Report of the Chief Officer Economy and Planning

Application Reference
P/2025/0832

Applicant
WREXHAM ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB

Agent
Mr Chris Potts

Site Address
DARLAND SCHOOL AND SPORTS CENTRE, CHESTER ROAD, ROSSETT, WREXHAM, LL12 0DL

Description of Development
GWEITHREDIADAU PEIRIANNEG I OSOD SYSTEM DDRAENIO NEWYDD A GOSOD CYNWYSYDDION LLONGAU A GWAITH TIRLUNIO / ENGINEERING OPERATIONS TO INSTALL NEW DRAINAGE SYSTEM AND THE SITING OF SHIPPING CONTAINERS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS

Ward
Rossett/Yr Orsedd

Community
Rossett/Yr Orsedd

Recommendation
Grant

Officer Report

Site Description

The site is situated to the south-east of Darland High School. The site is enclosed by established hedgerows and consists of open grass land marked out for football pitches.

The north-east boundary of the site is defined by Gamford Lane, which also serves as a vehicular access point. To the south-east, the site adjoins agricultural land, while to the south-west it borders a still under construction housing development.

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Proposal

The application proposes engineering operations to install a new drainage system, the siting of shipping containers and landscaping works.

The proposed works are summarised as follows:

- Installation of permanent irrigation tanks and pump housing;
- Provision of shipping container storage buildings;
- Construction of two swales (attenuation ponds) to attenuate surface water run-off from the site;
- Hard and soft landscaping works involving reinforced hedgerows, low management grassland, permeable maintenance access routes, and stock fencing.

Reason for Committee Determination

Individual letters of objection received from the owners/occupiers of 3 or more properties.

Site History

P/2025/0767 - DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS 8 (TRAFFIC AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN), 9 (TRAVEL PLAN) AND 10 (CAR PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN) OF PLANNING PERMISSION P/2024/1293 - Pending

P/2025/0505 - DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 7 (LANDSCAPING) OF PLANNING PERMISSION P/2024/1293 - Granted 19/08/2025

P/2024/1293 - ERECTION OF NEW TRAINING FACILITY COMPRISING OF 2 NEW BUILDINGS AND 2 SHIPPING CONTAINERS – Granted 05/03/2025

P/2008/0864 - ERECTION OF NEW SCIENCE BLOCK - Ganted 26/09/2008

Development Plan

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

PS1 Broad Location of Development (Settlement Limits)
PS2 Broad Location of Development (Not materially affect countryside, landscape, townscape, open space, natural environment)
PS8 Transport
PS11 Biodiversity
GDP1 Development Objectives (General Development Principles)
T8 Parking
EC1 Green Barriers
EC4 Hedgerows, Trees and Woodland
EC6 Biodiversity Conservation
EC12 Development and Flood Risk
EC13 Surface Water Run-off
EC14 Protection of Controlled Waters
CLF4 Playing Fields, Children's Play Areas and Open Space
CLF7 The development of countryside and water resources for informal recreation will be permitted provided that it does not harm visual amenity or nature conservation interests.

Local Planning Guidance

LPGN 7 Landscape and Development
LPGN 21 Space Around Dwellings
LPGN 30 Design
LPGN 32 Biodiversity and Development

Relevant National Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024)
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning
TAN 12 Design
TAN 15 Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion

Consultation Responses

Community Council:

Objects and raises the following concerns:

- Impact on residential amenity (visual and noise);
- Borehole and groundwater concerns – impact on water table, nearby properties and water abstraction and water management;
- Drainage, swales and maintenance – risk of stagnant water, visual impact, absence of a Drainage and SuDs management plan;
- Construction and Environmental Protection – dust;
- Community engagement process – lack of engagement.

Local Member:
Raises serious concerns regarding the location of the water tanks in proximity to residents and also the impact on the flooding potential on Gamford Lane.

Natural Resources Wales:
No objection.

