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P L A N N I N G

Land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU
DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT
Wrexham County Council
February 2020
2020.002

Conwy | 20 Connaught House, Riverside Business Park, Benarth Road, Conwy LL32 8UB

Chester | Bretton House, Bell Meadow Business Park, Pulford, Chester CH4 9EP



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application by Wrexham County Borough Council, for outline planning permission for the erection of a new school, associated bus bay on Chester Road, turning and drop off areas, car parking, playground, sports pitches, forest school area and new woodland walk Public Open Space (POS) on land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU.
- 1.2 At present, the area of land is fenced off and is inaccessible to the public. The site was previously used as sports pitches however, these were private and are not recognized as formal open space and have been disused since 2005.
- 1.3 The development would provide a 315place primary school with 45 nursery places to meet the demand for additional school places locally.
- 1.4 Following the enactment of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the requirement for pre-application consultation on major development schemes was implemented. This includes the provision of buildings over a 1,000sqm. The proposed development exceeds the 1000sqm threshold.
- 1.5 The requirement to carry out pre-application consultation falls under Section 17 of the Act and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) as amended by the 2016 Order. Guidance on carrying out the pre-application consultation requirements within the Act has been provided by the Welsh Government set out in Article 1 of the Town and Country Planning DMPWO (Amendment) 2016 'Guidance on Pre-application Consultation'.
- 1.6 This Design, Access and Planning Statement is issued as part of a suite of documents for Pre-Application Consultation prior to the submission of a formal planning application.
- 1.7 As required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order (Amendment) 2016 the statement aims to address the following matters;
- Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
 - Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
 - Explain the policy or approach adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and

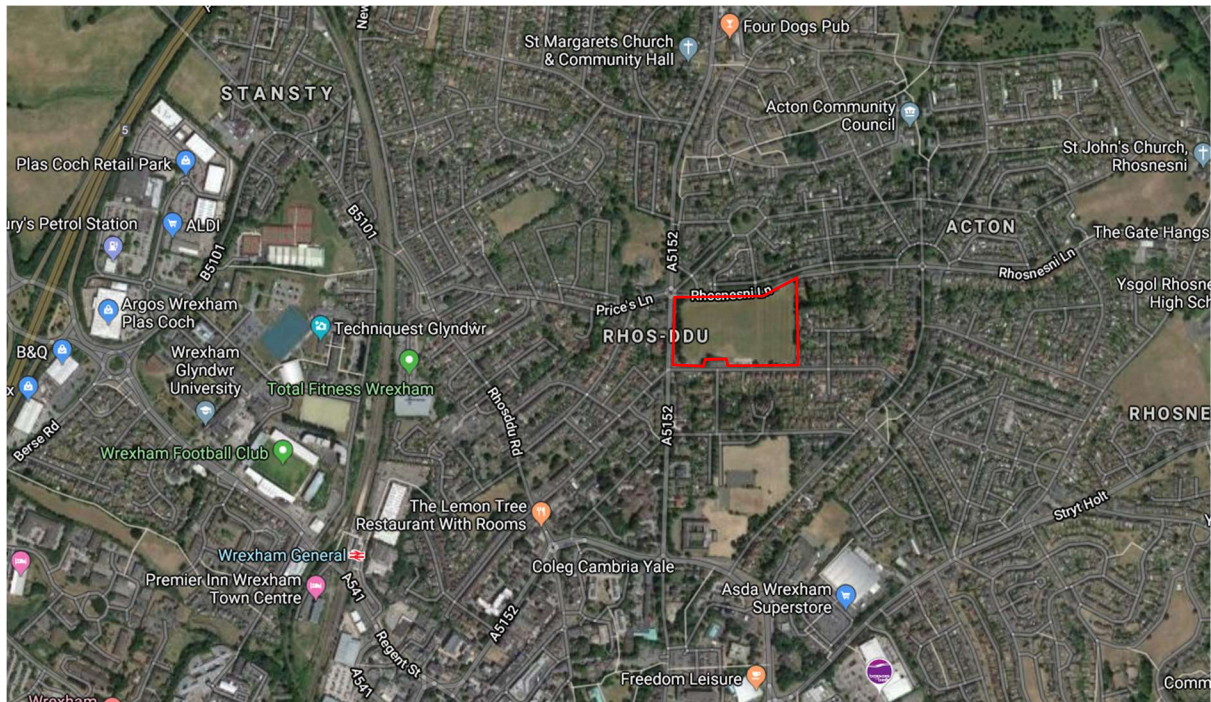
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- Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.
- 1.8 The adopted development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted on 14th February 2005.

2. The site and context

- 2.1 The application site is located within the area of Rhos-Ddu. The site is surrounded by residential properties and is bound to the north by Rhosnesni Lane, to the west by the A5125, to the south by Westminster Drive and to the east by residential curtilages of the properties off Lawson Road.
- 2.2 The application site is currently used as private sports pitches and leased out to Wrexham Football Club as their training facility. Due to this being a private site, the site is not identified within the Unitary Development Plan as a formal area of POS and therefore it is not considered that this development would cause any loss of POS.
- 2.3 To the north-west of the site off Price's Lane, there is a Community Centre, Skate park and area of open space. The western part of the proposed development, off Chester Road, will provide a woodland walk POS area which will link well into this.
- 2.4 Along the southern boundary there is an existing boxing club which will be retained as part of the development. This is accessed from Westminster Drive and will be fenced off from the site.

