

PLANNING AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

Land south of Rhos Street, Ruthin

Prepared on behalf of

The Applicant – Medra

April 2022



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Grimster Planning on behalf of our Client, Medra, (hereafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
- 1.2. The Statement 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 the town of 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 20 no. dwellings and associated infrastructure works comprising access, drainage and open space provision”

- 1.4. The Application comprises a number of supporting plans and drawings, and technical reports, which should be read alongside this Statement.

Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)

- 1.5. 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. A copy of the Council’s written pre-application response is provided in **Appendix 1** of this Statement.
- 1.6. 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

- 2.1. This Section of the Statement provides details of the Site, namely its location, description, and locational sustainability.

Site Location

- 2.2. The Site lies within the administrative area of Denbighshire County Council.
- 2.3. The Site is located within the town of Ruthin. It lies within the built-up urban area of the town.
- 2.4. In respect of its surroundings:
- To the north of the Site lies Rhos Street, with existing residential dwellings located opposite the Site;
 - Residential development lies to the east of the Site (including the existing shared access road into the Site from Rhos Street), including a mix of semi-detached dwellings and bungalows;
 - Ruthin Community Hospital (land and buildings) and The Clinic Surgery is located to the south; and
 - Existing residential rear gardens, footpath from Rhos Street, and hospital buildings form the western boundary to the Site.
- 2.5. An aerial image of the Site is provided in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site



Source: Ainsley Gomon Architects, Design and Access Statement

Site Description

- 2.6. The Site area extends to c. 0.55 hectares inclusive of the proposed access.
- 2.7. The Site currently comprises brownfield land in nature, comprising the former School buildings and associated hardstanding.

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- 2.8. The Site is no longer in active use. It formerly served as the Site of Rhos Street School (primary education) until its relocation to new purpose-built facilities in the town back in April 2018.
- 2.9. Vehicular (and pedestrian/cycle) access to the Site is currently available via Rhos Street as part of a shared access with the existing residential dwellings located to the east of the Site. There is an existing footpath link to the Hospital and Surgery along the western boundary of the Site from Rhos Street.
- 2.10. The topography of the Site slopes east to west, with existing retaining walls following the eastern boundary. The Site is located on a raised terrace as evident at its frontage on to Rhos Street.
- 2.11. The Site is not within a Conservation Area and the existing buildings on the Site are not listed. The nearest listed building to the Site is the Grade II* listed Rose Cottage located opposite the frontage on Rhos Street. Further details are provided in Section 6 of this Statement and the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.
- 2.12. The Site lies in Flood Zone A based on the Natural Resources Wales development advice maps, and thus is assessed to be at low risk of flooding.
- 2.13. There are a limited number of existing trees on the Site. However, there is no Tree Preservation Order across the Site.

Local Context and Character of Ruthin

- 2.14. Ruthin is one of the main towns in Denbighshire; it is identified as a Lower Growth Town in the adopted Local Development Plan.
- 2.15. The ward of Ruthin has a population of 5,461 people based on the 2011 census. It 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.
- 2.16. The town is accessed via around key routes; the A525, the A494, and the B5105, all of which converge in the centre of the town, and provide the north/south, east and west connections into and out of the town respectively.
- 2.17. The housing around the Site typically comprises traditional style two-storey dwellings that vary in size, design and materials. This includes terraced housing along Rhos Street, typically of a stone and render finish, with the exception of the Grade II listed Rose Cottage. The latter was listed by CADW in 1978 and is recognised by CADW to be *“an exceptional survival of a medieval cruck-framed hall-house of relatively low status, retaining its plan-form, character and detail.”* It is a timber framed building with mostly box framing with square panels infilled with wattle and daub on a high rubble stone plinth.
- 2.18. To the south of the Site lies the Ruthin Community Hospital and The Clinic Surgery, comprising a cluster of buildings which are largely constructed from red brick under a slate roof.
- 2.19. The housing to the east of the Site is of a more recent brick build, all two-storey in height. Single storey brick bungalows lie beyond this on Stryd Y Brython.

Locational Sustainability

- 2.20. In order to appraise the locational sustainability of the Site, we have considered the location of the Site relative to the everyday needs of future residents and access to key services.

Access to Education

- 2.21. The nearest Primary School to the Site is Ysgol Pen Barras located on Ffordd Glasdir; this lies c. 1.6km from the Site, and replaced the former Rhos Street School (the former buildings of which remain on the Site).
- 2.22. 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).
- 2.23. Overall, the Site benefits from very good access to primary and secondary education.

Access to Shops and Services

- 2.24. As one of the main towns in Denbighshire, there is existing retail provision in Ruthin providing residents with access to their everyday needs. This includes a Co-Op supermarket within walking distance of the Site, together with a post office, and other retail services.
- 2.25. There are existing public houses and restaurants in the town, some of which are again within a short walking distance of the Site.
- 2.26. Overall, the Site benefits from excellent access to local facilities to serve the everyday needs of future residents. Table 3 of the accompanying Transport Statement provides further details on the accessibility of local services from the Site.

Access to Public Transport

- 2.27. The nearest bus stops to the Site are located on Wernfechan, Station Road and Llanrhydd Road, some of which are within 400m of the Site. Details of the bus services provided via these stops are set out in section 4.4 of the accompanying Transport Statement.
- 2.28. In terms of rail provision, the nearest railway stations can be found in Buckley and Penyffordd, c. 22.8km and c. 23.3km distances from the Site respectively. These stations provide onward travel to Wrexham Central and Bidston, and destinations beyond via connecting services.
- 2.29. Overall, the Site benefits from good accessibility to local bus services and with it access to other towns/settlements.

Access to Healthcare

- 2.30. There are a number of existing medical centres/clinics in Ruthin, as well as local pharmacies. The same applies to dental clinics/practices.
- 2.31. Ruthin Community Hospital lies to the immediate south of the Site.

