

Cinders Farm, Ruabon

Planning Statement

indigo.

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Indigo



Colmore Gate
2-6 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2QD

T 0121 667 1220
E info@indigoplanning.com
W indigoplanning.com

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Appendix 1

Relevant National and Local Policies

Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (2005)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Indigo Planning has prepared this Planning Statement on behalf of Soaltar Limited to support the proposed agricultural buildings for the rearing of livestock at Cinders Farm, Ruabon.
- 1.2. The site is shown on the plans above and below.
- 1.3. Planning permission is sought for:

“Erection of four agricultural buildings for rearing livestock (poultry); ancillary buildings and plant; associated infrastructure; and landscaping.”

- 1.4. The proposed site will be developed to include:
 - Poultry rearing buildings and ancillary buildings;
 - Proposed hardstanding;
 - Landscaping; and
 - Related infrastructure (surface water attenuation, internal roads etc).

The Planning Issue

- 1.5. The proposed development is an agricultural use in a rural area and therefore the principle of the development is supported by national land use policy that encourages land in the countryside to be used for the purposes of agricultural production.
- 1.6. The proposal is development which falls within the threshold of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development and also requires licensing under the Environmental Permit Regulations. The planning issue therefore is whether it can be demonstrated that the development will have no unacceptable adverse environmental impact.
- 1.7. A thorough EIA has been carried out and reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) supporting this application. In tandem with the preparation of the EIA an application was made to Natural Resources Wales for a variation to the site Environmental Permit relating to the proposed expansion. Through the environmental permitting process it has been demonstrated that the site is capable of being managed in such a way as to eliminate or minimise pollution.
- 1.8. The ongoing auditing of the site by Natural Resources Wales as part of the environmental permitting regulations ensures the ongoing adherence by site managers to best available techniques for eliminating or minimising environmental effects.

Planning Policy

- 1.9. Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales (ED 9) and Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities is applicable. The overarching policy principle at national level is to ensure the sustainable development of rural economy and encouraging the diversification of rural enterprises to facilitate this.
- 1.10. Wrexham Council’s UDP (2005) is key to determining the appropriateness of development. Policy EC3 seeks to ensure that new agricultural buildings are sited as not to be materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment and landscape.

- 1.11. The proposed development of agricultural buildings meets the requirements of EC3. Therefore, the development is acceptable in planning terms because it is fully compliant with the development plan for the following reasons:

Reason 1: - Design and context

- 1.12. The development is well located in regard to its context and is appropriate to the setting in the countryside. The development will utilise the existing landscape features and topography as well providing substantial additional landscaping to ensure that the development is assimilated into the local landscape with minimal impact.

Reason 2: - Environmental effects

- 1.13. The development will not adversely impact on the natural environment, local highways, visual amenity or heritage. The application will be subject to an environmental permit and there will be no unacceptable impacts on environmental quality or existing residential amenity.

Reason 3: - Benefits

- 1.14. The development secures economic, social and environmental benefits and is considered sustainable development.

2. The proposed development

- 2.1. The following paragraphs summarise the description of the development. Full details of the design of the development can be found in the Design and Access Statement. A description of the management of the site and the relevant environmental controls can be found within Section 3 of the Environmental Statement.
- 2.2. The development proposes the erection of four poultry rearing houses constructed in two pairs to the north west of Cinders Farm.
- 2.3. The site would be laid out with four livestock rearing houses cut into the gentle slope of the site orientated north south. Gentle ground modelling would be located to the west and north of the site and in the adjoining field in the north-eastern part of the site.
- 2.4. A yard area would be to the north of the rearing houses and ancillary buildings would be located on or adjoining this yard: specifically feed storage bins; energy distribution building; a water storage tank; a generator; electricity substation; and office building.
- 2.5. The yard area would be connected to the local highway with an access track running through an existing field gateway.
- 2.6. A biomass boiler and storage building would be located to the north of the existing Cinders Farm and LPG storage tanks would be located adjoining this.
- 2.7. A control room would be connected to the front of each of the rearing houses.
- 2.8. A feed blending shed would be between each pair of houses.
- 2.9. Woodland planting, hedgerows and hedgerow trees and other landscape and biodiversity improvements would be located surrounding the site.
- 2.10. Two surface water attenuation ponds would be located to the north of the rearing houses and to the east of the biomass building.
- 2.11. Local highway improvements would be made to the local highway to include improvements to the visibility of the junction of the local highway with the A539 and vehicle passing places along the minor road connecting the site to the A539.

