
KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ORIENTED STRAND BOARD PRODUCTION FACILITY

PLANNING STATEMENT

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Planning Application Drawings and Figures

Drawing / Figure Number	Drawing Title
2197-01-01 Rev C	Statutory Plan (Planning Application Boundary)
2197-01-02 Rev B	Site Plan & Elevation
Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Cumulative Developments

Appendices

Appendix A – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Transport Assessment

Appendix C – Noise Impact Assessment

Appendix D – Heritage Assessment

Appendix E - Air Quality Assessment

FOREWORD

This document is the Planning Statement for the development of an oriented strand board production facility. The development forms part of an ongoing development programme to ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility and deliver environmental improvements. The ongoing development programme is referred to as Kronospan Vision 2020.

In addition to this Planning Statement and its associated technical reports, the planning submission comprises the requisite planning application form and certificates, Design and Access Statement, Pre-Application Consultation Report, planning drawings and an application validation statement.

Kronospan Vision 2020 is an investment programme which will modernise and enhance the site over the coming three years. The forward investment programme has a total cost of £150 million. The plans will enable the company to reduce its environmental impact, improve operational efficiency and offer new business and revenue streams.

Kronospan is an important local and national business. It is the 6th largest manufacturing business in Wales and provides direct employment for over 600 people of which 90% live within 10 miles of the site. As such, ensuring that the Kronospan site in Chirk remains a competitive and sustainable business is important to the local and national economy. The Proposed Development would expand the range of products manufactured at the site and ensure that there are no overall job losses resulting from the Kronospan Vision 2020.

It is Kronospan's intention to ensure that the Chirk manufacturing site remains a world leading production site. Furthermore, as a result of the Kronospan Vision 2020 investment and development programme Kronospan will be able to deliver continued environmental improvements at the Site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE APPLICATION

1.1 Introduction and Background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application made by Kronospan Limited (hereafter referred to as Kronospan) for the development of an oriented strand board (OSB) production facility (Proposed Development).

1.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises the development of an OSB production facility at the Kronospan manufacturing facility on the industrial site that forms part of Maesgwyn Farm off Holyhead Road, Chirk, Wrexham. The location of the Proposed Development within the Kronospan site is shown on drawing 2197-01-01 Rev C.

1.1.3 At present OSB is manufactured at European Kronospan sites and imported to the UK to meet customer needs. OSB is a low cost environmentally beneficial alternative to plywood and going forward we believe this product is vital in the UK for future affordable house building requirements. The Proposed Development would allow Kronospan to manufacture this product in the UK at the Chirk manufacturing facility, enhancing the sites capability and improving the long term sustainability of the business at the Chirk manufacturing site.

1.1.4 The Proposed Development is part of an ongoing development programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site and ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility. The development programme involves the submission of up to six principal planning applications to Wrexham County Borough Council over 2017 - 2018. These are as follows:

- Logyard silos and RCF offloading and grading facilities (commissioning)
- Melamine facing press hall / building (complete)
- Wood Chip Preparation Building and WESP Chip Dryer (submitted May 2017, approved August 2017, Reference: P/2017/0416)
- Log Delivery and Transfer System and Building to House a Replacement Wood Chipping and Flaking System and Demolition of

Existing Debarking and Chipping Facilities (submitted August 2017, approved May 2018, Reference: P/2017/0699);

- Raw Board Storage (Planning permission refused 6th November 2017, granted at Appeal 22nd May 2018 Reference: APP/H6955/A/18/3193142); and
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Facility (this application).

1.1.5 The locations of the four most recent proposals are shown on Figure 2.

1.2 Scope of the Planning Application

1.2.1 The planning application comprises the following main elements:

- Planning Application Form and Certificates;
- Application Validation Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Pre Application Consultation Report;
- Planning Statement and supporting studies comprising;
 - a Noise Assessment;
 - a Heritage Assessment;
 - a Landscape, Visual Impact Assessment;
 - a Transport Assessment; and
 - an Air Quality Assessment
- Planning Application Drawings.

1.2.2 This Planning Statement is divided into seven main sections following on from this introduction. Section 2.0 provides a description of the Proposed Development and its construction. Section 3.0 describes the need and benefits of the scheme. Section 4.0 summarises the relevant planning history associated with the Proposed Development and the Kronospan manufacturing site. Section 5.0 provides a description of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Section 6.0 provides a summary of potential cumulative effects with other schemes currently proposed by Kronospan. Section 7.0 provides a detailed appraisal of the planning policy context against which this application should be determined and assesses the extent to which the development accords with that context. Finally, Section 8.0 provides the conclusions to this statement.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

- 1.3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 prescribe the types of development for which EIA is mandatory (Schedule 1 development) and others which may require an assessment if they have the potential to give rise to significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2 development).
- 1.3.2 The Proposed Development falls within the description at paragraph 8(a) in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 to the Regulations (i.e. Industrial plants for the production of paper and board). The development exceeds the applicable threshold in column 2 of that table (new floorspace exceeding 1,000 square metres). As such it is necessary to consider whether the development is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.
- 1.3.3 A number of environmental assessments have been conducted in support of this application, focusing on the elements of the development considered most likely to result in adverse environmental effects i.e. landscape, transport, visual, heritage, air quality and noise. The assessments demonstrate that there would be no significant environmental effects from the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with the existing and other proposed developments at the site. As such the proposals are not considered to represent EIA development and therefore the application does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

1.4 The Site & Its Context

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development comprises the vertical extension of the existing press hall building and the provision of a new OSB blending building. The location for the Proposed Development is within the existing Kronospan manufacturing site. The Kronospan site is located on land adjacent to Holyhead Road (the B5070), Chirk and covers a total area of approximately 40 hectares.
- 1.4.2 The vertical extension would be located within the footprint of the existing press hall, in the south western corner of the Kronospan site and would include the reconstruction of the existing building within the footprint of the development to facilitate the vertical extension. The new OSB blending

building would be located to the west of the existing press hall building and would be connected to it by a conveyor.

- 1.4.3 The entirety of the Kronospan site covers an area of circa 40ha, with circa 14ha of this developed with industrial buildings and plant. Figure 1 shows the layout of the Kronospan site. A number of industrial process facilities are located in the west portion of the site. These facilities are used to process, sort and dry the raw wood materials used in the manufacture of MDF/particle board and include a number of tall structures including stacks that emit clean process emissions to atmosphere. The tallest structure on the site is the combined heat and power (CHP) biomass plant stack which is 70m in height.
- 1.4.4 A number of process buildings are located in the northern half of the site including: a saw mill; formalin plant and the secondary product manufacturing facility (Kronoplus) which produces laminate flooring and worktops.
- 1.4.5 The site car park, reception building, weighbridge and main site offices are located in the south eastern corner of the site to the south of the MDF/particle board manufacturing buildings.
- 1.4.6 The western perimeter of the Kronospan site is formed by the Shrewsbury to Chester railway. Improved railway siding facilities have been constructed within the site to enable an increased volume of timber to be imported by rail. The Llangollen Canal is located to the west of the railway line, circa 30m from the boundary of the site at its closest point. The canal is designated as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and as a Scheduled Monument. Water is abstracted from the canal for use in the manufacturing process. The eastern perimeter of the site is formed by Holyhead Road (B5070). An earth bund, planted with trees, has been developed along the eastern perimeter of the site in order to reduce the visibility of the site operations from neighbouring properties on Holyhead Road.
- 1.4.7 A sewerage pumping station and one property, owned by Kronospan, are located to the immediate north of the site. To the immediate south of the site

is the Cadbury's (Mondelez) factory, the Chirk AAA sports ground and the Chirk recreational ground.

1.4.8 The main residential area of Chirk is located to the east of the site with residential properties lining the majority of the eastern side of Holyhead Road. Chirk town centre is located approximately 500m to the south east of the site and parts of the town centre are designated as Chirk Conservation Area.

1.4.9 The wider area beyond the urban settlement of Chirk is dominated by agricultural fields and woodland. Chirk Castle (Grade 1 listed) and its grounds (Registered Park and Garden) are located circa 500m to the west of the site, beyond the canal. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) also lie to the west of the site, the closest boundary of the AONB runs concurrent with the grounds of Chirk Castle.

Access

1.4.10 The Proposed Development will not result in any change to the existing site access arrangements.

1.4.11 The site is accessed via a T-junction with Holyhead Road (B5070) which runs in a north south direction to the east of the site. The B5070 meets the A5 approximately 1.5km to the north of the site via a roundabout junction, known as Whitehurst Roundabout. Approximately 1km to the east of this roundabout the A5 forms a junction with the A483. The A483/A5 provide links north to Chester, west to Llangollen and south to Shrewsbury. To the south of the site access the B5070 leads to the A5 via Chirk town centre, this route is restricted to non-HGV traffic.

1.4.12 The existing railhead and sidings within the site are used to import timber for the manufacturing process as well as import via HGV.

1.5 The Applicant

1.5.1 The Applicant is Kronospan Limited. It is the UK's leading manufacturer of high quality wood-based panels and associated products and has been operating in the UK since 1970. The primary products manufactured by

Kronospan at the Chirk site are particle board and medium density fibreboard (MDF), from which a number of secondary products are produced such as laminate flooring, worktops and melamine faced boards.

