

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Planning and Listed Building Application for Demolition of student union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.

On behalf of Glyndwr University

Land at Plas Coch

Wrexham

August 2018

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The application submitted on behalf of Glyndwr University seeks detailed planning permission and listed building consent. The specific land uses are identified in Section Four of this Planning Statement. The description of development is:

Planning and Listed Building Application for Demolition of student union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.

- 1.1 Prior to the submission of the application, the views of the local community were sought via a statutory consultation exercise (this section is to be completed once the consultation process has taken place).

- 1.2 The application comprises the following documents:

- Application Form and Ownership Certificates
- 531-17-6-AE-00-003 Engineering Building Sections
- 531-17-6-AE-00-001 Engineering Building Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 531-17-6-AE-00-101 Engineering Building Proposed First Floor Plan
- 531-17-6-AE-00-201 Engineering Proposed Roof Plan
- 531-17-7-AE-00-001 Sports Hall Proposed Elevation A and B
- 531-17-7-AE-00-002 Sports Hall Proposed Elevations C and D (1 and 2)
- 531-17-7-AE-100-001 Sports Hall Existing Elevations (A and B) (1 and 2)
- 531-17-7-AE-100-002 Sports Hall Existing Elevations C and D (1 and 2)
- 531-17-7-AL-00-001 Sports Hall Plans
- 531-17-7-AL-100-001 Sports Hall Existing Roof Plan
- 531-17-7-AL-101-001 Sports Hall Plans
- 531-17-7-AE-00-001 Proposed Street Elevations
- 531-17-7-AE-100-001 Main Building Existing Elevation A and B
- 531-17-7-AE-100-002 Main Building Existing Elevation C and D
- 531-17-7-AE-100-003 Main Building Existing Elevation E, F, G and H
- 531-17-7-AE-100-004 Main Building Existing Elevation I and J
- 531-17-7-AE-100-005 Students Union Existing Elevation
- 531-17-AL-00-001 Plas Coch Proposed Masterplan
- 531-17-AL-10-001 Plas Coch Demolition Plan
- 531-17-AL-100-001 Plas Coch Site Location Plan

- 531-17-AL-100-002 Plas Coch Existing Site Plan
- 531-17-AL-100-003 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Reference Plan
- 531-17-AL-100-004 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 01
- 531-17-AL-100-005 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 02
- 531-17-AL-100-006 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 03
- 531-17-AL-100-007 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 04
- 531-17-AL-100-008 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 05
- 531-17-AL-100-009 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 06
- 531-17-AL-100-010 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 07
- 531-17-AL-100-011 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 08
- 531-17-AL-100-012 Plas Coch Topographical Survey Plan 09
- Design and Access Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Energy Statement produced by FutureServ
- Tree Survey and Constraints Plan produced by Indigo
- Plas Coch Campus Transport Assessment produced by ITP
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced by RPS
- Flood Consequence Assessment and Drainage Strategy produced by Scott Hughes
- Landscape Masterplan and Strategy produced by TPM

1.3 It is not the intention of this Planning Statement to substantially repeat the content of these documents, in particular the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and, as required for the Listed Building Consent, the Heritage Impact Assessment. This Planning Statement seeks to provide the planning context for the proposal.

2 Site Description and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site extends to 11.023 hectares (27.2 acres) and is situated within the urban area of Wrexham. Topographically, the site is generally flat and contains all of the academic buildings which form Glyndwr University, together with a series of individual car parks, linked via an internal road network, site landscaping which is predominantly areas of lawn, a sports centre and floodlit artificial sports pitch and a multi-use games area.
- 2.2 To the south of the site is Mold Road and beyond this an existing residential area, to the west is the B5101 and beyond this, Plas Coch retail park, to the north is a tennis centre and to the east are existing properties on Ashfield Road/Crispin Lane, the Racecourse Stadium, Wrexham Village student accommodation complex and Wrexham General Railway Station.
- 2.3 Access to the centre of Wrexham (circa 0.25 miles distant) can be readily achieved via walking and cycling along a relatively flat route which is well signposted.
- 2.4 The site is owned freehold by Glyndwr University and has been in continuous academic use since the early 1950's.
- 2.5 A significant proportion of the application site is covered by a Grade II listed building (ID 1851) which is the former Denbeighshire Technical College, which in turn became Glyndwr University.

