Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-274909-X6H9
Eich cyf/Your ref: P/2024/1151

Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dyddiad/Date: 06 March 2025

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 additional information for the above, which we received on 17 February 2025.

We continue to 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 additional information 'Phase II Report Addendum' dated 05/02/2025 (GeoCon Site Investigations Ltd) submitted in support of this discharge of conditions application. The site is considered to be of high sensitivity as it lies above a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) and Principal Aquifer.

We note that photographs 9 and 12 within the Phase I Report Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) Report (Reference GSI 2006 MP PI Report dated December 2023) show the presence of some relic infrastructure from the former munitions factory. We note the structures themselves will not be directly affected by the proposals, but works will occur on land adjacent to them. The window sample locations do not target these locations/areas of concern. The closest window sample locations are WS06 and WS04 and therefore the soil and groundwater quality in the immediate vicinity of the relic structures, (where works will occur) has not been determined.

Section 4.7 of the Phase II Site Investigation (SI) Report (Reference GSI 2006 EW PII Report dated April 2024) states that *"Groundwater was encountered in 14 of the 18 exploratory holes formed across the site"*. It is unclear if the remaining 4 window sample locations

recorded ‘No groundwater’ as this information was not provided. The presence of shallow groundwater and its likely connectivity to the water course to the north, suggests that groundwater conditions, including quality must be assessed. We do not consider it sufficient to infer the quality of groundwater based on soil data alone and notably if the soil samples do not include potential areas of concern such as those in photos 9 and 12.

In addition, given the history of the site, the potential presence of chemicals associated with explosive propellant must be investigated prior to the discharge of condition 7. Please see the following guidance. Land Contamination: Land contamination Techical Guidance on Special Sites: Explosives Manufacturing and Processing Sites

Some of the window sample locations are hydraulically downgradient of the onsite structures illustrated in photos 9 and 12. Some of the window sample locations would appear likely to have been representative of groundwater baseflow to the river but it is likely that no functional groundwater monitoring wells exist at the site because none of the window sample locations appear to have been completed as groundwater monitoring wells. The contractor has reported that they were not commissioned to carry out groundwater monitoring, therefore chemicals generally associated with an Ordnance factory/explosive propellant, have not been investigated in the soils or groundwater.

Based on the above, we do not recommend that Condition 7 be discharged as groundwater samples, notably in locations of concern such as those illustrated in photos 9 and 12 where contaminants associated with an ordnance factory/explosive propellant may have impacted local soils and groundwater, have not been collected and analysed. A meaningful controlled waters risk assessment cannot therefore be undertaken, and no conclusions with the necessary degree of certainty, can be drawn without this site-specific data.

Advice for the Developer

Please note that groundwater dewatering is a licenced activity if volumes greater than 20m^3/day of groundwater are needed to be pumped and is subject to applying to NRW for a Groundwater Investigation Consent (GIC) which is needed to obtain a groundwater abstraction licence. A Hydrogeological Impact Appraisal (HIA) will also be required to support any groundwater abstraction licence application.

Please also refer to GP3 – Groundwater Protection which was re-published in 2018: The Environment Agency’s approach to groundwater protection (publishing.service.gov.uk). Although it is currently being reviewed for an update, the current version contains a section on Infrastructure which includes guidance on buried high voltage cables, notably in relation to the depth to groundwater.

We note that operational infrastructure beyond just solar panels is proposed on the eastern side of the site, including an attenuation swale, 0.5m below ground level (southern boundary of Field 1B). These are a SuDs design feature, and the SuDs Approval Board (SAB) should be consulted on the design of the swale given potential constraints arising from a high groundwater table and the unknown groundwater quality within which the swale will be operating.

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

E-bost/E-mail: northplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

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.