Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-273477-C7Z0
Eich cyf/Your ref: P/2024/1357

Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 18 February 2025

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: NEWID DEFNYDD TIR O DDEFNYDD PRESWYL/PORI I DDEFNYDD CEFFYLAU YN CYNNWYS CREU MENAGE A THRAC TRACTORAU / CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM RESIDENTIAL/GRAZING USE TO EQUINE USE INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF MENAGE AND TRACTOR TRACK

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: CORNER HOUSE FARM, THE CADNEY, BETTISFIELD, WHITCHURCH, SY13 2LR

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC)/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the above, which we received on 27 January 2025.

We have concerns with the application as submitted because inadequate information has been provided in support of the proposal. To overcome these concerns, you should seek further information from the applicant regarding protected sites. If this information is not provided, we would object to this planning application. Further details are provided below.

Protected Sites

Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 (Wales) Ramsar site

The development site is located adjacent to a watercourse, which is hydrologically connected to the Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses (Wales) SAC and the Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 (Wales) Ramsar site.

We have concerns that a significant effect from the proposed development on the SAC and Ramsar site cannot be ruled out. We advise that further information is required to adequately consider the potential impacts on the features of protected sites and in particular to enable your Authority to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment under Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Section 2.4 of the Planning Statement refers to perforated land drains discharging to soakaways providing the drainage for the menage. We have concerns regarding this proposed drainage method as it could affect the above protected sites through pollution of the groundwater and associated hydrological connectivity to the protected sites. We note that the cross section drawing ref B06.1.003, dated August 2024 shows MOT Type 1 to be used for the menage base and 'clean stone' for the drainage runs. We would raise concerns if limestone was used in this location as it would potentially imbalance the pH levels which could then affect the protected sites.

We therefore advise that the following further information should be submitted in relation to the location and construction materials for the soakaways and the menage:

- A site plan detailing the proposed land drain pipes and soakaway locations. These should be positioned as far as possible away from any watercourses/ditches
- Construction materials for the drainage run and soakaways – clean inert stone should be used such as granite
- Construction material for the menage base – MOT Type 1 using an inert stone should be applied such as granite

As the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), your authority must, before deciding to give consent for a project which is likely to have a significant effect on a SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the project for that site in view of its conservation objectives. You must for the purposes of the assessment consult NRW and have regard to any representations we make within such reasonable time as you specify. In the absence of that assessment, NRW cannot advise that the proposals would not result in an adverse effect upon the SAC/Ramsar site.

River Dee and Bala Lake SAC

We note the application site is within the catchment of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC. In line with our *Advice to Planning Authorities for Planning Applications Affecting Nutrient Sensitive River Special Areas of Conservation* (28 June 2024), under the Habitats Regulations, Planning Authorities must consider the impact of proposed developments on water quality within SAC river catchments.

Please note, any manure produced must be managed (storage and application to land) in line with The Code of Good Agricultural Practice (CoGAP) for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air for Wales. If manure is managed correctly then the application as submitted is unlikely to increase the amount of nutrients entering the catchment. Therefore, we are satisfied that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / National Nature Reserve (NNR)

NRW consider the proposals have the potential to impact upon the Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SSSI and the Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR. Providing the impact pathways referenced above for the SAC/Ramsar site are adequately addressed, NRW consider the features of the SSSI/NNR will also be adequately safeguarded

Protected Species

Water voles

We note that there is a waterbody close to the application site. Our records indicate that water voles have been recorded within approximately 450m of the application site. However, the ecological report (Worsfold, S., November 2024, Ecological Impact Assessment at Corner House Road, Bettisfield) submitted in support of the above application does not include an assessment to determine whether water voles, a protected species are material to the application site.

As no information about this species has been submitted with the application, we recommend you seek the advice of your Authority's ecologist to determine if there is a reasonable likelihood of water voles being material to the application site and to scope the need for bespoke surveys.

Please consult us again if any further investigation undertaken finds that water voles are material to the application site, and you require further advice from us.

Bats

We note that the ecology report submitted in support of the above application (Worsfold, S., November 2024, Ecological Impact Assessment at Corner House Road, Bettisfield) has identified that there is a possibility of bats commuting and foraging within the application site. We therefore advise discussion with your Authority's ecologist in relation to the proposals regarding bats, in particular any lighting arrangements.

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.