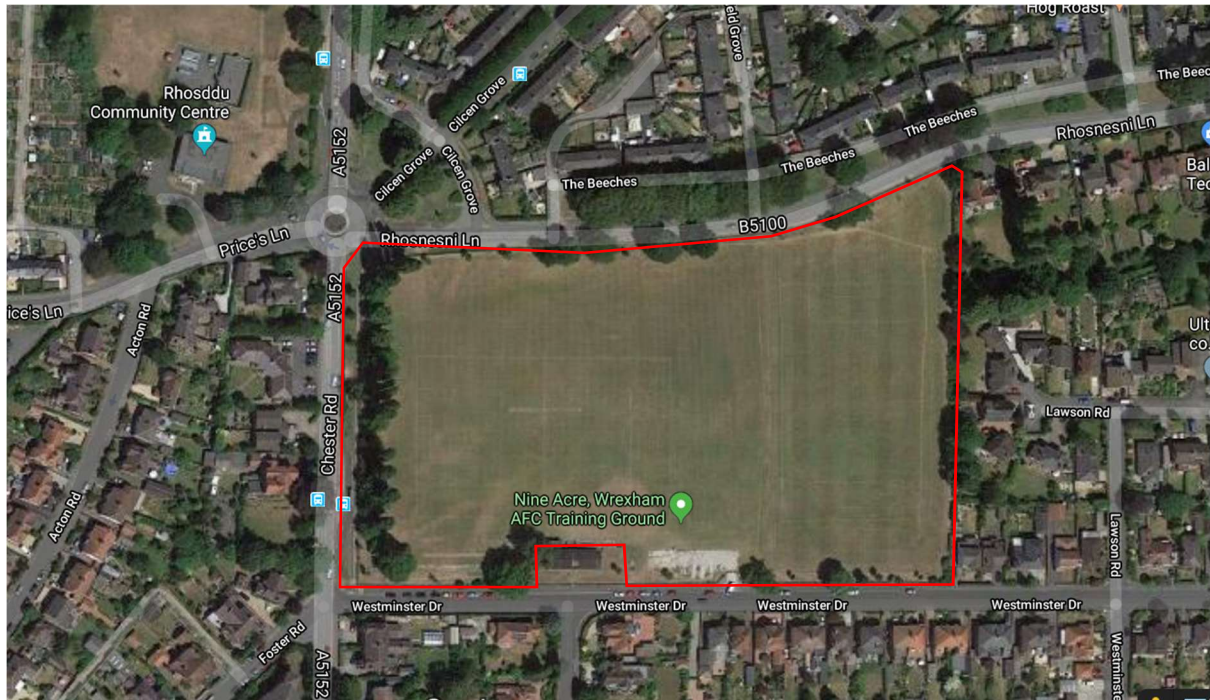
Figure 2.1 Extract of aerial image identifying the application site in its wider context



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- 2.5 As can be seen from the aerial image in figure 2.2, there is an existing bus stop on Chester Road.

Figure 2.2 Extract of aerial image identifying the application site within its immediate context



3. The proposed development

Use

- 3.1 The proposed development includes the following uses:
- 315 place new primary school and 45 place nursery.
 - Hard Play area adjoining the school to north and south.
 - Two pitches suitable to accommodate U9-U10 & U15-U16.
 - Forest School Area.
 - POS.
 - 6 coach parking/ drop off bay.
 - Pupil Drop Off turning area (7No. Spaces).
 - Pupil Drop Off Car Park (75No. Spaces) – with dual use as a Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA).
 - Staff Car Park (55No. Spaces).
- 3.2 The proposed building design is based on Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFA) baseline designs for 315 pupils and 45 nursery children to provide the required shared accommodation.
- 3.3 The play areas have been designed to provide for 'learning through play' for the foundation years. The proposal offers the best balance between providing effective education in efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings. Developing a robust and stable learning community is core to providing children with the best opportunities. A stable context will allow head-teachers, teachers and support-staff to focus on developing a curriculum that provides all children with the best opportunities.
- 3.4 The proposals envisage the development of community-based focus for every school in the area. 21st Century Schools need to provide services that draw both the community and school together, promoting lifelong education for adults, before and after school clubs, access to wider services and other community-based activities.
- 3.5 The sports pitches may be able to be booked outside of school hours, to provide a wider community benefit, however, this will need to be agreed and managed by the school governors.

Amount and scale

- 3.6 The school and nursery are to provide 315 school places and 45 nursery places and associated play areas. The approximate ground floor gross floor area would be 1,250m² and the approximate first floor gross floor area 1,130m².
- 3.7 The indicative dimensions of the building will be:
- Length 69.5m
 - Width 20.5m
 - Height 9.0m

Appearance

- 3.8 The following extracts of the 3D visuals detail the proposed appearance of the school. The final materials have not yet been selected. However, the materials will be colours and textures to complement the character of the surrounding area but will also be used to soften and incorporate it into the site, complementing the number of trees proposed to be retained and planted.