Access to Leisure / Recreation

- 2.32. The town of Ruthin benefits from a number of outdoor recreation/leisure facilities accessible by the local community. This includes the sports facilities heading east along Mold Road associated with Ruthin Leisure Centre, and the playing fields to the west of the Site.
- 2.33. 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).
- 2.34. Accordingly, the Site benefits from excellent access to leisure and recreation facilities for community use and to support the health and well-being of future residents, including young children.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. There is no planning history associated with the Site which is relevant to the determination of this Application. There are various permissions which relate to the previous use of the Site as a school dating back to 1980, but these are not considered relevant to this Application and the development now proposed.
- 3.2. It is the Applicant's understanding that CADW, as the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Service, undertook a survey of the main building on the Site c. 4 years ago, and concluded that the former School building did not meet the criteria for it to be listed.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. This Section of the Statement provides details of the proposed development for which detailed planning permission is now sought.

Use

- 4.2. This Application seeks detailed planning permission for the following:

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

Amount

- 4.3. The proposed development will comprise the development of 20 no. dwellings (Use Class C3), including 2 no. affordable homes (10%). This is consistent with the requirement for 10% of new homes to be of an affordable tenure under Policy BSC4 of the development plan (on schemes of 10 or more dwellings).

Housing Mix, Density and Floorspace

- 4.4. The proposed development will comprise the following housing mix:
- 2 no. 2-bed apartments (Affordable Homes);
 - 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.
- 4.5. The proposed density across the Site will be 37 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.6. The existing ground floor footprint across the Site is c. 1,634 square metres. The proposed cumulative GIA across the Site will equate to 1,709.08 square metres.
- 4.7. The affordable homes are anticipated to be of a Social Rent tenure, to be confirmed in discussions with the Council’s Housing Strategy Team.

Scale and Massing

- 4.8. The proposed dwellings (including the building comprising the 2 no. apartments) will all be a maximum of two-storeys in height, reflective of the surrounding local area.
- 4.9. The proposed mix of dwellings (as set out in paragraph 4.4 above) allows for a layout such that it does not create issues of scale and massing which would be out-of-keeping with the local character, and which at the same time best responds to the policy requirements set out in the Local Development Plan and other material planning considerations.

Layout

- 4.10. The house and plot sizes have taken account of the existing local character, incorporating a mix of semi-detached and detached properties/buildings. The size and massing of the properties has been arranged into small clusters to respect the scale, character and massing of the surrounding dwellings and is intended to sit comfortably on the Site. The orientation of properties has been carefully considered, with living spaces designed to maximise views and passive solar gain. The scheme also seeks to maximise natural lights, reducing the need for artificial lighting.
- 4.11. The layout has sought to positively address the street frontage on to Rhos Street through plots 19 and 20, whilst at the same time respecting separation distances and seeking to avoid any issues of overlooking on any adjoining properties (both existing and consented) consistent with the Council's spacing standards. This has informed the location of public open space at the front of the Site in order to avoid any overbearing impact on those properties located opposite the Site (responding to the difference in levels). This includes the Grade II* listed Rose Cottage. The larger properties are located at the southern edge of the Site as part of a design approach which seeks to mirror the scale and rhythm of neighbouring terraced dwellings.
- 4.12. Consideration has also been given to Secured by Design principles to inform the proposed Site layout and boundary treatments. Accordingly, the proposed dwellings have been designed/orientated such that there is the opportunity for natural surveillance from properties. This will create a safe and accessible living environment. Details of street lighting to be provided within the Site can be dealt with by way of a pre-occupation condition attached to any grant of planning permission.
- 4.13. Further details on the design development and principles are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Ainsley Gommon Architects.

Appearance and Materials

- 4.14. It is proposed that 5 house types will be delivered across the Site; further details, including floorplans, are provided on the submitted drawing package. details, including floorplans, are provided as part of the submitted drawing package and within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. These materials have been chosen to complement the grain of the surrounding area.
- 4.15. The palette of materials proposed by the Applicant comprises off-white textured render with natural reclaimed stone to break-up the scale and massing of the proposed development; natural slate for the roofs; energy efficient grey UPVC double glazed windows; and grey stone sills to reflect local details.
- 4.16. As outlined above, the proposed development has sought to use some natural reclaimed stone to frame the key plots within the Site to reflect the local vernacular, with the remaining properties of a render finish. Some stone and key features from the former School building might be salvaged and used in the rebuilding of the boundary walls where works are required (i.e. the access point from Rhos Street).
- 4.17. Confirmation of the full and final materials palette can be dealt with by way of a pre-commencement planning condition(s) attached to any planning permission.

Landscaping and Public Open Space

- 4.18. A Landscape Strategy Overview has been prepared and is submitted with the Application; this provides high-level details of proposed hedgerows, gardens, boundary planting and tree/shrub specimens. The Landscape Strategy seeks to provide an attractive green edge which offers opportunities to encourage wildlife and biodiversity throughout the Site.
- 4.19. Each property will have access to private garden/amenity space, and will benefit from boundary treatments (timber fencing, anti-climb fencing, brick/stone walls) and lockable gates which will separate the Site from neighbouring uses/users and provide privacy/security. Metal railings will delineate the access/route to the public open space area.
- 4.20. In respect of open space provision, 440 square metres is proposed as part of the proposed development at the front of the Site for the enjoyment of future residents; this should negate the need for any off-site contribution to be made by the Applicant.