3. Design and Context

- 3.1. UDP Policy EC3 recognises that agricultural development in the open countryside should reinforce existing farm complexes. The application site lies in close proximity to Cinders Farm. Cinders Farm is a complex of modern and traditional agricultural buildings with original farm workers cottages.
- 3.2. Policy EC3 requires developments take advantage of topography and other landscape features and forms part of an existing farm complex. For the purpose of this section we are assessing the development against these policy requirements.
- 3.3. The proposed development is to provide four agricultural buildings for the rearing of livestock. The proposal is consistent with the policies and objectives of the development plan which demonstrates that there is an acceptance that agricultural diversification has a continuing role in the rural area.
- 3.4. The proposed development lies to the north of the existing Cinders Farm buildings. The site is arable land which is bound by mature hedgerows to the north-west, and a public footpath along the western boundary. This is therefore a suitable location for the development acting as an extension and diversification of the existing farm and business operations at the site.
- 3.5. Development at the site will contribute to economic diversification at the existing Cinders Farm. Agricultural development is supported by policy EC3 where it is not detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment or supporting landscape. The principle of development for the poultry farm at this location is acceptable given the existing use at the site.
- 3.6. The proposed site is low lying and well contained visually by existing topography, trees and hedgerows. Whilst the site is more open to the north, the cumulative effects of trees and hedgerows in the local landscape helps to limit the degree and extent of visibility as distances increase. The proposed sheds will therefore be well screened within the wider open countryside. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment chapter of the ES sets this out in more detail and the Design and Access Statement includes a section on the overall screening effect of the proposed landscaping.
- 3.7. The application site is located near to visible signs of human activity and development including the A483/A539 and several working farmsteads and overhead powerlines to the east. There is evidence in the surrounding area of a settled working landscape. Therefore, there is no real sense of or loss of remoteness or tranquillity. The site therefore is considered capable of accommodating the proposed poultry development.
- 3.8. The proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement measures will enable the development to be integrated into the landscape in a way that is appropriate to the character of the landscape. The Landscape and Visual impact Assessment chapter of the ES concludes that the development would have a significance impact on the character of the application site, the immediate adjoining countryside or the wider landscape.

4. Environmental Effects

- 4.1. Local Policy requires that development does not result in a detrimental impact on the environment or surrounding landscape. The Environmental Statement reports the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment and this is interpreted in light of the policy requirements in the following sections.
- 4.2. Further Paragraph 7.6.5. of PPW confirms that the Council is required to adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices.

Location

- 4.3. The application site lies to the north west of the existing Cinders Farm and is accessible from the farm via an unclassified road which connects to the A539 to the south. The site is a greenfield site which does not contain any existing buildings and which once developed would not form part of the existing farmstead.
- 4.4. Nevertheless, the development will be designed to take advantage of the existing topographical landscaping features where present and will include landscaping mitigation and enhancements.
- 4.5. The proposed site will ensure an appropriate separation distance from the existing farm to ensure biosecurity of the farm and reduce the risk of infection from other farmsteads including cattle, and areas of open water. Nevertheless, the site is close enough for operational purposes and administration.
- 4.6. No alternative sites are considered appropriate, the development in this location will support the needs of the existing farm to diversify. The site is a sustainable location.

Highways

- 4.7. Access to the site is to be obtained from the existing unclassified road. The level of traffic movements which are anticipated are not deemed significant. Within the wider highways network these should not result in detrimental impacts to highway safety. The A539 is considered capable of accommodating the proposed highway movements anticipated from the proposed development.
- 4.8. The development will upgrade the existing access at the site with an appropriate hardwearing surface suitable for HGV use and includes improvement to the highway including improvement to the junction of the A549 with the minor road and the addition of two passing places. These improvements will benefit all road users.

Residential amenity

- 4.9. Operations at the site are to be controlled through an Environmental Permit. This permit controls all activities on site that have potential to produce emissions to land, air or water. In granting an Environmental Permit Natural Resources Wales will conclude that the site is capable of being managed in such a way as to avoid or minimise pollution (pollution includes any offence to a human sense).
- 4.10. The site will be audited by officers of Natural Resources Wales twice per year in order to ensure that the site is managed in accordance with the conditions of the Environmental Permit.

