REPLACEMENT PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning application ref no: P/2025/0430

Application site: The Oaks Site, Oak Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL139RG

Proposed development: Proposed green eco-heritage zone and single employment unit with integral offices (for HIAB), new vehicular access, car and HGV parking, servicing and storage, landscaping, heritage and ecology mitigation and ancillary development

Applicant: FI Real Estate Management and HIAB

OCTOBER 2025

DOCUMENT REFERENCE: 250818 THE OAKS HIAB REPLACEMENT PS VER 1

WREXHAM COUNCIL

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1 INTRODUCTION

Need for and purpose of replacement planning statement

1.1 This replacement planning statement ("replacement planning statement") supports planning application ref no. P/2025/0430 ("the planning application") made to Wrexham Council ("council") on 23 May 2025. It was validated and registered the same day.

1.2 The applicant is FI Real Estate Management of Canal Mill, Botany Brow, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 9AF ("applicant").

1.3 The proposed development is a green eco-heritage zone and single employment unit with integral offices (for HIAB), new vehicular access, car and HGV parking, servicing and storage, landscaping, heritage and ecology mitigation and ancillary ("proposed development").

1.4 The application site is land known locally as The Oaks site, Oak Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9RG ("planning application site).

1.5 Plan Red is playing the role of application agent ("application agent").

1.6 When the planning application was made in May 2025 the development plan applying to the application site was the Wrexham Local development Framework ("WLDP"), local planning guidance and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 ("The National Plan"). For a range of reasons, covered in detail in section 6, the development plan for Wrexham now comprises The National Plan, the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 adopted in 2005 ("WUDP") and local planning guidance.

1.7 Because the development plan applying to the application site has recently changed necessitates the need for the replacement planning statement. Much of the content of the replacement planning statement is the same or very similar to the original planning statement. The key differences are in relation to the section setting out the planning framework applying to the application site (section 6), the section setting out the planning assessment of the planning application and proposed development (section 10) and the section where set out overall conclusions (section 11).

Scope of statement

1.8 The scope of the statement is as follows:

- Section 2 provides background information on HIAB and FIREM.
- Section 3 sets out drivers for the planning application.
- Section 4 sets out whether alternative sites need to be and where considered.
- Section 5 describes The Oaks Site.
- Section 6 sets out the planning framework applying to the site.
- Section 7 describes the proposed development.

- Section 8 sets out the need for EIA, the outcome of pre-application advice and the same regarding pre-application consultation.
- Section 9 sets out benefits the proposed development will deliver.
- Section 10 sets out our planning assessment of the proposed development and through this the planning case in support of the planning application.
- Section 11 sets out conclusions on the matters presented and addressed in the statement.

2 ABOUT FIREM AND HIAB

FIREM

2.1 FIREM is one of the UK's largest commercial and employment property, asset management, development and construction companies. It manages assets totalling more than £1bn and in 2022 alone signed 102 property/lease deals following 108 deals in 2021.

2.2 The business controls more than 9.3 million sqm (10 million sqft) of buildings and has extensive portfolios of land and development sites. It has plans to develop a further 4.2m sqm (4.5m sqft) of commercial and employment floorspace.

2.3 The business, which also includes FI Facilities Management and FI Construction, has 1,062 tenants UK-wide and employs 300 people plus contractors. Tenants include the Department for Work and Pensions ("DWP"), IBM, NHS, EE, HSBC Bank, Zurich, RSA and American Express as well as hundreds of local businesses and independent traders.

HIAB

2.4 HIAB, the abbreviated version of Hydrauliska Industri AB was founded in 1944 in Hudiksvall, Sweden. In 1947 the company launched the world's first hydraulic truck-mounted crane. In 1949 Finnish company, Multilift, was set up to manufacture load handling equipment.

2.5 In 1977 the Partek Corporation purchased Multilift and in 1985 it bought HIAB. In the late 1990s this business restructured itself and made further acquisitions, In 2002 it was acquired by the Kone Corporation which in 2004 rebadged itself HIAB.

2.6 HIAB is a leading provider of smart and sustainable load handling solutions. It is an international company and currently operates in the UK, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Poland, Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Brazil and South Korea. The business employs 4,000 people, working in 15 R&D sites, separate production sites and 62 service centres.

2.7 HIAB UK sells and services the firm's full range of products and currently employs 218 full time welders, fitters, engineers, finance, sales and servicing staff.

2.8 It currently operates from operational centres at Ellesmere in Shropshire, its current UK headquarters, Northallerton, Dudley and Cumbernauld (Scotland). It also operates from 23 approved service centres across UK and Ireland.

3 KEY DRIVERS FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Key drivers for the proposed development initiative are as follows:

Green eco-heritage zone

3.2 The former development plan for Wrexham Industrial Estate ("WIE"), WLDP, designated the site as part of the WIE strategic ecological network. While this did not rule out employment development at the site, it was clear that the plan's preference for the site was something that could become part of or contribute towards delivery of the WIE strategic ecological network.

3.3 As we go onto to cover in later sections, HIAB identified the application site, in conjunction with the applicant, as being the best, the optimum location for its planned new headquarters building. This was the main driver for it wishing to focus its development requirements and related intentions at the site. The basis of how the site was treated in the WLDP meant that, in addition to its potential to be promoted for a single relatively small high quality employment unit, the wider, overall proposed development would need to include a significant green-ecology zone.

3.4 As such the key drivers for the proposed development when the application proposals were being formulated, influenced by how it was treated by the WLDP, were the desire to create a discrete new high quality headquarters facility for HIAB, and to complement this with a significant high quality green eco-heritage zone on the residual land, which in terms of hectarage is the vast majority of the site – roughly four fifths of the overall site area.

Headquarters and production unit for HIAB

3.5 HIAB has been at its current headquarters site at Gargotec Industrial Zone, off Elsdon Road/B5068, Elsdon, Ellesmere, Shropshire, for a period in excess of 20 years.



Figure 3.1: Cargotec Industrial Park, Ellesmere, Shropshire

3.6 Gargotec Industrial Zone is a long established and now dated historic industrial estate. We believe its origins lie in a former military depot established and operated during WW2 which

was converted to industrial use in the late 1940s. The site is a multi-unit development. Most units are old and out dated. HIAB operates out of a number of units. Other units are occupied by firms not associated with HIAB.

3.7 Key issues with the current headquarters and production facility and which are driving HIAB's desire to relocate are as follows:

- Units and related facilities are old and outdated.
- Available floorspace cannot be grown.
- Profile of accommodation does not lend itself to modern production practices.
- Current accommodation does not contain modern, good quality offices.
- HIAB operation is on a shared site and security is an issue.
- Desire for market leading customer focused site with the ability to showcase HIAB products and skills, train new customers and develop relationships.

3.8 HIAB assessed other locations when considering relocating. 31 locations were investigated. The main list of possible locations was soon reduced to 4 as follows: Crewe, Warrington, Wolverhampton and Wrexham.

3.9 When carrying out its final and more detailed assessment of the 4 locations, HIAB took account of a wide range of business, geographic, site, economic and staff related criteria before coming to the decision that Wrexham was the best option. Key reasons for this are as follows:

- The site meets HIAB's brief for a high quality, high profile site that can deliver a new headquarters and production facility.
- The site is 14 km from HIAB's current headquarters at Ellesmere which contributes towards staff retention.
- Wrexham is well located to offer opportunities for HIAB to link with local colleges and universities on engineering initiatives and research opportunities.
- HIAB can link with other similar WIE based companies including JCB and Dhollandia etc.
- HIAB wishes to expand its staff. WIE is a well-known and long established employment site which is able to draw from a large skilled labour base living nearby.
- The Oaks Site also allows the creation of a large green eco-heritage zone which complements HIABs commitment to long term environmental objectives.
- The application site is far more accessible than the company's current base.

4 WHETHER ALTERNATIVE SITES NEED TO BE CONSIDERED

4.1 It is our position that the applicants do not need to consider whether better alternative sites exist at WIE, the wider Wrexham conurbation or elsewhere in the borough.

4.2 The key reason for this is that, as we go onto to set out in section 6, the site falls within the defined extent of Wrexham Industrial Estate ("WIE") and relevant policies in the WUDP confirm that WIE is an acceptable and sustainable location for new employment development. Indeed, it is one of the main locations in the Borough where new employment development is directed.

4.3 Complementing this, The National Plan, also considered in detail in Section 6 confirms that Wrexham is the key centre in North Wales and the main centre for growth including new employment development.

4.4 The obvious consequence of relevant policies of the WUDP and The National Plan is that WIE is where developments like that promoted under the planning application should be directed and focused. As the main employment location within Wrexham, the wider Borough and North Wales generally is WIE, it is clear why HIAB has selected The Oaks site as the most suitable location for its new headquarters facility.

4.5 The corollary of the points made above is that there is no need for the applicant to consider other potential alternative sites for the proposed development as it can be demonstrated, by reference to the development plan applying in Wrexham, that the application site is one of the best sites, if not the most suitable site, for the proposed development in Wrexham, the wider Borough and North Wales generally.

4.6 Linked to the points made above, we would stress as we have already point out, that HIAB has singled out The Oaks Site as the optimum location for is new headquarters and production facility. It is not attracted to nor does it regard any other employment site in Wrexham, the wider the Borough and North Wales generally as offering the same level of potential as The Oaks Site does. In the event its plans for The Oaks Site not succeed, we understand that HIAB will most probably consider other options outside of the Borough.

4.7 Setting aside the points made above, but for the record, the other sites HIAB considered but discounted are listed below. There are 17 sites in total:

1. FIREM Site 5, WIE – site already committed for development for logistics for a different occupier.

2. FIREM Site 6, WIE – site too small but also affected by flood risk issues.

3. FIREM Kingmoor Site, WIE – site now has planning permission but being brought forward for large logistics units and planned for occupiers operating in this sector.

4. FIREM F Lloyd Site, WIE – site already developed and occupied/in.

5. Other small FIREM employment sites, including Dragon Packaging Site, WIE – all either occupied/in use or too small to meet occupier's needs.

6. FIREM land at Mainetti Works off Bedwell Road, WIE – already developed and in use / occupied.

7. Utopia development site off Industrial Estate Road, WIE – current planning application yet to be determined. Even if granted and the scheme comes forward, the nature of the scheme, which is mixed commercial/employment/complementary uses, is unattractive to the planned occupier.

8. Whitegates Industrial Estate, Queensway, Wrexham – site already developed and in use / fully occupied. Even if were to be promoted for redevelopment, the site's location, in the main urban area of Wrexham, does not meet occupier search criteria.

9. Land/industrial estate at former Rhostyllen Colliery, Colliery Road, off Wrexham Road, Wrexham – site is already largely developed but there could be scope for some new development / redevelopment of existing units but the overall site area, reflecting its history of use as a former colliery, is of a relatively poor quality, and as such does not meet the occupier's requirements for a quality site / location.

10. Commercial Zone to north of Wrexham Road, Rhostyllen, Wrexham – fully developed out and units are occupied and in use but even if a redevelopment plan were to be promoted, the site would be unlikely to meet the planned occupier's requirements by reference to the location and profile of the site.

11. Rhosddu Industrial Estate off New Road, Wrexham – this is a historic and well established and fully developed out industrial estate which offers limited scope for new development / redevelopment of existing developments. In essence it is little different to where the occupier is currently based. It does not satisfy general location, quality and profile related elements of the planned occupier's search criteria.

12. Commercial Estate off Plas Acton Road, Wrexham – this is a small occupied commercial estate plus a small adjoining industrial estate. There appears to be no opportunity to accommodate the floorspace/development needs of the occupier. While there might be scope for new development on greenfield land to the west of the commercial estate, this area is too small to meet the site/floorspace/ancillary accommodation needs of the planned occupier.

13. Commercial Zone off Gresford Interchange, Wrexham – this is a developed and in use small employment estate off Gresford Interchange. It provides no scope for expansion or to meet the development needs of the planned occupier.

14. Cyfford Junction 4 LDP Allocation, Wrexham – this is an allocation in the LDP for employment. The site is not developed nor does it appear to benefit from any planning history which suggest it will be brought forward for development in the near

future. We also understand that the preferred employment use would be offices which reflects the high-quality office development to the north east currently occupied by Moneypenny. Indeed, we understand the allocation was conceived and is expected to be an expansion of this development.

15. Llay Industrial Estate, Rackery Lane / Miner's Road at Llay, Wrexham – this is a well-established industrial estate that was developed on the site of the former Llay Colliery. In its current form it appears to offer no scope for new development nor do there appear to be any plans for redevelopment of existing units that might open up scope for a new unit of the profile required by the planned occupier, but generally the nature and profile of the estate, which reflects where the occupier is currently located, means it is a site/location that does not appeal to the occupier.

16. Five Crosses Industrial Estate off Ruthin Road, Minerva, Wrexham – this is also a long established historic industrial estate which in profile terms reflects that of the estate where the occupier is currently located. The subject estate appears to offer no scope for new development nor are there plans for redevelopment of any parts of the estate. Overall, this is not a location / development that meets the requirements of the planned occupier nor which generally appeals to it.

17. Coppi Industrial Estate off Hall Lane, Rhosllannerchrugog / Johnstown, Wrexham – this is a small, tight, well established industrial estate, which reflects in profile the estate where the occupier is currently located. It offers no scope for new development nor are there obvious opportunities for redevelopment. Overall, this estate does not appeal to the planned occupier nor meet its new development requirements.

