

# COMMUNITY AND LINGUISTIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Land south of Rhos Street, Ruthin

Prepared on behalf of

**The Applicant – Medra**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment has been prepared by Grimster Planning on behalf of our Client, Medra (hereafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
- 1.2. The Assessment is submitted in support of a detailed planning application (hereafter referred to as the “Application”), submitted to Denbighshire County Council for the development of the Site of the former Rhos Street School, south of Rhos Street in Ruthin (hereafter referred to as the “Site”).
- 1.3. The description of development for which detailed planning permission is sought, as stated on the Application Form, comprises the following:

***“Demolition of all existing buildings, structures and site clearance; erection of up to 20 no. dwellings and associated infrastructure works comprising access, drainage and open space provision”***

- 1.4. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, and other supporting technical information submitted as part of the Application.
- 1.5. Given the nature of the proposed development, the purpose of this Statement is to consider the potential impacts of the proposed development on matters including housing, population, economics, infrastructure, education and any other pertinent considerations to the proposed development.
- 1.6. The Assessment has been prepared having regard to the guidance contained in Technical Advice Note 20: *Planning and the Welsh Language* (October 2017) published by the Welsh Government, Policy RD5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan (“UDP”) adopted in 2013, and the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance – *Planning and the Welsh Language* which sets out the requirements for Community and Linguistic Statements and Impact Assessments.

### Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.7. To inform this Application, the Applicant has engaged in formal pre-application consultation with Officers at Denbighshire County Council regarding the Site’s development potential.
- 1.8. Furthermore, and in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in Welsh Government Guidance, the Applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation with the local community for the proposed ‘major’ development (by virtue of its scale in excess of ten dwellings). Full details, including the feedback/comments received and how these are addressed by the Applicant, will be documented in the Pre-Application Consultation Report to be submitted with the Application.

## 2 SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### Site Context

- 2.1. Full details of the Site's location and surroundings are provided in Section 2 of the accompanying Planning and Affordable Housing Statement. Further details are also offered in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. It is not the intention to repeat the full details in this Statement.
- 2.2. Notwithstanding this, the principal observations in relation to the Site's location and surroundings are as follows:
- The Site lies within the administrative area of Denbighshire County Council;
  - The Site is brownfield in nature and the land and buildings are now redundant following the re-location of the former Rhos Street School from the Site in April 2018;
  - The Site is located within the development boundary of Ruthin, comprises existing built form and is influenced by existing urban features including residential development, Ruthin Community Hospital and road infrastructure. The Site is contained on all sides by these existing urban features;
  - The Site occupies a sustainable location, with good access to public transport services (rail and bus), employment opportunities, shops and services, and local education (Primary and Secondary Schools); and
  - The Site benefits from good access to leisure and recreational facilities which would support the health and well-being of future residents of the Site.
- 2.3. In summary, the Site is considered to occupy a sustainable location within the urban area of Ruthin, and which is identified as one of the most sustainable locations for new development in the adopted Denbighshire UDP (as a Lower Growth Town).

### Proposed Development

- 2.4. Full details of the proposed development are provided in Section 4 of the accompanying Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, together with details of the Site's sustainability in Section 2. It is not the intention to repeat the full details in this Statement.
- 2.5. Notwithstanding this, in summary the proposed development comprises the development of the following:
- 20. no. dwellings (Use Class C3) comprising a mix of houses and apartments. This will include 2 no. affordable homes;
  - The proposed dwelling mix comprises:
    - 2 no. 2-bed apartments (Affordable Home);
    - 4 no. 2-bed, semi-detached properties;
    - 9 no. 3-bed, semi-detached properties;
    - 3 no. 3-bed semi-detached properties (side entry); and
    - 2 no. 4-bed, detached properties with integral garages.

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- In total, the percentage split across of dwelling sizes across the Site is as follows:
    - 30% 2-bed
    - 60% 3-bed
    - 10% 4-bed
  
  - The proposed development will be served via a vehicular point and associated pedestrian/cycle access off Rhos Street;
  
  - The proposed development will incorporate 440 square metres of public open space for the enjoyment of future residents; and
  
  - The proposed development will provide on-site car parking provision at the following standards:
    - 1 no. car parking space per apartment; and
    - 2 no. car parking spaces per 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings.

### 3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1. For decision-taking, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of determination, then that determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2. This requirement of planning law is re-iterated in Paragraph 1.21 of Planning Policy Wales 11 (“PPW11”) published in February 2021.
- 3.3. An assessment of the proposed development within the context of the development plan and other material considerations is undertaken within the accompanying Planning and Affordable Housing Statement.
- 3.4. In respect of the Welsh language, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced legislative provision. The Act requires the Welsh language to be considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal of local development plans, as well as being a consideration in the decision-making process when it comes to the determination of planning applications.
- 3.5. Accordingly, the focus of this Statement is to consider the proposed development in the context of the following policy guidance:
  - Planning Policy Wales 11: Edition 11 (February 2021)
  - Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN 20): Planning and the Welsh Language (October 2017); and
  - Policy RD5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan (June 2013).
- 3.6. A summary of the key policy guidance contained within each of the above documents is provided below.

#### Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11)

- 3.7. Paragraphs 3.25 to 3.29 of PPW11 provide guidance on the need to ensure that the likely effects of development on the Welsh language are assessed and fully understood as part of the planning process. This relates to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 3.8. PPW11 recognises that the Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric, and the land-use planning system is required to take account of the conditions which are essential to the Welsh language in order to contribute to its use and the Thriving Welsh Language well-being goal.
- 3.9. PPW11 sets out the need for language impact assessments to be carried out in respect of large developments not allocated in a development plan.

#### Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN20)

- 3.10. The guidance contained in TAN20 seeks to support and protect the Welsh language through the planning system. It provides guidance to plan-makers and decision-takers.
- 3.11. Paragraph 2.6.3 of TAN20 recognises that the distribution of economic growth can affect the linguistic balance.

- 3.12. Paragraph 3.1.3 states that planning applications should not be routinely subject to a Welsh language impact assessment. However, there is recognition that large scale developments can alter the dynamics of linguistic balance. In this regard, paragraph 3.2.2 states that the impact of large-scale development (on a windfall site) on the Welsh language may be assessed in an area defined as linguistically sensitive or significant.
- 3.13. Guidance on potential mitigation measures are provided in paragraph 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

### Denbighshire Local Development Plan

- 3.14. Policy RD5 provides guidance in relation to assessing the impact of new development on the Welsh language, as set out below:

#### *RD5: The Welsh Language and the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities*

*“Development could be refused if its size, scale or location would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community”*

*“Developers will be expected to provide bilingual signage as a minimum means of promoting the Welsh language. In appropriate circumstances, mitigation against any adverse effect will be secured through requiring a financial contribution by Section 106 or other means.”*

### Planning and The Welsh Language SPG

- 3.15. This SPG prepared by Denbighshire Council contains a methodology for Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment, and a checklist to allow both developers and the Council to make an assessment of the likely impact of a development proposal against the following five aspects of community life:
- Population (levels and the characteristics of that population);
  - Quality of life (therefore providing the impetus for people to remain, leave or move to the community);
  - The economy (affecting employment opportunities for different groups as well as the cost of living and, more specifically, the cost of housing);
  - Infrastructure (needed to sustain the community, particularly schools, health care and essential services);
  - The social and cultural life of the community (expressed through the viability of cultural institutions, particularly those affecting younger people).
- 3.16. The checklist sets out 18 questions across the 5 topic areas, with each scoring either positively negatively, or neutral and the degree to which any negative impact can be mitigated. There is a four-part methodology to add further comments against each question, as follows:
- After each question, there is an opportunity to describe the overall assessment;
  - Provide a statement of evidence, normally based on previous experience;
  - Provide a statement of whether you consider that the development will have a positive (+1), neutral (0), or negative (-1) community impact; and
  - How might any negative impacts be mitigated and/or positive impact enhanced.

- 3.17. In order to assess the impact of the proposed development across each topic area, it is necessary to have an understanding of the population profile for the area. This will draw on data published as part of the 2011 census as well as data published by Denbighshire County Council as part of the SPG (and any later evidence).



## 4 COMMUNITY PROFILE

- 4.1. This Section provides details of the community profile within Ruthin. This is important in order to underpin the Assessment, having regard to the guidance within Appendix 3 of the Planning and Welsh Language SPG produced by the Council, which acknowledges that:

*“Some understanding of the local demographic make-up of the settlement or Community Council area where the application is located will be essential in order to understand how the community might be affected, including changes over time. The overall population and age profile will assist in building up a picture of why the development is required and who is likely to benefit. The number of current and past Welsh speakers will be critical. The LPA will provide reference to background statistical information on a City, Town and Community Council basis.”*

- 4.2. We go on in this Section to consider the community profile of Ruthin.

### Population Profile

- 4.3. The Site lies within the ward of Ruthin, in Denbighshire. The most recent data on the population age profile in the ward is that set out in Table 1 below, via the 2011 census:

**Table 1: Age Profile in Ruthin Ward**

AGE PROFILE (AS OF 2011)						
AGE GROUPS	RUTHIN WARD		DENBIGHSHIRE		WALES	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>All Age Categories</b>	5,461	100	93,374	100	3,063,456	100
<b>0-4</b>	327	5.98	5,323	5.67	178,301	5.82
<b>5-7</b>	176	3.22	2,986	3.18	99,429	3.24
<b>8-9</b>	113	2.06	1,975	2.10	63,650	2.07
<b>10-14</b>	317	5.80	5,473	5.83	177,748	5.80
<b>15</b>	64	1.17	1,196	1.27	37,168	1.21
<b>16-17</b>	183	3.35	2,543	2.71	77,111	2.51
<b>18-19</b>	150	2.74	2,270	2.24	84,841	2.76
<b>20-24</b>	301	5.51	5,212	5.56	211,924	6.91
<b>25-29</b>	273	4.99	4,525	4.82	185,728	6.06
<b>30-44</b>	964	17.63	16,269	17.35	570,894	18.63
<b>45-49</b>	1,044	19.11	19,113	20.39	609,233	19.88
<b>60-64</b>	355	6.50	7,159	7.63	204,885	6.68
<b>65-74</b>	557	10.19	10,585	11.29	300,550	9.81

