

BOWLING BANK FARM

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR
CONVERSION OF EXISTING STABLES TO A CAFE,
SHOP AND BAR (COMPRISING CHANGE OF USE TO
MIXED A1 AND A3) AND PROVISION OF CAR PARKING,
LANDSCAPING AND OTHER ANCILLARY
DEVELOPMENT AT BOWLING BANK FARM,
WORTHENBURY**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

November 2020



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Mr Hopkins (the applicant) is proposing development (including change of use) on land within Bowling Bank Farm, Mulsford Lane, Worthenbury, Wrexham. The Proposed Development comprises the conversion of existing stables to a café (A3 use), shop (A1 use) and bar (A3 use) with an ancillary storage area, office and WC facilities. In addition, the provision of 2no. parking areas (providing a total of 31no. parking spaces), a package sewage treatment plants and an electrical connection kiosk would also be provided. Landscaping would be undertaken to provide outdoor seating areas and complement the existing trees and hedgerows.

1.1.2 The application site (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') is shown on Drawing 2316-03-002 and is 0.45 hectares in size.

1.2 The Site and Surroundings

1.2.1 Bowling Bank Farm is located within the administrative area of Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC). The Site is located to the east of Worthenbury village, approximately 7.4km south east of Wrexham. Bowling Bank Farm is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, south and east. Access is gained to the farm via a private access road taken from Mulsford Lane.

1.2.2 The farm as a whole comprises a main agricultural building, ancillary agricultural structures, extensive areas planted with a mixture of young trees including hazel, oak and beech access tracks and tracks formerly used as gallops. Mature trees and hedgerows also feature in the wider site and along the site boundaries, but are not located in close proximity to the proposed barn refurbishment.

1.2.3 The nearest residential properties to the stables are located approximately 35m west.

1.2.4 The Site is located within Flood Zone A.

1.3 Pre-application Advice

- 1.3.1 Prior to Mr Hopkins previously submitted a planning application for a larger area that incorporated glamping. This application was subsequently withdrawn and the current application has been prepared taking into account previous consultation responses and public consultation feedback.

1.4 Community Engagement

- 1.4.1 The Applicant previously undertook pre-application consultation for the larger glamping scheme as required by The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012.
- 1.4.2 However, the current application would not constitute a major development as the site area is less than 1 hectare and no new buildings over 1,000sqm are proposed. As such, formal pre-application consultation is not required for the Proposed Development

1.5 Planning History

- 1.5.1 As referenced above the Site was subject to a previous planning application (P/2019/0771) for conversion of the barn and provision of safari tents. This application was subsequently withdrawn in November 2019.
- 1.5.2 The WCBC online planning applications portal has been searched for applications at the site made within the last 5 years.
- 1.5.3 Planning permission P/2016/1174 was granted on 3rd April 2017 for the 'Erection of New Timber Stables with Attached Store Room for Feed, Bedding and Horse Tack' at the site.
- 1.5.4 An application (Reference P/2018/0639) for prior approval concerning a proposed agricultural building was approved by WCBC on 25th September 2018.
- 1.5.5 Retrospective planning permission (Reference P/2018/0664) was sought in August 2018 for an access track leading from Mulsford Lane in to the Site and was granted on 5th November 2018.
- 1.5.6 In addition to the above applications which have been made in the last 5 years, planning permission P/2012/0188 is also considered relevant. Planning permission P/2012/0188 was granted on 11th June 2012 and granted consent for the 'Change of use of agricultural building for bottling and packaging of mineral water'. Despite the application being granted, there was notable local

objection to application P/2012/0188. These objections related to issues such as traffic impact, the bottling plant being less required for the area than a shop or public house, contamination and land stability issues relating to a proposed borehole, and light pollution. The Proposed Development would not give rise to issues related to the concerns raised on application P/2012/0188 and would provide the village of Worthenbury with the local amenities of a shop, café and bar that was suggested as the time of the earlier application.

2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1.1 The Proposed Development comprises the following elements:

- the conversion of an existing stables to a bar, café, shop and ancillary office, storage and WC facilities;
- the provision of 2no. main parking areas (regularisation of the existing yard areas to the north and south of the stables);
- the installation of 1no. sewage package treatment plants;
- the installation of a District Network Operator kiosk;
- landscaping;
- utility connections; and
- external lighting.

2.1.2 The proposal would require change of use of part of the existing stable to a combination of A1 and A3 uses to allow for the use of the existing stables as a bar, café and shop. 2.

2.1.3 The Proposed Development would offer amenities to the village of Worthenbury through sustainable rural diversification. The Proposed Development would bring a vacant building back into use and all aspects of the Proposed Development have been designed so that they would integrate sympathetically into the rural landscape. It is considered that the amenity of Worthenbury and the cohesion of the community would be enhanced through the proposed shop, café and pub. A loyalty scheme would be offered to local residents for use of the bar and café.

