

PLANNING STATEMENT

Gamford House, Gamford Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0EW



Appleton Deeley Planning and Landscape

February 2019

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared on behalf of Urban Developments and Construction Ltd. in support of a Full Planning Application for the creation of 8 detached dwelling houses to replace derelict farm house, agricultural and workshop buildings at Gamford House, Gamford Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0EW, including landscaping and access.

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Wrexham County Borough has a shortage of suitable, available and deliverable brownfield sites within the existing settlement limits. Whilst some of these brownfield sites may be developed as windfall sites over the plan period, the quantum of new development required cannot be met. The absence of an identified five year housing supply has implications for the County Borough's ability to constrain its supply to settlement limits, and indeed to brownfield sites. Both the lack of a five year supply and the need to increase supply are strong material considerations.

1.2 In considering the location of new housing there is a presumption against developing open countryside unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Our case, demonstrating that this development proposal meets the exceptional circumstances test as set out in Planning Policy Wales edition 10, is based on the following:

- The Authority cannot present any case for a 5 year housing land supply;
- The site is brownfield land, previously with a commercial use
- The approved scheme presents an opportunity to deliver on a range of social, economic and environmental policy objectives
- That TAN1 continues to have significant material weight
- That the site does not meet any of the 4 purposes of including and retaining the land within the Green Barrier
- That there are no acceptable or deliverable alternative uses and indeed we have shown that in terms of Viability this site outperforms all other possible alternative housing sites, including the approved conversion scheme
- The proposals will achieve sustainable development in accordance with an emphasis on generating significant and mutually supportive economic, housing strategy and environmental benefits which collectively constitute sustainable development

1.3 We will demonstrate that the strategic policies of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan for the broad location of development are satisfied in that:

- The settlement limits to which new housing should be directed are outdated and do not have the brownfield site capacity to meet housing and economic regeneration aspirations of the County Borough.
- The proposals for Gamford House do not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
- The site is previously developed brownfield land and,
- The development maintains the existing settlement pattern and character of the County Borough

The proposals constitute a combination of conversion of buildings in accordance with Policy H3 and infill development to achieve residential amenity with a rural character, in compliance with Policy H5.

1.4 The design approach taken in these proposals is forward looking and responsive to the development aspirations of the County Borough. This approach is essential to the success of the emerging Local Development Plan and is articulated in the comments of the Planning Inspector at the Examination of the Wrexham Local Development Plan in 2016, who highlighted fundamental concerns including:

- A significant shortfall in the supply of housing which, if it were to be addressed, would undermine the strategy of the Plan of confining general housing to within settlement boundaries.
- The overall level of growth proposed by the Plan may lack sufficient ambition in terms of strengthening Wrexham's role as a key hub as envisaged in The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update, (reiterated in the North Wales Regeneration Plan 2018-2035).
- A lack of flexibility in the Plan, in particular overly rigid policies.
- The approach to green barriers does not have adequate regard to national policy.
- Concern that the envisaged scale of growth in the employment sector may be hampered by the limited pool of suitably skilled workforce that would be likely to result from the Plan's more restrictive approach to housing growth.
- Concern that the proposed imbalance between the scale of employment and housing growth may lead to employees commuting into the County to work, thus limiting the economic benefits to the area and increasing car borne journeys.
- Although part of County has recently been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it was accepted at the hearing that there was no reason to believe that the character of the County was such that it could not accommodate any expansion of settlements.
- Evidence from the house building industry raises concerns that many of the allocated sites will not come forward in the short term because of the particular challenges in developing brownfield sites in a difficult economic climate when lenders are risk averse in the face of potential unidentified abnormal costs. The evidence provided in the Entec Urban Potential Study (page 53) also indicates that for viability reasons a brownfield strategy would not provide a reliable source of supply.

1.5 These proposals accord with the policy thrust that the Inspector is seeking in the emerging LDP. We therefore consider that we have presented a strong justification for the Gamford House redevelopment proposals to be accepted.

2.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

2.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Appleton Deeley Planning and Landscape acting on behalf of Urban Developments and Construction Ltd.

2.2 The site comprises a 2.10Ha area of previously developed land located on Gamford Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0EW. It accompanies and supports the submission of a Full Planning application to Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) for the proposed redevelopment of the site for residential use.

2.3 The former depot site is owned by the applicants. They are local developers with an excellent track record of delivering high quality residential properties, including the exceptional design quality Golden Grove development (P/2015/0221).

2.4 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide an introductory background to the application, a descriptive appraisal of the site, its location, setting and surroundings. It will present a detailed description of the proposal, a summary of the design process and identifies any key issues with regard to impacts on the open countryside. This Statement will examine the key local and national planning policy frameworks applicable to the redevelopment proposals and interpret these in order to present the detailed case in support, summarising the reasons why planning permission should be granted, with reference to the scheme deliverables, benefits and net gains from this development.

2.5 This statement, along with all the other supporting documentation and plans, will demonstrate that the proposed development, subject of this application, is fully compliant with national policy guidance and with the adopted Unitary Development Plan and emerging Local Development Plan, and is therefore acceptable.

The Application Pack

2.6 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents, which are enclosed as separate items in the submission package:

- Architectural Masterplan drawings: Hardie Brack Associates
- Design & Access Statement: Hardie Brack Associates
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment: Appleton Deeley Planning and Landscape Ltd.
- Topographical Survey: Hardie Brack Associates
- Ecological Assessment: Tyrer Ecological Consultants
- Pre-Application Consultation Report: Hardie Brack Associates

2.7 This application pack satisfies both national and local validation requirements.

2.8 These documents and drawings are all provided with the enclosed application and itemised in greater detail on a separate Planning Application submission schedule spreadsheet.

Site Description

2.9 The application site is located close to the eastern built up edge of Rossett and its established residential estates. Rossett is a large village to the north of Wrexham and is home to some 3,500 residents. Gamford House is located on the northern side of Gamford Lane, approximately 0.2 miles east of the village of Rossett. The historic village of Rossett is located approximately 8 kilometres north-east of Wrexham town centre. The village is structured along Station Road and Chester Road (B5445). The A483 (which forms a bypass for the Village) bounds the village and its landscape setting to the immediate west. The village is also bound to the south by the River Alyn. The site is well located within easy access to Rossett's village centre, with local schools, shops and bus routes all within a reasonable walking and cycling distance.

2.10 The proposed development plot is relatively square in plan shape having approximate dimensions 118m in length by 98m in width at its widest points, providing a total area of 13,105m² (3.23acres) including residential curtilage. There is adjoining agricultural land surrounding the application site to North, East and West boundaries also owned by the Applicant having a total area of 8,215m² (2.03acres).

2.11 The site features a range of vacant, dilapidated farm buildings and a single derelict dwelling house. Gamford Farm was originally a working pig farm and then a workshop depot for commercial vehicle repairs, but has now not been in use for over 12 years. The buildings are not suitable for any other agricultural purpose, having been constructed specifically for pig farming. Their layout and design are not appropriate for modern agricultural requirements and the economies of scale that is essential for commercially successful modern farming. British pig farming declined dramatically during the 1990's due to competition from modern production units in mainland Europe.

Fig.1 Application Red Line Boundary and area of land in applicant's ownership marked by Blue Line



2.12 There are three main access points onto the site from Gamford Lane, one wider entrance to the west (accessing the barns) and two smaller entrance to the east (accessing the Gamford House) one of which will be amended to increase highway safety. The site is level with a slight fall from north to south towards the River Alyn. Perimeter hedgerows run along the western and eastern perimeter of the wider site, (edged in blue), and short stretches of hawthorn hedgerows and buildings define all other boundaries. Direct vehicular access is available to the site off Gamford Lane which links Rossett with Holt to the south east and the A534.

2.13 The site is considered to be located in a highly sustainable and accessible position to take advantage of existing community facilities and transportation related infrastructure and the redevelopment of this brownfield site making use of existing buildings is the most sustainable approach to the provision of new housing in the County Borough, particularly in a sustainable location. The sustainability credentials of the proposals are augmented by the fact that the developer, Urban Developments and Construction Ltd., is a local Company that employs a workforce from the Wrexham area and sources local sub-contractors and suppliers.

2.14 The opportunity now exists to secure the delivery of new housing of a design that responds to today's demands, attracting families to sustain local services and amenities, whilst removing a blight on the landscape that is currently attracting anti-social behaviour at the site.

Planning History

P/2016/0384 Change of Use and Conversion of Barns to Form 8no. Residential Units, Construction of 2no. Semi Detached Dwelling Houses (replacement of existing farm house) and Demolition of Remaining Structures Across the Site. Granted.

CB1060 Redevelopment of the site with 18no. dwellings and associated garages, including conversion of existing buildings and alteration to existing vehicular and pedestrian access.

Refused 16.5.97. Appeal dismissed 19.11.97.

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

3.1 The application is made for Full Planning Permission. The description of the development is as follows:

The creation of 8 detached dwelling houses through conversion and redevelopment to replace a derelict farm house, agricultural and workshop buildings at Gamford House, Gamford Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0EW, including landscaping and access.

The accommodation schedule comprises the following:

8no. 4 bed detached dwellings at 1.5 to 2.5 storeys and a density of 9.1 dwellings per Hectare.

3.2 Our approach to design development has been to incorporate the most distinctive characteristics and features of the existing site where appropriate. The design process has responded to the pre-application advice within correspondence with Wrexham County Borough Council and in the meeting of 28th April 2018. The scheme seeks to deliver a high quality, contemporary development that creates a rural feel from the existing built elements, with a positive impact upon the character and openness of the countryside.

The Setting

3.3 The settlement pattern of Rossett comprises a core around the route of the B5445 Chester road and surrounding hamlets and clusters of agricultural buildings. The Settlement Review of January 2018 redefined the eastern boundary of Rossett to the extent that the site is now closer to the edge of the settlement. Early buildings are characterised by red brick, render and slate roofing construction materials. Building are constructed in a range of building styles. Early housing is linear, structured along and within the road and lane patterns.

3.4 The streetscape and building pattern has little correlation with the historic street and field pattern, creating less structured, less cohesive places. The River Alyn contains development to the south, while Chester Road contains development to the west creating a strong, intact parkland landscape edge. The A483 by passes the village and provides connections to Wrexham, Chester and beyond.

Local Amenities

3.5 Station Road, Chester Road and Rossett Green are the principal historic assets of Rossett Village and form the most defined and recognisable features. They provide the focus for all radial routes converging into the village, and the linear routes along which local community services are located. Gamford Lane is one of these radial routes and is within comfortable walking and cycling distance of the wider village.

3.6 Recently, Darland High School and St. Peter's Primary School have created community hubs to the north of the historic village core. As such, all community hubs are within walking or cycling distance from the Gamford House site.

3.7 The vehicular access to the site is proposed exclusively off Gamford Lane. Highway capacity was considered acceptable for the approved conversion scheme ref. P/2016/0384. As indicated on the proposed site plan and landscape drawing, two existing access points are to be retained. A third access will be created to replace the access to Plot 1, to improve highway safety. Plots 1 and 2 would have their own separate access directly off the highway with remaining properties from the wider western entrance which would be amended and improved to suit the proposed residential use. The proposed layout would provide safe entrance points with adequate visibility splays of 2.4m x 56m in both directions.

3.8 We can confirm that very careful and selective hedgerow management will be undertaken to ensure the established landscape screening will remain in place along with the perimeter boundaries of the site. The scheme has been designed to ensure that the rural edge is maintained and enhanced and that the style and character befits the location and its surroundings. The proposals have been developed around a holistic yet contained design solution that has closely followed the technical advice of the many disciplines employed by the applicant and the responses by the Council in pre-application discussions, (see 3.13 below).

3.9 The applicant has explored the continued use of the site for commercial premises and has concluded that the only viable use of the site would be residential.



Fig.2 The site is intensively developed and impacting on openness of the countryside

Design Guidance

3.10 Planning Policy Wales edition 10 (PPW10) introduces the concept of 'place making': *'Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and wellbeing in the widest sense.'*

3.11 Our proposals have been developed in accordance with the principles set out in relevant national and local design guidance including:

Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes:

- Design
- Guidance on Design and Access Statements
- Site and Context Analysis Guide

Wrexham County Borough Council Local Planning Guidance Notes:

LPGN 07 - Landscaping and Development
LPGN 10 - Public Open Space on New Housing Developments
LPGN 13 - Housing in the Countryside
LPGN 16 - Parking Standards
LPGN 17 - Trees and Development
LPGN 21 - Space Around Dwellings
LPGN 24 - Designing out Crime
LPGN 27 - Development Contributions to Schools
LPGN 28 - Affordable Housing
LPGN 30 - Design
LPGN 32 - Biodiversity and Development

Pre-Application Discussions

3.12 The applicant has considered it essential to engage with Officers in seeking their advice and guidance pertaining to this proposal.

3.13 The recently assented Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016 placed a far greater emphasis upon pre-application consultation with key stakeholders and a formal process was activated. This applies only to major applications where the site exceeds 1.0 ha or where the site involves 10+ residential dwellings and/or a site over 0.5 ha. This site does not meet the minimum criteria for such consultation.

3.14 Notwithstanding this we undertook to hold detailed pre-application discussions with Officers at Wrexham County Borough Council, on 27th April 2018. Officers emphasised that the impacts upon the open countryside could only be acceptable through a carefully designed conversion scheme and that other housing developments in the Borough successfully achieved a 'rural' character. A further pre-application meeting was requested on 12th September 2018 but denied. A letter from WCBC was received dated 27th September 2018 with comments on the proposals, (see Appendix E). A number of significant issues emerged from these pre application discussions and these are examined below.

4.0 THE KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Housing Delivery

4.1 It was acknowledged at the pre-application meeting that the County Borough does not have a five year housing supply. Moreover, this is unlikely to change for at least another year until the emerging Local Plan had been adopted. The slippage in the production of a Local Development Plan preparation has been severe and it places the Authority in an even more difficult position and as the housing backlog is becoming greater. A failure to address the issue of housing delivery will mean that the backlog will simply grow ever larger without permissions being brought forward.

4.2 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10 December 2018) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and translates the Government's commitment to sustainable development. Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) indicates at paragraph 4.2.15 that: *"Planning authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a five -year supply of land for housing judged against the general objectives, scale and location of development required in the development plan. This means that sites must be free, or readily freed, from planning, physical and ownership constraints and be economically viable, in order to support the creation of sustainable communities. For land to be regarded as genuinely available it must be a site included in either a Joint Housing Land Availability Study".*

4.3 There is a clear requirement to provide a 5 year supply of housing land within PPW10. The Council has yet to adopt its emerging Local Development Plan and its Unitary Development Plan (14 Feb 2005) is now outdated. This has implications for the County Borough's ability to constrain its supply to settlement limits:

Part 6 of TAN1 relates to the issue of housing supply and states that:

*"6.2 The housing land supply figure should also be treated as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing. Where the current study shows a land supply below the 5-year requirement or where the local planning authority has been unable to undertake a study, the need to increase supply **should be given considerable weight** when dealing with planning applications provided that the development would otherwise comply with development plan and national planning policies."*

4.4 The last Wrexham County Borough Council Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) for 2013 presents the housing land supply for the area at the base date of April 2016. The document acknowledges that in the absence of an up-to-date Unitary Development Plan and adopted Local Development Plan (in accordance with paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 of TAN1), the Council is unable to demonstrate whether it has a five year supply or not, as it has no requirement figure to which it can work. Thus Wrexham is to be treated as not having a five year supply and the latest Housing Land Monitoring Statement (April 2017) confirms it is a zero supply authority.