Flood Risk
Advises that the planning application proposes less vulnerable development. The Flood Map for Planning identifies the application site to be at risk of flooding and within Flood Zone 2 Rivers. Given the nature of the proposed development (and in the absence of a flood consequences assessment) NRW consider the proposals could be acceptable, subject to the developer being made aware of the potential flood risks and consequences.

Recommends the Lead Local Flood Authority LLFA advise on drainage matters.

Protected Species - Bats
Notes that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has identified that bats are present at the application site. From the information submitted, NRW advise that the proposed development represents a lower risk for bats and therefore is not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Great Crested Newt
Advises that Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has identified that great crested newts (GCN) are a relevant consideration.

To avoid developments with planning permission subsequently not being granted a licence, the Local Planning Authority should take Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 5 into account when considering development proposals where a European Protected Species is present. Advises the Council needs to consider the tests in the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended):

- The development is for the purpose of preserving public health or safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and,
- The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Protected Sites - Foul Drainage
Notes the site is within the catchment of the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC). However, recognising the specific nature of the application submitted, comments that there is unlikely to be a source of additional nutrients and/or a pathway for impacts. NRW condition it reasonable for the Council to screen out this proposal as not likely to have a significant effect on the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in relation to nutrient inputs.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water:
Raises no objection on the basis that the the proposal would not connect to the public sewerage network. Recommends a condition to require that no surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.

Highway Officer:
Raises no objection in principle, but advises that the following details are required:
1. Agreement of an appropriate entrance detail and procedure for use of the Gamford Rd access.
2. Provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan
3. Agreement on an appropriate safety measures to prevent balls creating a hazard on the highway or assessment demonstrating it is of sufficiently low risk.

Contaminated Land Officer:
No comments.

Public Protection Officer:
Provided informatives regarding minor demolition construction noise and the burning of waste.

Arboricultural Officer:

No objection subject to planning conditions to secure:

- The development is to be completed in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement.
- Arboricultural Supervision to be undertaken to ensure complete adherence to the Arboricultural Impact Method Statement.
- Landscape and Management Plan to assist with the required NBB.

Ecology Officer:

Agree with the consultation response provided by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for great crested newt (GCN) will be required and should be secured by condition.

- Tree Root Protection Measures must be implemented in accordance with the Arboricultural Report prepared by MP Trees (December 2025). A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), including root protection areas, ground protection measures, and supervision requirements, should be secured by condition
- A sensitive lighting strategy should be secured by condition.
- A Net Biodiversity Benefit (NBB) Enhancement Plan should be secured by condition.

- It should be noted that the proposed attenuation ponds have the potential to provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts in the future. As such, the establishment of these features may increase the ecological value of the site over time and could have implications for any future maintenance or development works, which may require updated surveys and, if necessary, appropriate licensing.
- The existing and proposed location of the storage containers are likely to be within the root protection area of the adjacent tree(s). These will need to be moved outside of the root protection area (RPA), or a method of deployment would be required that would not impact the RPA.

Flood & Water Management Officer:
No response received.

Publicity Undertaken:
Site Notice: Expires 12/01/2026

Responses to Publicity:
6 objections received, the main points raised are:

- The position of the water tanks, pumps and borehole in the proposed compound. The tanks are very close to fence lines and pose a significant visual impact and loss of enjoyment to properties.
- Asking that the position is reviewed and the tanks are located closer to the access road where the visual impact and associated noise from operation would be greatly reduced.
- Pump sets for the sprinkler system would cause intermittent noise. This would be a nuisance for adjacent properties and the wider community in Almere Gardens.
- Hydraulic risk of tank failure. If the system failed in proximity to the properties what is the impact? This is a concern in respect of flood risk in an emergency situation.
- Odour from adjacent swale within 2m of fence line. Will the swale potentially flood or pond water that could stagnate, cause nuisance odour or introduce an increased population of biting insects.
- The continuous extraction of water via the proposed borehole operation raises serious environmental and structural concerns. Excessive localized extraction poses a potential risk of groundwater shrinkage, which could adversely affect the stability of the soil and foundations of nearby properties on Almere Gardens.