- 4.11. The Environmental Statement has considered the effects of odour and noise on population in the local area WSP found that with appropriate mitigation no significant noise effects would occur. AS Modelling Data found that no significant odour effects would occur.
- 4.12. Notwithstanding this the Environmental Permit will require the site to adhere to noise and odour management plans, updated on a regular basis to ensure best available practice is adhered to, and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 4.13. The site does not contain any listed buildings. The heritage chapter of the ES concludes that there will be no impact upon the setting of any listed buildings.
- 4.14. The archaeology chapter concludes that there are significant impacts on Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The site itself will be subject to earth works and therefore pre-commencement works controlled via planning condition are recommended to ensure that the satisfactory arrangements are made for the investigation, retrieval and recording of any possible archaeological remains.

Visual Amenity

- 4.15. This type of agricultural development has been considered acceptable elsewhere within the County and is expected within this countryside location.
- 4.16. The proposal result in additional hedgerow planting and management, boundary tree planting, woodland creation and rough grassland.
- 4.17. The existing hedgerows nevertheless, help to soften the outline of the buildings from the southern, northern and eastern directions. The location of the proposed development is considered suitable as it takes advantage of existing landscaping features and topography.
- 4.18. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment chapter of the ES concludes that there are no significant effects on visual amenity as a result of the proposal.
- 4.19. The development is therefore considered to have no adverse impact on landscape character of the site or surrounding area, and therefore accords with Policy EC3 of the Wrexham UDP (2005).

Ecology

- 4.20. The Ecology Assessment chapter concludes that the Proposal has been designed to avoid or reduce the significance of ecological impacts. Net gain of habitat and positive impacts are anticipated with respect to hedgerows, grassland, bats, great crested newt and breeding birds, through the integrated design and mitigation measures that form part of the Proposal. The habitats retained and created within the Site will be managed positively to deliver biodiversity benefits in the long-term.

Sustainable Drainage

- 4.21. The development incorporates on site surface water attenuation from French drains and soakaways. A sustainable drainage design will be detailed to ensure that the increase in hard surfacing does not increase the risk of flooding off site. The design will be sufficient to attenuate surface water flow from the site to green-field run-off from a 6-hour storm duration.

5. Benefits

- 5.1. The development will provide benefits which include the three dimensions of sustainable development; economic, environmental and social.

Economic

- 5.2. The proposed poultry farm operation will provide opportunities for agricultural employment. While the on-site employment amounts to an additional full-time worker plus a part time worker, the indirect employment amounts to providing sufficient additional employment for circa 43 FTE employees. The Socio-economic benefit statement accompanying the planning submission provides further details.
- 5.3. Additional employment will be created during the construction phase of the development. Whilst these will only be temporary, it contributes towards supporting full-time construction jobs within the surrounding area. Further, at varying points of the works, additional jobs will be created such as cleaning and preparation of the site for the next crop cycle.
- 5.4. The proposal accords with the requirement of Planning Policy Wales to support economic growth and paragraph 7.2.2 which requires economic considerations to be given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process.
- 5.5. The development will allow the diversification of the existing Cinders Farm to include the production of birds in efficient modern sheds. The proposal provides greater resilience to the existing business enabling them to remain competitive within the local market.

Social

- 5.6. As previously mentioned the proposal will increase the number of and range of employment opportunities for local residents. The proposed new employment includes opportunities for younger generations, helping to retain them within the local area. The scheme would also help to support local facilities and services, through the retention of a youthful population.
- 5.7. The development supports the objectives of the government to retain a skilled diverse workforce in rural areas, thus supporting productivity and competition.
- 5.8. There is also a rising demand for poultry within the UK, which this proposal will help to supply.

Environmental

- 5.9. The development represents investment into modern farming and food production which can help to secure more sustainable sources of food production. The proposal supports home grown produce reducing our reliance on imports, and reducing our carbon footprint.
- 5.10. The proposed development will be supported by a new biomass boiler. The boiler will use local timber produced on the applicant's land holding to heat and create electricity for both the units themselves and which can be exported to the national distribution network. Therefore, making the development highly energy efficient.
- 5.11. The design of the units, has also taken into account maximum solar gain, to make efficient use of natural daylight, thus reducing the need for energy consumption. The modern building will be well insulated in order to reduce heat loss and building inefficiencies.
- 5.12. The scheme supports the Governments objectives of creating a low carbon economy.

- 5.13. Net gain of habitat and positive impacts are anticipated with respect to hedgerows, grassland, bats, great crested newt and breeding birds, through the integrated design and mitigation measures that form part of the Proposal. The habitats retained and created within the Site will be managed positively to deliver biodiversity benefits in the long-term.