Accessibility

- 4.21. Vehicular (and pedestrian/cycle) access into the Site is proposed via Rhos Street, using the existing access into the Site, albeit upgraded accordingly (including the removal and partial reconstruction of some of the existing retaining walls along the eastern boundary of the Site). Access to the existing properties and their car parking area/spaces to the east of the Site will continue to be retained.
- 4.22. In order to improve visibility to the right upon exiting the Site, the junction connecting the access to the A494 will be moved westward by approximately 4m when compared to the existing position. This will also provide for an improved pedestrian crossing arrangements by creating an area of the east side of the junction mouth from where pedestrians will be visible from and will see into the Site access.
- 4.23. The access at the A494 junction will be 5.5m in width, with visibility splays of 2.4m x 90m, tapering to 5m within the Site consistent with advice received at the pre-application stage. This will require the relocation of the existing stone wall on the west side of the junction to the rear of the visibility splay. The internal road layout will be designed to comply with disabled access design guidance and will be to adoptable standards.
- 4.24. The relocation of the junction also has the added benefit of allowing for a 2m footway on each side of the junction, with a flush kerb in-line crossing with tactile paving to ensure accessible for all. This will facilitate and encourage pedestrian movements and sustainable modes of travel to local services and facilities. It is intended that the materials of the existing wall will be re-used to create the relocated walled entrance into the Site.
- 4.25. Owing to the retention of the existing stone boundary wall fronting on to Rhos Street, which the Council has sought as part of their pre-application response, it has not been possible to widen the existing footway along Rhos Street (which is currently c. 1.2m-1.3m in width). However, the existing footpath which runs adjacent to the western boundary of the Site can be made accessible via the creation of a new footpath link through the Site, and with it facilitate and encourage sustainable modes of travel.
- 4.26. To facilitate safe pedestrian movements to and from the Site and properties, the internal road arrangements will include footpaths with a minimum width of 900mm (which will connect to Rhos Street and potentially to the existing footpath along the western boundary of the Site).

- 4.27. The road layout has been designed with a full-size turning head such that the proposed development is accessible via refuse vehicles and emergency vehicles.
- 4.28. In respect of car parking provision within the Site, the Applicant has applied a standard of 1 space per apartment, and 2 spaces per the 2, 3 and 4-bedroom dwellings. No visitor parking is proposed. These are directly accessible from the internal access road and each parking area will benefit from overlooking from within the property.
- 4.29. Given the excellent locational sustainability of the Site, as documented in Section 2 of this Statement and the accompanying Transport Statement, a reduction in car parking against the standards set out in the Council's Parking Requirements in New Developments SPG is considered to be justified (as documented fully in Section 6 of the accompanying Transport Statement).
- 4.30. The 2 no. apartments will each benefit from a lockable cycle store to accommodate 2 no. bicycles. For the remainder of the proposed development, it is proposed to offer the provision of cycle store to purchasers at the point of sale of the house with the store being installed prior to occupation.
- 4.31. Details of the external street lighting shall be agreed with the County Highways Authority, and are shown indicatively at this time.

Waste and Recycling

- 4.32. Each of the proposed dwellings will have its own private bin storage area to aid waste collection and recycling.
- 4.33. As outlined above, the internal road layout has been designed to include a full-size turning head to ensure that the proposed development can accommodate the safe manoeuvring of refuse vehicles.

Drainage

- 4.34. The proposed development is expected to incorporate the following sustainable drainage measures:
- **Surface Water** –significant use will be made of infiltration in the form of cellular tanks in rear gardens and porous block driveways. Space will also be provided for water butts; these will provide local water storage for garden irrigation and other outside uses. The access road will drain to two swales on the east side of the road where water will be collected by a higher-level gully grating before it is conveyed to the detention basin for further treatment before any residual flow is discharged at a controlled rate off-site; and
 - **Foul Water** – it is proposed that the development will be serviced by a network of adoptable foul sewers constructed within the access road. Private drains from the properties will connect to the proposed sewer with lateral connections that will be offered for adoption by DCWW from each property demise. The topography of the Site lends itself to forming a new connection to the public foul sewer in Rhos Street.

Sustainability Measures

- 4.35. It is noted that Denbighshire has declared a climate change emergency. Accordingly, and in response, it is anticipated that the proposed development will incorporate some of the following sustainability measures:

- **Dwelling Design** – as an overriding principle, the design of the proposed development has sought to implement the energy hierarchy by reducing energy demands and then increasing energy efficiency in the dwellings. This will ensure that the properties are as energy efficient as possible in order not to adversely contribute towards future climate change;
- **Vehicle charging** – it is anticipated that around 25% of the proposed dwellings will benefit from electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- **Cycle Storage** – it is proposed that a lockable cycle store will be provided to each apartment. All other dwellings will have the opportunity to purchase a cycle store when acquiring their property from the Applicant at the point of sale;
- **Sustainable materials** – where possible, stone used in the construction of the former School building will be salvaged and re-used in the construction of some of the proposed dwellings and boundary walls. Materials will be selected from local sources wherever possible to minimise transport energy use and to help sustain the local economy;
- **Water** – in order for the proposed dwelling to utilise as little water as possible, water efficiency within the properties will be maintained through the installation of dual flush toilets and the use of flow restrictors on taps;
- **Drainage** - a sustainable urban drainage system will be implemented across the Site, as outlined earlier in this Section; and
- **Waste Management** – a post-construction domestic waste management and recycling scheme will be implemented. All kitchens will have internal recycling bins to encourage residents to recycle and minimise their own waste.