Figure 3.1 Extract of 3D visual showing view from The Beeches (houses), off Rhosnesi Lane

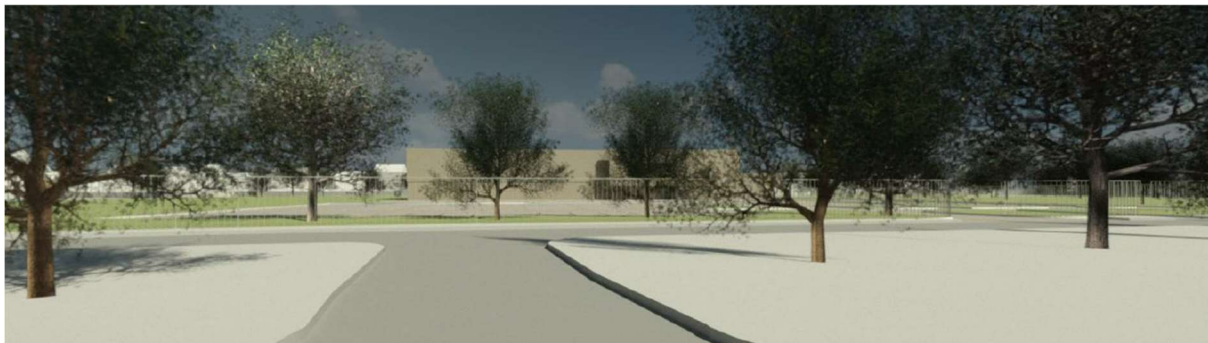


Figure 3.2 Extract of 3D visual showing view from the proposed POS, off Chester Road



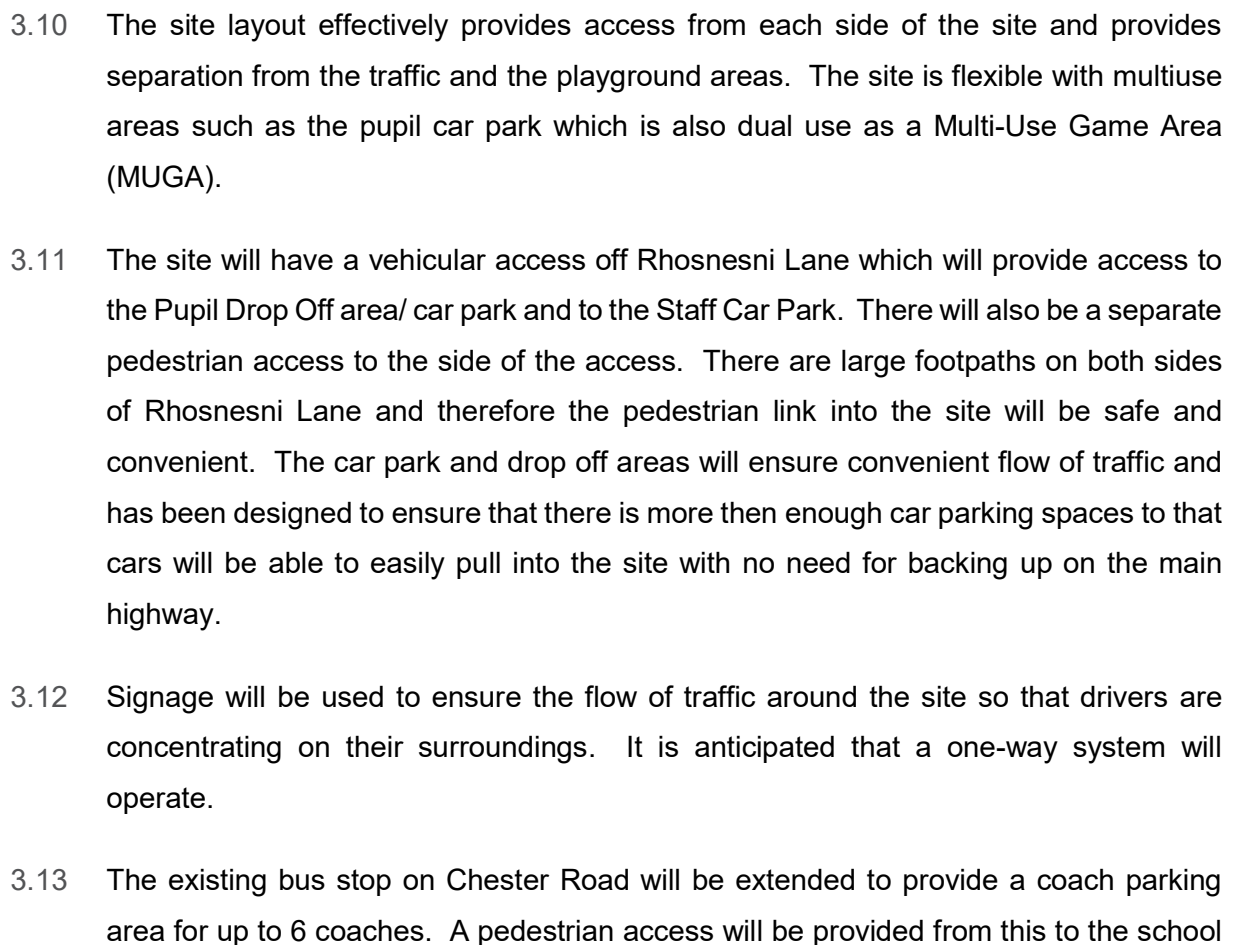
Figure 3.3 Extract of 3D visual showing view from vehicular access, off Rhosnesi Lane



Layout and access

- 3.9 The proposed school and nursery building has been positioned in the eastern two thirds of the site with the playing fields and car park immediately surrounding it. The proposed POS woodland walk area is on the western third of the site and links well to the other open space and community centre off Price's Lane.

Figure 3.4 Extract of the Proposed Layout Plan



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entrance. The cycle route and footway will be reconfigured but protected to provide for safe active travel. This location for the coach stop was selected so that it is located away from the main vehicular access and to avoid residential roads. Discussions are under way with the Local Highway Authority in terms of the setting out of this feature. The pathway through the POS will provide another safe pedestrian route.