6. Summary and conclusion

- 6.1. The proposal seeks the diversification of the existing business at Cinders Farm. The development thus contributes towards economic development which is supported by both local and national planning policy.
- 6.2. The development amounts to sustainable development which contributes towards meeting the growing demand for poultry in the UK and which helps to reduce the national carbon footprint from food imports.
- 6.3. The development is of an appropriate design, scale and layout which takes account of environmental sustainability. It is located to ensure a viable operation can be maintained for the existing farm.
- 6.4. The proposed development will not impact on nearby local amenity, and has no significant adverse impacts on local ecology, landscape or heritage designations.
- 6.5. The development is subject to an Environmental Permit which ensures the continued management of the site and surrounding landscape in accordance with agreed principles. The development will therefore have no significant impact on local amenity.
- 6.6. There are clear economic, social and environmental benefits from the development which outweigh any material considerations. The development is therefore sustainable development which should be supported.
- 6.7. Agricultural diversification and development is supported by both national and local policies. Development of this nature is entirely appropriate in this countryside location.
- 6.8. The proposal has significant merit, and accords with policies of the development plan and national planning guidance, and is typical of this agricultural landscape.
- 6.9. It is therefore respectfully requested that the development is supported and planning permission granted.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Relevant National and Local Policies

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 9, November 2016

- 1.1. Paragraph 4.1.3 places a duty on public bodies that they must carry out sustainable development.
- 1.2. Paragraph 4.1.5 defines sustainable development in Wales:

“Sustainable development” means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

Acting in accordance with the sustainable development principles means that a body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’
- 1.3. Paragraph 4.6.3 sets the priorities for rural areas:

“... A thriving and diverse local economy where agriculture-related activities are completed by sustainable tourism and other forms of employment in a working countryside...”
- 1.4. Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can be best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access and habitat and landscape conservation. All new development should respect the character of the surrounding area and should be of appropriate scale and design. Paragraph 4.7.8.
- 1.5. Paragraph 4.10.1 states:

“...Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable...”
- 1.6. Paragraph 4.11.9 notes that the visual appearance of proposed development its scale, and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations.
- 1.7. Paragraph 7.1.1 defines for planning purposes economic development as development of land and buildings for activities that generate wealth, jobs and incomes. Paragraph 7.1.3 the planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development.
- 1.8. Paragraph 7.3.3 supports farm diversification in rural areas, irrespective of whether farms are served by public transport. While consideration should be given to adapting existing farm buildings, the provision of a sensitively designed new buildings on a working farm within existing farm complexes may be appropriate where a conversion opportunity does not exist.
- 1.9. Paragraph 7.5.1 requires development plans to include policies encouraging farm diversification and new rural development opportunities.

Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

- 1.10. The planning system has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. Paragraph 2.1.1.

- 1.11. Paragraph 3.1.2 supports:

“Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities, increase local economic prosperity and minimise the need to travel for employment. The Development plan should facilitate diversification of the rural economy by accommodating the needs of both traditional rural industrial and new enterprises, whilst minimising impacts on the local community and the environment...”

- 1.12. Paragraphs 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 support farm diversification where appropriate considering the nature and scale of the development and the impact on the local highway network.

“Small on-farm operations such as food and timber processing and food packing together with services (e.g. workshop facilities, equipment hire and maintenance) to other farms, sports and recreation services, and the production of non-food crops and renewable energy should be encouraged. Local planning authorities should, however, consider the nature and scale of activity that would be appropriate.”

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (2005)

- 1.13. Policy PS2 is a strategic policy which aims to ensure the broad location of development.

- 1.14. Policy GDP1 states that new development should:

“(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 locality...”

“(b) 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...”

“(c) Secure the development of sustainable communities through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area...”

- 1.15. Policy EC3 seeks to ensure that new agricultural buildings are sited as not to be materially detrimental in terms of its impact upon the environment and landscape. It seeks to direct new buildings towards existing farm complexes. Isolated new buildings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there is an essential agricultural need, and no reasonable alternative location for the development.

- 1.16. The supporting text notes that there is an understanding that farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive. However new development can cause problems where the development proposed is significantly large or in sensitive locations.

- 1.17. Policy T8 requires that all new development should provide, either on site or in close

proximity, parking provision in accordance with the Council's current parking standards.

- 1.18. Paragraph 4.1 of the UDP states that the Council will, from time to time issue supplementary planning guidance with the aim of encouraging high standards of development and design. Accordingly, Local Planning Guidance Notes 16 – Parking Standards and 17 -Trees and Development are relevant.
- 1.19. Policy EC4 supports development which does not result in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites. Policy EC13 requires that development does not result in an unacceptable adverse impact due to additional surface water run-off.