4.5 The fact that the UDP cannot be treated as providing an appropriate basis for a housing requirement figure for a joint housing land availability statement is a clear indicator that the UDP's approach to housing is out-of-date. Further, the fact that the Council cannot meet its five year requirement shows that **settlement limits** constraining the ability to do so cannot continue to command significant weight. The Urban Capacity Study update (2013) identifies a shortage of suitable, available and deliverable brownfield sites within existing settlement limits. Whilst some of these brownfield sites may be developed as windfall sites over the plan period, the quantum of need cannot be met without considering the need for the release of green field sites currently on the edge of, but outside existing settlement limits.

4.6 In contrast, the position is as set out in paragraph 6.2 of TAN1 which is that the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight. The qualification found in paragraph 6.2 – *"provided that the development would otherwise comply with the development plan"* – is not to be interpreted as leading to some other conclusion on weight in such circumstances because, if there were otherwise compliance with the development plan, a proposal would be approved anyway and the weighting advice in paragraph 6.2 would not be necessary. The proviso is simply a reminder that the considerable weight to be given to the need to increase supply must be balanced against non-compliance with the development plan.

4.7 Recent Appeal decisions in Wrexham demonstrate very clearly the weighting to be given to the lack of a five year supply and therefore the need to increase supply:

Rhosrobin appeal decision – lack of a five year supply weighed heavily in favour of the proposed development (paragraph 25 of the decision letter)

Gresford appeal decision – lack of a five year supply carried considerable weight (paragraph 19 of the decision letter)

Minera appeal decision – the lack of housing land carried significant weight (paragraph 16 of the decision letter).

4.8 These weightings were applied notwithstanding the conflict of the proposals in the above cases with the Green Barrier policy (Policy EC1) of the UDP and the interpretation of paragraph 6.2 of TAN1. No different conclusion could be reached for the application at Gamford House. Both the lack of a five year supply and the need to increase supply carries considerable weight in this determination.

Delivery Challenges

4.9 In an exploration of suitable housing sites the Authority have produced a Site Register of comments and Officer Responses (doc. Ref. KPD14a dated January 2018); in which it provides a summary of comments made at the Preferred Strategy stage in relation to the single candidate site in Rossett (and indeed across the County Borough). The Register highlights the physical and legal constraints impeding delivery and that larger sites will place a burden on local amenities and infrastructure.

4.10 The single candidate site in this part of the County Borough is the Land Off Holt Road ref. RO004AS. The Officer response to comments about the site confirm that the lack of deliverable Brownfield sites have led to this Greenfield site being allocated for housing under Policy H1. The site itself is subject to flooding, heritage and infrastructure capacity issues. The comments submitted and the Officer response indicate that even the allocated Candidate Sites are subject to planning constraints, and it is worth comparing the qualities of the application site:

- An important element of our submission are the financial viability assessments of this scheme and the approved scheme. The Gamford House site is available, suitable and, of significant policy importance, it is viable. There are no site or viability constraints impeding deliverability of these proposals, and comparisons will be made with other sites in the County Borough.
- The site is currently detracting from the character of the County Borough and has a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of nearby residents.
- The site will not exceed service capacity. We are confident that through appropriate dialogue with third parties that all services will be provided and improved if required. The development is limited to 8no. dwellings which ensures there will be no strain on local services and amenities.
- The applicant is ready to bring this site forward for development, as is demonstrated by the submission of this application and the investment thereto; a number of people have expressed an interest in purchasing a property at this site and demonstrates the market appetite. Evidence of this demand is provided in Appendix D in the form of an enquiry to Wright Marshall Estate Agents, Chester.
- We have proven through our own evidence base that there are no known technical environmental or engineering constraints in bringing these sites forward for development.
- All known issues (e.g. contamination, drainage/floodrisk, ecological, highway/access, minerals, agricultural land quality, tree and archaeological) have either been addressed or are in hand.

4.11 Wrexham's Candidate Sites Assessment Paper Feb 2016 states that, *'Small Sites will not be allocated in the LDP, however where the sites are relatively constraint free and there is a prospect of them being developed over the lifetime of the LDP (2013 – 2028), there is potential for them to contribute to the windfall supply over the Plan period. Where small sites are located in existing settlement limits, no action needs to be taken, as these sites can come forward for development at any time provided any site specific constraint issues can be overcome and the scheme complies with the relevant development management considerations. **Similarly, the sites on brownfield land in the open countryside could come forward at any time under the same proviso as those within settlement.***' (Our emphasis).

4.12 The Appraisal Methodology as applied to the Candidate sites and Alternative sites has been used in a sequential approach to illustrate the scheme's credentials. We have assessed the proposal against some of the key relevant policies from the emerging LDP Deposit Plan and consider the principal policies examined in Section 5 below to be the most relevant and appropriate in this instance.

Wrexham CBC LDP2 Site Assessment Methodology (January 2018):

4.13 National planning policy and guidance on the preparation of LDP's and, in particular advice that *'The LPA should apply a set of criteria or filtering mechanism to classify and prioritise sites as to their acceptability for further consideration. Criteria will need to address deliverability issues and reflect the integrated plan objectives so that they meet sustainability appraisal requirements'*.

4.14 Paragraph 3.39 of PPW10 states that, *'When identifying sites in their development plans planning authorities should consider previously developed land and/or underutilised sites located within existing settlements in the first instance with sites on the edge of settlements considered at the next stage. It is recognised, however, that not all sites of this nature are suitable for all types of development.'*

At Stage 1 of the assessment, no small sites progressed to the allocation stages. However, the methodology states that;

'Where small sites are located in existing settlement limits, no action needs to be taken, as these sites can come forward for development at any time provided any site specific constraint issues can be overcome and the scheme complies with the relevant development management considerations. Similarly, the sites on brownfield land in the open countryside could come forward at any time under the same proviso as those within settlement. Only those sites where the constraints cannot be overcome or those on Greenfield land in the open countryside which are not proposed as rural enterprise dwellings are likely to be unsuitable for development and have been discounted.'

4.15 In accordance with Planning Policy Wales the following criteria should influence the allocation of housing sites in the LDP:-

- the availability of previously developed sites and empty or underused buildings and their suitability for housing use;
- the location of potential development sites and their accessibility to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility;
- the capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals), to absorb further development, and the cost of adding further infrastructure;
- the scope to build sustainable communities to support new physical and social infrastructure, including consideration of the effect on the Welsh language, and to provide sufficient demand to sustain appropriate local services and facilities;
- the physical and environmental constraints on development of land, including, for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk, taking into account the possible increase of such risk as a result of climate change, and the location of fragile habitats and species, archaeological and historic sites and landscapes;
- the compatibility of housing with neighbouring established land uses which might be adversely affected by encroaching residential development; and
- the potential to reduce carbon emissions through co-location with other uses

4.16 Although the Gamford House site was considered too small to be assessed for allocation it is clear that it would have scored well against these criteria. However, Gamford House is a prime candidate as a windfall site and the importance of this source of supply to meet the planning requirement over the plan period is examined below:

Fig.3 LDP Housing Provision Components 2013-2028 (as at Jan 2018)

Components	Sub-components	No. of dwellings
Sites	Completed Sites (2013-2017)	977
	Committed Large Sites (2017) ¹⁵	1994
	S106 Sites ¹⁶	33
	LDP Allocations deliverable within the plan period	3519
	Sub-total	6523
Allowances	Large Windfall Sites ¹⁷	1320
	Small Windfall Sites ¹⁸	825
	Sub-total	2145
Total provision		8668

4.17 It is clear that a significant number of windfall dwellings are required to meet the LDP Housing Requirement. With the principle of residential already accepted on the site the proposals at Gamford House should be considered favourably in order to meet this need.

4.18 The above table is from the Housing Topic Paper supporting the LDP submission and demonstrates that the housing provision requires a markedly higher build rate than has been seen in the past (average completions over 10 years is 426 dwellings a year) and seeks a step change in the delivery of new homes in the County.

4.19 The potential delivery of housing at Alternative Sites Register schemes with similar policy constraints to Gamford House have been considered and comments summarised below (Fig.4):

Site ref:	Address	Area(Ha)	Policy Constraints to Delivery
GRE005AS	Horsley Lodge	1.02	Predominantly new housing in the countryside as only the Lodge could be converted
GWY001AS	Ruthin Rd, Bwlchgwyn	8.52	Currently best and most versatile agricultural land. New housing in the countryside.
LL003AS	Ballswood Quarry	53.94	Active mineral site. New housing in the countryside.
NEWB001AS	Taylors, Minera	2.29	Remote from settlement. New housing in the countryside.

O003AS	Bangor Rd	2.75	Greenfield. New housing in the countryside.
RO002AS	Chester Rd, Rossett	6.00	Currently best and most versatile agricultural land. New housing in the countryside.
WR002AS	Mold Rd A483	2.10	Access issues. New housing in the countryside.

4.20 The allocated site at Rossett, comprising two parcels of land to the west of Gamford House, have recently been refused planning permission for a total of 132no. dwellings, (P/2018/0560). The sites are outside the settlement boundaries and within the Green Barrier and Special Landscape Area designations, and contain Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land and a portion of Best and Most Versatile Land. The proposals presented a detrimental impact upon pedestrian safety due to the increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic that a development of this scale would generate.

4.21 A further site that will not contribute to housing supply is the site at Alyn Drive as it was removed from the list of housing allocation sites by the Planning Inspector at the LDP1 submission stage. The constraint to development here is that the site is entirely within the zone C2 Flood Plain. Of the 14no. sites proposed for allocation in the LDP2 that are located outside the settlement limits, all of them contain at least some Best and Most Versatile Land, whilst the Gamford House site has none.

4.22 Para 9.4.9 of the Development Management Manual acknowledges that the evidence underpinning the emerging LDP could be used as a material consideration when making planning decisions.

Brownfield Land

4.23 National and local policy express a strong and clear preference for the use of brownfield land. Paragraph 4.9.1 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states that *“PDL should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites, particularly those of high agricultural or ecological value.”* The application site in this case not only lies close to the edge of the revised settlement boundary of Rossett but it is also previously developed land which retains a legacy of dilapidated and derelict buildings, together with abundant hardstanding. The site has had buildings on it since the late 19th century and its use has continued to reflect the economic and social needs of the County Borough.

4.24 Wrexham UDP Policy PS3 provides that *“development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible”*. The application site comprises vacant, derelict and underused land and is in accordance with Policy PS3.

4.25 It is also of relevance that brownfield capacity in the County Borough is limited. Paragraph 3.2 of BP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Development Potential (revised February 2016) makes it clear that the majority of brownfield sites have been developed, that it is apparent that the housing requirement cannot be accommodated on brownfield sites alone and that greenfield allocation is inevitable *“due to the limited capacity on brownfield sites.”* The LDP2 Preferred Strategy concludes that, *‘There is a lack of brownfield capacity to accommodate projected household growth in the County Borough.’* Suitable and available brownfield land such as found on the application site is therefore a premium resource. Its development would reduce the need to release less preferable green field land for new housing.

4.26 The search sequence which is set out in paragraph 4.9.1 of PPW in respect of housing allocations in development plans provides that the starting point should be *“the reuse of previously developed land and buildings within settlements, then settlement extensions and then new development around settlements with good public transport links.”* It is clear that the Council cannot meet its pressing need for additional land for housing on previously developed land within settlements. It is equally obvious that, if previously developed land within settlements cannot provide the required extra capacity, previously developed land outside settlement limits should, providing it is otherwise suitable, take sequential preference over green field land outside such limits. In this case, the reuse of this previously developed site is in accordance with National Policy (PPW10).

4.27 Previously developed land is a policy construct depending on a factual state of affairs, not on issues of lawfulness. It is to be distinguished from, for example, a permitted development right which, if it were based on an existing use would depend on the lawfulness of that use.

Previous Land Supply Data (large Sites) for Wrexham:

4.28 The historic figures show a considerable and persistent undersupply of housing in the area compounding the undersupply of housing within the Council’s area. Historically, Wrexham County Borough Council Joint Housing Land Availability (JHLAS) Study for 2013 acknowledges that expediting planning applications is the only viable alternative to increase housing land supply in the short term. The current application seeks to assist in the increase in the supply of housing land within the Wrexham County Borough area in line with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and TAN 1 (See Appendix 1 for more detail).

Sustainable Development

4.29 On the 29th April 2015 the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act became law. This Act places a duty on all public bodies in Wales to *‘carry out sustainable development’*. Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) promotes sustainable development in terms of the location of development, re-use of previously developed land and by setting minimum sustainable building standards. The objective of minimising the need to travel and increase accessibility by travel modes other than private cars is stressed. Higher density development is encouraged near locations or corridors, which are well served by public transport. The site is served by foul drainage, a 90mm water main and electricity supply.

4.30 Para 1.17 Planning Policy Wales edition 10 states *‘Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.’* It identifies ‘Outcomes’ that a development must meet to achieve sustainability objectives, including:

- Is accessible by means of active travel and public transport
- Prioritises the use of previously developed land and existing buildings
- Unlocks potential and regenerates
- Is of high quality and built to last
- Has homes and jobs to meet society’s needs

4.31 Our proposals are designed to achieve these outcomes. Residents of the development would have to travel some 450m to access local amenities such the nearest school, nonetheless such walking distances are not unusual as evidenced by the National Travel Survey 2012 (NTA). In addition Manual for Streets (MfS) advocates that walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km.

4.32 PPW10 places a strong emphasis on the importance of good design and the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive. This is highlighted as being the responsibility of all those in the development process, at all scales with PPW placing greater emphasis on quality, good design and the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive. It seeks the most efficient use of land with well-designed living environments and varied design rather than areas of monotonous character.

4.33 As a result of the issues and drivers highlighted in the Preferred Strategy, a review of the existing evidence base surrounding the housing, including national and local policy has identified the following additional issues and drivers that should be taken into account;

When building new homes it is important that their impact on the environment is carefully considered and that they are of a high standard of design, enhancing rather than having a negative impact on existing communities.

4.34 PPW also seeks to promote sustainability through good design. Paragraphs 4.11.1 and 4.11.2 of PPW provide the following definition of design:

“Design is taken to mean the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings. Good design can protect and enhance environmental quality, consider the impact of climate change on generations to come, help to attract business and investment, promote social inclusion and improve the quality of life...”

PPW10 Paragraphs 4.11.4 – 4.11.12 provide guidance on the requirements of good design. These include:

- Inclusive and accessible design;
- Promoting the efficient use of resources including land;
- Tackling the causes and providing effective adaptation to the effects of climate change;
- Offering high environmental quality, including open and green spaces.