- 1.5.2 The Kronospan manufacturing facility is a major local employer within Wrexham County Borough (WCBC) with the site at Chirk employing 600 staff. It is estimated that the facility also provides indirect employment to 6,000 people in industries relating to the manufacturing and supply chains associated with the operations at the site.

1.6 Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.6.1 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Amendment Order 2016 (DMPO 2016), requires the applicant to consult the public and statutory consultees prior to submitting a planning application for major development.
- 1.6.2 The purpose of this consultation is to provide an opportunity for statutory consultees and the public to review development proposals and to raise any issues, or areas of concern that the developer may need to address before submitting an application.
- 1.6.3 The consultation undertaken by the applicant and the feedback received is fully described in the Pre Application Consultation (PAC) Report which has been submitted in support of the application. This section of the Planning Statement briefly outlines the consultation undertaken.
- 1.6.4 Community and Specialist consultees were provided notice in writing of the proposed application in accordance with Article 2D of the DMPO 2016. Community consultees were provided details of where the draft application was available to view and specialist consultees were provided with electronic copies of the draft application. Notice was provided to the Neighbour consultee and site notices were posted at 2 locations near the site which have been used by WCBC to post notices of planning applications in the area.
- 1.6.5 The information required to be made available by Article 2C(b)(i-v) was deposited in the form of a draft planning application at Reception, Kronospan, Holyhead Rd, Chirk, LL14 5NT and was available for public

viewing during regular office hours from 8:30am on 29th June 2018 until 5pm 26th June 2018 (a period of 28 days). A record of visitors was taken at reception. No members of the public visited the Kronospan site to view the draft planning application however members of Chirk Town Council did visit and discussed the proposals with Mike McKenna (Kronospan Chairman).

2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides a description of the layout and design of the Proposed Development, together with details of its construction. It also outlines the processes that would take place at the facility.

2.2 Layout and Design of the Proposed Development

2.2.1 The layout of the site is shown on Drawing no. 2197-01-01 Rev C. A plan view and elevations of the Proposed Development is shown on Drawing no. 2197-01-02 Rev B.

2.2.2 The planning application covers a total area of 2,480m².

2.2.3 The Proposed Development comprises the development of an OSB production facility and is formed of two main components:

- a new OSB blending building where the material would be mixed with resin and wax; and
- the vertical extension of the existing press hall to accommodate a new OSB press and OSB forming line, noting that the existing building within the footprint of the development would be reconstructed to facilitate the vertical extension

2.2.4 A new quadradyn material screener and new sifters would be used to screen the flaked chip for fines and to group the chip by size so that the correct sized chip would be used for each layer of board; either surface layer or core layer.

2.2.5 Chain conveyors would be provided to transfer material from the chip screening equipment to the blending station and from the blending station into the forming station.

2.2.6 The proposed vertical extension is 54m in length, 30.6m wide and would provide an additional circa 27,264.6m³ volume to the existing press hall. The existing building has a maximum height of 11.5m and would be raised to 28m.

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- 2.2.7 The proposed OSB blending building would be located to the west of the press hall and would be 34.6 in length, 23m wide and 33.2m in height.
- 2.2.8 The proposed vertical extension would be located within the footprint of the existing press hall. The press hall extension and the proposed OSB blending building would be located adjacent to other long established buildings in the south western corner of the Kronospan site.
- 2.2.9 The elevations of the Proposed Development are shown on drawing no. 2197-01-02. A series of photomontages are contained in Appendix A that illustrate the Proposed Development from a number of key locations in the vicinity of the site.
- 2.2.10 The proposed colour for the Proposed Development has been chosen in order to reduce the visual impact of the facility, and this decision has been informed by a recent colour study undertaken to inform the revised submission of application P/2017/0699 (proposed development of a log offloading facility and flaker facility and refurbishment of the existing chipper). The colour study identified that the application of Olive Green (RAL 100 30 20) colour cladding to the development proposed in application P/2017/0699 would reduce the visual impact of the development. Subsequently, Olive Green cladding has been applied to visualisations of the Proposed Development (as shown in Appendix A Figures 3a-3c) and compared to the standard cladding colour of Goosewing Grey (RAL 080 70 05 BS 10A05). Since taller elements of the Proposed Development would in some views be seen against a backdrop of surrounding landscape, it is proposed that these too would be clad in a recessive dark green colour (Olive Green (RAL 100 30 20)) to reduce adverse visual effects.
- 2.2.11 Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that at certain times of year, in certain weather conditions, and when the Proposed Development is viewed from some local receptors, the effect of Olive Green cladding would not be as effective. As such, it is proposed that the final colour of the Proposed Development could be agreed through condition and Kronospan would welcome the opportunity to come to mutual agreement with the Local Planning Authority on this point.

2.3 Proposed Site Operations

- 2.3.1 The OSB production facility would be used to accommodate an OSB blending station, forming line and board press which would enable Kronospan to produce OSB at the manufacturing facility in Chirk.
- 2.3.2 Round wood is used for the production of OSB. This would be delivered to the site via rail and HGV deliveries. The transport effects of the Proposed Development are assessed in Appendix D. In summary the OSB production facility would result in a net increase in daily HGV loads of 91 vehicles (one way). Based on current delivery profiles this would equate to just 11 additional two-way HGV movements during the AM network peak hour (5 in / 6 out), falling to 8 movements during the PM peak period. This represents a maximum of 1 additional HGV movement every 6 minutes. Kronospan would utilise the existing rail head to deliver a significant proportion of the round wood used in the manufacture of the OSB, with the equivalent of circa 10,000 HGV loads being delivered per year by rail.
- 2.3.3 The round wood would be flaked in the new flaking facility (approved under permission reference: P/2017/0699) located within the log yard area. The flaked wood will be conveyed to and stored in wet chip bunkers (approved under permission reference: P/2017/0416) located to the south of the flaking facility.
- 2.3.4 The wet flakes would then be conveyed to two existing direct heating driers with an associated WESP air pollution abatement system, where they would be dried prior to being processed into OSB. The wood chip dryers, which are currently used as part of the existing particleboard manufacturing process, would become available for use following the development of the new dryer and WESP (planning permission reference: P/2017/0416). The existing dryers will be renovated to enable them to process the new raw material.
- 2.3.5 The dried flakes would then be transferred to the quadradyn material screener and oscillating screens where the wood flakes would be graded into different sizes and fines would be removed. At this stage the larger flakes would be directed to form the surface layer of the board and the smaller flakes would be directed to form the core layer.

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- 2.3.6 The graded flakes to be used in the core and surface layers would then pass to the OSB building by chain conveyors. The processes which would take place in the OSB building would be fed by gravity, thereby dictating the height of the OSB building. The first process in the OSB building involves the weighing of the flakes to ensure that the right amount of flakes pass into the glue drum. From the scales the flakes would drop into the glue drum where they would be mixed with resin and wax to bind the flakes. The material would then be transferred by conveyor to the OSB press and forming line.
- 2.3.7 The press and forming line would be located within the extended area of the existing press hall. Flakes would be dropped from height to form the core and surface layers of the board. The height of the building is dictated by the requirement for the wood flakes to be deposited in this way onto the forming line.
- 2.3.8 The core and surface layers would be formed along separate press and forming line within the press hall. Layers of bound flakes would be built up on the forming line so that several layers of chip are produced, with each layer of chips oriented perpendicular to the previous layer. A combination of heat and pressure is then used to press the layers of coated flakes to form the material into OSB.
- 2.3.9 Once formed, the OSB is cooled to form the finished OSB product which is then stacked, ready for distribution or further processing.
- 2.3.10 As described above the proposed press and forming line would be located within an existing manufacturing building. The increased height of the building is required to accommodate the forming station and other plant associated with the OSB production process. The OSB blending building is required to be 33.2m high in order to facilitate the feeding of material by gravity into the blending station. The underpass beneath the blending building is required to provide access to existing operational areas of the site, including emergency access to these areas.

2.4 Construction

2.4.1 The construction of the blending building would comprise the following stages:

- Removal of existing equipment;
- Constructing foundations;
- Building and steelwork erection;
- Installation of new plant, electrical and controls installation (piping, insulation etc.)
- Installation of fire detection and protection systems;
- Cladding and painting; and
- Testing and commissioning the equipment, blender, conveyors etc.

2.4.2 The construction of the vertical extension to the chipboard press hall would involve the following stages:

- Clearing the existing building of the current plant;
- Removal of the existing roof;
- Reinforcing foundations;
- Building and steelwork erection / modifications;
- Installation of new plant, electrical and controls installation (piping, insulation etc.)
- Refurbished outside area including the 2 existing dryers
- Installation of fire detection and protection systems;
- Cladding and painting; and
- Testing and commissioning the equipment, press, forming station etc.

2.5 Employment Opportunities

2.5.1 The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to produce a new product. The new production line would require 100 people to be employed and trained to operate the machinery and produce the OSB.

