

Application No: 16/0341N

Location: Land North Of, PYMS LANE, CREWE

Proposal: 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

Applicant: Mr Andrew Robertson, Bentley Motor Company

Expiry Date: 22-Apr-2016

## **SUMMARY:**

This proposal would bring economic benefits through the delivery of new jobs 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 and merging plan policies strongly supports such development.

The proposal is compatible with the surrounding development and the design, scale and form of the building would not appear incongruous within its context subject to the use of high quality materials and off site planting works. The main Engineering Technical Centre Building (ETC) would be the largest in terms of its height and scale in the vicinity of the area. However, this has to be balanced against the significant economic benefits of the proposals and the aspirations of the Council to realise the growth potential of Crewe as the '*Crewe High Growth City/M6 Corridor*'.

The proposals will have a moderate effect on the landscape, which in time, will be mitigated by additional planting to the north of the site and in the fullness of time by potential development to the north of the site identified for development under Policy CS3 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version.

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) and ecology would be acceptable.

The impact on neighbouring residential amenity would be acceptable owing to the low impact nature of the use (predominately offices and research and development), the generous separation with 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 'severe harm' on the local highway network. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) is satisfied that any additional vehicular movements and parking generated by the proposals could be accommodated by the existing highway network and the existing and proposed parking provision at the site. It is also important to note that recent improvements to the pedestrian facilities around the site (recent installation of zebra crossings) would support the safe movement of pedestrians across Pym's Lane.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits that would outweigh any conflict with the local plan in respect of its waste allocation. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the adopted Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and advice contained within the NPPF and emerging local policy. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE with Conditions**

## **PROPOSAL:**

This application seeks full planning permission for the 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 at Bentley Motors on land to the north of Pym's Lane, Crewe.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION:**

This application relates to the site of Bentley Motors, a large industrial site for the manufacturing of motor vehicles located within the settlement boundary for Crewe. This application relates specifically to land on the north side of Pym's Lane directly opposite the main entrance to the plant.

The application site measures some 4.5 hectares in size and comprises of the Council Waste Transfer Depot comprising primarily hard surfaced land and several industrial/storage units together with external areas of storage and parking with the remaining parts of the site comprising surface car parking.

The site is bound to the north by the 'Meadow Brook Cemetery', to the east by a 4 storey office building which is presently being constructed for use by Bentley beyond which there are residential properties fronting Pym's Lane. To the south of Pym's Lane is the main production plant. Directly to the west of the site, are other industrial and commercial units and associated parking further along. There are other areas which are within the applicant's ownership for car parking, a showroom and ancillary development.

The site falls entirely within the settlement boundary of Crewe as designated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and occupies part of a larger site waste allocation where it is detailed as a 'preferred site' for a waste management facility, as designated in the Cheshire Waste Replacement Local Plan Waste (ref. WM16).

Land to the north of the site is identified as Strategic Site CS3 under the merging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version Strategic Site which seeks to promote the development of a new sustainable neighbourhood at Leighton West and promotes the creation of an automotive research, development and supply hub, in partnership with Bentley Motors, in order to provide new employment opportunities and expand the automotive related investment in Crewe and the wider area.

## **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:

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

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

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 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013

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

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

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

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

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

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 motor cycle shelters – Approved 18-Nov-2015

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

### **National Policy:**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs 7, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 28, 56, 65, 109, 111 and 118.

### **Development Plan:**

The Development Plan for this area is the adopted Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan, which allocates the site within the Crewe Settlement Boundary.