4.35 The visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and relationship to its surroundings and context, are material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose a particular architectural taste or style arbitrarily and should avoid inhibiting opportunities for innovative design solutions. PPW indicates that consideration should be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial use before residential. However, the policy recognises that conversion for commercial use often has a more detrimental impact upon the character of a building as more of its features will be lost. Our proposals aim to protect and enhance distinctive features of the existing buildings.

4.36 For the purposes of formulating our proposals design sustainability is taken to mean the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. Sustainability must include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings. The location is highly sustainable and the site is well served by facilities available in Rossett including:

- St Peter’s Primary School
- Darland High School (Secondary)
- Darland Leisure & Activity Centre and community room (at Darland HS)
- Alyn Family Doctors

- Rossett Pharmacy
- Rossett Dental Care
- Premier Village store and Co-operative convenience store
- “Outreach” Post Office offering limited service
- Rossett & Burton Village Halls
- Llyndir Hall and Rossett Hall Hotels
- Golden Lion, The Alyn, Nags Head and The Griffin Public Houses
- Machine House Restaurant and Sun Wah Chinese Takeaway
- Gatehouse Veterinary clinic, BASC Offices, Rossett Business Park
- Bus Routes : Arriva No 1
- Places of worship; including Christ Church, Christ the King Catholic Church, a Baptist church and a Presbyterian Chapel.

4.37 A number of Technical Advice Notes within Planning Policy Wales seek to ensure sustainable development:

TAN 5: Nature Conservation & Planning (2009) This document contains specific guidance about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. The current Green Barrier in which the site was situated was reviewed within the ‘Strategic Green Wedge Review Stage 1’ document dated February 2016.

TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)

4.38 This document covers flood risk from all sources including surface water and identifies the acceptability requirement and the relevant development advice. It stresses that in all flood risk zones, any development will require an appropriate drainage strategy to demonstrate that the development itself will not create, increase or exacerbate surface water flood risk. The site is within Environment Agency Wales Zone B and further advice will be sought from Environment Agency Wales regarding the preliminary flood risk assessment undertaken as part of the scheme design. Section 8 and Appendix 4 of TAN 15 deal specifically with surface water run-off from new development and require that “Sustainable Drainage Systems” (SuDS) be considered at a very early stage preferably in the form of blue/green Infrastructure which can blend seamlessly into the development within public open space.

TAN 18: Transport (2007)

4.39 This requires transport and movement to be considered at the strategic and detailed level. The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, paragraph 3.4, relates to Settlement Strategy and states that: “*Large scale extensions of settlements which occurred in the past are no longer appropriate*”. Rossett is classed as a Rural Village and the settlement strategy states, “*The range of services available in these settlements is generally confined to those meeting purely local needs. The settlements themselves are surrounded by attractive countryside and some are not conveniently accessible by public transport. New development is therefore restricted to small sites.*”

4.40 The following Unitary Development Plan Strategic policies relate to the broad location of development and inform an assessment of **sustainable development**:

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

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

Policy PS3 Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of green field land, wherever possible.

Policy PS4 Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.

4.41 Importantly, the proposals respond to the Housing Strategy and Economic Development aspirations of LDP2 by providing large, high specification executive homes that will encourage the leaders of industry to invest in employment uses in the Borough. This provision means less travel to employment areas from outside, and less commuting into the County Borough.

Settlement Limits

4.42 In the absence of an up-to-date UDP and adopted LDP, in accordance with latest Welsh Government Guidance on JHLAS, TAN1, there is no requirement for a Local Authority to produce a JHLAS and the authority is considered to have a zero land supply. However, in order to inform the level of housing provision required in the forthcoming LDP, it is still necessary to monitor the housing land supply within the County Borough along with the number of completions. The Housing Land Monitoring Statement 2017 is of relevance to the assessment of housing supply. The five-year land supply comprises sites with outline or full planning permission, sites with a resolution to grant planning permission subject to the signing of a section 106 agreement and remaining site allocations from the UDP, categorised as prescribed in TAN 1.

4.43 The Wrexham Settlement Boundary Review (January 2018) identified under section 3. Development Sites: -3(a) Sites identified as Key Strategic Sites or Non-strategic settlement extensions. This amended the development boundary to include allocated sites, and

3(b) Additional Small sites/Infill sites. Development boundary amended to include previously unidentified sites suitable for development 10 or less dwellings, including brownfield sites on the edge of settlements.

4.44 The Gamford House site fits with 3(b) above. The conclusion must be that the UDP settlement limits are out of date and must be given significantly reduced weight. That is in line with paragraph 2.8.4 of PPW which states that it is for the decision-maker to determine whether policies in the adopted UDP are outdated for the purposes of determining a planning application but advises that, where such judgment is made, local planning authorities should *“give the plan decreasing weight in favour of other material considerations such as national planning policy, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.”*

4.45 As a result, the pressure to release some Green Barrier sites in advance of the Local Development Plan having reached adoption must be a **significant material consideration**. We have assessed whether or not the site has significant impact upon the purposes of the Green Barrier. The site must be considered on its individual merits, with housing land supply and impacts on openness of the countryside being the key material considerations. Additionally, an appraisal of the site’s sustainability credentials must also be taken into account.

4.46 Rossett comprises some 1,364 existing households (2015 census) and the proposal represents a modest increase in household growth, which is not considered to be either significant or unsustainable for a community of this size.

4.47 In February 2017 Wrexham County Borough Council published its Green Barrier Review and this site is proposed to no longer be classified as Green Barrier nor a Special Landscape Area once the emerging LDP has been adopted. However, we have undertaken a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as policies towards new housing in the open countryside still require that the impacts of the proposals on the character of the open countryside must be acceptable.

Openness

4.48 We consider that the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment element of this submission underpins the view that the development of this site for residential development is visually lost very quickly as you move away from the site and the LVIA serves to demonstrate that the impact upon the wider Green Barrier will be negligible.

4.49 In April 2018 Members of Wrexham County Borough Council approved (for public consultation) the Deposit Strategy version of the emerging LDP and all of its supporting evidence base. They have therefore conferred with their Officers' recommendations with respect to Green Barrier release being acceptable. The priority must therefore be given to releasing the most logical and sustainable locations for new development and, the sequential assessment of the candidate sites and alternative sites illustrates that there are few options which are capable of delivering growth of any scale and substance as only a few infill sites now remain, (see section 5 below). This proposal is considered to be at a location that is available, achievable, viable and deliverable.

4.50 Green Barrier policy is enshrined in PPW (Edition 9 November 2016) Section 4.8 and reflected locally by the UDP Policy EC1. At the pre-application meeting of 27th April 2018 it was acknowledged that the Wrexham UDP failed to pass this test in providing any reasoning for the Green Barrier designation over large swathes of land that could have been easily protected through Unitary Development Plan policies towards open countryside / landscape policy designations.

4.51 In addressing the impacts of development on such areas PPW states (Para 4.8.12) that factors such as "*openness, topography and the nature of urban edges*" should be taken into account. These have been acknowledged and addressed in the attached Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

4.52 The provisions of Wrexham's UDP Policy H5 and GDP1 require that the proposals ensure that any 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 positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality. If not, it would have to be classified as "inappropriate development" as it does not meet one of the exceptions of current UDP Policy EC1 and is a departure from the development plan. The test therefore has to be that the proposal meets exceptional circumstances where other considerations clearly outweigh the harm. These exceptional circumstances will be examined below.

4.53 It is recognised (in both PPW and UDP Policy) that there are essentially 4 purposes for including land in the Green Barrier and these are:

- To prevent coalescence of urban areas and villages with other settlements
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To protect the setting of urban areas and villages
- To assist in urban regenerations by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

4.54 In dealing with each purpose in turn we will demonstrate that this site no longer functions or meets its definition of Green Barrier and its loss would not have a significant impact upon any of its purposes:

To prevent coalescence of urban areas and villages with other settlements:

The redevelopment of this site will take place within a tightly defined and defensible boundary. The site is visually contained and enclosed by defined physical boundaries. It will not therefore result in any coalescence with neighbouring settlements for the closest defined settlement is Holt to the south east and the hamlet of Trevalyn is washed over Green Barrier.

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:

A sensitive and sympathetic design solution has been developed to be very low density (9.1 dwellings per hectare) using as much of the existing built fabric as possible. Its character and style has a rural feel with retention of existing landscaping and new planting and biodiversity areas. Any encroachment must be considered alongside volumetric calculations when considering impacts on 'openness'. The proposed development is self-contained and the additional volume carefully accommodated. Thus, the countryside will be protected and this development will not harm or impact upon the wider 'openness' of the countryside, as demonstrated by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

To protect the setting of urban areas and villages:

The setting of Rossett is not defined by this piece of land but by the more sensitive open parkland to the west of Chester Road on the other side of the settlement. This site does not contribute to that setting and character and the development would also not undermine the setting or character of the eastern side of Rossett as has been demonstrated by the LVIA, but instead enhance and redefine its urban edge; the benefit of it being contained by a strong landscape enclosure and that development within it will be discreet and have a soft rural edge to it. The Wrexham Settlement Boundary Review of January 2018 has expanded this part of Rossett so that Gamford House is now edge of settlement.

To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:

The development of brownfield land in Wrexham has peaked and the availability of suitable, viable and developable brownfield sites is minimal to such an extent that few are now coming forward to deliver housing land supply. There is a recognition that Green Barrier and open countryside must now be identified to serve the future needs of delivering jobs, homes and other infrastructure. The Green Barrier is no longer serving this purpose and is undermining regeneration and economic growth. The LDP1 strategy of trying to force all new development into unviable areas and not release any land on the edge of settlements has so far failed. A new strategy is therefore required as LDP2 emerges and the Green Barrier Review is part of this.

4.55 Local precedent does exist in respect of the Authority agreeing to the release of Green Barrier sites for housing (with housing land supply cited as a principal reason) and some examples of these include the following recent cases in Wrexham:

Case Reference P/2014/0021 Ruabon Business Park site: Release of green barrier strip to facilitate this proposal was considered to be acceptable in the light of the pressing need for additional housing land. Permission granted to Wynnstay Framing Co. Ltd for a mixed-use scheme of 319 houses, care use, foodstore, pub, light industrial and hotel.

Case Reference: P/2015/0178, Appeal reference: APP/H6955/A/14/2229577 Pont Adam, Ruabon: On appeal the case brought by Castlemead was dismissed solely on highway grounds, but the Inspector recognised that housing land supply took precedence and that all other technical matters had been

satisfied. Permission has now been subsequently granted for 19 residential dwellings with the highway issue having been resolved.

Case Reference: P/2013/0545 Appeal reference: APP/H6955/A/15/3135730 Hafod Tileries, Ruabon: Gladman were refused permission for this open countryside site that lies outside of the closest settlement (Johnstown) but won on appeal for 300 new dwellings. The Inspector noted that the settlement policy (PS1) which seeks to focus growth within defined settlements is effectively out of date and carries limited weight given the lack of housing supply and this outweighs countryside protection policies.

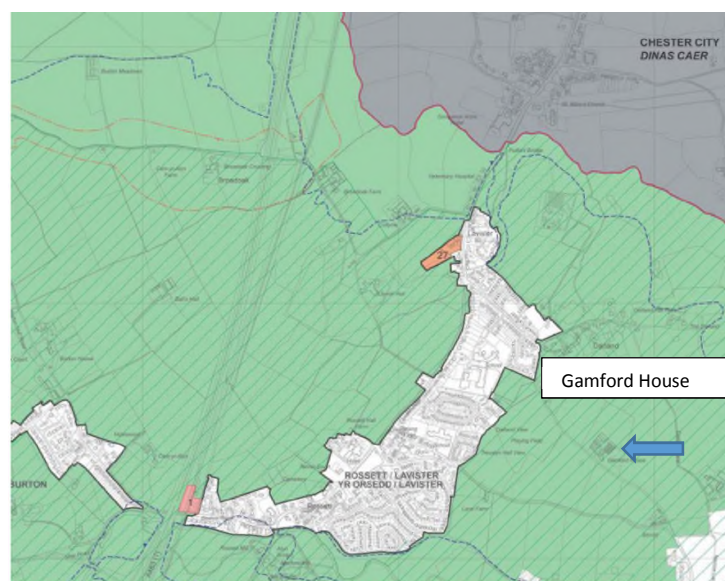
Case reference: P/2014/0262 Chestnut Court, Summerhill: It was recognised that housing land supply outweighed the loss of this green barrier site and permission was granted to Castlemead (SG Estates) for 20 residential dwellings.

Case reference: P/2015/0790 Boozey Fields, Gwersyllt: Permission approved for 56 homes in the Green Barrier: It was recognised that housing land supply outweighed the Green Barrier designation.

Case reference: P/2014/0905 Appeal reference: APP/H6955/A/16/3147116 Home Farm, Llay: Permission granted on appeal for up to 365 dwellings on edge of settlement in open countryside.

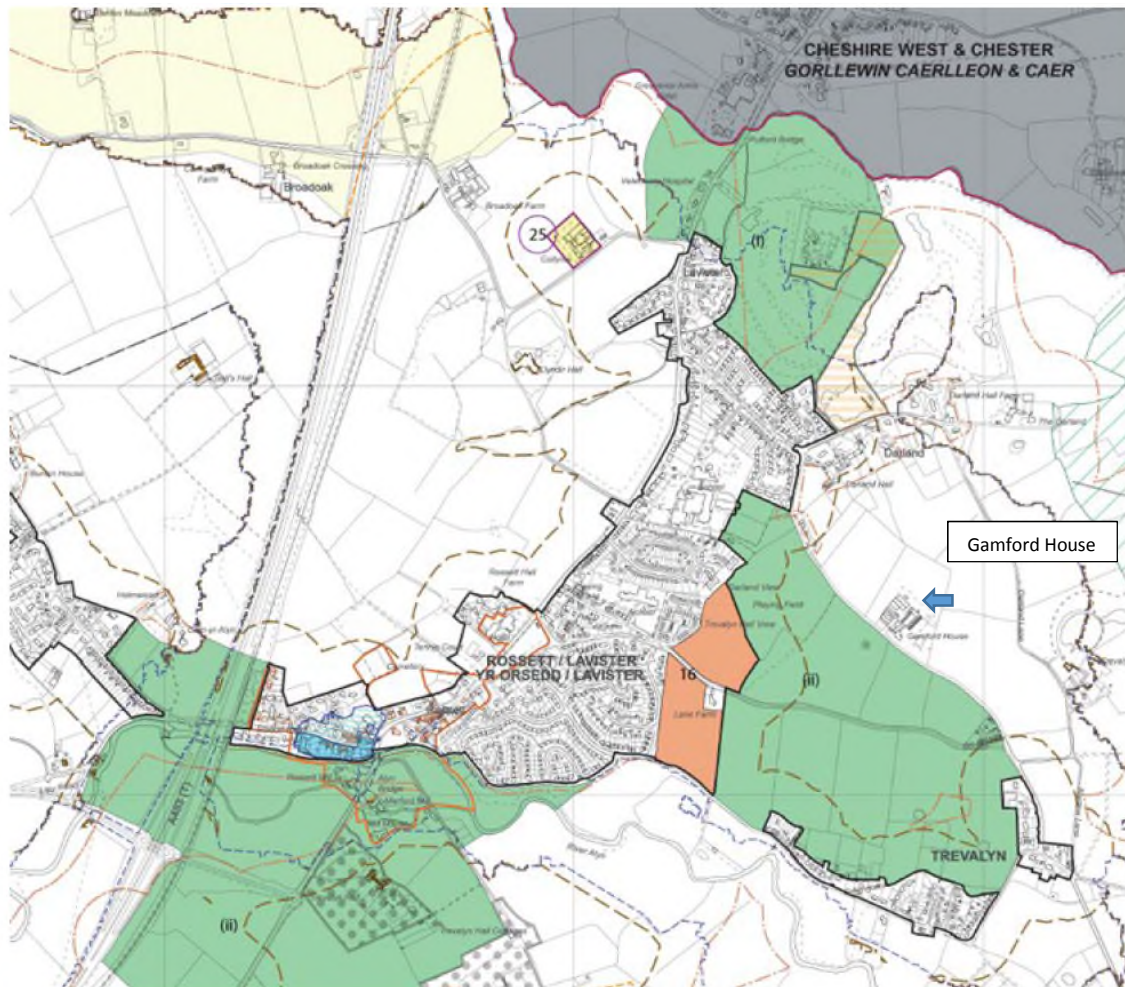
4.56 The Authority produced a “Strategic Green Wedge Review: Stage 1” report in February 2016 as part of their Preferred Strategy consultation exercise. The stage 1 review was limited to just Wrexham town and the Western villages. This study has now been enhanced by the Stage 2 report (LDP2 evidence document ref. EBNB01) dated October 2017 that has sought to address the fuller Green Barrier context of Wrexham to include the areas of Green Barrier around Rossett, Marford and Gresford (the relevant extract to this document is provided – see APPENDIX C).

4.57 The Review proposes to retain strategic Green Barrier between Rossett and Pulford; between Rossett and Marford/Gresford and; between Rossett and Trevalyn. But importantly it recognises that Green Barrier ought to be removed covering the area comprising the application site as it would not materially lessen the gap between Rossett and Trevalyn and this concurs with the findings of our Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment and is consistent with Para 4.8 of PPW edition 10. This is illustrated by the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map extracts shown below (Fig.5):



Existing UDP (Green Barrier) Proposals Map

Fig.6

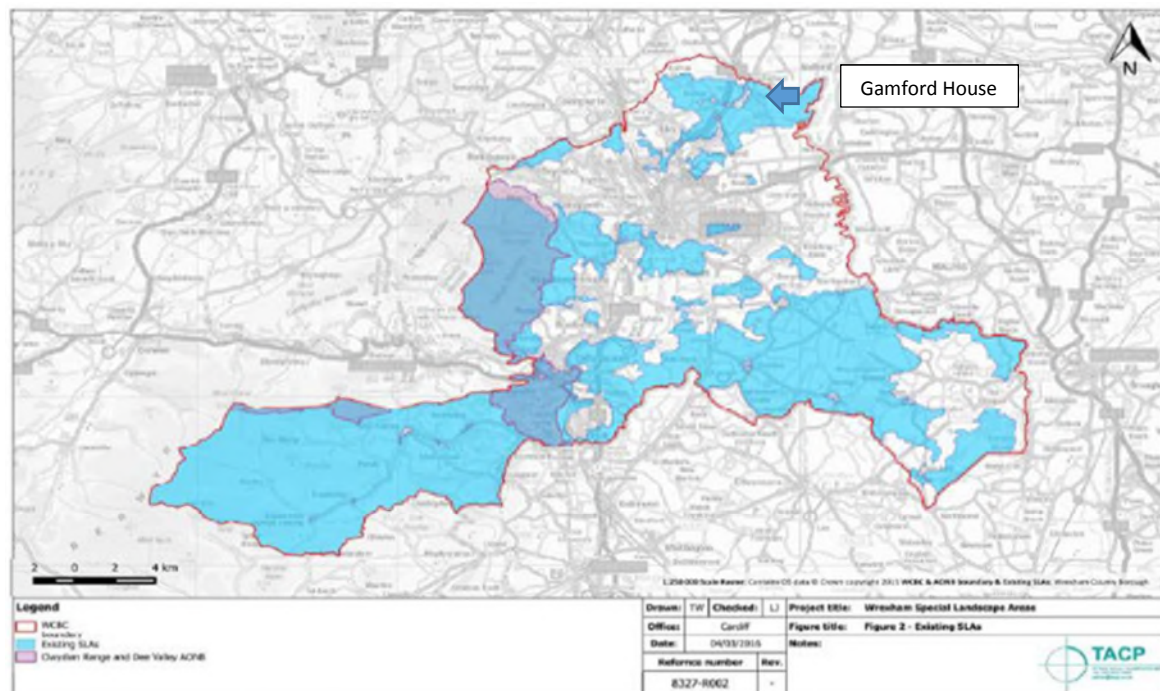


Proposed LDP (Green Barrier) Proposals Map

4.58 In addition, the Deposit Stage has also involved consideration of the UDP landscape policy designation of Special Landscape Areas. Evidence base has been prepared on behalf of the Authority by TACP and an SLA Study undertaken in January 2017 (LDP evidence doc. Ref. EBNB03) which finds that land ought to be released from this designation in compliance with PPW guidance and the assessment undertaken.

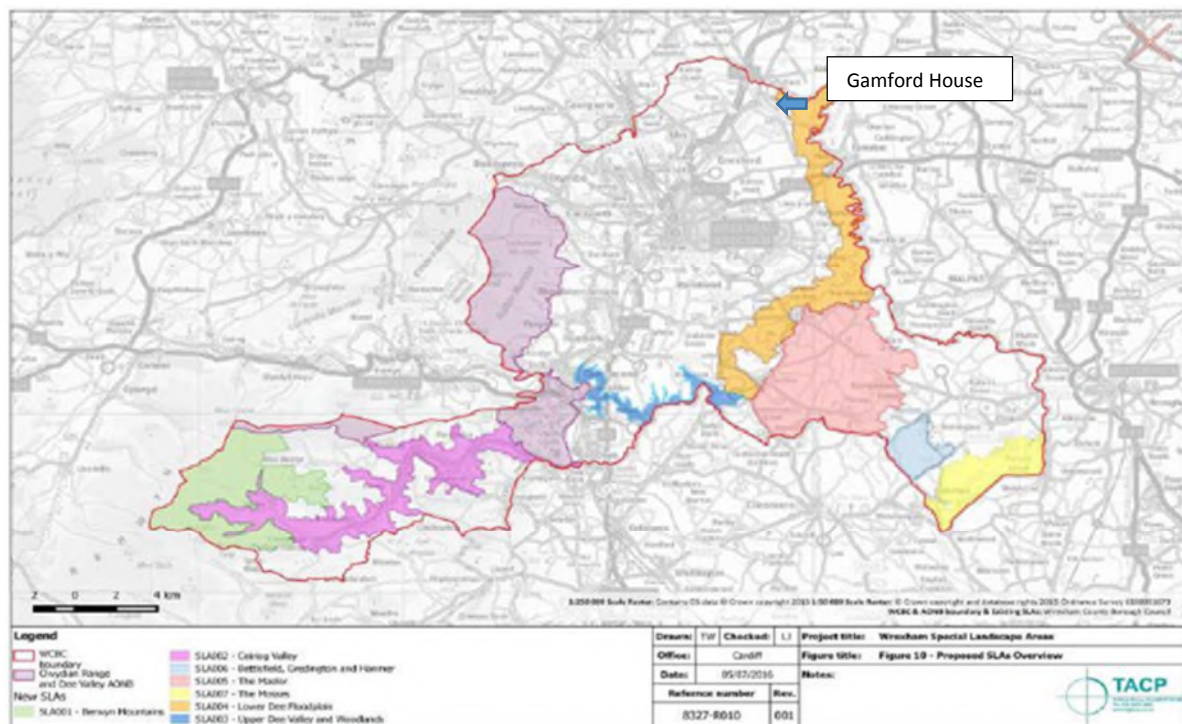
4.59 The County Borough has followed this advice and dramatically reduced the area of SLA, which again concurs with the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment we have undertaken, as shown on the plans below:

Fig.7



Existing UDP SLA areas

Fig.8



Proposed LDP SLA Areas

Environmental Impact Assessment:

4.60 All new housing developments with a site area over 0.5 hectares require screening to decide whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. A screening note is attached at Appendix E, and it is concluded that a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required.

Deliverability

4.61 The advice embodied within Planning Policy Wales is that it would be helpful for the applicant to demonstrate that sites would come forward and were not just being promoted on a speculative basis. In this case the applicant is strongly committed to bringing forward Gamford House for development. A signal of their intent is the time and effort spent in promoting the site through the emerging LDP process but also investing significant resources in producing a Full Planning submission that has involved commissioning detailed assessments, viability studies, surveys and design work.

4.62 The applicants have invested in a high quality design solution as they wish to ensure that they raise the standard of the residential offer in Rossett to preserve its status as a desirable place to live and augment local property values.

4.63 The applicants will be the developers of this site and have taken steps to ensure that what is being proposed is “fit for purpose” and commercially attractive to the market as a location, layout and product. As a local Company they wish to secure a future for Rossett and reinforce their reputation for high quality development.

4.64 There is evidence of interest from estate agents (see Appendix D) and it is considered that this demonstrates the sites credentials as an attractive and viable development proposition. The applicant has sought to ensure all technical and design issues have been resolved prior to submitting for planning. Assuming a permission is achieved by around summer 2019 the projected timescale for this will involve a start on site by the end of 2019. We trust that this narrative and the supporting evidence provided demonstrates that the applicant is serious and deliverability of the site is proven.

Principle of Development

4.65 Where a five-year land supply does not exist, TAN 1 indicates that the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning applications, provided that the development would otherwise comply with the Development Plan and National Planning Policies.

4.66 Set within this context the proposed redevelopment must be assessed on its own merits and as required by paragraph 5.1 of TAN 1, the need to increase housing supply should be ‘given considerable weight’ when dealing with planning applications, provided that the development would otherwise comply with national planning policies. Planning Policy Wales includes a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, against which this application should be assessed.

4.67 The introduction to PPW10 at paragraph 1.4.3 states: “The Welsh Government has specific duties regarding equal opportunities and sustainable development under the Government of Wales Act 2006 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Welsh Ministers (and other public bodies) to produce well-being objectives and take reasonable steps to meet those objectives in the context of the principle of sustainable development.”

4.68 Paragraph 4.3 of the PPW advises that: *“The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act establishes a ‘sustainable development principle’ which means that a defined public body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

Location

4.69 PPW10 para 3.37 states, *‘An essential component for a sustainable place is where development is to be located. Development plans will provide the basis for this by identifying areas and sites for new development. This will be based not only on the consideration of the needs of existing urban and rural areas but also future relationships between urban settlements and their rural hinterlands, particularly in the light of ensuring strong rural and urban communities, maintaining places which are resilient to the effects of social and economic change and are resilient in the light of the impacts of climate change.’*

4.70 The site is located on the edge of Rossett which is noted as being an ‘Urban Village’ in the UDP. These urban villages comprise the larger settlements to the north, west and south of Wrexham Town. While their range of services is narrower than Wrexham, they are capable of supporting some additional growth, particularly on derelict or underused land. These identified services ensure the site has direct access to larger nearby towns and cities for employment opportunities. The site is therefore served well during the main part of the day allowing for work, shopping and daytime leisure trips, therefore negating the need to rely on the private car.

4.71 The location of Gamford House would not need to solely rely on private cars to access services, education or employment and in terms of its location and services, scores highly from a sustainability perspective.

Summary of Key Planning Issues

4.72 In summary, our case, in demonstrating that this development proposal meets the exceptional circumstances test as set out in PPW, is based on the following:

- the Authority cannot present any case for a 5-year housing land supply;
- that TAN1 is of significant material weight;
- the site does not meet any of the 4 purposes of including and retaining the land within the Green Barrier;
- the proposals contribute towards meeting the County Borough’s economic development aspirations, as the provision for executive housing is both a vehicle for regeneration as well as an essential component in the attraction of high tech research and development facilities.

4.73 These cumulatively present a compelling case as to why this scheme should be supported and granted planning permission.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The purpose of this section of the statement is to set out the hierarchy of planning policy that is considered relevant to the consideration of this application; these are separately examined in detail by assessing and interpreting the merits of the proposals against them, with a view to demonstrating the case in support of the development proposals. The legal test for all planning decisions is to

determine the application in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 A material consideration will be whether the development management framework is up to date. The planning framework (for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) currently comprises the Development Plan (the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan) which was adopted in February 2005.

5.3 Section 38(6) of the Act confirms that in determining planning applications “any determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise”. Case law (such as *R. Cummins v Camden LBC* 2001) has established that for a proposal to be in accordance with the Development Plan it is not necessary for it to accord with each and every policy, rather it should conform with the plan as a whole.

5.4 The final part of our policy analysis is to consider any “other material considerations”. This will include assessing whether the proposals are in conformity and accordance with national policy (the Welsh Spatial Plan, Planning Policy Wales, TAN’s, Interim Ministerial Planning Statements) and any non-statutory guidance (e.g. best practice). It is concluded that national and non-statutory considerations also support the proposals.

5.5 We will now consider reasons why the proposal and the principle of the proposed development meets and conforms to these policies as set out below.

National Policy Framework

PLANNING POLICY WALES (2018) EDITION 10

5.6 Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) sets the context for sustainable land use planning policy in Wales, within which local planning authorities’ statutory Unitary Development Plans and Local Development Plans are prepared and development control decisions on individual applications and appeals are taken.

5.7 PPW10 para 1.2 states; *‘The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.’* It follows that, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 1.17), applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. These include current circumstances, policies in an emerging development plan and planning policies of the Welsh Government. All applications should be considered in relation to up-to-date policies.

The application is considered to be in accordance with the adopted development plan for the area, with further material considerations to support this view.

Chapter 4 – Planning for Sustainability

5.8 Paragraph 2.12 states: *“Planning should seek to maximise delivery of outcomes against all aspects of well-being/sustainable development, thus seeking to maximise contributions towards all of the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This can be achieved by adopting a place making approach.”*

5.9 Five Key sustainable development principles are established, including; Making best use of resources, and Creating & sustaining communities.

5.10 The proposal minimises land take by utilising previously developed buildings, avoiding development on Greenfield sites. The removal of hardstanding and the introduction of new garden areas with associated trees and plants will considerably enhance the biodiversity of the site. Consideration will be given to the use of permeable parking areas.

5.11 The development minimises carbon emissions by utilising existing buildings, with energy already locked into the construction. Fewer new materials and their associated emissions from production, transport and construction stages will be required. This is an important factor to consider in a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability of the scheme.

5.12 The site is not located within the centre of Rossett but can be reached by methods other than private car. Cycling is a viable option and there are public transport links within Rossett in the form of a bus service (Arriva 1).

5.13 The development will respect the character of the surrounding area in utilising existing buildings and retaining their traditional character and form, with sensitive alterations where necessary. The proposals in this case are in accordance with the key principles and key policy objectives of sustainable development.