Background

The site for the Wrexham AFC Under 16's Academy Facility is located to the rear of Darland High School and occupies the playing fields adjacent to Gamford Lane, as well as some of the school grounds to the north of the existing drainage ditch watercourse.

In March 2025, planning permission was granted (Ref: P/2024/1293) for new Academy Training Facility buildings to provide facilities for players and staff at Darland High School.

The existing sports field at Darland High School is served by an existing land drainage system, formed of a herringbone network of perforated pipes laid in gravel trenches. In summer 2025, the club delivered phase 1 works which comprised the improvements to one full-size football pitch.

Principle of Development

The site is identified in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan as being within the Green Barrier. UDP policy advises that development within Green Barriers will only be permitted where, amongst of things, it is for essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.

Paragraph 3.75 of Planning Policy Wales 12 defines inappropriate development within Green Wedges (which are analogous to the UDP's Green Barriers). However, essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation are excluded from the definition of inappropriate development.

The proposed development supports the provision of outdoor sport and recreation and is considered essential for enhancing the existing pitches for use by Wrexham AFC. The container and water tanks would be of a scale that is typical of development ancillary to sports facilities located in the open countryside and would not harm the openness of the wider Green Barrier. Therefore, the principle of development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policy EC1 and PPW 12.

Design

The proposed improvements to the existing land drainage system would involve the construction of two swales, one located along the north-western boundary and the other along the western boundary. Once complete, these would be soft landscaped and would not have a significant or harmful impact on the character of the site or the wider rural landscape.

Three shipping containers are proposed within the southern corner of the site for the storage of maintenance and training equipment, including two that would be relocated from their existing position, as approved under planning permission Ref: P/2024/1293. A borehole pumping house and 5 x 30,000 litre irrigation tanks would also be sited within this area. The tanks would be located close to the boundary with the Trevalyn Place development and would be 3.45m wide by 3.65m high.

The structures referred to above are relatively small in scale and are typical of the type of ancillary development associated with sports pitches. Together with the associated hard surfacing, they would not materially alter the character of the site. They would also be screened by an existing hedge, as well as additional hedgerow planting. As such they would not be unduly prominent in or detract from the character of the wider landscape.

Having regard to the above, the development would not harm the character of the site or the wider surrounding landscape. It therefore accords with policy GDP1.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The irrigation tanks would be sited close to the boundary with plots of the Trevalyn Place development. The nearest dwelling is approximately 10 metres from the boundary, which is shown enclosed by a hedge. The tanks would be set in from the boundary, with further planting to take place between them and the hedge. Although the tops of the tanks would still be visible, their distance from both the dwelling and boundary, together with the screening provided by both existing and proposed vegetation, would be sufficient to ensure they do not prove visually overbearing.

Concerns have been raised by nearby residents regarding potential noise and odour from the development. However, Public Protection have been consulted and have raised no concerns. Moreover, the site is already occupied by established sports pitches. The proposed development would not introduce any new uses nor would it directly result in the intensification of the pitches. The development closest to the boundary with Trevalyn View would be used in conjunction with the maintenance of the pitches and is therefore unlikely to give rise to significant noise or other disturbance.

Having regard to the above, the development is considered compliant with the requirements of policy GDP1 of the UDP in terms of residential amenity.

Highway Considerations

There is an existing access onto Gamford Lane. This would be used during construction. It has been confirmed that construction vehicles would comprise of rigid lorries only, with a maximum vehicle size of 20 tonnes. Whilst noting that the Highway Officer has sought further information, including swept paths, this is not considered necessary. Firstly, the construction period would be relatively limited. Secondly, and more critically, this is an established access that could be used for the maintenance of the pitches irrespective of whether some, or all, of the proposed development takes place.