4.8 Figure 4.1 below identifies the location of each site.

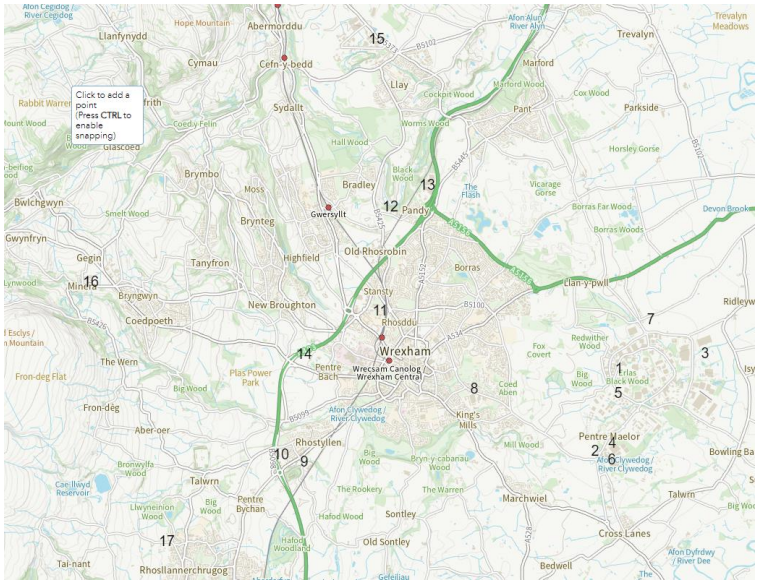


Figure 4.1: location of 17 alternative sites considered by FIREM/planned occupier

5 THE OAKS SITE

Location and address

5.1 The site is located in the south eastern part of WIE. Its address is The Oaks Site, Oak Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9RG. Its location is shown on Figure 5.1 below.

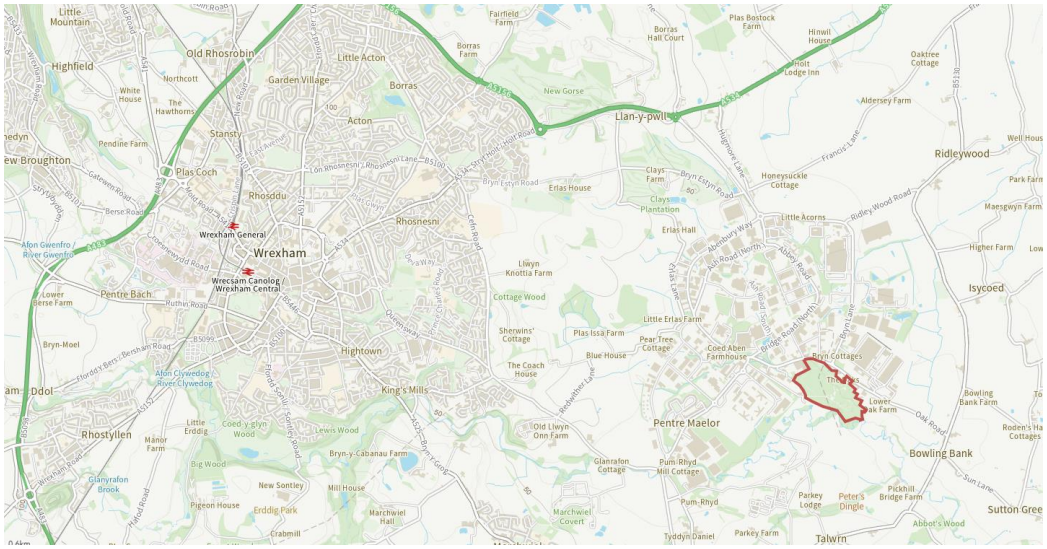


Figure 5.1: site location

Extent

5.2 The site extends to 22.2 ha (54.7acres). Its extent is shown on the plan at Figure 5.2 below:



Figure 5.2: extent of site (for definitive red line boundary refer to formal red line application plan)

Historic profile

5.3 The heritage report by Orion sets out the history of the site in detail. Its most recent history, i.e., WW2 to present day is the most relevant. The site former part of the extensive ROF Wrexham which was begun in 1939 and completed in 1941. This part of the ROF complex was involved in the manufacture and storage of cordite and TNT for use in munitions production. Hence the existence of a number of specialist manufacturing and storage buildings. For safety reasons, linked to the explosive nature of the substances produced and stored, the buildings that were constructed here were spread out and large amounts of safety zone/clear land were created between the individual buildings, which is typical of the design of second world war munitions factories.

Current profile

5.4 In 1949 ROF Wrexham was sold to the Board of Trade with the intention it be turned into an industrial estate which occurred. With the exception of the buildings described above, since 1949 no other development has occurred within the site. There has been development around the boundary fronting Oak Road and Redwither Road but this is out with the site.

5.5 Now the site is now unused and large parts of it have naturally re-vegetated and become overgrown and unkempt. Its current profile in terms of its ecology and arboriculture and related attributes are covered in detail in the ecology report by UES and tree report by MD Landscapes.

Access

5.6 Vehicular, pedestrian, cycle and public transport access to the site is possible off Oak Road.

PROWs

5.7 No PROWs cross the site. The nearest is ABE / 19 which is outside of and to the south west of the site.

Flood risk status

5.8 The site is at not at risk of flooding from rivers. Land outside of the site to the south west and associated with the course of the River Clwydog and a small feeder tributary from the north west is at risk (low, medium and high depending on location). Small specific areas of the site might be susceptible to shallow surface water flooding but only in time of high and consistent rainfall. The site is not at risk from flooding from the sea. This is shown on the following plan at Figure 5.3 which is an extract from the NRW Flood Risk map of Wales.

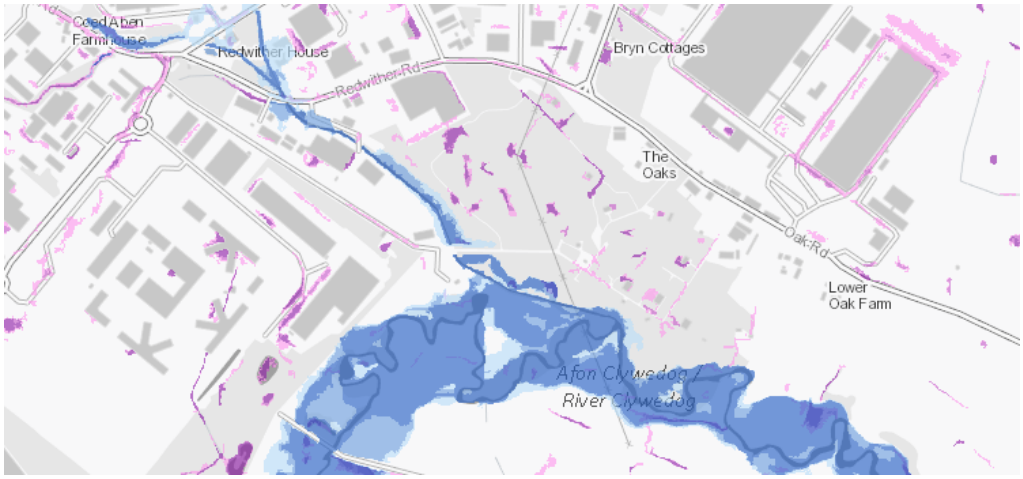


Figure 5.3: extract from NRW Flood Risk Map of Wales

Planning history

5.9 The only application of interest is planning application ref no. P/2019/0877 by Cefn Zone Developments Ltd validated on 28 November 2019. The application was made in outline form for Use Class B1 light industrial and B2/B8 industrial units including means of access and layout, illustrative strategic landscaping, with ecological and heritage zones on land at Oak Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9RG.

5.10 In total some 21,700 sqm (233,513 sqft) of industrial floorspace was proposed accessed off Oak Road. The parameters plan initially submitted with the application is as follows:



Figure 5.4: planning application ref no. P/2019/0877 *parameters plan*

5.11 The application was refused on 16th October 2020 by reference to the following grounds of refusal:

'1. Part of the site lies outside the Wrexham Industrial Estate Settlement Limit and comprises construction of new buildings for employment development. The proposal conflicts with UDP Policy E5. Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to justify the principle of this part of the development outside the settlement limit.

2. The proposal would result in the loss of 7 no. TPO trees and result in harm to 2 no. further trees, conflicting with UDP Policies GDP1, EC4, LPG 17, WCBC Tree and Woodland Strategy, as well as the provisions set out in PPW. The justification put forward for the loss of and harm to these trees is not considered to be sufficient and there are no material considerations associated with the proposal to warrant departing from local plan policy in allowing approval of the proposal on this basis.

3. The application fails to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be detrimental to Great Crested Newts. Insufficient information is contained within the Management Plan to demonstrate that the mitigation area can be created, maintained and managed in perpetuity. The future management of the mitigation area is fundamental to whether the proposed development would be acceptable. To allow this development without this information would have a detrimental impact, contrary to Policies EC6 and GDP1 of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, Local Planning Guidance Note 29 and Welsh Government TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning.

4. The application site is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the habitats and species at risk within the site, would be improved, enhanced and managed as part of the development proposal. In the absence of this information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal complies with UDP Policies EC6 and GDP1, Local Planning Guidance Note 29 or TAN 5.'

5.12 The refusal was appealed in April 2021, appeal ref no. APP/H6955/A/21/3273101, to be dealt with through the informal hearing procedures. However, in March 2022, the appellant's agent (acting on the instructions of the appellant) requested that the appeal be withdrawn. This was confirmed as having been actioned by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales ("PEDW") on 22nd March 2022.

5.13 We consider this application and its refusal in more detail in section 10 when setting out our planning assessment of the current proposals.

Photographs of site

5.14 All photographs presented below are courtesy of @ Google Earth aerial and street views.



Photograph 5.1: aerial photograph of site



Photograph 5.2: oblique aerial view across site looking north eastwards



Photograph 5.3: oblique aerial view across site looking towards south west



Photograph 5.4: street view of site from Oak Road looking south westwards



Photograph 5.5: street view of site from Oak Road looking westwards

6 PLANNING FRAMEWORK APPLYING TO THE SITE

Background and contexts

6.1 The planning framework applying to the planning application site and proposed development when the planning application was made comprised the Wrexham Local Development Plan ("WLDP"), relevant local guidance notes and The National Plan 2024 ("The National Plan"). This was complemented by other national policy was set out in Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12, February 2024 ("PPW") and Technical Advice Notes ("TANS").

6.2 As already confirmed in section 1 of the replacement planning statement, the planning framework applying to the application site changed post the making of the application. Through Order of the High Court of Justice made on 19 May 2025 the Council's decision taken on 20 December 2023 to adopt the WLDP was quashed the effect of which is that WLDP no longer forms part of the development plan and has to be treated as an un-adopted plan.

6.3 The current planning framework applying to the application site and proposed development comprises the development plan, which is now formed by The National Plan, the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan ("WUDP") and local guidance notes. These are presented in terms of the legal hierarchy applying. As before the development plan is complemented by PPW and TANs.

6.4 Although the status of the WLDP has slipped to that of an unadopted development plan, nonetheless it still carries weight. In addition, although the WUDP now forms part of the development plan, it was adopted in 2005, now more than 20 years ago, and it is based on now superseded national planning policy and an evidence base that can now no longer be regarded as pertinent and up to date nor reflective of relevant local circumstances.

6.5 We are aware that the policy officer of the Council is of the view the WDLP warrants being given significant weight in planning decisions by the Council. This is based on an appeal decision by Welsh Minsters, based on the recommendation of a PEDW Inspector, for a small housing development in the Borough (case ref no. CAS-03494-D4F5X8). The Welsh Ministers suggest that the WLDP is a significant material consideration.

6.6 Although we regard 'significant material consideration' to be different to 'warrants being given significant weight' nonetheless it is clear that the WLDP carries weight. We sought the advice of learned counsel on what weight can be considered appropriate weight. Based on the premises that the Council itself pursues a strategy which resulted in the WLDP becoming unadopted, and as recently as 30 July 2025, a few days after the appeal decision referred to above was published, wrote to the Welsh Government to ask it to withdraw the WLDP, it is reasonable to suggest that the WLDP should carry 'moderate weight.'

6.7 In terms of weight to be attributed to the Wrexham UDP in planning decisions, although it has now become part of the development plan, it is 20 years since it was adopted, and it is

based on now superseded national planning policy guidance and local circumstances are very changed. Accordingly, it is learned counsel's opinion that it does carry weight but it does not merit anything like the weight a fully up to date adopted local development plan would attract, certainty regarding the generality of the plan. Learned counsel further advised that, in the case of a conflict between what the WUDP says on a point on the one hand and what the LDP says on the other, it is clear that the WLDP, albeit simply in the form of a material consideration, might be considered by a decision maker to outweigh the WUDP in terms of wight it carries, even though it is part of the development plan.

6.8 This is the approach we apply when setting out our planning assessment in section 10.

6.9 We set out below relevant policies and related guidance drawn from The National Plan, WUDP, WLDP, local planning guidance notes, PPW and TANs.

Development Plan

The National Plan

6.10 The plan is a very detailed and lengthy multi-topic policy document and many of its policies and related guidance are not considered relevant. Accordingly, we concentrate on policy and related initiatives that form the spatial strategy for Wales with emphasis on those applying to North Wales. These are set out in Chapter 4: Strategic and Spatial Choices: Future Wales' Spatial Strategy. Key policies of relevance are set out below:

- Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow. The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales. Three National Growth Areas are identified as the main locations for significant growth including in employment and housing. The National Growth Areas are:
  - Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.
  - Swansea Bay and Llanelli.
  - Wrexham and Deeside.

  The National Growth Areas are complemented by Regional Growth Areas which will grow, develop and offer a variety of public and commercial services at regional scale. There are Regional Growth Areas in three regions:
  - The South West.
  - Mid Wales.
  - The North.

  Development and growth in towns and villages in rural areas should be of appropriate scale and support local aspirations and need
- Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking. The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres

and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- creating a rich mix of uses;
- providing a variety of housing types and tenures;
- building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;
- increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities;
- establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;
- promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and
- integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.

Planning authorities should use development plans to establish a vision for each town and city. This should be supported by a spatial framework that guides growth and regeneration and establishes a structure within which towns and cities can grow, evolve, diversify and flourish over time.

- Policy 3 – Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership.

  The Welsh Government and local authorities will play an active, enabling role to support the delivery of urban growth and regeneration. This includes assembling land, investing in infrastructure and preparing sites for development.