The relevant Saved Policies are:-

### **Crewe Local Plan Policy**

BE.13 (Buildings of Local Interest)  
BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.2 (Design Standards)  
BE.3 (Accessing and Parking)  
E.4 (Development on Existing Employment Areas)  
TRAN.3 Pedestrians  
TRAN.8 Existing Car Parks  
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version**

Policy MP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy PG 1 Overall Development Strategy  
Policy PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy  
Policy PG 6 Spatial Distribution of Development  
Policy SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles  
Policy CS3 Leighton West  
Policy IN 1 Infrastructure  
Policy IN 2 Developer Contributions  
Policy EG 1 Economic Prosperity  
Policy EG 3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites  
Policy SE 1 Design  
Policy SE 2 Efficient Use of Land  
Policy SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
Policy SE 4 The Landscape  
Policy SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
Policy SE 6 Green Infrastructure  
Policy SE 7 The Historic Environment  
Policy SE 8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy  
Policy SE 9 Energy Efficient Development  
Policy SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management  
Policy CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
Policy CO 2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure  
Policy CO 4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

The relevant saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

### **Other Material Considerations:**

- All Change for Crewe: High Growth City
- The Cheshire East Economic Development Strategy (June 2011);
- The Local Plan Strategy Employment Background Paper (March 2014);

- The Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)
- EC Habitats Directive and the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2010.

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

**Highways:** No objection subject to conditions.

**Environmental Protection:** No objection, subject to conditions / informatives requiring submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, a restriction on hours of construction, submission of details of external lighting, submission of details of noise mitigation for fixed plant etc, submission of an updated travel plan and a further contaminated land survey.

**Environment Agency:** No objection subject to conditions for remediation of unsuspected contamination and surface water drainage.

**Flood Risk Officer:** No objection subject to submission of a surface water drainage scheme.

**Natural England:** No objection – the proposal is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment.

**Public Rights of Way Unit (PROW):** No objection. The proposals do not affect a public right of way.

**United Utilities:** No objection subject to drainage conditions. It is also noted that there is a public sewer that crosses the site. A modification of the site layout, or a diversion of the affected public sewer at the applicant's expense, may be necessary.

## **CREWE TOWN COUNCIL:**

No comments received.

## **REPRESENTATIONS:**

None received.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL:**

### **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Principle of Development**

In terms of the local plan policy, the site is within the settlement boundary of Crewe where development is acceptable provided that it is compatible with surrounding uses and accords with other relevant local plan policies.

The area and part of the site has a longstanding association with the manufacturing and the production of motor cars and as such, it is considered that the compatibility of the site and the area for such use is well established. However, the site directly abuts the edge of the residential development along Pym's Lane and consequently the impact on these neighbours will be explored further in this report.

With respect to the principle of the development more generally, it is important to recognise that Bentley Motors is a major employer in the area. Bentley are seeking to improve and reconfigure their facilities in order to work more effectively and efficiently within the main administration, office and production areas of the plant to allow the company to realise their expansion plans and produce additional products. This proposal is a major component of the long term vision to invest in the production and manufacture of additional lines of vehicle. Thus, there are significant benefits arising from the scheme that would support job creation and the economic growth in the locality and the Borough.

The development of science, enterprise, manufacturing and advanced engineering is a key component of the economic vision for Cheshire East within the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version (CELPS). The economy of Cheshire East is one of the most successful in the North of England and consequently a principal aim of the CELPS is to "*ensure the right foundations are in place to sustain this success over the next twenty years*", including capturing the success and strengths of the *Crewe High Growth City/M6 Corridor*. Indeed, the Council's economic growth strategy seeks to secure "*a growth proposition for the south of the Borough centred around Crewe as a principal town but linking to a wider set of growth 'nodes' using the M6 Corridor as a key attractor and asset to support our ambition*". It is considered that such benefits are in line with the local plan.

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 Council's emerging Local Plan Strategy Submission Version. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant planning considerations.

### **Loss of 'Preferred Waste Management Facility**

Part of the application site falls within the boundary of a 'preferred site' for a waste management facility, as designated in the Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan. As such, the site has been considered suitable in principle for the development of a range of waste management facilities with the purpose of forming part of an integrated network of sites capable of making adequate provision for waste arising within Cheshire. Thus, the loss of this allocation for potential future waste management uses needs to be considered.

