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Supporting Planning Statement for an application for full planning permission to extend the existing Chipboard Manufacturing Business at Egger UK Ltd, Barony Road, Auchinleck to provide a Lamination Plant



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1.Introduction

1.1.Background.

This Supporting Planning Statement is designed to assist East Ayrshire Council (EAC) in determining an application for full planning permission for an extension to the existing chipboard manufacturing plant owned by EGGER UK Ltd at Barony Road Auchinleck. The extension will add a Lamination Plant which currently does not exist in the business. This will substantially extend the range of products that can be manufactured on site.

This is one of a series of planning applications which is part of the companies 5 year plan for the continued expansion at Auchinleck totalling an investment of £60million .

This lamination plant represents an investment of £15 million in the existing plant which is the largest private sector employer in East Ayrshire with 148 Full Time Equivalent Employees.

1.2.Planning History

The site has been subject to 2 recent applications which, following Screening Requests, were dealt with as Local Applications and in both cases; applications which did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment

The first is planning application ref 19/0525/PP in respect of a Planning Application under Section 42 to remove planning condition 7 (Hours of Operation of HGV vehicle movements) and planning condition 8 (Noise Nuisance) in relation to planning consent ref 96/0386/FL. This application was recommended by Officers for approval and the Planning Committee agreed to grant planning consent on 23rd August 2019.

The second is planning application ref 21/0137/PP in respect of the erection of plant, machinery, and an emissions stack as an extension to the plant. The application was approved under delegated powers by officers on 11th May 2021.

A recent application has also been submitted for a Combined Heat and Power Plant using biomass as the raw fuel to power the Egger plant at Auchinleck. This application was deemed by the Council to be a Local Planning Application following a Screening Request under the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development Regulations 2009(ref 21/0003/PACSCR). The application was also deemed by the Council under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2017 to be a development that did not require the submission of an EIA.(ref 21/0011/EIASCRC). This application is currently being considered by the Council.

In all of these applications, the Company has implemented a comprehensive community engagement and publicity strategy including the setting up of a Community Liaison Forum. The Company sees this as a positive and supportive way of managing their business even although they are not required to do so under planning legislation. The current application has also been subject to extensive community engagement and report is attached as part of the planning application submission.



1.3. Proposed Development.

The proposed development has a gross floor area of under 10,000 sq. and is thus considered to be a “Local Application” under Class 3 Business and General Industry, Storage and Distribution of the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

The proposal is 168m long by 58 m wide with an “I-shape” link at the southern end which gives a total floor space by external measurement of 9859 sq. The proposed extension would extend from the west side of the existing factory and would be the same length as the existing building. It is physically linked to the existing building as the proposed lamination plant would be linked to the existing chipboard production line by an automatic storage and feed in the existing plant.

The building is 10.3 m high which is below the existing eaves height of the existing plant. It is largely of a flat roof construction, but it follows the roof pitch of the existing plant to join onto the existing structure. The building would be finished in materials to match the existing structure (grey profiled metal sheeting).

The traffic implications are minimal with only 1 additional load per week required to supply the lamination paper.

This proposal would create jobs for an additional 16 FTE employees.

2. Determination of the Application.

The proposals are a “Local Application “ which do not require an EIA. Under the terms of sections 25 and 37 (as modified) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 the determination of any planning application should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations direct otherwise. The Development Plan is the East Ayrshire Council Local Development Plan 2017.

3. East Ayrshire Council Local Development Plan (LDP).

In relation to relevant policies in the LDP that are applicable to this proposal these are;

- Overarching Policy OP1
- Overarching Policy OP2
- Policy IND 2 :General Business and Industry
- Policy RES 11;Residential Amenity.
- Policy ENV 8:Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape



The next sections will give a summary of the individual policies with my comments thereon in italics.

3.1. Overarching Policy OP1

This is a general development policy that applies to the consideration of all planning applications and accordingly not all of the policy requirements are relevant to the Proposed Development. It requires all developments to comply with the multiple policy criteria and the LDP Vision and Spatial Strategy or to demonstrate how the development meets the principles of sustainable development.

