



**PROPOSED USE OF LAND AS CHRISTMAS TREE FARM AND OUTDOOR  
RECREATION CENTRE TO INCLUDE REINDEER CENTRE, PADDLE  
BOARDING, WATER RELATED ACTIVITIES, ENGINEERING OPERATIONS  
TO EXTEND THE EXISTING LAKE, CREATION OF BARK FOOTPATH,  
ERECTION OF CEDAR CLAD AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO PROVIDE  
OFFICE, MACHINE AND EQUIPMENT STORE, HAY/STRAW STORAGE,  
SICK BAY/MATERNITY BAY SPACE FOR REINDEER, CREATION OF CAR  
PARK, CREATION OF ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING**

**ON LAND TO THE SOUTH OF LLAY ROAD, CEFN-Y-BETH, WREXHAM**

**SUPPORTING PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**BY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Goodwin Planning Services have been instructed to submit an application for the use of land to the south of Llay Road, Cefn-y-Beth as a mixed use for agricultural (Christmas Tree Farm) and outdoor recreation to include a reindeer centre, paddle boarding, water related activities, engineering operations to extend the existing lake, creation of bark footpath, erection of cedar clad agricultural building to provide office, machine and equipment store, hay/straw storage, sick bay and maternity bay space for reindeer, creation of a car park, creation of a new access onto Llay Road and landscaping.

1.2 This Statement assesses the proposals against relevant planning policy and sets out the design and access details of the proposal. It is in 5 sections as follows:-

1. Introduction;
2. Context;
3. Design and Access;
4. Assessment Against Planning Policy;
5. Conclusions.

1.3 This Statement is based on the following submitted plans:-

- Site Location Plan (3034-01-001);
- Proposed Site Layout (3034-01-002);
- Floor Plans and Elevations (3034-01-003).

1.4 The application is also accompanied by the following Reports:-

- Highway Technical Note prepared by Axis;
- Ecological Appraisal prepared by Leigh Ecology Ltd;
- Flood Consequences Assessment and Drainage Management Strategy

prepared by Betts Hydro.

## 2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The site is located to the south of Llay Road in Cefn-y-Beth and currently comprises predominantly grazing land with a number of lakes as shown on the application plans. It forms a roughly triangular piece of land with Llay Road to the north, Park Road to the south west and a public footpath running along the eastern boundary.
- 2.2 The land is currently used for grazing purposes and therefore comprises agricultural land.
- 2.3 The site comprises 16.6ha of land. Details of the proposals are set out in Section 3 below. The additional Reports accompanying the application confirm the following:-

### 1. Flood Consequences Assessment & Drainage Management Strategy

This document assesses the proposals against relevant policies in relation to Flood Risk and Drainage including SuDS. The document concludes that:-

*“The Drainage Management Strategy is commensurate with the site and in summary, the development can be considered appropriate in accordance with Welsh Government’s Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems provided the mitigation measures proposed within are included within the development proposals”.*

The recommended mitigation measures can be incorporated through the imposition of appropriate conditions.

### 2. Ecological Appraisal

The Appraisal assesses the impact on existing habitats and species as well as the adjoining Llay Bog which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The

Ecological Appraisal recommends an Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy be produced. This can be achieved by way of the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

### 3. Highway Technical Note

This document sets out details of the existing and proposed access arrangements including details of the visibility splays which can be achieved, the level of car parking provided, the forecast traffic generation and an assessment of the impact on the local highway network. It concludes that:-

*“Based on the information presented within this Highway Technical Note, it is considered that there are no grounds for refusal of the proposed development at this location from a transport perspective”.*

### **3. DESIGN AND ACCESS**

3.1 As set out in the description of development, the proposal amounts to a change of use of land to a mixed use including a Christmas tree farm and outdoor recreation including the provision of a reindeer centre, paddle boarding, water related activities, engineering operations to extend the existing lake, creation of bark footpath, erection of a cedar clad agricultural building to provide office, machinery and equipment store, hay/straw storage, a sick bay and maternity bay for reindeer, the creation of a car park, the creation of a new access onto Llay Road and landscaping.

3.2 The brief for the development was to utilise the existing underused land for uses which would provide a long term viable future for the site and provide additional access to the open countryside to the local population including providing access to additional outdoor recreation uses.

3.3 The site and context has been analysed in Section 2 above and in the additional Reports detailing constraints on the site including the Highways Technical Note, Flood Risk Assessment and Ecological Assessment.

