

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Mr Ian Berry	Extension to existing data hall set up - New self contained data hall Land At, The Cofton Centre, Groveley Lane, Cofton Hackett, Birmingham Worcestershire		20/00521/FUL

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **Granted subject to conditions.**

Consultations

WRS - Noise

No objection

WRS – Contamination

No objection subject to unexpected contamination condition

WRS - Air Quality

No objection

Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Cofton Hackett Parish Council members have viewed this application and have no comment or objections.

Birmingham City Council

No Comments Received To Date

North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration

The proposals outlined in the planning application will help to secure the future jobs of the existing 15 staff members working at this site.

Securing jobs is a priority for NWedR and we are supportive of this application.

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection subject to a drainage condition

Highways - Bromsgrove

No objection

Publicity

9 letters were sent to adjoining properties on 15th May 2020 and expired 8th June 2020.

1 site notice was displayed on 29th May 2020 and expired 22nd June 2020.

An advert was placed in the Bromsgrove Standard on 29th May 2020 and expired on 15th June 2020.

No representations had been received at the time of preparing this committee report.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles
BDP3 Future Housing and Employment Growth
BDP13 New Employment Development
BDP14 Designated Employment
BDP 16 Sustainable Transport
BDP19 High Quality Design
BDP22 Climate Change
BDP23 Water Management

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019)
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance
Longbridge Area Action Plan

Relevant Planning History

B/2007/0356	Erection of industrial/warehouse units (B1,B2 & B8) and associated works (outline)	Granted	02.08.2007
B/2007/1115	Erection of industrial/warehouse units, submission of Reserved Matters.	Granted	10.01.2008
13/0994	Non-material amendment to planning approval B/2007/1115 to allow an amended building design to accommodate a new Data Centre building.	Granted	25.03.2014

Assessment of Proposal

Background

The Crofton Centre was granted planning permission under B/2007/0356 for 27,928 sq m of industrial/warehouse units within B1 (b and c), B2 and B8, this was split 21,000 sq m in outline and 6,928 sq m as a full application. Subsequently a reserved matters application was approved under B2007/11115 on the application site. The current site/unit was granted permission for a data centre under a non-material amendment (13/0994). This proposed to build various data centres in phases/modules. Only one phase has been built on site, however this is an extant planning permission which could still be implemented.

The applicant Atos are a European multinational information technology service and consulting company. They provide IT services to its customer base which includes a range of governmental and commercial organisations. The new data centre is required for a Critical National Infrastructure industry leading company who require the facility to host their new Supercomputer. The choice of site from an Atos perspective was based on local transport links and investment in the local area as well as local demographics for skilled engineers. The contract will be an initial 12-year contract and be one of the UK's most powerful high-performance computing (HPC).

Site Description

The application site forms part of the existing Cofton Centre employment site, which is accessed directly from Groveley Lane and shares an existing driveway that serves a number of existing buildings. The Atos site currently consists of a 2,500 sq m single storey industrial building and associated parking.

Proposal Description

The planning application seeks permission for the erection of a single storey data centre (B8 use). The proposed building would measure approximately 96.3m by 27.1m with an internal floor area of approximately 2,547 sq m. In terms of height, the proposed building, as measured from finished ground floor level, would be approximately 6.8m. The structure would be located adjacent to the existing data hall, but would not be physically connected. The proposal does not alter any existing accesses into the site nor reduces the current level of car parking (25 spaces in total).

The centre will consist of computing and networking equipment concentrated for the purpose of collecting, storing, processing, distributing or allowing access to large amounts of data, which will contribute towards the growth of telecommunications infrastructure within Bromsgrove. The proposed development will safeguard the 15 existing jobs associated with this process.

Principle of development

The application site is located within Crofton Centre which has been allocated as Designated Employment Land within the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 as well as within the Longbridge Area Action Plan (AAP). The existing site is an undeveloped plot within the business park, as outlined above it has an extant planning permission.