Design

- 2.1.4 The stables would be refurbished and re-clad with timber to the walls and re-roofed with insulated profiled steel cladding to improve the appearance of the barn and ensure it is fit for purpose. Details of the proposed materials are provided on Drawing 2316-03-008.
- 2.1.5 Parking spaces would be provided in two areas, one to the north-east of the stables and one to the south. These parking areas will provide parking for visitors to the café/shop/bar. Three electric vehicle charging points would be provided (to meet the requirement set by Planning Policy Wales 10 that a minimum of 10% of parking spaces in new non-residential should provide electric vehicle charging points).
- 2.1.6 A sewage package treatment plants would be installed to the north-east of the stables and treated water would discharge to an existing ditch within the ownership of the Applicant. Any discharge would be regulated by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The treatment plants have been sized to accommodate the maximum number of users of the shop/café/bar facilities. The dimensions of each treatment plant would be approximately 6.4m in length, 2.9m width and 3.2m in height. The treatment plant would be installed mainly below ground with a plastic access lid and control panel installed above ground level.
- 2.1.7 The District Network Operator kiosk is approximately 2.4m in length, 0.8m wide and 1.5m high would house electrical connection equipment. This structure would be located adjacent to the western boundary of the site and would be a brick structure with a waterproof roof.
- 2.1.8 Landscaping including the planting of trees and grass seeding would be provided to enhance outdoor seating areas.
- 2.1.9 External lighting would be directed away from site boundaries / on-site linear features. The majority of lighting would be of the Passive Infra-Red type attached to the building, set on a short timer and orientated towards the ground and away from the site boundary..

Access

- 2.1.10 The Proposed Development would be accessed via an existing access into the Site off Mulsford Lane. The Site could be accessed by cars, pedestrians and cyclists. 31no. car parking spaces would be available in the main parking areas, including 3no. bays to mobility standard.

Hours of Opening

- 2.1.11 The proposed café and shop would be open between the hours 9am until 4pm. The proposed bar would be open between the hours of 6pm and 10pm.

3.0 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

3.1 Landscape

The Special Landscape Area Designation

- 3.1.1 The Site is located just within a Special Landscape Area (as recognised in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011), and would remain within the extent of this designation following the review process carried out to inform the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan (2013 - 2028). Current planning policy relating to SLAs (UDP Policy EC5) is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, high standards of landscaping and design, and minimising impacts from distant viewpoints. The UDP does not provide any information setting out reasons why particular areas are considered worthy of SLA designation.

- 3.1.2 As part of the evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan, the document Special Landscape Areas Study¹ was prepared. This provided a review of the existing SLAs within Wrexham, in accordance with current national planning requirements and guidance, and identifies proposed revised boundaries and a statement of value and significance for each SLA within Wrexham.

The document identifies that the Site is located within the boundaries of proposed SLA 005: The Maelor, close the northern edge of this SLA. The summary description of SLA 005 is as follows: *“There are elements of estate parkland farming and an attractive mix of small to medium sized field parcels with frequent woodland blocks and copses and a high incidence of field and*

¹ Wrexham County Borough Council, 2017. EBNB03 Special Landscape Areas Study

mature hedgerow trees (predominantly oaks). The area has an intimate and settled feel to it reinforced by the small field pattern, winding network of country lanes and low proportion of out of scale or modern built development. The area bears a strong visual link in terms of landscape type, pattern, vegetation cover and appearance with the North Shropshire and Cheshire Plain, but it is the frequency of field ponds and high incidence of mature hedgerow trees combined with the rich archaeological/medieval heritage that belies the areas true character and distinct identity”².

The document identifies the following ‘special valued landscape qualities and features of key importance to planning policy and landscape management’:

“Development and management proposals in the SLA and within its landscape setting should take account of the following special valued landscape qualities:

- *An important historical, archaeological and cultural landscape that is vulnerable to changes in farming practice – conserve historical character;*
- *Conversion of farm buildings and diversification of traditional farmland – potentially visually and historically damaging;*
- *Effects of economic diversification and recreation in the countryside. The area is perceived as an attractive and unspoilt agricultural area with attractive, traditional and characterful villages and farmsteads;*
- *Biodiversity management and enhancements - Hedgerow and hedgerow tree conservation and restoration;*
- *Maintain traditional land use and management – encourage traditional land management techniques;*
- *Enhance biodiversity and habitats types – improve age range in vegetation cover”³.*

3.1.3 The Site is largely wooded. It is atypical of proposed SLA 005, which largely comprises farm fields and boundary hedgerow vegetation.

