



**PLANNING STATEMENT TO SUPPORT A
OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION, WITH
ACCESS MATTERS, FOR THE ERECTION OF
UP TO NINE DWELLINGS ON PREVIOUSLY
DEVELOPED LAND AND IN REPLACE OF A
LAWFUL COACH DEPOT**

AT

HAPPY DAYS COACHES

LITTLE GREEN

BRONINGTON

WHITCHURCH

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Happy Days Coaches Retirement Benefit Scheme

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supporting statement has been prepared and submitted by Halls Holdings Ltd on behalf of Happy Days Coaches Benefit Scheme.
- 1.2 This application is seeking Outline consent, to include access matters only, for the removal of existing buildings used in the connection with the Coach Depot, to be replaced with the erection of up to no.9 detached residential dwellings upon the existing footprint of the buildings and wider laid hardstanding curtilage, which is used for the parking, turning and manoeuvring of coaches/buses.
- 1.3 This statement is intended to assist in identifying the context of the proposed application, to include an assessment of how the proposed development accords with relevant national and local planning policies. It will also aim to set out any other material considerations that should be taken into consideration.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application is semi-regular in shape and measures approx. 0.385ha and is currently occupied by a coach depot. The majority of the site is laid to hardstanding with a handful of buildings. The site is used for the parking of coaches.
- 2.2 The site is within the existing line of development for Little Green, an identified recognisable settlement, with existing housing in both directions along Mill Road.
- 2.3 The site is bounded by a mix of treatments, including hedgerow, trees and fencing. The site is Fully contained within existing treatments and accessed via two large and wide access junctions off the classified highway.



3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 In order to fully understand the development context of the site in the preparation of this planning application, a full planning history search of the site has been undertaken:
- 3.2 P/2014/0916 – Erection of building for the storage of Coaches – GRANTED – January 30th 2015.
- 3.3 P/2014/0750 – Erection of replacement Bus Depot building – GRANTED – 1st December 2014

- 3.4 ENQ/2017/0079 – Residential development following demolition of existing commercial premises.
- 3.5 Whilst the above planning history is fairly limited, it is expected that the application site has additional planning history associated with its use as a commercial premise, but these are not shown on the Councils planning register for public viewing.
- 3.6 Nonetheless, the planning history confirms that the application site has an existing and lawful use for the storage and parking of coaches/buses, comprising a ‘bus depot’ and falling under a Sui Generis use class.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposal is seeking outline consent to establish the principle of residential development, to provide up to nine detached dwellings of varying form and type, in place of the existing buildings and upon the laid hardstanding used in connection with the existing Coach Depot.
- 4.2 Also included within this application, as being requested for determination, are matters of access associated with the proposed development. With the site currently concerning an existing commercial operation (coach/bus depot), there is adequate access off the serving highway. The site is currently served via two access points on either side of the western boundary, the proposed development will look to permanently close up the northern access point, with the proposed being served by only a single access point, utilising the existing southern access point on the western boundary.

5.0 PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 Planning Policy Wales

- 5.2 The Planning Policy Wales (PPW) was originally published in 2002 and is currently on its 11th Edition, being last revised February 2021 and sets out the planning policies of the Welsh Government, under which Local Planning Authorities prepare their Local Development Plans (LDPs). It is the principal and authoritative source of national planning policy.
- 5.3 The 11th Edition of PPW differs significantly to previous Editions in how it is structured, whereby the PPW has been revised to take account of the ‘Well-being of future Generations (Wales) Act 2015’.
- 5.4 The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- 5.5 Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In

settlement, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome.

5.6 PPW is supplemented by:

- Technical Advice Notes (TAN): detailed guidance in specific areas that supplement the policies set out in PPW. The relevant TANs to be referred to for the proposed development are as follows:
 - TAN 2: Planning and Affordable Housing
 - TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
 - TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
- Circulars: procedural guidance that interpret and explain a particular piece of legislation.
- Policy Clarification Letters: provide urgent clarification of policy or procedure.

5.7 PPW identifies that local planning authorities should therefore exercise their planning functions with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

5.8 Building Better Places (July 2020)

5.9 In July 2020, the Welsh Government issues the document Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures.

5.10 This document emphasises the importance for the consideration of health and well-being throughout the planning system of Wales.

