

Application No: 23/2349N

Location: Bentley Motors Limited, PYMS LANE, CREWE, CW1 3PL

Proposal: Demolition of an existing temporary industrial warehouse and construction of an Integrated Logistics Centre including a covered logistics route, internal amenity and office annex.

Applicant: Mr Andrew Robertson, Bentley Motors Ltd

Expiry Date: 01-Nov-2023

## **SUMMARY**

The proposal is for new integrated logistics centre for the existing Bentley Motors campus which would also involve the demolition of the existing temporary structure, some 8 years old, to the east of the existing workshops to provide for construction of the new, permanent logistics building. The existing structure on site only has an intended lifespan of some 10 years and therefore this application proposal seeks to provide a more permanent, appropriate facility.

The principle of the development is compatible with surrounding land uses and would facilitate the delivery of new jobs and economic growth for Bentley Motors, a large local employer. The proposal would thereby help to deliver significant economic and social benefits.

The proposal is compatible with the surrounding development and the design, scale and form of both the detailed proposals and those indicated in outline form would not appear incongruous within their context. The impact of the proposal on trees and hedges would not be significant and environmental considerations relating to flooding, drainage, land contamination (subject to further investigations), public open space, and ecology would be acceptable subject to conditions and the inspection of further submitted detail by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to be reported in the committee update. The committee update will also deal with the response of the applicant to the objection of United Utilities.

The impact on neighbouring residential amenity would be acceptable and owing to the generous separation with the nearest neighbouring properties and having regard to the context of the area as a centre for automotive manufacturing. Satisfactory access and parking provision can be provided and the development would not result in material harm on the local highway network. Highways has no objection to the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS), the policies of the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Plan Document and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Recommendation:**

Approval subject to conditions

## DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

This application relates to the site of Bentley Motors, a large industrial site for the manufacturing of motor vehicles located on Pyms Lane, Crewe. The Crewe Bentley campus has been in situ for over 70 years and hosts the full lifecycle of motor car production, including design, research and development, engineering and manufacturing. The wider site is expansive and runs from Middlewich Road in the west, along Pyms Lane, now closed to traffic, to the border of residential housing estate to the east. The south of the wider site is bounded by the railway line. The whole site is covered by the Strategic Employment Site EMP1 in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, and the designated employment site CRE1 - Land at Bentley Motors - in the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document. The site is within the settlement boundary of Crewe.

The site edged red for this application is at the east of the main complex of workshops within the Bentley campus. It is occupied largely by the temporary structure serving as the logistics warehouse which was approved by planning permission 16/5609N, in use class B1c (light industrial). The existing structure is some 11m height, with a footprint of some 115m x 70m. The existing building is composed of two very shallow roof pitches.

## DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is an application for full planning permission for demolition of the existing warehouse and construction of an integrated logistics centre with an attached office annex. The proposed building would approximately have a footprint of some 155m x 87m, meaning a materially larger footprint than that of the existing building. It would be constructed to a maximum height of approximately 13m and formed similarly of two roof pitches, albeit with a differing pitch and attached to the existing buildings to the south and west. The existing space about the south of the existing building would be subsumed by the increased length and the weighbridge would be re-sited to the south of the site.

## RELEVANT HISTORY

There is an extensive planning history for the Bentley Motors site. However, the only applications of relevance to this proposal are as follows:

18/0819D Discharge of conditions 4,5,6,7, & 8 on application 16/5609N *Part approved/part refused 16/APR/2018*

17/2934D Discharge of conditions 1 to 10 on application 16/5609N - It is proposed to construct a logistics building on existing hard standing to the east of Bentley's Pyms Lane plant. Part of the car park will be reconstructed to form a dispatch area. *Part approved/part refused 24/AUG/2017*

16/5609N It is proposed to construct a logistics building on existing hard standing to the east of Bentley's Pyms Lane plant. Part of the car park will be reconstructed to form a dispatch area. *Approved with conditions 03/FEB/2017*

