
LAND SOUTH OF HOLT ROAD, WREXHAM

Environmental Impact Assessment Non-Technical Summary

April 2021

Land South of Holt Road, Wrexham

Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary

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Prepared by:	Project Team	Project Team
Checked by:	MM	MM

Barton Willmore LLP
7 Soho Square
London
W1D 3QB

Tel: 020 7446 6888



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barratt Homes, Bloor Homes North West, John Raymond Jones and the Trustees of the Wrexham (Parochial) Education Foundation (hereafter referred to as the 'Appellants') are seeking outline planning permission for a proposed residential development on Land south of Holt Road in Wrexham (the 'Site'). The Site is situated within the administrative area of Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) and is shown on Figure 1.1.



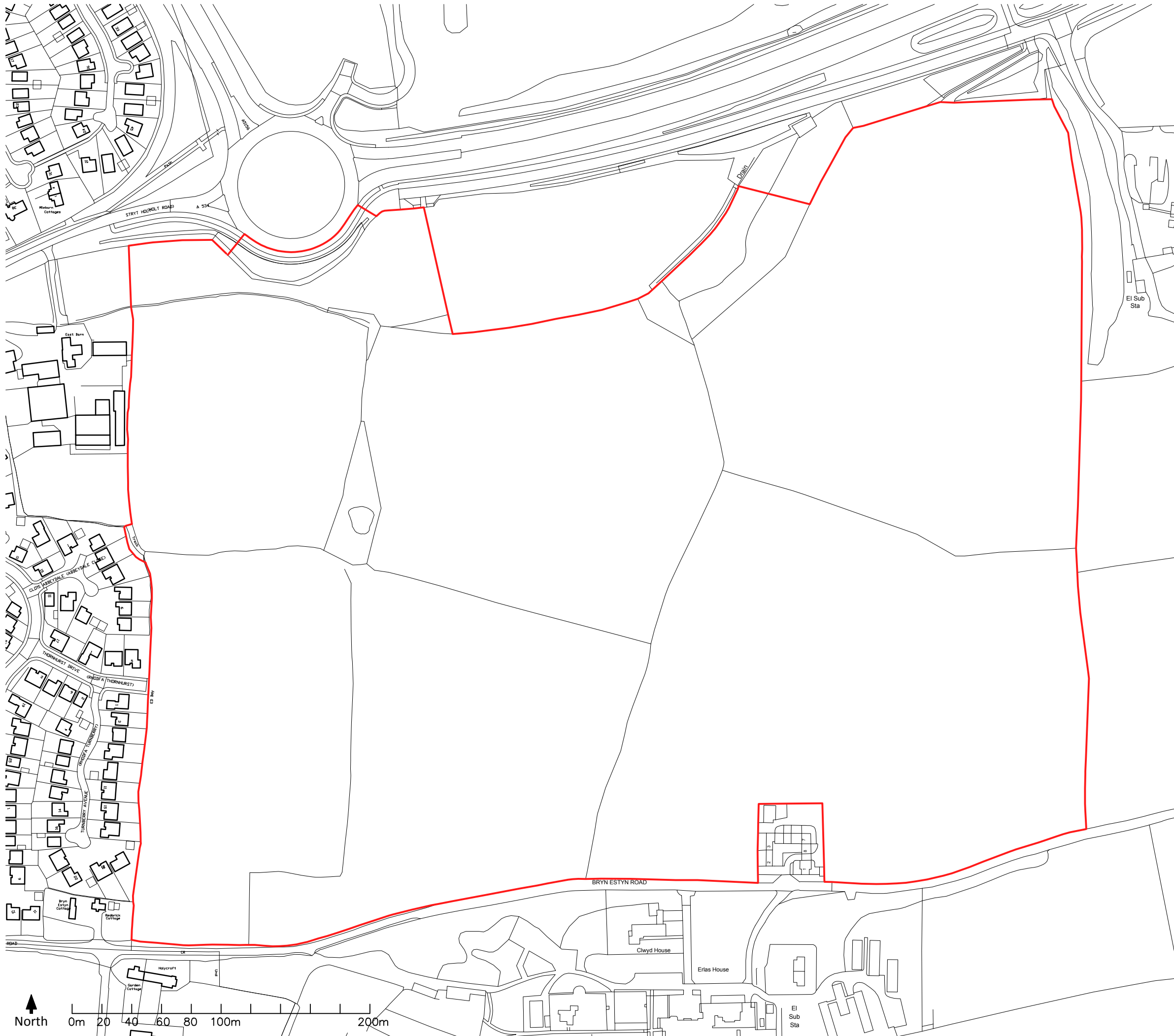
Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 1.2 This report provides a non-technical summary (NTS) of the Environmental Statement (ES). The ES is the report of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out of the Development in accordance with national legislation (*Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017*).
- 1.3 Copies of the ES can be purchased from the Environmental Planning Team at Barton Willmore:

Tel: 020 7446 6888 / Email: IEPenquiries@bartonwillmore.co.uk

1.4 The ES may be purchased as a whole document or in separate volumes, the costs for which are as follows:

- Non-Technical Summary (NTS) - £15
- Volume 1: ES Main Text & Figures - £250
- Full copy (with NTS) of the ES on memory stick - £20.



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
MASTERPLANNING
URBAN DESIGN

**RANDALL
THORP**

Canada House, 3 Chepstow Street, Manchester M1 5FW
0161 228 7721 mail@randallthorp.co.uk www.randallthorp.co.uk

KEY:

 Site boundary



John Raymond Jones

The Trustees of The
Wrexham (Parochial)
Education Foundation

Land South of Holt Road Wrexham

Site Location Plan

Drwg No: 661B 03A
Drawn by: MP
Rev by: SB
QM Status: Checked
Scale: 1:2500 @ A3

Date: 09-11-17
Checker: JF
Rev checker: DL
Product Status:
Issue

2 EIA METHODOLOGY

EIA Requirement

- 2.1 The EIA Regulations require that a proposed development will be subject to EIA where such development is likely to have 'significant' effects on the environment by virtue of factors including its nature, size or location. The Development falls within Category 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations as an 'urban development project' exceeding the 150 dwelling and 5-hectare thresholds. In November 2017 a request for a Screening Opinion was submitted to WCBC, the request was amended in December 2017. In January 2018 WCBC adopted a screening opinion in response to the December 2017 request which stated that the proposals did not constitute EIA development. Subsequent to this process a planning application was submitted for the Development in January 2019 (P/2019/0005) which Members of the WCBC's Planning Committee voted to refuse on 27th July 2020. The Appellants lodged an appeal against this decision in November 2020 (Appeal Reference APP/H6955/A/20/3263516), which was confirmed as valid on 17 December 2020. On submission of the appeal The Planning Inspectorate, authorised by the Welsh Ministers, adopted a Screening Direction which identified the Development as likely to result in significant environmental effects on agricultural land and minerals. An ES has therefore been prepared to identify and assess the likely significant effects of the Development.

Scoping

- 2.2 A formal Scoping Opinion was not requested as the Screening Direction adopted by the Planning Inspectorate confirmed the technical disciplines for which likely significant effects could arise. The topics scoped into the ES comprise Minerals and Agricultural Land.

EIA Methodology

- 2.3 The EIA Regulations stipulate that an ES should identify, describe and assess the likely significant effects of a development on the environment during the construction and operational phases. Environmental effects have been evaluated with reference to definitive standards and legislation, where available. Where it has not been possible to quantify effects, qualitative assessments have been carried out, based on available knowledge and professional judgement. Where uncertainty exists, this has been noted in the relevant assessment chapter.
- 2.4 Each ES chapter establishes the baseline conditions that would be affected by the Development. Site surveys and desk-based assessment of published resources are used to determine the baseline conditions at the time of application. Baseline information has been

gathered during 2020 and 2021 and where appropriate from earlier sources.