- Policy 8 – Flooding. Flood risk management that enables and supports sustainable strategic growth and regeneration in National and Regional Growth Areas will be supported. The Welsh Government will work with Flood Risk Management Authorities and developers to plan and invest in new and improved infrastructure, promoting nature-based solutions as a priority.

- Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure. To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

  - identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and
  - identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.

Planning authorities should include these areas and/or opportunities in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide.

- Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity. The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving regional connectivity. In urban areas, to support sustainable growth and regeneration, our priorities are improving and integrating active travel and public transport, including:
  - Active Travel – Prioritising walking and cycling for all local travel.
  - Bus – Improve the legislative framework for how local bus services are planned and delivered.
  - Metros – Develop the South East Metro, South West Metro and North Wales Metro.
  - Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles – Support the roll-out of suitable fuelling infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of ultra-low emission vehicles, particularly in rural areas.

  Where car parking is provided for new non-residential development, planning authorities should seek a minimum of 10% of car parking spaces to have electric vehicle charging points.
- Policy 20 – National Growth Area – Wrexham and Deeside. Wrexham and Deeside will be the main focus for growth and investment in the North Region. Strategic and Local Development Plans across the region must recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing and transport infrastructure. The Welsh Government encourage strategies that promote and enhance Wrexham and Deeside's strategic role.

Wrexham UDP

6.11 The WUDP 1996-2011 was adopted in 2005. It sets out the planning and related development aspirations for the County Borough of Wrexham looking forward to the year 2011. The fact this plan only looked forward to 2011 and it was adopted back in 2005, many years prior to the adoption of The National Plan and PPW, confirm that many of its policies are out of date and as such should carry limited weight. Other policies, however, remain useful and relevant in the sense they reflect current policy and guidance in The National Plan and PPW on the role and importance of Wrexham as a key settlement for growth; and regarding the most suitable and sustainable locations for new employment development in this City.

6.12 Relevant policies of the WUDP are considered to be as follows:

- Strategic Policy PS1 – Broad Location of New Development. Deals with new development for housing, employment, and community services. It confirms that such development will be directed to sites/land within defined settlement limits/employment areas

- Strategic Policy PS3 – Broad Location of New Development. Recommends that generally the emphasis should be on use of previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly where greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a quality.
- Strategic Policy PS4 – Broad Location of New Development. Recommends that 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.
- Strategic Policy PS6 – Employment. Approximately 300 hectares of employment land will be made available for development between 1996 and 2011. Much of this is at WIE.
- Strategic Policy PS11 – Biodiversity. Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature reserves where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced.
- Policy GDP1 – Development Objectives. All new development should:

  a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the locality.

  b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.

  c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.

  d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.

  e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.

  f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.

  g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.

  h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.

  i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site. Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.

j) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site. Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.

k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

- Policy EC4 – Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands. Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape.
- Policy EC9 - Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.
- Policy EC12 – Development and Flood Risk. Development (including the raising of land) within defined flood plains will only be permitted if it:

  a) would not be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding on-site; and/or

  b) does not result in an unacceptable risk of flooding on or off-site; and/or

  c) does not adversely affect flood management or maintenance schemes
- Policy E1 – Employment Allocations. Sufficient land will be allocated for employment development between 2001 and 2011 at WIE. A number of specific sites / allocations are listed (21 in number)
- Policy E4 Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements. Employment development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to Policy GDP1. We interpret unannotated land to be the same as land not specifically identified or allocated for development.
- Policy T8 – Parking. Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate.

6.13 The relevant extract from the WUDP's proposals map is as follows:

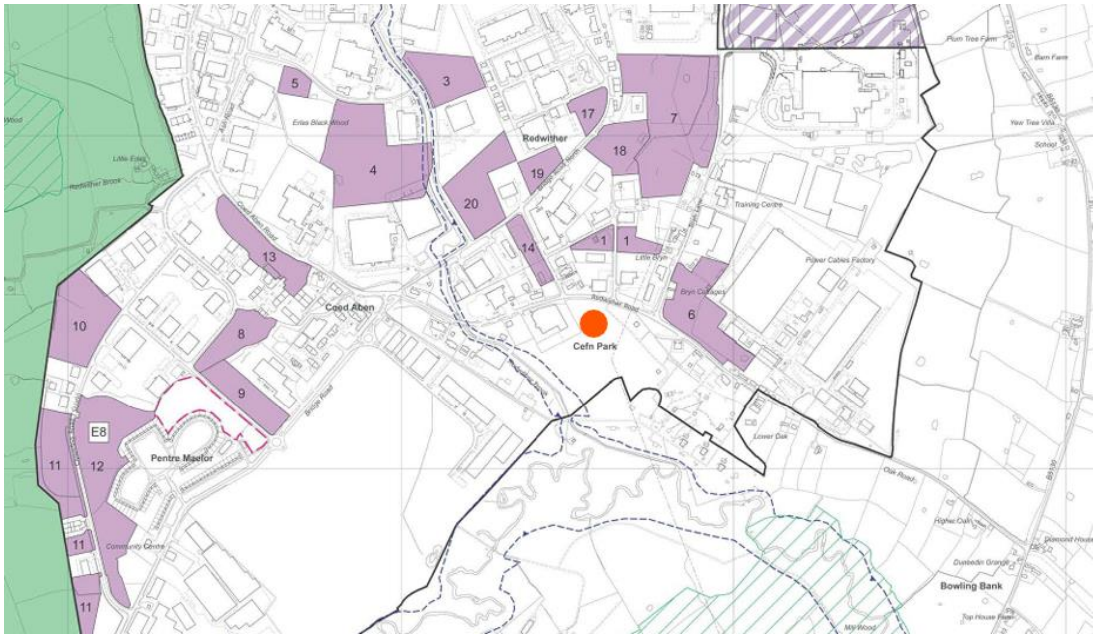


Figure 6.1: relevant extract from WUDP proposals map. The location of the proposed headquarters unit for HIAB is identified through the red dot (our addition)

6.14 From the proposals map it can be seen that the majority of the application site is within the defined development curtilage of WIE, particularly the section along Oaks Road, where the HIAB unit is proposed. The plan also clearly shows historic developments associated with the site's development history, which adds weight to our view that the site can and should be treated as previously developed land.

Wrexham LDP

6.15 Based on pre-application advice provided by the Council in XXXX, policies of the WLDP considered relevant are as follows:

- Policy SP2 – Location of Development. New development is directed to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map.
- Policy SP8 – Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise. To ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region, the Plan will diversify the local economy and widen the economic base by allocating land for development at several locations including WIE.
- Policy SP9 – Wrexham Industrial Estate. Wrexham Industrial Estate as shown on the proposals map is the County Borough's Key Business Sector Area and will be the primary focus for new employment development over the plan period for class B1, B2 and B8 employment. Land is also protected on the estate for a strategic ecological network for a number of local, national and internationally protected species and habitat.
- Policy SP14 – Natural Environment. Development will only be permitted where it seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment including areas specifically designated because of their respective profiles and qualities.

- Policy SP16 – Minerals Supply and Safeguarding. Minerals will be sustainably managed through a series of initiatives and policy drivers.
- SP19 – Green Infrastructure. Wrexham's distinctive natural heritage provides a network of green and blue infrastructure. Protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage networks needs to be reconciled with the benefits of development. Development will be required to maintain the extent, quality and connectivity of multifunctional green infrastructure on or near a site, and, where appropriate to enhance it.
- Policy MW3: Sustainable Supply of Minerals. Areas where proposals for mineral extraction are unlikely to be acceptable are identified on the Proposals Map as Extraction Exclusion Areas.
- Policy EM4 – Employment Development Outside Settlement Limits. New employment development outside of settlement limits will usually only be permitted if it involves the conversion of an existing building or where if it is required in connection with a rural enterprise subject to criteria forming part of the policy.
- Policy NE1 – International and National Nature Designations. Development likely to significantly affect any protected site of international importance, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will be subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). Development will only be permitted where it is possible to ascertain no adverse effect on the integrity of the habitat or site or where there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and compensatory measures are secured. Permission for development likely to impact the special features of a Nationally Designated Site will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where appropriate compensation can be provided. Development likely to affect any protected species will only be permitted when there is no satisfactory alternative and if there is no detrimental impact to the maintenance of the population concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range. The proposals must adequately demonstrate that they are for the purposes of preserving public health or safety or reasons of overriding public interest.
- Policy NE2 – Local Nature and Geological Designations. Development which adversely affects the nature conservation and/or geological importance of locally designated sites, habitats and species will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development which avoids nature conservation impacts; and compensation measures are designed to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature or geological conservation value of the site.
- Policy NE3 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows. Development will only be permitted where it does 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.
- Policy NE6 – Waste Water and Water Quality. All new development will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in particular through the treatment of waste water. To ensure no adverse

effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC, development creating waste water discharges will be required to demonstrate there is no increase in phosphorus levels in the SAC. This can be achieved through implementation of mitigation measures and associated supplementary planning guidance. Mitigation will involve, either delivery of measures specified in the Dee Catchment Phosphorus Reduction Strategy (DCPRS) or using alternative mitigation approaches to those mentioned above. Where further evidence demonstrates that adverse effects on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC can be avoided using alternative mitigation, these must be agreed with the Council, in consultation with Natural Resources Wales.

- Policy DM1 – Development Management. This is a very detailed policy which sets out expectations for new development regarding a number of planning, development and land use considerations including character and local distinctiveness; impact on amenity; pollution (all types); community safety; transportation; sustainability; flood risk / flooding; renewable energy and use of materials and regarding former coal mining.
- Policy T1 – Transport. Proposals for new development will be supported where they focus on use of sustainable modes; mitigate effects; don't comprise safety; provide appropriate levels of parking; cater for people with restricted mobility and require applications to be supported by transport assessments and travel plans.
- Policy MW1 – Minerals Safeguarding. Non-mineral development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas as defined on the proposals map will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that, inter alia, the mineral underlying the site does not merit extraction.

6.16 The relevant extract from the WLDP is as follows. In the plan the site is allocated as part of the Wrexham Industrial Estate Strategic Ecological Network to which Policy SP9 applies and Energy Mineral Extraction Exclusion Area subject to Policies SP16 and MW3:

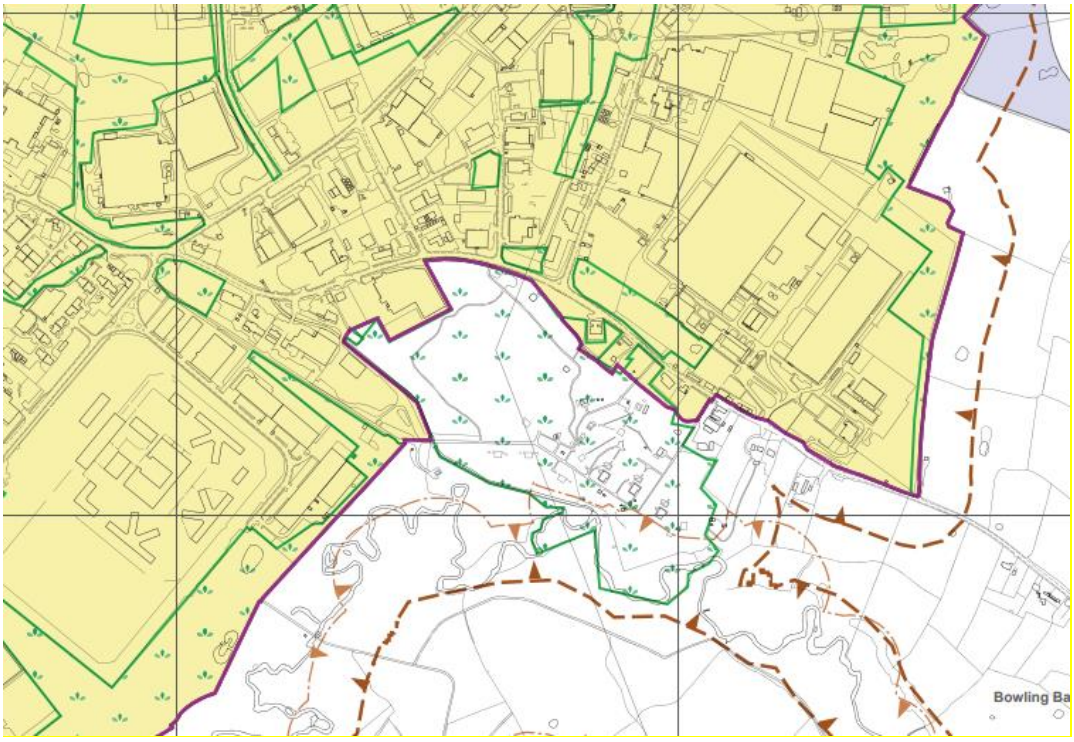


Figure 6.1: relevant extract from WLDPO proposals plan

Local Planning Guidance Notes

6.17 Those considered relevant by the council and highlighted through pre-application advice are as follows:

- LPG16: Parking. This sets out guidance on appropriate car parking standards for a range of land uses.
- LPGN17: Trees and development. This sets out how proposed developments should respect and incorporate trees in new developments and circumstances for new tree planting.
- LPGN26: Landscape and Industrial Development. This sets out the need for landscaping in new industrial development and provides guidance on appropriate landscaping initiatives.
- LPGN32: Employment Development and Nature Conservation. This sets out how new employment development should deliver what has become known as biodiversity improvements.
- LPG32: Biodiversity and Development. Covers the need for new development to respect and deliver biodiversity benefits.