The proposed development is unlikely to increase vehicular movements, or a type/size of vehicle accessing the site that would be materially different if works such as the relaying of pitches or other maintenance work took place. The volume of traffic and size of vehicles is also unlikely to be significantly different to seasonal flows of agricultural traffic along the land serving nearby fields.

The applicants have confirmed that measures would be put in place to safely manage construction traffic, including the use of banksman. Once on site, delivery vehicles would remain on an existing hardstanding, eliminating the risk of mud being deposited on Gamford Lane or the wider network. There would also be sufficient space for a delivery vehicle turning, which would also be overseen by the banksman.

Once the development has been completed, the Gamford Lane access would only be used for maintenance and for emergency access only. A planning

condition was imposed of planning permission P/2024/1293 to require the submission and implementation of a Traffic and Access Management Plan that set out measures to control the use of the Gamford Lane access. A similarly worded condition could be imposed on the proposed development.

The Highways Officer has requested details of measures to prevent footballs causing a hazard on Gamford Lane. Whilst the request is noted, this information is not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. The application is proposing works to improve existing and long established sports pitches, rather than the creation of entirely new sports pitches. The pitches could be used for football and other ball sports irrespective of whether the proposed development takes place. The proposed development therefore does not increase the risk of balls being accidentally kicked or thrown onto the highway.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development would not give rise to highway safety concerns and therefore accords with policy GDP1.

Natural Environment

The application site comprises of modified grassland enclosed by species-rich native hedgerows, a strip of broadleaved woodland, rural trees, and a drainage ditch. There would be no loss of existing trees or hedgerows, subject to protection measures being implemented during construction works. A net benefit to biodiversity would be secured through the implementation of additional native species planting within the site.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal accompanies the application and identified that bats are present. However, the proposed development poses a low risk to bat species and is therefore not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of their population at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also identified that Great Crested Newts need to be considered. The Council's Ecologist has advised that Reasonable Avoidance Measures would need to be implemented. These could be secured by a suitably worded condition.

NRW have advised that the following tests in the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) need to be considered:

- The development is for the purpose of preserving public health or safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and,
- The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

The proposed development would facilitate the enhancement of existing sports pitches and in turn support sports and recreational activities, which is considered

to be a matter of public interest. The pitches are established and have been for a considerable period of time, therefore there are no reasonable alternatives. Finally, subject to the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures, the proposed development is unlikely to be detrimental to the maintenance of Great Crested Newts at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development accords with policies EC4, EC6 and Planning Policy Wales 12 Chapter 6.

Flood Risk

Flooding has been raised as a concern from residents. The application proposes less vulnerable development as defined in Technical Advice Note 15:Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion.

The Flood Map for Planning identifies the application site as being within Flood Zone 2. The application is accompanied by a Flood Consequence Assessment. Given the nature of the proposed development and proposed improvements to the drainage of the site (see below), the proposed development would not be at unacceptable risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding off site.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development accords with policy EC12 and Technical Advice Note 15.

Drainage

The application is supported by a Drainage Strategy. This demonstrates that the proposed drainage swales would contribute to an overall betterment in terms of surface water discharges from the site. The proposed development therefore accords with policy GDP1.

Conclusion

The proposed development would not give rise to Green Barrier, visual impact, residential amenity, highway safety, ecological, flood risk or drainage concerns. It therefore accords with the relevant UDP policies, PPW12 and relevant Technical Advice Notes.

Condition(s)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiry of five years from the date of this permission.

2. The development shall only be carried out in strict accordance with the details shown on the following plan(s) and document(s):

    - Location Plan, Site Maintenance and Irrigation Compound WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1110 S0 P02,
    - Phase 2 Works General Arrangement WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1105 S0 P10,

- Section / Elevation WRX-MLD-XX-XX-DR-L-1111 S0 P01,
  Covering Letter dated 29 October 2025,
- Traffic Management Plan - 16511 Darland Academy pages 8/9 of 37,
- Design and Access Statement Date : 22nd October 2025 Revision : P03 Doc. Ref. : WRX-MLD-XX-XX-RP-L-9010,
- Drainage Strategy WRX-BHE-DAR-ZZ-RP-C-00001 0065004 23 October 2025 Revision P02,
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated October 2025,
- Arboriculture Impact Assessment And Method Statement dated December 2025 and
- Green Infrastructure Statement Date : 22nd October 2025 Revision : P03 Doc. Ref. : WRX-MLD-XX-XX-RP-L-9011.