<b>75-84</b>	426	7.80	6,522	6.95	187,434	6.11
<b>85-89</b>	117	2.14	1,656	1.76	49,360	1.61
<b>90 and Over</b>	95	1.73	927	0.98	25,200	0.82
<b>Mean Age</b>	42.25		42.39		40.62	
<b>Median Age</b>	43		44		41	

Source: ONS 2011 Census Data, Table KS102EW Age Structure

- 4.4. Based on the above, the Ruthin Ward has a higher proportion of people aged 75 and over compared to the County and national averages, with below average numbers in the 45-74 age group. The younger age groups are largely consistent with the County and national averages.

### North Wales Population Overview

- 4.5. Within Denbighshire, the North Wales Population Assessment undertaken in 2017 has identified that Denbighshire's population is projected to increase by 2.7% between 2014 and 2039. This equates to an average of around 2,500 people.
- 4.6. Across the age groups, those aged 18 to 74 are expected to decrease by 4,800, whereas those aged 75 years and over will increase by 7,500 people.
- 4.7. There is estimated to be a net migration of 6,600 people in the population, with natural change reducing by 4,100.

### Internal Migration

- 4.8. Details on the inflow, outflow and net internal migration in Denbighshire (for the year ending June 2020) is set out in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Internal Migration in Denbighshire

INTERNAL MIGRATION IN DENBIGHSHIRE (YEAR ENDING JUNE 2020)			
AGE GROUPS	INFLOW	OUTFLOW	NET
<b>0-4</b>	220	185	35
<b>5-9</b>	171	158	13
<b>10-14</b>	149	129	20
<b>15-19</b>	227	332	-105
<b>20-24</b>	1,092	416	676
<b>25-29</b>	493	381	112
<b>30-34</b>	334	341	-7
<b>35-39</b>	265	205	60
<b>40-44</b>	189	142	47

45-49	170	180	-10
50-54	221	161	60
55-59	240	185	55
60-64	209	145	64
65-69	181	98	83
70-74	176	108	68
75-79	80	85	-5
80-84	66	72	-6
85-89	47	26	21
90 and Over	35	30	5

Source: ONS, Internal Migration by Local Authority (year ending June 2020)

- 4.9. The details set out above demonstrate that the bigger net migration is in the 15-19 age group with a loss of 105 people. However, notable gains are seen in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups which would appear to be a positive trend. However, it is essential that these age groups are able to access living accommodation as a result.

### Welsh Language Profile

- 4.10. Appendix 2 of the Planning and Welsh Language SPG produced by Denbighshire County Council provides a breakdown of welsh speakers by community. This provides a comparison of the 2011, 2001 and 1991 census results. These are set out in Table 3 below insofar as they relate to Ruthin:

**Table 3: Welsh Speakers in Ruthin and Denbighshire**

WELSH SPEAKERS IN RUTHIN AND DENBIGHSHIRE			
Area	2011 Census (%)	2001 Census (%)	1991 Census (%)
Ruthin	41.7 (5,461 population)	43 (4,298 population)	44
Denbighshire	24.6	-	-

Source: Appendix 2, Planning and Welsh Language SPG

- 4.11. As shown in Table 3 above, the number of welsh speakers in Ruthin has declined by 2.3% since 1991. There is also a decline between 2001 and 2011, despite a population increase.
- 4.12. That said, the number of welsh speakers in Ruthin remains above the average for Denbighshire, with the percentage of people in the Ruthin Ward born in Wales equating to 67.8% versus the Denbighshire average of 58.1% (based on the 2011 census data).
- 4.13. Table 4 below provides a comparison of the welsh language skills in Ruthin, compared to those across Denbighshire and Wales.

Table 4: Welsh Language Skills

WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS						
SKILLS	RUTHIN WARD		DENBIGHSHIRE		WALES	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>All usual residents aged 3 and over</b>	5,265	100	90,527	100	2,955,841	100
<b>No skills in Welsh</b>	2,289	43.47	58,440	64.55	2,1687,987	73.34
<b>Can understand spoken Welsh only</b>	633	12.02	7,662	8.46	157,792	5.33
<b>Can speak Welsh</b>	2,195	41.69	22,236	24.56	562,016	19.01
<b>Can speak but cannot read or write in Welsh</b>	294	5.58	3,251	3.59	80,429	2.72
<b>Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh</b>	185	3.51	1,964	2.16	45,524	1.54
<b>Can speak, read and write in Welsh</b>	1,702	32.32	16,842	18.60	430,717	14.57
<b>Other combination of skills in Welsh</b>	162	3.07	2,368	2.61	73,392	2.48

Source: ONS 2011 Census Data, Table KS207WA Welsh Language Skills

- 4.14. Table 4 demonstrates that Welsh language skills in Ruthin are above the County and national averages. The proportion of people with no skills is considerably below that in the wider County. It is clear that the population within the Ruthin Ward area have a higher degree of capability in respect of reading, writing and speaking in Welsh when compared to the wider County and national averages.