3 Campus 2025

- 3.1 This planning application forms part of the overall Campus 2025 Estates and Learning Environment Strategy which is now being pursued by Glyndwr University (the University). Campus 2025 has assessed the University's existing estate and is based upon a recently undertaken extensive package of surveys of building condition, space utilisation, future academic requirements etc.
- 3.2 The conclusion of this exercise is that the University's Estate does not fulfil the principles and objectives of Glyndwr University and therefore needs a significant package of investment and redevelopment for the University to sustain a viable position within the higher education sector. The issue is not about expanding the overall size and academic capacity of the University Estate.
- 3.3 Indeed, the surveys show that the overall occupancy levels across the estate are low and that if the University needed to increase student numbers and/or the range of academic courses it offers, then there is sufficient capacity within the existing University Estate to accommodate such growth. The key requirement is to upgrade and modernise Glyndwr University's facilities to modern standards when compared to other Universities throughout the UK, so that the University can sustain a viable offering and student numbers across the range of academic courses which it provides. There is also a statutory requirement for Glyndwr University to maintain their existing listed buildings, which Campus 2025 enables Glyndwr to discharge.
- 3.4 Given this context, Campus 2025 is a package of planning applications, which enables the ambitions of Campus 2025 to be realised. The applications are all linked through the pressing economic, social and environmental case for Glyndwr University to improve its overall estate. Once the development identified within Campus 2025 is delivered, then this will bring substantial benefits:
- a) in the delivery of academic courses at Glyndwr University;
 - b) in the student accommodation offering within Wrexham and significant knock-on benefits to the town from a sustained and increased student population;
 - c) in the sale of land assets which are not required by Glyndwr University and can make a more positive contribution via residential development to meet Wrexham's housing need;
 - d) By enabling Glyndwr University to continue to attract new students and sustain a viable position in the higher education sector;
 - e) ultimately via the retention of Glyndwr University, with its significant contribution of jobs, investment and profile within the Wrexham economy.

- 3.5 The subject application will form part of Campus 2025 by providing 77 new homes within Wrexham and by providing funding back to Glyndwr University from an eventual land sale of consented development land to a housebuilder. Proceeds from the sale of the land sale will be invested back at the Plas Coch Campus and Regent Street Arts School.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that because this application is being brought forward direct by Glyndwr University themselves, there is not a developer taking an element of profit from the land sale, therefore this approach maximises the revenue available for the University.
- 3.7 The package of planning applications forming Campus 2025 is detailed on the table below. Whilst these are all individual planning applications and are submitted for determination as such, Campus 2025 is an overall project, whereby all of the individual sites make up the overall enabling package. It is therefore envisaged that the application will be determined by Wrexham CBC as part of a collective package of applications.

Site	Proposal
Plas Coch	Demolition of Student Union Building and reconfiguration of main campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension. Campus 2025 also involves significant package of refurbishment of the existing social learning and academic tuition space, together with improved and reconfigured car parking and significant improvements to the overall public realm and campus environment.
Regent Street	Refurbishment and improvement of Arts College (which is a listed building) removal of redundant outbuildings (not listed) and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility.
Northern Quarter	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 420 apartments on surplus land within Plas Coch Campus.
Wrexham Village	Following demolition of the student halls on the Plas Coch Campus, it is proposed to build a new student accommodation facility of 197 bed spaces. This adjoins an existing 323 bed facility (Wrexham Village), which was constructed within the last ten years and is currently operated by a third party. Wrexham Village is being purchased by Glyndwr University and will create a combined facility of 520 bed spaces, adjacent to the Plas Coch Campus.
Holt Road	Outline planning application for 77 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street
Gatewen Road	Outline planning application for 112 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street

3.8 Due to the proposals involving both Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area, then the overall package of applications is as follows:

Site	Proposal	
Glyndwr University Plas Coch Campus	Detailed planning and Listed Building Application for Demolition of student union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.	Application One
Regent Street Arts College	Application for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College, demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility	Application Two
	Demolition required within conservation area of ancillary outbuildings within Arts School to enable construction of 107 bed student accommodation facility.	Application Three
Land at north west of Plas Coch Campus	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 410 apartments with access from B5101, together with car parking, site landscaping and associated infrastructure on surplus land within the overall Plas Coch academic Campus.	Application Four
Land west of Crispin Lane	Outline application for student accommodation facility of up to 197 bed spaces, with parking and landscaping.	Application Five
Holt Road	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Holt Road, open space which can be used with adjoining land to the west to create a formal sports pitch, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Six
Gatewen Road	The erection of up to 112 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Gatewen Road, open space, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Seven

4 Application Proposals

- 4.1 This application contains a series of architectural drawings for the proposed new building elements. In terms of the physical buildings, the table below details those existing buildings which are proposed to be demolished:

Building Element	Loss in Floorpace (sq m)	Loss in Floorspace (sq ft)
Existing Student Union	943	10,150
Existing Engineering Building	1,939	20,871
Health Centre and Garage Block	259	2,788

- 4.2 A multi-use games area is also proposed to be removed, along with a number of the existing car parks and areas of open space / landscaping. All of these elements are detailed on the demolition plan which accompanies this application.

- 4.3 Following demolition, it is proposed to construct the following new buildings:

Building Element	Gain in Floorpace (sq m)	Gain in Floorspace (sq ft)
Sports Hall Extension	500	5,382
Learning Gateway Building	560	6,028
Inner Gateway Building	147	1,582
New Engineering Building	3,200	34,445

- 4.4 Alongside the new floorspace to be constructed, a significant package of new car parking, public realm, hard and soft landscaping is proposed, which will rationalise the Plas Coch Campus into a coherent masterplanned campus, with a sense of place and with individual building elements which inter-relate and complement one another. The current campus has evolved over time, with new/different building elements being constructed to meet specific needs as and when they arose. Until this point, there has never been a site-wide approach to masterplanning the whole Plas Coch Campus into a single coherent place.
- 4.5 As explained in the previous Section relating to Campus 2025, the key driver behind these proposals is not to increase the overall teaching space available for Glyndwr University. The key requirement is a qualitative rather than a quantitative improvement. Other than the increased floorspace of 1,261 sq m for the new engineering building and 500 sq m sports hall extension, all of the other components do not involve new teaching/academic space.
- 4.6 Much of the existing academic teaching space within the existing campus is to be refurbished and modernised, to bring the space in line with that offered by other Universities across the UK.

These internal works to the existing academic buildings do not require Planning Permission but do require a significant level of investment. Accordingly, much of the proposed expenditure for Campus 2025 does not involve the construction of new buildings, but the refurbishment of the existing estate. This investment has not occurred over the previous decades and so Campus 2025 has to remedy the result of significant under-investment and a backlog of maintenance required on Glyndwr University's Estate.

5 Listed Building Consent

5.1 This application seeks Planning and Listed Building Consent. The assessment and rationale for Listed Building Consent is set out within the Heritage Impact Assessment. This Planning Supporting Statement is not seeking to replicate all of the findings within the Heritage Impact Statement. However, the issuing of planning permission is clearly linked and dependent on Listed Building Consent also being granted.

5.2 The Listed Building Consent is required for the additional of the Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings. As discussed previously, these buildings are required to improve the overall entrance and profile of the University. This also enables the University to showcase various events / projects within new space specifically designed for this purpose. Glyndwr University currently cannot do this, as there is no suitable space within the existing University Estate. In respect of these two new entrance features, the Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that:

“.....this change would not be ‘harmful’ because the pavilion on the main elevation would not require the loss of, or damage to, a feature of special interest from the listed building. Instead, the proposal envisages the creation of a new high quality entrance gateway to the listed building which would re-connect this aspect of the asset with its contemporary surroundings and serve to highlight and advertise its role as the key point of access to the University Campus.