- 3.14 There will be a separate pedestrian access to the south of the school off Westminster Drive. The range of entrances ensure that the site is easily accessible from all sides and spaces them out well so that persons accessing the site should be in close proximity to one of the pedestrian accesses from whichever way that they are approaching the site.

Landscaping

- 3.15 The existing site is very open, flat fields with no landscaping within the inner limits. The outer limits of the site benefit from a number of mature existing trees. It is proposed that the existing trees will be retained and protected. A number of additional trees are proposed along the boundaries, but also within the POS.
- 3.16 Other soft landscaping will be used within the site, and this will be detailed as the design progresses.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 National and local planning policy guidance considered relevant to the principle of this development is set out in this section.

National planning policy and guidance

- 4.2 The proposal relates to a proposed new build educational building and relevant national planning policy is set out in:
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10, (2018);
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 'Nature Conservation and Planning';
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 'Design' (2016);
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18 'Transport' (2007); and,
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 'The Welsh Language'.
- 4.3 National Planning Policy which has been taken into consideration includes Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10, 2018, Technical Advice Note 12 (TAN12) – Design, Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport (TAN 18).
- 4.4 PPW Ed. 10 aligns national planning policy strategy with the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which is centred around achieving sustainable development.
- 4.5 Relevant national planning policies are listed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Summary of national planning policy and guidance

Policy	Summary of policy
Assessing the Sustainable Benefits of Development	<p>Paragraph 2.21 advises that;</p> <p><i>“Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process and assessed in accordance with the five ways of working to ensure a balanced assessment is carried out to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. There may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal or site allocation outweighs others, and in such cases robust evidence should be presented to support these decisions, whilst seeking to maximise contributions against all the well-being goals.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 2.22 goes on to advise that the key factors in an assessment relate to social considerations, economic considerations, cultural considerations and environmental considerations.</p>
Assessing the Sustainable	Paragraph 2.21 advises that;

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Benefits of Development	<p><i>"Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process and assessed in accordance with the five ways of working to ensure a balanced assessment is carried out to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. There may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal or site allocation outweighs others, and in such cases robust evidence should be presented to support these decisions, whilst seeking to maximise contributions against all the well-being goals."</i></p> <p>Paragraph 2.22 goes on to advise that the key factors in an assessment relate to social considerations, economic considerations, cultural considerations and environmental considerations.</p>
Access	<p>Paragraph 3.46 states that;</p> <p><i>"A broad balance between housing, community facilities, services and employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas should be promoted to minimise the need for long distance commuting. Planning authorities should adopt policies to locate major generators of travel demand, such as housing, employment, retailing, leisure and recreation, and community facilities (including libraries, schools, doctor's surgeries and hospitals), within existing urban areas or areas which are, or can be, easily reached by walking or cycling, and are well served by public transport."</i></p> <p>Paragraph 3.6 advises that;</p> <p><i>"Development proposals must address the issues of inclusivity and accessibility for all. This includes making provision to meet the needs of people with sensory, memory, learning and mobility impairments, older people and people with young children. There will often be wider benefits to be gained through the sensitive consideration of such provision, for example, whilst the presence of visual cues will be invaluable in assisting those with hearing loss to engage in a noisy environment, a navigable environment will benefit all. Good design can also encourage people to meet and interact with each other, helping to address issues surrounding loneliness. Good design must also involve the provision of measures that help to reduce the inequality of access to essential services, education and employment experienced by people without access to a car. Design measures and features should enable easy access to services by walking, cycling and public transport."</i></p>
Amenity	<p>Paragraph 3.21 states that;</p> <p><i>"The planning system must consider the impacts of new development on existing communities and maximise health protection and well-being and safeguard amenity."</i></p>
Design	<p>Section 3 relates to design and Placemaking In Action. It considers that Good Design Making Better Places. Paragraph 3.3 advises that;</p> <p><i>"Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surroundings area."</i></p>

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	<p>Paragraph 3.4 goes on to state that;</p> <p><i>“Design is an inclusive process, which can raise public aspirations, reinforce civic pride and create a sense of place and help shape its future. For those proposing new development, early engagement can help to secure public acceptance of new development. Meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales. These objectives can be categorised into five key aspects of good design”.</i></p>
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning	<p>Technical Advice Note 5 ‘Nature Conservation and Planning’ provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.6.1 states that;</p> <p><i>“Biodiversity conservation and enhancement is an integral part of planning for sustainable development. The planning system has an important part to play in nature conservation. The use and development of land can pose threats to the conservation of natural features and wildlife. Past changes have contributed to the loss of integrity of habitat networks through land-take, fragmentation, severance, disturbance, hydrological changes and other adverse impacts. But development can also present significant opportunities to enhance wildlife habitats and the enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage.”</i></p>
TAN 12 Design	<p>The guidance in TAN 12 has been considered in formulating the proposal and in reporting on the Design and Access issues. The Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion, at every scale throughout Wales. Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 identifies that an understanding of landscape and townscape quality, including its historic character, is fundamental to the design process.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and, provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 states;</p> <p><i>“The distinctive settlement patterns which characterise much of Wales have evolved in part in response to the country’s diverse landscape and topography. The way in which development relates to its urban or rural landscape or seascape context is critical to its success. Because of this, an understanding of landscape quality, including its historic character, is fundamental to the design process.”</i></p>