Consequently, the proposal constitutes a "departure" from the development plan and there is a presumption against the proposal, under the provisions of sec.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which states that planning applications and appeals must be determined "in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise". The issue in question is whether the development represents a sustainable form of development and whether there are other material considerations associated with this proposal, which are a sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the development plan.

Whilst the site subject of this application is within a waste allocation, the site is not actually safeguarded for waste use. This proposal would see the total loss of this allocation. However, it must be borne in mind that the Council has sought to make additional provision by granting approval for the construction and operation of a waste transfer station and refuse derived fuel processing facility and associated development at the site of Ideal Standard, Cledford Lane, Middlewich (planning ref; 15/2355W).

Whilst part of the site (referred to as site 'WM16') is currently in waste management use, it has been purchased by Bentley Motors and alternate provision made in readiness for it being vacated. Thus, the loss of the site as a 'preferred waste site' would not impact significantly on the borough's strategic provision of waste sites. Additionally, owing to the recent sale of the land to Bentley with the option to lease to the Council, it is unlikely that the site would continue to be capable of being delivered for waste should the landowner decide it is required for their own expansion.

It is also important to acknowledge that the proposals will assist in the economic growth of Bentley Motors, where there are clear benefits arising from the scheme that would support job creation and the economic growth of the locality and the Borough. It is considered that such benefits would outweigh the loss of the site for waste uses and would accord with the overarching aims of the NPPF in terms of supporting sustainable economic development. The loss of the site as a 'preferred waste site' is therefore considered to be acceptable and would not undermine local and national policy.

Taking into account the significant employment benefits and investment to the area that this scheme would bring, the scheme is found to be economically sustainable and thus material considerations outweigh the conflict with the development plan.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Design**

The NPPF and local plan policies BE.2 and SE.1 emphasise the importance of securing high quality design appropriate to its context. NPPF paragraph 61 states that:

*“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”*

The development is a proposed complex of new high quality offices, warehousing and workshop buildings, and associated car parking. These would be formed within 3 distinct elements, an Engineering Technical Centre (ETC), Design Centre and workshops attached to the rear of the ETC. Vehicle and pedestrian access will be from Pym's Lane, with one existing and one additional access proposed.

The proposed development would have a floorspace of some 38,592 square metres spread across three buildings with the largest (the engineering technical centre) having 5 floors. The

buildings would be of modular prefab construction with the engineering technical centre measuring 25 metres in height with a frontage to Pym's Lane of 140 metres. The building would be positioned to the west of the recently constructed four storey modular business building providing office accommodation beyond which there is the residential development on the north side of Pym's Lane.

The bulk and massing of the ETC building would be successfully broken up by splitting it into 3 elements with 2 intervening vertical glazed features serving as the main entrances to the building thus promoting legibility.

To the west of the ETC building would be the lower two-storey height design centre which coupled with the existing office building to the east, would ease the disparity in heights along the Pym's Lane frontage. The design centre would be predominantly glazed, of modular construction and constructed using high quality cladding systems as facing materials.

The ETC and design centre frontage buildings would be set back 30 metres from the beginning of the footway to allow for appropriate hard and soft landscaping to be accommodated to the front of the building and provide scope to provide a decent public realm.

To the rear of the site, the workshop building would adjoin to the rear of the ETC building but would be lower in terms of its height. It would be of simple construction with function over form, but would be screened somewhat from view by the frontage buildings. This lower subordinate element would assist in easing the transition with the main ETC building from wider views to the north of the site.

In terms of the wider visual impact on the area, the impact of the scale and height of the main ETC building would be moderate within the local context. The effects would be reduced by the hierarchy of buildings stepping up to the central ETC building, which would become a landmark building. Further, with mitigation planting, which is proposed outside of the site to the north, the visual impacts would be reduced over time. This will be explored further in this report.

It is important to note that the area is characterised predominantly by commercial and industrial premises and as such, the proposed buildings would not appear incongruous within this context. Whilst the main ETC building would be the largest structure in the vicinity of the site, the Council has set out its vision for the area by allocating land to the north of the site as a strategic site under Policy CS3 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version.