Complimented with high quality public realm treatments, the new entrance pavilion would enliven and showcase the main elevation. It is accepted that it would conceal some aspects of the existing façade (most obviously the Portland stone panels), but even so these would be retained and protected within the development, where (instead of them being external) they would become decorative features of the new entrance space.

At the same time, it is recognised that the design of the pavilions has been chosen for them to be free-standing and not need any fixture to the listed building. On that basis, it is clear that these aspects of the development proposals are fully reversible without causing future harm to the listed building.”

5.3 It is therefore demonstrated that there is a lack of harm to the addition of the Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings and therefore subject to listed building consent being granted, there is no policy basis upon which to refuse planning permission for these elements.

5.4 In addition, Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition of the existing Student Union Building, which is covered by the Grade II Listing which applies to the overall main campus building. The Student Union Building (as discussed further within the DAS) is positioned within an unattractive area of car parking and service yards which sit between the Mold Road entrance and the remainder of the campus to the north. Sitting within the middle of the Plas Coch Campus, it could not be sold to a third party for another use and is now simply surplus to requirements, as Glyndwr can and do use other elements of the existing Plas Coch Campus for activities which were previously undertaken within the Student Union. Its positioning within the campus also prevents any comprehensive improvements to the overall campus. In some ways, if this element of the listed building were to be retained, it would place all of the listed buildings on the site at risk, as the comprehensive improvements required by Campus 2025 could not be delivered.

5.5 This is discussed and assessed within the Heritage Impact Assessment, where it is found that:

“As far as the Student Union’s current condition is concerned, aside from the replacement of the original window frames with upvc units, and quite possibly the provision of additional skylights on the single-storey elements; the building is considered to essentially be in the same structural condition that it was when built in the 1950s. It has not been altered much from the original architects’ design.

Having said that, information provided by the University indicates that the building requires extensive backlog maintenance and additional future planned maintenance to bring it up to a ‘fit for purpose standard’. However, in view of the restricted usage of the building, due to its peripheral position on the north eastern edge of the main college quad, it is clear that the allocation of the University’s scarce resources to this building to achieve the scale of improvement necessary would be wholly disproportionate to its amenity value.

For the most part, though, the justification for demolition of the Student Union building is provided by the University’s desire to deliver a comprehensive masterplan which releases surplus land for sale, to generate the funding necessary for ‘Campus 2025’ improvements, bring the facilities at the Campus into the 21st century, and enable the University to attract the student numbers necessary within a very competitive marketplace.

Within that comprehensive masterplan, the demolition of the Student Union building allows better connectivity between the Wrexham Student Village accommodation and the heart of the Campus via a new central pedestrian boulevard. Its demolition also enables improved north-south pedestrian connectivity within the reconfigured consolidated parking area and the construction of the 'Inner Gateway Building' to form a prominent and legible entry point into the main listed building at the heart of the Campus.

Furthermore, the proposed new 'Learning Gateway Building' (forming part of the proposals) covers off a number of the uses currently offered by the existing Student Union building, so it is seen as being surplus to requirements.

Whilst the partial demolition of a listed building is a serious matter, and one which requires considerable importance and weight to be afforded to the decision to grant Listed Building Consent, it is evident that the former gymnasium and music block is a peripheral aspect of the former Technical College Campus, and apparently one of the last of the main elements to be built in the early 1950s. Its demolition would undoubtedly be regrettable, but it would bring forward improvements to the Campus which would secure the viable long term future of the original core buildings.

It is clearly a 'next best alternative', but, subject to Listed Building Consent being granted, it is expected that a condition will be attached to secure the completion of an appropriately detailed record of the building prior to its demolition, therefore mitigating its loss."

- 5.6 The findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment therefore conclude that whilst the demolition and loss of a listed building is a negative factor which weighs against the granting of planning permission and listed building consent via the required balancing exercise (see Section Eight) the student Union building is a peripheral aspect of the overall listing and its demolition does enable the overall comprehensive improvements required by Camus 2025 to occur.