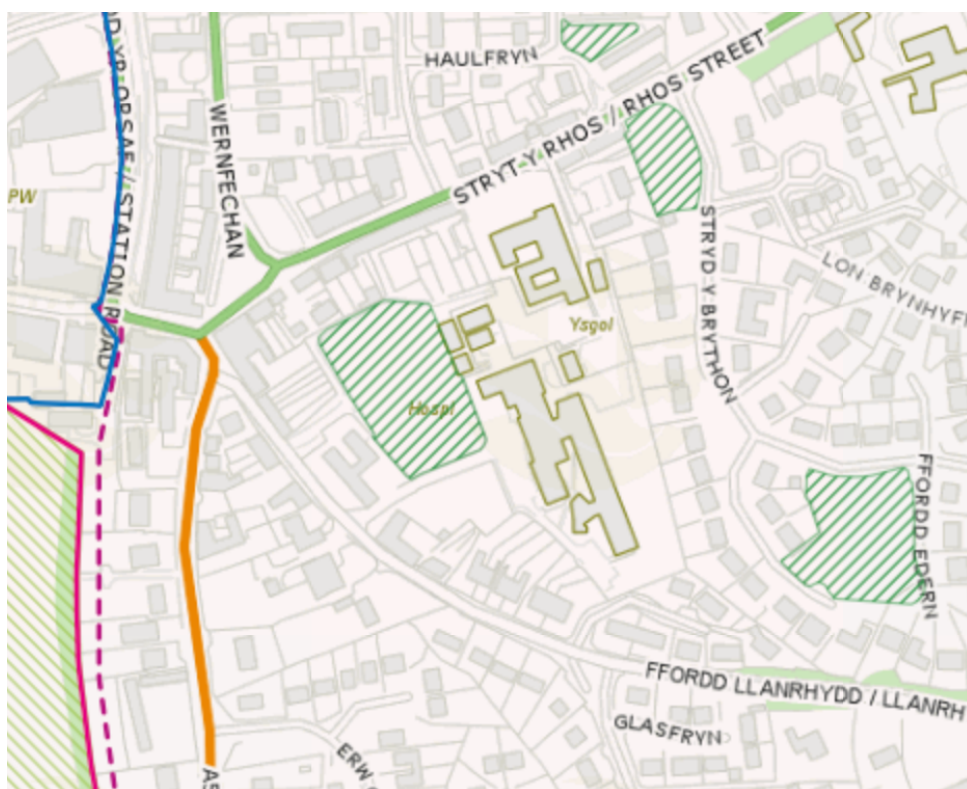
5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. This requirement of planning law is re-iterated in Paragraph 1.21 of Planning Policy Wales 11 (“PPW11”) published in February 2021.
- 5.3. Accordingly, we set out the relevant development plan and any other material considerations relevant to this Application below:

Local Development Plan

- 5.4. The development plan for the purposes of this Application comprises the following:
 - Denbighshire Local Development Plan covering the period 2006 to 2021 (adopted in 2013);
 - Denbighshire Local Development Plan Proposals Map.
- 5.5. The adopted LDP is now time-expired, and thus the weight to be afforded to the policies will depend on the consistency of the LDP with PPW11. On the Local Development Plan Proposals Map, the Site is lying within the development boundary of Ruthin and is not allocated for any specific land-use nor subject to any specific designations. Ruthin itself is identified as a Lower Growth Town.

Figure 2: Local Development Plan Proposals Map Extract



Local Development Plan

- 5.6. In addition to those policies cited above, the following Local Development Plan policies are considered to be pertinent in the determination of this Application, and are considered further in Section 6 of this Statement:

Table 1: Relevant Local Development Plan Policies

Policy Reference	Policy Title
BSC1	Growth Strategy for Denbighshire
BSC2	Brownfield Development Priority
BSC3	Securing Infrastructure Contributions from Development
BSC4	Affordable Housing
BSC11	Recreation and Open Space
RD1	Sustainable Development and Good Standard Design
RD5	The Welsh Language and Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities
VOE1	Key Areas of Importance
VOE5	Conservation of Natural Resources
VOE6	Water Management
ASAS3	Parking Standards

Emerging Local Development Plan

- 5.7. Denbighshire County Council is currently in the process of preparing its new Local Development Plan. To date it has consulted on its Preferred Strategy as part of its Pre-Deposit stage consultation.
- 5.8. Consultation on the Deposit version of the emerging Local Development Plan is expected to take place in late 2022 or 2023.
- 5.9. Given that the emerging Local Development Plan remains in its infancy, it attracts limited weight in the determination of this Application.

Planning Policy Wales 11

- 5.10. PPW11 is a material consideration in planning decisions. PPW11 sets out the Welsh Government's approach to sustainable development and core planning principles. This identifies sustainable development as the process by which to improve the *economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being* of Wales, and proposals should seek to promote sustainable development.
- 5.11. Paragraph 1.18 re-iterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.12. Within PPW11, paragraph 1.22 requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.13. Placemaking features strongly within PPW11, identified as a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces. This encourages high-quality development, with major developments creating new places.

- 5.14. Chapter 3 of PPW11 identifies the need to encourage and support the use of the Welsh language. Development proposals should consider the likely impact on the Welsh language and is a material planning consideration. It also seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land unless there is an overriding need for its development.
- 5.15. Chapters 3 and 4 of PPW11 look at locational sustainability. New development should be accessible by walking and cycling, and well-served by public transport, as alternatives to the private car. New development should be located such that it minimises the need to travel and reduces dependency on the private car.
- 5.16. Chapter 4 of PPW11 includes reference to new housing provision, with the need for a supply of land which is deliverable. Local Planning Authorities are required to ensure that the Council's Housing Trajectory forms part of the LDP, and it must set out the expected rate of housing delivery for both market and affordable housing for the LDP period. The Housing Trajectory must be used as the basis for monitoring the delivery of housing delivery in each Authority area. Accurate information on housing delivery assessed against the Trajectory is necessary to form part of the evidence base for development plan Annual Monitoring Reports and for subsequent plan review. Under-delivery against the Housing Trajectory may require a specific early review of an LDP. Monitoring must be undertaken in accordance with the guidance set out in the Development Plans Manual.
- 5.17. Planning applications for housing on sites that comply with an up-to-date development plan should be assumed to be viable. Paragraph 4.2.25 confirms that a community's need for affordable housing is a *material planning consideration* in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.18. Chapter 6 requires development proposals to take account of the wildlife or landscape value of an area (including safeguarding protected species), and states that it is important to balance conservation objectives with the wider economic needs or local businesses and communities. Landscape value is identified as an intrinsic part of PPW11, and consideration should be given at the outset to any landscape value such that the wellbeing needs can be achieved. The provision of green infrastructure is encouraged, and the quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into new development.
- 5.19. Chapter 6 also covers matters relating to flood-risk and drainage. PPW11 is clear that new development should reduce and not increase the risk of flooding; to this end, Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to work closely with Natural Resources Wales, drainage bodies, sewerage undertakers and relevant authorities in the determination of planning applications. This process should ensure that surface water run-off is controlled as near to the source as possible through the use of sustainable urban drainage systems ("SUDS"), ensuring that development does not increase flooding elsewhere by the loss of flood storage/flood flow route, or increase the problem of surface water run-off. Paragraph 6.6.17 requires that development of one or more dwellings also require approval from the SuDS Approval Body ("SAB") before construction can commence. This is designed to ensure that SuDS infrastructure is properly maintained and functions effectively for its design life.

