process.

I can confirm that the Coal Authority has no further comments to make

Fire and Rescue Service

No observations to make

Sport Wales

Sport Wales welcomes the proposed new Community Hub particularly its activity studio and changing rooms that will encourage and facilitate physical activity and use of the adjacent playing fields.

Airbus

No aerodrome safeguarding objections

**4.00 PUBLICITY**

4.01 Press Notice and Site Notice

No responses received as yet. Site Notice still to expire.

## **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 058233- Application for prior notification of proposed demolition John Summers High School- Prior approval not required 17/04/18

057719- Construction of a new Learning Disability Day Services facility- Approved 13/02/18

60771- Refurbishment of the existing Day Centre to accommodate Sleeping accommodation. Works include the part refurbishment of the existing building to alter walls and door openings and the installation of Fire, Sprinkler and Security Systems. Approved 10/02/20

The majority of planning history relates to the High School that formerly operated on the site.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan  
STR1- New Development  
STR8- Built Environment  
STR11- Sport, Leisure and Recreation  
GEN1- General Requirement for Development  
GEN2- Development Inside Settlement Boundaries  
D1- Design Quality, Location and Layout  
D3- Landscaping  
D4- Outdoor Lighting  
D5- Crime Prevention  
AC2 – Pedestrian Provision and Public Rights of Way  
AC13- Access and Traffic Impact  
AC18- Parking Provision and New Development  
SR1- Sports, Recreation and Cultural Facilities  
SR4- Protecting Recreational Open Space  
CF1- Retention of Existing Facilities  
CF2- Development of New Facilities  
CF5- New Community Centres  
EWP17- Flood Risk

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

7.01 This application is for the redevelopment of the Queensferry Campus site. This site is a Local Authority resource and previously accommodated John Summers High School, which closed in the summer of 2017 and has been partly demolished. The site contains Queensferry Primary School, the Glanrafon resource centre and Hwb Cyfle Adult Day Care Centre. The proposals include the demolition of

remaining parts of the former John Summers High School, development of a new dining hall for the retained Queensferry Community Primary School alongside refurbishment works to the school, construction of a new Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and construction of a new Community Hub building.

The redevelopment proposals form part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Education Programme. The remit of this programme being to deliver new investment in schools and colleges across Wales, improving facilities and reducing the number of educational buildings which are in poor condition.

In total 2,700 sq.m of floorspace is to be demolished. The new floorspace proposed to be built across the scheme will total 2,565 sq.m. Consequently, there would be an overall reduction in both floorspace and to the overall footprint of buildings on the site as a result of the development.

### Site

The application site, which has an area of approximately 3.5 hectares, out of the approximate 8 hectares of the site as a whole, is located within the settlement boundary for Deeside settlements within the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

The site contains large green open areas as well as existing areas of hardstanding and internal roads and pathways throughout. The site periphery contains well established trees.

The Campus previously accommodated the John Summers High School, which closed in Summer 2017. Much of the former high school's buildings have now been demolished, however some of its buildings remain in situ and adjoin the primary school. A hard surface games court also remains on the site adjacent to the southern boundary.

The existing Hwb Cyfle Adult Day Care Centre and former Glanrafon Centre buildings on the Campus site do not form part of the application proposals and are unaffected.

### Principle

Policy CF2 supports the development of new education and community facilities. The site is being developed as a multi-use facility with education, sports and recreation and community uses. In particular this policy explains how this form of development should utilise previously developed land where possible. This proposal redevelops an existing site already well embedded into its local

community and seeks to add community value by its new assets. It is considered that the principle of development is acceptable within the criteria and reasoning of this policy and can be supported.

Planning Policy Wales 10 says, in paragraph 4.4.1 that:

*“Community facilities contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places. They can include schools, cultural facilities, health services, libraries, allotments and places of worship.”*

Therefore the development of this site in the way proposed is considered to represent a key contribution to placemaking within the local community.

### Sports and community facilities

A key aspiration for the proposals is to improve provision and access to local sport facilities. The Community Hub will provide enhanced access for local sports teams to utilise the 2no. existing grass rugby pitches at the Campus. The pitches themselves are unaffected by this planning application, however, new changing rooms will be made available within the Hub for the use of sports teams utilising the grass pitches. At present, sports teams use retained changing rooms which were formerly associated to the John Summers High School. These changing facilities are dilapidated and do not help promote the existing rugby pitches as a viable location for sporting activity.