Those policy criteria of relevance include the requirement for developments to accord with the individual LDP policies, be compatible with surrounding land uses, not to have unacceptable environmental effects, protect and enhance natural and built heritage designations and to have no unacceptable impacts on the landscape and tourism. The policy also requires developments to be acceptable to the Ayrshire Roads Alliance and other service providers.

The undernoted assessment in paragraphs 3.2-3.5, identifies that the proposed development is in accordance with relevant policies within the LDP. These are Policies OP2, IND2, RES11 and ENV8

In terms of the Vision and Spatial Strategy, the proposed development is sited within the Rural Diversification Area in an area which is designated within the LDP as a Local Business Location which is safeguarded for continued industrial use. The proposals are therefore acceptable in terms of the Councils Vision and Spatial Strategy.

The proposal will extend out from one of the main buildings on the site which manufactures the chipboard. The lamination plant requires to be connected to the existing production line of the existing structure and is proposed to be attached to it. The proposed building would be located on the west side of the existing plant complex.

The proposed siting means that the building will not be visible from the east and the site is well screened on all other sides with mature trees. The proposed plant will be largely screened by the existing buildings and boundary screening. The visual impact of the proposal would be insignificant in this context.

In relation to the potential impact of other uses the site has previously been considered as not being located within a “sensitive area” in relation to other recent applications for extensions on the site. Specifically, this view was taken in the consideration of planning application ref 21/0137/PP for additional plant and machinery including an emissions stack.



The site is surrounded by agricultural land. The nearest residential receptor is Treeshill Farm which lies approximately 430 m to the northwest and Knagshead Farm which lies 395 m to the east. Knagshead Farm is a working farm and Treeshill Farm is unoccupied and is owned by Egger UK. The site is 1400 meters west of Auchinleck, 1700 meters north- east of Ochiltree.

Traffic implications arising from the proposed extension are minimal as this would equate to 1 additional HGV per week to supply the lamination paper.

In view of the above assessment, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Overarching Policy OP1

3.2.Overarching Policy OP2.

Overarching Policy OP2, states that in bringing forward their proposals, developers will require to implement the relevant enhancement and mitigation measures contained within the Environmental Report relating to the appropriate site assessment for residential, business, and industrial, retail, and other LDP site allocations.

The site is designated for business and industrial uses in the LDP. The proposal will form an extension to the existing manufacturing plant that is currently operational on site. As a result of the site being fully developed, there are no enhancement and/or mitigation measures within the Environmental Report that need to be implemented.

The proposals are thus in accordance with Policy OP2.

3.3.Policy IND2;General Business and Industrial Development.

This policy directs proposals for business and industrial developments to sites designated for such purposes in the LDP.

The proposals are to extend an existing business on the site which is designated and safeguarded for business and industrial use in the LDP.

The proposals are thus in accordance with Policy IND 2.

3.4.Policy RES 11 :Residential Amenity.

This policy seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the residential character and amenity of existing residential areas. The policy indicates a presumption against the establishment of non-residential uses close to residential properties which may have detrimental effects on local amenity, or which cause unacceptable disturbance to local residents.



The proposed plant will be approximately 1420 meters to the west of Auchinleck and situated on the western side of the existing plant complex. It is situated 1700 meters northeast of Ochiltree and 580 meters southwest of the nearest residential property. The site itself is surrounded on all sides by a dense belt of established woodland.

The proposed lamination plant will be housed within an extension to the west side of an existing building to form a continuous production process. The area has been deemed by the Council to be not located within a “sensitive area”.

The process will involve the adhesion of a laminated material onto some of the chipboard produced within the plant. The process itself is not a generator of noise and the entire process would be undertaken within the proposed extension. It is considered that there will be no adverse impact from noise arising from this additional process on any nearby residential properties.

In terms of visual impact, there will be no impact on any residential properties because they are too far away from the proposed extension. The whole complex is well screened on all sides and the building is designed to be subservient to the main building and with materials to match the existing buildings.

The increased traffic from HGVs at 1 vehicle per week will also result in no significant adverse impact on residential properties.

In view of the above it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effects from noise, traffic or general disturbance and the proposed development will have no adverse visual impact. The proposed development is thus in accordance with LDP Policy RES 11 :Residential Amenity.