Technical Advice Notes (TAN)

- 5.20. Alongside PPW11, a number of Technical Advice Notes ("TAN") have been prepared by the Welsh Government. Those of relevance to the determination of this Application comprise the following:
- TAN2 – Planning and Affordable Housing

- TAN5 – Nature Conservation and Planning
- TAN11 - Noise
- TAN12 – Design
- TAN15 – Development and Flood Risk
- TAN16 – Recreation and Open Space
- TAN18 – Transport
- TAN20 – Planning and the Welsh Language
- TAN24 – The Historic Environment

Other Material Planning Considerations / Evidence Base Documents

- 5.21. Denbighshire County Council has published a number of other material planning considerations and evidential based documents which are considered to be pertinent in the consideration of this Application; further details are set out below.

Housing Land Supply

- 5.22. The Council's last Joint Housing Land Availability Study published in June 2019 accepted that it was unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Having regard to the guidance contained in TAN1 (paragraph 8.2) at the time of its preparation, the housing land supply in Denbighshire County was adjudged to be 1.55 years and the requirements of Paragraph 4.2.15 of PPW10 were not met.
- 5.23. Since the publication of this Study, TAN1 has now been revoked by the Welsh Government and with it the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Joint Housing Land Availability Study. Nevertheless, the Council's latest Annual Monitoring Report published in December 2020 clearly illustrates the significant housing delivery pressures across the County, and the fact that housing needs have continuously failed to be met since 2010/11 (and in each year since the Local Development Plan was adopted in 2013). In 2018/19, only 124 new homes were built against a requirement for 727 dwellings in the same year, and this only increased to 242 dwellings in 2019/20. There is a historic shortfall that needs to be urgently addressed.

Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)

- 5.24. The Council's most recent LHMA Update was published in July 2019. Ruthin is identified within it as lying within the Ruthin and East Local Housing Market Area (LHMA05).
- 5.25. Within this 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).
- 5.26. Across the County there is identified to be an annual requirement for 155 affordable homes per annum (social and intermediate housing need).

Local Planning Guidance Notes

- 5.27. Denbighshire County Council has published the following Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes ("SPGN") which are considered relevant in the determination of this Application:
- SPGN – *Access for All*
 - SPGN – *Affordable Housing*
 - SPGN – *Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity*

- SPGN – *Parking Requirements in New Developments*
- SPGN – *Planning Obligations*
- SPGN – *Planning and the Welsh Language*
- SPGN – *Recreational Open Space*
- SPGN – *Residential Development*
- SPGN – *Residential Design Guide*
- SPGN – *Residential Space Standards*
- SPGN – *Trees and Landscaping*
- SPGN – *Listed Buildings*

5.28. Compliance of the proposed development with these SPGNs is considered in Section 6 of this Statement.

6 TECHNICAL AND POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. This Section of the Statement assesses the proposed development against the relevant policies of the development plan, and other material considerations, as documented in Section 5.

Principle of Development

- 6.2. As documented in Section 5 of this Statement, the proposed development should be determined against the policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the context of this Application, the development plan comprises the Denbighshire LDP.
- 6.3. The Site itself 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.
- 6.4. The Site comprises a brownfield parcel of land within the development boundary. It is not allocated for any specific land-use in the adopted LDP. Accordingly, the principle of residential development on the Site is considered to be acceptable, as too is the re-use of previously developed land.
- 6.5. The proposed development of 20 no. new homes will make a valuable and much-needed contribution to the housing needs (and 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 the proposed development can help to achieve this, with it being deliverable in its entirety within c. 13-16 months from a grant of planning permission (allowing time for the discharge of planning conditions).
- 6.6. Accordingly, the principle of residential development on the Site is established and supported by Local Development Plan Policies BSC1 and BSC2, and is consistent with the objectives of PPW11 and the re-use of previously developed land.

Housing Needs

- 6.7. As per the information contained in Section 5 of this Statement, there is evidently a housing shortfall in Denbighshire which needs to be urgently addressed through positive decision-taking. As a now derelict and redundant brownfield parcel of land with the defined urban area of Ruthin, the Site is a logical development opportunity for new housing, surrounded by existing built form at all sides, including housing.
- 6.8. The scale of the proposed development would in no way prejudice the Council's emerging Local Development Plan and its development strategy. It would not be premature. Instead, it would deliver a much-needed housing scheme comprising market and affordable homes that should be viewed positively.
- 6.9. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development will result in the loss of the existing buildings on the Site, it simply is not economically viable to bring forward a scheme for the conversion of the buildings on the Site to residential use. Any preference for such a scheme would very likely mean that the Site remains redundant and would steadily decline in appearance and structure over time.

Housing Mix

6.10. The proposed development will comprise the following housing mix:

- 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.

6.11. In total, the percentage split across of dwelling sizes across the Site is as follows:

- 30% 2-bed
- 60% 3-bed
- 10% 4-bed

6.12. The proposed development will incorporate 2 no. affordable homes (Plots 19 and 20), equating to 10% of the total number of dwellings. This is consistent with Policy BSC4 and represents a social benefit of the proposed development. The affordable homes are anticipated to be of a Social Rent tenure, to be confirmed in discussions with the Council's Housing Strategy Team, and secured by way of a planning condition or obligation.