A disused set of tennis courts located close to the access from Chester Road West do not form part of this application and are outside of the planning application's boundary. However, as a long-term aspiration, these courts could be rejuvenated and supported by the new changing facilities at the Hub.

Guidance within TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space at paragraph 3.8 identifies the benefits that enhancements to changing facilities can have for supporting sport and recreation, which the development proposals will support.

Within the Community Hub, a new activity studio of 135 sq.m is to be provided. As well as being available for functions and alike, this new space will also be available to accommodate classes such as for dance or yoga, thus promoting health and wellbeing.

UDP Policy STR11 relates to Flintshire's sports, leisure and recreational needs. The policy seeks to meet the County's needs through ensuring that new facilities are of a scale and type appropriate to their locality. The Campus is well connected to local public transport services. with the site being on the edge of

Queensferry Town Centre which is approximately 250m to the east and located close to other surrounding amenities and services. The location is therefore entirely appropriate to locate a community facility.

Planning Policy Wales 10 explains the importance of both community facilities as well as recreation spaces in the creation of creating viable and sustainable places, as well as promoting health, wellbeing and amenity. The proposal

### Queensferry Primary School

Queensferry Community Primary is a 1 form entry primary school. There are currently 176 pupils enrolled at the school (the maximum capacity being 175), with a further 11 nursery pupils. Presently there are 29 members of staff, with staffing levels fundamentally to be unchanged as a result of the proposals.

The existing dining hall currently used by Queensferry Community Primary is proposed to be demolished, and a replacement dining/assembly hall, new kitchen and entrance will be contained in a new extension in its place. The new extension is to provide 324 sq.m of floorspace. Pupil and staff numbers will be fundamentally unchanged by the proposal. The scheme would remove unsuitable and unusable existing buildings and provide a greatly superior school environment through a new extension.

Parts of the building which are sited beside the internal access road from Chester

Road West will be demolished to allow for the development of a new main school entrance as well as new external teaching space and a dedicated servicing/delivery bay. Part of the existing school building where it connects to the new extension will also be remodelled and refurbished.

The school's overall footprint will be reduced as a result of the works, however this will not impact the schools teaching capacity. The 31 existing car parking spaces to the north of the building will remain in place, with the car park unchanged. The primary school's existing hard surfaced and grass play areas on the eastern side of the school building are also unaffected and are to be retained.

The extension is in keeping with the existing school building and I consider it is in accordance with relevant Flintshire Unitary Development Plan policies

The extension and refurbishment of the primary school is a key element of the proposal and assists the provision of Welsh Governments 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools initiative by upgrading the currently inadequate school facilities.

## PRU

A new stand alone and purpose built Pupil Referral Unit is proposed to be built on the site. The new Pupil Referral Unit is to be known as Plas Derwen and will accommodate existing specialist educational services currently provided within the existing school building, as well as bring together within a single purpose built building, pupil referral facilities which are presently located elsewhere within the local authority area.

The development proposals seek to provide a new purpose built two-storey PRU facility, providing 1,641 sq.m (GIA) of floorspace. The new building would be better equipped to meet the specific educational needs of its pupils than the current inadequate facility located within the buildings to be demolished. The proposed facility would accommodate up to a maximum of 98 pupils and would consolidate into a single facility the existing PRU provision within the local authority area which at present is provided across a number of sites. Staff working at the site would subsequently increase from 12 at present to around 35.

Internally the PRU will provide a central hall space, classrooms, group working spaces and staff areas. Externally a hard surface play area will be provided, as well as an enclosed grass play area to the north western side of the building. The new building would be better equipped to meet the specific educational needs of its pupils.

In terms of its design, the PRU is proposed to be two storeys in height with a parapet roof. The building is finished with panels of dark grey and light grey brick. The design is characteristic of the other buildings on the site whilst being designed to cater for its specific use, with a carefully considered layout and entrance arrangements to enable the proper management of the site and the needs of the pupils. The design of the building ensures that it will site within the landscape and not be an overly dominant feature that would be detrimental to neighbouring amenity.