² *Ibid*, page 69

³ *Ibid*, page 70

The Proposed Development and the Special Landscape Area Designation

- 3.1.4 The Proposed Development includes works to the existing stables and barn, which would improve the appearance of this somewhat dilapidated structure and would therefore contribute positively to the local character and visual amenity of the SLA.
- 3.1.5 The existing building is of no architectural merit and does not provide any wider positive contribution to the special qualities of the SLA referenced above.
- 3.1.6 The proposed main car parking areas would occupy a small area of the Site and would be located on what are existing areas of hard standing located either side of the existing stables. Existing hedge vegetation to the south and new planting to the north would enclose the car parking areas. Presently, views toward the proposed car parking are available from both north and south, but following the implementation of the new landscaping and changes to the management of the existing hedge to allow this to grow taller, visibility would reduce over time and cars parked at the Site would be well screened.
- 3.1.7 Overall, the Proposed Development would not have a detrimental effect upon the Special Landscape Area designation, and indeed would integrate sympathetically into the rural environment and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the SLA designation through the renovation of an existing dilapidated building. In relation to the special qualities and management guidelines for proposed SLA 005, the Proposed Development would not adversely affect any of these.

3.2 Ecology

- 3.2.1 No statutory or non-statutory designations have been identified within 1km of the Site. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the area previously proposed for glamping was undertaken in 2018 and bat survey of the barn was also undertaken in.
- 3.2.2 The site of the Proposed Development would not impact of any of the wider ecology of the site to the west and would be limited to the surfaced area around the barn, the stables and barn itself and a grassed area to the east. There would not be any impacts of the areas identified as more sensitive in the previous reports.

3.2.3 Environmental DNA sample testing was conducted on significant bodies of standing water within 250m of the previous application area in 2018. This survey identified Great Crested Newts to be present in 2 of the 9 waterbodies sampled. Both ponds are remote from the proposed development at distance >200m from the barn. Notwithstanding, this separation distance and suboptimal habitats surrounding the existing stable and bar strict Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM's) would be followed with regard to GCN and this is deemed sufficient to mitigate any potential impacts upon amphibians during conversion of the stables and barn.

3.2.4 The stables and barn were surveyed for bats (see Appendix A) and the findings of this survey are summarised below:

'The application site, set within a rural environment, consists of an L-shaped barn and stables (B1) surrounded by disturbed ground and pasture within the wider landscape.

B1 is deemed to offer 'negligible' bat roosting opportunity owing to a lack of evidence suggesting use by bats (such as droppings, feeding remains, urine stains etc.) and features deemed suitable for roosting bats.

No further bat surveys are required on B1.

A minimum of one (1) Schwegler 2F bat box is recommended to be installed within the development footprint, either to a mature tree or existing building.

No bird nests were observed during the survey.

A minimum of one (1) Schwegler 1B bird box is recommended to be installed within the development footprint, either to a mature tree or existing building.

No concerns are evident regarding invasive species on site.

No further surveys are deemed necessary'

3.2.5 The suggested bat and bird boxes would be provided on mature trees to the east within land owned by the applicant.

3.2.6 The PEA recommends that any artificial lighting during and post-development is to be directed away from site boundaries/ on site linear features and all future

external lighting will be of the Passive Infra-Red type, set on a short timer and orientated towards the ground.

3.2.7 The PEA did not identify any field signs indicating current use of the Site by badgers.

3.2.8 No evidence of invasive species was identified in the glamping area.

3.2.9 Subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures described above, no detrimental effects regarding protected/notable species are considered likely to arise.

3.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

3.3.1 The Site is located within Flood Zone A and not at risk of flooding. The proposed parking areas and paving around the building would increase the amount of impermeable surface at the Site. These areas would drain to swales and discharge to ditches in a sustainable drainage system. As such, no issues with regard to surface water drainage are anticipated to arise from the Proposed Development. It is suggested that the details of the final SUDS drainage scheme could be secured through a suitable worded condition.

3.3.2 Foul sewerage from the converted stables would be treated by a sewage package treatment plant. Clean treated water from the plant would be discharged to adjacent ditches within the Applicant's land ownership and this would be registered with Natural Resources Wales. As such, foul sewage would be dealt with on Site without any need for connections to the mains sewer network.

3.4 Transport

3.4.1 The Wrexham County Borough Council Highways Department consultation responses to the previous application and subsequent Highways Technical Notes have informed the design of the site entrance. The Highways Technical Note is provided at Appendix B and any reference to the previously proposed glamping development should be ignored.

3.4.2 There are a variety of walking routes in the area that would encourage trips on foot. The local highway network is lightly trafficked and therefore presents an attractive / safe network of lanes to walk along, where it is necessary to do so.