5.11 The document sets out ways for which future development and the planning system must move forward following the significant impact that COVID-19 has had on communities. It emphasises the importance of creating homes that are life-long, adaptable, secure and affordable. The document states that we need to “...ensure we are building homes and neighbourhoods that are great places to live, with easy access to services and appropriate infrastructure and greenspace.”

5.12 The guidance also notes that COVID-19 has demonstrated that planning decisions can be undertaken quickly and effectively and continues to encourage this.

5.13 The National Development Framework

5.14 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Welsh Government to develop a National Development Framework (NDF). The Welsh Government is currently developing the first NDF and the final version of the NDF is due to be published in September 2020.

- 5.15 The NDF will set out a 20 year land use framework and be reviewed at least every five years. Unlike its predecessor, the Wales Spatial Plan, the NDF will have development plan status, meaning it can be a material consideration in planning decision and that all Strategic Development Plans and LDPs must be in conformity with it

5.16 Local Development Plan Policies

- 5.17 Within the administrative area of Wrexham County Borough, the Local Development Plan (LDP) is made up of a single core document: The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, adopted on the 14th February 2005.

- 5.18 The Council are currently in the preparation of a Local Development Plan, which will replace the current adopted UDP – a requirement introduced since 2004, with all UDPs being gradually phased out in support of the shorter and more concise LDP which will set out the local planning authority's (LPA) long-term land use and development strategy.

- 5.19 The UDP comprises two parts:

- Part 1 – 'The Strategy' which outlines the LPAs broad intention for development in the area and provides a framework for the more specific policies and proposals;
- and,
- Part 2 – 'Specific Policies' which expand on the strategic vision for the county and provide detailed guidance for the development and other use of land.

5.20 The Unitary Development Plan

- 5.21 The broad location of development

- 5.22 PS1 – New development for housing, employment and community services will be directed to within defined settlement limits/employment areas.

- 5.23 PS2 – Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

- 5.24 PS3 – Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly so where greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2, or 3a quality.

5.25 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.

5.26 PS5 – Provision will be made for the development of 5775 dwellings between 1996 and 2011.

5.27 GDP1: Development Objectives

In addition to the specific land use or locational policies of the Plan, all development proposals must satisfy certain general requirements, the regulation of which is a key function of the planning system.

5.28 EC2: Agricultural Land

Development on agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a will only be permitted if it does not lead to the irreversible loss of agricultural land.

5.29 H2: Residential Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements

5.30 Residential development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to compliance with GDP1.

5.31 Emerging Policy

5.32 The Council are working on their Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2013 – 2028. When adopted LDP2 will replace the current UDP.

5.33 The LDP was submitted to the Welsh Government and PINS for examination in November 2018. Initial hearing sessions were carried out in Autumn 2019 and several further sessions were carried out in February and March 2020 following the receipt of the Inspectors post-hearing letter. Given delays relating to the current pandemic, it is not anticipated that the Inspectors report will be issued no later than 30th December 2020.

5.34 Whilst the emerging LDP is at an advanced stage it is not anticipated it will be adopted until 2021, therefore the proposed development will be assessed against the current UDP policies. The emerging LDP should be afforded little to no weight.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The application site lies to the north of Bronington, within a named settlement of Little Green – a rural settlement that follows a very much linear development along Mill Road, leading from the A525 down to Bronington.
- 6.2 Little Green, although not an identified settlement under the UDP, it is nonetheless a recognisably named settlement, sign-posted off the A525.



- 6.3 The application site lies some 1km from the identified rural village of Bronington (UDP H1), of which is able to provide services/facilities for day-to-day needs. Although there are no pedestrian provisions along this stretch of highway, there are large soft verges, which would allow for safe walking to the settlement. Additionally, there are public Rights of Way which would allow for safe walking to Bronington – BRO/10 and BRO/11.
- 6.4 Nonetheless, it is fully recognised that the application site lies outside of any identified settlement and its development boundary, resultantly lying in the countryside for planning policy purposes.
- 6.5 The Council is unable to demonstrate that it has a 5 year housing land supply, contrary to PPW which requires LPAs to ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5 year housing land supply. Where this is the case, the need to increase supply should be given considerably weight when dealing with planning applications provided that the development would otherwise accord with both national and local policy.
- 6.6 The UDP was adopted in February 2005 and its plans period runs from 1996 – 2011. Given its primacy, adopted status and that most of its policies are considered to be generally up-to-date, a degree of weight is still attached to the relevant adopted policies. However, this must be considered against the fact that the UDP has

technically expired and in light of TAN1 guidance and that the council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.