Access to the PRU will be achieved via the existing access from Dee View, to the south of the campus. This will provide a distinct route of access for the PRU, separate to that of the other facilities on the Campus. The facility will utilise the existing car park accessed from Dee View. This car park will be remodelled and extended to incorporate a total of 32 car parking spaces (including 2no. disabled spaces), as well as 4no. dedicated minibus parking spaces. A designated drop-off/taxi area would also be provided. Covered cycle parking for 14 bicycles (7 stands) is also to be incorporated.

Acoustic fencing is proposed along a 72m section of the site's southern boundary, between the proposed building and the existing dwelling at Dee View. This fencing will provide both visual and acoustic screening between the PRU outdoor play area and the neighbouring residential properties to the south as a measure to help protect the residential amenity enjoyed at the neighbouring properties

A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate that noise associated to the PRU building would not unduly impact the amenity enjoyed at any neighbouring properties. The assessment also establishes that an appropriate noise climate for the educational use will be achieved internally.

I consider that the proposed PRU facility is appropriate to the site in terms of its design, scale and massing, its use, its visual and other impacts upon neighbouring amenity and its access. The proposal represents an important facility for the benefit of the entire County.

### Community Hub

The new Community Hub building is proposed to be a single storey building with a mono-pitch roof and will include an activity studio, learning workspaces, break-out area, a kitchen and serving area, meeting rooms and changing facilities which will be linked to the sports pitches which currently exist on the Campus. The building would provide a total floorspace of 600 sq.m (GEA). 20 car parking spaces are proposed to be provided for users of the Community Hub, including 2 disabled bays. A dedicated delivery drop-off area is also incorporated. It is anticipated that the Hub will initially operate with 3 permanent members of staff.

The Community Hub building is located centrally on the site, to provide convenient access to the existing sports pitches on the northern half of the wider Campus site. This also allows the building to take advantage of the topography of the land which falls very gradually from south to north. Locating the building alongside the internal access road enables the building to be favourably viewed alongside the Adult Day Care Centre building and preserves open grass areas elsewhere within the Campus site.

The Community Hub building provides important modern facilities to strengthen the existing sports, recreation and cultural activities on the site. This is consistent with the multi-use community value of the campus as a whole, when taken alongside the educational buildings, the day care and community hubs and sports facilities.

The building is single storey grey-brick building with external cladding. I consider the design to be both appropriate to the use and the wider setting of the Campus.

## Highways

Fundamentally, the access arrangements for the Campus won't be changed by the proposal. The existing access from Chester Road West will continue to provide vehicle access to the car park for Queensferry Community Primary, as well as the new Community Hub. Similarly, the existing access from Dee View will continue to provide vehicle access to the car park for Plas Derwen PRU. As such, suitable access points and designated car parking which is safe for both vehicles and pedestrians will continue to be provided on site, compliant with UDP Policy AC13.

There is currently no cycle parking provision at the school for either pupils or staff. As part of the proposals, this will be improved and sustainable forms of travel will be promoted. Provision will be included for 7 bicycle hoops, giving parking capacity for 14 bicycles, as well as 1 scooter pod with capacity for 10 scooters. This new provision will help provide increased opportunity for pupils and staff alike to travel to the school through sustainable means.

New Travel Plans for Queensferry Community Primary and Plas Derwen have been prepared in response to the site's new proposals. Copies of the Travel Plans have been provided in support of the planning application. The Travel Plans will serve as live documents to promote and support sustainable forms of travel by both staff and pupils and will be monitored in future years to keep under review progress made against the sustainable travel targets.

The Highways Authority consider that the potential levels of traffic generation on highways serving the site are unlikely to exceed those previously generated by the former John Summers High School use of the site. The submitted travel plans are considered appropriate for use.

As such it is considered that there is no requirement for conditions to protect the local highway network .

As a result of the works, it will be necessary to re-route an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) which traverses the site from Chester Road West to Dee View, passing to the east of the primary school buildings. An alternate improved route will be provided to the west of the primary school which will pass alongside the proposed Community Hub Building. The existing public right of way would remain open to the public during the construction phase until such time as the alternative route is opened. It is intended that a separate application for a Public Path Diversion Order will be progressed once planning permission is obtained.

## Trees

A comprehensive Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment have been undertaken as part of the planning application submission. The assessment sets out the arboricultural impact of developing the site, subsequent mitigation recommendations and protective measures. The tree survey was undertaken in January 2020 and was completed in accordance with BS5837:2012.