- 3.4.3 The scheme is compliant with the maximum car parking standards set out in WCBC's Local Planning Guidance Note 16.
- 3.4.4 The trip-generating potential of the scheme has been estimated with reference to suitable trip rates from the industry-standard TRICS database. The calculations demonstrate that the traffic generating potential of the scheme is relatively low. In the weekday AM peak hour, the scheme is expected to generate only 2 two-way trips, whilst in the PM peak, 7 two-way trips are forecast. Volumetrically, this equates to only 1 additional vehicle movement every half an hour in the AM peak and around one additional movement every 10 minutes in the PM peak. It is expected that this would be imperceptible to local residents or in terms of its impact on the local highway network.
- 3.4.5 Having regard to the above, it is therefore concluded that there can be no highways or transport reasons to resist granting planning permission.

Heritage

- 3.4.6 The nearest listed building is Bowling Bank Farm House and the attached range to the west, located approximately 30m to the south-west of the site. Frog Lane Cottage (east) and Frog Lane Cottage (west) are Grade II listed cottages located approximately 170m and 200m north respectively from the existing barn/stables. The site is not located within the Worthenbury Conservation Area.
- 3.4.7 The proposed works to the existing stables/barn would result in this structure being 'tidied-up' and would offer a visual improvement which could benefit the aforementioned listed buildings. Bowling Bank Farm House and is separated from the stables and barn by mature trees and vegetation.
- 3.4.8 In light of the above, no adverse impacts on the heritage significance of Bowling Bank Farm House, Frog Lane Cottage (east) and Frog Lane Cottage (west) are anticipated.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY APPRAISAL

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section undertakes an appraisal of the Proposed Development in the context of the current extant and emerging planning policy framework.

4.2 Planning Policy Context

The Statutory Development Plan

- 4.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (September 2004) and paragraph 1.21 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10 – December 2018) requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2.2 In the case of the Proposed Development the relevant statutory Development Plan comprises the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, which was adopted on the 14th February 2005.

Material Considerations

- 4.2.3 Material considerations can include national planning policy, emerging development plan policies and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), as well as other land use and environmental factors which could influence the acceptability of development.
- 4.2.4 It is anticipated that such material considerations will include (but not be 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 10 (December 2018)
- Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)
- Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport (March 2007)

- Local Planning Guidance Note No.3 - Converting Rural Buildings (March 2006)
- Local Planning Guidance Note No.17 - Trees and Development (December 2012)
- Local Planning Guidance Note No.32 - Biodiversity & Development
- Wrexham County Borough Destination Management Action Plan 2018-2020 (2018)

4.3 Planning Policy Appraisal

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

- 4.3.1 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in February 2005. 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.
- 4.3.2 Policies contained within the statutory Development Plan that are considered of particular relevance have been identified and an appraisal of the Proposed Development in the context of these policies is provided below.

Policy PS2

- 4.3.3 Policy PS2 requires that development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
- 4.3.4 The elements of development proposed to the stables would enhance the overall appearance of the area through refurbishment of the stables and use of timber cladding and new doors and windows. Aesthetic improvements would be undertaken to the area surrounding the stable to provide an outdoor seating area and area for parking. Due to its size, the DNO kiosk would not affect the landscape character, open space or the quality of the natural environment. The package treatment plant would be buried and would only be apparent from the area immediately surrounding the plant where the PVC caps would be visible at ground level. As such, the package treatment plant would also not materially detrimentally affect these qualities. For the aforementioned reasons the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with Policy PS2.

Policy PS3

- 4.3.5 PS3 requires that development should use previously developed brownfield land in preference to the use of greenfield land. The Proposed Development of the community café, shop, and bar and parking areas would utilise brownfield land which is currently underused land adjacent to Worthenbury village. Existing areas of hardstanding and existing access tracks would be made use of within the development. For these reasons, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with Policy PS3.

Policy PS4

- 4.3.6 Policy PS4 requires that development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated within the existing transport network to reduce the overall need to travel and encourage use of alternatives to the car.
- 4.3.7 The Proposed Development is located outside the settlement boundary of Worthenbury. However, the Proposed Development comprises the refurbishment of an existing building adjacent to the settlement boundary to provide the facilities of a shop/café/pub for use by the local community. The stables would be fitted with a new roof and new cladding and its appearance would be complimentary to the surroundings. The provision of these facilities in this location would reduce the need for residents of Worthenbury to travel outside the village to access this type of facility and would therefore contribute to reducing their overall need to travel and add to community amenity.
- 4.3.8 As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in compliance with Policy PS4.

Policy GDP1

- 4.3.9 Policy GDP1 sets out the general requirements for all new development and aims to achieve a high standard of sustainable development. The improvements the existing building would provide a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings and would provide an attractive, safe, convenient and pleasant environment for people to visit.
- 4.3.10 The Proposed Development would not result in or be subject to flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination either on or off Site. The Proposed Development would contribute to the sustainability and well-being of the village

of Worthenbury through the provision of local facilities and local employment opportunities. It is considered that the Proposed Development meets the requirements set out in Policy GDP1.