### Local Housing Market Assessment (2019)

- 4.15. The Council's most recent LHMA Update was published in July 2019. Ruthin is identified as lying within the Ruthin and East Local Housing Market Area (LHMA05).
- 4.16. The County of Denbighshire is identified as having a high proportion of older people aged 65 and over compared to the national average in Wales. This is shown in Table 1 above. As such, there are more people on average in the over 65 age groups than in the economically active age group of 16-64 in Denbighshire (compared to the national average). The life expectancy of those in the 65 and over age group is also expected to increase between 2019 and 2024, with a small reduction in the 16-64 age group.
- 4.17. Within the Ruthin and East Local Housing Market Area, the LHMA identifies a particularly need for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom affordable homes in LHMA05 based on the SARTH and Tai Teg Registers (social and intermediate housing).
- 4.18. Across the County there is identified to be an annual requirement for 155 affordable homes per annum (social and intermediate housing need).

### Economic Profile

4.19. Table 5 below provides an illustration of the economic profile of the local community within Ruthin, compared to the County and national averages.

**Table 5: Economic Activity**

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY						
AGE GROUPS	RUTHIN WARD		DENBIGHSHIRE		WALES	
	COUNT	%	Count	%	Count	%
All residents aged 16 to 74	3,826	100	67,676	100		100
Economically Active	2,687		44,409		1,476,735	
Employee – Part Time	600	15.68	9,696	14.32	313,022	13.94
Employee – Full Time	1,451	37.92	23,121	34.16	799,348	35.60
Self-Employed	407	10.63	6,971	10.30	194,029	8.64
Unemployed	128	3.34	2,857	4.22	96,689	4.30
Full-Time Student	101	2.63	1,764	2.60	73,647	3.28
Economically Inactive	1,269		26,292		868,402	
Retired	613	16.02	12,487	18.45	361,501	16.10
Inactive Students	240	6.27	3,239	4.78	133,880	5.96
Looking after home or family	96	2.50	2,314	3.41	86,396	3.84
Long term sick or disabled	152	3.97	4,088	6.04	140,760	6.26
Other	38	0.99	1,139	1.68	45,894	2.04
Unemployed Aged 16-24	47	1.22	960	1.41	30,772	1.37
Unemployed Aged 50-74	28	0.73	537	0.79	16,820	0.74
Unemployed Never Worked	15	0.39	417	0.61	14,951	0.66
Long Term Unemployed	40	1.04	1,111	1.64	38,428	1.71

Source: ONS 2011 Census Data, Table KS601EW Economic Activity

4.20. Based on the above, the number of people economically active in Ruthin in employment is above the County and national average. The number of economically inactive people who are retired is below the County and national average, with fewer people in long-term unemployment.

4.21. The local population in Ruthin are employed across a number of sectors, based on the ONS 2011 Census Data presented in Table KS605EW (Industry). This shows that the highest sectors of employment in Ruthin are the following, accounting for over 50% of work activities/sectors:

- Human Health and Social Work Activities – 15.37%
- Education – 13.84%

- Wholesale and Retail Trade – 13.13%
- Construction – 10.3%

### Local Infrastructure

4.22. Details of the local infrastructure near to the Site are set out in Section 2 of the accompanying Planning and Affordable Housing Statement. However, in summary these comprise the following:

- Bus stop on within a short walking distance of the Site as documented in the accompanying Transport Statement;
- Local shops and services in the town of Ruthin, including public houses, convenience stores;
- Local healthcare provision in the town of Ruthin, including doctors surgeries/medical centres, and dental surgeries; and
- Public open space/recreation areas, including sports facilities heading east along Mold Road associated with Ruthin Leisure Centre, and the playing fields to the west of the Site. The nearest play area to the Site is located to the north of Rhos Street, off Haulfryn, within a very short walking distance (c. 100m).

4.23. Overall, the Site is very well-served by existing and accessible infrastructure.

### Recent Evidence

4.24. Denbighshire County Council has published the Welsh Language Strategy (2017-2022). Within this, the following key headlines can be drawn:

- The Council is proposing to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire by 0.5% up to 2022;
- The 2011 census showed that 22,236 people in Denbighshire can speak Welsh, equating to 24.6% of the population (across all age groups). In the period 2001-2011, this represented a drop of 1.8% in the number of Welsh speakers across the county;
- Based on the 2011 census, 41.7% of the population in the Ruthin Electoral Ward District can speak Welsh, equating to 2,195 people. This is the largest of the main towns in Denbighshire;
- There has been a significant increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the 3-4 age group across the County; and
- Reference is made to the need for mitigation measures to minimise the negative impact of development on the Welsh language.

