
Land Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham

Review of Minerals Safeguarding Designation



Contents

Instructions 1

Strategic Planning Framework.....1

Suitability of land at Boozey Field for mineral development.....2

Geological Information 4

Local aggregate supply.....4

Financial viability of minerals working.....4

Conclusion 4

Land at Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham

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Instructions

We are instructed by Gower Homes to review the minerals safeguarding designation on land at Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham. We understand that Gower Homes is seeking to develop a residential housing scheme at the site. Any potential development at the site may be affected by the mineral safeguarding.

Strategic Planning Framework

The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2011 was adopted on 14th February 2005. The UDP provides a framework for local decision making and the reconciliation of development and conservation interests in order that land use changes proceed coherently and with maximum community benefit. The UDP sets out the Council's broad development strategy and provides a framework for more specific policies and proposals. The UDP conforms with the Technical Advice Notes (TAN) produced by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The UDP is in the process of being replaced by the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2013 to 2028. The LDP2 will again be a long term land use and development strategy for the County Borough Council. However, until the LDP2 is adopted the UDP remains in force.

Strategic policy PS9 in the UDP refers to minerals and states:

Provision for minerals development will be made at a level that ensures a supply of minerals set in the context of regional land bank requirements, and that takes account of environmental protection policies and the potential for the use of rail freight transport.

Whilst the UDP provides for an adequate supply of minerals it sets out a hierarchy for how new mineral development proposals should be considered. In line with national policy there is support for optimum exploitation of resources at sites that already have planning permission for mineral working, following which applications for extensions of existing sites will be considered. New sites will be considered where the existing landbank is inadequate.

The UDP sets out policies for protecting mineral resources at policy MW9 which states:

Resources of sand and gravel, and clay will be safeguarded from non-mineral development in order to prevent the sterilisation of unworked minerals deposits. The identification of mineral resource areas gives no presumption in favour of the working of any deposits. Within such areas non-mineral development will be strongly resisted unless a resource assessment (or other information) is provided to demonstrate that no exploitable reserves exist within the development site. Where non-mineral development which materially prejudices minerals resources is granted planning permission on land holding minerals deposits, provision should be made for the prior removal of mineral deposits.

Proposed policies for the LDP2 will be similar for minerals to those contained within the UDP, including a requirement to maintain a seven year landbank for sand and gravel. Similarly there is a proposed minerals safeguarding policy.

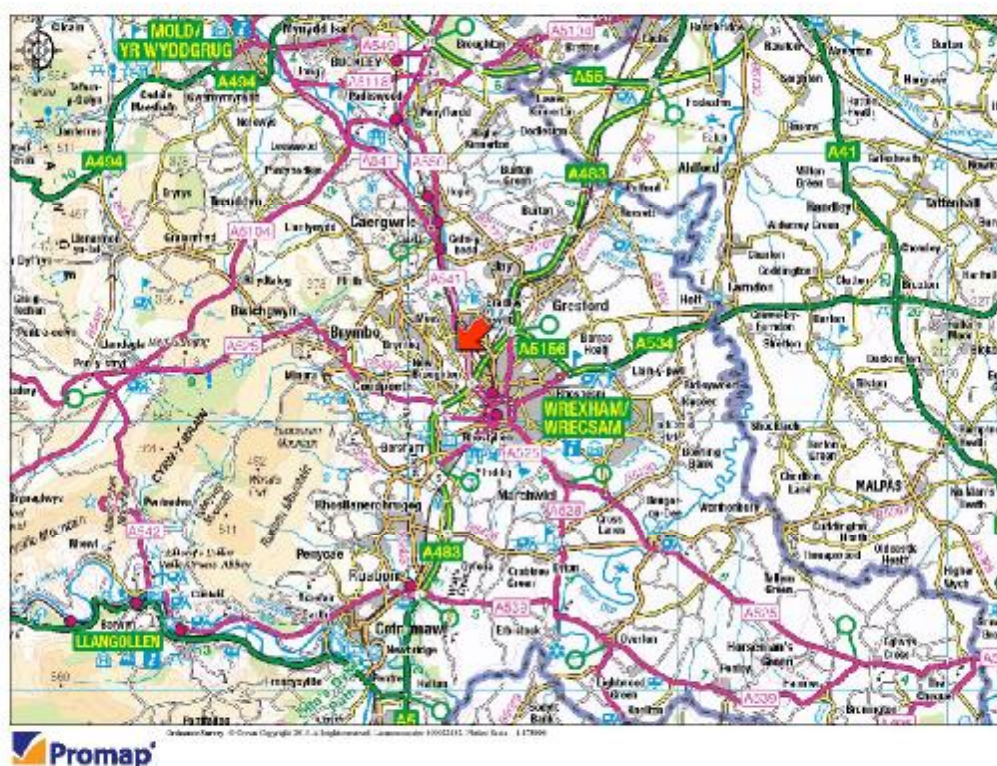
Land at Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham

Review of Minerals Safeguarding Designation

Suitability of land at Boozey Field for mineral development

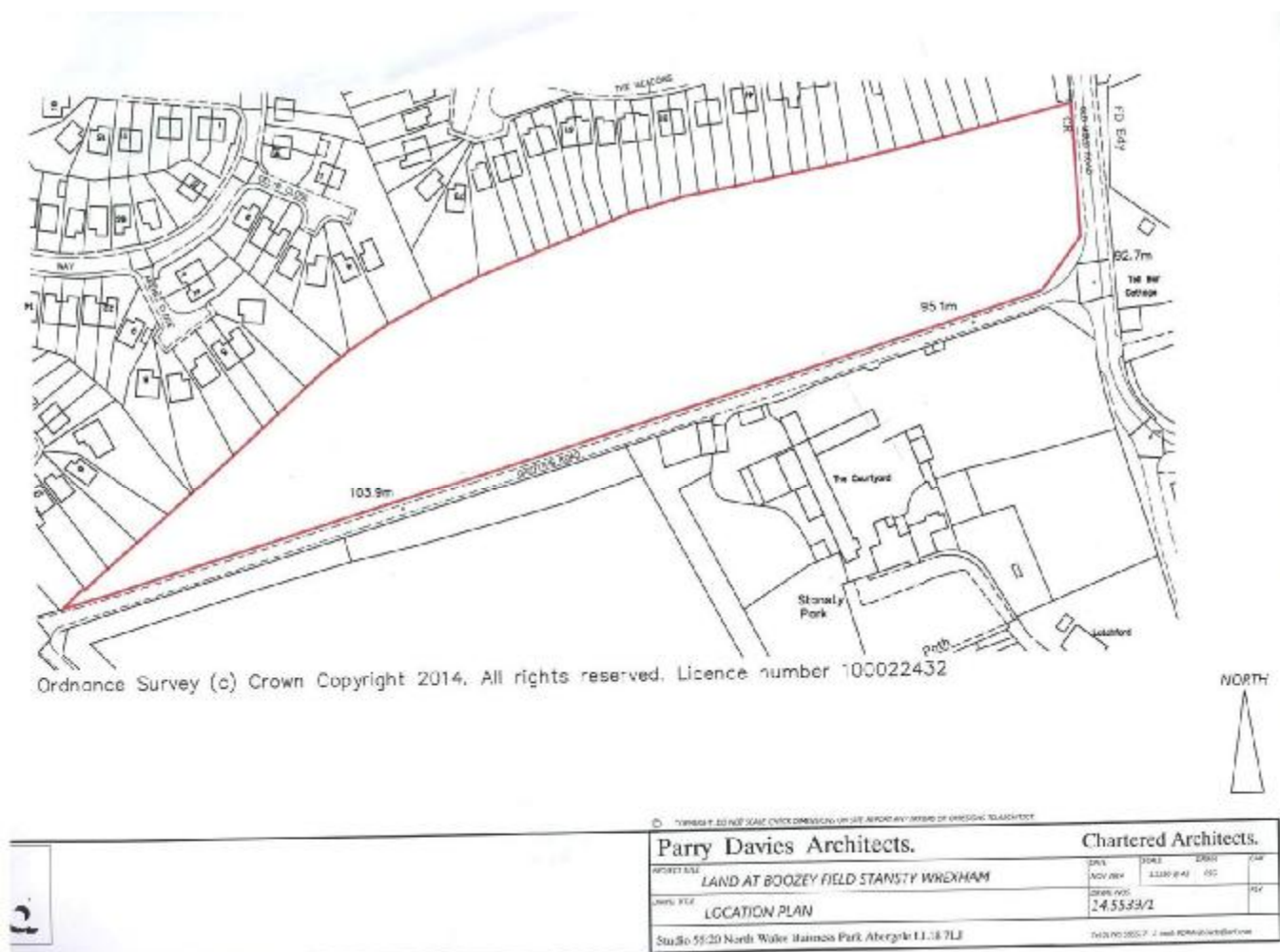
The land which Gower Homes is seeking to develop is located off the Old Mold Road, approximately 1 mile north of Wrexham centre. The site is roughly triangular in shape and measures 400m in length and is 70m wide at the widest part of the site abutting Old Mold Road to the east. The southern boundary of the site runs along Griffiths Road and the northern boundary backs onto to residential developments on Glascoed Way and The Meadows. Location and site plans are attached for ease of reference.