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		<p>Paragraph 5.8.1 states; <i>“The special qualities of the rural landscape and coastline of Wales should be recognised. The qualities should be enhanced through conservation of the character of the countryside and by achieving quality in new development.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 5.8.2 states; <i>“Policies and guidance should take account of the need to steer activity to avoid negative impact on distinctive rural landscapes and the best agricultural land and to conserve and enhance diversity of species and habitats. Managing change by means of a landscaping strategy based on a thorough landscape assessment is one means of safeguarding a rural sense of place. This should analyse key issues and put forward guidelines for design themes, palettes of materials, and briefs for specific sites.”</i></p>
TAN 18	Transport	<p>TAN 18 has also been taken into consideration. The main aim of TAN 18 is ensuring that new development is located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.4 of TAN identifies that the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport is complex and varied. The development of land is dependant, in part, upon transport infrastructure and services to function efficiently. By influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.</p> <p>TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.</p> <p>TAN 18 expands on the importance of accessibility in future developments. TAN 18 provides guidance on providing good accessibility with objectives such as; <i>‘ensuring new development is located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion;’</i> and; <i>“ensuring that new development and major alterations to existing developments include appropriate provision for pedestrians (including those with special access and mobility requirements), cycling, public transport, and traffic management and parking/servicing;”</i></p> <p>TAN 18 focuses on ensuring future developments consider the importance of the relationship between land use and transport. TAN 18 places an emphasis on reducing the need to travel and the need to provide sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport.</p> <p>TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, in particular ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.</p>
TAN 20		<p>TAN 20 provides guidance on how the planning system considers the implications of the Welsh language when preparing LDPs and making</p>

	<p>decisions. The LPA should consider the needs and welfare of the Welsh language, and in so doing, contribute to its well-being. Changes introduced in the current version of TAN 20 are as a result of bringing into force provisions contained in the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>The main changes relate to the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The link between planning for the Welsh language through land-use planning and community planning;• Providing clarification that decision makers may take the language into account where it is material to the application;• Allow language impact assessments in certain specified circumstances.
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Local planning policy and guidance

- 4.6 The adopted development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005. Table 4.2 provides a summary of local planning policy which is of relevance to the proposed development.
- 4.7 In addition to the UDP, there are Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPG) which provide guidance on the design of development within the county.
- 4.8 Wrexham County Borough Council are in the process of preparing a Local Development Plan, and this has been to examination in summer 2019 and therefore is anticipated to be adopted in 2020. The Deposit plan policies support the provision of well sited community services and open space and the Council are committed to their delivery to meet the shortfall through commuted sums to provide the right level of facilities in the right place.
- 4.9 Other relevant adopted local guidance is contained within the following Guidance Notes:
- Guidance Note No 6 – Access to and use of buildings (2005);
 - Guidance Note No 7 – Landscape and Development (2003);
 - Guidance Note No 16 – Parking Standards (2011);
 - Guidance Note No 17 – Trees in Development (2011);
 - Guidance Note No 23 – Development of Sites with Land Contamination (2013);
 - Guidance Note No 24 – Designing Out Crime (2003);
 - Guidance Note No 26 – Landscape and Industrial Developments (2003);
 - Guidance Note No 27 – Developer Contributions to Schools (2010);
 - Guidance Note No 31 – The Welsh Language and Welsh Communities (2011);
 - Guidance Note No 32 – Biodiversity & Development (2011).

Table 4.2 Summary of local planning policy and guidance

Policy	Summary of policy
Policy CLF2 relates to the provision of new facilities and specified the following.	<p><i>Policy CLF2 Land will be safeguarded for the provision of:-</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. a health centre and a day psychiatric hospital (10 places) adjacent to Primary School, Rhosymedre.</i> <i>2. a community theatre, adjacent to the Library and Arts Centre, Wrexham.</i> <i>3. a community centre, School Lane, Bronington</i> <i>4. a primary school on 4.5 hectares o land within the housing portion of the Ruthin Road Development Area, Wrexham.</i> <p><i>Additional facilities may be provided during the plan period.</i></p> <p>The application site is not listed within this policy, however, due to the age of the adopted plan this site would not have been anticipated as required for a new school. However, the proposal is in accordance with the spatial strategy and the anticipation that additional facilities would be brought forward within the plan period.</p>
Policy CLF3 seeks dual use facilities	<p><i>Policy CLF3 The extension of dual community and school use of existing leisure facilities will be favoured/ encouraged.</i></p> <p><i>The explanatory text goes on to state that:</i></p> <p><i>9.4 Some facilities, such as leisure centres or golf courses, provide for the needs of the County Borough as a whole, or at least a substantial part of it: other facilities such as playing fields, children's play areas or community halls satisfy demand from the immediate population. Often, additional facilities can be provided by more intensive development or use of existing sites and buildings or can be accommodated on plots of land whose size, shape, or physical characteristics render them unsuitable for other uses. The Sports Council for Wales has indicated that 61% of expected demand for sports halls and 15% of expected demand for swimming pools in the County Borough is unsatisfied by existing facilities. Optimising the use of existing sports and swimming facilities is therefore a priority. The opening up of existing school facilities as dual community and school use can substantially reduce local unsatisfied recreational demand, maximise existing infrastructure, and increase land use economy, and will be encouraged.</i></p>
General Development Principles Policy GCP1 Development Objectives	<p><i>Policy GDP1 All new development should:-</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.</i> <i>b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.</i> <i>c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.</i> <i>d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.</i> <i>e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.</i>