Policy CS3, seeks to promote the development of a new sustainable neighbourhood at Leighton West and promotes the creation of an automotive research, development and supply hub, in partnership with Bentley Motors, in order to provide new employment opportunities and expand the automotive related investment in Crewe and the wider area. Whilst this is an emerging policy, and thus less weight can be attached to it, it is evident that the aspirations are to encourage economic development within the area, specifically on the land to north where views of the proposal are most sensitive. Accordingly, if the emerging local plan aspirations are realised, this would provide further screening of the proposed development subject of this application.

Subject to further considerations relating to landscape and the use of high quality materials, the proposal complies with policies BE.2 and SE1 (Design).

## **Landscape**

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA). The LVIA indicates that it has been undertaken using the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA 3)'. As part of the LVIA the baseline landscape character is identified at both the national and regional level. The application site lies within the National NCA 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain. At the regional level the application site is located in the area identified in the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2009) as Landscape Character Type 7: East Lowland plain, Wimboldsley Character Area (ELP5). The appraisal also includes comments on the townscape of the site and surrounding area.

The landscape appraisal identifies that the characteristics and landscape/townscape character of the site has been assessed as being of low value, and that the overall landscape/townscape character within the ZPV ( Zone of Primary Visibility) as being of medium value. The appraisal identifies that the overall landscape/townscape sensitivity to the proposed development at site level is low and that the overall on the wider area is moderate. The visual appraisal (Table 8) identifies 10 viewpoints and indicates that there will be moderate/major visual effects for 6 viewpoints, moderate effects for 4 viewpoints and minor to minor-moderate and negligible effect for 3 viewpoints, and that this will reduce to moderate for 5 viewpoints, moderate–minor for 1 viewpoint, minor-moderate for 4 viewpoints, minor for 1 viewpoint and negligible for 1 viewpoint.

The Council's Principal Landscape Officer has confirmed that he broadly agrees with the landscape and visual appraisal. He considers that the visual effects and effect at year 15 (after mitigation planting to the north of the site), will be greater for Viewpoint 3 Cemetery users and consequently feels that the boundary planting as identified on the 'Off Site Planting and Mitigation Drawing (Drawing No: L-9211)' should be increased, ideally within the cemetery as well as within the application site boundary. This could be secured under a further planting and mitigation scheme.

The proposals owing to their size, scale and location on the edge of Crewe, will have a moderate effect on the landscape, which in time, will be mitigated by additional planting to the north of the site and in the fullness of time by potential development to the north of the site identified for development under Policy CS3 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version.

## **Trees**

The application site is set back behind a wide highway verge with grass strips, a footway and a line of trees along this part of Pym's Lane (forming part of a boulevard approach). On the Pym's Lane frontage of the site, there is a narrow planting bed with trees and there is a hedge and trees to the west and to the north..

The application is supported by a Tree Survey (Middlemarch Environmental Report No. RT-MME-120726 dated September 2015) and Tree Removal and protection Plan (AHR dated

September 2015). The report broadly complies with the requirements of BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations 2012

The report has identified 61 individual trees, four groups and six hedgerows within the application site. Eleven have been categorised as High Quality (A Category) trees, 17 Moderate Quality (B category) trees, the remainder are classified as low (C category) or are unsuitable for retention.

Those trees comprising of various Common Lime, Hybrid Poplar, Alder, Norway Maple and Horse Chestnut located on the wide grass verge fronting Pyms Lane and along the southern boundary of the site (G2) are considered a prominent feature contributing to the visual amenity of the area and road frontage character.

The submitted Tree Removal Drawing identifies three low (C) category trees (a Lime and two Hybrid Poplar) that require removal due to the proximity of the proposed new building and potentially a young/ semi mature high (A) category Oak tree (T56) located to the east of the existing site access.

