

DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT - APPROVAL

Ref: CS/EL

Application No:	3/2013/0254/P
Development Proposed:	Proposed chill extension, replacement lorry docking bays and increased yard area to existing meat processing factory at Castill Laithe Abattoir, Gisburn Road, Sawley

CONSULTATIONS: Parish/Town Council

Parish Council - No objections to this application.

CONSULTATIONS: Highway/Water Authority/Other Bodies

Environment Directorate (County Surveyor) – Comments that the proposed development is of a B3 type (general industrial) use and that according to the County Council's parking standard guidelines for this type of use, the parking requirement is in the ratio of 1:45. This means that for every 45m² gross floor area there should be one parking space available to use associated with the proposed development. Currently, there is provision of 100 parking spaces for the use of the whole site. The proposed development has an area of 180m² gross floor area so the parking requirement will be four spaces. In view of the existing 100 parking spaces available to use, it is recognised that these spaces can accommodate an additional four vehicles within the available spaces and be manageable without significant effect on the adjacent highway network.

The existing access to the property is from the A59. This entrance has an adequate radius for lorries entering and leaving the site. There is no change to the existing arrangement of access to the site from the A59.

In view of the above considerations, it is realised that the development is of a minor nature and is unlikely to have a significant effect on the adjacent highway network. There is therefore no objection to the proposed development on highway grounds.

CONSULTATIONS: Additional Representations.

Two written representations have been received from the owner of land that immediately adjoins the site. The owner makes comments relating to the application that are summarised as follows:

As is known to both the Council and the applicant, her land is a habitat for the European Protected Species Great Crested Newt and bats. In the determination of this application, the Local Planning Authority is therefore obliged to consider the Standing Advice on European Protected Species produced by Natural England. This advice would require, in this case, that surveys relating to bats, badgers, Great Crested newts, invertebrates, reptiles and plants to be carried out. As there are ponds within the vicinity of the site, water vole and crayfish surveys may also be required.

Standing advice relating to traditional farm buildings may also give rise to the need for bat and barn owl surveys.

The adjoining landowner is unable to comment further on the application until the required surveys have been carried out.

It is stated on the submitted application form that there are 180 employees at this site. In

evidence submitted by Dunbia at a recent planning hearing, it was stated that the number of employees was 375. In view of this discrepancy, the highway authority should be re-consulted to ensure that parking is sufficient on the site.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan

Policy G1 - Development Control.

Policy G5 - Settlement Strategy.

Policy ENV3 - Development in Open Countryside.

Policy ENV7 - Species Protection.

Policy ENV10 - Development Affecting Nature Conservation.

Policy EMP8 - Extensions/Expansions of Existing Firms.

Core Strategy 2008 to 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Regulation 22 Submission Draft.

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations.

Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection.

Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation.

Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy.

National Planning Policy Framework

COMMENTS/ENVIRONMENTAL/AONB/HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES/RECOMMENDATION:

The application relates to the existing Dunbia abattoir on the south side of the A59 in the open countryside between Sawley and Gisburn. The application comprises three main elements as follows:

1. A 30m x 6m extension to the main building to be used for the storage of chilled carcasses awaiting processing. This extension is designed so that the ridge and eaves heights match the existing building and it will be constructed using external materials also to match the existing building.
2. Four existing loading bays would be blocked up and replaced with the formation of three new docking stations in the external wall of the existing chill store.
3. The yard area at the rear of the building is to be extended in order to provide more space for the storage of pallets and lorry trailers. A 2.4m high paladin fence would be erected on the new boundaries of the yard areas to match the existing boundary fencing.

Within the context of the existing site, this is a relatively minor proposal but the development is essentially required as an improvement to the existing business. As such, the proposal complies with saved policy EMP8 of the Local Plan which states that the expansion of established firms on land outside main settlements will be allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and is not contrary to other policies within the Plan. Policy DMB1 of the emerging Core Strategy also expresses support for proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy. One of the main elements of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to supporting a prosperous rural economy.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle when considered in relation to the existing Local Plan, the emerging Core Strategy and the national guidance contained in NPPF.

With regards to detailed considerations, the development would not have any detrimental

effects upon the appearance of the locality when considered in the context of the existing complex. Basing his comments on parking provision in relation to floor area (as opposed to number of employees) as required by the adopted Parking Standards, the County Council highway engineer expresses no objections to the proposed development as both the parking provision and the accesses into the site are considered to be acceptable such that the proposal has no detrimental effects on highway safety.