Policy EC4

- 4.3.11 Policy EC4 sets out how development proposals should conserve woodlands, trees, hedgerow and other natural landscape features and confirms that development that results in the loss of or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland Sites will not be permitted. There would be no impacts on the existing trees, hedgerow and woodland features at Bowling Bank Farm. The Proposed Development also includes the planting of trees and hedgerows to enhance the immediate vicinity of the stables and barn. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be supported by Policy EC4.

Policy EC5

- 4.3.12 Policy EC5 concerns Special Landscape Areas and confirms the types of developments within these areas that will be subject to strict controls; rural enterprises are identified as an exception to these controls. Rural enterprises are not defined within the UDP. Technical Advice Note 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities) defines rural enterprises as:

“land related businesses including agriculture, forestry and other activities that obtain their primary inputs from the site, such as the processing of agricultural, forestry and mineral products together with land management activities and support services (including agricultural contracting), tourism and leisure enterprises”. (emphasis added)

- 4.3.13 In light of this definition, it is considered that a business which comprises the re-use of an existing rural building to provide facilities to a rural village constitutes a rural enterprise. As such, according to Policy EC5, the Proposed Development is not subject to the same strict controls other development within the Special Landscape Area would be subject to.
- 4.3.14 Nevertheless, due to the nature of the Proposed Development, and the existing nature and appearance of Bowling Bank Farm, it is considered that the proposals would improve the appearance of the stables and that this would provide wider benefits to the SLA.

4.3.15 The proposed main car parking areas would be enclosed by existing hedge vegetation to the south and new planting to the north. Over time, with the implementation of the new landscaping and allowing the existing hedgerow to grow taller, visibility would reduce over time and cars parked at the Site would be well screened.

4.3.16 As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with Policy EC5.

Policy EC6

4.3.17 The Site is not located within or near a site allocated under policy EC6. The Proposed Development would retain the existing trees and plants on the Site and would introduce additional tree planting to complement these existing features. Adverse effects regarding protected/notable species are considered unlikely to arise. In light of the above, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with Policy EC6.

Policy EC9

4.3.18 Policy EC9 places special requirements on development or redevelopment within the curtilage of listed structures. The Proposed Development is not located within the curtilage of any of the nearby listed buildings and as such the proposed development is considered to be neutral to this policy.

Policy EC12

4.3.19 Policy EC12 concerns development and flood risk. The Site is located within Flood Zone A and would not be at risk of flooding. The development would also not cause an increase in flood risk elsewhere due to the use of SuDS.

Policy PS11

4.3.20 Policy PS11 concerns biodiversity and encourages the improvement of the biodiversity value of sites. As set out in Section 3 above, a PEA was completed for the glamping area and identified that with the implementation of the recommended standard mitigation measures, adverse effects regarding protected/notable species are considered unlikely to arise.

4.3.21 The woodland on the wider site would be managed to promote its biodiversity value wherever possible and the operation of the proposed businesses would

support the landowner in achieving this aim. Enhancing the local biodiversity is a key facet of the long term management proposals for the site and improving biodiversity is seen as a way of enhancing the overall experience of visitors to the café, shop and bar. Information on species present on site and sensitivities/management activities will be communicated to the visitors as part of the overall sustainable visitor experience.

Policy S7

- 4.3.22 Policy S7 concerns retail outlets in the countryside. The proposed shop would be provided through the conversion of the existing stables which is located within open countryside. Policy S7 sets out the conditions that proposed retail development must satisfy in order to be permitted. The proposed shop meets all but one of these criteria: the criterion it would not comply with is to primarily sell goods or produce predominantly made or grown on the premises. However, the Applicant has already embarked on discussions with local producers, several of whom live in the local area, about the prospect of selling their products which include eggs, firewood and honey. As such, the Proposed Development would support local business and cottage industries and provide an outlet for local producers to sell their produce.
- 4.3.23 Overall, the supporting text to this policy recognises the contribution that small scale shops make to the quality of rural life and confirms that the policy seeks to address the decline in the number of shops in rural villages. The Proposed Development would provide an opportunity for a local shop to be provided in the village, supported by the complementary businesses of the proposed bar and cafe.
- 4.3.24 The proposed shop would contribute to addressing the aims set out in the supporting text to this policy by providing a local shop in a rural village that does not currently have one.

Policy E5

- 4.3.25 Policy E5 recognises that within some rural areas there is a need to “*provide employment, prevent the loss of services, and maintain a viable and balanced community*”. New employment development that would result in a loss of visual quality and landscape character and adversely affect agriculture will be resisted. The re-use and adaption of vacant buildings in the countryside can provide

opportunities for small businesses which can provide employment opportunities for local rural communities. The Proposed Development would provide employment opportunities through the re-use of existing stables without any adverse impact on the landscape character or visual amenity of the area. The re-use of the existing stables would improve the appearance of this structure so that it contributes positively to the local landscape character and visual amenity.