The assessment does not provide an impact assessment of the proposed development on below ground constraints (root protection areas) and therefore it is not possible to determine the impact of proposal on trees proposed for retention. BS5837:2012 para 5.3.1 states that the default position should be that structures should be located outside the RPA of trees shown for retention unless there is an overriding justification for doing so and that it can be demonstrated that the trees can remain viable. Further evidence should therefore be submitted by the Consulting Arboriculturist on this matter.

The proposed direct tree losses as shown are not considered significant to the wider amenity of the area and can be adequately mitigated by replacement planting. There are significant opportunities for additional large canopy tree planting along the wide grass verge along the Pyms Lane to address the visual impact of the development, improve the street scape and to contribute to Climate change adaptation.

Subject to clarification on the impact upon Root Protection Areas of retained trees, should planning consent be granted, tree and landscape conditions are recommended.

## **Land Contamination**

The application site area has a history of previous development such as a council depot, electrical substation, car parking and a former pit; therefore the land contamination cannot be ruled out. Part of a known landfill site that has the potential to create gas is located partially on site, and extends off site to the north. A number of reports relating to land contamination have been submitted in support of the application.

The Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment identified potential contaminant linkages which required further investigation. This report recommended site investigation and subsequent gas monitoring, between 6 and 12 rounds of monitoring over a period of 3 to 12 months.

Phase II site investigation works were undertaken. The site nomenclature between the reports has changed i.e. Area A is Area 1 etc. in the Phase II reporting. Some gas monitoring has

been undertaken, but the full programme has yet to be completed. Therefore, an updated gas risk assessment is required for the site.

No site investigation information has been submitted for Area A/Area 1 despite this being requested. Although an amount of site investigation information is held under the previous application for the office building to the east (15/3665N), this should be re-submitted for this application for completeness, as part of this area is within the planning boundary.

Concentrations of PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls – used in manufacture of plastic and coatings etc) were identified within the chemical analysis but do not appear to have been risk assessed. This should be undertaken. Further site investigation is recommended in an area of fuel storage/infrastructure in Area B/2. The underground storage tanks require decommissioning and removal in line with current guidance and legislation. Cheshire East Council's petroleum officer should be contacted with respect to the requirements for the surrender of the petroleum license. Further investigation should also take place upon demolition of the properties currently on this area of the site, as recommended in the report.

The further investigations required should also include the area of electricity substations on the centre of Area B/2 and the area of pesticide storage on the east of Area B/2 – as yet these identified potential sources of contamination remain un-investigated. A former pit is present on the north west of Area C/3 which also does not appear to have been investigated. Further information relating to this area of potential infilling should be provided.

Although a Remedial Strategy has been submitted, this may require updating on the basis of the further gas monitoring currently being undertaken and on the basis of the further investigation proposed, as detailed within the recommendations of the report and above. It is also noted that a water pipes risk assessment is still outstanding for the site. As such, and in accordance with the NPPF, the Council's Environmental Protection Unit recommends that the require updated reports and investigations can be secured by condition, should planning permission be granted. Subject to this, the considerations in respect of land contamination are acceptable.

### **Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation**

Vehicle and pedestrian access will be from Pym's Lane, with one existing and one additional access proposed. The site is located within a highly sustainable area with footway access available to the wider Crewe area, local bus stops, and from the Sunnybank Rd car park to the site.

Policy BE.3 deals with access and parking and states that development will only be permitted where proposals provide:

- safe pedestrian access
- the provision of any off street parking
- manoeuvring and operational space should be designed to minimise visual impact
- safe vehicular access and egress arrangements

### *Sustainable Access*

The section of Pyms Lane adjacent to the development site forms part of the Nantwich to Crewe 'Greenway', a wide and well-lit foot/cycleway set back from the road, providing a footway link to the wider Crewe area.

Employees arriving to the new site will most likely use the car park adjacent to Sunnybank Road. Pedestrian access between the Sunnybank Road car park and the development site is northwards via footways along Sunnybank Road and then eastwards along the Greenway section of Pyms Lane. There are a total of 3 zebra crossings on Sunnybank Road and Pyms Lane that have recently been installed to assist with pedestrian movements from the north side to the south side of Sunnybank Road.