Planning Policy Wales and TANs

Planning Policy Wales

6.18 Key relevant guidance and policy on employment development and related topics, much summarised given the length of PPW, is as follows:

- Achieving well-being through placemaking - sustainable places are the goal of the land use planning system in Wales; they are the output of the planning system rather than the process of achieving them.
- Maximising well-being and sustainable places through placemaking - placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings. It applies to major developments and creating new places as well as smaller developments created within a wider place.
- Key planning principles – these cover growing the economy in a sustainable way; making best use of resources; facilitating accessible and healthy environments; creating and sustaining communities; maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact.
- Placemaking in action involves a range of initiatives and expectations including:
  - Good design – good design makes better places and planning should deliver good quality, well designed developments;
  - Promoting healthier places – planning should promote healthier places and communities and planning can play a role in delivery of this;
  - The Welsh Language and placemaking –support of the promotion of the Welsh Language and Welsh communities and the role of planning in delivering these objectives;
  - Sustainable management of natural resources – promotes the sustainable management of natural resources and sets out the role of planning in delivering this;
  - Strategic placemaking – this is an important component of the delivery of successful and sustainable development and all developments should have regard to this advice;
  - Spatial strategy and site search sequence – sets out the ideal spatial strategy and site search sequence so as to make the best use of land resources and ensure development has positive effects;
  - Accessibility - all development should be accessible and the emphasis should be on reducing trips and use of sustainable modes;
  - Previously developed land – sets out benefits of using previously developed land before greenfield land;

  - Supporting infrastructure – development should only be supported if it benefits from existing relevant infrastructure and, if not, necessary new infrastructure can be provided.

- Active and social places – development should contribute to promoting social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being by providing well-connected and cohesive communities
- Moving within and between places - the planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport
- Productive and enterprising places - productive and enterprising places are those which promote the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the country by providing well-connected employment and sustainable economic development.
- Economic infrastructure - the productive and enterprising places theme of planning policy covers economic development, physical infrastructure, energy and the efficient use of resources. It includes the development of land necessary for economic activity, including traditional office and industrial development, rural enterprise and tourism, and the transport infrastructure and communication systems necessary to make those developments sustainable and work effectively.
- Transportation infrastructure – the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure is essential in order to build prosperity, tackle the climate emergency, reduce airborne pollution and to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- Economic development - for planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long-term prosperity, jobs and incomes. The planning system should ensure that the growth of output and employment in Wales as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic uses. Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services. Economic land uses also include construction, energy, minerals, waste and telecommunications sectors which are also sensitive to planning policy.
- Reduce energy demand and use of energy efficiency - the planning system should support new development that has very high energy performance, support decarbonisation, tackle the causes of the climate emergency, and adapt to the current and future effects of climate change through the incorporation of effective mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Making best use of material resources and promoting the circular economy - placemaking embraces the inter-relationships between the built and natural environment.
- Recognising the special characteristics of places - the distinctive and natural places theme of planning policy topics covers historic environment, landscape, biodiversity,

geodiversity and habitats, coastal characteristics, air quality, soundscape, water services, flooding and other environmental (surface and sub-surface) risks.

- The historic environment - the planning system should look to protect and enhance the historic environment which is made up of individual historic features collectively known as historic assets (statutory designated assets and local assets).
- Green infrastructure - green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Planning should protect and maximise the value of such assets.
- Biodiversity and ecological networks - the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement.
- Water and flood risk - Flood risk management is a critical role of planning and development should minimise scope for flood risk.
- Air quality and soundscape - clean air and an appropriate soundscape contribute to a positive experience of place as well as being necessary for public health, amenity and well-being.
- Lighting – planning should balance the provision of lighting to ensure developments can operate effectively and enhance safety and security to help in the prevention of crime and to allow activities like sport and recreation to take place.

6.19 Unlocking potential by taking a de-risking approach - understanding the barriers to unlocking the potential of places, including the transformation or regeneration of an area or the development of a single site, is a key part of achieving sustainable places.

Technical Advice Notes

6.20 PPW is supplemented by a number of technical advice notes (TANs) which remain applicable. Relevant TANs are listed below. As these are topic specific and technical in content, their key provisions are summarised in the technical reports of the consultants that have prepared related support documents in support of the planning application:

- TAN 5: Nature conservation and planning (September 2009). This sets out guidance on the interaction of development with nature conservation and how planning should deliver benefits. Much of its guidance is updated through The National Plan and PPW.
- TAN12: Design (March 2016). This sets out the benefits of good quality development and the need for new development to deliver on these aspirations.
- TAN18: Transport (March 2008). This sets out the need for new development to incorporate appropriate new transport infrastructure and ensure any impacts are mitigated.
- TAN23: Economic Development (2014). This sets out national objectives regarding economic development. Local Planning Authorities should assess the economic value of proposals, including job creation and contribution to policy goals. LPAs should assess

the economic value of proposals, including job creation and contribution to policy goals. Economic benefits should be balanced with social and environmental considerations. TAN23 aims to help local planning authorities (LPAs) make informed decisions that support:

- Wealth creation.
- Job generation.
- Income growth.

It complements Planning Policy Wales (PPW) by offering detailed advice on integrating economic development into planning processes. It is designed to encourage and facilitate use and development of land suitable for economic development. LPAs are advised to steer development to sustainable locations and support flexibility in planning decisions to accommodate evolving economic needs.

Other planning policy considerations

6.21 The WLDP is now un-adopted by the Council. This suggests its policies should be given no or little weight planning decisions. However, one policy we do regard to be of some relevance, given the principles it establishes, and these are embodied in the proposed development, is Policy NE6: Waste Water and Water Quality. This states as follows:

- Policy NE6: Waste Water and Water Quality – All new development will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in particular through the treatment of waste water.

  To ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC, development creating waste water discharges will be required to demonstrate there is no increase in phosphorus levels in the SAC.

  This can be achieved through implementation of mitigation measures and associated supplementary planning guidance. Mitigation will involve, either:

  i. Delivery of measures specified in the Dee Catchment Phosphorus Reduction Strategy (DCPRS), which will require:

  a) Developer contributions/community infrastructure levy funds to deliver measures identified within the DCPRS to reduce phosphorus levels within the catchment;

  b) Phasing of development to meet the delivery milestones within the DCPRS, and delaying development if milestones have not been met;

  Or

  ii. Using alternative mitigation approaches to those mentioned in 1. above. Where further evidence demonstrates that adverse effects on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC can be avoided using alternative mitigation, these must be agreed with the Council, in consultation with Natural Resources Wales

7 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Update on proposed development

7.1 On 20 August 2025 an amended drawing pack was provided to the Council. The list of the amended drawings are as follows:

- 1256-MCAU-P.02-00-000-P2 - Existing Site Location Plan
- 1256-MCAU-P.02-00-001-P14 - Proposed Site Plan
- 1256-MCAU-P.03-0G-001-P6 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 1256-MCAU-P.03-01-001-P5 - Proposed First Floor Plan
- 1256-MCAU-P.03-0R-001-P4 - Proposed Roof Plan
- 1256-MCAU-P.04-001-P4 - Proposed Sections
- 1256-MCAU-P.05-001-P4 - Proposed Elevations

7.2 The proposed amendments are minor and relate solely to the finish and appearance of the offices in terms of use of materials and window profiles, extending the main roof between points 10 and 11 (see Drawings Nos. 1256-MCAU-P.03-0R-001-P4 Proposed Roof Plan & 1256-MCAU-P.05-001-P4 0 Proposed Elevations). The site layout and key details of the proposed development remain as previously was the case and as set out in the original planning statement.

7.3 The minor amendments are very minor and new drawings have been prepared so as to align with HIAB driven requirements following it having entered into an Agreement for Lease (AFL) with the applicant on the proposed development. It desired that the drawings listed in that document alignment with those forming part of the planning application. The AFL strengthens HIAB's committed to the site and proposed development, lending further weight and support to the economic and investment case that sits behind the application proposals.

Key elements of overall development proposals

7.4 The proposed development comprises two key elements as follows:

- High quality green eco-heritage zone designed to deliver a wide range of environmental, ecology, BNG and heritage benefits so as to deliver the site's designation in the WLDP.
- Small, discrete sustainable headquarters and production unit comprising assembly, manufacturing, warehousing elements and offices for HIAB which interacts and makes best use of the proposed green eco-heritage park.

7.5 We now consider in more detail each element of the overall development proposal

High quality green eco-heritage park

7.6 Key elements of the proposed high quality green eco-heritage zone are as follows:

- Of the total available site area, 22.2 ha (54.7 acres), the green eco-heritage park will dominate the site and utilise 18.4 ha (45 acres) of the available site area.
- Ecology elements will aim to preserve the existing locally listed heritage assets. We would stress that the area will extend to 18.4 ha (45 acres).
- Create a more open profile for this land – it is currently overgrown which impacts on its ecological value.
- Remove / manage bramble and invasive species.
- Foster / create habitats for at least four species of bat.
- Foster rabbit grazed short-sward grassland to support meadow-rue, pepper saxifrage, grass vetchling and dyer's greenweed.
- Retain significant buildings, storage facilities and access tracks. Other features to be retained include a former concrete water storage tank built in the 1940s which has now filled with aquatic vegetation. Nowadays the tank function as a wildlife pond and contains good populations of great crested newts, an internationally protected amphibian.
- [redacted]
- Dense scrub is now the most abundant habitat on site which supports a significant assemblage of breeding birds with at least 20 songbird species present. This is to be managed.
- Create habitats to support rare invertebrates that are found in areas of previously disturbed ground and open grasslands. Species include Clouded Daisy Fly (oxyna nebulosa), a spider-hunting wasp (priocnemis exaltata) and Red-Girdled Mining Bee (andrena labiata).
- The green eco-heritage zone will be sensitive, sustainable, proportionate and targeted to maximise the potential of its future biodiversity value.
- Proposals will also seek to recover and enhance some of the irreplaceable open-mosaic habitats which have significantly declined due to the successional process of scrub encroachment. Full details of the green eco-zone will be worked up in discussion with the council's team of ecologists.
- Delivery and management of the facility controlled through any grant of planning permission (by planning conditions and obligations in a s106 agreement). It is planned that the facility, as with other similar FIREM ecology initiatives at WIE, will be manged by a local wildlife organisation, with the agreement of this organisation, FIREM and the council.

Headquarters and production facility for HIAB

7.7 Main elements of the proposed small discrete headquarters development are as follows:

- Discrete development site for headquarters facility on only 3.6 ha (9 acres) of the overall site.
- Main assembly/manufacturing/warehouse unit.
- Integral offices.
- Internal welfare facilities.
- External caged storage area.
- Fenced test area.
- Separate vehicular access and egress off Oak Road.
- Circulation roads.
- Car parking.
- HGV parking.
- EVCPs.
- Yard areas and unloading/loading bays.
- High quality but discrete means of enclosure.
- High quality drainage/SUDS system.
- Retention of most mature trees on site and new tree planting and landscaping.

Layout of the proposed development

7.8 The proposed layout of the development is as follows:



Figure 6.1: envisaged layout of proposed development

Floorspace, height and car parking details

7.9 Details are set out in table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: Floorspace and Car parking Details		
Floorspace		
Description/Use	***SQM***	***SQFT***
Total floorspace main unit (with integral offices)	7,179	77,276
Parking		
Car parking standard spaces	77	
Car parking disabled	5	
HGV spaces	70	
Cycles parking	10 spaces	
EVCPs	10	
Unit heights		
To haunch	10 m	
To ridge	12 m	

Appearance and elevational design

7.10 The unit will be contemporary in terms of architectural style and the colour of the cladding system is likely to follow the corporate colours of the planned occupier.

Drainage

7.11 The site/development will include a high-quality drainage system which will follow the principles of a SUDS system which will deal with foul and surface water subject to further discussions with NRW and WW on scope of design and details of design.

Landscaping and tree planting

7.12 The entire development will be landscaped to a high standard which will involve new tree planting, replacement tree planting, shrub and low-level planting and associated works.

8 RELATED PLANNING MATTERS

Need for EIA

8.1 The profile of the application site considered alongside the nature and scale of the proposed development suggests that the planning application does not need to be supported by an Environmental Statement ("ES") setting out the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") of the proposed development. This is agreed with the Council.

Pre-application advice

8.2 The applicant sought formal pre-application advice on the proposed development from the officers of the council. This involved the following:

- Application for formal pre-application advice supported by pre-app planning statement, pre-app DAS, site plan, proposed layout plan and related information on HIAB and the site.
- Formal response from the council in letter dated 11/10/224.

8.3 A summary of feedback provided is as follows:

- Relevant planning framework set out in section 8 including policies of WLDP.
- Planning history of the site.
- Principle of development – no in principle policy support for the proposed development nor in accordance with the LDP.
- Employment land / development – already a sufficient supply.
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Benefit - whilst the creation of an 'Eco-Heritage Zone' is considered positive in principle, in the absence of any survey / assessment information regarding the current status and value of the site, and in the absence of any details regarding the make-up, design and nature of this zone, it is not possible to say with any certainty whether or not this would be viewed as sufficient mitigation, restoration and management of the site to such an extent that overcomes the overall concerns with the loss of this habitat and Wildlife Site.
- Trees – Arboriculture / tree report needed as will a detailed landscaping scheme.
- Highways impacts – Further consideration needed but no immediate concerns raised by Highway Authority and a transport report / assessment required in support of application
- Sustainable transport – sustainable transport links and measures need to be considered and promoted.
- Flood risk – No FRA provided so cannot comment in detail. FRA needed and also Flood Consequence Assessment and also SAB approval for the scheme if it were to proceed.
- Waste collection – needs to be taken into account and a waste management strategy needs to be provided.