3.0 NEED AND BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

- 3.1.1 Kronospan is the NO.1 OSB producer in Europe and has operated since the early 1970's. The site manufactures wood-based panels and other wood products. The site is ideally located for the production of wood-based board due to the presence of the railway head within the site which is connected to the Chester to Shrewsbury rail line. The railway head enables the delivery of round wood to the site via rail and therefore reduces the reliance of the manufacturing facility on HGVs for the delivery of raw material.
- 3.1.2 The Proposed Development is part of an ongoing development programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site, improve the efficiency of the operations and to ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility.
- 3.1.3 The primary products manufactured at the site are particle board and medium density fibreboard (MDF), from which a number of secondary products are produced such as laminate flooring, worktops and melamine faced boards (MF). The Proposed Development will introduce a third raw board process to the site for the production of Oriented Strand Board (OSB).
- 3.1.4 OSB is a malleable and strong board product used in the construction industry. OSB is considered to be an ideal substitute for plywood as it is less expensive and more environmentally sustainable.
- 3.1.5 Due to the carbon storage qualities of wood based panel, houses constructed from OSB are considered environmentally superior to those constructed using traditional construction products. Kronospan considers the increased use of OSB to be fundamental for the provision of new affordable houses, particularly for residential schemes capable of easing the UK's housing deficit.
- 3.1.6 Currently the UK imports most of the OSB it requires. The production of OSB by Kronospan will make a significant contribution to supplying the UK's demand for OSB and therefore reduce the UK's reliance on imports for this product. OSB is a low cost environmentally beneficial alternative to plywood and going forward we believe this product is vital in the UK for future house building requirements.

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- 3.1.7 The addition of this product to the existing Kronospan range will enable Kronospan to further diversify and compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, contributing to the UK balance of payments and economic sustainability of this important UK business.

3.2 Environmental Benefits

- 3.2.1 Kronospan is continuously implementing projects aimed at further improving environmental conditions at the site. These include a project to reduce emissions and occasional plume grounding, and the development of significant infrastructure to reduce fugitive dust emissions from the receipt, processing and storage of RCF and storage of other raw product including wood chips, sawdust and bark. This latter project involves the construction of six storage silos on the Site, a project that has completed commissioning. This project has a total capital expenditure of £20 million and demonstrates the commitment of Kronospan to ensure continuous environmental improvement and respond to local environmental concerns.
- 3.2.2 The effects of the ongoing improvement projects in terms of landscape, visual, heritage, air quality, noise and transport have been assessed within the various applications submitted by Kronospan over the past few years. The overall outcome of the ongoing improvement projects at the site will be to provide improvements in terms of air quality and noise, negligible impacts on the historic environment and no significant effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts. In terms of the OSB production facility the improvements undertaken and proposed to date e.g. log offloading facility, flaker facility and refurbished chipper, and raw product silos, would mean the manufacture of this new product would not result in any additional adverse effects in respect of noise and air quality.
- 3.2.3 In terms of traffic and transport effects, the OSB manufacturing process would require the delivery of round wood to the site via rail and HGV. The use of the railway head for the delivery of raw material is intended to reduce the potential highway related effects of the development. As outlined previously use of rail would avoid approximately 10,000 HGV deliveries per year when compared to a scenario where all of the wood was to be imported by road. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in a

small increase in the number of HGV movements at the site, however this increase would not cause appreciable effects on the local or strategic highway network.

3.3 Employment Opportunities

- 3.3.1 As set out previously the Proposed Development would create 100 new employment opportunities, and provide the necessary training to facilitate the operation of the OSB production line. Some of the other proposed improvements at the site involve increased automation and improved manufacturing efficiency. As a result, less staff are required to deliver the same or increased manufacturing output. The additional jobs created by the OSB facility would more than offset the reduced staff numbers resulting from improved manufacturing efficiency in other areas of the site.
- 3.3.2 Accordingly, the implementation of the new OSB production line, along with the other improvements at the manufacturing facility required to sustain the long term future of the site, would more than offset the loss of jobs resulting from the Vision 2020 improvement program. Furthermore, the continual improvement and diversification of the operations at the site would allow Kronospan to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, sustaining this important local business which would continue to provide employment to circa 600 staff and in turn the circa 6,000 plus people in the UK indirectly supported by its operations.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Prior to the 1970s, the site was greenfield agricultural land and included a farm house. The original 17th Century farmhouse still forms part of the offices of Kronospan. The site at Chirk was chosen because of its central location between its main customer base and its plentiful supply of raw materials.
- 4.1.2 The construction of the first factory building commenced in 1971 and the company began operating in 1973. In the late 1980s, the company bought the factory next door and this has since been extended to provide the base for the company's 'Kronoplus' operation, which produces laminate flooring and worktops.
- 4.1.3 The site has a long and complex planning history, therefore only the larger/noteworthy applications have been included in the table below (e.g. planning applications for signage or canopies over storage areas for example have not been included).

Table 4.1 Planning History

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
9/1459	Erection of a factory for the manufacture of particle board together with timber storage, accommodation, kiln, offices with flats over and other ancillary buildings, provision of car parking facilities and enlargement of existing access.	4 August 1970
9/1534	Outline application for the development of land by the erection of a factory for the	16 August 1971

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	manufacture of particle board and alterations to existing access.	
9/1534/1	Details of the factory for the manufacture of particle board and plastic faced particle board and alterations to existing access.	29 October 1971
9/1549	Use of existing dwelling as office accommodation in association with proposed factory development.	10 September 1971
9/1884	Details of warehouse for the storage of finished particle board submitted in accordance with Condition No.2 of planning permission 9/1534.	29 March 1974
4/472	Relocation of an existing warehouse.	15 January 1975
4/1798	Extension of existing factory for the manufacture of particle board.	17 December 1976
4/1799	Erection of a new warehouse.	12 April 1977
4/2690	Erection of new flanker building and associated wood chipping machinery.	25 July 1978
4/2843	Extension to warehouse with garage and vehicle inspection pit.	3 October 1978

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
4/5288	Erection of building to house new waste material boiler.	8 April 1982
4/5913	Proposed construction of a pre-drier unit (for the pre-drying of wood chips).	30 November 1982
4/6500	Proposed erection of a formaldehyde plant at existing factory.	29 November 1983
4/6690	Proposed extension to existing factory to provide a new particle board press line.	29 November 1983
4/6737	Proposed extension to existing warehouse to provide additional storage accommodation.	17 January 1984
4/7217	Proposed extensions to existing factory to provide a 4th particle board press line and 5th melamine press with additional warehousing facilities and extensions to canopies over loading bays and re-siting of gatehouse.	21 December 1984
4/7554	Proposed erection of plant in the form of a stack, 16m high above the level of factory roof for the collection and exhaust of fumes from the drying ovens.	7 November 1985

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
4/7724	Proposed construction of a new substation to increase electrical capacity to pre-production area.	1 October 1985
4/7747	Proposed installation of incinerator to deal with the formaldehyde plant tail gases.	6 December 1985
4/8926	Proposed installation of 7.55MW boiler and erection of a 52m high chimney.	16 October 1987
4/8970	Proposed construction of 52m chimney to serve existing wood chip drying plant (no. 3 drier).	13 May 1988
4/11904	Proposed installation of medium density fibreboard plant comprising a refiner building, tube drier, sifter, a forming station and in the existing building a new production line and the installation of abatement equipment in the form of an electrostatic fluidised bed (EFB) system to filter emissions from the weiss boiler and the no. 1 Babcock drier.	7 July 1993
4/13976	Erection of sawmill incorporating log in-feed	13 July 1994

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	conveyor, de-barker, chipper line, hoggers, cantor chippers, trimmer, profile units, screen units and saws, saw sharpening and tool assembly workshop and stores, plant sorting and stacking unit for the manufacture of timber planks and wood chips (partly retrospective).	
CB01264	Turbine hall extension including 35m high stack.	6 April 1998
CB02609	Amended application for 4 cyclones for MDF II	10 November 1998
CB02899	Erection of new warehouse.	8 March 1999
CB3633/HS	Deemed Hazardous Substance Consent.	29 October 1999
P/2012/0165	Development of biomass plant, recycled wood fibre (RCF) offloading & screening facility & associated infrastructure to support existing production operations	Approved - 14 September 2012
P/2013/0824	Development of biomass plant comprising biomass boiler & furnace ash, handling facility & flue, gas treatment facility including stack & air pollution control, reagent storage silos, recycled wood fibre offloading	Approved - 07 May 2014

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	& screening facility, biomass storage area & associated infrastructure (substitution of planning permission code P/2012/0165)	
P/2014/0215	2.5m diameter by 7m high extension to existing 15m high abatement stack.	Approved 02 June 2014
P/2015/0728	Erection of building to contain three gas engines and three steam boilers, erection of electrical substation building, oil tank compound, a duct from the press abatement system to carry process emissions to the SEKA (WESP) stack and associated infrastructure to support existing operations.	Approved - 04 Jan 2016
P/2016/0219	Construction and Operation of a Recycled Fibre (RCF) Reception Facility, Grading Plant, Storage Silos and Other Associated Infrastructure (referred to as the log yard RCF project)	Approved – 03 May 2016
P/2016/0336	Extension of a building to house a new melamine facing (MF) press, following the demolition / relocation of the existing MF department's ventilation system, hydraulic	Refused – 05 September 2016 Granted at Appeal – 04 May 2016 (Reference APP/H6955/A/16/3165368)