16/0341N - Demolition of all existing on-site buildings and structures, the construction of a five

storey engineering technical centre comprising offices at the front of the building and warehousing at the rear, the construction of a two-storey design centre comprising offices and a workshop together with associated works – *Approved with conditions – 27-Oct-2017*

15/3869N - It is proposed to convert the existing field into a private car park for Bentley Motors. The site is an existing green area which will be converted to hard standing material to suit the needs of a car park. The car park will be enclosed with fences. North east and south of the proposed car park, a 14m width band will be dedicated for planting. – *Approved 18-Mar-2016*

15/4141N - Alterations to E1 Car Park, realignment of internal road, construction of a vehicle test building, relocation of Gate 3 Security Lodge and amendments to gate arrangement, installation of 5 No. entry gate positions and relocation of cycle and motorcycle shelters - *Approved 18-Nov-2015*

15/3665N - Construction of a 4 storey office building on the site of an existing carpark – *Approved 28-Oct-2015*

14/5262N - Proposed pre-fabricated building, complete with services to be installed as office and restrooms for Lorry Park on site at Bentley Motors – *Approved 09-Feb-2015*

14/2944N - Construction of a new Painted Body Store Warehouse and ancillary accommodation totalling approximately 5060sqm gross internal floor area. The relocation of fuel tanks and a fuel filling location. The proposed building comprises a large warehouse with one and a half portal frame structure, a single storey office annex to the North elevation with rest and WC facilities, an enclosed link to the existing adjacent warehouse to the east and an enclosed bridge link above the private road to the adjacent property to the North. A 10m overhanging canopy will be provided for the full width of the building to the west elevation and a 2m deep canopy to the north side of the east link – *Approved 29-Aug-2014*

13/5114N - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application 12/4426N (proposed development of the site to provide a permanent car park with a total of 1817 car parking spaces plus lorry parking for up to 14 HGV's) – *Approved 18-Feb-2014*

12/4426N - Proposed development of the site to provide a permanent car park with a total of 1817 car parking spaces plus lorry parking for up to 14 HGV's – *Approved 03-Jun-2013*

12/4319N – Resolved to grant full planning permission (subject to S106 Obligation) for the erection of a two storey temporary office accommodation with links to an existing building to accommodate existing staff relocated on site on 1st May 2013

12/3418N – Full planning permission approved to develop site to provide a permanent car park with a total of 478 parking spaces on 30th November 2012

12/4373N - New build showroom with associated car parking approved on 6th February 2013

## **POLICIES**

### **National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

MP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
PG 1 Overall Development Strategy  
PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy  
PG 7 Spatial Distribution of Development Policy  
SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East Policy  
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles Policy  
IN 1 Infrastructure  
IN 2 Developer Contributions  
EG 1 Economic Prosperity  
EG 3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites  
SE 1 Design  
SE 2 Efficient Use of Land  
SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
SE 4 The Landscape  
SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE 6 Green Infrastructure  
SE 7 Built Heritage  
SE 9 Energy Efficient Development  
SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management  
SC 2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities  
CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO 2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure  
CO 4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments  
Appendix C - Parking Standards

### **Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)**

EMP1 - Strategic Employment Area  
EMP2 - Employment Allocations  
GEN1 – Design Principles  
PG9 - Settlement Boundaries  
HOU12 - Amenity  
REC1 - Open Space Protection  
ENV1 - Ecological Network  
ENV2 - Ecology  
ENV5 - Landscaping  
ENV6 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
ENV7 - Climate Change  
ENV12 - Air Quality  
ENV16 - Surface Water Management and Flood Risk  
ENV17 - Protecting Water Resources

HER 7 Non Designated Heritage Asset  
INF1 - Cycleways, Bridleways and Footpaths  
INF3 - Highway Safety and Access  
CRE1 - Land at Bentley Motors, Crewe

## **Neighbourhood Planning**

There is no Neighbourhood Plan for Crewe.