5.14 The proposals are considered sustainable and enjoy the benefit of the presumption in favour of sustainable development embodied in PPW10. The contribution of the proposals to remedying the deficiency in the supply of market housing is a benefit which is entitled to considerable weight. Environmental benefits are achieved in the form of an improvement in the character and appearance of the area, the redevelopment of a site which makes no positive contribution at present.

5.15 PPW10 is clearly in support of a proposal such as this. It introduces a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”, where developments enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities now and over the long term and that weight is given to national policy in determining individual applications where policy in adopted or approved development plans is outdated or superseded (para 1.17). The Planning (Wales) Act was published and granted Royal Assent in July 2015. It included statutory provision for sustainable development to be at the core of all planning decisions and development planning policy and standards of pre-application consultation by both applicants and the services to be provided by LPA’s to facilitate engagement.

5.16 The most relevant TAN’s (and MTAN’s) that are considered to be material for the current application comprise the following:

- TAN1 : Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (2015)
- TAN2 : Planning & Affordable Housing (2006)
- TAN5 : Nature Conservation & Planning (2009)
- TAN6 : Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)
- TAN12 : Design (2016)
- TAN15 : Development & Floodrisk (2004)
- TAN18 : Transport (2007)
- TAN22 : Sustainable Buildings (2010)
- TAN23 : Economic Development (2014)

5.17 We will summarise the key and salient and pertinent points from each of them below. As a general comment we consider that the proposals at Gamford House comply with them all:

TAN1 requires that every Authority must publish on an annual basis and it identifies what housing land supply they consider is present. The Council released its last Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS 2014) in March 2015. PPW (Para 9.2.3) states that it is a requirement of all Authorities to provide a 5 year housing land supply. However, the last published figures (JHLAS 2014) show that Wrexham had just 3.1 years supply; down from 3.4 years in 2013, 3.5 years in 2012, 3.9 years in 2011, 5.35 years in 2010; thus the trajectory is that it is decreasing every year and with no adopted LDP to identify future sources of supply the situation is forecast to only get worse. We are aware that more recent figures from 2016 suggest the supply has plummeted to just 1.14 years supply.

5.18 TAN1 however provides even greater guidance and clarity and Paras 6.2. 8.1 and 8.2 are of particular pertinence; for they states that where a current study shows less than 5 years the need to increase supply (by approving more development) should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning applications provided that the development would otherwise comply with the development plan and national policy. However, where there is an expired UDP and/or no adopted LDP in place the Authority will effectively be considered to have a zero supply.

5.19 The LDP2 Delivery Agreement date is continuing to slip into the future. This places the authority in a position where it must seek to halt the growing shortfall in housing land supply.

5.20 TAN2 Para 10.12 recognises that it is important that there is adequate housing provision in rural areas to meet the needs of local people and to contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities.

5.21 TAN5 Protected species and habitats have been assessed and examined; with an extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment undertaken. New areas of biodiversity are proposed and a 'dark corridor' and buffer is identified along the northern/eastern perimeter of the site for bats.

5.22 TAN6 Although mainly dealing with agricultural related development this TAN does seek to support development that will serve to enhance the future sustainability of rural communities through new residential opportunities. Para 3.1.2 of TAN6 states that: *Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities, increase local economic prosperity and minimise the need to travel for employment.* New housing is an important vehicle for the growth of the rural economy.

5.23 TAN12 Para 2.5 states: *Good design is not inevitable. It requires a collaborative, creative, inclusive, process of problem solving and innovation – embracing sustainability, architecture, place making, public realm, landscape, and infrastructure.* The design solution, as described in the Design and Access Statement, demonstrates that TAN12 has been followed and has taken a sensitive and sympathetic approach in response to the local natural and built environment assets. Simply converting these buildings severely compromises good design. However, the proposed modifications and extensions required to meet standards of residential amenity are modest. Dwellings are retained on the existing building footprint set out with reasonable separation between the built forms whilst providing adequate interface distances to deliver positive impact on the site.

5.24 TAN 15 – Development and Flood Risk (2004). TAN15 contains a development advice map (DAM); based on Environment Agency and British Geological Survey mapping. The DAM shows three development advice zones, A, B, C. Zones A and B are areas of generally low risk (i.e. outside the main river flood plain). Zone C represents the extreme flood outline, and is further subdivided into two zones. The site lies within Flood Zone B of the DAM map. The site may be underlain by soils that could

be suitable for infiltration. The site currently drains to the watercourse and the existing impermeable areas that are to be retained will continue to drain as per the existing situation. It is considered that surface water storage should not be required in this instance given the significant betterment which will already be provided over the existing situation in relation to runoff rates and volumes.

5.25 TAN18 Pre application advice considered that a full Transport Assessment would not be necessary for the modest scale of this development. Highway impacts were considered under the approved application P/2016/0384. We believe this shows that the site is located in a highly sustainable location and accessible.

5.26 TAN22 The standard Code will be met and building Regulations will serve to ensure buildings meet current standards of sustainability.

5.27 TAN23 This is of significant material weight given that PPW defines economic development broadly so that it can include any form of development that generates wealth, jobs and income (including residential). It follows therefore, that the economic impact of these proposals must be given serious weight; the nature and extent of the benefits are provided in the summary to this section. Para 1.15 recognises that economic land uses include construction and house building. PPW references on a number of occasions the need to align housing and jobs and the delivery of meeting affordable housing need in a sustainable travel to work area.

5.28 The most relevant and pertinent Paragraphs in TAN23 comprise the following:

Para 1.2.1 As a consequence it is essential that the planning system recognises, and gives due weight to, the economic benefits associated with new development. Key factors in determining the weight and benefits of supporting schemes will be to ask the questions of what viable alternative uses exist for Gamford House, how many jobs will be directly provided and what other special merit might exist. This scheme will deliver and generate many construction and supply chain jobs and the new housing will serve to support enhanced local services and facilities once occupied.

5.29 TAN23 discusses supporting strong rural economies; recognising that sustainable development is essential to building strong and vibrant rural economic communities; and it is important in aligning existing and future homes and jobs.

The Welsh Language

5.30 The impact that development may have on the Welsh language is a material consideration. However, PPW10 also advises that decisions must not introduce any element of discrimination between individual linguistic ability, and should not seek to control housing occupancy on linguistic grounds.

5.31 LPG31 defines Ceirio Valley, Pant, Poncian, Coedpoeth, Johnstown, Penycae and Minerva as language sensitive Wards. Rossett is not classed as a language sensitive Ward so there is no requirement for an impact assessment to be carried out in respect of this development.

Local Planning Framework

Emerging LDP2

5.32 The LDP as submitted in 2012 was withdrawn for reasons that must carry significant weight in the assessment of the current application. The Planning Inspector's Report highlighted fundamental concerns:

- A significant shortfall in the supply of housing which, if it were to be addressed, would undermine the strategy of the Plan of confining general housing to within settlement boundaries.
- A failure in the Plan to respond to its own evidence base.
- An incoherent use of evidence e.g. short and long term trends used inconsistently to justify low housing figures.
- The overall level of growth proposed by the Plan may lack sufficient ambition in terms of strengthening Wrexham's role as a key hub as envisaged in The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update, (reiterated in the North Wales Regeneration Plan 2018-2035).
- Some policies lack effect, are unduly onerous, pull in the opposite direction to their intended objectives, and contain drafting errors.
- A lack of flexibility in the Plan, in particular overly rigid policies.
- The approach to green wedges does not have adequate regard to national policy.
- Concern that the envisaged scale of growth in the employment sector may be hampered by the limited pool of suitably skilled workforce that would be likely to result from the Plan's more restrictive approach to housing growth.
- Concern that the proposed imbalance between the scale of employment and housing growth may lead to employees commuting into the County to work, thus limiting the economic benefits to the area and increasing car borne journeys.
- Although part of County has recently been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it was accepted at the hearing that there was no reason to believe that the character of the County was such that it could not accommodate any expansion of settlements.
- Evidence from the house building industry raises concerns that many of the allocated sites will not come forward in the short term because of the particular challenges in developing brownfield sites in a difficult economic climate when lenders are risk averse in the face of potential unidentified abnormal costs. The evidence provided in the Entec Urban Potential Study (page 53) also indicates that for viability reasons a brownfield strategy would not provide a reliable source of supply.

5.33 Any local planning policy assessment must consider the "Wrexham Unitary Development Plan", which was adopted in February 2005 and whose plan policies are currently being used for Development Control purposes. The plan period ran from 1996 to 2011.

5.34 Given its primacy, adopted status and the fact (most of) its policies are considered to be (generally) up to date, a degree of weight can still be attached to the relevant policies therein. However, the plan has technically expired and in the light of TAN1 guidance (January 2015) the Authority can no longer demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and moreover, there are National policies (PPW10) that have come on-stream since that must be afforded significant weight.

5.35 Wrexham County Borough Council is pursuing the replacement of the UDP with the Local Development Plan (LDP) which will cover the plan period 2013 to 2028, but the plan has not been through Examination and been adopted and, until it has been, Planning Policy Wales (edition 10) para 2.14 must apply. At the time of writing the LDP2 has reached the Submission Plan stage with a full suite of evidence base and draft policies and allocations, and as such, we consider that significant

weight must apply, despite it not having been subject of a binding Inspectors Report. We consider that the proposals for Gamford House meet the following Objectives:

Relevant LDP2 Objectives

5.36 Objective 1: Meet the future needs of a growing population by providing the right type, mix, quality and amount of development and infrastructure in sustainable and accessible locations, ensuring that the role of Wrexham as a key settlement of national importance in the Wales Spatial Plan Wrexham – Deeside – Chester hub is strengthened;

Objective 2: Foster mixed communities by delivering housing, including affordable homes to meet the needs of the County Borough, ensuring a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenure through the identification of deliverable housing land allocations with supporting social, environmental and physical infrastructure;

Objective 6: Promote and encourage a healthy, active and safe lifestyle that improves wellbeing through increasing accessibility to services and facilities by locating development in sustainable locations, protecting our green spaces for people and wildlife and designing safe, secure and walkable communities;

Objective 9: Reduce the need to travel by car by locating new development in the most sustainable locations, within accessible distances by foot, bicycle, bus and rail to jobs, schools, community, leisure and health facilities, homes and shops, as well as seeking to alleviate known highway infrastructure capacity constraints on the road network within the County Borough.

5.37 The Council's published LDP2 Deposit Plan (doc. Ref. KSD04 dated March 2018) seeks to deliver 8,525 dwellings over the plan period. This site will contribute to this housing delivery requirement and importantly will also seek to address the delivery of large executive homes that are not viable at alternative sites. The challenge that Rossett faces with just a single allocation is that it has very few opportunities for anything other than minor infill as no larger brownfield sites exist.

5.38 We consider that sequentially the only logical location to release land is upon the application site as the rest of the settlement faces some serious challenges including the following:

- Open parkland setting to the west of the main Chester Road (B5445); This is key to the character and setting of Rossett; developing here would result in a very significant change to the character of the village and access is limited.
- The key strategic gap that affords the separation of settlements within the neighbouring Authority and the settlement of Pulford, lies to the north where there is Green Belt, whilst another important strategic gap is located to the south between the village and Marford.
- Floodrisk to the south of Harwood's Lane with the River Alyn and another floodrisk area to the north
- Poor accessibility through to land located to the west which would also suffer from noise impact generated by the railway line and the busy A483

5.39 We therefore consider that the application site outperforms all other alternative sites that have been promoted or identified in the Local Plan and by other speculative submissions. The application site performs on all levels, is free from constraint, is deliverable and ought to be encouraged.

5.40 In the meantime, the approach should be to identify the provisions of the (existing and emerging) development plan and determine if this application is in accordance or in conflict. If in compliance the

starting point will be to approve our proposals by granting planning permission as the decision is in accordance with the plan.

5.41 The extract of the UDP proposals map (provided earlier above in this statement) presently illustrates how Rossett is enclosed by a Green Barrier Policy EC1 and Special Landscape Area designation, UDP Policy EC5. The Strategic Green Wedge Review Stage 2, October 2017 and the Special Landscape Areas Study, January 2017, have concluded that these designations should no longer impact upon the Gamford House site.

5.42 It is therefore essential to consider Policy H3 and Policy H5 of the UDP, but we have also assessed and tested the proposals against all relevant local and national policies and consider those listed below to be the most relevant and appropriate in this instance.

PS1 Broad Location of Development: *The UDP requires that development should be directed towards defined settlement boundaries.* Such settlement limits are out of date and can only command significantly reduced weight. Correspondingly, the requirement of this policy that development be confined to settlement limits is also subject to the same diminished weight.

PS2 Development should not materially or detrimentally affect countryside, landscape character, open space or the quality of the natural environment. The existing settlement pattern includes the Village, ribbon development along the radial routes and well established clusters. The Gamford House site has been developed since the 19th century, and the contribution that such sites make to the character of the landscape is examined in more detail in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Our design, landscape, trees and ecology evidence demonstrates that the proposals will not harm such interests by virtue of the site's enclosed and contained character and the retention of hedgerow and ecological habitats.

PS3 Development should preferably use previously developed land wherever possible. The previous use of the Gamford House was as commercial premises for the storage and repair of distribution wagons.

PS4 Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network. The existing settlement pattern includes the well-established clusters that surround Rossett and Gamford House lies closest to the Village within comfortable walking and cycling distance.

PS8 Transport. The site is located within walking distance of many of the amenities and services that the Tier 3 settlement of Rossett has to offer. Junction 7 of the A483, 1.5 miles from the site provides excellent access to the regional road network. Chester Road passes through Rossett 450m west of the site. Route 1 operated by Arriva runs between Wrexham Bus Station and Chester Railway Station via Gresford, Marford, Rossett, Pulford and Chester Business Park. This route provides a 10 minute frequent service in both directions from Mondays to Saturdays and a 30 minute service on Sundays.

Policy GDP1– Development Objectives, addresses Wrexham CBC's general development principles.

The proposed development particularly complies with criterion a) of the policy: *All new development should 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 positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.*

The scheme design will accord with the character of the countryside and will make a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality in removing buildings in a poor state of repair, unattractive hardstanding and the general detritus of a former commercial site. This is essential if the

proposals for new dwellings are to comply with part b) of Policy H5, Housing in the Countryside. The attached Design and Access Statement confirms compliance with b), c), d), e), f), g), h), and i) of Policy GDP1.

With regard to criterion d) of the policy, safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the site was approved under the application P/2016/0384, and has not changed.

5.43 The following general UDP policies also apply to these proposals:

GDP2 Capacity of Infrastructure and Community Facilities: Due to its modest scale the proposal would not result in any local infrastructure or community facilities becoming deficient as a result of this development being implemented. The site is served by foul drainage, a 90mm water main and electricity supply.

EC1 Green Barriers: The emerging LDP2 and its evidence base has reviewed the extent of the Green Barrier (now referred to as Green Wedge) and found it should be 'rolled back'. This designation will no longer apply to the site under the Local Development Plan.

EC2 Agricultural Land: The site does not have an agricultural use, but is Brownfield.

