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PLANNING

LAND OFF B5102, ROSSETT
WREXHAM LL12 0AD
PLANNING STATEMENT
MS LARISSA JONES
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Conwy | 20 Connaught House, Riverside Business Park, Benarth Road, Conwy LL32 8UB

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Planning Statement



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted as part of a planning application for the erection of a new farm shop with an ancillary café, associated access, car parking and landscaping.
- 1.2 The farm shop would form part of the agricultural holding known as Rackery Farm, which is located on Higher Lane, Burton, Rossett.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to diversify the agricultural enterprise by providing a new standalone farm shop within an easily accessible location, that would sell local farm produce from the farm and surrounding local agricultural enterprises.
- 1.4 Prior to the submission of this application, a pre-application enquiry was undertaken (ref: ENQ/2020/0115) for the proposal. The applicant also consulted with Joe Bickerton, the Council's Destination Manager prior to the submission of this application, from whom the feedback received was supportive.
- 1.5 There has also been considerable support from the local community for the provision of a farm shop in this area. The applicant has presented the proposal to Llay Community Council, from which the feedback received was very positive and of the opinion that a local farm shop within the area is needed as a way to source local produce for the wider community within the area.
- 1.6 The agricultural enterprise has already diversified previously through the introduction of a successful luxury glamping site "Rackery Retreat" that currently operates on land within the agricultural holding. Planning permission for this was granted on 7 June 2018 (ref: P/2018/0282).
- 1.7 The adopted development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011, which was adopted on 14th February 2005. Its replacement, the Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) has been through the examination process.
- 1.8 This Planning Statement sets out an appraisal of the application site and its surroundings, the proposal, the relevant planning policy and guidance, and sets out the main considerations relating to the proposed development.

2. The site and context

- 2.1 The site is currently agricultural land, part of the agricultural holding known as Rackery Farm located on Higher Lane, Burton, Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0AD.
- 2.2 Rackery Farm is a 100 acre dairy farm, which also produces grass, maize silage and other products from the arable land.
- 2.3 In August 2018, the successful luxury glamping site “Rackery Retreat” (approved under planning permission P/2018/0282) was set up by way of agricultural diversification, which has attracted over 300 families in the past 18 months. The three luxury safari tents, with private hot tubs, are in huge demand with most weekends and school holidays being fully booked.
- 2.4 Another testament to the success of Rackery Retreat is that it was awarded the Gold winner in the Diversification Innovator (small – medium) of the Year category of the British Farming Awards 2020. Drawing from the success of this diversification venture, the applicant and her family are
- 2.5 The site is located along the main road B5102 on existing agricultural holding land of Rackery Farm. The land is a vacant field and the location for where the shop is proposed is heavier headland which is less likely to produce as good quality crops as the remainder of the grass field.
- 2.6 The western part of the site and land to the north-west of the site is an existing tourist attraction comprising of a countryside walk within a woodland area with large ponds and wildlife. The farm shop and ancillary café would serve as a visitor facility to this tourist attraction, providing parking and easy access onto the countryside walk so to allow more visitors to enjoy the woodland area.
- 2.7 There is an existing agricultural access into the site; however, the proposal would include the provision of a new access along the B5102.
- 2.8 A Public Right of Way (PRoW) LLA/3 is located to the east and north-east of the site.
- 2.9 The following aerial photograph identifies the application site in the context of its surroundings.

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Figure 2.1 Aerial image of the application site (outlined in red) in the context of its surroundings (Google Maps)



3. The proposed development

- 3.1 The proposal comprises the erection of a new farm shop and ancillary café, with associated access, car parking and landscaping off the B5102 in Wrexham LL12 0AE.
- 3.2 The applicant is Larissa Jones, is the daughter of Andrew Jones whom owns the agricultural enterprise Rackery Farm.
- 3.3 The proposal seeks to diversify the agricultural enterprise further by providing a new standalone farm shop that would sell local farm produce from the farm and surrounding local agricultural enterprises.
- 3.4 The building would also provide an ancillary café and a meeting/function room for the local community to utilise for various temporary functions.
- 3.5 It is envisioned that, as the farm shop business grows, there will be scope for the provision of other local services, such as a local butchery, local bakery, deli meat counter and take-away service.
- 3.6 As part of this application, a Business Plan has been submitted with details of the existing agricultural enterprise and the proposal. Additionally, we have provided a summary of the business at Rackey Retreat within Appendix A of this Statement, and letters from local farms confirming their interest in selling their produce within the proposed farm shop within Appendix B.
- 3.7 Additionally, the development would improve the accessibility into the existing countryside walk with woodland, ponds and wildlife. Part of this area is included within the application site, whereas the rest sits adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site. All of this tourist attraction lies within the ownership of the applicant.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 This section will provide a summary of the local and national planning policy relevant to the consideration of this application.