Statutory Development Plan Appraisal Conclusion

4.3.26 Based on the above appraisal there would be a degree of conflict between the Proposed Development and the policies concerning retail outlets in the countryside and new camping sites with the SLA. However, the Proposed Development would comply with all other relevant policies. When considered in the context of the points listed below, it is concluded that the Proposed Development would comply with the UDP when taken as a whole:

- the lack of, and need for, a village shop/café and bar in Worthenbury;
- there are currently under utilised buildings at Bowling Bank Farm;
- the positive contribution that the proposed changes to the stables would make to the local landscape character and visual amenity;
- there are existing clear areas within the woodland area of the farm;
- the tents would be well screened; and
- the glamping business is required to support the café, bar and shop businesses.

Material Considerations

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

4.3.27 Wrexham County Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough. The LDP was submitted for examination on 30th November 2018. However, at the time of writing this planning statement the plan has not been adopted.

4.3.28 The LDP is the Council's land use plan that, once adopted, 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.

- 4.3.29 The most relevant policies of the emerging plan are considered in the following paragraphs.

Policy R6

- 4.3.30 Policy R6 considers edge and out of centre retail development proposals and sets out criteria that such proposals must meet to be permitted. The proposed shop would be located adjacent to the village of Worthenbury and would be small in scale (26.9m² of shop floor space). The shop would play an important role in sustaining the village of Worthenbury through the provision of a local facility to meet retail needs and enhance the rural economy. The shop would be developed through the conversion of existing stables and would be easily accessible on foot from the village. The proposed shop would not cause any harm to the vitality, attractiveness or viability of any other retail centre as it would serve a local market and be supported by the café and bar.. The Proposed Development is considered to accord with Policy R6.

Policy NE3

- 4.3.31 Policy NE3 confirms that development will only be permitted where it would not cause unacceptable harm to trees, woodlands and hedgerows of significant public amenity, natural or cultural heritage value or those that provide important ecosystem services including mitigating the effects of climate change.
- 4.3.32 As set out above the stable and barn conversion would not impact any existing trees or adversely affect any heritage assets. New trees would also be provided as part of the Proposed Development and the wider area under the control of the applicant would be managed to enhance biodiversity value.
- 4.3.33 As such, the aims of this policy would be met by the Proposed Development.

Policy NE5

- 4.3.34 Policy NE5 concerns Special Landscape Areas and seeks to protect and enhance the character and quality of the particular landscape features for which the SLA has been designated.

- 4.3.35

- 4.3.36 As set out above the re-use and enhancement of an existing stables would improve the appearance of this structure and would therefore contribute positively to the local character and visual amenity.
- 4.3.37 The proposed car parking would be enclosed by existing hedge vegetation to the south and new planting to the north. Over time, with the implementation of the new landscaping and allowing the existing hedgerow to grow taller, visibility would reduce over time and cars parked at the Site would be well screened.
- 4.3.38 As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with this policy.

Policy NE6

- 4.3.39 Policy NE6 sets out the Council's requirements with regard to the treatment of waste water and river water quality. Foul water would be treated on Site using a sewage package treatment plant. There is not considered to be any conflict between the Proposed Development and Policy NE6.

Policy DM1

- 4.3.40 Policy DM1 concerns general development management considerations. The Proposed Development is not in conflict with Policy DM1.

Policy SP2

- 4.3.41 Policy SP2 directs new development to the settlement limits defined on the Proposals Map. The aim of this policy is to direct development to the most sustainable locations and to ensure that development meets the needs of the economy, environment and health. Although the Proposed Development would be located outside the settlement limits, the café, bar and shop aspects of the proposal involve the re-use of an existing building that is currently unoccupied.
- 4.3.42 The proposed café, bar and shop would provide facilities that are not currently available in the village and whilst there is a degree of conflict with Policy SP2, it is considered that the thrust of the policy would be met.

Policy SP9

- 4.3.43 Policy SP9 seeks to achieve economic growth and emphasise the role of the LDP to diversify the local economy and widen the economic base. The method

of delivering this is through four measures set out in the policy. One of these measures is: “*Maintaining and enhancing the County Borough's tourism, culture and leisure offer taking into account the unique character, local distinctiveness and heritage of the area and its context in the wider sub region*”. It is considered that the Proposed Development assists the aims of this policy by providing a destination for visitors to the area.

Policy SP16

- 4.3.44 Policy SP16 states that development will only be supported where it will conserve, protect and enhance cultural heritage assets, and where appropriate, their settings. The Proposed Development would not affect any cultural heritage asset or its setting and as such, is considered to be neutral to this policy.