6 The Development Plan

- 6.1 The development plan consists primarily of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011. Also relevant to various specific topics are various Technical Advice Notes issued by the Welsh Government, together with Local Planning Guidance Notes issued by Wrexham CBC. There is no relevant planning history for this site, as it has not previously been the subject of any planning applications.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

- 6.2 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 is now significantly out of date. The site does not benefit from any specific allocations and is simply white land, within the settlement limit of Wrexham Town Centre.

- 6.3 The broad location of development is set out within Policies PS1 – PS12. The PS Policies cover a range of issues, but those most relevant to this application include:

- Policy PS1 *“New development for housing, employment and community services will be directed to within defined settlement limits”*. The proposal clearly accords with this element of policy, as it falls within the boundary of the largest settlement within Wrexham CBC’s administrative area.
- Policy PS2 *“Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment”*. The proposal accords with this policy in planning terms, as it involves 100% brownfield land and significantly improves the open space and public realm on offer within the overall Plas Coch campus.
- Policy PS3 *“Development should use previously developed brownfield land, comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to greenfield land, wherever possible...”* Again, the proposal fully accords with this policy.
- Policy PS4 *“Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.”* In proposing to retain and improve the academic facilities of Glyndwr University within the urban area of Wrexham, then the proposal accords with this policy in maintaining the existing settlement pattern, integrating with the surrounding land uses and maximising the potential for trips which do not involve the car.

6.4 Within the UDP, the General Development Principles are set out within Policy GDP1, which covers a range of themes. It is important that proposals can demonstrate accordance with Policy GDP1, due to a link between this policy and Policy H2 (discussed later within this section). The following themes within Policy GDP1 are relevant to this application:

- **Scale Design & Layout.** The proposals do accord with the existing Plas Coch campus in terms of scale, layout and design. This is discussed further with the accompanying DAS and Heritage Impact Assessment.
- **Safe and Convenient Pedestrian and Vehicular Access.** The scheme proposes a new vehicular junction to Mold Road, which would enable pedestrian accesses through to Wrexham General Station and town centre beyond.
- **Public Transport Facilities** – these are outlined in the accompanying transport assessment. Given the location of the site, the site scores excellently from a sustainability perspective.
- **Environmental Safeguarding.** The proposals accord with the uses in the local area and do not result in any significant issues from noise, odour and vibration. Any effects from the construction period will be limited to this phase in the same way that any construction activity does. Planning conditions regarding construction hours of operation, traffic management etc can be used to control this aspect.
- **Secure Public Services.** The site is located within the urban area of Wrexham and effectively surrounded by existing utility networks, which can be utilised by the new development.
- **Flooding, Soil Erosion, Landslides and Contamination.** The site does not flood, nor is there any issue with contamination.
- **Secure the Development of Sustainable Communities.** The site is located adjacent to the town centre of Wrexham and therefore enables new housing to be developed within the single largest and most sustainable settlement within the entire Authority, with the greatest potential to achieve modal shift away from the private car and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

6.5 Policy GDP2 relates to the capacity of infrastructure and states a requirement for the developer/landowner to enter into a planning agreement/obligation which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Glyndwr University intend to fully consider any appropriate contributions in accordance with Article 122 of The Community

Infrastructure Regulations 2010 with the aim of producing a planning agreement for the subject land in due course.

- 6.6 Policy CLF1 deals with community and leisure facilities and states that *“Development which adversely affects indoor or outdoor central multi-activity community and leisure facilities, particularly within settlement limits, will not be permitted.”* This is relevant, as the proposals do involve the removal of an existing multi-use games area. This facility is currently owned by Glyndwr University (i.e. it is not a public facility) and is approaching the end of its economic life. Whilst not directly part of Campus 2025, Glyndwr University also own a significant tract of land at Colliers Park, which was recently granted planning by Wrexham CBC (ref P/2018/0194) for:

“alterations and extension to existing facility to create National Football Development Centre (D2) and educational facility (D1) including replacement pitches, and floodlighting and associated external works, external store and containers and access arrangements.”