National planning policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018)

- 4.2 Paragraph 1.17 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states that “**legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development** in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated”.
- 4.3 PPW identifies that local planning authorities should therefore exercise their planning functions with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

Technical Advice Notes (TAN's)

- 4.4 The relevant TAN's to be referred to for the proposed development are as follows:
- TAN 5: nature conservation and planning;
 - TAN 6: planning for sustainable rural communities;
 - TAN 12: design;
 - TAN 18: transport; and
 - TAN 23: economic development.

Local planning policy

- 4.5 In accordance with the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the starting point for determination of the application is the Development Plan which comprises, in this instance, the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP). Notwithstanding the fact that this plan is out-of-date, the UDP is still utilised to guide development within Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 4.6 It should be noted that the Deposit Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013-2028) was approved in March 2018, and together with supporting documents, the plan

was consulted on until July 2018. The plan has been through the examination process, but has yet to be adopted.

Building Better Places (July 2020)

- 4.7 In July 2020, the Welsh Government issued the document Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures.
- 4.8 The document emphasises the importance for the consideration of health and well-being throughout the planning system of Wales.
- 4.9 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 a “*more resilient Wales*”, addressing the identified key issues, including the following:
- Staying local: creating neighbourhoods;
 - Reawakening Wales’ tourism and cultural sectors; and
 - Green infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience.
- 4.10 The document acknowledges that local food production and supply chains have become very important, and stresses the need to support this localism through the planning system.
- 4.11 In regard to tourism and the wider benefits on the economy, the document states:
- “It is particularly important that tourism and culture opportunities that can deliver community benefits to the local area are supported in ... rural areas.”*
- “As our tourism and cultural assets begin to reopen there will be a need for sensitive social distancing measures so they can still be appreciated in their own right. In a similar way to our town centres, outdoor spaces around tourism and cultural assets will need to be carefully planned and managed to allow associated industries (such as cafes and bars) to operate effectively.”*
- “PPW sets out the positive framework for tourism and culture that encourages the sector to enhance the sense of place in tourist hotspots and to develop new opportunities and cultural experiences in new destinations”.*
- 4.12 Further, the guidance states that “...the crisis has highlighted the importance of access to green spaces and opportunities to connect with the natural and historic environment.

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It has highlighted that easy access and proximity to quality greenspace is severely lacking in some areas and to some sections of our communities and actions to reduce such inequalities should be prioritised as part of wider regeneration and improvement activities as a matter of social and environmental justice”.

5. Main considerations

5.1 The main considerations of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development;
- Design and impact on the character of the area;
- Residential amenity;
- Biodiversity; and
- Access and parking.

5.2 These matters are discussed in turn below.

Principle of development

5.3 Strategic Policy PS1 of the UDP states that new development for employment should be directed within settlement limits/employment areas.

5.4 The proposed shop would be located outside of any settlement limit, within the open countryside. Therefore, it would not be located within any settlement/employment area and would be contrary to this policy.

Support for localism and rural diversification

5.5 Notwithstanding the above, the UDP acknowledges the importance of retail outlets in the countryside. Policy S7 states that these would be permitted, providing that they adhere to the following criteria:

- They predominantly sell goods or produce predominantly made or grown on the premises;
- The proposals accord with Policy GDP1; and
- The sales floor area does not exceed 50 square metres.

5.6 In accordance with the first criterion, the farm shop proposed would sell a proportion of home-grown and reared produce, such as homemade food and cakes, deli items and farm-grown vegetables. In addition, there would be a large proportion of produce from other nearby local farms and rural enterprises within the area. The farm shop would provide a location for the collection and sales of these local products, which would result in wider knock-on benefits to local rural economy accordingly.