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	oil and diesel storage tanks, a vehicle filling station, garage service building and other associated infrastructure	
P/2016/0534	Proposed building extension to store medium density fibreboard (MDF) and chipboard	Refused – 05 September 2016
P/2017/0416	Replacement of existing wood chip preparation facility and development of a new wood chip dryer and associated equipment.	Approved – 31 July 2017
P/2017/0699	Development of a Log Offloading Facility and Flaker Facility and Refurbishment of the Existing Chipper	Approved – 10 May 2018
P/2017/0700	Development of a raw board store.	Refused – 06 November 2017 Granted at Appeal – 22 May 2018 (Reference: APP/H6955/A/18/3193142)

4.1.4 In conclusion, the planning history identifies that:

- The Kronospan site has been developed since the 1970s;
- The site has a long history of planning consents for large industrial development;
- There have been a number of planning applications from 1999 through to 2018 relating to development such as the biomass plant, extensions

to existing buildings, gas engines, temporary stacks, new silos, fencing and signage;

- The planning consents include permissions for tall stacks, new buildings and wood processing plant; and
- Several applications have recently been submitted for projects included in the Kronospan Vision 2020 strategy.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The proposed OSB production facility is located within the existing built area of the Kronospan site and would involve the vertical extension of an area of an existing building as well as a new building. The new development would be located within the south western corner of the site, as shown on Drawing 2197-01-01.
- 5.1.2 At the pre-application meeting held with WCBC on the 26th May 2017, it was agreed that the planning application should provide a detailed assessment of the noise, landscape, heritage, transport and air quality effects of the Proposed Development.
- 5.1.3 As the proposed location of the facility is within the existing developed area of the site it would avoid any direct effects on ecology. The Proposed Development would not increase the impermeable area of the site and therefore would not result in any adverse effects on flood risk or drainage.
- 5.1.4 The following sections summarise the findings of the detailed environmental assessments that are appended to this Planning Statement.

5.2 Noise

- 5.2.1 A detailed noise assessment is provided in Appendix C. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance and the approach agreed with the WCBC Environmental Health Officer with regards to the assessment of noise impacts from previous development at this site.
- 5.2.2 The assessment has been undertaken to inform and guide the design of the development such that any likely noise impact on existing dwellings is minimised. Existing background noise monitoring data has been used along with contemporary site specific monitoring to determine the baseline noise conditions at nearby residential receptors.
- 5.2.3 Observations at the nearest residential properties indicate that noise from local and distant road traffic and noise from the existing industrial activities in the area form the general noise climate at the nearest receptors.

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- 5.2.4 The Proposed Development would sit alongside an existing particleboard press hall and would generate similar reverberant sound pressure levels within the building to the existing operations. The predicted contributory noise levels from the Proposed Development are between 25dB and 37dB LAeq during daytime and night-time periods at nearest sensitive receptors.
- 5.2.5 The background sound levels at night-time (i.e. lowest likely) for comparison vary between 40dB and 60dB LA90 with residual LAeq levels typically between 43dB and 60dB. As such it is concluded that the Proposed Development would not result in any increase in existing residual sound levels.
- 5.2.6 The cumulative effect has also been considered. The cumulative assessment takes into account development undertaken at the site since 2011, and comprises the following elements:
- Development that has been granted planning permission and has been developed;
 - Development that has been successfully appealed and will be developed; and
 - Development that has been submitted but not yet permitted (at the time of completing the noise assessment in April 2018).
- 5.2.7 The results show that the cumulative effect of all new plant consented since 2011 is at least 10dB below the baseline residual noise and therefore would not cause any increase in residual levels. The cumulative noise level from consented development is also at least 7dB below baseline background sound levels.
- 5.2.8 Based on this analysis and in consideration of the context of the noise compared with the residual levels, we can conclude that the Proposed Development would not result in any background noise 'creep' in accordance with H3 Horizontal Guidance Note for Noise Part 2: Noise Assessment and Control and BAT.
- 5.2.9 On this basis it is concluded that noise levels from the Proposed Development, when considered in isolation and cumulatively with the noise

levels from the existing plant and other proposed development at the Kronospan site, would be acceptable.

5.3 Landscape and Visual and Heritage

- 5.3.1 Appendix A contains a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Heritage Appraisal. The assessment was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The LVIA follows best practice guidance set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (3rd edition 2013, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.
- 5.3.2 The Proposed Development would be introduced into an existing large-scale industrial site that has an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area. Views of existing tall, bulky structures at the Kronospan site are commonplace within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape.
- 5.3.3 A colour study was undertaken for the proposed Chipper and Flaker development (P/2017/0699) which is proposed to be located within the Kronospan site further to the north west. The colour study identified some benefits in using alternative colours other than grey for cladding of elements which extend the visual envelope of the facility. Since taller elements of the Proposed Development would in some views be seen against a backdrop of surrounding landscape, it is proposed that cladding these buildings in a recessive dark green colour would reduce adverse visual effects. Comparative photomontages have been prepared from three viewpoints (Viewpoints A, E and I) to demonstrate this, and these are presented on Figures 3a-c (Appendix A).
- 5.3.4 As shown on photomontage E (Green Lane) the Proposed Development would appear smaller than some of the other existing structures and the use of dark green cladding would mean that the new structures would not stand out appreciably against the vegetated backdrop. As such the LVIA has concluded that the Proposed Development would only result in a minor change to the visual arrangement of elements within the wider site.

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- 5.3.5 The presence of the Proposed Development would not have a material effect upon either the statutory purposes or the special qualities of the AONB. The presence of the Kronospan facility is an established part of the context of the south-eastern edge of the AONB (i.e. the area around Chirk), and the addition of the Proposed Development would not materially increase this influence upon the designation.
- 5.3.6 The cumulative landscape and visual effects of the proposed new WESP, Chip Dryer, Chipper and Flaker, Raw Board Storage and OSB Facility developments would not be significant. Whilst each of the four schemes would include industrial structures that are substantial in scale, they would all be introduced into the existing Kronospan site, where much larger existing structures exert an established influence upon the surrounding area. Additionally, the landform and level of vegetation cover in the area surrounding the site combine to limit the number of locations where clear views of the schemes would be available. As such the cumulative effects of their presence would be limited.
- 5.3.7 In summary the additional presence of the Proposed Development would be unremarkable and would result in little appreciable change to the existing influence of the Kronospan Site upon the surrounding area.

5.4 Cultural Heritage

- 5.4.1 An assessment of the predicted impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of cultural heritage assets has been undertaken and is presented in Appendix D.
- 5.4.2 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance relating to the setting of historic assets, *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales, May 2017*.
- 5.4.3 Stage 1 of the assessment considered the 92 designated heritage assets located within 2km of the Kronospan site. This assessment identified that construction and operation of the Proposed Development would have no impact on the heritage significance of the local cultural heritage resource.
- 5.4.4 The potential cumulative impacts resulting from the combined operation of the Proposed Development and the proposed new: Wood Chip Preparation

Building and WESP Chip Dryer (approved in July 2017); Log Offloading, Facility and Flaker Facility and Refurbishment of Existing Chipper (approved May 2018); and the Raw Board Store have been considered.

- 5.4.5 It was concluded that there would be cumulative impacts of negligible magnitude on the canal both as a World Heritage Site and Scheduled Monument due to the presence of the Chipper & Flaker and the WESP Chip Dryer, rather than the Proposed Development.

5.5 Traffic and Transport

- 5.5.1 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared to consider highways and transport issues related to the Proposed Development. The TA is included as Appendix B to the Planning Statement.

- 5.5.2 The TA has been prepared in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), and supporting documents, with the scope and nature of the assessment matters reflecting the extent of highway and transport issues identified as being likely of material interest to highways officers at both Wrexham County Borough Council and the Welsh Government/North and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Agency.

- 5.5.3 In order to provide an indication of local network operating conditions on immediate main road routes to the Kronospan site, average weekday traffic surveys have been undertaken at three key locations on the local highway network during July 2017, as identified below:

- B5070 Holyhead Road/Kronospan Access/Chapel Lane staggered crossroads junction;
- A5/B5070 Holyhead Road roundabout junction; and,
- A5/A483 roundabout junction.

- 5.5.4 Based on the forecast production levels, and including for cessation of the existing import/export of OSB product, it is envisaged that the OSB facility would give rise to an additional 91 HGV loads per day, or 182 two-way HGV movements, across the local and strategic highway networks.

- 5.5.5 The daily profile of HGVs delivering raw materials to the OSB facility, and exporting the OSB product, is anticipated to reflect that of current

Kronospan operational activity. Based on this assumption, just 11 additional two-way HGV movements are anticipated during the AM network peak hour (07:45-08:45) (5 in / 6 out), falling to 8 movements during the PM peak period (6:30-17:30). This represents a maximum of 1 additional HGV movement every 6 minutes. During the busiest hour of HGV movements (14:00-15:00) just 15 two-way movements are anticipated (8 in / 7 out), representing 1 additional HGV movement every 4 minutes.