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	<p><i>f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.</i></p> <p><i>g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.</i></p> <p><i>h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.</i></p> <p><i>i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.</i></p> <p><i>j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.</i></p> <p><i>k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.</i></p>
Policy CLF 4 Playing Fields, Children's Play Areas and Open Space	<p><i>Policy CLF 4 The redevelopment of sports grounds, playing fields, children's play areas and informal open spaces and allotment gardens for uses other than sport and recreation will not be permitted unless:-</i></p> <p><i>a) redevelopment of only a small part of the site would allow the retention and enhancement of that existing facility; or</i></p> <p><i>b) the long term requirement for the facility has ceased and it would not lead to, or increase an existing shortfall of that facility in the immediate locality; or</i></p> <p><i>c) the loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality. Alternative sites should be within settlement limits or, in exceptional circumstances, adjacent to settlement limits provided that associated buildings, lighting, and parking facilities are not intrusive in the landscape and user accessibility is not reduced.</i></p>
Policy T8 Parking	<p><i>Policy T8 relates to parking and states that;</i></p> <p><i>"Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate:-</i></p> <p><i>a) the availability of public transport nearby,</i></p> <p><i>b) proximity to public car parking,</i></p> <p><i>c) proximity to local services and facilities,</i></p> <p><i>d) road safety hazards and amenity considerations arising from on-street parking in the vicinity of the site.</i></p> <p><i>Where implementation difficulties arise in making parking provision on-site or nearby, the Council will require a developer to make financial contributions for measures to assist public transport, or walking and cycling as appropriate."</i></p> <p><i>The explanatory text (Paragraph 10.10) goes on to state that;</i></p> <p><i>"The Council's guidance on parking standards, which is updated from time to time, ensures that development does not adversely affect road safety or local amenity. Occasionally, however, full compliance with these standards may neither be practicable nor appropriate (e.g. where there may be insurmountable access, amenity, space or layout constraints) particularly where key urban regeneration or building conservation objectives are denied. Such circumstances are likely to apply in Wrexham town centre and</i></p>

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	<p><i>the larger district shopping centres. If there is no space available on the site, suitable parking provision will need to be made elsewhere in the area. The Council operates a policy of allowing a developer to buy parking spaces for non-operational parking or to finance public transport improvements or measures for walking and cycling in lieu of on site provision. Such arrangements can be advantageous to both developer, in saving valuable space on site, and to the general public, which in the long term will benefit from increased public car parking provision, particularly targeted at short stay spaces to protect the vitality and viability of the Wrexham town centre, or improved public transport facilities and services. Supplementary policies on car parking are set out in the Parking Strategy contained in the Council's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 (see Appendix III). The Council recognises that the management of car parking may be used in the future as a means to encourage the use of public transport, footpaths and cycleways, where this is appropriate."</i></p> <p>Policy T9 relates to walking, cycling and horse riding routes and states that; <i>"Development proposals will be required to provide walking and cycling routes, where feasible and appropriate, that link with existing or proposed walking and cycling routes, and integrate with the public transport system. Opportunities for horse riding along these routes will be secured where appropriate"</i></p>
Policy T9 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Routes	<p>Policy T9 Development proposals will be required to provide walking and cycling routes, where feasible and appropriate, that link with existing or proposed walking and cycling routes and integrate with the public transport system. Opportunities for horse riding along these routes will be secured where appropriate.</p> <p>The explanatory text goes on to state that; <i>10.11 Road improvements, traffic management measures, and pedestrian schemes will create safer and more pleasant areas for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. The County Borough contains many public rights of way that fulfil an important recreational role. However, opportunities for regular walking or cycling for employment, shopping, educational or leisure purposes are limited by the lack of safe and convenient routes between settlements. The provision of dedicated and segregated cycling routes, and parking facilities, linked to the public transport system will be a material consideration in the evaluation of development proposals. The provision of dedicated and segregated cycling, walking, and horse riding routes and parking facilities, linked to the public transport system, will be a material consideration in the evaluation of development proposals. All such routes should be open and benefit from a high degree of natural surveillance, where appropriate, to ensure that they remain safe and convenient for users. It is essential that walking, including the use of canal towpaths, and cycling become practical alternatives to the car.</i></p>

5. Main considerations

- 5.1 The principle of the erection of a new primary school and nursery in this sustainable location is considered acceptable. The site is well connected to a large residential area and is accessible by sustainable transport routes. The site is served by a footpath and cycle route.
- 5.2 The design and layout of the site has made the best use of the site in terms of managing residential amenity, but also to ensure that the site is safe and convenient to get to by foot or cycling.
- 5.3 The application site is currently used as private sports pitches and leased out to Wrexham Football Club as their training facility. The background papers for the Unitary Development Plan confirms that the site has never been classified as POS, and therefore the introduction of the POS on the western third of the site will provide a net increase in POS. The principle of development of the site for a community use with accessible POS is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 5.4 The application site is not listed as safeguarded or allocated for a school within UDP policy CLF2. Due to the age of the adopted plan this site would not have been anticipated as being required during the plan period. The proposal is compatible with the UDP spatial strategy. In addition, in line with policy UDP policy CLF3, the plan encourages dual community and school facilities as will be delivered through this scheme through the delivery of POS and the potential shared use of sports pitches. This will provide a wider community benefit.

Site selection

- 5.1 The application site has been selected as the most suitable site for the new school for the following reasons:
- Nine Acres is already in the ownership of the Local Authority.
 - Nine Acres sits within the Education and Early Intervention portfolio.
 - The Nine Acres site is the only available site located within the town centre area that is owned by the Local Authority, within the Education & Early Intervention portfolio that is large enough to provide adequate accommodation and sufficient play area as per the relevant building bulletin/ specifications.
 - There would be scope for growth within the site if required in the future to fit in with sustainable objectives.