4.25. In addition to the above Strategy, the Council has published Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning and the Welsh Language. Key additional headlines to be drawn from this are:

- It is estimated that between 1,200 and 2,200 fluent Welsh speakers are moving out of Wales each year. The 2011 census revealed there had been a decline in Welsh speakers in 31 of the Community Council areas in Denbighshire, including Ruthin.

## 5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. This Section of the Statement considers the impacts of the proposed development having regard to the information contained in Section 4. This also takes account of the Assessment Questionnaire contained in **Appendix 1** of this Report.

### Compliance with the Local Development Plan

- 5.2. The Site lies within the defined urban area of Ruthin. Ruthin is identified in the adopted LDP as a Lower Growth Town which makes an important contribution to the housing and employment needs of the County.
- 5.3. The Site comprises a brownfield parcel of land within the development boundary. It is not allocated for any specific land-use. Accordingly, the principle of residential development on the Site is considered to be acceptable, as too is the re-use of previously developed land.
- 5.4. The proposed development of 20 no. new homes will make a valuable and much-needed contribution to the housing shortfall in Denbighshire against the requirement set out within the Local Development Plan (7,500 dwellings between 2006 and 2021); as set out in Section 5 of this Statement, there has been a considerable year on year under-supply of housing in Denbighshire since 2010/11 and this needs to be urgently addressed through positive decision-taking in relation to sustainable housing schemes. The revocation of TAN1 does not remove the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to meet their housing requirement, and as a housing allocation the Site can help to achieve this with it being deliverable in its entirety within 13-16 months from a grant of planning permission (allowing time for the discharge of planning conditions).
- 5.5. Accordingly, the principle of residential development on the Site is established and supported by the Local Development Plan.

### Effects on Housing

- 5.6. The nature of the proposed development is to deliver much-needed new homes to the people of Denbighshire County, and more specifically Ruthin and its neighbouring communities. The proposed development will comprise 18 no. market homes for sale, and 2 no. affordable homes available to local people. The mix of homes will include 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties.
- 5.7. As documented in the accompanying Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, there is a shortage of housing land in Denbighshire County, and an outstanding affordable housing need. The failure to deliver sufficient new homes in the right place at an affordable cost has the potential to result in out-migration of people, particularly younger people and families, from Ruthin (and Denbighshire County) in search of a new home. Indeed, there is already high levels of out-migration in age groups 15-34, with those aged 20-34 likely to be seeking access to their own home. Given the area's proximity to the border with Flintshire and England, this could result in the steady out-migration of people from Wales altogether. This would only serve to harm the Welsh language.
- 5.8. Accordingly, the proposed development provides the opportunity to deliver a mix of much-needed new affordable homes in a sustainable location which will be accessible to young single people, couples and young families who might otherwise struggle to access their own property, and who might already be migrating out from Ruthin. They are not holiday homes built to attract people from outside the County.

- 5.9. The proposed mix and tenure of accommodation is primarily steered towards younger single people, couples, and families looking to access their first property or upsize; however, it does also include provision (in the form of apartments for the older members of the community who may be looking to downsize. This is intended to provide for a mixed, balanced community.
- 5.10. The proposed development will help to retain people who were born and raised in Denbighshire County, and in doing so future generations. This can only serve as a positive to the Welsh language through the retention of the local population in Ruthin, both young and old, where there is already above average levels of people with Welsh language skills.

### Effects on Economic Activity

- 5.11. The proposed development has the potential to create direct employment opportunities during the construction phase, as well as indirectly in the supply chain. Given that 10.3% of the existing population are employed in the construction sector, it is considered that these opportunities will be capable of being filled/sourced locally, and a number of them will have skills in the Welsh language.
- 5.12. On completion, the proposed development has the potential to result in the retention of the local population, particularly those in the 16-44 age group, whilst also supporting the in-migration of people from other parts of the County who might otherwise struggle to access an affordable property of their own (i.e. those in age groups 20-24 and 25-29). This should be viewed positively, with the alternative being the relocation of those people to neighbouring Counties or other parts of Wales, or across the border in to England.
- 5.13. The provision and availability of an increased local workforce can help to attract new inward investment into the local area, whilst supporting existing businesses/employers. A key ingredient in attracting new business to any town is the availability of a local workforce – however, without a sufficient supply of housing which is accessible and affordable, people will not live in the town, and thus businesses will not re-locate/set-up there. Further, there is the risk that existing businesses relocate if they are unable to fill vacancies with suitably qualified/skilled employees, particularly in the working age groups.
- 5.14. The proposed development will provide the opportunity to do just that, providing new homes in one of the main towns in Denbighshire to support and sustain economic growth and competitiveness. The levels of employment and unemployment in Ruthin are above and below the County and national average respectively, which is naturally a positive, and the proposed development should only help in ensuring that those working people (and others) can access their own home within the town.
- 5.15. Whilst the availability of jobs could potentially attract non-Welsh speakers into the town, at the same time the failure to deliver new and affordable housing will not allow for those Welsh speakers to access existing/future jobs in the first place.
- 5.16. The very nature of the proposed development, including affordable housing, is designed to provide new housing which is accessible to local people and who might not otherwise be able to afford to live in the area owing to the shortage of new homes. As such, the availability of a local workforce for businesses to access should ensure that wages remain at a level which allows local businesses to operate in the area, and in same time will provide local people with the opportunity to access their own home, including first time buyers. The alternative is businesses being unable to fill roles due to a lack of locally skilled/available people, and as such having to pay larger salaries to attract people from outside of the County, or alternatively relocating their businesses elsewhere in the County or into neighbouring Counties.



