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PLANNING OFFICERS' GROUP

Press Release

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAND STRATEGY FOR NORTH WALES

The North Wales economy has an adequate provision of strategic employment land that is able to meet the needs of investors according to the results of a recent study.

The North Wales Planning Officers Group (NWPOG) which consists of all the Chief Planning Officer in North Wales commissioned the consultants Arup to investigate the availability and supply of strategic employment sites in North Wales for the next twenty years. As potential investors take little note of local authority boundaries and as large employment sites cater for a wider geographic area, the group felt it was important to work collaboratively across North Wales. The study was also asked to identify gaps in employment land provision in terms of quality, quantity and location and to give a broad indication of where site expansion should take place.

The report, “Regional Employment Land Strategy for North Wales”, concluded that the North Wales economy has an adequate provision of strategic employment land that is able to meet the needs of investors and all authorities should include sufficiently flexible policies in their local development plans in order to support a programme or a potential investor with specific site requirements. It also highlighted the need to work at a national level in order to promote sites to potential investors and ensure that the Welsh Government recognise the key strengths of the region and the opportunities to cluster around existing strategic sites.

On behalf of NWPOG, Jonathan Cawley, the Director of Planning and Cultural Heritage at Snowdonia National Park Authority and the lead officer for the project said:

“It is important for the planning system to allocate sufficient land in the right location to enable new investment and job opportunities and to recognise that large strategic sites serve more than one local authority area. We need to work together to avoid duplication of site provision and to identify any further work required to bring the best sites forward for immediate development. This study clearly shows there are adequate strategic employment sites available if the potential investors can be attracted in competition with other areas in Wales and the UK. The planning system is not an impediment to economic growth and we will ensure that this remains the case in the future.”

Ends

Note to editors

1. The North Wales Planning Officers Group (NWPOG) includes the Chief Planning Officers of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbigh, Wrexham, and Flint Councils together with Snowdonia National Park Authority.
2. The group’s remit is to discuss current planning issues common to North Wales e.g. looking at joint collaboration projects in the region.
3. The group recognises that in a period of public sector cutbacks it is sensible to work jointly on common issues in order to save resources and pool expertise.
4. Currently planning applications for mineral proposals are dealt with by one team across North Wales and based in Flintshire County Council. The current Chairman is Andrew Farrow, Chief Planning Officer of Flintshire County Council.
5. In all, seven specific recommendations were made and can be found in a summary document, “Regional Employment Land Strategy for North Wales Strategy Document” which can be found at
6. For further information, please contact Jonathan Cawley on 01766 770274.