6.13. The proposed housing mix, 2, 3 and 4 bed properties, also aligns with the housing needs identified in the Council's LHMA. The provision of affordable housing is a material planning consideration to be taken into account in the determination of this Application consistent with paragraph 4.2.25 of PPW11.

6.14. The proposed net density across the Site will be 37 dwellings per hectare taking account of the Site's location, surroundings and configuration. This is largely consistent the guidance contained in Policy RD1(ii) of the Local Development Plan, providing for the efficient use of a previously developed site and the surrounding, established development pattern and a development which enhances the local natural and historic environment on what is now a redundant parcel of land.

6.15. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policies RD1 and BSC4, the Affordable Housing SPGN, TAN2, and PPW11.

Locational Sustainability

6.16. As demonstrated within this Statement, the Site evidently occupies a sustainable location. It benefits from excellent access to local services and amenities, and local bus services. It is well-connected via the existing footpath network within the town. The wider economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being benefits of the proposed development are considered in Section 7 of this Statement.

Deliverability of the Site

6.17. This Applicant has secured an agreement with the landowner of the Site with a commitment to acquire the freehold subject to securing planning permission.

- 6.18. Upon any successful grant of detailed planning permission, the Applicant would seek to make a start on-site within at least 3 months (allowing time to execute the S106 Agreement, any discharge any pre-commencement planning conditions and to make the necessary contractor arrangements).
- 6.19. The Applicant has advised that they would anticipate the Site could be completed within c. 13-16 months from any grant of planning permission. Accordingly, the proposed development will make an immediate and significant contribution towards addressing the accepted housing shortfall in Denbighshire.

Layout and Design

- 6.20. As documented in Section 4 of this Statement, careful consideration has been afforded to the proposed layout taking account of the Site's surroundings (including neighbouring residential properties and Ruthin Community Hospital), policy requirements (i.e. site access, visibility splays, pedestrian footways, drainage) and technical considerations (impact on heritage assets, access requirement). This will provide for a high-quality, safe and accessible living environment which future residents can enjoy. Further details are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 6.21. This has informed the preparation of a proposed layout which provides for the efficient use of the land whilst protecting the residential amenity of neighbouring land-uses. The layout, siting and spacing of the proposed dwellings is in general accordance with the Council's Residential Space Standards SPG to provide for an efficient use of land which satisfies wider policy requirements.
- 6.22. The house types, plot sizes and palette of materials have been designed to maintain a consistent design approach and character, being no more than 2-storey in height and of modest proportions. Given the setting back of plots 19-20 from Rhos Street, it was not considered necessary that the dwellings at the front of the Site be single storey in height, taking account of the scale of the existing building on the Site.
- 6.23. Consideration has been given to respecting the local vernacular where appropriate, in particular those buildings located at the front of the Site adjacent to Rhos Street. The existing stone boundary wall at the frontage of the Site will also be retained in its entirety, as requested by the Council in its pre-application responses. Where possible, some of the previous stone used in the construction of the former School building will be salvaged and used again as part of the proposed development. The layout will also allow for natural surveillance within the Site from properties with a view to designing out crime.
- 6.24. Each property is designed to allow for access by people of all abilities consistent with the Council's Access for All guidance.
- 6.25. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policies RD1 and BSC4, the Access for All, Residential Development, Residential Design Guide and Residential Space Standards SPGN's, TAN12, and PPW11.

Public Open Space and Landscaping

- 6.26. As set out in Section 4 of this Statement, the proposed development will comprise 440 square metres of public open space at the front of the Site, positively addressing Rhos Street. The location of the public open space will also help to avoid any concerns in relation to overlooking, loss of light, and loss of privacy from surrounding properties. The provision of on-site public open space is not

a requirement under Policy BSC11, and therefore represents an additional environmental benefit of the proposed development.

- 6.27. Each of the proposed dwellings will benefit from private outdoor amenity space in the form of rear gardens (and in some cases front gardens).
- 6.28. A Landscape Strategy Overview has been prepared and is submitted with the Application; this provides high-level details of proposed hedgerows, gardens, boundary planting and tree/shrub specimens. The Landscape Strategy seeks to provide an attractive green edge which offers opportunities to encourage wildlife and biodiversity throughout the Site. It is proposed that full details of the proposed hard and soft landscaping can be submitted to the Council for approval by way of planning condition.
- 6.29. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policies RD1 and BSC4, the Recreational and Open Space SPGN, TAN16, and PPW11.

Highways, Road Safety and Car Parking

- 6.30. The proposed arrangements, including road and footpath widths, as described in Section 4 of this Statement are considered to be acceptable and consistent with the requirements of the trunk road authority. It has also been demonstrated that the Site is capable of accommodating refuse/emergency vehicles through the provision of a full-size turning head.
- 6.31. In respect of car parking provision within the Site, the Applicant has applied a standard of 2 spaces per dwelling, with the exception of the apartments which have 1 space per dwelling. No visitor parking is proposed. Lockable cycle stores will be provided to the 2 no. apartments, and purchasers of the remaining dwellings will have the option to acquire a cycle store from the Applicant at the point of sale.
- 6.32. Given the sustainable location of the Site, as documented in Section 2 of this Statement, the level of car parking is considered to be appropriate to the scale of the proposed development and the housing mix, whilst seeking to facilitate and encourage non-car modes of travel through the provision of safe pedestrian and cycle routes to and from the Site (including improved/safer pedestrian linkages to Rhos Street through the proposed access arrangements, together with the potential to connect with the existing footpath to the west of the Site and in turn link through to the Community Hospital). This approach is considered to be representative of good planning, facilitating safe pedestrian movements to and from the Site, reducing reliance on the private car to justify a reduction in car parking against the standards set out in the Council's Parking Requirements in New Developments SPG for the reasons set out in Section 6 of the accompanying Transport Statement.
- 6.33. The Transport Statement submitted with the Application has assessed the potential impacts of the proposed development on the highway network and road safety, including accident data (which shows no incidents have occurred along Rhos Street at the frontage of the Site). Using TRICS rates, the Statement has established that the proposed development will generate an average of 92 movements per day (compared to the 70 arrivals and 46 departures during the AM peak period, and 46 arrivals and 70 departures during the PM peak period, when the Site formerly operated as a School).
- 6.34. The Transport Statement has concluded that the proposed development will not generate a high volume of car trips, particularly when taking account of the very sustainable location of the Site. The proposed amount of car parking is sufficient to meet requirements whilst at the same time

