

[REDACTED]

Our ref: ER/DJ Email: [REDACTED]

16th June 2021

Dear Wrexham Borough Council,

**RE:Reference:APP/H6955/A/21/3271
810 application**

I am writing to you on behalf of Coleg Cambria Llysfasi to express our support of the appeal for planning application **APP/H6955/A/21/3271810**, Five Fords, Wrexham - hub for future 'Low Carbon Farming' business.

The plan to construct a state-of-the-art greenhouse on land which lies to the east of the Five Fords Waste-Water Treatment Works is an exciting opportunity for the horticulture and land based sectors in Wales to develop, with the potential to become a nationally significant piece of infrastructure with a significant contribution to the economy of Wales.

The land chosen is in a unique position with opportunities to link in with Welsh Water and neighbouring Anaerobic Digester Plants while simultaneously having good network links across the region with access to skilled labour from the nearby town of Wrexham.

We understand that the greenhouse will grow high wire crops, likely to be specialty tomatoes, and will employ the latest high-tech growing methods and innovation, whilst also employing 150 people. The proposal to heat the greenhouse using waste heat from the Waste-Water Treatment Works and to use carbon dioxide from the works (currently vented into the atmosphere), piped into the greenhouse to help the plants grow is a blueprint of what can be done at a number of sites across Wales in some of the old industrial heartlands which will regenerate economies in those areas creating jobs and wealth.

The output from the site will also contribute to the local economy, generating an impressive 29

kg/m² of cherry plum tomatoes or 200 cucumbers/m², equating to over 4,000 tonnes of tomatoes or 30 million cucumbers. To achieve these yields while at the same time sequestering 4,500t of CO₂ is not only impressive but should be a celebrated achievement.

The project is looking to develop local partnerships with land based further and higher education universities and colleges looking to enhance their local offering to increase the opportunities in horticultural, agronomy and agri-tech industries. The potential for a long-term partnership with 'Low Carbon Farming' and the 5-Fords project will allow Coleg Cambria to broaden its industry links and input and for curriculum opportunities and content across multiple land based courses which would include; agriculture, horticultural, agronomy and agri-engineering. This would add value to learners throughout their educational offering and future careers.

This partnership could work towards opportunities for the Wrexham 5-Fords project site as being the hub for horticulture and associated training for the whole of Wales thus attracting further investments in the Colleges involved including Coleg Cambria.

Coleg Cambria Llysfasi

The Llysfasi site of Coleg Cambria based just west of Wrexham has a deep history in the delivery of quality education for over 100 years. Llysfasi Farm sits within an area of outstanding natural beauty in the Vale of Clwyd, North Wales, it is 970 acres and has three main enterprises; beef, sheep and dairy. In addition, Coleg Cambria provides a range of landscaping, horticultural and environment & ecology courses at our Northop site.

We are recognised as industry leaders in land-based education and have established an excellent reputation. We are always keen to collaborate with and support relevant projects and share our knowledge of food production including the use of sustainable systems and technologies to enhance and protect the environment.

At Llysfasi our ethos is 'Education and Innovation for Inspiring Success', which is what we aim to achieve every day, it is therefore imperative that we continue to work with and in partnership with industry and innovative projects like the Low Carbon Farming 5-Fords project to provide our learners the knowledge and skills they need towards a successful future.

Coleg Cambria is proactive in ensuring learners have industry relevant experience and are currently investigating the incorporation of sustainability and net zero elements and information that should be embedded within the curriculum. The Low Carbon Farming 5-Fords project would be an excellent opportunity to learn, see and experience elements of this in practice. This project also could offer work experience opportunities for learners, internships, post college placements/graduate programmes and course sponsorship in the future.

Coleg Cambria Llysfasi Net Zero project

The 5 Fords project in Wrexham proposed by Low Carbon Farming has a direct link with our

vision as a learning centre of excellence in land based education and renewable technologies. This would bring benefits to our learners and employees in North Wales for future growth and stability. Coleg Cambria, Llysfasi has started (2021) a 15 year project to educate, demonstrate and innovate in the drive towards net zero carbon primary (farming) food production and land management and the 5-Fords initiative offers a collaborative opportunity that strategically and practically fits with our activities.

Our vision is to deliver excellence in renewable energy technologies, carbon use reduction through improvements in efficiency and carbon sequestration. These activities will act as an innovation demonstrator platform and test bed for new and existing renewable and low carbon technologies. This will facilitate growth in the commercial agricultural and growing sectors in North Wales and wider regions through the efficient use of new and digital-based precision primary food production.

- The close proximity of 5-Fords allows Cambria to have access to a large scale project delivering low carbon food, circular economies and agri-tech development and evolution.
- 5-Fords can act as a catalyst for discussions and educational provision on how agriculture can cut CO₂ and meet ambitious Welsh Government Net Carbon Zero targets.
- The 5-Fords initiative provides an example of approaches to the circular economy that could be used to educate and train learners for future job opportunities.
- The use of waste CO₂ in the 5-Fords initiative provides the potential for growing high-value alternative crops in the region, which will create GVA and jobs on top of the traditional food and farming base that the region has.

The college continues to build partnerships and links with national and global organisations which include Farming Connect (in Wales), LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) programme for National schools competition, Kubota and AGCO apprenticeship schemes, Tilhill Forestry Diploma, the PreciseAg (Precision Agriculture) project and various industry leading beef production partnerships supporting our sustainable beef production programme.

It is imperative that educational establishments and future horticulturalists and land based sectors have access to facilities such as the 5-Fords project, this will offer bespoke on-site training and education on innovative technologies.

Benefits this Low Carbon Farming 5-Fords project would bring to Llysfasi (plus other Coleg Cambria Campuses) and our learners of land based and technology based students

- Increased the skills and knowledge for our learners- to ensure that they are industry ready in this sector

- Promotes careers/increased job opportunities in the land based/food production/technologies sectors for students
- Potential to deliver accredited apprenticeship programme qualifications specific to the 5-Fords initiative
- Increase the skills levels of the workforce through formal qualifications /National programme and raising awareness of this career pathway
- Access for student work experience/work placements to learn on site at the 5-Fords facilities
- Retain young people in the area with the high end skills for long term employment and the ability to maintain successful individuals and groups in the rural environment.
- Links learning with the latest innovations within Agricultural science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)
- Raise awareness and profile of food production and environmental benefits using this system

It is vital that the College can support and get involved with initiatives like this project to ensure that our current students and future farmers and horticultural growers learn from and gain knowledge and experience of innovation and sustainable food production systems.

With so many opportunities to support the learning of our students and wider community, Coleg Cambria Llysfasi supports this appeal for planning application.

Yours sincerely,



Elin Roberts, Assistant Principal of Technical studies and site lead Llysfasi



Dewi Jones, Farm Manager, Coleg Cambria Llysfasi