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- The Nine Acres site is in a primarily residential area.
- There is good accessibility and connectivity to the Nine Acres site by bus, car, foot or cycle.
- There are no constraints on the site that would create issues for this development.
- The site will provide additional benefits such as the ability to provide open space.
- The development will bring the site back into a beneficial use.
- Wrexham CBC have previously reviewed sites within the Town centre for a primary school but with the exception of the Groves site, no other sites were available or suitable.
- The Nine Acres site is already held for education purposes and the use of the land for a primary school is permitted by virtue of the deed (subject to planning permission).

6. Other design considerations

Materials

- 6.1 The proposed development has been distinctively designed whilst sympathetically reflecting the character of the area with the needs of people in mind, providing ample playing and natural areas as well as distinct parking areas.
- 6.2 It is not considered that the proposal will disrupt the rhythm and grain of development within the vicinity of the site as the proposed development has been designed to complement the design of other buildings in the vicinity of the site. The materials will be similar to the materials used in the local vernacular. They will also use natural materials to incorporate it into the wooded setting.
- 6.3 The proposal will not cause any detriment to any adjoining land use or neighbours as the proposed development has been carefully designed to overcome any issues of overlooking with the positioning and size of fenestration being carefully considered. The playing pitches will generally be used during the weekdays and only during daylight hours. This should not cause any impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring residential dwellings.
- 6.4 The overall appearance of the proposed development is considered to be compatible with the local area. The local area is characterised by two storey dwellings which are set back from the road. The proposed school will be a two storey building which is set back from the roads within a well landscaped site. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the proposed development integrates into its surroundings. It was a key part of the development that development is set back and buffered away from Chester Road. The additional landscaping will also enhance the suburban character of the area which is particularly green. The site can comfortably accommodate the proposal without appearing cramped or overdeveloped. The total site area is 36,434m² and the 1250m² which only covers 3.5% of the overall site. 23,670m² (65%) are playing pitches and associated playgrounds and parking areas. 11,514m² (31.6%) is POS.
- 6.5 As can be seen from the 3D visuals in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, the proportions of the buildings are complementary to the height of the surrounding buildings and would not be overbearing.

Figure 6.1 Extract of 3D visuals



Figure 6.2 Extract of 3D visuals



Environmental sustainability

- 6.6 In terms of environmental sustainability, consideration has been given to the effect of the proposed development on the environment by ensuring that the location is accessible to its users without the need to use a private car.
- 6.7 In considering the principles of the energy hierarchy, reducing energy demand and maximising energy efficiency, a reduction in carbon emissions that are required by Building Regulations shall be achieved by the school.
- 6.8 The proposals offer the best balance between providing an effective education environment and delivering efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings.

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- 6.9 The proposals envisage the development of a community-based focus for every school in the area. 21st Century Schools will provide services that draw both the community and school together, promoting lifelong education for adults, before and after school clubs, access to wider services and other community-based activities. By providing such a diverse school, this will reduce the need to travel.

Community safety

- 6.10 The proposed development has been designed with the safety and well-being of future users being a key consideration as well as the need to protect and enhance the safety of the surrounding community. The proposal has been designed to allow for natural surveillance from the surrounding residential dwellings whilst promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility. The school's governing body will ensure that the site is managed well throughout the day and night to prevent antisocial behaviour.
- 6.11 The proposed development will not have any detrimental effect on community safety or on the amenity of the residents of the surrounding residential properties.
- 6.12 The proposed wooded POS is well spaced out to ensure good visibility through the area.

7. Accessibility

Planning policy

- 7.1 The relevant national policies and guidance relating to accessibility are set out within:
- Planning Policy Wales, Edition 10, (2018); and
 - Technical Advice Note 18 'Transport' (2007).
- 7.2 The relevant planning policies within the adopted LDP are as follows:
- T8 Parking
 - T9 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Routes

Movement to, from and within the development

- 7.3 In terms of design, the proposed site layout has been carefully designed to ensure that all of the site's future users can effectively access the site and the proposed new school/ nursery and have safe access to the wider pedestrian, cycle and highway network.
- 7.4 The proposal includes the formation of a new vehicular access off Rhosnesni Lane which will provide access to the Pupil Drop Off area/ car park and to the Staff Car Park. There will also be a separate pedestrian access to the side of the access. There are large footpaths on both sides of Rhosnesni Lane and therefore the pedestrian link into the site will be safe and convenient. The car park and drop off areas will ensure convenient and safe flow of traffic and have been designed to ensure that there are enough car parking spaces so that cars will be able to easily pull into the site with no need for backing up on the main highway.
- 7.5 Signage will be used to ensure the flow of traffic around the site and make it clear where vehicular traffic can go so that drivers are concentrating on their surroundings and the safety of pedestrians. It is anticipated that a one-way system will operate.
- 7.6 The existing bus stop on Chester Road will be extended to provide a coach parking area for up to 6 coaches. A pedestrian access will be provided from this area to the school entrance. The cycle route and footway will be reconfigured but protected to provide for active travel. The location for the coach stop was selected so that it is located away from the main vehicular access and to avoid residential roads. Discussions are under way with the Local Highway Authority in terms of the setting out of this facility. The path through the POS will provide an alternative route.