supporting sustainability objectives aimed at discouraging unnecessary car use and ownership (particularly when one takes account of the climate change emergency that has been declared in Denbighshire). As part of the latter agenda, it is anticipated that around 25% of the proposed dwellings will benefit from electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

- 6.35. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policies RD1 and BSC4, the Access for All and Parking Requirements in New Developments SPGNs, TAN18, and PPW11.

Nature Conservation

- 6.36. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Roost Assessment has been undertaken across the Site. In doing so, this has identified the following:
- The Site is dominated by hardstanding areas and built form, with some amenity grasslands and scattered trees/plants/shrubs. The Site is located within a wider landscape that is of low interest for biodiversity and situated in an urban area. There are no statutory designated sites or priority habitats within a 2km search area of the Site;
 - Those species most likely disturbed by the proposed development will be bat and bird species. The Site provides suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats, roosting bats small mammals and nesting birds;
 - No evidence of bat roosts has been found on the Site, apart from the possible feeding remains within the roof space of building B as defined in the accompanying Assessment. The existing buildings are identified as having moderate roost potential (Buildings A and B as defined in the accompanying Assessment), and Building C as having low roost potential (as defined in the accompanying Assessment); and
 - No evidence of nesting birds has been identified on the Site, including within the existing buildings.
- 6.37. The Assessment has concluded that the proposed development will not have any direct or indirect impacts on statutory designated sites. The development could give rise to a moderate adverse impact on breeding/nesting birds and a minor adverse impact on terrestrial mammals and habitats. The impact on roosting bats is currently unknown owing to the need for further bat survey work during the optimal season of May to August inclusive.
- 6.38. The Assessment provides details of a number of recommendations; avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures; and the need for additional survey work (which the Applicant is willing to undertake at the optimal season to supplement the Application).
- 6.39. Subject to following the guidance contained in the Assessment, the proposed development is considered to be consistent with Local Development Plan Policies RD1 and VOE5, the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity SPGN, TAN5, and PPW11. It will not have a negative impact on protected species.

Trees and Hedgerows

- 6.40. There are no existing trees or hedgerows on the Site of any significance which will need to be removed to accommodate the proposed development.

- 6.41. Accordingly, and based on the recommendations of the Assessment, the proposed development is considered to be consistent with Local Development Plan Policy RD1, the Trees and Landscaping SPGN, TAN5, and PPW11.

Heritage

- 6.42. As documented in Section 2 of this Statement, the Site does not contain any heritage assets (designated or locally listed), and is not physically connected to any. The nearest heritage asset to the Site is the Grade II*listed Rose Cottage located opposite the Site on Rhos Street.
- 6.43. Further, the Site does not lie within a designated Conservation Area.
- 6.44. Notwithstanding this, and in view of the guidance contained in the pre-application response received from Denbighshire County Council (which identified the former school building on the Site as a local historic asset), the Applicant has commissioned the preparation of a Heritage Impact Assessment for submission with the Application.
- 6.45. The Assessment confirms that Denbighshire County Council has not published a list of local historic assets. The existing buildings on the Site are however identified on the Denbighshire Historic Environment Record (Reference PRN142207).
- 6.46. The Assessment provides a detailed commentary on the historic development/evolution on and around the Site. In relation to the Grade II* listed Rose Cottage, it notes that the setting of this heritage asset has been subject to relatively significant change over the years, with the adjoining stone-built terraced houses being constructed considerably later than the medieval timber-framed building of Rose Cottage. The existing building on the Site, being set back from Rhos Street, does not contribute to the ability to appreciate the listed building, accentuated by the curve in the street alignment. The existing building on the Site has remained a consistent part of the setting of Rose Cottage since the mid C19th; however, it is considered to make a neutral contribution to the actual significance of the listed building for the reasons set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment.
- 6.47. It is concluded within the Assessment that the proposed development would cause a moderate magnitude of change within the setting of the Grade II* listed Rose Cottage, located opposite the Site. There is no known association between the Cottage and the former school building on the Site. The existing open aspect of the Site frontage to Rhos Street would be partly retained by proposed open space, whilst the scale and materiality of the building adjoining the open space would complement the wider character of Rhos Street. Whilst the proposed development would therefore represent a change in the setting of the heritage asset, TAN 24 is clear that the setting is not a heritage asset in its own rights and its value is derived from what it might contribute to the significance of a heritage asset. To this end, the proposed development is considered to sustain the significance of Rose Cottage.
- 6.48. The Heritage Impact Assessment has also fully considered the heritage value of the existing building on the Site, comprising both an external and internal inspection/assessment of the building. The proposed development would result in the loss of the local historic asset identified by Denbighshire County Council; however, the inspection/assessment of the building has found its heritage value to be variable. Externally, the 1840's gabled frontage of the building is largely unchanged; however, the rear of the building has been extensively extended. The interior of the front range has been comprehensively adapted. Additional floors have been created, and the original room plans has been remodelled with no original fixtures or fittings surviving inside the building. In this context, the loss of the heritage value of the existing building should be considered

and balanced in the context of the benefits to be derived from the proposed development of the Site, as documented in Section 7 of this Statement.