## **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Environmental Protection - no objection subject to conditions

United Utilities - objection on the basis of impact on sewer - to be dealt with between Bentley and United Utilities and to be discussed in committee update.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) - holding objection subject to further information which has been submitted and will be reviewed prior to the committee update

Active Travel England - no consultation response

Greenspaces on behalf of Cheshire East Council (formerly known as ANSA) - no objection

Highways - no objection

Crewe Town Council - no consultation response

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

Chapter 2 of the NPPF introduces the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is the focus of policy MP1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS). This policy stipulates that proposals that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy SD2 of the CELPS is the overarching policy in relation to the design of all proposals, requiring them to contribute positively to an area's character and identity in terms of design and the relationship to the future and neighbouring occupiers. These considerations, along with others, are addressed in the following sections in this report.

The application site is within a designated strategic employment area. Site allocation CRE1 of the SADPD [Land at Bentley Motors](#), Pym's Lane applies to the site.

Policy EMP1 of the SADPD states that these strategic employment areas are of particular significance to the economy of Cheshire East and will be protected for employment use as set

out in CELPS Policy EG 3 on existing and allocated employment sites. The proposal enhances the employment provision of Bentley Motors at this site and very substantial weight is afforded to the proposal in light of this.

The proposal is for a new B2 (general industrial) integrated logistics centre building and associated infrastructure within a settlement boundary. Subject to all other relevant material considerations there is no policy reason to undermine the principle of development. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that encourage sustainable economic development should be treated favourably and this view is further reinforced in Policy EG1 of the In line of the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlines in the NPPF and CELPS policy MP1 the principle of development is considered acceptable subject to material considerations as set out below.

### **Design and Impact on Character of the Area**

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SD2 states that all development will be expected to contribute positively an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of;

- Height, scale, form and grouping
- Choice of materials
- External design features
- Massing of the development (the balance between built form and green/public spaces)
- Green infrastructure; and
- Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood

Policy SE1 of the CELPS advises that the proposal should achieve a high standard of design and, wherever possible, enhance the built environment. It should also respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings.

Policy GEN1 (Design Principles) sets a number of design principles that development proposals should meet. This includes the following; 1. create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, avoiding the imposition of standardised and/or generic design solutions where they do not establish and/or maintain a strong sense of quality and place; 2. create a sense of identity and legibility by using landmarks and incorporating key views into, within and out of new development; 3. reflect the local character and design preferences set out in the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide supplementary planning document unless otherwise justified by appropriate innovative design or change that fits in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

The main pattern of development on site is that of a tight, regularly arranged grid of warehouses and workshops. the proposed logistics hub would extend this built form to the east and would read as a visually logical addition to the main factory complex when viewed from Pyms Lane to the north and the row of residential properties to the east as well as points within the site to the south. The bulk of the existing factory would obscure view of the new structure from any point beyond to the west, as it does with the current structure on site. The proposed structure would be significant in bulk and scale although when read from the public highway to the north and the houses to the east it would not appear visually overbearing given the existing built form on site. The proposed building would not read as significantly taller than the existing building in

material terms. The proposed materials palette would be entirely in keeping with this advanced manufacturing facility and befits this strategic employment site and key part of the industrial base of Cheshire East. The facing materials at the walls would be aluminium cladding.

In line with the requirement of site allocation CRE1 and policy HER7 of the SADPD and policy SE7 of the CELPS consideration has been had to the locally listed building at Bentley Motors. This would be located well beyond the site edged red to the north and would not be impacted in any way.

Overall then the proposal would comply with the above policies on visual amenity.

### **Impact on Residential Amenity**

Policy SE12 of the CELPS states that the council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, soil contamination, light pollution or any other pollution which would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm. Developers will be expected to minimise and mitigate the effects of possible pollution arising from the development itself, or as a result of the development (including additional traffic) during both the construction and the life of the development. Where adequate mitigation cannot be provided, development will not normally be permitted.

Policy HOU12 of the SADPD states that with reference to the residential standards set out in Table 8.2 'Standards for space between buildings', the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide supplementary planning document and other policies where relevant, development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses, or future occupiers of the proposed development due to: 1. loss of privacy; 2. loss of sunlight and daylight; 3. the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings; 4. environmental disturbance or pollution; or 5. traffic generation, access and parking.