- 5.5.6 Such increases in HGV levels are considered unlikely to have any notable effect on either the local or strategic highway network, either in operational or safety terms. Furthermore, the Kronospan site has historically generated HGV levels in excess of those currently experienced, as well as marginally in excess of those anticipated under future operation inclusive of the OSB facility scheme – 462 historically compared to 458 once the OSB facility is operational.
- 5.5.7 10,000 HGV loads per annum would be avoided from having to travel on the highway network by use of the onsite rail sidings to import a proportion of the wood used to manufacture the OSB. This represents the avoidance of approximately 39 HGV loads per day, or 78 two-way HGV movements.
- 5.5.8 The assessment considered the impact of the Proposed Development flows along local roads and the operation of the B5070 Holyhead Road/Kronospan Access/Chapel Lane junction, the A5/B5070 Holyhead Road roundabout junction and the A5/A483 roundabout junction.
- 5.5.9 Impacts on air quality resulting from the increase in HGV movements associated with the OSB development have been considered in the Air Quality Assessment contained at Appendix E. This assessment concludes that the impacts of the additional HGVs on air quality would be negligible on human receptors and not significant in terms of ecological receptors.
- 5.5.10 Based on the review of anticipated future operational highway conditions and reference to appropriate guideline standards, it is concluded that the proposed OSB facility at the Kronospan site would have only a negligible impact on operational or highway safety conditions over the local highway network. It is also considered that the amenity of the surrounding area would not be affected by the increase in HGV movements associated with

the Proposed Development. Accordingly there should be no overriding reasons for refusal of the planning application on highway grounds.

5.6 Air Quality

- 5.6.1 Appendix E contains a detailed Air Quality Assessment undertaken by Fichtner Consulting Engineers. The potential environmental effects of the air emissions from the Proposed Development (in terms of both process and traffic emissions) on human health and ecological receptors have been assessed using detailed dispersion modelling. The results of the modelling have been assessed against relevant air quality objectives and guidelines identified from national legislation and Natural Resources Wales (NRW)/Environment Agency (EA) guidance documents.
- 5.6.2 A range of scenarios have been modelled and reported within Appendix E. Furthermore, a series of conservative assumptions have been used in the modelling to provide a robust assessment. Taking into consideration the conservatism in the modelling, the significance of impact associated with the Proposed Development is deemed to be negligible both in isolation and the cumulative impact with the consented development.
- 5.6.3 An assessment of the impact on ecological receptors in the surrounding landscape has also been undertaken. The assessment has considered designated sites up to 10km from the Proposed Development. The assessment has concluded that at all identified ecological receptors the emissions from the Proposed Development are not considered to result in significant effects.

6.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECT

6.1.1 The Proposed Development is one of up to six principal planning applications being submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council over 2017 and 2018 and is the most significant of the Kronospan Vision 2020 programme. The six planning applications are as follows:

- Logyard silos and RCF offloading and grading facilities (commissioning)
- Melamine facing press hall / building (complete)
- Wood Chip Preparation Building and WESP Chip Dryer (Submitted May 2017, approved August 2017, Reference: P/2017/0416)
- Log Offloading Facility and Flaker Facility and Refurbishment of the Existing Chipper (Submitted August 2017, approved May 2018, approved May 2018, Reference: P/2017/0699);
- Raw Board Storage (Planning permission refused 6th November 2017, granted at Appeal 22nd May 2018 Reference: APP/H6955/A/18/3193142); and
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Facility (this application).

6.1.2 These developments form part of the Kronospan Vision 2020 strategy and the locations of these proposals are shown on Figure 2. The Proposed Development is the most significant of the Kronospan Vision 2020 programme.

6.1.3 As some of these developments will be constructed at the same time and will be operational at the same time, it is considered important to take into account the cumulative effects of the proposed developments with regard to noise, air quality, landscape and heritage impacts. The improvements undertaken and proposed to date as part of the Kronospan Vision 2020 programme would mean the introduction of the manufacture of OSB facility would not result in any additional adverse effects in respect of noise and air quality. The cumulative effect of the applications include an overall reduction in the noise resulting from the site operations and less potential for fugitive dust emissions.

6.1.4 From an economic and social perspective, it has been highlighted on a number of occasions within this statement that the implementation of the projects that form the Kronospan Vision 2020, will enable diversification of

the business and increase the productivity and efficiency of the site, whilst ensuring no overall job losses. This will allow Kronospan to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, ensuring the long term sustainability of this important local business.

- 6.1.5 The potential for cumulative effects in terms of traffic and transport, noise, landscape and visual, cultural heritage and air quality have been assessed as set out in the preceding section of the report. The assessments have concluded that no significant adverse cumulative effects would arise from the construction and operation of the four proposed facilities and that overall improvements in air quality and noise would result from the proposals.

7.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND APPRAISAL

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an analysis of the Proposed Development in the context of all current, relevant planning policy and guidance.

7.1.2 Following on from this introduction the policy appraisal is divided into four sections. Section 7.2 provides a brief overview of the relevant policy context and identifies the principal documents to which further reference will be made. Section 7.3 provides a detailed assessment of how the proposals accord or otherwise with the relevant policy considerations. Finally, Section 7.4 provides a summary of the Planning Policy Appraisal.

7.2 Policy Context – Overview

The Statutory Development Plan

7.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (September 2004) and paragraph 3.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016) requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2.2 In the case of the Proposed Development the relevant statutory Development Plan comprises the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005.

7.2.3 The key environmental considerations in relation to the Proposed Development at the existing Kronospan site are noise, heritage, visual impact, transport and air quality. The relevant policies of the UDP in relation to these matters, as well as the general principle of the development, have been identified as follows:

- Policy PS1: Strategic Policy
- Policy PS2: Strategic Policy
- Policy PS3: Strategic Policy
- Policy PS4: Strategic Policy
- Policy GDP1: Development Objectives

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- Policy E4: Employment Development (of un-annotated land) within Settlements
 - Policy EC5: Special Landscape Areas
 - Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation
 - Policy EC7: Conservation Areas

Material Considerations

7.2.4 In addition to the policies of the statutory Development Plan, the proposal has also been considered in the context of other material planning considerations. These include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

The Emerging Development Plan

- Wrexham Local Development Plan (2013 - 2028) - Deposit Plan (March 2018)

Other National, Regional and Local Planning Considerations

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9 (November 2016);
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014);
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017)
- People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update (July 2008);
- One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009); and
- The following Local Planning Guidance Notes:
 - Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26
 - Local planning Guidance Note No. 33.

7.2.5 A further material planning consideration is the established 'need' for the development which is set out in Section 3.0 of this statement. The weakness in productivity growth in Wales since the 2008/2009 recession is also considered to be material to this application and is discussed in paragraphs 7.3.87-7.3.89.

7.3 Planning Policy Context and Appraisal

- 7.3.1 The following sub-section sets out the policies contained within the statutory Development Plan and other material considerations that are of relevance to the proposal. The objective of this assessment is to determine whether the Proposed Development would lead to the achievement, or otherwise of national and local planning policy and guidance objectives. The appraisal also establishes the degree to which the Proposed Development is supported by, or conflicts with, other material planning considerations.

The Development Plan - Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (February 2005)

- 7.3.2 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in February 2005 and was originally scheduled to cover the period to 2011. Its primary functions are to set out planning policies and to provide a basis for decisions on planning applications and to make proposals for development and the use of land. There are several strategic policies of relevance to the proposal.

Policy PS1 and Policy PS2: Strategic Policies

- 7.3.3 Policies PS1 and PS2 are strategic policies which aim to ensure that new development for housing, employment and community services will be directed to within defined settlement limits/employment areas and that the countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment are not detrimentally affected by development.
- 7.3.4 The Kronospan site comprises a number of existing large industrial process buildings including air emissions stacks, storage areas for raw materials, warehouse buildings for manufactured products, offices and car parking. The Proposed Development would be located within the footprint of the existing particleboard manufacturing facility, adjacent to other long established buildings in the south western corner of the Kronospan site. Therefore the Proposed Development would not materially detrimentally affect the character of the local area or the quality of the natural environment.

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- 7.3.5 The overall outcome of the ongoing improvement projects at the site will be to provide improvements in terms of air quality and noise, negligible impacts on the historic environment and no significant effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts. In the context of the ongoing improvement projects, the improvements undertaken and proposed to date would mean the manufacture of OSB would not result in any additional adverse effects in respect of noise and air quality. For the aforementioned reasons, the proposal accords with Policies PS1 and PS2.

Policy PS3: Strategic Policy

- 7.3.6 Policy PS3 aims to ensure that development is directed at brownfield sites rather than greenfield land.
- 7.3.7 The Proposed Development would be located on previously developed land (as defined in Figure 4.4 of the PPW) and therefore the proposal accords with Policy PS3.

Policy PS4: Strategic Policy

- 7.3.8 Policy PS4 aims to ensure that development is integrated in the existing transport network.
- 7.3.9 The Proposed Development would maintain the existing settlement pattern and character. The staff operating the OSB would rely upon the same transport network as the existing employees. This has been examined in the Transport Assessment which concludes that the site represents a sustainable location for an employment development, being located within an acceptable walk/cycle catchment of local residential areas, as well as being accessible by both bus and rail services to/from key local settlements slightly further afield. These services are anticipated to reduce the need for employees at the site to utilise the car for commuting journeys.