5.7 Appendix B provides examples of local farms within the area that have made their interest known to the applicants. Further, the applicant has presented the proposal to

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Llay Community Council, from which the feedback received was very positive and of the opinion that a local farm shop within the area is needed as a way to source local produce for the wider community within the area. The meeting was attended by approximately 15 Councillors, and the Community Council as a whole expressed their support of the development during the meeting. The level of support demonstrates the demand for a local farm shop, such as the one proposed, to provide a point of sale for local produce within the area.

- 5.8 As identified within the government's new guidance "Building Better Places", the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of local food production and supply chains. It has also seen local communities band together to support local businesses in a strong movement of localism throughout the country. This strong sense of localism is expected to continue in our journey to recovery from the pandemic, and the document emphasises the importance of supporting this localism in moving forward.
- 5.9 Indeed, the support from local people, local business owners/farmer, local Councillors and the Community Council demonstrates the prevalence of localism within the local area, and the desire to support local food and goods production within the area.
- 5.10 In regard to the second criterion, Policy GDP1 provides that new development should be of high-quality, secure and sustainable design, and provides a list of criteria for which proposed development should adhere to.
- 5.11 The majority of the criteria listed refer to the proposed design of the development, which is discussed later within this letter. However, criterion k seeks to secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
- 5.12 It is considered that the proposal would enhance the local economy whilst providing benefitting the social and environmental well-being of the area.
- 5.13 Under the explanatory text of policy S7, paragraph 8.14 of the UDP states:
- "...shopping development in the countryside (e.g. farm shops which sell their own produce; a small shop selling goods produced in an integral craft workshop; or a small shop integral to a tourist facility or petrol filling station) could create additional employment opportunities and aid rural economic diversification".*
- 5.14 The above paragraph is applicable to the proposal in two ways, one being that the development is for a farm shop intended to sell local produce from their own farm as

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well as surrounding local farms. This would help to support local rural enterprises within the area, having a knock-on benefit to the social well-being of local residents.

- 5.15 Additionally, the proposed shop and café would be integral to an existing tourist attraction within the area, providing ease of access to the countryside walk, convenience through the facilities within the building, and enhancing the tourism economy of the area accordingly.
- 5.16 Tourism significantly contributes towards the economy of Wales. In addition to the spend by tourists, it is important to note the contribution local businesses such as the proposed development can make towards the local economy throughout the year. This includes spending with local businesses for maintenance equipment, landscape and employment of local staff at the premises. Indeed, the Business Plan provided with this application confirms that the proposed farm shop would result in the employment of 8 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) staff, comprising of six full-time staff and additional part-time staff on weekends and school holidays.
- 5.17 The benefits to the local economy will subsequently improve the social well-being of the local residents of the area. More details on the economic benefits of development are provided further within this report.
- 5.18 Additionally, the site would provide easy access to a local countryside walk, promoting a healthy tourist activity and enabling visitors to be more active conveniently. This would have knock-on benefits to the mental and physical health of locals and tourists alike who visit the facility.
- 5.19 “Building Better Places” identifies that the pandemic “...*has highlighted the importance of access to green spaces and opportunities to connect with the natural...environment*”. The development would therefore accord with the new guidance in this respect.
- 5.20 It would be in the interest of the applicant to ensure the proper monitoring and maintenance of the woodland, ponds and countryside walk, as it would encourage visitors to the site and more customers for the proposed farm shop. As part of the application, the ponds, woodland and wildlife area are proposed to be enhanced, and therefore, it would be beneficial to the environmental well-being of the area in this regard.
- 5.21 Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would secure the development of sustainable communities.