Whilst the extension is within the existing confines of the complex, the proposal does involve an extension of the yard areas. The applicants have therefore commissioned a Protected Species Survey, the results of which have been submitted for consideration in the determination of this application (although this was not received at the time of submission of the application). The survey covered the species of bats, great crested newts, badgers, otters and water vole.

The aims of this survey (that was carried out by Corvus Consulting) were as follows:

- To provide sufficient information on the potential effects of the proposed development on protected species to allow the ecological impact of the proposal to be considered in full by the Local Planning Authority.
- In particular, to assess the potential impacts of development on bats, badgers, otters, water voles and great crested newts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation, recommendations and enhancement measures for potentially impacted species.
- To determine whether European Protected Species licenses (issued by Natural England) for development purposes, will be required in respect of bats, otters or newts at the site, and also whether they would be likely to be granted if sought.

It is stated in the report that the site was visited on 11, 12 May and 13, 14 May 2013 and that all surveys were conducted according to Natural England specifications.

The results of a bat roost potential survey were that the buildings on the site are of modern industrial design and have low potential for roosting bats. Tree lines, bordering the abattoir site contain trees with similar low potential for roosting bats. A group of trees forming a line running north east to south west and bordering the proposed development site contain cracks, splits and cavities and have been assessed as having a good potential for roosting bats. Evening surveys on the 11 and 13 May 2013 and a survey between 3am and 5am on the morning of 14 May 2013 found no evidence of bats emerging from or entering potential roost sites in these trees.

The survey of bat activity revealed common pipistrelle bats foraging around security lights within the proposed development area on the evenings of 11 and 13 May. The maximum number of bats observed simultaneously was 2. Common pipistrelle bats were also observed foraging along a tree line at the southern boundary of the development site. No bats were recorded foraging over the effluent lagoons. The conclusions in relation to bats were that no bat roosts, areas of significant roosting potential or important foraging areas will be impacted by the proposed development. As a precautionary measure, a planning condition limiting additional illumination of the southern tree line might be prudent as this area may well be of local importance as a commuting route. Should such a condition be implemented, no impact upon bats is predicted.

In relation to great crested newts, no suitable habitat for this species occurs within the area of the proposed development so no loss of foraging habitat is likely if the development is to proceed. However, great crested newts have been recorded on neighbouring land and the eastern area of the abattoir site contains 5 effluent lagoons, the furthest of which are considered to have the potential to be breeding habitat for great crested newts.

The conclusion to the great crested newt survey was that no evidence of this species was found at any of the lagoons in proximity to the proposed development. With the exception of one of the lagoons (T4) none are capable of supporting amphibians at any life stage. It was however noted that the furthest of the lagoons to the east of the site may have the potential to host breeding populations of newts but given the physical separation of approximately 350m between the proposed site and these lagoons, unsuitability of habitats within the proposed development areas in respect of nesting or breeding newts, no impact is predicted upon this species, should the proposal proceed.

In the unlikely event that great crested newts are encountered at the proposed development site, all construction work must cease immediately and the advice of a suitably qualified person sought.

The result of the badgers survey was that, although badgers do occur locally, no evidence was found that they occur on or in direct proximity to the proposed development site, and the intact fence around the abattoir site prevents badgers from accessing the site. It is not therefore considered that the proposed development will adversely affect local badger populations and, as such, no licensing or conditions on developments are required in relation to this species.

In relation to otters, the conclusion in the report is that no habitats suitable for otters are present in proximity to the proposal site. The lagoons do not provide foraging resources for the species and no holts or other resting sites were observed during the surveys. No impact is therefore predicted on this species if the development were to proceed.

With regards to water voles, the surveys did not find any signs of this species and no impact upon this species is therefore predicted in the event of the development proceeding.

Therefore, overall, of the surveys carried out only bats were observed within the survey area and no impact on bats is predicted providing the southern tree line is not illuminated. No significant impacts are predicted on the remainder of the species which were the subject of the surveys and no offences would be likely to occur and no Protected Species Licenses would be likely to be required in order for the development to proceed.

Subject to appropriate conditions, therefore, the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed development would not have any detrimental effects upon any protected species.

Overall therefore, there are no sustainable objections to this relatively minor development at this established business.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR APPROVAL:

The proposed development represents an improvement of an established business to the benefit of the local economy and without any seriously detrimental effects upon visual amenity, wildlife/protected species or highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: That conditional planning permission be granted.