### Effects on Population Movement

- 5.17. As shown in Table 2 of this Report, there is a high proportion of in-migration to Ruthin in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups. The proposed development will deliver accessible new housing for these age groups, and could help to reverse the trend in the number of movements out of Ruthin in the 15-19 age group, as well as collectively in the 20-34 age groups where there will be instances of people seeking to access their own home (and in some cases their first home).

### Effects on Education

- 5.18. The nearest Primary School to the Site is Ysgol Pen Barras located on Ffordd Glasdir; this lies c. 1.9km from the Site, and replaced the former Rhos Street School (the former buildings of which remain on the Site).
- 5.19. The nearest Secondary School to the Site is Ysgol Brynhyfryd located on Mold Road in Ruthin. This lies c. 0.3km from the Site within a short walking distance (in an easterly direction along Rhos Street).
- 5.20. An increase in demand for places at these School's will help to secure their long-term viability and employment opportunities.
- 5.21. The National Centre of Learning Welsh was established in 2006, and 6 Regional Centres have been established across Wales, including one in North Wales. This provides the opportunity for Welsh learning in the region. It is understood that around 7,000 people enrol on Welsh courses in North Wales on an annual basis, and the proposed development can help to sustain this.

### Effects on Infrastructure

- 5.22. The proposed development will deliver new housing in a sustainable location, providing future residents with the opportunity to use sustainable modes of transport without relying on the private car. This has the added benefit of limiting the number of vehicular movements on the local highway network (should people choose to use other modes of transport), and as such would serve as a betterment to the local quality of life than people who might otherwise travel to and from Ruthin.
- 5.23. In terms of local services and healthcare provision, the proposed development will help to sustain these. It is inevitable that new development will likely add some pressure to local services; if required a financial contribution towards local healthcare services (as well as the likes of public transport) could be secured as part of a Section 106 Agreement where these are fully justified and consistent with the CIL Regulations. It would then be necessary to assess the impact of any such contributions on the viability of the development coming forward at all.

### Effects on Quality of Life

- 5.24. The ability to provide new housing for local people, as well as those moving into Ruthin, goes hand in hand with the ability to support local services. This includes local healthcare services, which have an essential role to play in supporting the day-to-day quality of life of residents, and ensuring that residents continue to live in Ruthin. This in itself will be of direct benefit to the Welsh language, particularly in an area where there is an above average number of people with Welsh language skills.

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- 5.25. The proposed development, by virtue of its design, will provide for natural surveillance and in turn enhance the security of existing and future residents living near to and on the Site (in the event that planning permission is granted).
- 5.26. The proposed development will deliver a new use which has the potential to make a positive contribution to local community life with more people residing in the area, and through that there is the potential to form new social connections and friendships.
- 5.27. To this end, the proposed development will make a positive contribution to the quality of life.

#### Any other considerations

- 5.28. The proposed development, given its location, will provide future residents with good access to local employment opportunities, shops and everyday services. This in turn has the potential to positively benefit local businesses (and those in nearby towns) and employers in terms of increased local expenditure (as a result of increased custom) and access to potential employees respectively. It will also help to support local services, including healthcare. This can only be viewed as making a positive contribution towards helping sustain the vitality of the town and Welsh-speaking businesses.
- 5.29. As outlined earlier in this Statement, the Site is sustainably located with excellent access to public transport, shops, services, employment and education. The proposed development will increase the demand on local medical services and education, but at the same time it will also help to sustain them with people who have been born and raised in Denbighshire County by delivering much needed affordable housing. This will help to preserve the Welsh language in the community by retaining those people in Denbighshire County, and young people who are identified as being the most prevalent when it comes to speaking the Welsh language – the proposed development is not aimed at attracting large populations of people from outside of the County.
- 5.30. It is not considered that the proposed development will give rise to any social tensions or divisions. The delivery of much-needed new homes is intended to cater for those people looking to access their own property, and in doing so prevent them from having to potentially leave their local area and even Denbighshire County to access a home. It is expected that the majority of the properties will be occupied by existing residents of Ruthin and potentially other parts of Denbighshire County who already have an affiliation with the town and the Welsh speaking community. Given that the proposed development is delivering much-needed affordable housing, if anything it has the potential to strengthen the local community. The retention/increase in the local population, and most likely age groups 16-29 and 30-44 offers the opportunity for new social connections and/or social groups/initiatives to be formed and sustained.
- 5.31. A failure to deliver new homes, and with it a greater risk of out-migration, has a much bigger potential to harm Welsh traditions and cultures.