Policy GDP1: Development Objectives

- 7.3.10 Policy GDP1 sets out eleven objectives for all new development. The following four objectives are considered to be particularly relevant to the proposal:

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- *a) Ensure 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.*
 - *e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes where possible.*
 - *f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.*
 - *k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.*

7.3.11 As described in Section 5.0, several of the existing structures are appreciably larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height, mass, floorspace, or all three. The Proposed Development would always be seen in the context of views where the presence of large-scale structures at the Kronospan site is an established influence, and the Proposed Development would have little or no appreciable effect upon the existing influence of the site. Additionally, a Long Term Landscape Strategy has been submitted to the Council. Once approved, this strategy will ensure that Kronospan continue to build upon previously implemented mitigation measures which have been highly successful.

7.3.12 As described within Section 2.2 the materials used in the construction of the Proposed Development would reflect the existing built infrastructure at the Site. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would accord with the character of the site.

7.3.13 The Kronospan Vision 2020 projects will provide overall improvements in terms of air quality and noise emissions. In terms of the OSB production facility, the improvements undertaken and proposed to date would ensure that the manufacture of OSB would not result in any additional adverse effects in respect of noise and air quality.

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- 7.3.14 Kronospan is the 6th largest manufacturer in Wales¹ and provides direct employment for over 600 people, of whom 90% live within 10 miles of the site. The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to further diversify its manufacturing operations at the Chirk site and produce a product which is currently mainly imported from European producers. This would improve the company's ability to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, contributing to the economic sustainability of this important local employer. The Proposed Development would also ensure that there are no overall job losses resulting from the Kronospan Vision 2020 projects.
- 7.3.15 The Proposed Development would be well served by existing public transport facilities, with pedestrian and cycle routes leading directly to the staff entrance of the main manufacturing site.
- 7.3.16 In light of the foregoing the Proposed Development is considered to accord with Policy GDP1.

Policy E4: Employment Development (of un-annotated land) within Settlements

- 7.3.17 This policy confirms that employment development proposals on unannotated land within settlements will be permitted provided that the proposal accords with Policy GDP1.
- 7.3.18 The Kronospan site is not allocated for employment within the UDP but has been occupied by the manufacturing facility, and thus in employment use, for over forty years. The application site is within the settlement limits of Chirk as identified on UDP Proposal Map 4: Inset 7. Additionally, the proposal has been found to be in accordance with Policy GDP1 and therefore the proposal fulfils the requirements of Policy E4.

Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation

- 7.3.19 This policy confirms that development within or in close proximity to a site of biodiversity interest will be required to demonstrate that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature

¹ Research compiled by Cardiff university and Creditsafe for "Top 300, 2015 Walesonline"

conservation value of the site. This policy is only relevant where a development would harm a site of biodiversity interest.

7.3.20 The Chirk Castle and Parkland Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 500 metres west of the Proposed Development site. The development is proposed within the existing boundary of the Kronospan facility on an area currently occupied by manufacturing equipment. As such there would be no direct effects on the SSSI or any other designated site.

7.3.21 It can be concluded that the Proposed Development would not result in any harm, directly or indirectly, to sites of biodiversity interest. In light of the foregoing, there is not considered to be any conflict between the Proposed Development and Policy EC6.

Policy EC7: Conservation Areas

7.3.22 This policy seeks to ensure that conservation areas are preserved or enhanced and requires new development *within or in close proximity* to be compatible with the special qualities of the conservation area.

7.3.23 Chirk Conservation Area lies approximately 500 metres to the south of the Proposed Development. No development is proposed within the conservation area and the Proposed Development would be largely screened from view by vegetation and would appear as a very limited addition to existing structures, which would not stand out due to the recessive, proposed dark green cladding, and to the greater size/scale of existing structures.

7.3.24 On this basis it can be concluded that the Proposed Development would not be contrary to Policy EC7.

Material Planning Considerations – The Emerging Development Plan

Wrexham Local Development Plan (2013 - 2028) - Deposit Plan (March 2018)

7.3.25 Wrexham County Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough. The LDP is the Council's land use plan that will establish where and how much new development will take place in the County Borough over the period 2013 –

2028. It will also identify which areas need to be protected from development and will replace the existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1996-2011) once adopted (currently programmed for March 2018).

7.3.26 The Deposit Plan is the second formal publication of the evolving LDP document. The LDP identifies where and how much new development will take place in the County Borough, as well as which areas need to be protected for their environmental qualities. Once adopted, the LDP will replace the UDP and will be used to make decisions on all planning applications.

7.3.27 The Deposit Plan contains site specific land allocations and detailed planning policies. A six week period of consultation on the Deposit Plan is currently taking place and will end on the 31st May 2018. Following the consultation period the LDP is scheduled to be submitted for Examination in November 2018 and Adoption in Spring 2019. As such, the emerging Development Plan is at an advanced stage of its preparation and due weight should be attributed in the determination of this planning application to the policies contained within the emerging plan. The relevant policies and objectives of the Deposit Plan are considered under the headings below.

Economy and Employment

7.3.28 Strategic Objective SO2 seeks to:

“Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham County Borough with strategic growth in Wrexham Town and Wrexham Industrial Estate”.

7.3.29 This objective is supported by several policies including Strategic Policy SP2 *Location of Development*, Strategic Policy SP9 *Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise* and Policy EM1 *Protection of Existing Employment Land*.

7.3.30 The Kronospan manufacturing site is allocated as an employment area on the Proposals Map. Policy SP2 requires that new development is directed to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map. Policy SP9 safeguards existing important industrial estates

and seeks to facilitate a level of growth which allows opportunities to deliver approximately 4200 jobs in the County Borough over the Plan period.

- 7.3.31 The Proposed Development is part of a programme of continual improvement of the operational efficiency of the site which will allow Kronospan to compete effectively and maintain its current levels of employment. The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to introduce a third raw board process at the site and therefore enable Kronospan to further diversify and compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, contributing to the economic sustainability of this important local employer.
- 7.3.32 The policy and objectives centred on Economy and Employment therefore add weight to the policy support for the Proposed Development.

Natural Environment

- 7.3.33 Strategic Objective SO9 seeks to: *“Protect, manage and enhance the natural and historic environment and landscapes”*.
- 7.3.34 Strategic Policy *Historic and Cultural Environment* confirms that development will only be supported where it conserves, protects and enhances cultural and heritage assets of the County Borough and, where appropriate, their settings.
- 7.3.35 The Kronospan facility is an established part of the context of the south-eastern edge of the AONB. Policy NE4: *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* sets out that within the AONB development will only be supported where it conserves or enhances the natural beauty of the area and its setting. Criteria that development must meet in relation to the AONB are also set out in this policy.
- 7.3.36 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Heritage Appraisal have been completed to support this application. The LVIA concluded that the additional presence of the Proposed Development would be unremarkable and would result in little or no appreciable change to existing influence of the Kronospan site upon its surroundings. Neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant. The

Heritage Assessment found that no impact on the heritage significance of the local cultural heritage resource.

- 7.3.37 For the aforementioned reasons the Proposed Development is in accordance with the main relevant policies and objectives relating to the natural environment.

Development Management

- 7.3.38 Policy DM1: *Development Management Considerations* sets out 12 general criteria development must fulfil, it is considered that the Proposed Development satisfies all of these requirements.

Material Planning Considerations – Other National, Regional and Local Planning Considerations

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)

- 7.3.39 Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which is supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs) and circulars, is the national planning policy for Wales and sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government. The policies of relevance to the Proposed Development have been considered in the subsequent section. PPW and the TANs are material to decisions on individual planning applications and, as such, it is important to consider how the Proposed Development fits within this policy context.
- 7.3.40 The following chapters of PPW are considered relevant to the Proposed Development:
- Planning for Sustainability (Chapter 4);
 - Economic Development (Chapter 7); and
 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution (Chapter 13).
- 7.3.41 The relevant advice within these chapters of PPW is outlined below and considered in the context of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.42 Chapter 4 relates to ‘Planning for Sustainability’ and sets out the Welsh Government’s commitment to achieving sustainable forms of development. The Welsh Government acknowledge the economic, social and

environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the definition provided in Figure 4.2 of PPW. Paragraph 4.2.1 states that the planning system has a fundamental role to play in achieving sustainable development in Wales.

7.3.43 Paragraph 4.2.2 states that the planning system provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.

7.3.44 The environmental impacts of the Proposed Development have been assessed, as reported in Section 5.0 of this Planning Statement. The assessments conclude that the development would not give rise to any significant adverse effects.

7.3.45 The need and benefits of the Proposed Development are set out in Section 3.0 and the economic benefits are explored further below in context of Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development. It is clear that the Proposed Development will contribute to sustaining the valuable economic contribution that the business makes to the local and national economy.

7.3.46 Based on the foregoing it is clear that the Proposed Development constitutes Sustainable Development as defined within PPW and therefore there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for the development.