3.5. Policy ENV 8 :Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape.

This policy specifies that the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment will be a key consideration in assessing the appropriateness of development proposals in the Rural Area. It seeks to protect and respect the landscape character, minimise impacts on the landscape and avoid the loss of valuable landscape features. Particular features that contribute to the value, quality and character of the landscape are to be conserved and enhanced. Developments that would create unacceptable visual intrusion or irreparable damage to landscape character will not be supported by the Council.

The Egger UK business has been located on this site for over 20 years and the site is safeguarded for business and industrial use in the LDP.

The site is not formally designated for any local or national scenic or landscape value.



The proposed development will form an extension of 9859 sq. m or just under 1 hectare within an existing plant which is 17.5 hectares. Given the size and scale of the existing plant the proposed extension will not be visually dominant on the site.

The extension will be lower than the existing building and will be absorbed within the existing complex of buildings and machinery. Using materials to match, the proposed extension will be visually compatible with the existing buildings.

The site is screened with mature trees and landscaping on every boundary and the proposals will be largely screened by the existing buildings and the existing landscape. The existing mature screening will be retained, and it is considered that the extension will easily be absorbed within the wider landscape setting.

There will be no unacceptable visual intrusion and as a result, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV 8:Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape.

In conclusion, in relation to the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan, it is considered that the proposed development is fully in accordance with LDP Policies;OP1,OP2,IND2,RES11 and ENV8.

4.Other Material Planning Considerations.

4.1.Scottish Planning Policy 2014(SPP).

SPP (2014) is Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed.

It introduces a “*presumption in favour of development which contributes to sustainable development.*” Decisions are to be guided by a number of listed principles. These include

- Giving due weight to net economic benefit
- Making good use of existing capabilities of land and buildings
- Supporting delivery of business development

It is considered that the proposed development can draw support from this national policy as it will build upon and expand an existing significant employer in the area with a major financial investment of £15million as part of a £60 million investment over 5 years as part of Eggers 5 year Vision.

This will help sustain the existing work force of 148 FTE employees and create a further 15 new local jobs. There is a well-established young apprenticeship scheme in the business which can be used as part of the expansion programme to direct employment to local young people.



The construction project itself would bring even more jobs to construct this significant extension. The proposed extension would make maximum use of an established existing business site and uses currently vacant land within the site designated for business and industry in the LDP.

There is also support for Business and Employment as a policy principle (paragraph 93) including development that increases economic activity, giving due weight to net economic benefit and allocation of business sites.

The proposed development can draw support from this policy principle which supports the retention of existing jobs and the creation of new jobs. The proposed development will add a new product to the current business thereby diversifying and strengthening economic activity. The proposed development is on a site which is designated for business and industry.

The proposed development is strongly aligned with Scottish Planning Policy on Sustainable Development and support for Business and Employment.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations.

It is considered that the Proposed Development is fully in accordance with Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 in that the Proposed Development is in accordance with the Development Plan and there are other material planning considerations that are supportive.

Specifically, in relation to the Development Plan, the proposals are in accordance with EAC LDP policies;

- **Overarching Policy OP1 as the proposals are in accordance with the relevant policies in the LDP and Supplementary Guidance**
- **Overarching Policy 2 as the site is designated for business and industrial uses in the LDP. The proposal will form an extension to the existing manufacturing plant that is currently operational on site. As a result of the site being fully developed, there are no enhancement and/or mitigation measures within the Environmental Report that need to be implemented.**
- **Policy IND2 which directs proposals for business and industrial developments to sites designated for such purposes in the LDP.**
- **Policy RES 11 it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effects from noise, traffic or general disturbance and the proposed development will have no significant adverse visual impact.**



- Policy ENV8 as there will be no significant adverse visual intrusion from the proposed development within the landscape.

In relation to other material planning considerations there is support for the proposals from Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). The proposed development is strongly aligned with SPP Policy on Sustainable Development and support for Business and Employment.

In this context it is considered that the proposals are in accordance with section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as they are in accordance with relevant LDP Policies and are supported by National Statements of Government Policy which are significant material planning considerations.

In view of this analysis, it is considered that the proposed development should be approved.

Alan Neish DIP TP

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