3. Within three months of commencement of the development hereby permitted, a scheme of landscaping and net benefit to biodiversity, to include a timescale for implementation, shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details. Any soft landscaping that is thereafter removed or being severely damaged or becoming diseased shall be replaced by soft landscaping of the same species as that originally planted within the next available planting or seeding season.

4. No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.

5. No development shall commence until a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for Great Crested Newts has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved RAMs scheme.

6. Prior to the first beneficial use of the development, a Traffic and Access Management Plan (TAMP) in respect of the Gamford Lane access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning department. The TAMP shall include:

· Details of the maximum size of vehicle permitted to use this access

· Frequency of use of the access

· Restriction on general parking / use of this access

· A management plan to include details of how visitors associated with the facility will be discouraged from parking on the public highway

All vehicular access to the development shall thereafter be in accordance with the approved Traffic and Access Management Plan.

Reason(s)

1. To comply with Section 91(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

2. To comply with Section 71ZA(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

3. To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to secure a net benefit to biodiversity in accordance with policies GDP1, PS11 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan and paragraph 6.4.5 of Planning Policy Wales.

4. To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment in accordance with Policy GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

5. In order to protect wildlife interests in accordance with Policies GDP1, PS11, EC4, EC5 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

6.

In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Notes

Following the commencement of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, the works as proposed are required to obtain approval from the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) prior to commencement of those construction works. Further details of the SAB, the new national standards, the pre-application advice service and the application for approval process can be found on the Wrexham CBC's SAB webpage: https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/planning_portal/sab/sab.htm or by contacting the SAB Team directly at SAB@wrexham.gov.uk

All works in relation to the implementation of this permission, including deliveries to and /or leaving the site, should be undertaken only between the hours of 07.30 to 18.00 Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 14.00 on a Saturday, and at no time on a Sunday or a Bank Holiday. Outside these times, any works which are audible beyond the site boundary have the potential to cause unreasonable disturbance to neighbouring premises.

The applicant is advised that the Council has the option to control construction noise by serving a Control of Pollution Act 1974, Section 60 Notice where deemed necessary, and failure to comply with such a Notice can result in prosecution.

The applicant is further advised that any complaints received relating to noise of any type from the development may also be investigated using the Council’s Standardised Procedure for Dealing with Noise Nuisance Complaints. This is done under the Statutory Nuisance provisions provided within the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and legal action may be taken where appropriate.

The applicant must adhere to the times given above wherever possible. If, however, there are urgent or unavoidable circumstances requiring work outside of the specified times, permission to proceed may be sought by contacting Environmental Health & Housing Standards at healthandhousing@wrexham.gov.uk or 01978 292040. Please use the same contact details for any other enquiries regarding construction / demolition site noise.

Burning of waste generated from construction activities is not considered to be an appropriate method of disposal and action may be taken as follows:

- Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 anyone found disposing of construction site waste by burning is likely to be in breach of their duty of care with regard to waste disposal;

- Under the same Act an abatement notice may be served where smoke is judged to be causing a nuisance to neighbouring properties. Failure to comply with the requirements of the notice can result in prosecution;

- Under the Clean Air Act 1993 it is an offence for a commercial activity to burn anything that gives rise to dark smoke.

To prevent offences under the above named Acts there should be no bonfires on the site, to include the prohibition of the burning of cleared vegetation. The applicant should contact the Council's Environmental Health & Housing Standards Team on healthandhousing@wrexham.gov.uk or 01978 292040 for further advice and information.