6.7 Previously developed land

6.8 The application site concerns a lawful and existing coach depot, made up of large areas of hardstanding used for the storage and parking of coaches/buses, with a range of buildings – a large central repair workshop and smaller ancillary office/plant buildings on the southern boundary.

6.9 The site first appears on historic mapping from 1975, where the main central building is plotted and marked as 'Depot'. This confirms that the site has been in use for a commercial use, as a depot, from its establishment and the site has evolved and expanded as vehicles enlarged and in-line with its occupiers.

6.10 The application site, the buildings and all areas of hardstanding are therefore regarded as previously developed land – i.e. brownfield land, in accordance with Section 3 of Planning Policy Wales.

6.11 Siting, scale and design

6.12 The proposal is sought in outline, with only access matters up for consideration. Scale, layout and appearance are all reserved for subsequent approval.

6.13 Nonetheless, the application is made for the erection of up to 9 detached dwellings, all with their own private amenity and parking spaces. An indicative plan accompanies this application to show a suggested layout and the site capable of providing the applied for amount of development, whilst ensuring most efficient use of the land is made.

6.14 The dwellings are shown in a largely linear formation, occupying either side of the central estate road. This configuration reflects the existing built pattern, whereby the residential properties to both the north and south of the site are in a similar linear and highway fronting position.

6.15 A table of the upper and lower scales of the dwellings has been provided on the indicative plan and show all dwellings to be two storeys in height. However, those dwellings directly fronting the highway have a greater range in height owing to their highway fronting presence, whereby these could be of a lesser height than those to the rear to ensure the visual impacts of the street scene are not adversely impacted.

6.16 It is expected that all dwellings will be built of local materials, with sympathetic detailing and appearance, similar to those dwellings within the wider Little Green settlement.

6.17 Highways and access matters

6.18 The site is currently accessed via two existing access points off the classified highway, Mill Road. The two access points have wide splays and good visibility commensurate to the highway conditions and the vehicle usage – for use by coaches and buses.

6.19 The northern access junction:



6.20 The southern access junction:



- 6.21 In addition, there is a large laid passing place adjacent the site and in-between the highway. This is outside the ownership of the applicant and provides a double-width carriageway at the point of entry:



- 6.22 The proposal is to close-up the existing northern access point and have the site accessed via the existing southern access only. In providing only a single point of entry, this will improve highway safety through removing unnecessary access junctions. The southern access junction is the preferred as it is afforded considerable visibility in both directions.
- 6.23 From the single point of entry, the site will be served by a single estate road to which each unit will be gain their access, leading onto a private laid parking and turning area. Each plot is sufficiently sized to provide adequate parking provisions, with a defined turning head at the northern end of the estate road, allowing vehicles to manoeuvre and exit the site in a forward gear.
- 6.24 Owing to the fall-back position of the access point in lawful use for a coach depot, the existing access is considered adequate and satisfactory for the proposed development. The removal of frequent large vehicles off the network will also improve highway safety for all users.
- 6.25 Public Transport links**
- 6.26 The site lies approx. 950m north of Bronington, of which is accessed via Mill Road. There is an extensive rights of way network in the locality, of which provide pedestrian access to Bronington.
- 6.27 In addition, the site is on the route of the regular bus service 146 – Wrexham to Whitchurch -, with a bus stop directly adjacent the site. There are 4 bus services daily from Whitchurch to Wrexham. <https://bustimes.org/services/146-wrexham-whitchurch-3>
- 6.28 The designated rural village of Bronington has all the day-to-day services and facilities for future occupants: a village store, a primacy school and church.
- 6.29 Drainage and Flooding**
- 6.30 The application site lies in Flood Zone 1, where there is are no flood risks constraints to development.
- 6.31 Ecology and biodiversity matters**
- 6.32 The application site is predominantly laid in hardstanding and used as a coach depot. There is an area of scrub land to the north and hedgerows along some of the boundaries.
- 6.33 There are no nearby sites of ecological importance, with the nearest being Llyn Bedydd Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI), located over 1.2km away to the south west.
- 6.34 The proposed development will have low impact on ecology and will be able to improve the local biodiversity through enhanced landscaping and introducing greater

green spaces than is currently available on-site, with improvements to the local fauna through bat and bird boxes.