- 2.5 The significance of an effect is determined by the sensitivity of the receiving environment (receptor) and the magnitude (size/scale/severity) of the effect that the Development would lead to. The majority of EIA disciplines use the terms negligible, or minor, moderate or major adverse or beneficial to describe the significance of an effect. Some disciplines use bespoke criteria in accordance with published guidance and industry best practice.

Cumulative Effects

- 2.6 A requirement of the EIA Regulations is to assess cumulative effects. Cumulative effects are generally considered to arise from the combination of effects from the Development and from other committed schemes in the vicinity, acting together to generate elevated levels of effects.
- 2.7 For the purposes of this ES the proposed developments at Table 2.1 have been included in the ES.

Table 2.1: Cumulative Schemes considered in the ES

Site and Planning Reference	Description of Development	Approximate Distance from Site
Borras Park Community Primary School P/2020/0475	One Storey and Two Storey Extensions, Refurbishment Works, Associated Parking Areas, Outdoor Recreation and Games Area	800m to the north west
Former Firestone Factory, Bridge Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate P/2013/0671	Outline Planning Application for the construction of a Prison (Maximum Floorspace of 76,370 Sqm Gross External Area) Within A Secure Perimeter Fence Together With Access, Parking, Visitor / Support Building, Energy Centre, Landscaping.	2.5km to the south
Land at Borras Airfield, The Holt Estate, Borras Quarry, Holt Road P/2003/0579	Extension of sand and gravel workings	800m to the north east

3 THE SITE & DEVELOPMENT

Site Context

- 3.1 The Site is located north-east of the town of Wrexham, and within the administrative boundary of WCBC and in the ward of Holt. The northern boundary of the Site broadly follows the east-west alignment of the dualled A534 Holt Road, which provides direct access to Wrexham town centre to the west, Wrexham Industrial Estate to the east and the wider strategic road network. To the north lies Wrexham Golf Course, Borrass Quarry and extensive agricultural land. The eastern boundary of the Site borders arable fields beyond which lies Sandy Lane and Clays Golf Course. The northern section of the eastern boundary consists of a ready-mixed concrete plant located in an historic quarry area. Bryn Estyn Road forms the southern boundary of the Site, along with the residential properties of Bryn Estyn Court. Beyond Bryn Estyn Road is Wrexham Rugby Club, a limited number of residential properties, Erlas Victorian Garden, the Erlas Centre and agricultural land beyond. Established residential properties on Turnberry Avenue, Thornhurst Avenue and Abbeydale Close (known as the Fairways estate), and the buildings of Tyn-twill Farm form the western boundary of the Site.

Site Description

- 3.2 The Site extends to 28.52 hectares (ha) and is approximately rectangular in shape. It is currently in agricultural use and consists of seven separate fields. Internal field boundaries are mainly hedgerows or tree-lined. Four separate and interconnecting electricity lines cut across the Site. A drainage ditch enters the Site from the north-west corner and runs along in an eastern direction across the north-western section of the Site. The drainage ditch ends at a wooded area at a junction of three field boundaries, just south of the A534 roundabout. A further drainage ditch enters the Site from the north-east corner and runs along the northern boundary of the Site for a short distance. An area of woodland is located in the north of the Site surrounding a steep valley. The topography of the Site varies but generally slopes from the south-west down to the north-west.

Environmental Baseline Conditions

- 3.3 The site is not in an air quality management area, it is not at risk of flooding given its location in Flood Zone 1, and there are no heritage features such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments or conservation areas on or directly adjacent to the Site. The bedrock underlying the Site is classed as an aquifer. The Site is not covered by, or adjacent to, any areas which are subject to a statutory ecological designation.

Sensitive Receptors

- 3.4 The features which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Development have been identified and the likely significant effects on these potential receptors have been considered by the technical studies and chapters of this ES. The potential sensitive receptors comprise the agricultural land on the Site and the mineral resource under the site.

The Development

- 3.5 The Development comprises construction of up to 600 dwellings with associated landscaping, public open space, and on-site infrastructure, with all matters reserved except for the northern site access.