- Air quality – no concerns raised at this stage. An AQR needed with application. EVCPs needed as part of application proposals.
- Land contamination – Ground Investigation and Remedial Measures Investigation Assessment needed in support of the application. For clarity the assessment is likely to require the following elements: identification of any remedial measures required to deal with any hazards identified; a Remediation Strategy (where necessary), including remediation options appraisal; and a verification plan and report.
- Sand and gravel safeguarding area - part of the proposal site lies within a Sand and Gravel Safeguarding Area, where LDP policies SP16 and MW1 apply. Policy SP16 protects such mineral from unnecessary sterilisation, unless the requirements of policy MW1 can be met where it can be demonstrated that:

  i. the mineral does not merit extraction;

  ii. the need for the development outweighs the need to protect the mineral;

  iii. the mineral can be extracted before development commences;

  iv. the development is temporary in nature;

  v. infrastructure for the supply of the mineral would not be compromised
- Benefits of development – list of benefits extensive but could be delivered elsewhere on other employment land.
- Conclusion - at the present time the officers did not believe that a departure application for the development of the site as presented is justified, neither did they consider the case for the application was good enough to warrant the granting of an application for the development. As such, whilst this does not prohibit an application, it is considered that such an application would be unlikely to receive officer support. Although the final judgement and decision would to be made by Wrexham Planning Committee.
- Submission requirements – these were confirmed as follows:
  - Completed Application Form;
  - Location Plan;
  - Site Plan;
  - Existing Plans;
  - Proposed plans including layout, elevations, section and levels;
  - Sewerage Line Mapping;
  - Landscape Scheme – hard and soft details, including a planting plan;
  - Biodiversity Matrix and mitigation measures to demonstrate Biodiversity Net
  - Benefit;
  - Drainage Strategy;

- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Flood Consequence Assessment;
- Ecological Appraisal;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Waste management strategy;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Land Contamination Assessment and Remedial Measures Report;
- Tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Construction Surface Water Drainage Management Plan;
- Transport Statement and Travel Plan
- Service Parking management Plan

- EIA screening opinion – recommended

Requirement for and outcome of pre-application consultation

8.4 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) sets out the need for developers to carry out statutory pre-application consultation ("PAC") on planning applications for major developments in Wales. The definition of major development is set out in Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 ("DMPWO"). It covers the provision of a building(s) larger than 1,000 sqm which is the case here

8.5 PAC was carried out by running an online exhibition of the proposed development which provided links to the planning application package (related drawings and technical reports). PAC started in early April 2025 and the online exhibition was available for viewing and responding on for a period in excess of 28 days prior to submission of the application. Relevant consultees, representatives of the council, along with local councillors, local parish councils, local businesses and local residents were invited to visit the site and comment on the proposals.

8.6 Overall, officer responses received reflected many those made at pre-application stage; similarly, this was the case regarding those received from consultees. There were few substantive responses made by members of the public or other local organisations.

9 BENEFITS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Socio Economic and social value benefits

Socio economic benefits

9.1 FIREM commissioned Metro Dynamics to undertake an assessment of the of the proposed development to ascertain the range measure of socio-economic benefits it would deliver. This is provided in support of the planning application as a separate stand alone document. what follows is a summary of its key findings.

- Headline figures:
  - £167m total gross economic value generated over 30 years through construction and post-delivery phases
  - 225 long-term created / safeguarded jobs in / for Wrexham
  - £76m total gross economic generated in first 10 years of project
- Construction:
  - 40 new jobs created (FTEs) over 15 months
  - £5m GVA generated from construction jobs, supply chain and local spend over construction period
  - Contributions to longer term workforce and skills through apprentices
- Operation:
  - £162 GVA created over a 30-year timeline through operational jobs, indirect and indirect impacts
  - 114 direct jobs created / safeguarded and another 111 through supply chains and local spending
- Placemaking and community:
  - Amenity benefits through public realm
  - High quality development
  - Wider environmental benefits of biodiversity and energy efficient building
- Potential new positions:
  - Management/Leadership positions Team Leaders/Supervisor Workshop Engineer
  - Application Engineers
  - Technical Engineers Parts & Logistic Service Controllers
  - Sales & Key Account Management
  - Health & Safety Quality Finance

- Human Resource
- IT

- There will also be training and apprenticeship schemes as follows:
  - Workshop Engineer Apprenticeships - opportunity to become skilled at installation of Hiab products working towards a level 3 Engineering Technician Apprenticeship.
  - Field Service Engineer Apprenticeships - opportunity to become skilled in fault find, maintain, service and repair along with working on mechanical, electrical and hydraulic systems.
  - Application Engineer Apprenticeships - opportunity to become a skilled application/design engineer working towards Mechanical Engineering qualifications.
  - Local research and innovation - HIAB is regarded as the world's leading provider of on-road load handling equipment and related intelligent services and smart and connected solutions to this type of equipment. It has a reputation for innovation and engineering excellence. Although details have to be one of the worked up, the business has a reputation for working with partners operating in similar sectors, this so as to be at the forefront of research and development into new equipment and engineering solutions. This also extends to working with universities and higher education colleges offering courses in engineering. Local universities and colleges in and around Wrexham in North Wales are likely to benefit from HIAB having its HQ in the City.

Social values

9.2 FIREM has experience of working with council's like Wrexham Council, working with its partners, to deliver a wide range of high quality social values. These can be delivered through a social values delivery plan which FIREM, working with HIAB, would be prepared to agree to. These would apply over the construction and post development and into operational stages of the project.

New guaranteed future for site

9.3 Currently, the applicant site is land that is unused. It is land that it is not in beneficial use. This is even though it once formed part of a massive munitions factory and it is within the development curtilage of WIE (see section 6).

9.4 It is land that is regularly trespassed on and used for informal but unauthorised activities ranging from tipping and other anti-social activities to dog walking. In the absence of the proposed development there is no prospect it will be utilised for beneficial.

9.5 It is our view that, in the absence of the proposed development, the application site has an uncertain future.

9.6 In the WUDP the site is unallocated but within the defined curtilage of WIE. Employment development in such locations, subject to satisfying other policies, can be regarded as

acceptable in principle. In the WLDP the site is allocated so that the land should form part of WIE's strategic ecology network. However, no further details are provided as to what this policy actually means or desires in a practical sense, including how the perceived ecology value of the land will be secured, managed and delivered into the long term future.

9.7 In section 10 we comment further on what these policies mean and how much weight they should attract, but setting this aside for the moment, and working on the assumption both are relevant to differing degrees and both carry weight, it is a sensible conclusion to come to that what both policies desire or support at and for the site can be delivered through the proposed development. By this we mean a small part of the site will be developed for employment uses and the remaining, larger part of the site, promoted as a high quality ecology asset thus meeting the desired need of it to become a valuable part of the WIE strategic ecology network.

9.8 In essence, the planning application and the proposed development it seeks planning permission for will transform the site and deliver a major beneficial development in the form of a small but high quality headquarters building for an international business and a local ecology and heritage resource, thus providing a new high quality and guaranteed future for the site into the long term.

Wholesale improvements to site

9.9 The site will be improved in a way that, in the absence of this planning application, can simply not be contemplated. It will be improved in a very impressive and wholesale way. It will go from being an unused and we would say unsightly liability to a high quality managed asset.

Management of site

9.10 The proposed improvements to the site, namely the green elements of the planning application, i.e., the eco-heritage park, will be delivered through a combination of planning conditions and legal agreement, the latter of which offers potential for the long term retention and management of the green elements of the proposed development for a period up to 30 years.

Profile building

9.11 Having a high quality renowned company like HIAB at WIE, like the other truly international companies at WIE, will contribute to profile building of the estate and the fact that Wrexham is a fantastic place to set up in and to do business in.

Ecology, BNG and heritage benefits

9.12 Ecology and BNG benefits are as follows:

- Preserve of the existing locally listed heritage assets.
- Recording and opening up of locally listed heritage assets.

- Preservation and improvement of priority habitats including woodland, dense scrub and flower rich-grasslands.
- Better interaction with River Clywedog which borders the site to the south adding increased biological value and morphological interest.
- Clearing of bramble and willow at original munitions buildings to the east of development site to support four species of bats / colonies.
- Improvements to rabbit grazed short-sward grassland.
- Improved habitats to facilitate notable botanical species including meadow-rue, pepper saxifrage, grass vetchling and dyer's greenweed.
- Retention of former concrete water storage tank built in the 1940s which has now filled with aquatic vegetation as it functions as a wildlife pond which contains good populations of great crested newts.
- [redacted]
- Dense scrub to be retained but managed to supports a significant assemblage of breeding birds with at least 20 songbird species present.
- Rare invertebrates found in areas of previously disturbed ground and open grasslands to be supported. Species include Clouded Daisy Fly (oxyna nebulosa), a spider-hunting wasp (priocnemis exaltata) and Red-Girdled Mining Bee (andrena labiata).
- Management of the facility in a formal way and into the long term future.

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Introduction

10.1 In this section we set out our planning assessment of the planning application and the development it promotes and in so doing set out the planning case in support of the application.

10.2 In Wales, decisions on planning applications, by reference to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

10.3 The planning documents that form the development plan are set out in section 6 of the replacement planning statement. Material planning considerations, also covered at section 6, include PPW and Technical Advice Notes (TANs), and usual planning, development and land use considerations.

10.4 Those who take decisions on planning applications have to interpret planning policy as written and come to a clear and coherent conclusion regarding how much emphasis to place on material planning considerations.

10.5 Based on the above, the approach we follow to carry out our assessment of the planning application and the proposed development is as follows:

- As many applying development plan policies cover matters relating to usual planning, development and land use related considerations, so as to assist our assessment of whether the planning application accords with said policies, we first assess the planning application against key material considerations in the form of usual planning, development and land use considerations.
- We follow this with an assessment of whether the application generally accords with PPW and relevant TANs as they also material considerations.
- We then consider whether the application generally accords with relevant development plan policy of relevance (as identified in section 6).

10.6 As set out in section 6 regarding weight to be attributed to the now unadopted WLDP, based on advice of learned counsel, while it is now only a material consideration in planning decisions, nonetheless we give moderate weight to relevant policies. And regarding weight to be given to relevant policies of the WUDP, while it is out of date and as such does not merit the full weight an adopted development plan would attract, nonetheless at the Council's behest it now forms part of the development plan for Wrexham, and some of its policies remain reasonably consistent with national policy, suggesting it is appropriate to give it differing weight depending upon policy contexts and circumstances. In essence, we give policies either great, moderate or limited weight depending upon the actual policy and related contexts and circumstances, while taking into account what the more recent WLDP says about the same subject. In all cases, when applying appropriate weight, to both sets of policies we do this fairly and professionally.

Usual planning, development and land use considerations

Key basis of application proposals – enabling development case

10.7 It is important to make the point at the outset of our assessment of the planning application and the development it promotes is the fact the overall proposal comprises a single, relatively small, employment unit, to be used by HIAB as a new HQ facility. This development is on only 18% of the overall site area. The remaining 82% will be given over to a large high quality eco-heritage zone.

10.8 The composition of the development proposal was specifically designed to reflects how the site is treated in the WLDP. It also reflects early discussions with HIAB. It welcomed the opportunity for its planned new HQ to be located adjacent a high quality eco-heritage zone. This reflets the profile of other similar facilities in other parts of the world. Such facilities are typically used and enjoyed by members of staff.

10.9 In essence, the development proposal was designed to meet the key expectations of policy in the then local arm of the development plan for the area, and those of the prospective occupier of the employment unit.

10.10 While the WLDP now only warrants moderate weight as it no longer forms part of the development plan, and it is our position that site related policies of the WUDP should also attract moderate weight, which effectively sees both sets of site related policies balanced out, it is clear that a relatively small employment development is enabling a much larger area of the overall application site to be brought forward as a high quality eco-heritage zone. In essence, the HQ unit, which is the only part of the scheme to generate value, is playing the role of an enabling development with regard to the eco-heritage zone as this element of the overall development generates no value.

10.11 And as we have also set out, what the WLDP wants for the site, a strategic ecology asset, least on the vast majority of it, is delivered through the proposed development. And what the WUDP suggests is appropriate for most of the site in development terms, namely employment developments, is delivered on part of it (only 18% of the site area). In essence, what both plans want for the site, albeit one is adopted and forms part of the development but because of its age does not attract full weight, and the other one is now unadopted but up to date meaning it too carries weight but not full wight, is delivered through this proposals. And because the built development effectively funds the eco-heritage zone and related green benefits also means, that, while it is our position that development plan policy is accorded with, the development can also be justified by reference to an enabling development case.

10.12 This is an important factor to be given considerable weight in support of the planning application.

Profile of WIE

10.13 Since WIE was first created it has become the largest and most important industrial/employment zone in North Wales if not the Country. The estate currently extends to over 550 hectares and is home to major manufacturing, assembly, processing, light and general industrial sectors along with warehousing and distribution operations.

10.14 WIE is the key location for growth in the industrial and employment sectors in Wrexham. This is acknowledged by the council. The council's economic development strategy and development and growth strategies in The National Plan and WUDP identify WIE as the key focus for economic and employment growth now and in future years. WIE is marketed as the place to come to if you wish to establish and grow and develop an industrial business. These are key reasons why HIAB has taken the decision to relocate its key UK operation to WIE.

10.15 The reason for raising these points is directly relevant to the proposed development in that it delivers an important economic development and through this a valuable strategic ecological resource.

Principle of development and previously developed land considerations

10.16 This is a matter we have a different view to the council on. This is by reference to feedback provided through the council's pre-application response on the proposed development (see section 8). The council's view is that the principle of development is not established nor that the application site is previously developed.

10.17 The site formed part of the extensive ROF Wrexham complex which was begun in 1939 and completed in 1941. This part of the ROF complex was involved in the manufacture and storage of cordite and TNT for use in munitions. This required the construction of a number of specialist manufacturing and storage buildings. This reflected the uses that these buildings were to be put to. Most these buildings, all in different states of disrepair, remain in situ, particularly the largest ones. Accordingly, it is fact that the site formed part of a significant extensive built development. The buildings developed during WW2 remain in situ albeit they are in a poor state of repair which can be rectified.

10.18 The site's historic use and development history and the fact it remains partially developed, suggests that parts of the site can be regarded as having the status of previously developed/brownfield land, which contributes to our view that the principle of development at the site is established. And the majority of the application site forms part of the wider defined WIE in the Wrexham UDP including as land available for development.

10.19 Overall, it is our view that the principle of development at the site, least the majority of it, is well established, and parts of the site can be regarded as having the status of previously developed/brownfield land. This carries weight as a material consideration in the determination of the planning application, particularly if for employment uses given the site is part of WIE, where new employment development is directed.