3.4 The design of the development has evolved to make an efficient use of the site whilst ensuring that the scheme blends in with the surrounding open countryside. Individual elements of the scheme include the following:-

- An extension of the existing lake to the extent of the natural flood plain by the excavation of approximately 500mm of material. The excavated material will be used to create small islands for wildlife with the existing single island in the current lake being retained;
- Internally reindeer stock fencing to a height of 1.8m high is proposed;
- A new access is proposed to Llay Lane which will be a two way vehicular

entrance with a 15m pull off before a stock proof entrance barrier. Car parking will be provided for 100 vehicles with 10% for disabled driver vehicles. The car park will be a gravel surface with timber post marking car parking bays. The entrance itself will be in tarmac and will be two way;

- At the western end of the car park the proposal is to erect a cedar clad twin pitched agricultural building measuring 30m x 60m to provide an office, machine and equipment store, maintenance facility together with hay/straw storage and a sick bay and maternity bay for reindeer. A gravelled access will be provided on 3 sides. The height of the building is 4m to the eaves and 6m to the ridge. Additional tree planting is proposed to the east and west to further assist with screening and to break up the outline of the building. The use of cedar cladding in the form of a traditional agricultural building is also intended to assist in assimilating the new built form on the site into the existing rural landscape. The roof is proposed to be comprised of fibre cement roof sheets with sky lights (a total of 10). Doors in the eastern and western elevations will be double leaf machine doors to match the proposed cladding;
- In terms of access and movement full details are set out in the Highways Technical Note. Essentially access to the site would be provided via a new site access junction off Llay Road in approximately the same location as an existing site access which is located in the north eastern corner of the site. Visibility splays achieved are 2.4 x 148m to the east measured to the nearside channel line and 2.4 x 161m to the west measured to the nearside channel line. In order to achieve the visibility splays a short section of hedgerow which is located to the west of the site will be removed and replanted behind the visibility splay. Internally, movement from the car parking area to the lakes will be achieved utilising a new 2m wide bark footpath with no edgings. The footpath will have a gradient slacker than 1:20 to the lake. An existing public right of way runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This will be

retained along its current route;

- In terms of environmental sustainability, the proposal has appropriately assessed flood risk and provides a Drainage Management Strategy which incorporates sustainable drainage systems. The Ecological Assessment recommends ecological enhancements including a Management Plan to assist in enhancing the adjoining Site of Special Scientific Interest. Opportunities have also been taken to improve existing landscaping including reinforcing existing gappy hedges and providing additional tree planting within the site. Overall, the scheme will lead to an enhancement of the biodiversity value of the site.



#### **4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY**

4.1 The site lies within the open countryside as defined in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. The proposal comprises a mix of agricultural use and outdoor recreation of an existing lake. It therefore needs to take place on agricultural land and land which includes an existing lake. It is not a use which could be located within an urban area.

4.2 In terms of the overall strategy, policy PS2 indicates that development must not detrimentally affect the countryside, landscape or the quality of the natural environment. As set out above, the proposal has been designed to incorporate the proposed building into the landscape. The materials chosen and the scale of the building along with incorporated landscaping will ensure that the scheme sits appropriately within the landscape without adversely affecting the character of the local countryside.

4.3 Strategic Policy PS11 indicates that encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites. As set out in Section 2 above, the Ecological Appraisal recommends a Biodiversity Enhancement/Management Plan which will ensure that the overall proposals improve the biodiversity value of the site and its immediate surroundings.

4.4 Policy GDP1 sets out a range of criteria which should be met by all developments. Each of the criteria are met in this case as follows:-

- a) The agricultural building proposed is of a scale, design and layout which accords with the character of the site and the locality. It utilises appropriate materials and landscaping;
- b) The proposal will lead to no issues in relation to community safety as the site will be adequately supervised during open hours which, as set out in the

Highways Technical Note will be 10am to 5pm between April and October and 11am to 3pm between November and March. Access to the site will be restricted outside of these hours other than for staff and access will be controlled by the proposed stock proof entrance barrier. Access to the existing public footpath will however be maintained;

- c) The agricultural building proposed utilises double door openings to the east and west. The internal layout is shown on drawing number 3034-01-003;
- d) Safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the site is proposed as addressed in the Highways Technical Note;
- e) The site is accessible by utilising existing public footpath network with public footpath LLA/12 running from the north to the south of the site along its eastern boundary;
- f) The Drainage Strategy demonstrates that the proposal will have no adverse impacts in terms of pollution of water. General activity on the site will be located at the furthest point away from the nearest residential properties;
- g) There will be no public cost to secure services to the site;
- h) The proposal will incorporate a Management Scheme to enhance the nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest as set out in the Ecological Appraisal;
- i) The Flood Risk Assessment accompanying the application demonstrates that the proposal will not result in flooding;
- j) The proposal will have no impact on an area possessing a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity;
- k) The proposal will assist in the social wellbeing of the area through providing additional outdoor recreation facilities in proximity to existing settlements.