Deposit Plan Appraisal Conclusion

- 4.3.45 Although there is a degree of tension with Policy SP2 the location of the development is considered appropriate due to its nature and scale and the positive contribution it would provide to the sustainability of the village of Worthenbury. The Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the Deposit Plan, when considered as a whole.

Local Planning Guidance Note No.3 Converting Rural Buildings

- 4.3.46 This guidance note explains the approach the council take towards dealing with proposals to change the use of and conversion of rural buildings. The guidance note emphasises that converted buildings should keep their original character. The existing stables and barn are of a utilitarian construction and are not particularly distinctive or attractive. The structure is in a poor state of repair. The proposed conversion of the existing barn would provide visual enhancement to the structure through the provision of a new roof and timber cladding. The conversion would be in accordance with the thrust of this guidance note.

Local Planning Guidance Note No.17 - Trees and Development (December 2012)

- 4.3.47 This guidance note amplifies Policy EC4 regarding the protection of trees and the importance of trees in development design. As set out above the Proposed Development would retain the existing trees and continue to manage and nurture the woodland that has been planted on the wider site owned by the

applicant. New trees would also be provided to complement the existing trees and hedgerows.

Local Planning Guidance Note No.32 - Biodiversity & Development

- 4.3.48 The guidance note amplifies UDP policies concerning nature conservation. As set out above there would be negligible effects on local biodiversity as a result of renovating the stables and barn. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with this guidance.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10 (December 2018)

- 4.3.49 Paragraph 2.12 advises that:

“the planning system is a very important policy, decision making and delivery mechanism. It should seek to maximise delivery of outcomes against all aspects of well-being/sustainable development, thus seeking to maximise contributions towards all of the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This can be achieved by adopting a placemaking approach”.

- 4.3.50 Chapter 4 of PPW concerns Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking and sets out the Key Planning Principles to enable the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act to be realised through land use planning. This chapter also identifies the national sustainable placemaking outcomes which should be used to inform the preparation of development plans and the assessment of development proposals. These outcomes are as follows:

- Creating and Sustaining Communities;
- Making Best Use of Resources;
- Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact;
- Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner; and
- Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments.

- 4.3.51 Paragraph 4.3.39 requires that *“Where car parking is provided for new non-residential development, planning authorities should seek a minimum of 10% of car parking spaces to have ULEV charging points”.*

- 4.3.52 Chapter 5 concerns Productive and Enterprising Places and paragraph 5.6.1 states:

“A strong rural economy is essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural communities. The establishment of new enterprises and the expansion of existing business is crucial to the growth and stability of rural areas”.

- 4.3.53 Paragraph 5.6.4 recognises that there are certain industries that cannot be accommodated within settlements. Paragraph 5.6.5 recognises that *“new businesses in rural areas are essential to sustain and improve rural communities”*.

- 4.3.54 Chapter 4 concerns Active and Social Places. Paragraph 4.3.40 states that:

“Local and village shops, and public houses provide an important role in the local community and their loss can have a detrimental impact, particularly in rural locations”.

- 4.3.55 Paragraph 4.3.41 states:

“In rural areas, planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to applications for conversion of suitable village properties to shops and for extensions to village shops designed to improve their viability. A positive approach should also be taken, subject to amenity considerations, to re-establishing public houses, especially in villages which have lost such provision. The lack of public transport in rural areas should not preclude small-scale retail or service development where this will serve local needs”.

- 4.3.56 The Productive and Enterprising Places theme (Chapter 5) of PPW recognises the development necessary for economic activity, including rural enterprise and tourism.

- 4.3.57 Paragraph 5.5.2 states that:

“The planning system encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, urban regeneration and social inclusion, while recognising the needs of visitors and those of local communities”.

- 4.3.58 Paragraph 5.5.3 states:

“In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. Here development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment”.

4.3.59 As set out previously, all aspects of the Proposed Development would be designed to a high standard in order to provide a high quality experience for visitors and ensure effects on the environment are minimal. These aspects are significant interests for the Applicant as they will encourage repeat business and contribute to the long-term viability of the development. The development would involve the re-use of an existing stables and use of an existing access. As such, the location of the development is considered to be sustainable and appropriate for the type of development proposed. It is not anticipated that the Proposed Development would give rise to unacceptable disturbance or other adverse effects.

4.3.60 The Applicant is seeking to make a significant long-term investment through the Proposed Development. There are currently no shops or café facilities in Worthenbury and the Proposed Development would address this and assist the economic activity of the rural area and the sustainability of the village. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be supported by PPW.

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

4.3.61 TAN 6 advises that:

“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”.

4.3.62 This note also considers the re-use and adaption of rural buildings and advises that in assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed for the building is acceptable in planning terms.