The proposed industrial unit would generate a workforce of some 80 employees. Rather than a physical manufacturing process it is proposed that the specific use which would occur would be the storage and retrieval of parts relating to the car manufacturing process. The application has stated that separate waste stream bins will be provided throughout the building which will be emptied daily and taken to the on-site recycling centre for treatment. The waste is then separated into bulk waste stream bins for recycling off site.

The Council's environmental protection team has reviewed the submitted noise report and environmental health detail and has no objection, subject to appropriate conditions in relation to this.

The proposed integrated logistics building is within an existing complex of entirely industrial use buildings with the only neighbouring residential use sited to the east, where west facing rear elevation windows of houses at Minshull New Road. Some 65m would be retained from the new ILC building to the closest neighbouring property's rear elevation wall which is easily in compliance with the standards set out in Table 8.2 and having regard to the general desirability of separation between this advanced manufacturing site and residential uses.

Matters relating to parking and access will be discussed in the relevant section further in this report. Subject to this it is therefore found that policy HOU12 of the SADPD and policy SE12 of the CELPS would be complied with.

## **Public Open Space**

Site allocation CRE1 states the proposal will be supported where it would retain the existing sports facility, playing field and associated area of existing open space unless they are proven to be surplus to need, or suitable improved provision is created having regard to the requirements of CELPS Policy SC 2 'Indoor and outdoor sports facilities'. The Bentley sports facility 'Legends' falls outside the site edged red and would be retained.

This application triggers Policy SE6 requirements for open space provision and sports contributions.

The application to demolish an existing temporary building and construct an integrated logistics centre. This site is identified within the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document as CRE1: Land at Bentley Motors. Development for the site should include the design to be sensitive, to ensure the amenity of residents in the vicinity of the site is not unacceptably affected. The site plan indicates a small area of green space between the car park and adjoining properties. The Open Space officer has requested this is appropriately planted to reduce the visual impact of the new building for residents. In line with this and in terms of general landscaping considerations a landscaping scheme will be conditioned.

The Design and Access Statement shows the logistics route will interfere with the current viewing 'garden' and the removal of a small corner of shrubbery. With regards to open space, the public open space officer has requested that the applicant could put forward options to improve or increase on site provision.

In terms of outdoor sports facilities, financial contributions for offsite provision to be used in line with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy or any subsequent document would normally be sought. However, in this instance ANSA/public open space have stated that they believe the impact should be for the benefit of employees. They therefore request the applicant to put forward potential improvements for the sports on site. Clearly this will need to be weighed in the overall planning balance.

The impact on the land designated as green space then must be considered in the context of what use that space currently serves and the context of the wider Bentley site which has extensive sports and recreation facilities which would not be impacted by the proposal. Finally, this needs to be considered in the planning balance if the scheme as a whole, taking into account the substantial weight afforded to the site's employment designation and the economic benefits afforded by the scheme.

## **Highways**

Policy CO1 of the CELPS states, inter alia, that to deliver the council objectives of delivering a safe, sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system that encourages a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking; supportive of the needs of residents and



businesses and preparing for carbon free modes of transport, the council will expect development to: 1. Reduce the need to travel by: i. Guiding development to sustainable and accessible locations or locations that can be made sustainable and accessible; ii. Ensuring development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design; iii. Encouraging more flexible working patterns and home working; iv. Supporting improvements to communication technology for business, education, shopping and leisure purposes and; v. Supporting measures that reduce the level of trips made by single occupancy vehicles.

Policy INF3 of the SADPD states that development proposals should: i. comply with the relevant Highway Authority's and other highway design guidance; ii. provide safe access to and from the site for all highway users and incorporate safe internal movement in the site to meet the requirements of servicing and emergency vehicles; iii. make sure that development traffic can be satisfactorily assimilated into the operation of the existing highway network so that it would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network; iv. incorporate measures to assist access to, from and within the site by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and meets the needs of people with disabilities; and v. not generate movements of heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads, or on roads without suitable access to the classified highway network.