Land at Boozey Fields, Wrexham - Location Plan



Land at Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham

Review of Minerals Safeguarding Designation



Site Plan

Due to the size and shape of the landholding it will be extremely difficult to develop the land for mineral extraction. The site at its widest is only 70 metres, and a stand off from Griffiths Road and the residential properties on The Meadows will restrict the width to a very narrow strip that it would be impractical to work. At the western half of the landholding narrows to a point and will not be workable at all. The width of a landholding will in part determine the depth to which mineral can be worked. In this case the landholding is too narrow for mineral to be worked commercially.

Land at Boozey Field, Stansty, Wrexham

Review of Minerals Safeguarding Designation



Geological Information

We have been provided with a copy of a geo-environmental report prepared by [NAME] on behalf of Gower Homes. The report states that the western part of the site is underlain by glacial sand and gravel, with the eastern area (which is at a lower elevation as the land falls away west to east) being underlain by glacial till.

We have identified evidence of four boreholes close to the site as shown on the attached plan. The data for the borehole closest to the site is limited to 3.5 metres below ground level and no commercially viable mineral is identified. The remaining boreholes show similar clayey sand and gravel materials to a depth of at least 3 metres.

There is little merit in exploring mineral at depth as the site is so narrow that mineral cannot be extracted.

Local aggregate supply

There are significant reserves of consented sand and gravel in the Wrexham area and as such further resources are currently not required. There are sites at Borrás/Caia Farm, Ballswood, Llay and Hafod, Johnstown which together contain substantial permitted reserves. The Council acknowledges that the priority should be to seek the optimum exploitation of these resources. Should these reserves not suffice, the Policy recognises that further reserves may need to be made available through the extension laterally and/or in depth of existing operations.

Notwithstanding the current supply position, the subject land is so restricted in terms of size that no commercial deposit could be released from the subject landholding.

Financial viability of minerals working

Due to the limited size of the landholding the mineral yield would be so small that it would not justify the cost of site investigation and planning promotion. In our opinion there is no prospect of this site being worked for minerals.

Conclusion

In our opinion there would be no demand from the minerals industry for this site due to proximity to residential property and the small and difficult size of the site. It would not be economically viable to develop this land for mineral extraction and as such the safeguarding protection should be removed to allow the site to be considered for alternative development.

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