There are bus stops located on Sunnybank Rd, Pyms Lane, and Minshull New Road with footway access available to each of them. Consequently, there is appropriate provision for safe pedestrian access.

#### *Vehicular Access*

The submitted Transport Assessment incorporates a review of accident data in the area for the period from May 2010 – Mar 2015. This showed 12 recorded injury accidents occurring in the vicinity of the site with 3 being classified as serious and the remainder as slight. 2 accidents occurred in 2010; 1 in 2011; 2 in 2012; 2 in 2013; 2 in 2014 and 3 in 2015, spread between Pyms Lane and its junctions with Minshull New Road and Middlewich Road. None of the accidents were as a result of the road layout and there were no clusters of accidents.

The proposed access points have been tracked for use by 12m rigid and 16.5m articulated vehicles. The swept paths demonstrate that both types of vehicle are able to make all the entry and exit movements required without encroaching onto the opposing traffic lanes. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) has confirmed that the proposed site access visibility is safe for the intended use and therefore acceptable.

#### *Impact on Local Highway Network*

The majority of staff to be accommodated within the new development will be relocated from elsewhere on the Pyms Lane site and the redistribution of these staff numbers won't result in significant additional vehicle trips on the local road network. Approximately 280 additional staff will be relocated from Middlewich.

The assessment has assumed that all the 280 staff will arrive to the site by car and that all of them will arrive/leave in the morning and evening peak hours. The recently constructed office building adjacent to the site (15/3665N) has been included as a committed development and it has also been assumed that all staff associated with it will arrive to the site by car and that all of them will arrive/leave in the morning and evening peak hours. It is unlikely that all employees will arrive by car or within the peak hour and the capacity assessments are therefore considered robust.

Capacity assessments of the Middlewich Rd/Pyms Lane signalised and the Minshull New Rd/Pyms Ln/Badger Ave roundabout junctions have been carried out using standard software, for a 2015 base year, 2018 opening year and 2023 design year. Sensitivity tests of the Minshull New Rd/A532 West St priority junction and A530 Nantwich Rd/A532 Coppenhall Lane/Marshfield Bank roundabout have also taken place. The vehicle trips have been distributed onto the network using location of usual residence and place of work by method of

travel to work, 2011 census data. The assessments have shown that the traffic impact will not be 'severe'.

The assessment has shown that additional vehicle trips will travel to the Sunnybank Road car park via the Sunnybank Road railway bridge. The bridge is narrow and is barely wide enough for two-way traffic and is also used by pedestrians. There is no footway and the HSI considers that it is not pedestrian friendly. Cheshire East Council has plans to improve this route for both car users and for pedestrians. It includes a 'shuttle running' arrangement and the inclusion of a footway. The HSI has advised that the applicant will need to enter into a s184 agreement for these improvements.

### *Car Parking*

Adequate car parking is provided for within the existing car park on Sunnybank Road. Cycle parking is also provided at the same car-park. Some staff and visitor car parking will also be provided within the site.

Taking the above into account, the scheme is found to be acceptable in terms of its impacts on the local highway network and the existing parking and pedestrian facilities would be sufficient to accommodate the proposed development. The proposal therefore accords with Policy BE.3.

## **Ecology**

### *Hedgerows*

There will be a loss of hedgerows associated with the proposed development. However, there appears to be adequate scope within the proposed layout for adequate new hedgerows and native planting to be provided to compensate for this loss. The Councils Nature Conservation officer (NCO) has advised that if planning consent is granted, a landscaping condition should be attached to ensure that appropriate species and planting specifications are utilised to ensure the nature conservation value of the new hedgerows is maximised.