Profile of proposed development.

10.20 As we have set out in detail in section 7, the overall proposed development comprises two key components. The main component in terms of land take is the green eco-heritage park. This accounts for 82% of the total site area or 18.3 ha (45 acres) of the total of 22.2 ha (54.7acres). The area proposed to be developed for the HIAB unit, which effectively delivers the green eco-heritage park, and its long term management, and in this regard it arguably can be regarded as enabling development, amounts to only 3.6 ha (9 acres) or 18% of the total site area. And even then this will only be used for the development of a relatively small single high quality employment unit. This extends to 6,924 sqm (74,529 sqft). The ratio of built development (footprint) to site area (plot for HIAB) is very low 1 to 5. Typical ratios for this type of development are much higher – often 1 to 2. This is because HIAB requires areas for open storage, parking, landscaping and storage of products.

10.21 Linked to the points made above, we would also point that, in normal circumstances, a site of 22.2 ha (54.7 acres) could comfortably support in the order of 46,450 sqm (500,000 sqft of employment development (footprint), which mimics a number of similar developments across large parts of WIE.

10.22 It is clear therefore that a noteworthy aspect of the proposed development is the fact it is mainly, and by some margin, a scheme that is green and development free. Based on the treatment of the site in and by WLDP, which we accept carries moderate weight, this is a considerable asset of the proposal and one to be supported, particularly since the proposed development delivers the site's long term beneficial, managed future.

Suitability of site for the proposed development.

10.23 It is our view that The Oaks Site is eminently suitable for the proposed development.

10.24 The wider WIE is intended and almost exclusively allocated or designated in the WUDP for industrial or employment development. The Oaks Site is within the defined extent of WIE. It is our position that this aspect of the WUDP carries moderate weight. We say this since The National Plan singles out and identifies Wrexham as a location that will be promoted for considerable growth in future, and within Wrexham, WIE is also singled out as a location where economic development (all forms of employment uses and industry) should be directed. This means that how the WUDP treats this part of the WIE, despite its age, remains pertinent and current

10.25 And as we have already confirmed, the proposed development is not just biased towards employment development. Reflecting what the WLDP aspires for across the site, the proposed development includes a substantial and significant green eco-heritage zone. This affects the vast majority of the available site area (82%). This will be kept free of development and dedicated to ecological betterment and similarly with regard to the site's heritage assets. It will be maintained into the long term future.

10.26 The small element of the overall development proposal that is earmarked for built development, the headquarters and production facility for HIAB, affecting only 18% of available site area, is proposed in the north western point of the site, fronting Oaks Road, next to and opposite other industrial buildings. It is the most suitable part of the site for

development, in part because of its relationship to existing industrial developments, but also because this part of the wider site is not the most valuable in ecological terms.

10.27 The above analysis suggest that the site can be regarded as eminently suitable for the overall form, scale, mix and scale of developments and uses it is proposed for.

Relationship to adjoining uses and developments

10.28 The only potentially sensitive use that has a functional relationship to the application site is a single dwelling located approximately 50m south west of Oaks Road some 330m to the south east of the proposed siting of the headquarters building. The rear garden area adjoins part of the application site. That part of the application site which lies between the property and headquarters building is well treed and overgrown and there are a number of heritage assets. Collectively these act as a very effective visual screen and noise barrier but it must also be remembered that the distance between the two is over 330m. It should also be noted that this property appears to be linked to a terrace of small industrial unit/s directly fronting Oaks Road which are approximately 45m to the north east and within its curtilage. These are being used for vehicle repairs/maintenance, which is a general industrial use, by reference to typical activities carried on as part of the use.

10.29 There is a further dwelling, located on the eastern side of Bryn Lane, some 250m as the crow flies from the proposed headquarters building. This has no functional relationship with the application site nor will it be impacted by the development as there is a substantial industrial unit, along with landscaping and trees, between it and the only part of the application site proposed to be developed. These features will act as very effective visual screen and noise barrier. There is a further residence some 88m north east of this property. But this is also similarly screened from the application site (by existing units, trees and landscaping). We understand that there is a property that potentially remains in residential use just to the north of the River Clwydog, some 380m to the south of the headquarters building, but the effects of topography, trees and landscaping means this property has no functional relationship to the application site, nor would it be impacted by the proposed development. Indeed, a number of other major industrial operations/buildings are significantly closer.

10.30 All other uses and developments in the immediate and wider locale, including directly to north east, north and west, are in industrial use, mainly light and general industry and warehousing and distribution. It is worth pointing out that some existing industrial buildings close to or opposite the application site are significant in scale. The majority appear to have footprints between 4,645 sqm (50,000 sqft) and 9,290 sqm (100,000 sqft) but there are even larger industrial buildings nearby – a building with a footprint of 22,000 sqm (236,000 sqft) and one of 43,000 sqm (462,000 sqft) are immediately to the north east of the application site. It is our position that there is no scope for the proposed headquarters and production facility to adversely impact on sensitive and less sensitive uses in the vicinity of the site.

10.31 To summarise and conclude, the proposed development has a satisfactory relationship to adjoining uses and developments and will not adversely impact on them. This is confirmed

by the noise assessment carried out by Buro Veritas and submitted in support of the planning application.

Accessibility

10.32 The site is highly accessible and can be accessed by all modes, including public transport, car, cycle and by pedestrians/on foot, although it is acknowledged there are no larger or well established areas of residential nearby. This is confirmed in the transport report by Prime Transportation.

Transportation impacts

10.33 The planning application is supported by a detailed transportation report and related travel plan by Prime Transportation.

10.34 This confirms that the proposed development, with emphasis on the headquarters building and related production facilities for HIAB, can be satisfactorily accessed off Oaks Road. This applies to all types of vehicles that might visit the site. This includes light and heavy good vehicles, private cars, cycles and by pedestrians. This is also the case when these vehicles need to egress the development site.

10.35 In addition, it should be noted that the closest bus stop to that part of the site proposed to be developed, the headquarters and production building, is a mere 170m away, suggesting the site can be regarded as highly accessible by public transport.

10.36 The proposed level of car parking meets both the proposed operator's needs and additional information and plans confirms that arrangements can be adapted to satisfy car parking standards operated by the council. This is also the case with parking for HGVs and general internal circulation plus servicing arrangements for the planned unit.

10.37 The travel plan by Prime Transportation confirms a number of sustainable transportation measures and aspirations to be delivered through the planned development.

10.38 Overall, the transportation report by Prime Transportation concludes that all aspects of the planning application and the proposed development it seeks planning permission for, including access and egress arrangements, car parking and related traffic effects and impacts, can be regarded as acceptable and satisfying planning policy on the same.

Effects of ecology and BNG

10.39 The site has been rigorously assessed to ascertain its true ecological value, linked to how the site is treated in the development plan, by reference to the wider ecology assets of parts of WIE.

10.40 Based on assessment work by UES and discussions with the council's ecologist, the site comprises a rich mosaic of priority habitats including woodland, dense scrub and flower rich-grasslands. The site also contains a number of local heritage assets which support wildlife and contribute to the site's ecological value.

10.41 The planned green eco-heritage park, which represents the main zone of the overall application proposals, 82% of site area, will look to introduce a sensitive, sustainable, proportionate and targeted ecological resource to maximise the potential of its future biodiversity value.

10.42 The proposals will be targeted to recover and enhance some of the irreplaceable open-mosaic habitats historically found at the site but which have significantly declined due to the successional process of scrub encroachment.

10.43 The area will look to maximise the potential of the existing heritage assets, in terms of both their heritage and ecology value, ensuring their continued existence, but extending their usefulness as ecology assets.

10.44 FIREM and the planned occupier propose to work with the council and its team of ecologists, plus the likes of the North Wales Wildlife Trust, with whom FIREM is working with on other projects, to deliver this exciting aspect of the overall proposals.

10.45 Delivery of this could be controlled through use of planning condition/s and a s106 agreement.

Effects on trees

10.46 A detailed arboriculture impact assessment/tree report and landscaping plan has been prepared by MD Landscapes. These confirm that the site contains a number of mature, semi-mature and immature trees, including oaks which influenced the name of the site.

10.47 The proposed layout has been designed to maximise the number of existing trees that can be retained, although it is likely that a small number of trees will need to be removed to make way for the headquarters development. But in compensation for any trees losses this and other elements of the wider development will make provision for significant levels of replacement planting.

10.48 In addition and reflecting the fact that the bulk of the site is proposed to be developed and used as an extensive green eco-heritage zone, which in addition to the ecology biased proposals for this part of the site, will also benefit from an extensive landscaping plan and related tree strategy, which will involve the planting of new trees. This has been formulated with the input of the applicant's ecologists.

10.49 In conclusion, the overall proposals will secure the protection of many trees on site and while some trees will be removed the numbers are low but they will be replaced by new trees to be planted throughout the site.

Flood risk and drainage considerations

10.50 Barnsley Marshall were appointed to deal with flood risk and formulate a sustainable drainage strategy for the site based on the development proposals that are promoted through the planning application. Findings and related proposals are set out in through the flood risk assessment and drainage strategy and related plans.

10.51 The FRA confirms that the proposed development will not give rise to any flood risk related issues including from flooding water courses, drainage systems backing up, pooling water through excessive rainfall or flood risk associated with flooding by the sea.

10.52 The preferred drainage strategy is fully sustainable and embodies principles established and typically rolled out though SUDS related systems. The principles that the SUDS system for the site/development will follow aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the site and local environment. This will be achieved by lowering flow rates, increasing water storage capacity on site and reducing the transport of pollution to the water environment.

10.53 The SUDS system will use a sequence of techniques that together form a management train. As surface water flows through the system, flow velocity is controlled and pollutants are removed. Details of the management train, to be agreed and confirmed in conjunction with the council, NRW and Welsh Water, may include source control methods that decrease the volume of water entering the drainage local river network by intercepting run-off water from hardstandings and roofs for subsequent re-use. It is also likely to include pre-treatment steps, such as vegetated swales or filter trenches, that remove pollutants from surface water prior to discharge to watercourses or aquifers; retention systems that delay the discharge of surface water to watercourses by providing storage within ponds, retention basins or wetlands, for example, infiltration systems, such as infiltration trenches and soakaways, that mimic natural recharge, allowing water to soak into the ground.

10.54 The profile, scope and details of the proposed drainage arrangements, given they will be based on and fully embody the principles common to SUDS systems, will be scoped, discussed and agreed with the council, NRW and WW. This includes delivery and maintenance strategy and arrangements of the system.

10.55 There is also the potential, if deemed necessary by NRW and WW, for a phosphates treatment facility to be provided on site to address any related concerns. This embodies principles established through WLDP Policy NE6 (set out in full in section 6). All aspects of this possible facility could be controlled through use of planning condition/s.

Effects on heritage assets.

10.56 A detailed heritage assessment and archaeological desk based assessment of the application site have been carried out by Orion Heritage.

10.57 The assessments were prepared to provide advice to the commissioning client, FIREM, and support the planning application for the proposed development.

10.58 The assessment demonstrates that the proposed development will have no impact on the Grade II listed Pickhill Bridge (18059), the location and details of which are confirmed in the assessments. Its significance is considered to be preserved.

10.59 In addition, the assessments demonstrate that the proposed development will have no impact on the non-designated groups of buildings at Higher Oak (CPAT 146937-146941),

Lower Oak (CPAT 147333-147334), Parkey Farm (CPAT 147678-147681) and Pickhill Bridge Farm (CPAT 147939-147947).

10.60 And, finally, the assessments demonstrate that the proposed development will have no impact on a number of non-designated heritage assets located within the study site as follows: 110352 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, building SJ389491, 110353 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, pill box I SJ38954925, 110354 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, pill box II SJ391490, 110357 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, pill box V SJ387493 and 120554 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, Isycoed, Pillbox SJ389490.

10.61 While the proposed development will result in a visual change within the surroundings of the above mentioned assets, it is considered that said change will have no impact on their potential significance, which itself is considered to be limited owing to the loss of their historic function and poor maintenance. The proposed sensitive landscaping which could highlight these assets within the wider landscape would constitute a heritage benefit and as such the potential significance of these assets would be preserved in relation to the proposed development.

10.62 It is acknowledged that the proposed development will have result in the demolition of the following non-designated heritage assets located within the study site: 110358 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, pill box VI SJ386493 and 110360 Wrexham, ROF Marchwiel, pill box VIII SJ386493.

10.63 Parts of the proposed development will be located across the sites of the above mentioned pillboxes, potentially requiring their demolition. This would remove any potential heritage value associated with these pillboxes; however, they are already considered to be of limited potential significance with eroded settings and as such little harm would arise from their demolition and the construction of the proposed development across their historic footprints. The proposed sensitive landscaping across the remainder of the study site, which could highlight the remaining non-designated heritage assets associated with the ROF Marchwiel site, would constitute a heritage benefit and as such the potential limited harm arising from the demolition of the abovementioned pillboxes would be offset by the landscaping of the proposed development .

10.64 The remaining buildings and structures associated with the former ROF Marchwiel site that are located within the study area / site (listed in the Heritage Assessment), which are also not included by the Clwyd-Powys Historic Environment Record, will be incorporated within the proposed green eco-heritage zone and subject to sensitive landscaping which would highlight any extant assets within the wider landscape, constituting a heritage benefit. As these remaining structures are all of varying levels of dereliction and disuse, most are considered to be of little to no heritage value and therefore will not be impacted by the proposed development, regardless of whether they require demolition for their lack of structural integrity, or whether they can be incorporated within the wider landscaping proposals.

10.65 Overall, the effects of the development proposals on the heritage assets found at the site can be regarded as acceptable, which takes into account some small unavoidable impacts.

Proposed landscaping.

10.66 MD Landscapes have prepared a detailed high quality landscaping scheme which will be delivered across all parts of the site linked to both the proposals for the main green eco-heritage zone and also those for the HIAB headquarters and production facility.