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- 5.22 In regard to the final criterion, it is acknowledged that the proposed development exceeds the threshold of 50 square metres.
- 5.23 Notwithstanding this policy conflict, regard must be given to the fact that the Covid-19 crisis had not yet occurred at the time of the adopting the UDP. The pandemic has brought about a drastic change to the perception of suitable floorspace for buildings. “Building Better Places” emphasises the need to implement suitable social distancing measures moving forward. The pandemic has demonstrated that many indoor spaces cannot operate effectively under the social distancing measures brought about from the pandemic. Many restaurants and cafes have had to greatly reduce the number of people that can be seated at any one time within their premises, and many shops have operated as a “one-in-and-one-out” system to prevent overcrowding.
- 5.24 Taking the above into account, a larger building with more floor space to allow for effective social distancing is considered to be more suitable than that detailed within the outdated policy, and would be in the interests of the health and well-being of customers and staff alike.
- 5.25 Further, whilst it is acknowledged that the Deposit LDP has not yet been adopted, is considered appropriate to give regard its policies given that is in its final stages.
- 5.26 Policy EM4 states that new employment development outside of settlement limits are permitted providing that they are in connection with a rural enterprise, including proposals for farm diversification.
- 5.27 With the farming industry facing uncertain times ahead, the applicants’ aim is to secure the long-term economic future of the farming business, improving their overall resilience to cope with market fluctuations, by diversifying and making best use of their existing resources.
- 5.28 As stated above, the proposal would be a further branch of rural diversification for the existing rural enterprise Rackery Farm. The previous diversification scheme for the farm through providing a glamping site has been extremely successful, and applicant is looking for other ways to expand to support the economic longevity of the farm.
- 5.29 Farm diversification is further supported through TAN 6, which states that “*Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities [and] increase local economic prosperity...*”

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- 5.30 The policy goes on to state that, in the case that the proposed building is located away from an established rural enterprise complex, there needs to be a clear reason for the development and there is no reasonable alternative location.
- 5.31 As discussed previously, there is a clear demand for a farm shop within this area to sell the local produce of local farms, including Rackery Farm.
- 5.32 The proposed building would be located away from the existing farmyard of Rackery Farm; however, the land proposed is part of the agricultural holding. The existing farmyard is located off a private access track off Higher Lane which is a narrow country road. Higher Lane is a fairly quiet country lane and serves mostly local residents whose homes are accessible from this route.
- 5.33 It was considered that the provision of a farm shop within the existing working farmyard would be an unsustainable location for the development. For the reasons stated above, the shop would be more difficult to access, and a passer-by would need to detour to visit the shop en-route to another destination. Additionally, it is not considered that the farm shop would be visible in its setting, which would be to the detriment of the development in its function.
- 5.34 In comparison, the B5102 is a main road two-way traffic separated by clear road markings. The road provides a clear, easy link between Llay and Rossett. The Business Plan submitted with this application confirms the average traffic movements along this road amount to 1,503 per day. Therefore, the siting of the shop along this main road would be likely to attract a far greater number of customers.
- 5.35 The development would also benefit being sited next to the existing countryside walk tourist attraction to the west as it would attract tourists/visitors to the shop and café, increasing the development's profile. Further, the shop would be located within walking distance to the established glamping site Rackery Retreat run by Rackery Farm. This would enhance the visitor experience for those staying at Rackery Retreat as well as provide more potential customers for the shop. Walkers using the nearby PRoW LL3/A would also benefit from the proposed development.
- 5.36 Additionally, the site is in walking distance from the new residential housing estate to the south-east of the site, encouraging local residents to support the local farming businesses through the ease of access to local produce. This is in keeping with the emphasis of localism and creation of neighbourhoods within "Building Better Places". Local residents would be encouraged to visit the shop if it is easily accessible to them.

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- 5.37 The Croes Howell Restaurant and Bar is also located along the B5102, and therefore it is not considered that the proposed development would be more in-keeping with this restaurant as opposed to the agricultural buildings within the farm.
- 5.38 In accordance with above, it is considered that the proposed location of development is the most suitable and the alternative of locating the building within the farmyard would be unsustainable.

Impact on tourism and associated economic benefits

- 5.39 As stated previously, the Council's Destination Manager, Joe Bickerton, was consulted prior to the submission of this application. The response received for the proposal was positive, stating that the business case, proposal and justification for the expansion of the existing farming enterprise seemed warranted, particularly given the success of the glamping site Rackery Retreats.
- 5.40 The Wrexham Destination Management Plan 2018 - 2020 encourages sustainable growth for independent tourism products within County Borough. Mr Bickerton confirmed that this would include a local produce farm shop, and one that supports other local food and drink suppliers. The proposed building, as well as providing a local produce shop, would include an ancillary café from which local food and drink would be sold.
- 5.41 The Destination Management Plan identifies that tourism within Wrexham County Borough was estimated to be worth approximately £116m of direct and indirect expenditure in 2016. The following table has been taken from the Plan, providing an overview of the impact of the tourist industry on the Borough in 2016:

Figure 5.1 Tourism impact (2016) on Wrexham County Borough

Wrexham County Borough – Tourism Impact 2016	
Number of visits	1.85m
- % day visits	78%
- % staying visits	22%
Number of visitor days	2.57
- % day visits	56%
- % staying visits	44%
Total spend (direct and indirect)	£116m
No. of FTE Jobs supported by tourism spend	1,663

Source: STEAM, GTS (2017).