- 6.7 This facility is being developed jointly by Glyndwr University and the Football Association for Wales. In undertaking this significant development, Glyndwr will have the joint-use use of a facility of national significance alongside the Football Association for Wales. The new development at Colliers Park will also deliver both a quantitative and qualitative improvement beyond the existing multi-use games area on Plas Coch, as the new pitches are both larger in capacity terms and of a newer and improved specification. This proposal is therefore brought forward on the basis that the provision of better sports facilities elsewhere on Glyndwr University’s Estate more than off-sets the loss of the facility at Plas Coch. Because of this net improvement, there is no adverse effect to Glyndwr’s overall provision and therefore Policy CLF1 has been complied with.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

- 6.8 In addition to the Wrexham UDP, a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes have been produced and approved by Wrexham CBC, which amplify development plan policy and are therefore material to the consideration and determination of the subject planning application. The key notes are as follows:

- Local Planning Guidance Note 7 deals with landscape and development. The DAS and landscaping proposals demonstrate that landscape and public realm are significantly enhanced as a result of this proposal, with more trees introduced and the campus redesigned in a way where pedestrians and car parking courts are separated, within an overall landscaped setting.

- Local Planning Guidance Note 16 looks at car parking. The DAS and accompanying transport assessment looks at this guidance and demonstrates how this has been complied with. It is noteworthy that much of Plas Coch's car parking facilities were planned and delivered prior to this guidance being adopted and would not meet modern standards. The stark and unplanned development of the car parking, particularly to the east of the subject site adjacent to the Racecourse Stadium and around the current Student Union Building present an unattractive area which can be significantly improved via the proposals.
- Local Planning Guidance Note 19 provides guidance in respect of urban landscape design. The subject site at Plas Coch falls within Character Area 5 – Mixed-use non-residential. The opportunity actions are listed as *“break up extensive car parking areas with tree and shrub planting and contrasting surfacing and plant replacement trees.”* The proposals fully accord with this ambition in providing several new pockets of public realm, which seek to remove car parking from pedestrian routes within an overall landscaped setting.

6.9 Whilst the above list of policies is relevant, the key planning justification for the package of new buildings and general improvements is the overall enabling package of benefits found within Section Three : Campus 2025. Glyndwr University is a significant asset within Wrexham and provides significant jobs, profile, an active student population, local community benefits and cultural assets to the town of Wrexham. Campus 2025 is a genuine pivotal point for Glyndwr University. Without the package of improvements and the knock-on effect of being able to sustain a viable range of academic courses and student numbers, then the University faces an uncertain future. A visit to any university city across the UK reveals the extent of investment that has flowed into UK Universities over the past 20 years. Glyndwr (in standing still) has effectively fallen behind, within this highly competitive marketplace.

Planning Policy Wales

- 6.10 National planning policy is set out within Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Its contents are not repeated in full in this Planning Statement. However, for the purposes of determining the subject application, there are a number of issues outlined below.
- 6.11 Policy 4.9 states a preference for the reuse of brownfield land, which the proposal fully accords with.
- 6.12 Policy 7.6.1 addresses economic development and places an obligation on Local Authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development. Whilst

the buildings proposed are not significant employment generating assets in their own right, the context needs to be the safeguarding and retention of Glyndwr University.

- 6.13 Policy 6.5.14 deals with proposals to demolish listed buildings and confirms that any proposals to demolish should be considered as exceptional. As stated previously, Campus 2025 is an exceptional project, with the aim of safeguarding the future of Glyndwr University within Wrexham. The loss of the University would certainly be an exceptional event for Wrexham and significantly outweighs the loss of the Student Union Building.
- 6.14 The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the loss of the Students Union Building is a negative, but that this is outweighed by the redevelopment of the land within which the Listed Building is located, which will clearly outweigh the loss resulting from the demolition of the listed building. Indeed, because the loss of the Students Union Building is intended to result in the rest of the listed building continuing to be used as a higher-education facility, then this further strand of justification demonstrates that this proposal is an exceptional application and should be treated as such.
- 6.15 Policy 7.6 deals with development management and the economy. Whilst the proposals are not for traditional “B-Class” employment uses, Glyndwr University remains one of the largest employers in Wrexham. Safeguarding these jobs is important to Wrexham’s overall economy and is a significant consideration in favour of the application.
- 6.16 Policy 11.1.12 deals with Sport and recreation and states that *“all playing fields, whether owned by the public, private or voluntary organisations, should be protected from development, except where.... alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available”*. In this instance, the alternative provision is significantly in excess of that being lost and therefore the policy test has been met via the development (which has recently been granted planning permission) of the new facility at Colliers Park.