10.67 Once the overall landscaping scheme, and related proposals for the green eco-heritage zone, are implemented, collectively they will deliver high quality green areas, new valuable habitats, and well landscaping areas, which include replacement and new tree planting. Overall, these proposals will deliver the council's aims and objectives for that part of the planned WIE strategic ecological network which straddles the site. The creation of a highly functional fully planned ecological environment for the green eco-heritage zone for this part of the site cannot be underestimated. The proposals will also set off and present in the best way possible the HIAB headquarters and production facility.

10.68 These aspects of the proposed development represent a significant benefit of the overall proposals and will greatly assist in creating a high quality, well-managed and maintained lasting ecological legacy across the vast majority of the site, and a high quality small but attractive sustainable development.

Layout and design

10.69 The proposed development will deliver development in the form of a single employment unit and a high quality green eco-heritage zone.

10.70 The proposed unit is planned to be sited in the north west corner of the site close to other well established existing employment units also accessed off Oaks Road. The green eco-heritage zone will be sites to the south east of the unit. The proposed arrangement and relationship between the unit and green zone is regarded as the optimum layout for the site in terms of what is proposed.

10.71 It is the applicant's intention to work with the council's ecologists and other related professionals to draw up very detailed plans for the green zone, potentially working in conjunction with the likes of the North Wales Wildlife Trust, which FIREM has experience of already on other sites.

10.72 The unit will be of a high quality of design and follow sustainable development principles and the development itself will use modern attractive good quality materials in its construction. The facility incorporates integral offices which will face out of the development towards Oak Road. The layout makes provision for a separate access and egress off and to Oak Road. The car parking needs of HIAB will be met. As we have already confirmed, HIAB's car parking needs are less than car parking standards suggest should be provided. Although the HIAB car parking scheme/numbers is what the planning

application seeks planning permission for, the package of application drawings includes a plan that demonstrates how additional parking could be provided. Indeed, if the council considered it appropriate any grant of planning permission could be made bespoke/personal to HIAB. And as we have already confirmed HIAB see the site to be a long term venture. In the event that, at the end of its lease, HIAB decided to vacate the site, FIREM as owner of the site, would be happy to introduce additional parking spaces to meet standards.

10.73 The yard areas of the facility will be of a high quality and functional design and afford easy access into and out of the production areas for machinery and finished products. The yard will also allow storage of built/assembled products.

10.74 As many existing trees as possible within this part of the site will be retained but the small number to be lost due to the preferred, and optimum, siting for the unit, will be replaced and supplemented by additional tree planting. The site will also be well landscaped.

10.75 The layout and design of the facility has been specifically designed to meet the production, working, staff and office needs of HIAB, and in this regard can be regarded as fully bespoke and of a high quality.

HIAB and its needs

10.76 We set out in detail in section 4, the key reasons why HIAB is planning to relocate its current headquarters from Ellesmere in Shropshire to the planned facility at The Oaks, WIE. We are of the view that the needs of HIAB for a new high quality headquarters facility , and its decision to focus on The Oaks site at WIE, are important considerations, that should be given considerable weight in the planning decision on the planning application.

10.77 HIAB set itself a brief to identify and secure a unique, high quality, well profiled site that can deliver a new headquarters and production facility with that is capable of meeting its specific production and operation needs. This is an important point in that the proposed unit that is in for planning is bespoke. It meets all of HIABs accommodation needs.

10.78 HIAB selected Wrexham, influenced by the fact it is very loyal to its employees, and in which it has made a great investment. Its employees enjoy good working conditions, training and opportunities to grow and development within the business. Accordingly, it required its new headquarters to be acceptably close to its current base at Ellesmere. Acceptable was set at being within, as the crow flies, a distance of approximately 20km (12 miles) from the old headquarters. This distance was regarded as being sufficiently close to its current base for existing staff to be a happy to make the journey to the new site. There is of course the potential that some staff living north of Ellesmere will have their journey to work reduced in distance/time terms.

10.79 In this instance the distance from the current headquarters to the new site as the crow flies is 14 km (8.4 miles), some 6km (3.6 miles) within the threshold set by HIAB. The Oaks option which HIAB has selected as its optimum location means the company can retain all of its current staff based at Ellesmere. This would not have been the case regarding the other

options considered, including Crewe (38 km away), Warrington (58 km away) and Wolverhampton (64 km away).

10.80 A key attraction of Wrexham to HIAB is that it offers opportunities to link with local colleges and universities on engineering initiatives and research opportunities. These include Wrexham University, University of Chester and Yale College. This is also the case with other local companies on WIE that operate within similar areas, including JCB and Dhollandia etc. HIAB often works directly or indirectly with companies of this ilk on engineering projects and initiatives.

10.81 HIAB is a business that started life in Scandinavia, as set out in section 3. Many of its historic sites in this part of the world, plus newer sites there and elsewhere in the world, are set within or have access to large undeveloped green areas, typically held for the benefit of its staff/employees for recreational purposes. As this continues to be a desire of HIAB, part of its brief for a new location/site for its new headquarters and main production facility was proximity to a dedicated adjacent green area. This was a key factor that made The Oaks Site a very attractive proposition to HIAB, this by reference to the fact a unique aspect of the wider site is the fact it allows not only the creation of a high quality new headquarters and production facility, but also the creation of a large green eco-heritage zone next door on the major part of the site. HIAB expects and wants to be part of the team that delivers this facility and maintains it into the longer term future, which also complements HIAB's commitments to long term environmental and sustainability objectives.

10.82 Overall, it is our position that HIAB site related requirements, which have resulted in WIE and within it The Oaks site being identified as the optimum location for its new headquarters and production facility, represents an important material consideration in support of the planning application.

Alternative sites considered

10.83 As already set out in section 4 it is our position that it is not necessary to consider the availability and suitability of other sites for the proposed development.

10.84 We say this by reference to the fact the proposed development it seeks planning permission for is directly related and bespoke to the planning application site. No other specific site or site related opportunity, regardless of where it is, or whether it is available or not, is capable of delivering what the application site can deliver. Of more importance, is the fact the site's treatment in and by WUDP means it can be considered eminently suitable for employment uses/developments.

10.85 Even if this were not to be the case, none of the alternative sites at WIE and in the wider Wrexham conurbation that were considered by us, FIREM and HIAB, came close to meeting HIAB's development and site related needs. This is a very telling point. Since if the council does not want to support HIAB's plans to relocate to The Oaks Site, HIAB will recommence its search for a suitable site/development opportunity elsewhere. There is a very good chance this will be outside of Wrexham.

Enabling development considerations

10.86 Although only a minor point given how WUDP treats the application site, the main element of the planning application in proposed development/land use terms is the green eco-heritage zone. This affects 82% of the available site area. The remaining 18% of the application site is to be used for the proposed headquarters and production facility for HIAB. This element of the wider proposals is directly related to the green eco-heritage zone as it delivers and secures the long term and maintained future of it. In essence, the element proposed on 18% of the application site, the HIAB HQ unit, facilitate the intended use and long term future of the remaining 82% of the application site, the eco-heritage zone.

10.87 Enabling uses are typically uses/developments that, because of how a site is allocated or designated, might not typically be supported or regarded as acceptable. In this instance, the WUDP supports employment development at the application, so it is not necessary to use enabling development arguments to justify the proposed HIAB unit. Nonetheless, the fact the HIAB unit delivers a significant eco-heritage zone - major planning benefit, as would an enabling development in other circumstances, should be given weight as an important material consideration.

Economic and social values benefits

10.88 TAN23: Economic Development places considerable emphasis on the delivery of developments like that proposed under the planning application which deliver economic developments. Key guidance and policy in this TAN is satisfied. And this fact should carry weight in the determination of the application.

10.89 In addition to this, there are many specific benefits that the proposed development will deliver. These are set out in detail in section 9. In summary, they fall into the categories of socio-economic benefits, particularly new high quality jobs, which generate considerable values for spending in Wrexham, social value benefits, and profile building benefits for the City of Wrexham.

10.90 Setting aside the main and most obvious benefits – delivery of what the application site is designated and intended for in WUDP, a key and we say important benefit is the fact a high quality, well known and renowned international industrial company wishes to relocate from England to Wales, Wrexham specifically, so as to set up its new UK headquarters and main production facility.

10.91 The benefits that a development proposal might deliver, assuming they are deliverable and can and will be delivered, which is the case here (through use of planning conditions and s106 agreement), are important material considerations that can and should be given weight in the determination of the planning application.

Creating a long term viable future for the site

10.92 If the application is permitted the scheme will deliver, and on the vast majority of the available site area, a valuable eco-heritage resource. If permission is withheld the site will

simply be left as it. It will become increasingly overgrown and unkempt. It will lose much of its ambient ecological value and existing heritage assets will decline and become inaccessible.

10.93 Accordingly, creating a long term viable, functional, beneficial and development plan policy compliant future of the site, which also delivers a wide range of benefits which the local community and wider borough will benefit from, should not be under estimated, and should be given great weight in the determination of the planning application.

Accordance with PPW and relevant TANs

PPW

10.94 The application will deliver a high quality development and environment and contribute towards desired placemaking principles and aspirations for creating sustainable places.

10.95 Regarding key planning principles, the development will assist in growing the economy in a sustainable way; make best use of resources; facilitate an accessible and healthy environment; create a sustainable communities; maximise environmental protection and have a limited environmental impact.

10.96 In addition, in consideration of additional placemaking aspirations, the proposed development will deliver:

- A high quality well designed development.
- The development will contribute towards delivery of a healthier place, Wrexham, and its communities.
- The development, by virtue of being in North Wales, will provide potential to enhance the Welsh Language and placemaking aspirations.
- The development will deliver sustainable management of important natural resources.
- The site is highly accessibility and transportation strategy will contribute to reducing trips and use of sustainable modes;
- It is our position that part of the application site is previously developed.
- The development will contribute to promoting social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being by providing well-connected and cohesive communities
- The development will enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport
- The development is a well-connected employment and sustainable economic development.
- The development delivers development of land considered suitable and necessary for economic activity, including traditional office and industrial development.
- The planning system expects some planning applications to deliver economic developments.

- The development recognises the special characteristics of the place – the application site, including its historic environment, landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and habitats.
- The development will deliver high quality green infrastructure which can become part of a network of natural and semi-natural features in this part of Wrexham.
- Water and flood risk can be managed effectively.

Technical Advice Notes

10.97 It is our position, by reference to the technical reports dealing with the specific topics that the relevant TANs cover, that the TANs in question can be accorded with. These are as follows:

- TAN 5: Nature conservation and planning (September 2009).
- TAN12: Design (March 2016).
- TAN18: Transport (March 2008).
- TAN23: Economic Development (2014).

Accordance with development plan policy

10.98 We now turn to consider whether the planning application by reference to the proposed development its seeks planning permission for, in part based on the assessment that precedes it, generally accords with relevant development plan policy (set out in section 6), which takes into account policy in The National Plan, WUDP and WLDP .

10.99 Relevant policy, including our assessment of whether they are generally accorded with, taking into account the points we make at the outset of this section on the appropriate weight policy attracts, is as follows:

The National Plan

- Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow, is accorded with, as one of the identified National Growth Areas, locations considered suitable for developments like that proposed through the application, is Wrexham and Deeside.
- Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking, is also considered to be generally accorded with. This is because the proposed development positively contributes towards building a sustainable place which support active and healthy lives. It also embraces urban growth and regeneration strategic placemaking principles.
- Policy 3 – Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership, is considered to be accorded with given the general aims and aspirations of the policy, which has at its heart the delivery of urban growth and regeneration, through the assembly of land, provision of infrastructure and preparation of sites for development.

- Policy 8 – Flooding is accorded with as flood risk at the application site through the proposed development is not considered an issue.
- Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure is accorded with because at the heart of the proposed development is the enhancement of biodiversity and the provision of high quality new green infrastructure.
- Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity is accorded with as the development supports sustainable growth and regeneration and will contribute towards improving and integrating active travel and public transport.
- Policy 20 – National Growth Area – Wrexham and Deeside. This is fully accorded with as the proposed development is within WIE, Wrexham's main employment zone, where developments like that proposed under the planning application should be directed.

Wrexham UDP

- Strategic Policy PS1 – Broad Location of New Development. This policy is accorded moderate weight as it reflects policy in The National Plan. It is our position that the policy is generally is accorded with because the proposed development is within a defined settlement limit/employment area, in this case the defined area of WIE.
- Strategic Policy PS3 – Broad Location of New Development. This policy is accorded moderate weight as it reflects policy in The National Plan. The policy is generally accorded with as much of the application site is previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land, and no agricultural land is affected.
- Strategic Policy PS4 – Broad Location of New Development. This policy is accorded moderate weight as it reflects policy in The National Plan. The policy is generally accorded with as the proposed development will maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network, helping to reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.
- Strategic Policy PS6 – Employment. This policy is accorded limited to moderate weight because, while it reflects policy in The National Plan, it does not reflect how WLDP treats the site. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the development proposal is a green eco-heritage zone rather than built development. This means that what the WLDP aspires to at the site can generally be delivered. And as we have already advised, the development of a small HQ facility, which performs an enabling development function, and affects only a small part of the application site, suggests that the general aims of the policy can be delivered through the proposed development.
- Strategic Policy PS11 – Biodiversity. This policy is accorded full weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and policy WLDP. It is our position that the policy is accorded with. The planning application will improve the biodiversity value of the site and deliver something akin to a new local nature reserve where the nature conservation and landscape interest of much of the application site will be protected and enhanced.