### *Pond*

Ponds are a local priority habitats and hence a material consideration. An artificial pond is present on the site that would be lost as a result of the proposed development. Whilst the current pond is likely to have limited nature conservation value, it is recommended that in order to secure an enhancement for biodiversity as required by the NPPF, the existing pond should be replaced by a new purpose designed wildlife pond. This could be secured by condition.

### *Nesting birds*

The habitats on site are likely to support nesting birds including house sparrow, which are a priority species and hence a material consideration. If planning consent is granted it is recommended that conditions are attached to safeguard breeding birds during construction and features are incorporated into the scheme that accommodate bird nesting.

## **Impact on Non-Designated Heritage Asset**

Situated on the opposite side of Pym's Lane to the south, are 2 art deco period buildings which form part of the frontage to the Bentley Production Plant. The main building is locally listed and therefore a non-designated heritage asset.

Whilst the proposed five-storey engineering technical centre building will be higher than the existing development found elsewhere on Pym's Lane, the Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that its impact upon the setting of both the existing locally listed building and the adjacent building in a similar style on the south of Pym's Lane will be minimised by the presence of the intervening road and the pavements, grass verges, hedging and line of trees on either side of the road. The proposed style of the new building whilst modern will compliment the historic locally listed building/its adjacent building to a degree by virtue of its similar use of horizontal lines and a large similar company logo/emblem. It will important however that the existing landscaping/trees both to the front of the development site and to either side of the road is maintained.

## **Flooding and Drainage**

The site is within Flood Risk Zone 1 and is not therefore at risk from flooding. However, owing to the size of the proposals, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as been undertaken. The Environment Agency and the Council's Flood Risk Team have assessed the FRA and are satisfied that subject to the recommendations within the FRA, the proposal would not give rise to flooding or drainage issues.

## **Residential Amenity**

Policy BE1 states that proposals for new development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:

- they are compatible with surrounding land uses;
- they do not prejudice the amenity of future occupiers or the occupiers of adjacent property by reason of overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance, odour or in any other way;
- they do not generate such levels of traffic that the development would prejudice the safe movement of traffic on surrounding roads, or have an adverse impact on neighbouring uses; and
- they do not lead to an increase in air, noise or water pollution insofar as this might have an adverse effect on the other use of land.

The impact of the development upon nearby residential properties is a material consideration in regard to noise, disturbance and the physical massing of buildings.

The nearest neighbouring dwelling (no. 23 Pym's Lane) would achieve a distance of 106 metres with the east facing elevation of the proposed engine technical centre (ETC) building. It is important to note that Bentley have recently constructed a four storey office building directly to the east of the site on land in-between the proposed ETC building and no. 23 Pym's Lane. The ETC building would be approximately 10 metres taller, but owing to its separation and given that it would follow the same building line as the adjoining office building, it is not considered that the proposed building would materially harm neighbouring amenity by reason of loss of light / overshadowing nor would it give rise to direct overlooking.

In terms of the use, the B1a (offices) and B1b (research and development) uses, which by their nature are less intensive and less noisy than general B2 industrial uses would be unlikely

to cause harm to neighbouring residential amenity. Whilst there would be a workshop building to the rear of the ETC building, this would be self contained and would achieve a separation of at least 160 metres with the nearest residential property.

At this time, the exact details of the fixed plant and equipment are not known. As such the applicant has submitted an acoustic assessment of the existing noise levels, and calculated a suitable "rating level" which can be used as design criteria, and conditioned accordingly. The rating level is based on the methodology in BS 4142: 2014 (Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound). However, it is important to recognise that the area is characterised by commercial, industrial and manufacturing uses (specifically automotive) and therefore the proposals are compatible in this respect.

Accordingly, the Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) has assessed the application together with the submitted noise assessment and are satisfied that subject to conditions requiring detail of the fixed plant and equipment being submitted and does not exceed the Rating Noise Level of 42 dBL<sub>AEQ</sub> 1m from the façade of the nearest noise sensitive dwelling, then the scheme would not prejudice the amenity of future occupiers or the occupiers of adjacent property by reason of noise or odours.

