Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-262724-D3P8
Eich cyf/Your ref: P/2024/1151

Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 03 September 2024

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: RHYDDHAU AMOD 7 (HALOGIAD) CANIATÂD CYNLLUNIO P/2021/0676/DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 7 (CONTAMINATION) OF PLANNING PERMISSION P/2021/0676

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: LAND NORTH EAST OF MAELOR WORKS, CROSS LANES, WREXHAM, LL13 0UW

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC)/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the above, which we received on 14 August 2024.

We have concerns with the application as submitted. We do not recommend your Authority discharges condition 7 for the following reasons.

Condition 7

We have reviewed the following reports available on the planning portal:

- Application form
- Covering letter
- Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment of land at solar farm, Wrexham. GeoCon Site Investigations Limited, Report Ref: GSI 2006 MP PI Report V1, dated: December 2023
- Geoenvironmental Site Investigation Report Phase II Site Investigation of land at solar farm, Wrexham, GeoCon Investigations Limited, Report ref: GSI 2—6 EW PII Report, dated: April 2024
- Relevant appendices of the above reports

General comments:

- References are made to the Environment Agency; the environmental regulator in Wales is Natural Resources Wales

<u>Phase I Report Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) Report:</u>

We note the Site was formerly a Royal Ordnance Factory, described as *"Appearing post WW2, relates to ROF production of explosive propellant, identical building units connected by railway across western site area. Further infrastructure 100m north of site beyond the river. Potential for burn pits, disposal sites, laboratories, smelting and chemical plants. Some structures remain in present day".* There is, therefore, the potential for contamination to be present across areas of the Site, however we have not been able to find a figure which clearly presents where the potential sources of contamination may be located, which should be used to inform a useful site investigation.

We agree with the recommendation that an intrusive site investigation should be undertaken, based on the historical land use and the sensitivity of the site (principal aquifer, SPZII and adjacent surface water course).

Phase II Site Investigation (SI) Report:

We note the phrase *"The locations of the exploratory holes were specified by GeoCon and were positioned to gain key information beneath the site in relation to the proposed development".* It is unclear whether the site investigation was targeted based on the historical activities at the Site; this is important information to understand whether the site investigation has been sufficient at investigating the potential sources of contamination at the Site. We advise that additional information is provided to clarify how the locations of the exploratory holes were selected.

We note groundwater was encountered in 14 of the 18 exploratory hole locations and that *"GeoCon have not been commissioned to carry out any groundwater monitoring at the Site".* There is no clear rationale for excluding this from the scope of investigation which would be expected given the historical land use and the environmental sensitivity of the site (located on a principal aquifer and in close proximity to a surface water course).

The Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) considered risks to controlled waters, and concluded that risks to groundwater, drinking water and surface waters were all very low; this was on the basis of the aquifer designation (secondary A and principal aquifer), the location within an SPZII and SPZIII, the distance to surface waters and the results of soil sampling. However, we consider that due to these factors, which result in the area being of high environmental sensitivity and vulnerability, an assessment of groundwater quality should have formed part of the scope of the investigation to provide data to feed into the GQRA and the assessment of potential risks at the Site.

Based on the above uncertainties and data gaps, we are currently unable to recommend the discharge of Condition 7.

Other Matters

Our comments above only relate specifically to matters included on our checklist, *Development Planning Advisory Service: Consultation Topics* (September 2018), which is published on our website. We have not considered potential effects on other matters and do not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other interests.

We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our website for further details.

If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully

Rachael Burke
Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu/Advisor - Development Planning
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi./Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.