Residential Use

- 3.6 Up to 600 dwellings are proposed. The proposed housing mix, whilst only indicative at this stage, is expected to comprise of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties, with 15% 2-bed, 60% 3-bed and 25% 4-bed. The Development will provide up to 20% affordable housing comprising an indicative mix of 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

Access

- 3.7 Detailed approval is sought for the main access into the Site from the Holt Road roundabout, with all other indicated access points and roads being indicative at this time.

Landscaping

- 3.8 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Development. The assessment was based on the incorporation of mitigation measures. In addition to the Landscape Assessment, mitigation measures set out in the Ecological Assessment included the following design proposals:

- retention / enhancement of ponds, woodland, hedgerow, and
- the creation of SuDS ponds, native tree and woodland planting, and creation / enhancement of wildflower meadows on existing arable / grassland.

Surface Water Drainage

- 3.9 Sustainable Drainage Systems¹ will be incorporated into the Development. The planning application was accompanied by a suite of drainage information and a detailed drainage scheme, in accordance with the applicable regulations and to the Lead local Flood Authority's satisfaction, will be provided at the reserved matters stage once the detailed layout for the Development has been clarified. Investigations at the Site have identified that the ground conditions are favourable for infiltration drainage and a Flood Consequences Assessment was submitted with the planning application.

¹ Drainage systems designed to mimic natural drainage and efficiently manage the drainage of surface water runoff in an urban environment through collection, storage, and cleaning before allowing it to be released slowly back into the environment.



- KEY:**
- Site boundary
 - Open space
 - Residential development
 - Primary access point (as per CBO Site Access Plan re CBO-0322-011)
 - Potential secondary link
 - Strategic link road
 - Indicative primary roads
 - Potential links to adjacent land
 - Footpaths
 - Strategic shared use footpath/cycleway link
 - Existing pedestrian and cycle routes
 - Existing vegetation to be retained
 - Existing pond to be retained
 - Proposed woodland and tree planting
 - Proposed equipped play area (400m²)
 - Indicative SuDS attenuation areas (if required)

Land South of Holt Road Wrexham

Parameter Plan

Drwg No: 661B 05 B
Drawn by: SB
Rev by: SB
QM Status: Checked
Scale: 1:2500 @ A3

Date: 02-08-18
Checker: DL
Rev checker: DL
Product Status: Issue

4.0 ALTERNATIVES

- 4.1 Under the EIA Regulations (Part 5 Section 17(3)(d)) an ES is required to provide a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the appellant. The main alternatives to the Development which have been considered and the main reasons for the choices made are discussed below.

Alternatives

- 4.2 Alternative options typically comprise:

- The 'do nothing' alternative, where the Development is not progressed;
- Consideration of Alternative Locations or Uses; and
- Consideration of Alternative Designs.

The 'Do Nothing' Alternative and Alternative Sites

- 4.3 The 'do nothing' alternative means leaving the Site in its current use as a greenfield land. Neither the do-nothing option nor alternative sites were considered by the Appellants as they can deliver housing on this Site.

Alternative Designs

- 4.4 The design principles for the Development were established based on contextual analysis of the Site and surrounding area, and considered the vegetation, landform, ecology, drainage, connectivity and built form. As a result, five key design concepts have been embedded into the layout and compromise:
- Retention and protection of existing landscape features;
 - Provision of landscape buffers and boundary treatments;
 - Improvement in recreational value/pedestrian network;
 - Delivery of a strategic north-south link road; and
 - Definition of development blocks and provision of internal access.
- 4.5 These concepts formed the basis of the masterplan which has been adapted into a Parameter Plan for the purposes of this assessment. The Site constraints were clearly established from the outset and working with the key design concepts identified above, no alternatives were identified that need to be considered in this ES.

5 CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The construction programme for the Development is anticipated to span approximately four years.
- 5.2 The mitigation measures proposed within the ES to minimise adverse effects during the construction phase would be implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which would be agreed with WCBC prior to commencement of work on Site. The CEMP, will include, among others:
- A table showing the objectives, activities (mitigation/optimisation measures), and responsibilities for the implementation of those activities;
 - The broad plan of the work programme including working hours and delivery times;
 - Details of prohibited or restricted operations (location, hours etc.);
 - Contact during normal working hours and emergency details outside working hours;
 - Provision for reporting, public liaison, and prior notification of particular construction related activities;
 - The mechanism for the public to register complaints and the procedures for responding to such complaints; and
 - The details of proposed routes for HGVs travelling to and from the Site.
- 5.3 The final CEMP will be prepared and submitted in support of future reserved matters applications.

6.0 AGRICULTURAL LAND

- 6.1 The ES includes an assessment of the effects of the Development on 27.7ha of agricultural land within the Site boundary.
- 6.2 The information used to inform this assessment was taken from detailed surveys carried out across the Site in April 2004 and September 2018. The surveys, carried out in accordance with the established guidelines and criteria, identified that most of the Site is classified as best and most versatile (i.e. the most productive) agricultural land in Subgrade 3a. The effect on the loss of agricultural land is assessed as a direct, permanent moderate adverse effect, which is significant.
- 6.3 Mitigation to prevent soil damage will ensure that the magnitude of change on the soil resource is low. There is likely to be a direct, permanent minor adverse to negligible effect on the soil resource which is not significant.
- 6.4 Assessing the effects of the Development alongside those of other schemes in the locality results in cumulative effects of the same significance as those of the Development alone.

7.0 MINERALS

- 7.1 The ES includes an assessment of the effects of the Development on the sterilisation of minerals under the Site.
- 7.2 Baseline data relating to minerals on the Site were obtained using geological plans and borehole records. The site investigation established that the mineral resource on the Site is predominantly fine sand to a depth of approximately 25 metres. There is a small proportion (5-10%) of gravel but the gravel is scarce or absent at greater depths. Commercially viable deposits of sand and gravel normally have a significant proportion of gravel, so the absence of gravel in the mineral resource means it is less commercially attractive than a resource with a high gravel content. Wrexham has a landbank of permitted sand and gravel reserves sufficient for 19.6 years.
- 7.3 The only practicable mitigation measure is for a limited amount of prior extraction to an extent that does not jeopardise construction of the Development. This will remove some of the more gravelly sand and it would be possible for it to be hauled from the Site to Borrass quarry which is approximately 1 km to the north of the Site.
- 7.4 The residual effect would be that the remaining sand would be permanently sterilised. However, this remnant is fine sand with no significant gravel content so it is of very little commercial use or value. To put it in context, the area of sterilisation is approximately 3% of the existing area of unconstrained sand and gravel to the north, east and south of Wrexham.
- 7.5 If the above mitigation measure is implemented, then the magnitude of effect would reduce to minor-moderate adverse however the overall residual effect would remain as minor adverse effect on the mineral resource, which is considered to be not significant.
- 7.6 There are no cumulative schemes from a minerals perspective that need to be considered.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The ES has assessed the likely impacts of the Development on agricultural land and minerals. The assessment has identified that:

- the loss of agricultural land would be of moderate adverse significance;
- loss of or damage to soil resources would be of minor adverse to negligible significance; and
- the sterilisation of underlying minerals would be of minor adverse significance.

8.2 There will be no effects on agricultural land or minerals on completion of the Development as any effects will occur at the construction stage.

8.3 Mitigation measures to be implemented include the preparation of a Soil Resource Management Plan at the detailed design stage; and the potential for consideration of limited prior extraction of the mineral resources at the Site to an extent which would not jeopardise the establishment of the Development platform however this cannot be confirmed until ground works commence.

Conclusion

8.4 The Development will result in a moderate adverse residual effect as a result of the loss of agricultural land and minor adverse to negligible effects resulting from the loss of or damage of soil resources and the sterilisation of mineral resources.

REFERENCES

ⁱ SI 1824 as amended by 2015/660