- 4.5 The proposal is therefore entirely consistent with policy GDP1.
- 4.6 Policy EC3 allows the construction of new agricultural buildings unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment and surrounding landscape. As set out above, the proposal will have no adverse impact on the environment or surrounding landscape and is designed to sit comfortably within the landscape and appear as an agricultural building. Although the use of the building will be mixed (agricultural and outdoor recreation) it is designed to appear as an agricultural building. The scheme incorporates appropriate screening and is located in close proximity to the proposed access to the site to avoid the need for considerable areas of internal access roads. The proposal is therefore entirely consistent with policy EC3.
- 4.7 The proposal also includes provision for enhancing existing hedgerows (and replacement of the section of hedgerow which needs to be removed to facilitate the visibility splays). Overall, the proposal will lead to additional planting of hedgerows and enhancement of existing gaps to the benefit of the natural landscape and wildlife. The proposal is therefore entirely consistent with policy EC4.
- 4.8 Similarly, policy EC6 seeks to protect sites of biodiversity interest. The proposals have been designed with the advice of an Ecologist to ensure that the ecological value of the site is enhanced and will make provision for the enhancement of the adjoining Site of Special Scientific Interest. The proposal is therefore consistent with policy EC6.
- 4.9 The Flood Consequences Assessment prepared by Betts Hydro demonstrates that the proposal is not at risk of flooding and will not cause additional flooding elsewhere. The proposal is therefore consistent with policy EC12. The Betts Hydro Report also includes a Drainage Management Strategy which demonstrates compliance with policy EC13 which seeks to resist developments which would cause unacceptable surface water run-off. The incorporation of SuDS within the scheme and the overall

Drainage Strategy confirm compliance with policy EC13.

- 4.10 In terms of the use of the existing lake, policy CLF7 indicates that development of countryside and water resources for informal recreation will be permitted provided that it does not cause harm to visual amenity or nature conservation interests. As set out above, the proposal is designed such that it will cause no harm to visual amenity and will benefit nature conservation. In terms of the context of the site, the development proposed is small scale involving the erection of a single building of agricultural appearance and a new car park. The proposal is therefore actively supported by policy CLF7.
- 4.11 The proposal therefore complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.
- 4.12 National Planning Policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021). It acknowledges the benefits of the countryside for social and recreational purposes for both local communities and visitors (paragraph 3.38). It also acknowledges that recreation is vital to the health, wellbeing and amenity of an area including encouraging healthy physical activity and emphasises the benefits of providing enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of physical activities including for both children and adults (paragraph 4.5.1). The application proposals achieve precisely this and will provide an outdoor recreation facility for local communities and visitors and will attract varying age groups including children and adults.
- 4.13 The proposal is therefore not only consistent with the relevant policies of the Development Plan but also relevant policies at National level.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The application proposals involve the use of land as a Christmas tree farm and outdoor recreation centre to include a reindeer centre, paddle boarding, water related activities, extension of the existing lake, creation of a bark footpath, erection of a cedar clad agricultural building to provide office, storage for equipment, hay and straw and a sick bay/maternity bay for reindeer, the creation of a car park, the creation of a new access and landscaping.
- 5.2 The proposal has been designed to make an efficient use of the land for the benefit of the local community and visitors providing outdoor recreation and access to the open countryside close to existing residential areas (although not immediately adjoining them where adverse impact could be created).
- 5.3 The design of the scheme has evolved in order to ensure the new built form blends with the landscape and appears as an agricultural building whilst retaining the existing public right of way route and providing a new safe vehicular access to the site.
- 5.4 The proposal is consistent with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and encouraged by those policies which seek to promote outdoor recreation uses and access to the open countryside. It is also consistent with the relevant National Planning Policy.
- 5.5 The proposals are accompanied by appropriate supporting Reports including a Highways Technical Note, Flood Consequences Assessment, Drainage Management Strategy and Ecological Assessment.
- 5.6 There is no planning reason why planning permission should not be granted for the proposed development.