- Policy GDP1 – Development Objectives. This policy is accorded moderate weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and similar policies in WLDP. It is our position that this policy is generally accorded with because:

  a) The development is of an appropriate scale, high quality in design and has an efficient and effective layout. Use of materials and landscaping accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

  b) The need to guarantee personal and community safety and security where taken into account in the design and layout of development.

  c) The development makes best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.

  d) The development ensures safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the development, both on site and in the nearby locality.

  e) The development is located where it has convenient access to public transport.

  f) The development safeguards the environment from the adverse effects of pollution arising from development.

  g) Secure public services are available.

  h) The development safeguards wildlife and provides new habitats.

  i) The development will not result in flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination.

  k) The development contributes to the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

- Policy EC4 – Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands. This policy is accorded moderate weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and policy WLDP. It is our position that it is generally accorded with as the development provides for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and includes new planting.
- Policy EC9 - Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. This policy is accorded full weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and policy in WLDP. It is our position that the policy is accorded with as the development respects and protects buildings and features of historic interest (heritage assets).
- Policy EC12 – Development and Flood Risk. This policy is accorded moderate weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and policy WLDP. It is our position that it is generally accorded with. This nis because the development will not cause or contribute towards flood related issues and also deals with phosphate issues on site.
- Policy E1 – Employment Allocations. This policy is accorded limited weight because while it reflects strategic policies in The National Plan the WLDP does not allocate the site for employment development. However, regarding whether the policy is accorded with, only a small part of the site is to be used for employment development. And this development plays the role of enabling development to deliver a significant eco-

heritage asset, which is what WLDP aspires to at the site. This policy, considered alongside Policy E4 set out below, is considered generally accorded with as the proposed development is in WIE, is small in scale, plays the role of an enabling development and delivers other benefits.

- Policy E4 Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements. This policy is accorded limited weight because it reflects some but not all policy objectives of The National Plan and policy WLDP. It is considered to be generally accorded with by reference to the contexts and circumstances of the site and similarly the scope and scale of the proposed development.
- Policy T8 – Parking. This policy is accorded moderate weight because it reflects policy in The National Plan and policy WLDP. This policy is considered to be generally accorded with. The proposed level of car parking is bespoke to the needs of HIAB. While this differs from what standards suggest needs to be provided, it is our position, and that of Prime Transport Consultants, that this is a more robust way of setting how much car parking should be provided to support a development. In the event HIAB were to vacate the site and another general industrial users were to take over the unit, because HIABs outdoor / yard areas are above normal standards in site area terms, there is scope within the undeveloped parts of the site for additional parking to be provided.

Wrexham LDP

- Policy SP2 – Location of Development. This policy is accorded moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy directs development to the defined settlement limits and employment areas as identified on the Proposals Map which includes WIE. The application site is within WIE. But this is only in the context of the site forming part of the strategic ecology network of WIE. The development curtilage of WIE within which built development should be directed is outside of the application site. However, 82% of the application site area is proposed as a high quality eco-heritage zone. This element of the planning application can be regarded as according with the policy. The remaining 18%, where the HQ unit will be located, might be regarded as not being in accordance with the policy. But it is our position that because the HQ unit only affects a small site area, 18% of the application site, and it will accommodate an important industrial entity – HIAB, and it plays the role of enabling development to deliver the eco-heritage zone, allows a conclusion to be drawn that this policy is mainly accorded with as the level of non-accordance is minor. Overall this policy can be regarded as being generally accorded with.
- Policy SP8 – Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise. This policy is accorded moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. To ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region, this policy allocates land for development at several locations including WIE. For the same reasons given in connection with Policy SP2 covered above, this policy is also regarded as being generally accorded with.
- Policy SP9 – Wrexham Industrial Estate. This policy is accorded moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. Wrexham Industrial Estate as

shown on the proposals map is the County Borough's Key Business Sector Area and will be the primary focus for new employment development over the plan period for class B1, B2 and B8 employment. Land is also protected on the estate for a strategic ecological network for a number of local, national and internationally protected species and habitat. For the same reasons given in connection with Policies SP8 and SP9 set out above, this policy can also be regarded as being generally accorded with.

- Policy SP14 – Natural Environment. This policy is accorded moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy confirms that development will only be permitted where it seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment including areas specifically designated because of their respective profiles and qualities. This is very much one of the key outcomes of the proposed development – the delivery of a high quality managed and maintained eco-heritage zone into the long term future. For this reason this policy can be regarded as being generally accorded with.
- Policy SP16 – Minerals Supply and Safeguarding. Minerals will be sustainably managed through a series of initiatives and policy drivers. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted, but arguably it should be attributed less by reference to the fact we do not think it applies in this instance. Regarding what the policy seeks to achieve, which can be summarised as the safeguarding of land containing minerals, to facilitate future extraction, the Council cannot seek the retention of the application site as an ecological resource by reference to policies already reviewed and then encourage mineral extraction. But in any case, mineral extraction at the application site would be neither practical, feasible nor viable by reference to its size and profile. The policy by reference to its objectives is not accorded with. But we are of the view the policy does not apply. But even if we are wrong then it should be given, at best, little weight.
- SP19 – Green Infrastructure. This policy is accorded moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy confirms that Wrexham's distinctive natural heritage provides a network of green and blue infrastructure. Protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage networks needs to be reconciled with the benefits of development. Development will be required to maintain the extent, quality and connectivity of multifunctional green infrastructure on or near a site, and, where appropriate to enhance it. The proposed development includes an extensive high quality eco-heritage zone. This directly delivers what this policy aspires to regarding how it applies to planning applications. This policy is regarded as being generally accorded with.
- Policy MW3: Sustainable Supply of Minerals. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted, but arguably it should be attributed less by reference to the fact we do not think it applies in this instance. The same points made about Policy SP16 apply to this policy.
- Policy EM4 – Employment Development Outside Settlement Limits. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy can be regarded as relevant. While on the face of it the proposed development does not accord with the policy, it must be considered

in the context of the fact the proposed development is within WIE, next to existing long established employment units / developments, and expected to deliver a facility that can contribute to the estate's strategic ecology network, which it does, and in a large measure. It should also be remembered, as already set out, that the proposed employment unit, the HQ for HIAB, is relatively small and discrete and, importantly, it plays the role of an enabling development, as it delivers the policy supported and required eco-heritage zone. We are of the view that when the contexts of the application site and proposed development are taken into full account, this policy, least the principles of this policy, is not breached to the degree this warrants a reason to resist granting the planning application. So, while we accept that the actual terms of the policy are not fully accorded with, the policy does establish the principle that employment development outside of designated employment sites can be supported. Overall, we are of the view the policy is not fully accorded with, but important material considerations which support the proposals, and which should be considered against the fact the policy only carries only moderate weight, allow the development to be supported.

- Policy NE1 – International and National Nature Designations. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. We question whether this policy applies. The policy applies to protected site of international importance. The site is of local importance. Nevertheless, even if we are wrong, the planning application delivers a high quality eco-heritage zone, across the majority of the application site, which protects and boosts the ecological quality of the land in question, and into the long term future. This policy, if it applies, can be accorded with.
- Policy NE2 – Local Nature and Geological Designations. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy seeks to ensure that development which adversely affects the nature conservation and / or geological importance of locally designated sites, habitats and species should be resisted. Development will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative location for the development which avoids nature conservation impacts; and compensation measures are designed to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature or geological conservation value of the site. As we have set out in relation to Policy NE1, the proposals deliver a high quality ecology resource in the form of an extensive eco-heritage zone, which will be maintained and protected long into the future. This policy is accorded with.
- Policy NE3 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy confirms that development will only be permitted where it does 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. The proposals deliver benefits for trees, woodlands and hedgerows and although some trees will be lost they will be replaced and there is the added benefit that 82% of the site area will become ahigh quality eco-heritage zone, which

incorporate plans for new trees, woodland planting and hedgerows. This policy is considered accorded with.

- Policy NE6 – Waste Water and Water Quality. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The policy confirms that all new development will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in particular through the treatment of waste water. To ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC, development creating waste water discharges will be required to demonstrate there is no increase in phosphorus levels in the SAC. This can be achieved through implementation of mitigation measures and associated supplementary planning guidance. Mitigation will involve, either delivery of measures specified in the Dee Catchment Phosphorus Reduction Strategy (DCPRS) or using alternative mitigation approaches to those mentioned above. Where further evidence demonstrates that adverse effects on the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC can be avoided using alternative mitigation, these must be agreed with the Council, in consultation with Natural Resources Wales. It is the applicant's intention to introduce through its wider drainage strategy alternative mitigation, linked to its SUDS system, which will deal with phosphate issues. This policy is considered accorded with.
- Policy DM1 – Development Management. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. This is a very detailed policy which sets out expectations for new development regarding a number of planning, development and land use considerations including character and local distinctiveness; impact on amenity; pollution (all types); community safety; transportation; sustainability; flood risk / flooding; renewable energy and use of materials and regarding former coal mining. Overall, it is the applicant's position that all relevant planning, development and land use related matters of relevance to any consideration of whether the planning application can be supported, are satisfied. Overall, this policy is regarded as being generally accorded with.
- Policy T1 – Transport. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. This policy requires that proposals for new development will be supported where they focus on use of sustainable modes; mitigate effects; don't comprise safety; provide appropriate levels of parking; cater for people with restricted mobility and require applications to be supported by transport assessments and travel plans. This is the case in this instance as demonstrated through the Transport Assessment by Prime Transport. This policy is regarded as being accorded with.
- Policy MW1 – Minerals Safeguarding. This policy should potentially be accorded at best moderate weight by reference to the status of the WLDP, i.e., it is unadopted. The same points made in respect of Policies SP16 and MW3, set out above, apply to this policy.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

10.100 Local Planning Guidance Notes identified in section 6 as being of some relevance to the proposed development, namely LPG16: Parking; LPGN17: Trees and development; LPGN26:

Landscape and Industrial Development; LPGN32: Employment Development and Nature Conservation and LPG32: Biodiversity and Development, are considered to generally be accorded with. This is by reference to the relevant summaries on the related topic areas set out above. We would also say with regard to Local Planning Guidance Notes that some are now dated and key aspirations have been overtaken by guidance in The National Plan and PPW. We say that relevant policy in The National Plan and PPW is largely accorded with.

Conclusions on whether the application accords with development plan policy

10.101 Since the WLDP became an unadopted development plan, which resulted in the WUDP being reintroduced as part of the development plan for Wrexham, alongside The National Plan, there has been a debate as to how much weight both plans should attract. It should be noted that The National Plan comes first over WUDP in terms of legal hierarchy. We accept that the WUDP has to be regarded as out of date by reference to the fact it is based on now no longer applying national policy unrelated guidance and local circumstances have changed. And, regarding the WLDP, this plan became unadopted through the actions of the Council and more recently it has requested the Welsh Government to withdraw the plan.

10.102 In the context of the points made above, and as we set out at the outset of this section, based on the advice of learned counsel, we have sought to attribute appropriate weight to The National Plan, WLDP, WUDP, PPW, TANs, and local planning guidance.

10.103 We have given considerable weight to The National Plan. This identifies Wrexham and WIE within it as a suitable location for growth including employment development and sets out expectations for development to deliver on what we loosely term the green and environmental agendas. It also requires developments to satisfy usual planning, development and land use considerations. It is our position that the broad strategic policy expectations and requirements of this plan are accorded with.

10.104 We give between limited and moderate weight to the WUDP, depending upon individual policies and their relevance, largely by reference to its age, but we are of the view some of its policies remain pertinent to current circumstances. The WUDP confirms that the vast majority of the application site is identified as falling within the development curtilage of WIE. This includes the area where the HQ unit is proposed to be developed.

10.105 With the WLDP we have attributed moderate weight to it. This though is only by reference to the fact it has been through examination and found to be sound and it is current and up to date. In the WLDP the plan allocates the site differently. Instead, it confirms that the vast majority of the site forms part of the WIE's strategic ecology network. This is what 82% of the application site proposes to deliver. This aspect of the plan has to be regarding as being accorded with. Indeed, it is the first attempt by any land owner / developer to deliver the plan's expectations for the site. In addition, it should be noted that the small discreet HQ unit for HIB, as we have set out in detail in earlier paragraphs, performs the role of an

enabling development to effectively deliver and fund the eco-heritage zone, which is an important material consideration.

10.106 Policy and guidance in other relevant policy documents, PPW, TANs and local planning guidance, are relevant and important material considerations, but all are broadly complied with.

10.107 Overall, our key conclusion on whether the planning application and the proposed development it supports can generally be regarded as according with key policies of the development plan, including by reference to the appropriate levels of weight to be given to them, is that it can be.

Key conclusions following planning assessment.

10.108 We are of the view that the planning application and the proposed development it promotes has much to merit it. Importantly, it can be regarded as generally according with relevant development plan policy, including when appropriate levels of wight are attributed to it. Other relevant planning policy that has the status of a material consideration can generally be satisfied. Usual key planning, development and land use considerations, which also have the status of material considerations, are also satisfied. In addition, there are a number of compelling other material considerations which support the application being granted, including significant socio-economic and social benefits and ecology related benefits.

10.109 Overall, we are of the view the planning can and should be granted planning permission.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The proposed development would deliver a high-quality headquarters development for an internationally renowned industrial company.

11.2 The business wishes to relocate its UK headquarters to Wrexham/WIE, specifically The Oaks site.

11.3 In arriving at its decision, working alongside FIREM and its team, the planned occupier has investigated, assessed but discounted a number of other industrial locations and development opportunities in and around the wider Wrexham conurbation, including WIE.

11.4 As far as the planned occupier is concerned, The Oaks site is the optimum location for its new UK headquarters. The proposed development is also the optimum development option to meet its needs.

11.5 The development would deliver a high-quality headquarters facility plus a unique high-quality ecology and heritage zone which represents a significant benefit of the overall proposal.

11.6 The development would deliver a wider range of important and relevant benefits including profile benefits (for the City of Wrexham), socio-economic benefits, social value benefits and valuable ecology and heritage related benefits.

11.7 The proposed development is supported by The National Plan and site specific policy in WUDP, which collectively form the development plan for Wrexham.

11.8 It is also supported by PPW and relevant TANs.

11.9 There are a number of other, we say weighty, material considerations that can be presented in support of the proposed development.

11.10 Overall, it is our view that the proposed development has much to merit it and can be supported by reference to all levels of relevant planning policy, including development plan policy, and benefits from many material considerations.