EC4 Hedgerows: Trees and Woodland. The scheme has been designed to ensure that any loss of these features is minimal; in particular those already providing a landscape buffer to Gamford Lane. The landscaping scheme has been designed to provide a rural character to the development and is integral to the desire to preserve openness of the countryside.

EC5 Special Landscape Area: The development will be constructed to a high standard of design as outlined in the Design and Access Statement. The presence of a built form and any impact it may have upon the Special Landscape Area has already been established through the existing barns and commercial buildings. However the demolition proposed will enhance the Special Landscape Area. The emerging LDP2 and its evidence base has reviewed the extent of the Special Landscape Barrier and found it should be 'rolled back'. As discussed above this designation will no longer apply to the site under the Local Development Plan.

EC6 Biodiversity Conservation: In support of this application a report has been commissioned from Tyrer Ecological Consultants. Their Report forms part of the submission package and should be read in conjunction with this Statement.

EC12 Development and Flood Risk: The site lies within Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone B, with minimal risk of flooding.

EC13 Surface Water Flooding: The site is currently predominantly concrete hardstanding covering an area of 2,460m² but the proposals will reduce this area and create extensive permeable areas in rear gardens and structural landscaping, thus reducing run-off and the risk of off-site flooding.

EC15 – Small Scale Neglected Sites: This policy aims to enhance amenity through the restoration of sites and dilapidated buildings, particularly those in sensitive locations. The proposal to re-use redundant traditional buildings at Gamford House would comply with this policy as their positive impact upon the character of the open countryside would be ensured by their high quality design and materials specification.

H1 Housing Allocations: The lack of a sufficient supply is a significant material consideration that must be afforded considerable weight in the determination of this application.

H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits: For those buildings capable of conversion at Plots 3, 4, 5, and 8 the proposals have been designed to address all of the requirements of this Policy. Guidance Note 13 outlines the various categories of housing that are considered acceptable in the countryside. Among these is the conversion of rural buildings, which are no longer suitable for their original purpose. Provided the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new building, it is recognised that conversion to other use(s) such as residential, employment, community or visitor accommodation, can safeguard the building's future.

5.44 The viable conversion of buildings at Gamford House demand that extensive rebuilding is required to achieve residential amenity and the desired rural character of this cluster development.

The issue of whether the works required are tantamount to the erection of a new build in the countryside should not be afforded significant weight in the context of the site being brownfield and the goal of making a positive contribution to the character of the landscape.

5.45 In accordance with paragraph 6.10 of the UDP the proposals reflect the local vernacular and alternative non-residential uses are considered inappropriate. Residential is the only viable use as the site access is unsuitable for a commercial traffic.

H5 – Housing in the Countryside: provides that: *Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where:-*

- a) proposals accord with Policies H3, H4, and H8; or*
- b) proposals comprise infilling subject to Policy GDP1; or*
- c) an essential need to house a full time agricultural or forestry key worker can be established.*

5.46 Where existing buildings at Gamford House require modest rebuilding or alteration then they will be considered as infilling to contribute to the integrity of a scheme that creates a rural character. The proposals at Gamford House comply with Policy GDP1, and therefore with Policy H5(b) above. Although the requirements of Policy H5 are important at this location it should be remembered that Gamford House is a Brownfield site.

5.47 Our proposals include 2no. new dwellings on the site of the much extended Gamford House, at Plots 1 and 2, as well as substantial rebuilding on plots 3, 6 and 7, and a less intrusive approach at plots 4, 5, and 8.

5.48 As detailed in our response to policy PS1 Broad Location of Development, settlement limits are out of date and can be given only significantly reduced weight. Correspondingly, the presumption against development in the countryside in policy H5 is also subject to the same diminished weight.

H7 Affordable Housing: The proposal for 8no. Dwellings means that this site falls below the threshold for an Affordable Housing requirement.

CLF5 Open Space Requirements from New Residential Developments: The proposal for 8no. Dwellings means that this site falls below the threshold for the Provision of Open Space requirement to apply.

T8 Parking: In conformity with SPG16 adequate parking provision is proposed to satisfy standards. For C3 residential use, the parking standards are:

3 / 4 bedrooms – 3 spaces (including garaged parking)

T9 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding: As the site is not classed as a major development there is no requirement to make provision for these activities but the location lends itself to the pursuit of these with access to both the village and the open countryside.

5.49 In consideration of the emerging LDP2, the published Deposit Draft comprises a series of policies that the Authority are seeking to apply once the plan has been adopted. Some degree of weight can be afforded these and their associated evidence base.

Local Planning Guidance Note 3 – Converting Rural Buildings

5.50 This guidance note explains the approach of Wrexham Council with regards to the change of use or conversion of rural buildings and expands upon policies GDP1, H3, E5 and CLF9 from the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. The note states that there are some buildings which are unsuitable for conversion, including those which are:

- *structurally unsound;*
- *roofless, missing substantial sections of wall, or so ruined that only vestiges remain of the original structure;*
- *of temporary construction;*
- *eyesores which should be removed in the interests of landscape conservation;*
- *unsuitable in terms of size and form of construction;*
- *at risk of flooding*

Those former agricultural and commercial buildings which are proposed to be retained and converted at Gamford House do not fall into any of the above categories.

5.51 In addition, guidance states that planning permission would not normally be granted if:

‘There is insufficient floor area in the existing building to provide acceptable standards of accommodation (in the case of conversions to dwellings, this should be a minimum of 40m²);

The proposals involve rebuilding more than 10% of the walls if the roof structure needs to be rebuilt; or 20% of the walls if the roof structure is to be retained.’

5.52 The buildings are of a sufficient floor area to provide acceptable standards of accommodation. The roofs of the sheds will require reconstruction, as they require a modest increase in height to afford reasonable residential amenity. The structural survey states that at plots 3, 4, 5 and 8 no more than 15 – 20% of walls will need to be rebuilt (See Design & Access Statement). At plots 6 and 7 more substantial rebuilding will need to take place. Please refer to the separate structural report from HBA for full details.

5.53 LPG 3 requires that, in terms of development principles, it is essential that converted buildings should keep their original character and not have the appearance of being fundamentally new structures. *‘The aim should therefore be to retain such key features. Where the building has no original or traditional features of merit, the Council will expect the design of a conversion to reflect the vernacular character and appearance of other buildings in the locality.’* The design process has considered the character of rural properties in the locality and incorporated materials, fenestration details and roof designs that are in keeping.

5.54 Part 2 of the Guidance Note relates specifically to the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings. Several material considerations are set out for when it is proposed to convert an agricultural building to a dwelling:

General Location – *In many instances, buildings located in very remote areas will be unsuitable for non-residential uses.* Gamford House is not located in a remote area.

Local Road Network – *For road safety reasons, the intensive use of narrow, single-carriageway country lanes with few passing places is normally undesirable. If a building is served by an unclassified road less than 4 metres wide (as defined on the 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale Ordnance Survey Maps), its use for business, commercial or tourism purposes may therefore be inappropriate.* Commercial uses at the site would not be acceptable given the relatively narrow width of Gamford Lane.

Site Access – *Where the site access is narrow and/or shared with other premises; or where visibility is obstructed by buildings and boundary walls, its use by significant levels of additional traffic may be hazardous.* The proposal will make improvements to existing access points approved under 2016/0384/FUL and visibility splays have been designed to the required standard.

External Appearance – *Conversions of agricultural buildings should seek to maintain the agricultural character and appearance of the existing structure.*

5.55 Whilst the buildings at Plots 1, 2, are proposed to replace the existing extensive farmhouse, proposals for plots 3, 4, 5 and 8 have been designed to create a rural character whilst minimising impacts upon openness of the countryside. Proposals for plots 6 and 7 will replace a building with an industrial character with two dwellings that contribute positively and are integral to the character of the redevelopment.

5.56 The site is located close to Rossett Business Village and it is not considered that there is a demand for further commercial floor space within the locality. Part 3 of the Guidance Note sets out information required to assess the suitability of buildings for conversion and the findings of the structural survey are detailed in the Design and Access Statement. In summary the proposed development is considered to comply with relevant information contained within Guidance Note 3.

Local Planning Guidance Note 13 – Housing in the Countryside

5.57 Guidance Note 13 outlines the various categories of housing that are considered acceptable in the countryside. Amongst these (part b) is the conversion of rural buildings, which are no longer suitable for their original purpose.

Provided the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new building, it is recognised that conversion to other use(s) such as residential, employment, community or visitor accommodation, can safeguard the building's future.

5.58 The existing buildings at plots 3, 4, 5, and 8 have remained vacant for 10 years, being no longer suitable for their original purpose and are proposed for conversion. The site regularly attracts anti-social behaviour and those buildings that are capable of conversion are dealt with sympathetically to contribute to the 'rural' character of the scheme.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.59 There are some relevant approved/adopted non-statutory supplementary planning guidance documents that exist which have been considered in preparing this proposal; these comprise the following:

- SPG6 – Access to and use of Buildings
- SPG7 – Landscape and Development
- SPG10 – Public Open Space on New Housing Development

- SPG15 – Cycling
- SPG16 – Parking Standards
- SPG17 – Trees & Development
- SPG21 – Space Around Dwellings
- SPG24 – Designing Out Crime
- SPG27 – Developer Contributions to Schools
- SPG28 – Affordable Housing
- SPG30 – Design Guide for Developers & Architects when Designing Residential Development
- SPG31 – The Welsh Language & Welsh Communities
- SPG32 – Biodiversity & Development

SCHEME SPECIFIC ECONOMIC BENEFITS

5.60 In addition to the linkages made in TAN6 and TAN23 paragraph 2.21 of Planning Policy Wales, edition 10, makes the link between social, economic and environmental goals. The proposals for high quality executive style homes at Gamford House have relevance for the economic regeneration aspirations of the County Borough and fit well with the economic objectives of National Policy. EBE01 Employment Land Review 2015 states importance of the planning system supporting economic growth, and ensuring that there is sufficient land that is suitable for economic uses:

- *Local planning authorities should facilitate the provision of sufficient land to meet market demand, except where there are good reasons to the contrary. In addition, local planning authorities should steer economic development to the most appropriate locations by:*
- *Coordinating development with infrastructure provision*
- *Supporting national, regional and local economic policies/strategies*
- *Aligning jobs and services with housing (where possible) to reduce the need for travel, especially by car*
- *Promoting brownfield, vacant and underused land*
- *Delivering physical regeneration and employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities*

Para 2.29 An example of a development of 'special merit' could be a greenfield development that could attract high-value, high-skill businesses that would not be interested in a lower-quality urban environment.

Para 2.30 In rural areas, development may be acceptable in countryside locations if it makes communities more sustainable (encouraging people to work close to home), meets the expansion needs of an existing local business or an existing business cluster.

5.61 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10 December 2018) provides detailed strategic guidance on planning policy and sets out land use policy, which is supplemented by the Technical Advice Notes (TAN's) and by draft Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (MIPPS).

5.62 Chapter 5 of PPW10 is of particular importance as it deals with Economic Development; it is the context for what TAN 23 explores in more detail. The Productive and Enterprising theme covers the economic components of placemaking. Local planning authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these are given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process, and should recognise that there will be occasions when the economic benefits will outweigh social and environmental considerations.

5.63 The Economic Prosperity Strategy 2012-2016 identifies four main priorities towards achieving economic prosperity within Wrexham: Investment, Employment, Wealth and Quality of life. Our proposals aim to achieve all of these objectives. Housing is a key sector of economic activity both in its own terms, for instance, construction work as well as design, maintenance, architecture, and sales. Affordable, attractive and integrated housing creates places where people want to live and businesses want to invest.

5.64 Wrexham is identified in the Wales Spatial Plan as a key hub which ought to be strengthened as a focus for investment in, among other sectors, housing. There is concern that the restrictive approach of the Plan to housing in particular fails to have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan. It is vital that economic development supports a healthy housing market and vice versa and the Local Housing Strategy is aligned to and will support the Economic Prosperity Strategy. Restricting housing growth would limit the number of workers available in the local pool of labour making it more difficult to attract investment from potential employers. (Planning Inspector's comments at the LDP Inquiry 2016).

The proposals would bring the following specific economic benefits:

- The total project contract value for this project is in the region of £2M and this will help to secure existing construction jobs based locally and create new ones.
- The creation of employment for skilled trades in the locality will help maintain employment and provide and contribute towards the ongoing economic investment.
- It is estimated that the development would need a constant 10 direct operative jobs a day to sustain a 2-year construction programme with another 40 supply chain jobs indirectly supported.
- Significant local spend and economic output during the construction period of the development will represent a big boost to existing businesses.
- Post-completion, the spending power of another 8 households into the local economy can also be expected to be significant; not only in first occupation expenditure but ongoing local expenditure in sustaining local services and facilities beyond just the construction cycle
- The completed development will also generate Council Tax revenue for the Authority and with an average £3,262 bill per Band I household this will generate up to £26,000 per annum in supporting and enhancing existing public services.
- With a local Community Council precept seeing new income being devoted to local initiatives to address any local expenditure needs at grass roots.
- This proposal seeks to attract the leaders of industry to the County Borough, bringing economic growth and prosperity into the local economy.
- The proposed development would generate employment opportunities in construction and in other sectors linked to the construction market. There would also be ongoing maintenance costs and services required by the occupants which would supplement the local economy;
- The proposal would support social infrastructure, providing a contribution towards education facilities.
- Developer contributions to local schools.

5.65 Local Planning Guidance Note No. 27 - Developer Contributions to Schools is one of a series of notes deriving from policy GDP2 in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan and identifies the circumstances and locations in which developer contributions to the provision of education facilities, such as additional classrooms, will be necessary. It is understood that any developer contribution will be based on the following considerations:

5.66 It will apply to proposed developments of four or more residential units, whether by new build, conversion or changes of use. It will only apply to schools deemed to have a shortage of places taking into account other residential developments within the area and after addition of the extra pupils likely to be generated by the proposed development.

5.67 If the potential pupils generated by the proposed development cannot be accommodated within existing schools then it is understood that a commuted payment will be calculated by multiplying the additional places required by the pupil cost figure (in accordance with Table 1 of the guidance note) to produce the commuted sum to be included in the planning obligation. We would be keen to learn of the Council's current position in regards to the school capacity and associated need in order to seek compliance with these requirements within the final Section 106 Agreement.

SCHEME SPECIFIC SOCIAL BENEFITS

5.68 PPW10 para 4.2.1 states, '*New housing development in both urban and rural areas should incorporate a mix of market and affordable house types, tenures and sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities.*' This need to broaden the housing offer was confirmed in the Local Housing Market Update 2017, where stakeholders provided their views on the potential/actual market weaknesses in Wrexham (see extracts in Appendix A below). These included:

- A lack of housing stock (supply) and suitable land for new development;
- More diversity and choice required, especially to enable households to trade up;
- Stagnant house prices in affecting smaller and terraced homes with the price of semidetached 3 bedroom and 4 bedroom homes in rising due to lack of supply;
- Imbalanced housing stock – lower proportion of detached properties;
- Low levels of greenfield sites coming forward for development;
- Little/low confidence in the local economy to encourage further house building.