The proposal is to demolish an existing industrial building and replace it with a new one, extending the building south slightly to increase the floor area.

There will not be any reduction in on-site car parking spaces and access will remain from within the Bentley site, with no changes to access from the public highway.

There is a significant number of existing car parking spaces within the wider Bentley site and given the existing fall-back use, the parking is considered adequate.

The extension is minor when compared to the wider and existing Bentley site and the Highway impact will be minimal and no objection is raised.

### **Drainage and Flood Risk**

Policy SE13 of the CELPS, in line with chapter 15 of the NPPF, states - inter alia - that developments must integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation, in line with national guidance. Policy ENV16 of the SADPD states, inter alia, that in order to manage surface water drainage effectively and reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with LPS Policy SE 13 'Flood risk and water management', development proposals should satisfy the following criteria. It should be demonstrated how surface water runoff can be appropriately managed. Surface water runoff should be managed to achieve: i. on greenfield sites, at least no increase in runoff rates, and a reduction in rates where possible; and ii. on previously developed sites, a reduction in existing runoff rates in line with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (2015) or any subsequent replacement standards.

Bentley have Environmental Agency consent to discharge their waste via the foul drainage. There are no large quantities of trade effluent.

Cheshire East Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the application and based on the submitted information they would place a holding objection until the below conditions have been satisfied: Details for the party responsible for the maintenance of flood mitigation assets -The below pipes show flooding in the 1 in 100 + CC rainfall event. The LLFA has also stated that they will require evidence of how this flooding will be contained within the site boundary. A detailed surface water management plan is required to ensure that the development is in accordance with NPPF and local planning policies. It should be ensured that all major developments have sufficient surface water management, are not at increased risk of flooding and do not increase flood risk off-site.

To this end the applicant has submitted extensive technical detail to respond to the LLFA's comments which are being reviewed at the time of authoring this report and will be reported back in the committee update.

United Utilities has objected on the basis of impact to the sewer. They have stated that the applicant should contact their Developer Services team to address the objection prior to submitting agreed details to the Council for formal consideration.

The applicant has submitted a comprehensive Phase II Geoenvironmental Site Assessment to the Council. This is considered to satisfy the requirements of planning control in relation to drainage although it will be for the applicant to demonstrate this to United Utilities in terms of their asset protection outside of planning control. There is however this outstanding United Utilities objection.

### **Trees/Ecology**

There are no protected trees on site.

The application site falls within the CEC ecological network which forms part of the SADPD. Policy ENV1 therefore applied to this application. Policy SE3 of the CELPS and policy ENV2 of the SADPD also require development proposals to deliver a gain for biodiversity.

Whilst the application site is extensive it consists almost entirely of hard standing and buildings. Consequently, opportunities for ecological enhancement are limited. Therefore, a condition will be recommended regarding enhancements to biodiversity.

The Council's's ecologist has advised that that roosting bats are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development

### **CONCLUSION and PLANNING BALANCE**

The considerations relating to the comments of all statutory consultees have been noted and addressed in the report, subject to a committee update from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and clarification on the requirements of United Utilities.

Substantial weight is afforded to the clear policy support for the proposal at this site in the form of CRE1 Bentley Motors employment allocation. This proposal would bring economic benefits and investment in an area with a longstanding association with the manufacture of motor

vehicles. Bentley Motors are a major employer located within one of the principal growth areas of the Borough where national / local plan policies strongly support such development.

Although no additional recreational provision for workers is proposed this has to be balanced against the economic benefits of the proposals as a whole and the aspirations of the Council to realise the growth potential of Crewe and to allow for the growth of employment on this strategic employment site as defined in the Development Plan by encouraging investment in the area. The proposal prefigures the production of new electric vehicle products in the next few years within the Volkswagen/Bentley group and would allow for the Cheshire manufacturing site to prepare a business case to the VW Board in Germany in respect of this to bring manufacturing to Cheshire East. This planning application is therefore recommended for approval.