- 6.35 There are no habitats on the site which class as UK priority habitat and the site is therefore not considered to be an important ecological feature. The surrounding land is semi-improved grassland or arable farming land and surrounding hedgerows are all common species.

6.36 Contaminated Land

- 6.37 There is clear support for the full and effective re-use of land and sites which have been previously development. The re-use of land helps to revitalise built-up areas and reduces the need to use new sites outside of these areas, thus assisting the protecting and safeguarding the countryside. However, there is a realisation that a number of these previously developed sites may be the subject of contaminated land.

- 6.38 Typical contaminated sites include: old sewerage works; land used for industrial processed; and, landfill sites. Contamination is a material planning considerations and the best way of minimising any associated risks is to ensure that areas of potentially contaminated sites are identified early on in the planning process.

- 6.39 The proposed development is a lawful coach depot. The site is entirely laid in hardstanding and used for the parking and storage of coaches and buses when not in-use. There are no storage fuel tanks on the site and only a handful of buildings. There



Figure 1 Phot showing internal of large central metal building.

is large central metal framed and clad building; however, this internally this lies clear and used for more storage:



Figure 2 Photo showing external laid hardstanding and coach parking.

- 6.40 The other buildings comprise of an office/reception building, which is a temporary build structure and easily removed. Also a small metal clad general store building, which is too small to be used for any vehicle storage and easily removed.
- 6.41 On the above basis, the site is not considered to have any contamination risks and the redevelopment of this site would not pose any health and safety concerns to future occupants.
- 6.42 Where there is only a suspicion that the site might be contaminated or where the evidence suggests there is only slight contamination, planning permission may be granted but conditions attached to make clear that development will not be permitted to start until further clarification has been sought.

6.43 Public Rights of Way

- 6.44 There is a single public footpath (BRO/ 16) that runs through the site, from the classified highway to the east and exiting the site along the southern boundary and continuing up the private drive serving Ingleside (Figure X):



Figure 3 Public Rights of Way Definitive Map (Source: <https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/service/public-rights-way-definitive-map>)

- 6.45 Planning proposals for the development of land affecting the public rights of way give rise to two matters of concern: the need for adequate consideration of the rights of way before the decision is taken; and the need, once planning permission has been granted, for the right of way to be kept open and unobstructed.
- 6.46 Most outline planning applications do not contain sufficient information to enable the effect of any right of way to be addressed. Consequently, such matters are usually dealt with during consideration of the matters reserved under the planning permission for subsequent approval.
- 6.47 Wales Office Circular 32/92 sets out the information to be supplied and validated with a planning application. All public rights of way crossing or adjoining the proposed development site should be marked on the plan to be submitted with the full planning application.
- 6.48 The above-mentioned footpath is noted on the submitted Indicative Site Plan and whilst this outline application is seeking access matters only, the layout and site arrangement are able to show that the right of way will remain open, unobstructed and unaffected by the proposed development.
- 6.49 The affect on the right of way will be negligible, owing to the presence of existing development on site. The footpath users currently have to travel across an active coach depot, which is unsightly and potential hazardous. The removal of the coach

depot and replaced with residential dwellings, will increase the safety of its users through pedestrian provisions and clear markings to the route of the footpath.

- 6.50 However, as stated above, this matter can be satisfactorily dealt with at reserved matters stage, in accordance with the Guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed application, seeking outline consent for up to nine dwellings is considered to represent sustainable development on a on-balanced approach.
- 7.2 The application site does lie in an area of open countryside, where new development is resisted. However, the site represents previously developed land of which has an active preference for its re-use. The site is located centrally within an existing built-up area and recognisably named settlement. There is existing residential development in both directions and in close proximity to the application site.
- 7.3 The development of this site would contribute to boosting the boroughs housing supply whilst safeguarding the countryside and providing enhancements and betterments to the local highway network and ecology and biodiversity of the area.
- 7.4 The proposed dwellings would not adversely impact on the street scene and through careful and sympathetic materials, design and layout.
- 7.5 It is therefore considered that planning permission should be granted as there are material benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm from being in a countryside location.