7.3.47 Chapter 7 of PPW, 'Economic Development', explains that in assessing the economic benefits of a scheme, key factors include:

- *“the numbers and types of jobs expected to be created or retained on the site;*
- *whether and how far the development will help redress economic disadvantage or support regeneration priorities, for example by enhancing employment opportunities or upgrading the environment; and*
- *a consideration of the contribution to wider spatial strategies, for example for the growth or regeneration of certain areas.”*

7.3.48 As noted above, and discussed further in the next section of the report, the Proposed Development provides significant economic benefits to Wrexham and Wales and therefore makes a positive contribution to this national policy

goal. The increased job opportunities resulting from the Proposed Development would more than offset the reduced staff numbers resulting from improved manufacturing efficiency in other areas of the site.

- 7.3.49 Chapter 13 of PPW relates to minimising and managing environmental risks and pollution, in particular the risks associated with climate change. The environmental risks that proposed developments should take into consideration are flood risk, unstable and contaminated land, air and water quality, noise and light pollution. All these factors have been considered and where appropriate assessments have been presented in this application. In this regard the Proposed Development accords with the policies set out in Chapter 13 of PPW.

Conclusions

- 7.3.50 The Proposed Development would contribute to each of the national policies outlined above and it has been established that the proposals represent Sustainable Development.
- 7.3.51 The Proposed Development would result in a number of benefits to the manufacturing process, enabling Kronospan to diversify into the production of a new raw board product. The introduction of this new production line would ensure that no overall job losses occur as a result of the Kronospan Vision 2020 improvement projects. The Proposed Development would therefore help secure the ongoing success of this important local employer and reduce the UK's reliance on European imports for OSB.
- 7.3.52 The overall outcome of the ongoing improvement projects at the site would be to provide improvements in terms of air quality and noise, negligible impacts on the historic environment, no significant effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts and enable Kronospan to maintain its current employment levels. The assessments demonstrate that the improvements undertaken and proposed to date will ensure that the manufacture of this new product would not result in any additional adverse effects in respect of noise and air quality.
- 7.3.53 On the basis of the foregoing it is considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with the national planning policies set out above.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)

- 7.3.54 TAN 12 provides advice in respect of delivering good sustainable design. The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which describes the approach undertaken to the design and considers Access and Movement, Character, Community Safety and Environmental Sustainability.
- 7.3.55 Section 3.0 of the TAN describes the design process. At paragraph 3.2 it states that “appreciation of the site’s context, and the development of a vision and agreed design objectives must be established and remain central to the evolutionary [design] process.”.
- 7.3.56 The Proposed Development is a functional development that will house equipment to enable OSB to be produced at the Chirk site. Other than ensuring that the building meets its functional requirements to enable it to fulfil its role in the site’s manufacturing process, the principle design driver is for the building to fit into its local context i.e. an industrial site, and so far as is possible to reduce the prominence of building from any locations outside the site from where it can be seen.
- 7.3.57 The TAN highlights how appraising the local context is a vital early step in the design process. At paragraph 4.5 it notes that “the local context will highlight distinctive patterns of development or landscape where the intention will be to sustain character”. In terms of character the TAN states at page 19 that the design should respond to:
- landscapes and townscapes, culture and biodiversity
 - locally distinctive patterns and forms of development
 - existing buildings, infrastructure, urban/rural landscape and public art
 - clear boundaries and established building lines
 - appropriateness of uses and the mix of uses and densities
 - easily recognisable and understood features and landmarks
- 7.3.58 The Proposed Development comprises an extension to the existing chipboard press hall and a new building adjacent chipboard press hall. The development would be located in the southwestern corner of the Kronospan site adjacent to other long established, large buildings, tall and prominent

industrial process equipment and other industrial infrastructure. The Kronospan site forms a long established landmark locally and whilst undoubtedly a visual detractor, is a valid and distinctive component of the local 'sense of place'. This influence is documented within the adopted Chirk Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan (2014).

- 7.3.59 The Proposed Development would be consistent in height with the surrounding structures. As set out in Section 2.2, the Proposed Development would be clad in Olive Green cladding (subject to the agreement of WCBC) which has been selected to reduce the visual impact of the facility. Furthermore, the existing influence of the industrial site would not be altered or extended.
- 7.3.60 The Chirk site is an existing large-scale industrial site that has an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area. Views of existing tall, bulky structures at the Kronospan site are commonplace within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape.
- 7.3.61 TAN 12 requires that in areas recognised for their landscape, townscape, architectural, archaeological and/or historic value, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites and conservation areas, the objective of sustaining character is particularly important and context appraisals should reflect this. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is contained in Appendix A and a Heritage Assessment is contained in Appendix D. These assessments concluded that the additional presence of the Proposed Development would be unremarkable and would result in little appreciable change to the existing influence of the Kronospan Site upon the surrounding area, including upon the designation of the AONB, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS and Scheduled Monument, Chirk Castle Historic Park & Garden and Chirk Conservation Area.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014)

- 7.3.62 TAN 23 provides advice on various aspects relating to economic development including developing high level economic planning objectives and assessing the economic benefits of new development.

7.3.63 Paragraph 2.1.1 states that *“It should not be assumed that economic objectives are necessarily in conflict with social and environmental objectives. Planning should positively and imaginatively seek such ‘win-win’ outcomes, where development contributes to all dimensions of sustainability”*.

7.3.64 Kronospan have recently released their investment strategy, Kronospan Vision 2020, which sets out their aim to make Kronospan a world leading wood-based panel production site. Kronospan envisage achieving this through the following measures:

- investing in the business in order to reduce the environmental impact of the operations at the site;
- improving operational efficiency through much needed equipment upgrades; and
- offering new business and revenue streams.

7.3.65 The above measures will be achieved through the investment of £150 million over the next 3 years. As set out previously, Kronospan are an important local employer providing direct employment for over 600 people, the majority of whom live locally, and paying over £1.3 million in net wages every month. The business also makes a significant contribution to the local and national economy via business rates and corporation tax. Annually the business contributes over £1 million through business rates and since 1970 the business has paid £57 million in corporation tax.

7.3.66 The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to introduce a third raw board process to their production operations and enable OSB to be produced at the site, rather than imported from Kronospan sites based elsewhere in Europe. Therefore the Proposed Development would contribute to Kronospan implementing its Kronospan Vision 2020, enabling the long term sustainability of the business to be secured, ensuring that the substantial economic benefits of the business continue to be realised.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017)

7.3.67 TAN 24 provides advice on how the historic environment should be considered during development plan preparation and decision making on

planning applications. Specific guidance is available on several aspects of the historic environment including:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled Monuments; and
- Conservation Areas.

7.3.68 Paragraph 1.26 confirms that it is for the Applicant to “provide the local planning authority with sufficient information to allow the assessment of their proposals in respect of scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, or other sites of national importance and their settings”.

7.3.69 A Heritage Assessment has been completed to assess the predicted impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of cultural heritage assets and potential cumulative impacts resulting from the combined operation of the Proposed Development and the other projects proposed under Kronospan Vision 2020. This assessment is contained in Appendix D.

7.3.70 This assessment concluded that the construction and operation of the OSB facility would have negligible impact on the heritage significance of the local cultural heritage resource.

‘People, Places, Futures’: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update (July 2008)

7.3.71 The Spatial Plan is a twenty year plan for the sustainable development of Wales. It comprises the overarching framework and integration tool and provides important underpinning in a whole range of matters, such as:

- *“Economic development and the long term goal of full employment at a rate of 80%; and*
- *Making the right decisions, and getting the most benefit from specific; and major investment decisions, affecting public services;”*

7.3.72 The final section of the Spatial Plan presents the Area Strategies for the six identified Plan Areas. The Kronospan site is located within the North East Wales Border and Coast Region. The overall vision for this region is: *“an*

area harnessing the economic drivers on both sides of the border, reducing inequalities and improving the quality of its natural and physical assets”.

The Spatial Plan recognises that this region is highly dependent on the manufacturing sector both in terms of jobs provided and the gross value added to the local and national economy. The Proposed Development would ensure that there are no overall job losses resulting from the Kronospan 2020 improvement programme. Clearly the Kronospan facility, and therefore the contribution that the Proposed Development makes to the ongoing success of this business, makes an important contribution to meeting the aims of the Spatial Plan.

One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009)

7.3.73 The document indicates that sustainable development is the overarching strategic aim of all the Welsh Government’s policies and programmes. The Sustainable Development Scheme includes strategies for sustainable resource use, sustaining the environment, a sustainable economy, a sustainable society and the wellbeing of Wales. Where the economy is concerned the vision is for a: *“resilient and sustainable economy for Wales that is able to develop whilst stabilising, then reducing its use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change”.*

7.3.74 As identified previously, Kronospan is continually seeking to improve efficiency and reduce waste in order to improve the sustainability of the products it manufactures. The Kronospan facility makes a contribution to the development and growth of sustainable businesses in Wales, in line with the vision set out by the Welsh Government within *One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government*.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

Wrexham County Borough Council has produced Local Planning Guidance Notes on multiple topics; these notes expand on the detail provided in the UDP policies and provide further indication of Council’s approach to planning issues. The Local Planning Guidance Notes have been reviewed and two of these notes have been identified to be of relevance to the proposal, these documents are considered with regard to the Proposed

Development below. It should be noted that whilst effects on the Chirk Conservation Area have been considered within this application, specifically in relation to Policy EC7 of the UDP, the Local Planning Guidance Note 4 (Conservation Areas) is not relevant to the application as it deals solely with development within conservation areas.

Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26 – Landscape and Industrial Development

- 7.3.75 This note aims to improve understanding of the landscape and environmental issues which the Council will take account of when determining applications for industrial development. It advocates that high-quality design can improve the image of a business, attract high-quality staff and encourage investment.
- 7.3.76 As described in Section 5, the Proposed Development would typically result in only a minor change to the arrangement of elements within the wider site. The Proposed Development would not alter or extend the existing influence of the industrial site.
- 7.3.77 An earth bund planted with trees has been developed along the eastern perimeter of the site in order to reduce the visibility of the site operations from neighbouring properties on Holyhead Road. Furthermore, a Long Term Landscape Strategy for the Kronospan site has been submitted to the Council. This document provides a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities for landscape mitigation within the surrounding area and sets out a programme of landscaping management and planting that would help mitigate views of the wider facility, including views of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.78 As described in Section 2.2 above the Proposed Development would be located adjacent to other long established buildings in the south western corner of the Kronospan site. These buildings and structures are Goosewing Grey in colour. For the reasons set out in Section 2.2, the colour of the cladding proposed in this application is Olive Green. However, Kronospan do not have any preference with regard to the colour of the Proposed Development and, if planning permission were granted,

Kronospan would welcome the opportunity to come to mutual agreement with the Local Planning Authority on this point via planning condition.

- 7.3.79 On the basis of the foregoing it is considered that the principles of Local Planning Guidance Note 26 have been adopted.

Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33 – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site

- 7.3.80 The stated aim of the guidance note is to ensure the integrity of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape are maintained. It sets out the need to consider the impact of Proposed Development on the World Heritage Site and its setting.
- 7.3.81 Appendix D to this Planning Statement contains a Heritage Assessment that considers the effect of the Proposed Development on the character of the WHS that accords with the *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (May 2017)* guidance and the matters raised within Section 6 of Local Planning Guidance Note 33.
- 7.3.82 It demonstrates that views of the Kronospan Site from the canal are restricted, reflecting the fact that the canal runs through a tunnel and a deep cutting adjacent to the site, and the stretch of canal further to the north is lined with mature trees. The tallest existing structures at the Site are intermittently visible for an approximately 1km stretch of canal north of the cutting. The Applicant has approached the Canal and River Trust offering the provision of planting in order to further screen the Site from the canal, however at the time of writing they had not received any response to this offer.
- 7.3.83 The photomontages contained in Appendix A illustrate the limited visibility of the wider Kronospan site from the WHS itself. The Proposed Development would be heavily screened by vegetation and would only be seen against a back-drop of taller existing structures within the Kronospan factory.
- 7.3.84 The Kronospan site is more clearly visible from elevated viewpoints within the WHS buffer zone west of the canal. The Proposed Development would be visible from within the Buffer Zone for the WHS but only in combination

with the existing Kronospan factory and not in locations that offer more informative views of the WHS. Where visible, the OSB production facility would appear within the existing complex of industrial structures, not adding to the vertical or horizontal extent of the factory.

7.3.85 It is concluded that the visual extent of the Kronospan site would not change significantly, nor would its influence upon the character of the WHS.

7.3.86 On this basis it is concluded that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any impact upon the heritage significance of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape. As such the Proposed Development would meet the stated aim of Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33.

Productivity

7.3.87 In 2015 productivity in Wales was between 11-35% below the UK average. The productivity index for England has increased by an overall 0.1 index points during the period from 1997-2015 whereas the productivity index for Wales has decreased by 6.2 index points during the same period².

7.3.88 Weaknesses in productivity growth since the 2008/2009 recession have been attributed to several factors, including:

- Low levels of business investment for example, the resources and quality of equipment available to workers to produce output;
- A lack of lending to more productive firms since the banking crisis;
- The reallocation of employees within firms to less productive roles; and
- Reduced rates of innovation and discovery².

7.3.89 The Proposed Development is one of four projects forming a £200 million investment programme to be implemented at the Kronospan manufacturing facility over the next 3 years. The OSB production facility comprises an investment in equipment and employee skills and is an example of how businesses should react to balance the decline in productivity experienced in Wales over the past two decades. Without investment in new

² House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 06492, 20 September 2017, Productivity in the UK, By Daniel Harari

manufacturing processes, reduced productivity could begin to have significant detrimental effects on the economics of the business at the Chirk site. Accordingly it is clear the Proposed Development is crucial to the future prospects of the manufacturing industry in Wales, which must increase its productivity in order to remain competitive in the wider UK, Europe and worldwide markets.

7.4 Planning Policy Appraisal - Summary

7.4.1 Table 7.1 gives a detailed breakdown of all national, regional and local policies against which the proposal is assessed and provides a conclusion of whether the proposed development accords with the relevant policies.

Table 7.1: Assessment of the Proposal against Planning Policy and Guidance

Policy No	Policy Thrust	Development aids policy	Development is neutral to policy	Development does not accord with policy
<i>Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (UDP)</i>				
Policy PS1	Directs new development for housing, employment, and community services to within defined settlement limits/employment areas.	✓		
Policy PS2	Seeks to prevent development that would materially detrimentally affect the countryside landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.	✓		
Policy PS3	Directs development to previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land.	✓		
Policy PS4	Development should be integrated with the existing transport network	✓		
Policy GDP1	Sets a series of general requirements/criteria all new development should comply with.	✓		
Policy E4	Employment development on un-annotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to compliance with Policy GDP1.	✓		

Policy No	Policy Thrust	Development aids policy	Development is neutral to policy	Development does not accord with policy
Policy EC6	Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site.		✓	
Policy EC7	Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area.		✓	
<i>Material Planning Considerations</i>				
<i>Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 Deposit Plan</i>				
Objective SO2	Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham County Borough.	✓		
Policy SP2	Direct new development to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map.	✓		
Policy SP9	Sets out measures to diversify the local economy and widen the economic base to ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver.	✓		
Policy EM1	Sets out the protected employment areas, including Chirk Industrial Estate, to be protected for B Use Class.	✓		
Objective SO9	Protect, manage and enhance the natural and historic environment and landscapes.		✓	
Policy SP16	Confirms that development will only be supported where it conserves, protects and enhances the cultural and heritage assets of the County Borough and, where appropriate, their settings.		✓	
Policy NE4	Sets out the requirements for development in respect of effects on the AONB.		✓	

Policy No	Policy Thrust	Development aids policy	Development is neutral to policy	Development does not accord with policy
Policy DM1	Sets out the requirements that all development proposals must fulfil.	✓		
<i>Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)</i>				
Chapter 4 - Planning for Sustainability	Sets targets for carbon and greenhouse gas emissions reductions which are to be achieved through the facilitation of new and more sustainable forms of energy generation. Sets out the criteria and requirements for achieving sustainable development.	✓		
Chapter 7 – Economic Development	Sets out WAG's objectives for creating a strong and vibrant economy.	✓		
Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution	Sets out how to minimise the adverse effects of any environmental risks from future land uses.	✓		
<i>Other Relevant Government Policy / Strategy Documents</i>				
People, Places, Futures. The Wales Spatial Plan (2008 Update)	Provides a 20-year plan for sustainable development in Wales including a vision for the North East Wales region.	✓		
One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009)	Sets out the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales.	✓		
<i>Local Planning Guidance Notes</i>				
Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26 – Landscape and Industrial Development	Aims to improve understanding of the landscape and environmental issues which the Council will take account of when determining applications for industrial development.		✓	
Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33 – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site	Aims to ensure the integrity of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape are maintained		✓	

7.4.2 It can be seen from the assessment of the statutory Development Plan and other material planning considerations in Table 7.1 above, that the Proposed Development is either in conformity with, or supported by, all facets of the identified, relevant planning context.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1.1 The Proposed Development would form part of an ongoing development programme to ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility and deliver environmental improvements. The Proposed Development is the most significant project of the Kronospan Vision 2020 programme.
- 8.1.2 The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to diversify by producing a new raw board product and therefore improve the productivity of the site. OSB is currently mainly imported from European panel manufacturers. Producing OSB at Chirk would enable Kronospan to better react to market demands and ensure the continued ongoing success of Kronospan in the competitive market of wood-based board production. This would help sustain the long term future of this important local business which provides employment to circa 600 staff and in turn the circa 6,000 plus people in the UK indirectly supported by its operations. The Proposed Development would ensure that reduced staff numbers resulting from improved manufacturing efficiency in other areas of the site would be more than offset.
- 8.1.3 The OSB production facility comprises an investment in equipment and employee skills. Such investments are required to balance the decline in productivity experienced in Wales over the past two decades and enable manufacturing in Wales to remain competitive in the wider UK, Europe and worldwide markets.
- 8.1.4 An assessment of the proposals against the relevant planning policy and guidance has demonstrated that the scheme meets the test of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and paragraph 3.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales as it fully complies with the provisions of the statutory Development Plan. Furthermore, it has been established that the Proposed Development constitutes Sustainable Development as defined within PPW and therefore there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for the development.
- 8.1.5 In addition, a comprehensive assessment of relevant material considerations has not revealed any justification for determining this

application other than in accordance with the development plan. In fact, the proposals have also been found to strongly accord with, and be supported by, a range of material planning considerations. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted without delay.