In terms of traffic generation, the likely increase in vehicle movements will not be significant relevant to the current uses in the vicinity of the site and consequently, in respect of residential amenity, this will not cause material harm to the residential amenity afforded to the nearest occupiers.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would not materially harm neighbouring amenity by reason of loss of light, direct overlooking, visual intrusion or noise and therefore complies with local plan policy BE.1.

In the round, subject to further submission relating to trees, landscaping and land contamination, the scheme is found to be environmentally and socially sustainable.

## **PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSIONS**

This proposal would bring economic benefits through the delivery of new jobs 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 and merging plan policies strongly support such development.

The proposal is compatible with the surrounding development and the design, scale and form of the building would not appear incongruous within its context subject to the use of high quality materials and off site planting works. The main Engineering Technical Centre Building (ETC) would be the largest in terms of its height and scale in the vicinity of the area. However, this has to be balanced against the significant economic benefits of the proposals and the aspirations of the Council to realise the growth potential of Crewe as the '*Crewe High Growth City/M6 Corridor*'.

The proposals will have a moderate effect on the landscape, which in time, will be mitigated by additional planting to the north of the site and in the fullness of time by potential

development to the north of the site identified for development under Policy CS3 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version.

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) and ecology would be acceptable.

The impact on neighbouring residential amenity would be acceptable owing to the low impact nature of the use (predominately offices and research and development), 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 'severe harm' on the local highway network. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) is satisfied that any additional vehicular movements and parking generated by the proposals could be accommodated by the existing highway network and the existing and proposed parking provision at the site. It is also important to note that recent improvements to the pedestrian facilities around the site (recent installation of zebra crossings) would support the safe movement of pedestrians across Pym's Lane.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits.

Whilst the proposal constitutes a "departure" from the waste development plan where there is a presumption against the proposal, under the provisions of sec.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which states that planning applications and appeals must be determined "in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise". There would be significant benefits to the economy which are considered to outweigh this conflict and as such the scheme is found to be sustainable. These material considerations are sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the development plan.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the adopted Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and advice contained within the NPPF and emerging local policy. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Standard time limit (3 years)**
- 2. Accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Materials to be submitted and approved**
- 4. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted noise impact assessment**
- 5. Further details of any fixed plant / noise generative equipment to be submitted and approved and the noise level from the equipment shall not exceed the Rating Noise Level of 42 dBL<sub>AEQ</sub> 1m from the façade of the nearest noise sensitive dwelling**
- 6. Submission of an Environmental Management Plan**

- 7. Additional Phase II Land contamination investigations and assessments to be submitted and approved**
- 8. Accesses constructed in accordance with submitted details prior to first use**
- 9. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted noise impact assessment**
- 10. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted ecological survey**
- 11. Survey for nesting birds if works carried out during nesting season**
- 12. Scheme to incorporate features suitable for breeding birds**
- 13. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted Flood Risk Assessment**
- 14. Submission of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan scheme**
- 15. Details of foul water drainage to be submitted**
- 16. Surface water drainage strategy to be submitted**
- 17. Updated off site landscaping scheme and planting plan to be submitted and approved**
- 18. Landscape scheme to be submitted**
- 19. Landscape implementation**
- 20. Submission of updated arboricultural report showing RPAs for retained trees to be submitted to and approved**
- 21. Tree retention in accordance with submitted details**
- 22. Tree protection scheme to be submitted and approved**
- 23. Hours of construction restricted**
- 24. Piling method statement**
- 25. Travel plan to be submitted**
- 26. Details of external lighting to be submitted and approved**
- 27. Details of cycle parking to be submitted and approved**
- 28. Scheme for public realm works along Pym's Lane to be submitted and approved**

**Informative to include s184 agreement to include 'shuttle running' arrangement and the inclusion of a footway for Sunnybank Road car park via the Sunnybank Road railway bridge.**

**In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation), in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of the Strategic Planning Board, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.**

**Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Board to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.**