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- 5.42 As can be seen from the table above, the majority of visits to Wrexham County Borough were day visits. The Plan identifies that Wrexham is easily accessible from major population centres, including the Liverpool City Region and North West England with a good road network. The area also acts as a “gateway” to other parts of Wales. This would make it a prime location for day visits for visitors within these nearby areas, and for visitors passing through to other parts of Wales.
- 5.43 The proposed development would mainly cater towards visitors such as these. The café element would provide snacks/drinks and small meals for tourists whom have travelled from afar. Local food and goods would appeal to tourists, especially day visitors, as they are able to take home perishables at the end of the day and keep/store them appropriately. The location of the shop on the main road, the B5102, would mean that the shop would be easily accessible for visitors in and around the local area.
- 5.44 One of the current challenges facing the tourist industry of Wrexham County Borough identified within the Plan is the limited finance and resources for future promotion and development. The development would help to alleviate the pressure on the Local Authority and this financial burden. The shop would enhance and promote the existing woodland and ponds, improving access to this existing tourist attraction, and the revenue generated from farm shop would help towards enhancing and preserving this countryside walk.

Planning balance

- 5.45 It is accepted that the proposal would not strictly accord with Policy PS1 or the final criteria of Policy S7.
- 5.46 Notwithstanding this, the UDP does support retail within the countryside, and the latest guidance “Building Better Places” seeks to promote localism, healthy communities and suitably designed development to allow for effective social distancing measures brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is considered that the proposal would be in keeping with all of these key issues identified within the guidance.
- 5.47 Additionally, it is evident that there is wide-spread support for the proposal, indicating that there is demand and need for such a development within the local area.
- 5.48 The development would support an existing local rural enterprise through further diversification. The success of Rackery Retreat is a testament to the quality of development that would be provided.

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- 5.49 The development would also help to enhance the tourism industry of Wrexham Borough County, which would have knock-on economic benefits within the plan area.
- 5.50 For the reasons stated above, we consider that the proposal would be acceptable in principle.
- 5.51 It is acknowledged that the Council's response to the pre-application enquiry (ref: ENQ/2020/0115) stated that the proposal would not comply with Policy E6 of the UDP as well. However, Policy E6 refers to "small on-farm operations such as food processing and packing, together with services to other farms, such as workshop facilities and equipment hire and maintenance", and does not refer to any retail uses such as a local farm shop. As such, we would consider that this policy is not applicable to the development proposed.

Design and impact on the character of the area

- 5.52 The building would be single storey in nature and would be utilise wooden cladding on the external walls to reflect the natural setting and the woodland to the west. This would minimise the impact of the building within its setting and reduce the prominence of the building when viewed from the main road.
- 5.53 As can be seen from the layout, the proposed building would be set back into the plot to ensure that it does appear visually obtrusive within the area.
- 5.54 In any case, extensive screening provided by way of the existing mature hedgerow along the boundary and proposed soft landscaping would help to mitigate the built-form in its setting and assimilate the building into the area harmoniously.
- 5.55 Views of the development from the PRoW that runs to the east and north-east of the site would be mitigated by the existing vegetation that runs along the PRoW border.
- 5.56 Additionally, the existing siting of the Croes Holywell Restaurant and Bar is considered to be similar to the proposed building, and therefore the proposed development would not appear alien within the landscape.

Residential amenity

- 5.57 The nearest residential properties to the proposed development are the new-build properties located on the opposite side of the B5102, approximately 187 metres away.

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- 5.58 Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would have no impact on the residential amenity of any neighbouring properties.