#### Is the proposal likely to have an impact on the use of the Welsh language in the community?

- 5.32. The proposed development will deliver new housing designed to cater for the needs of different groups, whether it be single people, couples or young families, and older members of the community.
- 5.33. The proposed new dwellings are aimed at people living in the local community of Ruthin, and other parts of Denbighshire County. There are not being built with the intention of attracting non-Welsh

speaking members of society, and measures to control the occupancy of the affordable properties will be discussed with the Housing Strategy Team at Denbighshire County Council.

- 5.34. By delivering new dwellings with the Welsh community in mind, the proposed development has the potential to have a positive impact on the use of the Welsh language in the local area, whether it be in employment, education or other social activities.
- 5.35. This will ensure that Ruthin remains an area with one of the largest networks of people who can communicate in the Welsh language in Denbighshire, as well as remaining above the national average. This will be important in view of the decline in Welsh speakers in Ruthin since the 1991 and 2001 census results, as shown in Table 3 of this Report.
- 5.36. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will have a positive impact on the Welsh language, as assessed further in **Appendix 1** of this Report.

## 6 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

- 6.1. The Applicant has given consideration to potential measures to help encourage and promote the Welsh language, and to accommodate Welsh speaking members of society.
- 6.2. Although this Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development has the potential to positively impact on the Welsh language, a number of enhancement measures have been identified and are proposed by the Applicant as documented below:
- The use of bi-lingual street names and signage within the Site to accommodate Welsh speaking residents, and to support and encourage the use of the Welsh language;
  - An agreement for the proposed affordable homes to be accessed first by those people in housing need, having reference to the Council's local housing register. A cascade approach to occupancy will be discussed with the Housing Strategy Team at Denbighshire County Council;
  - Marketing and advertising of the properties in both Welsh and English;
  - On-site notices/homeowner information packs in both Welsh and English; and
  - The preparation of a Construction Method Statement and detailed lighting design (secured by planning condition).

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## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. This Statement has been prepared in support of a detailed application for the proposed development of land south of Rhos Street, Ruthin for the following:

***“Demolition of all existing buildings, structures and site clearance; erection of up to 20 no. dwellings and associated infrastructure works comprising access, drainage and open space provision”***

- 7.2. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development has the potential to make a positive contribution to the Welsh language in the town of Ruthin and Denbighshire County generally.
- 7.3. It will not generate any harm such that it would warrant a reason to withhold planning permission on the grounds of an adverse impact on the Welsh language.
- 7.4. Taken as a whole, inclusive of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, the proposed development has the ability to generate considerable benefits in respect of supporting and sustaining the use of the Welsh language within the community, and would have a positive community and linguistic impact.



**APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAND SOUTH OF RHOS STREET, RUTHIN**

QUESTION (based on Appendix 4 of Planning and Welsh Language SPG)	POSTIVE (+1)	NEUTRAL (0)	NEGATIVE (-1)	SCORE	COMMENTS
<p><b>1. Is the development likely to lead to a population increase/decrease that might: Affect the balance of Welsh Speakers (positive or negative way); or Lead to an absolute or proportional decline in the number of Welsh speakers?</b></p>		0		0	<p>The proposed development will deliver new housing to provide existing residents of Ruthin with access to a new home and/or their first home, ensuring that there is sufficient housing available locally such that people do not need to leave Ruthin to obtain access to a property. Given the age profile of Ruthin, it is not considered that the proposed development (particularly given its more limited scale) will result in the loss of Welsh speakers from the town, and it will also help to support the internal migration into Ruthin, with the inflow into the town demonstrated to be much greater than the outflow.</p>
<p><b>2. Is the development likely to lead to increased in-migration?</b></p>		0		0	<p>Given that the proposed development would deliver new housing for local people, it is not considered that it would lead to increased levels of in-migration over and above the existing levels of in-migration identified through the 2011 Census data (given its relatively limited scale as well).</p>
<p><b>3. Is the development likely to lead to increased out-migration</b></p>	1			+1	<p>The proposed development will deliver new homes accessible by local people, and should therefore have a positive effect in helping to retain existing residents who might otherwise have to leave Ruthin to access a property. This correlates with the 2011 Internal Migration Census data, which shows the highest levels of outflow in the 20-34 age groups where people will typically be seeking to access their own home. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.</p>
<p><b>4. Is the development likely to lead to a changing age structure of the community?</b></p>	1			+1	<p>The proposed development should seek to enable those people in age groups 15-19, 30-34 and 45-49, who are shown to be the highest in respect of out-migration from the town, to remain staying living in Ruthin. That should help to provide a more balanced age structure in the town, which at present has a much higher proportion of older people aged 75 and over compared to the County and national averages. This is important to ensure that local services are supported and local employment roles are capable of being filled. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.</p>

**APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAND SOUTH OF RHOS STREET, RUTHIN**

<b>5. Is the development likely to have an impact on the health of local people?</b>		0		0	The proposed development should help to support local services by helping to sustain them (through increased footfall, expenditure), and which in turn can have a direct benefit to the wider community in terms of the availability of healthcare services within the town.
<b>6. Is the development likely to have an impact on the amenity of the local area?</b>	1			+1	The proposed development would result in the development of a derelict and dis-used parcel of land, making a positive physical and visual improvement to the area through a high-quality and sustainable development whilst providing for the efficient use of previously developed land within the settlement boundary. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.
<b>7. Is the development likely to lead to the threat of increased crime or violence in the community?</b>	1			+1	The proposed development would result in the redevelopment of a derelict site, and the demolition of a dis-used building. In doing so, it will remove the potential for the site and buildings to attract anti-social behaviour. The development of the site for housing, through its design, will also offer improved natural surveillance both within the site and the surrounding area. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.
<b>8. Is the development likely to have a detrimental impact on local businesses?</b>	1			+1	The proposed development should help to support and boost local businesses, with increased expenditure from the potential future occupants of the properties. This could lead to increased job creation, during both construction and operation (including supply chain opportunities) This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.
<b>9. Is the development likely to have a detrimental impact on local jobs?</b>	1			+1	The proposed development should help to ensure that the local workforce can find living accommodation within the town, without having to migrate elsewhere, in turn ensuring that local jobs can be retained and filled by suitably skilled local people. It may also help to attract new inward investment into the town, thus creating new employment opportunities. The availability of housing and economic prosperity go hand in hand. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.



## APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAND SOUTH OF RHOS STREET, RUTHIN

10. Is the development likely to lead to greater economic diversity?		0		0	The proposed development does not involve any economic/employment uses, albeit as outlined above, the availability of housing goes hand-in-hand with supporting and sustaining economic prosperity.
11. Is the development likely to have an impact on local wage/salary levels?		0		0	The proposed development does not involve any economic/employment uses, albeit as outlined above, the availability of housing goes hand-in-hand with supporting and sustaining economic prosperity.
12. Is the development likely to have an impact on the average cost of housing?		0		0	The proposed development will deliver new housing into the town, albeit there is no evidence to confirm either way that this would impact on the average cost of housing in the town.
13. Is the development likely to have an impact on local schools?	1			+1	The proposed development will deliver new housing which is suitable for families, and thus will ensure that the local schools can continue to be supported by allowing for families (including school age children) to find a new home in Ruthin (and for those looking to upsize). The availability of a broad housing mix is key to the creation of sustainable communities. This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.
14. Is the development likely to have an impact on health care provision?		0		0	An increase in the local population will naturally put an added increase on local services, including healthcare. However, the scale of the development is such that this impact would not be detrimental, and at the same it can serve to help sustain those local services and employment opportunities within the sector.
15. Is the development likely to have an impact on the provision of local services, such as shops/post offices/banks/pubs?	1			+1	The proposed development will enable any future residents to support local services through increased expenditure in the town, some of which is currently lost in the 20-34 age groups with the highest levels of out-migration (and who will typically be seeking access to their own home). This is considered to be a significant benefit and positive of the proposed development.
16. Will the development potentially lead to social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the Welsh speaking community?	1			+1	Given that Ruthin already has a high proportion of people with skills in the Welsh language, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would harm the overall proportion of the Welsh speaking community by virtue of its relatively limited scale, particularly as it would seek to

**APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAND SOUTH OF RHOS STREET, RUTHIN**

					reduce some of the existing levels of out-migration. A series of mitigation and enhancement measures are also proposed as part of the development, which are considered to be a benefit.
<b>17. Will the development potentially lead to changes in local Welsh traditions/culture?</b>		0		0	It is not considered that the proposed development would harm nor enhance Welsh traditions/culture.
<b>18. Will the development be likely to have a potential impact on local voluntary/activity/youth groups?</b>		0		0	The proposed development will provide new homes suitable for families (amongst others). This would potentially allow for younger people to continue living in Ruthin, given that out-migration is collectively highest in the 20-34 age groups, albeit the success of this cannot necessarily be measured. However, it would in turn have the potential to support local voluntary and youth groups by retaining the younger population, which includes those in the 15-19 age group (which has the highest net outflow). The Applicant will support local voluntary/activity/youth groups where practicable.
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>+9</b>	