5.69 The Local Housing Market Update Report (2017) outlines the scale of future strategic challenges which include the ongoing delivery of new market and affordable housing to address need and support economic growth. The proposals address these challenges in the following way;

- as an "exclusive executive" housing scheme the proposal creates a range of 8 no. 4 bed detached dwellings,
- this new housing will offer the opportunity to secure the future of the Primary and Secondary schools. New housing brings families, retains families; thus providing future community sustainability.
- it will provide for access for all sectors of the community, particularly those with mobility difficulties; the design incorporates DDA compliant grade access into the buildings and across the site.
- the development is accessible by foot/cycling to local amenities and facilities, and taking advantage of public transport interfaces (bus routes); thus promoting sustainable travel choices and reducing the need to travel using private modes of transport.

- the development of the site meets Highway safety needs and will provide for sufficient off-street parking spaces, turning and access for all refuse, emergency and delivery vehicles.
- the proposals will replace a derelict site that is deflating local property values and attracting crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.70 Public Rights of Way: There is no Public Right of Way (PRoW) crossing through the site.

Designing Out Crime:

5.71 Local Planning Guidance Note No. 24 - Designing Out Crime amplifies development plan policies which acknowledge that the design of the physical environment can positively influence human behaviour. Attractive, imaginative, and feasible design can help reduce crime, the fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour, thereby achieving a safer and higher quality environment, and an improvement in residents' quality of life. The note is a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications including this submission. The Design and Access Statement outlines how this design has been prepared taking into account of this guidance note.

5.72 During the design process, design measures such as layout, appearance and landscaping have been carefully assessed to help to prevent crime. The following safety measures have been implemented as part of the design process:-

- Security through natural surveillance: overlooking of car parking areas from habitable room windows
- A sense of ownership through clearly defined boundaries between private and public areas
- Adequate street lighting for all areas including car parking
- External environment to be designed to avoid inadvertent creation of opportunities for crime through, for example, providing hiding places. The positioning and choice of planting in a way to minimize the potential for such problems
- In its current state the site is attracting crime and anti-social behaviour

Residential Amenity of Future Residents:

5.73 The proposals as approved under P/2016/0384, by virtue of an attempt to convert existing commercial buildings, has significantly compromised residential amenity to the extent that the proposals do not meet standards aspired to in both the UDP and LDP2. Such constraints imposed by conversion limits has resulted in a scheme that fails to achieve a rural character, but rather reinforces the commercial alignment of buildings.

5.74 The impact that the current proposal would have in improving this residential amenity is an important consideration of this planning application. Residential amenity includes noise, odour, vibration through construction, and overshadowing and overlooking from the dwellings once built. Local Planning Guidance Note No. 21 - Space around Dwellings amplifies policies in development plans on residential amenity. It applies to the construction of new houses and will form a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications. The guidance note suggests that new houses should benefit from a satisfactory degree of privacy and daylight. To achieve this, minimum separation distances should be maintained between houses, and in particular, between windows lighting habitable rooms. The standards have subsequently been considered and complied with in the layout and are detailed in the Design and Access Statement:

5.75 Where two habitable rooms face each other such that direct overlooking is physically possible, the windows should be 22 metres apart. Where a window in a habitable room faces a blank wall, the height of which exceeds the top of that window, there should be a distance measuring a minimum of 13 metres between them. The proposals would ensure compliance with these distance standards. Furthermore, all new houses should benefit from private garden space for drying clothes, accommodating pets, children's play, and quiet enjoyment etc. Front gardens do not constitute private garden space. For the proposed dwellings the minimum private garden area is 70 sq.m.

Highway Safety:

5.76 On the basis of pre-application advice the application is submitted without an accompanying Highways Impact Assessment, as the necessary improvements required to facilitate the proposed development were considered under the approved scheme P/2016/0384. However, we have regarded it a duty to improve highway safety wherever possible and for this reason have improved the access to Plot 1.

5.77 Two existing access points are to be retained, whilst the improved access to Plot 1 will ensure highway safety. Plots 1 and 2 would have their own separate access directly off the highway with remaining properties accessed from an improved western entrance. This existing access is to be amended and improved to suit the proposed residential use and the proposed layout, following removal of hedgerow would provide safe entrance points with adequate visibility splays of 2.4m x 56m in both directions.

5.78 A Gated Community is proposed, with new internal access road formed to serve 6no. dwelling houses. Each dwelling will have private garage with off road parking, sufficient off-road parking will also be available for visitors to alleviate any requirement to park on the highway. Parking would be provided in accordance with the Council's guidance note (requirement for 3 parking spaces) and parked vehicles should not project into, and interfere with the use of the road or pavement to ensure that the scheme does not prejudice highway safety. To achieve this, all new driveways would measure at least 5.5m in length. There will be sufficient turning space for delivery and waste collection vehicles.

5.79 Given the size of the site and number of residential properties proposed a preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared and submitted as part of the application. This report concludes that in general terms the flood risk to the site is low and as such no specific design restrictions should be placed on the development by the Statutory Consultees in this regard. An appraisal of the sustainable surface water drainage hierarchy concludes that all surface water from the development will either be infiltrated in to the ground or discharged to the public sewer at a rate equivalent to that shed from the existing undeveloped site.

SCHEME SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

5.80:

- The site will benefit from a holistic approach with a sympathetic and sensitive design taking account of the neighbouring rural and urban grain and its landscape setting and character.
- It will deliver a development in a way that reflects the existing urban grain of the settlement and at density that is appropriate and delivers "place-making" in accordance with PPW10.
- The design has taken account of and respects its landscape setting, ecological habitat and hedgerow infrastructure and sought to integrate these features. Maximum retention, mitigation and enhancement of existing landscape features is enabled through new reinforced planting, buffer, dark corridor and biodiversity opportunities and will safeguard the open countryside.

- The proposed layout and detail of the scheme in design terms offers the highest quality design solution that could be expected for this site and the applicant has invested heavily in this to get it right and it will serve to significantly enhance the design quality of the area, benefiting the special character and appearance of the site in its rural / urban fringe setting.
- The properties would be built to modern building regulations requirements and therefore provide excellent thermal performance through insulation and heating systems, helping to ensure the proposal is contributing towards carbon savings and the move to a low carbon economy.

6.0 SUMMARY PLANNING BENEFITS

6.1 The development proposals generate significant and mutually supportive economic, social and environmental benefits and gains which collectively constitute sustainable development in line with PPW10, and must not be underestimated.

6.2 We consider these scheme deliverables should be afforded full weight as material planning considerations and as part of the case for very special circumstances. They are significant enough to justify and demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable and would serve to outweigh any perceived or apparent harm that this proposal could be considered to have upon the locality, its open countryside and Green Barrier designation. This proposal has also demonstrated that it is in full accordance and wholly compliant with all national and local planning policy and associated best practice guidance governing development proposals. We submit that considerable and significant weight should be afforded to the Policy documents referred to as material considerations in support of the proposals.

6.3 This application is technically robust and it has been demonstrated that there are few, if any, negative impacts that would result. The overall planning balance is weighted strongly in favour of granting permission as per Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The proposals must be supported and permission approved without any delay in accordance with the emerging LDP2 because we have demonstrated that no adverse impacts are evident in impeding such a positive determination being reached and any impacts which might be judged to occur would have to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies of the Development Plan taken as a whole.

6.4 This statement has assessed the suitability of the application site for the proposed development and having concluded that the proposal is inherently compliant with Local and National policy it is our opinion that this proposal must be approved.

6.5 We have then sought to consider whether there are any other material considerations that might balance out any reason for approval and actually outweigh its compliance with policy to such an extent, so as to make the proposal unacceptable. Our conclusion is that there is nothing to prejudice a positive determination and indeed we are strongly of the opinion that this proposal should be supported and encouraged to come forward.

6.6 There is a presumption against developing Green Barrier (open countryside) for residential use unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. We consider that we have presented a strong justification for the Gamford House site to be developed for the purposes proposed by this application, which is supported by national planning policy guidance.

6.7 The Council has recognised for some time that it will have to release land outside the UDP's settlement limits if it is to meet its emerging requirement. The Vision, Objectives and Strategic Growth and Spatial Options document of the Local Development Plan which was consulted on in March-April

2015, states in paragraph 5.15 that, *'the urban capacity study (2013) identifies a shortage of suitable, available and deliverable brownfield sites within the existing settlement limits. Whilst some of these brownfield sites may be developed as windfall sites over the plan period, the quantum of new development required cannot be met without considering the need for the release of green field land currently on the edge of, but outside the existing settlement limits.'* The fact that current settlement limits will have to be breached to meet housing requirements is therefore apparent.

6.8 This matter was expressed strongly in the officer's report in respect of proposed housing development at Gresford Road, Llay: *'It will not be possible to significantly increase the supply of land available for housing unless planning permission is granted to develop appropriate sites located outside of existing settlement limits. Indeed, the decreasing housing land supply in recent years suggests that the current UDP settlement boundaries are becoming a significant constraint to providing the land that is needed to meet the housing requirements of the County Borough.'*

6.9 We therefore feel that the proposals suitably reflect the advice and guidance provided. Having assessed the relevant national planning policy guidance, it is our contention that the proposed development is supported, fully compliant and is endorsed by local and national planning policy.

6.10 We believe this Statement, together with the accompanying and supporting documentation and associated plans demonstrate this and satisfactorily illustrate all the points that need to be considered. Our case, in demonstrating that this development proposal meets the exceptional circumstances test as set out in PPW10, is based on the following:

- The Authority cannot present any case for a 5 year housing land supply;
- The site is brownfield land, previously with a commercial use
- The approved scheme presents a missed opportunity to deliver on a range of policy objectives
- That TAN1 is of significant material weight
- That there are no acceptable or deliverable alternative uses and indeed we have shown this site outperforms all other possible alternative sites, including the approved conversion scheme
- The proposals bring a range of site specific economic, social and environmental benefits
- There will be a significant reduction overall in the built form present on the site through the demolition of several portal framed barn buildings. Large areas of hardstanding will be removed and soft landscaping introduced, resulting in a net improvement with regards to surface water runoff and biodiversity. The proposal will create a high quality, attractive residential development which makes best use of the existing buildings on site, improving the landscape character and openness of the countryside in this part of the County Borough.

6.11 These cumulatively present a compelling case as to why this scheme should be supported and granted planning permission. We believe the proposals will achieve sustainable development in accordance with an emphasis on generating significant and mutually supportive economic, housing strategy and environmental benefits. The proposals accord with the ambition of the Place Making agenda promoted by Planning Policy Wales edition 10.

6.12 The proposals will prevent this derelict site having a continuing detrimental impact upon the landscape and character of the neighbourhood. This development will enhance the vitality of the rural community at Rossett. It will re-use redundant and disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting through the provision of homes of exceptional quality. The development will

relieve pressure on more valuable green field sites in the County Borough, make a contribution towards overall housing land provision and constitutes sustainable development through the reuse of land and buildings.

6.13 The plans and elevations that accompany this submission show the proposed dwellings to be truly outstanding in their design and the materials specified. They significantly enhance the quality and character of the landscape, are sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and should be approved.

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A : Wrexham LHMA Update 2017 - extract from Draft Report Page 40 April 2018

Stakeholder views on the owner occupied sector

4.19 Accompanying the main household survey, a range estate and letting agents within the local area were contacted and asked for their considered views and opinions on the current housing market in Wrexham. Whilst these comments and opinions do not form part of the empirical or quantitative evidence, they do provide a qualitative flavour or feel for the market informed by those working professionally within the sector. The following paragraphs provide a summary of responses where these relate to the private housing market.

4.20 Face to face interviews were undertaken with estate and letting agents during December 2017 in order to gain the widest possible insight into the dynamics of the local re-sale market. Nearly all of the agents serving the borough were based in Wrexham. One interview was achieved in Chirk. However we also visited Holt, north of Wrexham and the towns and villages between Chirk and Wrexham as well as visiting key parts of the town of Wrexham including Caia Park and the industrial estate.

4.21 Overall it quickly became apparent that much of the housing infrastructure of the borough except the rural north was built to service the mining, steel and related industries. Although relatively recent new building and regeneration is evident this update did not find significant levels of very recent or current housebuilding on any scale.

4.22 The agent at Chirk told us that there were very high levels of incomers to the area both because of the large local employers and the fact that the village has a good range of services due partly to its tourist appeal and its railway station. The agent told us that supply was very limited and blamed Brexit for the slowdown due to uncertainty. The market was felt to be unbalanced and a 'sellers' market'. There were 4 or 5 offers for every vacancy. Prices were rising. The agent highlighted the need for additional housing that was suitable for elderly downsizers.

4.23 Agents based in Wrexham, selling across the Borough all highlighted the need for additional supply of 3 and 4 bedroom homes. They considered that these were needed to 'unblock' the market. There was a plentiful supply of terraced and ex local authority housing meeting the needs of local first time buyers and movers.

What was needed was better quality housing for households seeking to 'move up'. Agents told us that this needed to be at specific price points to be affordable to local households suggesting that £250,000 should be the target price for 4 bedroom homes.

4.24 Agents considered that such additional housing would help to stimulate the town centre economy as well as the local housing market, pointing to recent store closures and high vacancy rates in the town centre.

Appendix B: Green Barrier PPW policy extract

Overall Conclusion

The area of green wedge surrounds the settlements of Rossett and Burton, and extends to the national border with England in the north and the existing settlement edge of Gresford to the south. The area is characterised as flat rural lowland, with scattered farmsteads, villages, and sporadic development beyond the village boundaries.

There is direct inter-visibility between the edges of Marford and Rossett, and Lavister and Pulford, and the topography, open aspect, and direct road link create a limited sense of separation between the settlements. Overall it is considered that there is justification for the retention of the green wedge designation along the B5445 between Gresford, Rossett and Pulford, where the risk of coalescence and the impact upon the openness of the area are more pronounced. Retention of the area between Rossett and Pulford would also tie into the North Cheshire Green Belt as shown in the key diagram of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One).

The narrow gap between Rossett and Burton does serve to maintain a sense of openness between the settlements edges sitting in close proximity to each other. The designation is set along defensible boundaries, serving to manage the urban form in these locations. Development beyond the road would lead to a discordant urban/rural fringe lacking a clear boundary. The green wedge in this location also serves to avoid encroachment into the countryside in an area of development pressure (2 candidate sites have been submitted in this area). An area between the eastern edge of Rossett and Trevalyn (where there is inter-visibility between the edge of Rossett and ribbon development along Harwood Lane) serves the function of avoiding coalescence between two areas of residential development.

Conclusion: In order to take these factors into account, it is recommended that the overall principle of retaining the green wedge in the area is appropriate; however amendments to the designation to accommodate the allocation of site H1(16) Land north and south of Rossett Road, Rossett. The area sitting along the B5445 between Gresford, Rossett, and Pulford, and the areas between Rossett and Burton and Rossett and Trevalyn, should be retained for the green wedge purpose of preventing coalescence between those settlements and assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The areas of green wedge that covers open countryside, and which do not sit between settlements in close proximity, do not serve the same purpose as identified above.