Biodiversity

- 5.59 As part of this planning application, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken for the site.
- 5.60 The development would result in the loss of some hedgerow to the front of the site in order to provide the visibility splay required. Notwithstanding this, The hedgerow is not species-rich and does not qualify as an 'Important' hedgerow within the definitions of the Hedgerow Regulations. However, its loss will result in a small loss of possible bird nest sites although the proximity of the main road severely reduces this potential.
- 5.61 Replacement planting is proposed as part of this proposal to off-set the loss of this part of the hedgerow.
- 5.62 External lighting will be designed to avoid illumination of potential bat roosts or foraging features including hedgerows and mature trees.
- 5.63 Hedgerow removal will be carried out outside the nesting season and hedgerow will be replaced with species-rich native hedgerows containing shrubs which provide nesting cover and food resources for birds. Precautions to avoid disturbance to nesting birds will be included within the Reasonable Avoidance Measures.
- 5.64 Additionally, as part of this proposal, scheme offers potential for enhancement of nearby habitats and the creation of new habitat features to benefit biodiversity. Details of these are provided within the PEA submitted.

Access and parking

- 5.65 The proposed site would require the provision of a new vehicular access to be located off the main road, the B5102. The Council's Highways department provided feedback at the pre-application enquiry stage (ref: ENQ/2020/0115), requiring the provision of a visibility splay of 2.4m x 120m in both directions. Accordingly, this visibility splay will be provided as part of the development, as indicated on the proposed plans submitted with this application. Thus, the proposal would allow for safe manoeuvre in and out of the site, and would not have an adverse impact on the highway safety of road users in this respect.

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- 5.66 The Highways department also requested the provision of a tactile crossing to be provided across the entrance of the site, which would be provided as part of the development.
- 5.67 Parking and turning areas would be provided within the site, and all vehicles would be able to exit the site forward-facing. The provision of off-road parking spaces would mean any proposed development would not lead to on-street parking problems in the area.
- 5.68 Additionally, the proposed parking area would enhance the tourist attraction as there is not parking to serve the area currently. The access to the countryside walk would be via a pedestrian link from the car park, ensuring the safety of visitors.
- 5.69 TAN 18 provides guidance on transport and identifies that the Welsh Government's principal objective for new development is to ensure that they are located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion.
- 5.70 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 focuses on walking and cycling as a mode of transport and highlights the importance of planning and building walking and cycling infrastructure as well as encouraging behaviour change in Wales.
- 5.71 The nearest bus stops to the site are located an approximate 7-minute walk away to the west. Access to these bus stops would be via an existing pavement along the northern side of the B5102, which would ensure safe access to and from these bus stops. The services from these offer frequent journeys to and from Llay and Trvelyn. Additionally, the PRoW LL3/A is located to the east of the site, and the development would be easily accessed from this PRoW.
- 5.72 Therefore, it is considered that the development of the site would promote the use of walking, cycling and public transport, in line with national and local policy.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposal relates to the erection of a new farm shop with an ancillary café, associated access, car parking and landscaping.
- 6.2 Feedback received from pre-application discussions with the local community have been extremely supportive of the proposed development. Additionally, the Council's Destination Manager has confirmed that the proposal would be in line with the aims of the Wrexham Destination Management Plan 2018-2020, and stated that the business case, proposal and justification for the expansion of the existing farming enterprise was acceptable.
- 6.3 The UDP supports retail within the countryside, and the latest national guidance "Building Better Places" seeks to promote localism, healthy communities and suitably designed development to allow for effective social distancing measures brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is considered that the proposal would be in keeping with all of these key issues identified within the guidance.
- 6.4 The development would support an existing local rural enterprise through further diversification.
- 6.5 The development would also help to enhance the tourism industry of Wrexham Borough County, which would have knock-on economic benefits within the plan area.
- 6.6 By virtue of the siting, scale, design, and landscaping of the development, the proposal would not result in any adverse impacts upon the character of the surrounding landscape, residential amenity or highway safety.
- 6.7 As demonstrated throughout this report, we consider the proposal to be in accordance with national and local policy. We therefore consider the proposed development acceptable.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of existing Rackery Retreat luxury glamping business

Rackery Retreat summary

Rackery Retreat is a luxury glamping site which first opened on 1st August 2018 as the first diversification of Rackery Farm. Having been open for just under two years we had welcomed over 300 families to the retreat in 18 months to the point where we recently closed for a short period in March due to covid-19. The Retreat has three luxury safari tents, these are fully contained lodges with fitted kitchens, luxury bathrooms including a roll top bath, four poster beds and private hot tubs. Rackery Retreat was developed to provide a sustainable and profitable future for the farm for Andrew and Jenny Jones.

