



FI REAL ESTATE
MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL VALUES STATEMENT

Draft Statement of Intent

FI Real Estate Management Land and Development Related
Initiatives in Wrexham Industrial Estate

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1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 This document is to be read as a *Statement of Intent* on approach to delivering social values by FI Real Estate Management Ltd ('FIREM') in connection with its proposed development at Kingmoor.
- 1.2 FIREM is a major property portfolio holder, property owner and developer operating across the UK, including a considerable number of assets within Wrexham County Borough at Wrexham Industrial Estate ('WIE').
- 1.3 The company was conceived and developed as a business by its founder and owner, Tim Knowles. From small beginnings FIREM has grown into a very successful, key and influential player in the UK property owning and development sectors. The key development sectors that FIREM operates in are focused on employment and commercial uses.
- 1.4 FIREM has strategic plans for growth. These are largely orientated on an ambitious and well-resourced development and property improvement programme, including in Wrexham focused on its WIE assets.
- 1.5 FIREM sees there to be very good opportunities to benefit the local communities living in and around Wrexham through FIREM's strategic plans for growth. This is through the potential to deliver a range of social values and opportunities linked to the key objectives of the Government's Levelling Up Fund initiative ("LUF").
- 1.6 The key purpose of this document is to set out and establish FIREM's commitment to work with the Council to deliver social value and opportunities linked to LUF objectives. As such it is to be read and interpreted as FIREM's Statement of Intent to work with the authority to deliver such objectives.
- 1.7 Specifically, the Statement of Intent is to be interpreted as follows:
 - Where possible and agreed with the Council, FIREM will work with the authority and its partners to deliver social values and contribute towards delivering opportunities linked to the key objectives of the Government's LUF initiative. This will mainly be through new development and property management activities.



- Possible social values and opportunities linked to the key objectives of the Government's LUF initiative could be drawn from the wide range of social, economic and environmental targets. Current thoughts on specific initiatives are listed in Section 4.



2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This statement of intent has been prepared by Plan Red, its' planning consultant, on behalf of FIREM.
- 2.2 The statement provides background on and describes social values and opportunities linked to the Government's LUF initiative that FIREM might be able to provide to benefit local communities living in and around Wrexham.
- 2.3 In the main these will be communities living close to Wrexham Industrial Estate which is where the majority of the property it owns within the borough is located.
- 2.4 The scope of the statement is as follows:
- Section 3 describes the origins of social values and the Government's LUF initiative.
 - Section 4 sets out social values and opportunities linked to the key objectives of the Government's LUF initiative that FIREM might be able to provide.
 - Section 5 sets out conclusions on the matters covered in the statement.



3 ORIGINS

Social Values

- 3.1 The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* gives authorities in Wales the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of their communities.
- 3.2 The Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.3 The Act is unique to Wales attracting interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.
- 3.4 Benefits and initiatives to deliver social, cultural and environmental improvements and the economic well-being of their communities, what we would term social values and social value improvement, can be delivered in many different ways and through different means. For example, they can be delivered through procurement, management related operations, development promoted by the public and private sector and initiatives linked to the construction and operational stages of development.
- 3.5 The Act seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and it sets out seven well-being goals for Wales. It requires public bodies (such as the council, police, health services, fire and the voluntary sector) to work together as a Public Services Board (PSB) to agree objectives for improving the well-being of the local area.
- 3.6 The things the Council does must help to achieve the well-being goals set out for its borough including those set out through the Wrexham PSB. The PSB is where the Council presents its our well-being objectives and improvement priorities as required by legislation and explains how its activities and programmes will help achieve the vision for the borough and national Well-being Goals.
- 3.7 The Wrexham Council Plan 2020 -2023 confirms that the Council provides many services to its communities. These include schools, waste collection, social care, council housing, planning services, roads, museums, country parks and trading standards. The Council's



vision for the future is that all the people that live here are supported to fulfil their potential, prosper and achieve a high standard of well-being. The Council will be a strong and inclusive community leader to help make this happen

3.8 The Wrexham Council Plan 2020 -2023 confirms that in 2019 the Council agreed its vision for the following 10-15 year period.

3.9 Regarding economy, the plan confirms that the County Borough's economy will be:

- Thriving and resilient – with a good mix of new and existing businesses, local enterprises, national and international companies.
- Reflect the position of Wrexham town as the major urban area of North Wales.
- Offer a range of employment opportunities, with higher salaries and better job satisfaction.
- A good mix of traditional industry with the skills and knowledge economy.
- Value older people through continuing to use their skills and expertise in work places or through volunteering opportunities; and Be well-connected regionally, nationally and internationally – both in terms of travel and communications.

3.10 In 10-15 years, the people of the County Borough will:

- Live here because they choose to – and are proud of their culture and identity.
- Have high aspirations for education and for life, with the skills, opportunities and tools to achieve them.
- Support children and young people to have the space and opportunity to play
- Have equality of opportunity regardless of their personal circumstances.
- Have the tools to make good life choices that keep them healthy and happy and less reliant on public services.
- Be made up of resilient individuals living in strong and resilient communities where no one feels, or is, isolated or lonely where people take responsibility for themselves and their areas.
- Feel safe, regardless of their background or life choices.



3.11 In 10-15 years, the County Borough will be a place with:

- Unique and beautiful countryside and heritage that is seen as the gateway to North Wales where people want to be and are proud to say they come from.
- A vibrant, accessible and welcoming town and surrounding areas which offers a range of retail, leisure and accommodation options – where our historic landmarks and new developments enhance each other.
- Good public transport links and infrastructure so people can easily access the services and facilities they want and need to, as well as being able to travel to major cities.
- Good quality housing for all, irrespective of whether it is social housing or privately rented/ owned.
- Thriving resilient communities with play, cultural and leisure activities for all ages.
- Actual and perceived low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.12 Building on the above, it is our view that many of these, and which form the overall vision for the borough, could be delivered through new development initiatives and by working in partnership with organisations like FIREM. For example, new development;

- Attracts new businesses and allows the growth of existing businesses
- Provides the potential for new employment opportunities to be created;
- Contributes towards the achievement of higher salaries and better job satisfaction;
- Provides opportunity to mix traditional industry with new enterprise and employment sectors;
- Delivers new skills and opportunities linked to new sectors;
- Allows growth of new sectors such as within the knowledge economy;
- Provides potential to value older people through continuing to use their skills and expertise in work places; and
- Allows or creates potential for skill development programmes and fosters and supports volunteering opportunities.



Levelling Up Fund

- 3.13 Investing in infrastructure has the potential to improve lives by giving people pride in their local communities; bringing more places across the UK closer to opportunity; and demonstrating that government can visibly deliver against the diverse needs of all places and all geographies including Wales.
- 3.14 The country's local communities and the links between them across the UK are fundamental parts of our shared economy, culture and society. Nevertheless, economic differences remain between different parts of the UK, including in our cities, ex-industrial towns, and rural and coastal communities.
- 3.15 These economic differences have real implications: they affect people's lives through their pay, work opportunities, health and life chances. Tackling these economic differences and driving prosperity as part of 'levelling up' left behind regions of the UK with those that perform much better is a stated priority for the current government.
- 3.16 Prosperity can be measured in many ways. However, for many people, the most powerful barometer of economic success is the positive change they see and the pride they feel in the places they call home. People want to be able to look around their towns and villages and recognise that their homes and communities have been improved and they are better off than in previous years.
- 3.17 In this vein, the government recognises that the most impactful infrastructure projects, i.e., those that help bring improvements and pride to a local area, are often small in scale and geography meaning they are achievable. These include the likes of regenerating a town centre, local investment in cultural facilities or upgrading local transport infrastructure.
- 3.18 As the country recovers from the unprecedented economic impacts of Covid-19, the government has recognised that it is more important than ever to prioritise investment that not only brings economic benefits, but also helps bind communities together.
- 3.19 Accordingly, in reflection of this, The Levelling Up Fund ("LUF") was announced at the government's 2020 Spending Review to support communities in realising this vision. The Fund will focus on capital investment in local infrastructure thereby building on and consolidating prior programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund. It is planned to have a visible, tangible impact on people and places, and support economic



recovery. In doing so, it will also create opportunity across the country, prioritising bids that invest in regeneration and growth in places in need and areas of low productivity and connectivity.

- 3.20 At the 2020 Spending Review the Fund was forecast to deliver £600 billion gross public sector investment over five years to 2025.
- 3.21 At time of preparing this first draft of this report for PAC we were aware of changing circumstances at national government which places uncertainty on LUF commitment and the level of funding support. So far, the government continues to signal its commitment to LUF¹.
- 3.22 Assuming continuation of the Fund which is a central plank of the government's 2019 mandate, the LUF will operate to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities. This includes a range of high value local investment priorities, including local transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets.
- 3.23 The Fund will be jointly managed by HM Treasury (HMT), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 3.24 This cross-departmental Fund represents a new approach to local investment and will end silos in Whitehall that make it difficult to take a holistic approach to the infrastructure needs of local areas. All areas in the UK are able to access the Fund, specifically:
- Unitary authorities (including metropolitan borough councils), London borough councils and district councils in two tier areas in England; and unitary authorities in Scotland and Wales are eligible to submit bids.
 - County councils with transport powers, combined authorities, mayoral combined authorities and the Greater London Authority (GLA) are eligible to submit one transport bid; and unitary authorities in Scotland and Wales, and unitary authorities

¹ At PAC issue of Version 1 of this statement, the Autumn Statement spending review to be issued by new chancellor, Jeremy Hunt on 17th November 2022, cast uncertainty on LUF bidding; in April 2023 two rounds of LUF bids has been completed, as yet Wrexham has not been successful. A potential 3rd round of LUF bids has been announced, but not confirmed, by the Government.



in England with transport powers are able to submit one additional bid which must be for transport.

- 3.25 It is unlikely that FIREM could become directly involved in a LUF bid. However, should Wrexham County Borough Council promote an LUF bid in the potential 3rd Round that includes initiatives that might provide scope for FIREM to contribute towards their achievement then FIREM would be happy to assist.



4 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR SUPPORT

- 4.1 In this section we set out the social values and LUF initiatives that the new development and property management related initiatives by FIREM might be able to provide support toward.
- 4.2 FIREM considers that its new development and property management related initiatives have the potential to deliver social values and opportunities linked to LUF related initiatives which fall into the following main sectors:
- Social benefits.
 - Economic benefits.
 - Environmental benefits.
- 4.3 We consider each below and set out specific opportunities, benefits and initiatives that FIREM might be able to provide or contribute to:

Social Benefits

- There is the opportunity linked to the fact FIREM has an operational base at Wrexham Industrial Estate for the company to form a formal alliance with local schools and colleges through which it offers work experience, interview experience, advice on CV drafting, employment sampling sessions and other ‘from education into work’ related benefits.
- There is the opportunity when promoting new development that FIREM constructs through its in-house FI Construction arm, to commit to provide work experience for appropriately aged pupils at local schools.
- Similarly, if the project is sizeable and the construction stages would run for a number of years, FIREM would be prepared to consider offering apprenticeships through FI Construction. With the potential pipeline of projects at scale within WIE this is considered a significant opportunity.
- Building on the above, FIREM would be prepared to consider supporting initiatives that get young people into work including through employability support which could be directed at local schools and colleges.



- Again, and building on the points already made, FIREM is prepared to create and support work placements, work experience and vocational opportunities. This would be directed at local schools and colleges.
- FIREM would be prepared to consider creating opportunities for some of the employment and work experience opportunities to be made available for adults with learning disabilities or to be utilised by mental health initiatives and to generally help residents adopt healthier lifestyles and improve wider social aspects of their lives.
- As FIREM intends to retain development it constructs and then operates, FIREM is prepared to commit to request and require any companies taking space at one of its developments (through lease related initiatives or controls) to commit to Employer Volunteering Schemes.
- As FIREM intends to retain development it constructs and then operates, FIREM is prepared to commit to request and require any companies taking space to consider offering apprenticeship opportunities for younger local residents (through lease related initiatives or controls).
- As FIREM intends to retain development it constructs and then operates, FIREM is prepared to commit to request and require any companies taking space at one of its developments to commit to offer work-based learning opportunities. There is likely to be scope through the type of employment that will be offered for work-based learning opportunities to be created. This would be through lease related initiatives or controls.
- FIREM is prepared to consider supporting people get back to work by providing career mentoring, CV and career advice and guidance (including those aged 50+).
- As FIREM intends to retain development it constructs and then operates, FIREM is prepared to commit to request and require any companies taking space at one of its developments to commit to create opportunities for disadvantaged people including long term unemployed, ex-offenders and people with disabilities (through lease related initiatives or controls). There is scope through the employment that will be offered through the proposed development for work-based learning opportunities to be created. FIREM will also consider opportunities it can provide through its own development and property management related activities to consider the same.



Economic Benefits

- FIREM is committed that any of its developments should ideally offer space/units that provides potential for use of local labour. FIREM develops and then lets its commercial and employment developments. This means it is in a position to influence occupancy and how leaseholders will be expected to operate. This means that the target of the use of local labour is a real prospect. This would also be the case through use of FI Construction which would deal with the construction stages of the project.
- FIREM is very keen to foster the right conditions and circumstances for new apprenticeships to be created. This is something it will consider through its own main and subsidiary businesses, like FI Construction. It will also look to influence incoming tenants. This also relates to training and other social related benefits covered earlier.
- FIREM is committed to sourcing from and use of local suppliers connected with all stages of a development project, i.e., construction, operation and subsequent maintenance.
- FIREM is committed to use of local companies and local skills. This relates mainly to the construction stages of the project which would be dealt with by FI Construction. FIREM will set out specific plans for this as and when opportunities present themselves.
- On community sourcing approaches to regenerate and boost local communities, there is scope through proposed developments to deliver on this target, albeit the full benefits of the proposed uses will be influenced by the occupiers that will take the planned floorspace/units, and how far and to what degree they are prepared to work with FIREM and the councils on regeneration initiatives. Nevertheless, FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.
- On creation of new jobs and Business to Business skill support, this might be possible but needs to be investigated once a proposed development has been completed and is brought into use but FIREM is prepared to commit to try to deliver on this.
- With regard to providing opportunities to become part of the supply chain and working with VCSE sector to create increased volunteering opportunities in the borough, this might be possible, but it will need to be investigated once the proposed



development has been completed and is operating. Nevertheless, FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.

Environmental Benefits

- Regarding use of products from sustainable sources and increase in recycling, minimisation of waste and re-use of resources, this is deliverable through a planning permission relating to a proposed development. This would be through use of planning conditions if they satisfy relevant tests. FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.
- On reduce the amount of waste generated. Again, there is scope to deliver on this through appropriately worded planning conditions. FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.
- On reduction of energy / energy consumption, albeit in connection with construction stages and use of materials rather than through the operational stages of the project, FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this especially if construction is by FI Construction.
- On supporting sustainable travel, this is an achievable and deliverable target and can be controlled through a planning permission. This is specifically in connection with the terms of a green travel plan. This would most probably be through planning conditions. If any of the specific promises or deliverables required through the plan are that way orientated or require financial payments then a Section 106 agreement would be required. FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.
- On potential for public spaces to improved and/or secured, an obvious benefit of some proposed developments is that they will significantly enhance a currently unattractive but cleared and ready for development opportunity site. The development would be delivered through the terms of the planning permission that would be pursuant to the planning application being granted and relevant elements would be controlled through planning conditions. FIREM will use its influences to deliver on this.

4.4 The list set out above confirms that, through the development and property management related activities of FIREM, there is considerable potential for FIREM to deliver a range of



valuable social values and LUF related initiatives that might benefit local communities living in and around Wrexham.

- 4.5 The potential social values and related LUF initiatives could be delivered through a number of mechanisms. These include planning conditions and/or Section 106 agreements where benefits are linked to proposed developments. Where this isn't the case FIREM will look to discuss and agree options, potentially including formal arrangements, with the Council and its partners and other related organisations.



5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusions

- 5.1 FIREM is keen and committed to work with the Council to deliver a range of valuable social values and opportunities linked to LUF initiatives to benefit the local communities living in and around Wrexham.
- 5.2 This would most probably mainly be through its development and property management related functions.
- 5.3 Linked to the above point, FIREM has a base at Wrexham Industrial estate and owns and operates a considerable amount of employment floorspace in the estate.
- 5.4 The social values and opportunities linked to LUF related initiatives are extensive and fall within the categories of social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 5.5 This statement, presented in the form of a Statement of Intent, is designed to foster connections and discussions with the Council and its partners on how FIREM might deliver social values and opportunities linked to LUF initiatives.
- 5.6 There are many mechanisms that might be used to create partnering arrangements with the Council and relevant authorities, formal and informal, and FIREM is willing to consider all options.

Possible Next Steps

- 5.7 FIREM is earnest about the plans and proposals sets out in this Statement of Intent.
- 5.8 It would welcome an initial meeting the Council on the same and to create an on-going relationship and dialogue.
- 5.9 The proposed planning application at Kingmoor to which this Statement has been prepare for presents an opportunity to put into practice such initiatives. Plan Red offers to facilitate an initial meeting and coordinate any future dialogue with the Council and its partners.