7 Delivery, Planning Obligations and Conditions

- 7.1 There are no known insurmountable technical or environmental constraints to bring the site forward for development. The application scheme is a sustainable form of development and forms the focus of investment for Campus 2025.
- 7.2 Glyndwr University have a well progressed funding package, which brings together various revenue streams to enable the overall Campus 2025 project to be realised. Once planning permission is obtained, then this work can continue with the benefit of a planning permission in place, so that the further package detailed design work for construction can take place.
- 7.3 The current assumption is that, following outline planning permission in Autumn 2018, the site would be developed in phases, mindful that arrangements will be required for phasing and the delivery of buildings, whilst keeping the University open. As this application seeks Planning and Listed Building Consent, then it is envisaged that a full suite of conditions be imposed, under both systems.

8 Benefits, Planning Balance and Conclusions

- 8.1 This Detailed Planning and Listed Building Application is for demolition of Student Union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works is submitted on behalf of the landowner Glyndwr University.
- 8.2 As outlined within the supporting statement, there are a number of Local and National Policies relevant to the determination of the application. In policy terms, then there are no specific land-use policies which seek to prevent Glyndwr from improving academic and ancillary facilities upon their campus. The concept of Glyndwr University making improvements on the Plas Coch Campus is supported by general policies within the Wrexham UDP and PPW, insofar as there is a general presumption which supports developing existing brownfield sites, in a way which sustains and supports their existing uses.
- 8.3 They key balancing exercise involves the negative aspects, which are:
- the proposed demolition of the Student Union, which is a listed building.
 - The additional of the Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, which do affect an existing Listed Building.
 - The relocation of the multi-use games area to Colliers Park, which will deliver a significant improvement to the facility which Glyndwr University own.
 - Other technical issues such as transport, where the proposals will undoubtedly have an impact, but one which the applicant's design team has assessed and concluded is capable of mitigation.
- 8.4 In terms of traffic and transport, then whilst the proposals introduce new parking areas and an amended form of access, this needs to be placed in the context of an existing academic use which is significantly under-utilised. As discussed previously within Section Three, Campus 2025 recognises that many of the buildings within the Plas Coch Campus are capable of accommodating a significantly larger student population than already exists. If the campus were to be utilised by a larger student population, then such a change would not require planning permission and so the proposals take a base position of under-utilisation, rather than where Glyndwr University would have been if their estate had benefit from investment and student numbers had not fallen. Key to assessing any mitigation will be establishing whether any improvements are related to the quantitative improvements (which focus on retaining, rather than growing the student population) or issues with the wider network, which are outside of the scope of this application.

- 8.5 As detailed within Campus 2025, this application deals with an extraordinary set of circumstances. Glyndwr University are acutely aware that the demolition of the listed Students Union building weighs against the scheme. However, given the financial position of Glyndwr University and its need to significantly improve the overall estate, then there is a significant need to remodel and redevelop the campus, in order to sustain the University's student position and safeguard it as a higher-education provider within Wrexham. This weighs significantly in favour of the scheme, such that it provides the exceptional circumstances to outweigh the loss of the listed building. Subject to all statutory consultees being satisfied that the technical aspects of the application such as drainage, highways, landscape etc can all be resolved satisfactorily, Officers should recommend that Planning Permission be granted, subject to planning conditions and any necessary planning obligation.

Narvo Asset Management

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