Rackery Retreat has been a roaring success now being booked up every weekend from when we open again in July until October, due to marketing success we have been able to operate an occupancy rate of 100% during school holidays and weekends and at 50% occupancy rate on average for the whole year. One of the reasons we have been so successful is due to the marketing strategy for the luxury site using our social media channels. This is something which Larissa runs daily with her sister Gemma alongside her current full-time job. Currently 90% of our bookings come direct from Instagram where we now have 12,600 followers. Through the successful use of influences and bloggers, we have been able to grow this following very successfully. Larissa and Gemma directly message influencers and bloggers and set up a collaboration to offer a complimentary stay if they feature Rackery Retreat on there feed which normally leads to on average 500 followers and 10 bookings from each one.

We have also been able to set up collaborations with restaurants in Chester by offering discount to our guests when they stay with us.

During the first twelve months in operation Rackery Retreat welcomed 144 different families across 269 nights in two tents totalling a revenue of £44,337.00. In the second twelve-month period we installed hot tubs in our three tents and saw a large increase in occupancy levels. Revenue increased by £10,000 to £54,807 during the first six months of the second year Vs the full twelve months in Y1.

We envisage the Retreat and Farm shop working very closely in the future as we can offer breakfast and welcome hampers to guests that stay at the Retreat as well as a % discount to be spent in the shop. We received regular requests for hampers and local places to visit to dine and eat local produce. Rackery Farm Shop as the second diversification of the farm would be able to provide an income for the second generation and provide sustainability for Rackery Farm for generations to come.

Some of the customer feedback we have received at the Retreat is shown below,

“Last minute break”

“I came across an instagram story with a last-minute offer from Rackery Retreat at 3am on the Friday during a night shift. I messaged their instagram page and by 4:30am I had a getaway booked for me and my girlfriend for the Saturday. They were so quick with responses and were extremely accommodating when it came to my specific requests and even made a few changes

to their usual procedures to make sure we had the perfect trip.

We stayed in the Oak tent and it was beautiful. Immaculately clean and decorated to a standard where I just wanted to live there! Andrew met us on arrival and even got the fire going before he left, as well as getting us an extra heater just in case. He gave us plenty of suggestions for places to eat/drink and even a bit of history of the local area. We were left alone for the evening but he popped round before we left to check everything was ok which was a lovely gesture.

The bed was super comfortable and the shower instantly hot, making you forget you're in a tent.

The hot tub was incredible, even on a cold night, and the bottle of prosecco was the perfect finishing touch!"

February 2020

"You need to book!"

"My fiancé and I had such an amazing stay at Rackery Retreat last weekend... what a unique, luxurious and relaxing place it is!

We loved every minute, spent most of it in the gorgeous hot tub that stayed hot the entire weekend, and had a beaut Sunday lunch at Pant Yr Ochain which we highly recommend also.

Our tips; don't forget it's a tent! The gorgeous luxurious decor can make you forget, so take warm clothes if it's cold and a hot water bottle was my saviour :) they provide lots of throws and heaters though but if you're a cold person take extra!

If you like more privacy we stayed in The Oak and it's facing away from the other tents in the bottom of the field so the hot tub and veranda felt super private.

You will not regret booking, Ian was also lovely and we enjoyed chatting to him!

Thanks for such a lovely stay we can't wait to come back!"

January 2020

APPENDIX B

Correspondence between applicant and local farmers
with confirmation of interest



Clotton Hall Dairy

Clotton

Tarporley

Cheshire

CW6 0EH

Dear whom it concerns,

I would certainly be happy in supporting the Jones family with their proposed new farm shop venture by supplying them with our dairy products. It would be great to see a new farm shop in the area which will enhance their existing glamping business.

If you require any further comment, don't hesitate to ask.

Kind regards,



Clotton Hall Dairy

Sarinah Farooq

From: Larissa Jones [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 June 2020 11:40
To: Rhys Davies; Sarinah Farooq; [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Farm shop

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi all,

Please also find below another email from a local potato supplier.

Many Thanks,
Larissa

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 22 June 2020 at 10:08:08 BST
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Farm shop

Hi Larissa

Subject to our conversation I am happy to confirm that as a local potato grower I will be happy to supply your farm shop with freshly lifted new potatoes in season and maincrop throughout the rest of the year .

[REDACTED]
P.R.Done & Co , Erilas Hall , Abenbury , Wrexham LL13 9UD