4.3.63 The Proposed Development would comprise a significant investment into a Site which is currently vacant. The investment would provide local facilities to the village and employment opportunities within this rural area of the borough. As set out in the above appraisal, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with local and national planning policy and therefore is considered to be acceptable in planning terms. As such, the Proposed Development is supported by TAN 6.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.3.64 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) is concerned with improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 4.3.65 The Act puts forward seven well-being goals which all public bodies listed in the Act (including Local Authorities) must work towards achieving. The seven goals are:
- A prosperous Wales;
 - A resilient Wales;
 - A healthier Wales;
 - A more equal Wales;
 - A Wales of cohesive communities;
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
 - A globally responsible Wales.
- 4.3.66 The Act requires that public bodies operate through a sustainable development process to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- 4.3.67 It is considered that the Proposed Development would contribute to the well-being goals set out in the Act in the following ways:
- The provision of flexible jobs in a rural location;
 - The provision of local amenities for an existing community which would improve its viability, sustainability and attractiveness;
 - The materials used in the development would be sustainably sourced wherever possible;
 - The Proposed Development would utilise an existing vacant building and would integrate sympathetically into the surrounding rural environment; and
 - The development of a sustainable tourism business which would encourage visitors to the local area, support the rural economy and encourage people to enjoy spending time outdoors.

- 4.3.68 In light of the above, the Proposed Development is in accordance with the principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Destination Management Action Plan Update (2018 - 20)

- 4.3.69 The Destination Action Plan covers the period to 2020. This document provides a strategic focus to the development and management of the visitor experience. The document identifies actions to shape the direction of the local tourism development.
- 4.3.70 The impact of tourism in Wrexham County Borough is significant, estimated to be worth approximately £116 million of direct and indirect expenditure in 2016. The provision of a café, bar and shop would attract visitors to Worthenbury and the surrounding area and enhance the overall tourism offering in this areas of Wrexham.
- 4.3.71 An appraisal of local and national planning policy has been completed. Overall, support exists for the Proposed Development which would re-use an existing agricultural building, support the rural economy, provide amenities to support the sustainability of the village of Worthenbury, and protect and enhance the character and quality of the Special Landscape Area.
- 4.3.72 The Proposed Development would be located outside the settlement boundary and within a Special Landscape Area. However, the Proposed Development comprises a rural enterprise which would integrate sympathetically into the rural environment and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the Special Landscape Area through the renovation of an existing dilapidated building.
- 4.3.73 The Proposed Development has been found to be in accordance with the main thrust of the relevant existing and emerging local planning policy.
- 4.3.74 PPW sets out the most up to date land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. The support for the Proposed Development provided by PPW is significant. PPW recognises the need for a strong rural economy, the importance of local village amenities, and the contribution that tourism can make to a healthy and diverse economy, rural diversification and social inclusion.
- 4.3.75 The plan period of the UDP expired in 2011 and the UDP does not provide the same level of support as PPW for development that would deliver these

benefits. PPW is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In light of the above, and until a new LDP is adopted, it is considered that PPW must be given significant weight in the determination of planning applications in the borough.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 An appraisal of local and national planning policy has been completed. Overall, support exists for the Proposed Development which would re-use an existing agricultural building, support the rural economy, provide amenities to support the sustainability of the village of Worthenbury, and protect and enhance the character and quality of the Special Landscape Area.
- 5.1.2 The Proposed Development would be located outside the settlement boundary and within a Special Landscape Area. However, the Proposed Development comprises a rural enterprise which would integrate sympathetically into the rural environment and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the Special Landscape Area through the renovation of an existing dilapidated building.
- 5.1.3 The Proposed Development has been found to be in accordance with the main thrust of the relevant existing and emerging local planning policy.
- 5.1.4 PPW sets out the most up to date land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. The support for the Proposed Development provided by PPW is significant. PPW recognises the need for a strong rural economy, the importance of local village amenities, and the contribution that tourism can make to a healthy and diverse economy, rural diversification and social inclusion.
- 5.1.5 The plan period of the UDP expired in 2011 and the UDP does not provide the same level of support as PPW for development that would deliver these benefits. PPW is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In light of the above, and until a new LDP is adopted, it is considered that PPW must be given significant weight in the determination of planning applications in the borough.
- 5.1.6 The Proposed Development is considered to have numerous benefits in terms of sustainability, as follows:

- it would utilise an under utilised stable and barn;
- it would support local businesses and cottage industries by providing them with an outlet through which to sell their produce;
- it would provide community amenities located within walking distance of residential properties;
- it would provide a visitor attraction and support the wider tourism offering in this part of Wrexham;
- it would contribute positively to the landscape and visual amenity;
- it would not give rise to adverse environmental impacts; and
- it would provide employment opportunities and contribute to the rural economy.

5.1.7 The Proposed Development has been considered in the context of the relevant local and national planning policy documents and guidance and has been found to be in accordance with these documents when considered as a whole. As such it is requested that planning permission is granted without delay.