Broadly speaking, the Campus site is lined with trees and vegetation along its south western and south eastern boundaries. Trees and vegetation are also found along both sides of the access road from Dee View and within the site alongside internal roads and footways. Any trees sited within the existing established perimeter fencing of Queensferry Community Primary are not impacted by the development proposals. No trees on or immediately adjacent to the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order or are located within a Conservation Area.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment has established that in order to facilitate the development proposals a limited number of existing trees will require removal. Of the trees identified for removal, none are Category A trees. A number of Category B1 and B2 trees (moderate quality) and Category C trees (low quality) are identified for removal, where the requirements of the proposed development do not allow for their retention. A further limited number of Category U trees are also recommended for removal as a result of their poor condition or limited useful longevity. No hedgerows require removal to facilitate the development.

Comprehensive planting strategy is proposed which will appropriately mitigate for the loss of any trees necessary to facilitate the development. The soft landscaping plan submitted includes details for replacement planting incorporating both trees and shrubs. An overall increase in trees will be achieved across the site, with circa 55 new trees proposed within the landscaping scheme, alongside other complementary planting. Areas of wildflower meadow and natural grassland are also incorporated within the soft landscaping scheme. Once the planting scheme has had opportunity to mature, there will be an arboricultural net-gain and improvement in respect to trees and other planting across the site, providing compliance with UDP policy TWH1 and the guidance within SPG No.4 (Trees and Development). This will be secured by condition.

### Flooding issues

The site is categorised as being within Flood Zone A in the definitive maps in TAN15. This designation covers the northern most half of the site, which is not directly affected by the development. The majority of the new development is shown to lie outside the flood outline for

this event. A marginal area is shown to be at risk, with several of the new car parking spaces shown to lie partially within the flood outline.

As a result of the application proposals, the overall extent of impermeable areas across the site will actually be reduced as a consequence of the demolition works incorporated to remove parts of the existing school buildings, and the introduction of new replacement grass and planting areas. The Flood Consequences Assessments estimates that post-development, impermeable areas on the site would decrease by approximately 14%. The FCA states that the flood depths for this area are 'zero' at the point where the flood outline meets the car park, and on this basis states that no mitigation is required. Natural Resources Wales consider that the flood depths at this location are expected to be in the region of 5 cm. Although the proposed car parking has not been designed to be flood free, it is considered that the expected flood depths are shallow and are unlikely to pose a risk to property or people. Given the shallow nature of the flooding, and the fact that the car parking will be used as part of the existing school site it is considered that the risks to be acceptable and the development to comply with the advice in TAN15.

### Welsh Language

With regards to the considerations of Welsh Language and the advice contained within Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language, public bodies must seek to achieve a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language, which is to be achieved through "a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh Language and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation."

Signage across the Campus is currently and will continue to be bilingual. The Community Hub will provide a valuable community resource which will add social value to the local community, create new local jobs, contributing to the Welsh government's aim to help sustain local communities through job creation and a strong economy. As such I consider that the proposals will comply with UDP Policy GEN6 and TAN 20 guidance in that the proposals will actively support Welsh language, sport and culture. The schools through their teaching curriculums and policies will continue to support the Welsh language and culture. Furthermore, new and enhanced opportunities for local groups and sports teams will be provided through improved access to facilities for them to utilise.

### Other matters

Phase 1 and Phase 2 Site Investigation Reports have been completed, including intrusive ground investigations, in order to assess the geo-environmental condition of the site and to assess any

contamination risks. The associated site investigation reports undertaken by E3P are provided in support of the planning application. An assessment of the site's risks associated to any previous coal mining activity has also been undertaken and is provided within the reports. The Coal Authority consider that the investigations undertaken in preparation of the development proposal confirm that the site is suitable for development subject to appropriate remediation works which can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

Whilst Sport Wales are supportive of the principle of the development, particularly the community hub, they have queried the loss of the tennis courts at the location of the PRU. It is the case that these courts are underused, in a poor state of repair and not available for community use. As such I do not consider that the proposal would represent a loss of existing sporting facilities. The benefit of the community hub use to local sporting facilities outweighs the potential loss of this disused facility.

## **8.00 CONCLUSION**

### **8.01 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

**Contact Officer: James Beattie**  
**Telephone: (01352) 703262**  
**Email: [james.beattie@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.beattie@flintshire.gov.uk)**