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- 7.7 There will also be a separate pedestrian access to the south of the school off Westminster Drive.
- 7.8 This range of entrances ensure that the site is easily accessible from all sides and spaces them out well so that persons accessing the site should be in close proximity to one of the pedestrian accesses from whichever way that they are approaching the school.
- 7.9 The internal access road will ensure that the site users will be able to enter and leave the site in a safe manner. All accesses will be kept clear and maintained through the use of formal planning conditions.

Sustainability

- 7.10 As can be seen from the extract of the Active Travel Wales Plan, the site is well connected to active travel routes. There is an opportunity to improve the connections through the POS and incorporate the paths and cycle routes to this standard when configuring the coach parking.

Figure 7.1 Extract of Active Travel Mapping

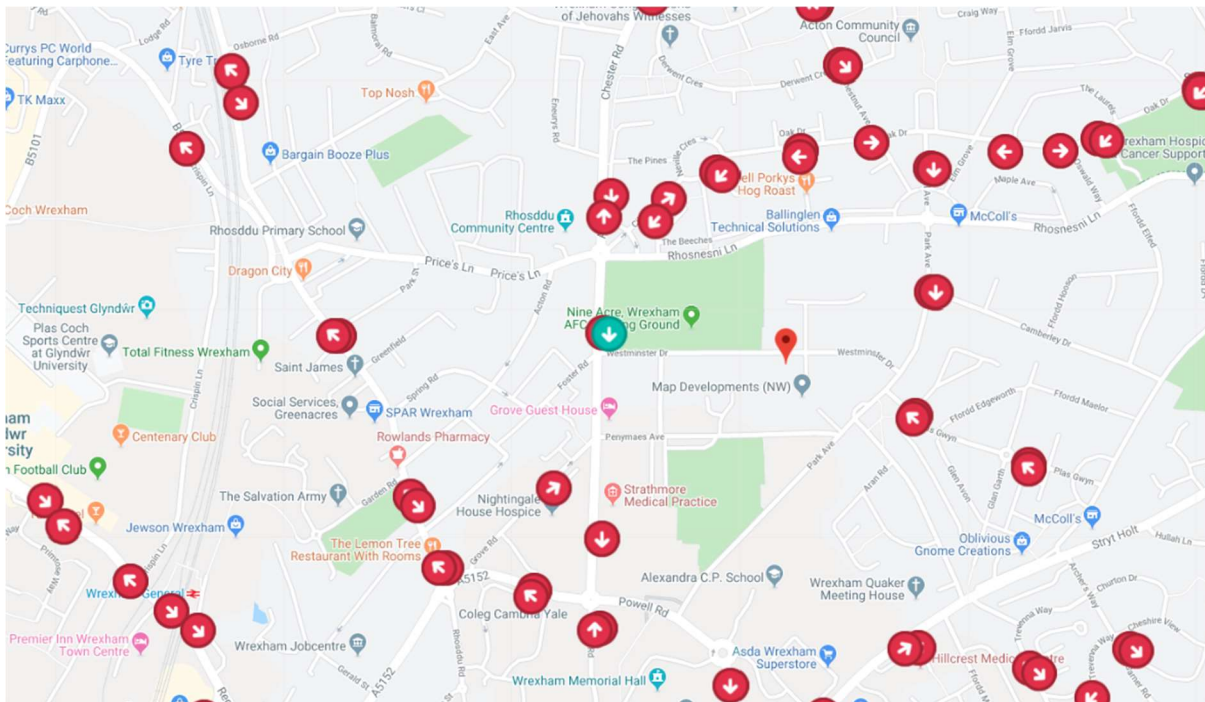


Figure 7.2 Extract of Active Travel legend



- 7.11 As identified in Figure 7.3, the application site is located in close proximity to several bus stops, with the closest being along Chester Road. These buses provide links on services 1 and 35 between Wrexham Bus Station and Chester Railway Station. Both provide onward links to other locations via rail and bus (Wrexham and Chester Stations), including coach services. Services on this bus stop are regular and throughout the day (circa every 15 minutes) from 05:45 -23:30.

Figure 7.3 Extract of Traveline Cymru Bus Stop Locator



Parking

7.12 The proposed development includes:

- 6 coach parking/ drop off bay.
- Pupil Drop Off turning area (7No. Spaces).
- Pupil Drop Off Car Park (75No. Spaces) – with dual use as a Multi Use Game Area (MUGA).
- Staff Car Park (55No. Spaces).

7.13 Local Planning Guidance Note No 16 states that there is a minimum standard of 2 parking spaces for cars at schools, but that it should be circa 1 car parking space per 25m² gross floor space. The indicative floor space is going to be 2,380m² which equates to 95.2 spaces. There is an over provision against these standards with 137 spaces parking spaces provided. In order to make the best and most efficient use of land 75 of these spaces are also multi-purpose as they can be used as an outdoor play area when not in use.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This proposals for outline planning permission for the erection of a new school, associated bus bay on Chester Road, turning and drop off areas, car parking, playground and sports pitches, forest school area and new woodland walk (POS) on land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU are considered to be acceptable in principle and compliant with Wrexham UDP and PPW policies.
- 8.2 This statement has addressed all other material planning considerations including design and access matters. The education development would complement the character of the surrounding settlement and help meet the requirement for additional school and nursery places locally.
- 8.3 The site is located within a sustainable location which will be easily accessible by new pupil and nursery children via a range of transport methods. The proposed development would be compliant with the advice and strategy set out within the Active Travel Wales Guidelines.
- 8.4 In view of the foregoing, it is considered that the proposed development can be supported.

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