Policy BDP14 sets out that designated employment areas 'are expected to make a significant contribution towards creating jobs across Bromsgrove and meeting the employment targets identified in Policy BDP3.' Policy BDP14.1 states that 'The regeneration of the District will continue through maintaining and promoting existing employment provision in sustainable, accessible and appropriate locations (as identified on the Policies Map)'.

Within the Longbridge AAP, the site is identified within Proposal EZ3: Employment uses on the Cofton Centre site, it is considered to comply with the land use strategy for employment uses.

The NPPF states that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

Cofton Centre is an existing employment area situated on land designated for employment purposes. The use of the site for B1, B2 and B8 uses has also been established on site under outline planning permission granted under planning application reference B/2007/0356 and a data centre use under 13/0994. As such the principle of employment development on this site is considered to be acceptable. In addition, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration have set out that the proposal would help Bromsgrove to achieve some of the economic priorities that were adopted in April 2017, which include: driving economic growth; supporting businesses to start and grow; and driving up and retaining skills locally.

The application site is located within land under the ownership of ATOS which is an established employment based operator. The proposed development of a data centre (Use Class B8) would help to support the existing operation of the established business which operates from the site. Given this, it is considered that the proposed development fully accords with the land use policies in the District Plan and is also supported by the NPPF.

Character and appearance

The new building will be portal framed building, with solid concrete slabs around the perimeter of building to match the existing date halls. The use of concrete slabs is required for security reasons to prevent ramming of the building. The building will be clad in microrib insulated panel to match the existing building, which is light and dark grey. There is an indication by the applicant that solar panels will be installed on top of the roof.

The layout, scale, design and external appearance of the building reflects the commercial use. The design and scale of the building is considered to be appropriate in this commercial setting and complies with BDP19 and the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

The development will utilise existing access and parking, which is considered sufficient. The site has 25 spaces none will be lost as the result of this development. No new access into the site is being proposed. The Highway Authority has raised no objection. The proposal and the application is considered to comply with BDP16 and the Longbridge AAP.

Noise

With regard to residential amenity, the proposal is set a sufficient distance away from the nearest residential properties to be considered to have no significant impacts regarding noise levels. Following a site visit WRS Noise are satisfied with the information provided that the cumulative noise from the existing installation and the proposed should not adversely impact the nearest noise sensitive receptors.

Contamination

WRS Contamination has no objection to the planning application subject to a suitable contamination condition.

Drainage

The site falls within flood zone 1 and it is not considered that there is any significant fluvial flood risk to the site. There is some risk to the site from surface water flooding as indicated on the EA's flood mapping. However, appropriately designed drainage can mitigate this risk. Subject to a planning condition regarding drainage, North Worcestershire Water Management have no objection.

Conclusion

Overall it is considered that the proposed development for the new unit within the Cofton Centre accords with the policies in the Bromsgrove District Plan and the NPPF and is therefore acceptable. The proposal would enable the continued growth of an established business and would ensure that their future remains within the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **GRANTED subject to conditions**

Conditions:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Site Location Plan – SK-LBG-100
Existing Site Layout Plan – SK-LBG-101
Proposed Site Layout Plan – SK-LBG-102
Proposed Elevations & Section – SK-LBG-104

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the details set out on drawing Proposed Elevations & Section – SK-LBG-104 and section 7 Materials of the Planning Application Forms.

Reason: To ensure the development has an acceptable appearance and to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 4) No works or development above foundation level shall take place until a scheme for surface water drainage will be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme should be indicated on a drainage plan and the approved scheme shall be completed prior to the first use of the development hereby approved.

Reason: In order to ensure satisfactory drainage conditions that will not create or exacerbate flood risk on site or within the surrounding local area.

- 5) In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, these will be subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following the completion of any measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any buildings.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors

- 6) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order and the Town and Planning Act 1990) the total gross internal floor space of the building hereby permitted shall not exceed 2,547 sq m and no extension or alteration either external or internal, including the provision of an increase in floor space of the mezzanine floor shall be carried out without the prior permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To retain control over the intensification of the use of the site, particularly having regard to the provision of onsite parking.

Case Officer: Mr Paul Lester Tel: 01527 881323
Email: paul.lester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk