

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR
THE SITING OF A MODULAR UNIT TO PROVIDE STAFF FACILITIES COMPRISING
CHANGING ROOMS, TOILETS, SHOWERS AND OFFICES**

AT

**HYDRO ALUMINIUM, BRIDGE ROAD, WREXHAM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,
WREXHAM LL13 9PS**

APPLICANT: HYDRO ALUMINIUM DEESIDE LTD

PLANNING STATEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

1. This application seeks planning permission to site a two-storey modular unit to provide staff facilities comprising changing rooms, toilets and showers on the ground floor and first floor office space on land at Hydro Aluminium Deeside Ltd, Bridge Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham LL13 9PS ('the Site').
2. On 2 September 2022 the Council gave the applicant pre-application advice (ref ENQ/2022/0218) on the proposal (**attached at Appendix 1**), albeit that that related to a single storey unit. The request for pre-application advice was accompanied by three options for the location of the unit; Location 1 was considered to be the most appropriate, and consent is now sought to site the unit in Location 1. The Council's advice says that the proposal would, in principle, be acceptable, subject to various considerations, including:
 - a. Ecology: that the proposal would not result in the loss of habitat for Great Crested Newts (GCN) but that the potential for GCNs to be present within the site cannot be discounted and a planning application should be accompanied by a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for GCN, and provisions that demonstrate that the development will provide net benefit to biodiversity;
 - b. Visual impact: the unit would be viewed in the context of the industrial character of the site in any of the 3 options, but that Location 1 would be preferable as it would avoid the loss of trees along the site frontage;
 - c. Parking: Location 1 would be preferable because it would not result in the loss of any parking;
 - d. Phosphorous: development which increases foul water flows to the Five Fords wastewater treatment works would result in an increase in phosphate discharges into the River Dee and Bala Lake Riverine Special Area of Conservation (SAC), but provided the proposal replaces existing facilities and does not increase staffing numbers phosphorous discharges into the River Dee SAC are unlikely to increase.

3. The Council's comments have been taken on board in formulating the proposal.
4. The proposed unit will be located close to the entrance to the main building, and provide staff facilities comprising changing rooms, toilets and showers on the ground floor and additional office space on the first floor. The proposed facilities will not accommodate additional staff but simply replace inadequate existing facilities currently located in the main building. When the proposed unit is installed the existing facilities will be used for storage and/or additional meeting space.
5. The facilities will be provided for existing staff employed by Hydro Aluminium Deeside Ltd, a global company with more than 50 years of experience in aluminium, at their aluminium remelting facility on the Wrexham Industrial Estate, which has annual production capacity of 60,000 metric tons of extrusion ingot.
6. The Site is located on the Wrexham Industrial Estate, and is bordered on three sides by other commercial and industrial uses, as well as a prison. To the south of the Site is the Pentre Maelor housing estate. The Site is not within a Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Green Belt, or other designated area.
7. The unit will be provided by Portakabin, and will be an 'Ultima Building System'. More detail on the specification and materials can be found in the document **attached at Appendix 2**. The document demonstrates that the unit will be of a high quality, and be Building Regulations compliant.
8. The unit will be placed on pad foundations which will ensure that it is level. Details of the work required in this regard are **attached at Appendix 3**.

RELEVANT LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

9. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 say that, to the extent that development plan policies are material to an application, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise.

10. The development plan comprises the Unitary Development Plan ('UDP'), which was adopted in February 2005 and covered the period 1996 – 2011, and is therefore time expired. Notwithstanding that, it remains the adopted development plan for determining applications until replaced by a new plan. The most relevant UDP policies are considered below:
- a. Policy PS1 says that new development for housing, employment, and community services will be directed to within defined settlement limits/employment areas, which is the case here;
 - b. Policy PS2 says that development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment. This requirement is considered to be met;
 - c. Policy PS3 says that development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land. The unit is to be sited on a previously developed area which is currently used by the applicant on an ad hoc basis to store goods;
 - d. Policy GDP1 requires that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality. The proposed unit is of a simple design, in keeping with the existing building, and constructed using high quality materials;
 - e. Policy EC17 says that land between the Pentre Maelor Housing Estate and the Site should be safeguarded as a landscape buffer zone to remain free of built development given that residents often suffer harm to their quality of life through the detrimental impact of traffic, operational noise etc. associated with industry. The proposal is compliant with this policy as it will not result in this Buffer being built on; nor will it exacerbate the problems encountered by residents of the estate;

- f. Section E relates to employment development and encourages this type of development, so long as it does not prejudice existing amenities through noise, vibration, smell, safety, health or excessive traffic generation. The proposal will provide improved facilities for existing staff, and as such will contribute to the long term success of the applicant business;
 - g. Policy E8 repeats much of policy EC17. The proposal is compliant, particularly given that the unit will not have any negative impact on residents' amenity in terms of noise, smells, vibration etc.;
 - h. Policy T8 requires that development provide sufficient parking. No additional parking is proposed but none is required as the proposal will not result in any additional staff.
- 11. Emerging policies are also relevant. The Council is progressing a new Local Development Plan ('LDP'), which is currently at an advanced stage, and relevant policies should be given weight. They include:
 - a. Policy SP2, which says that new development is directed to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map. The Site is within these;
 - b. Policy SP9 supports economic development and the growth of existing businesses;
 - c. Policy SP10 highlights the importance of the Wrexham Industrial Estate and says that it will be the primary focus for new employment development over the plan period for B class employment and other ancillary related development;
 - d. Policy SP12 says that development which would have an unacceptable impact on the safe and efficient operation of the transport network should be restricted. The proposal does not conflict with this policy;

- e. Policy SP15 says that development will only be supported where it protects conserves and enhances the natural environment including Local Wildlife Sites such as the strategic ecological network on Wrexham Industrial Estate. The Site is situated within an established industrial premises and on land that is mostly hard surfaced already. In the pre-application advice, the Officer concluded that the proposals would not result in the loss of habitat for Great Crested Newts, and the applicant's ecology report agrees with this;
- f. Policy DM1 contains general considerations and says that development must accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing buildings and surrounding landscape/ townscape in terms of its siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping. It must also not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of nearby occupiers by virtue of noise, disturbance and overlooking; and provides a satisfactory standard of amenity for the users of the development itself. It is considered that this proposal is complied with, for the reasons outlined above;
- g. Policy NE3 prohibits development which causes unacceptable harm to important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. As no trees are proposed to be removed as part of this proposal, there is no issue in this regard;
- h. Policy NE6 says that development will only be supported where there is no adverse impact on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC and its conservation objectives, in particular through the treatment of wastewater. Developments should in the first instance seek to connect to the existing mains network, as is the case here. Where this would result in nutrient levels exceeding conservation objectives targets within the SAC, then proposals will need to fully mitigate the adverse effects caused by the proposed development. However, this is not considered to be the case, given that existing staff numbers will not increase as a result of the proposal, and the proposal is simply replacing existing facilities. There will therefore be no change in this regard. In the pre-application advice, the Officer came to the

view that the proposals are unlikely to increase phosphorous discharges into the River Dee SAC;

- i. Policy EM6 mirrors policy EC17 in the UDP and says that land surrounding Pentre Maelor is to remain free of development in order to ensure satisfactory standards of residential amenity;
 - j. Policy T1 says that proposals should not compromise the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway network or have an adverse impact on highway safety or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation. This will not be an issue here as no new staff will be employed as a result of the proposal.
- 12. Additional policy contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance is also relevant including LPGN16 Parking Standards, and LPGN29 Wrexham Industrial Estate Employment Development and Nature Conservation.
 - 13. National policy contained in Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW), and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning, TAN 12: Design, TAN 18: Transport, and TAN 23: Economic Development is also relevant.
 - 14. Paragraph 6.4.5 of Planning Policy Wales 11 requires development to provide net benefit to biodiversity. The enclosed ecology report includes provisions that demonstrate that this requirement is met.
 - 15. Each of the issues referred to in the Council's pre application advice are considered below.
 - 16. **Principle of development:** the Council has confirmed that the site is located within the settlement limit of the Wrexham Industrial Estate and within a designated Employment Area and is specifically protected for Class B1, B2 and B8 use by policy EM1, and that the proposal is acceptable in principle.
 - 17. **Ecology:** Wrexham Industrial Estate is an ecologically sensitive area, primarily due to populations of GCN. This application is accompanied by an ecology report (**attached at**

Appendix 4) which sets out a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for GCNs. It also sets out how the development will provide net benefit to biodiversity.

18. **Visual Impact:** the location chosen for the siting of the unit would allow all existing landscaping to be retained, and as such no Arboricultural Impact Assessment is considered to be required.
19. **Parking:** there will be no loss of parking, and as such the proposal complies with policies relating to parking.
20. **Phosphorous:** the proposals will not result in the increase in staff numbers. The additional offices proposed on the first floor are to provide more space for existing staff, as opposed to space for additional staff. It is therefore submitted that the proposals will not increase phosphorous discharges into the River Dee SAC, and are acceptable in this regard.

CONCLUSION

21. It is therefore considered that the proposal is policy compliant, and that planning permission should be granted.