Conclusion: It is therefore recommended that these areas be removed from the designation. Development in these locations would be controlled by the presence of an existing settlement boundary along with local policies presuming against inappropriate development in the open countryside. The area no longer designated as green wedge would still be afforded a high level of protection from development considered inappropriate in the open countryside.

Appendix C: Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment Screening:

The proposals have been screened for SEA requirements against the following sustainability issues:

- Stabilisation of population
- Protection and enhancement of built heritage assets
- Increasing employment levels and reducing long-term unemployment
- Quality, distribution and access to green infrastructure

- Remediation of contaminated land
- Quality and protection of natural resources
- Maximising use of renewable energy
- Improving air quality, and the quality of water and groundwater
- Adapting to climate change
- Minimising all types of flooding
- Capacity of physical infrastructure
- Reducing the need to travel, and increasing opportunities for cycling and walking
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

This screening has used the 'Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment' as contained in The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Schedule 1 Regulations 9(2)(a) and 10(4)(a). These are the criteria "for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment". It has concluded that the proposals do not require a full Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment due to the considerations and design features detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Appendix D: Site marketing exercise

From Wright Marshall Estate Agents, Chester (redacted)

From: "Debbie Hodge" <debbiehodge@wrightmarshall.co.uk>

Date: 19 December 2018 at 12:08:14 GMT

To: "Nathan Cunningham" <nathan@urbandevelopments.co.uk>

Subject: RE: GAMFORD FARM (G113A)

Reply-To: <debbiehodge@wrightmarshall.co.uk>

Hi Nathan

I had a gentleman on the telephone [REDACTED] who is interested in your development on the land that you purchased from us earlier this year. He would like a quick chat with you, he lives in the area and wanted your details as he is very interested. His telephone number is [REDACTED].

Debbie Hodge
Secretary
Wright Marshall Ltd
15 Grosvenor Street
Chester
CH1 2DD
Tel: 01244 317833
www.wrightmarshall.co.uk

Appendix E: Pre-application Correspondence



Gamford
MPhillipsenq2018-01



enq2018-0058a.pdf

PLANNING STATEMENT (DRAFT)

Gamford House, Gamford Lane, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0EW

Appleton Deeley Planning and Landscape Ltd.



February 2019

HARDIE BRACK

By email: g.moody@hardiebrack.co.uk

Your Ref/Eich Cyf
Our Ref/Ein Cyf
Date/Dyddiad
Ask for/Gofynner am
Direct Dial/Rhif Union
E-mail/E-bost

ENQ/2018 /0058
16/04/2018
Matthew Phillips
01978 298780
matthew.phillips@wrexham.gov.uk

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

**CONSTRUCTION OF 8 NO. DETACHED DWELLING HOUSES TO REPLACE REDUNDANT
FARM HOUSE AND AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS
GAMFORD HOUSE GAMFORD LANE, ROSSETT, WREXHAM.**

I refer to your recent enquiry in respect of the above.

National Policy:

Planning Policy Wales

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning

Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport

Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development

Development Plan policies:

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

Strategic Policies

Policy PS1 Strategic Policy
Policy PS2 Strategic Policy

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh.
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

Specific Policies

Policy GDP1	Development Objectives
Policy EC1	Green Barriers
Policy EC5	Special Landscape Areas
Policy EC6	Biodiversity Conservation
Policy EC15	Small Scale Abandoned Sites
Policy H5	Housing in the Countryside
Policy H8	Affordable Housing
Policy H10	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
Policy CLF5	Open Space Requirements from new Residential Developments.
Policy T8	Parking

Deposit Local Development Plan

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1	Location of Development
------------	-------------------------

Topic, Criteria and Area based policies

Policy DM1	Development Management Considerations
Policy H7	Housing in the Countryside
Policy H8	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
Policy H9	Conversion of Buildings Outside of Settlement Limits to Residential Use

Local Planning Guidance Notes:

Local Planning Guidance Note 10: Public Open Space in New Housing Development.

Local Planning Guidance Note 13: Housing in the Countryside.

Local Planning Guidance Note 16: Parking

Local Planning Guidance Note 27: Developer Contributions to Schools

Relevant Planning History

CB 1060	Redevelopment of site with 18 dwellings and associated garages, including conversion of existing buildings and alteration to existing vehicular and pedestrian access. Refused 16.05.1997. Appeal dismissed 19.11.1997
P/2016/0384	Change of use and conversion of barns to form 6 no. residential units, construction of 2 no. semi-detached dwelling houses (replacement of existing farm house) and demolition of remaining structures across the site. Granted 7.11.2016

Validation information:

Application forms

Site Location Plan

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh.
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

Block Plan – existing and proposed

Elevation and floor plans – existing and proposed

Ecology Report incorporating full details of any ecological mitigation

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Application fee.

Developer Contribution Requirements:

School contributions may be required if there is insufficient capacity in local primary or secondary schools at the time a formal application being considered. These would be secured via a Planning Obligation that would need to be completed prior to the grant of planning permission.

Views of officer:

Housing in the Countryside

The site lies outside of a settlement and within a Green Barrier and Special Landscape Area as defined by the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. Residential development in such areas is very strictly controlled and only normally likely to be permitted where:

- i) The proposal is for the conversion of a suitable building to a dwelling (policy H3 refers);
- ii) The proposal is for the subdivision of an existing dwelling (policy H4 refers);
- iii) The proposal is for no more than 5 affordable houses on land that forms a logical extension to a settlement limit and where there is a proven need for the affordable housing (policy H8 refers);
- iv) The proposal constitutes the infilling of a small gap within a well developed built frontage (policy H5 refers);
- v) There is an essential requirement for the manager or employee of a rural enterprise to live on site or adjacent to that enterprise.

Given that redevelopment of the site is proposed i) and ii) are not applicable. Based on the details submitted I have assumed that the dwellings will not be affordable but in any case the site does not adjoin or form a logical extension to a settlement so iii) is not applicable. The site is not a small gap in an otherwise well-developed built frontage so iv) is not applicable and on the basis of the details submitted I also conclude that v) is not applicable. As such the proposals do not accord with policy H5.

The supporting statement suggests that the site is classed as brownfield land, however I do not agree. My understanding is that the last use of the site was primarily agricultural. Figure 4.4 of Planning Policy Wales defines previously developed land as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, excluding agricultural or forestry buildings, and associated fixed surface infrastructure. Even if it were accepted that the site is classed as previously developed land, Planning Policy Wales paragraph 4.9.1 recognises that not all previously developed land is suitable for development, for example because of its location, whilst paragraph 9.3.6 of Planning Policy Wales states that new housing in the open countryside should be strictly controlled. I consider planning policy H5 to be broadly consistent with this advice. Therefore in my opinion the general planning policy preference for the re-use previously developed land does not justify the redevelopment of the site in this instance.

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

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We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

Whilst I recognise that the site benefits from planning permission for residential use, this was only granted on the basis of the existing buildings being converted. The proposals also permitted the replacement of the existing farmhouse with 2 new dwellings, which does not technically comply with policy H10. However permission was granted due to the fact that the extant dwelling is large enough to sub-divide into two units and that due to several previous but unsympathetic extensions, the scheme represented an opportunity to enhance the site. This together with the granting of permission for conversion of the other buildings does set any precedent for a more comprehensive re-development.

Housing Need

I acknowledge that the Council does not have the 5 year housing land supply it is required to do so by national planning policy owing to the fact that the UDP plan period has now lapsed. In accordance with Technical Advice Note 1 the need to increase support is therefore afforded significant weight. Furthermore given that existing settlement limits reflect the housing requirements identified in the UDP that were informed by migration led projecting, using mitigation trends from 1996. Policy PS1 is now outdated and therefore afforded less weight in the determination of planning applications

The Deposit LDP proposes to make provision for 8525 homes (which includes a 10% contingency allowance) for the 2013-2028 period. Taking into account existing supply of homes, an allowance for windfall developments, and completions between 2013-2017 this equates to a requirement for additional land to be brought forward for 3,375 new houses. The LDP housing requirements are informed by far more up to date information. It will not be possible to meet the County Borough's future housing requirements without the release of greenfield sites, which is a relevant material consideration that I have taken into account in this case. Housing supply/need must however be balanced against other national and local planning policy considerations.

Green Barrier

The UDP designation of Green Barriers is consistent with the Green Wedges referred to in Planning Policy Wales. Planning Policy Wales advises that inappropriate development should not be permitted within Green Wedges. The construction of new buildings is inappropriate development unless it is for the following purposes:

- justified rural enterprise needs;
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the green wedge and which do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it;
- limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- limited infilling (in those settlements and other development sites which have been identified for limited infilling in the development plan) and affordable housing for local needs under development plan policies; or
- small scale diversification within farm complexes where this is run as part of the farm business.

None of the above applies to this proposal therefore it is inappropriate development.

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
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Paragraph 4.8.15 of PPW states that inappropriate development should not be granted planning permission except in very exceptional circumstances where other considerations clearly outweigh the harm which such development would do to a Green Wedge.

I do not consider there to be any very exceptional circumstances that apply in this case that would warrant granting planning permission. I have already dealt with housing supply above and will comment on other matters covered in the Pre-Application Planning Statement below.

I note that marketing analysis has suggested that the extant scheme is not deliverable. However I do not consider this to be a valid consideration in favour of redevelopment of the site. Indeed such an argument could be advanced in many other similar situations which, if accepted, would result in new building housing development in Green Wedges and indeed in other rural locations despite clear conflicts with planning policy.

I do not accept that the extant planning permission would result in the amenity standards afforded to future occupiers being severely compromised. The development accords with Local Planning Guidance Note 21 in terms of separation distances and garden space. Indeed each dwelling would be afforded generous outdoor amenity space. Even if this were not the case, LPG21 sets out guidance rather than ridged standards that may be more pragmatically applied to conversion schemes than new build. However this would not lend any significant weight to the case for complete redevelopment instead of conversion. Indeed if accepted it is also an argument that could be advanced in many other similar situations to justify new housebuilding in the countryside.

The fact that the site is currently vacant is not, in my opinion, a very exceptional circumstance that justifies redevelopment. Whilst I am aware that policy EC15 supports the reclamation/reuse of such sites it cannot be read in isolation from other planning policies regarding development in the countryside. If planning permission were routinely granted for new build housing on derelict or neglected sites in the countryside then it could well encourage landowners to deliberately neglect sites in the hope of obtaining planning permission for developments that would otherwise conflict with planning policy.

Special Landscape Area

The site currently has the character and appearance of a large farm complex, which is not an uncommon feature in the local landscape. The plans approved as part of the extant permission would broadly retain the existing character of the site through a sympathetic conversion of a number of the existing structures.

Based on the details submitted, the proposed development would result in development that is of clearly urban/suburban character located in the countryside. Whilst the development would not have a significant impact in wider landscape terms, it would nevertheless detract from the rural character of the immediate locality and therefore the Special Landscape Area.

Local Development Plan

The Council has recently published the deposit Local Development Plan for consultation. The policies and proposals contained within it can be afforded little weight at this time. However it is appropriate to comment on relevant LDP policies given that it is planned to have the LDP adopted in 2019.

The site would not be located within a Green Wedge or Special Landscape Area. However the proposals would not accord with policies SP1 and H7, which have broadly similar objectives to

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

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We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

UDP policies PS1 and H5. In my opinion the development would also conflict with policy DM1 in so far as detracting from the rural character of the site and its immediate surroundings.

Conclusion

The proposals do not accord with both local and national planning policy in respect of the location of new housing development and therefore I would not be prepared to support a formal planning application.

I trust the above is of assistance, however you should note that my comments are made without prejudice to any formal decision of the Council.

Yours faithfully,



Pennaeth yr Amgylchedd a Chynllunio/Head of Environment and Planning

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh.
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

HARDIE BRACK
PEKIN BUILDING
23 HARRINGTON STREET
LIVERPOOL
L 9QA

Your Ref/Eich Cyf
Our Ref/Ein Cyf
Date/Dyddiad
Ask for/Gofynner am
Direct Dial/Rhif Union
E-mail/E-bost

ENQ/2018 /0058
27/09/2018
Matthew Phillips
01978 298780
matthew.phillips@wrexham.gov.uk

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

**CONSTRUCTION OF 8 NO. DETACHED DWELLING HOUSES TO REPLACE REDUNDANT
FARM HOUSE AND AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS
GAMFORD HOUSE GAMFORD LANE, ROSSETT, WREXHAM.**

I refer to the plans received on 12 September 2018 in connection with the above.

I will comment on each of the plots in turn:

Plots 1 and 2

Whilst the principle of replacing the extant farmhouse with 2 dwellings has been established via the existing planning permission reference P/2016/0384, the proposals were supported due to the specific design put forward (which was finalised after extensive discussions with the Case Officer) and the fact that it represented a relatively modest increase in the overall amount of development in comparison to the extant structure.

Taken together plots 1 and 2 are considerably larger than both the existing dwelling and the replacement dwellings previously granted permission. In my opinion the proposals are contrary to policy H10 of the UDP and represent harm to the openness of the Green Barrier and to the rural character of Gamford Lane.

Plot 3

This is a modern farm building. It will require extensive reconstruction and alteration in order to convert it to residential use. The works required will be tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside thus being contrary to policies H3 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Plot 4

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

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We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

The existing buildings are, in my opinion, capable of conversion. However the proposals involve significant alteration and extension to the building which conflicts with policy H3.

Plot 5

This is a modern farm building. It will require extensive reconstruction and alteration in order to convert it to residential use. The works required will be tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside thus being contrary to policies H3 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Plots 6 and 7

The proposals involve extensive reconstruction, extension and alteration of the existing building tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside thus being contrary to policies H3 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Plot 8

The building is capable of conversion and the proposals appear to involve relatively modest alteration and new build works. The proposals also appear to retain the general form and character of the existing building and as such would, in my opinion, be broadly in accordance with policy H3.

Overall Comments

Whilst the submitted plans propose the re-use of a number of existing buildings, due to the extensive amount of new build, reconstruction, alterations and extensions proposed the scheme is in effect a predominately new build residential development in the open countryside and within a Green Barrier. This is contrary to adopted UDP policies. In my opinion the proposals also conflict with advice in paragraph 9.3.6 of Planning Policy Wales.

Other Matters

Since my response to the initial proposals the Welsh Government has dis-applied paragraph 6.2 of Technical Advice Note 1. Housing land supply remains a material consideration but it is now for the decision maker to determine how much weight it is given in individual cases.

The fact that UDP plan period has lapsed, that Wrexham does not have a 5 year housing land supply and it is clear that additional land needs to be brought forward to meet the housing requirement set out in the Deposit LDP are important material considerations in the determination of relevant planning applications. Despite this, I do not consider the need for additional housing land to be material consideration of sufficient weight to allow the significant conflict with local and national planning policies to be set aside in this instance.

Conclusion

The proposals do not accord with both local and national planning policy in respect of the location of new housing development and therefore I would not be prepared to support a formal planning application.

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh.
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

I trust the above is of assistance, however you should note that my comments are made without prejudice to any formal decision of the Council.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Jones'.

Pennaeth yr Amgylchedd a Chynllunio/Head of Environment and Planning

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.*

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