- 6.49. In respect of other considerations, the proposed development would not affect the ability to appreciate Ruthin Conservation Area or the contribution of setting to its character and appearance.
- 6.50. Through previous discussions between the landowner, Denbighshire County Council, and the Applicant, the retention and conversion of the existing building was not found to be a viable option; this included consideration of an apartment scheme (conversion), and a granted funded fully affordable housing scheme. Accordingly, the proposed development is the only viable option by which to bring forward residential development on the Site which is commercially viable for both the landowner and the Applicant.
- 6.51. In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policy VOE1, SPGN – Listed Buildings, TAN24 and PPW11.

Welsh Language

- 6.52. A Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment has been prepared and is submitted with the Application. This Assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development has the potential to provide for a positive community and linguistic impact in Ruthin.
- 6.53. A number of enhancement measures are proposed which would support the local community and linguistic effects. These include bi-lingual street names and signage, local advertisement/marketing of the properties, the preparation and submission of a Construction Method Statement, and a detailed lighting design.
- 6.54. Accordingly, and subject to the recommendations set out in the Assessment in relation to further porosity testing, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policy RD5, SPGN – Planning and the Welsh Language, TAN20 and PPW11. The proposed development would not cause significant harm to the character and language balance of the community of Ruthin.

Flood-Risk and Drainage

- 6.55. As documented in Section 2 of this Statement, the Site lies in Flood Zone A. It is therefore deemed by Natural Resources Wales to be at a low risk of flooding.
- 6.56. In accordance with TAN15 and the latest national standards on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems documented in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, a drainage strategy has been prepared and is submitted with the Application. This has identified the following drainage solutions as the means by which to facilitate the proposed development:
 - **Surface Water** –significant use will be made of infiltration in the form of cellular tanks in rear gardens and porous block driveways. The access road will drain to two swales on the east side of the road where water will be collected by a higher-level gully grating before it is conveyed to the detention basin for further treatment before any residual flow is discharged at a controlled rate off-site; and
 - **Foul Water** – it is proposed that the development will be serviced by a network of adoptable foul sewers constructed within the access road. Private drains from the properties will

connect to the proposed sewer with lateral connections that will be offered for adoption by DCWW from each property demise. The topography of the Site lends itself to forming a new connection to the public foul sewer in Rhos Street.

- 6.57. Accordingly, and subject to the recommendations set out in the Strategy, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policy VOE6 and PPW11.

Ground Contamination

- 6.58. Given the nature of the proposed land-use, and the existing brownfield nature of the Site, both a Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment have been undertaken and are submitted within the Application. These have assessed the potential for existing/future sources of ground contamination on the Site. In summary, these have established the following:

- The Phase 1 Risk Assessment identified only Negligible to Low, and Low potential risks of potential pollutant linkages;
- The Site is not located within a Coal Mining Area;
- The Phase 1 Risk Assessment has identified the potential for Made Ground on the Site. Any Made Ground may represent a potential source of contamination; and
- Given the historical land use of the Site and the surrounding area, the Phase 1 Risk Assessment recommends that the low risk of potential ground contamination be confirmed through intrusive investigations.

- 6.59. In response, a Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment has been prepared. This has concluded that the Site is suitable for the proposed land-use, and no potential sources of contaminants of concern have been found. In the event that any unforeseen contamination is encountered during the ground works/construction phase, then works should be ceased in that area until it has been assessed. No specific risks have been identified through the Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment which are considered to require any remedial action at this time.

- 6.60. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to respond positively to and is consistent with Local Development Plan Policy VOE6, SPGN Residential Development, and PPW11.

Planning Conditions

- 6.61. As outlined within this Statement, the Applicant is willing to accept a number of planning conditions related to the proposed development where these satisfy the six tests set out in the Welsh Government Circular published in October 2014 and WGC 016/2014. These could include:

Pre-Construction Conditions (i.e. "Prior to commencing the construction of the approved development.....")

- Drainage (surface water and foul water);
- Materials;
- Affordable Housing;
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan and Method Statement;
- Hard and Soft Landscaping;
- Demolition Method Statement;
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure;

- Cycle Store;
- Reasonable ecological avoidance measures being adhered to at all times (compliance condition).

Pre-Occupation Conditions (i.e. “Prior to the occupation of the approved development.....”)

- Ecological Mitigation; and
- External street lighting.

6.62. **Given that the proposed development will involve the demolition of the existing buildings on the Site, and site clearance works, it is requested that these enabling demolition and clearance works be allowed to take place prior to the discharge of the pre-construction and pre-occupation conditions being discharged.**

6.63. The Applicant is willing to liaise with the Council over the wording of these conditions during the course of the planning application, and submit any information for approval as part of the planning application itself in order to allow for the demolition works to commence shortly after any potential grant of planning permission. At this stage, it is anticipated that this might comprise a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and a Demolition Method Statement.

Planning Obligations

6.64. The Applicant is committed to engaging in discussions with Officers at Denbighshire County Council in relation to securing planning obligations where these satisfy the requirements of and SPGN – Planning Obligations and Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations which require that:

- The obligations must be necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- The obligation must be directly related to the proposed development; and
- The obligations must be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development.

6.65. Any requests for financial contributions, including education, which are consistent with the aforementioned policy tests must be justified by up-to-date evidence.

7 CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1. Having regard to the Technical Assessment in Section 6 of this Statement, this Section goes on to consider the proposed development in the context of the overarching objectives of sustainable development as documented in paragraph 2.28 of PPW11.

Social Benefits

- 7.2. The proposed development will deliver the following **Social** benefits:
- The delivery of 20 no. much-needed new dwellings in Denbighshire where there is an accepted shortfall in housing land supply and an overriding need for new homes, and which should be afforded significant weight in favour of the proposed development. The proposed development will not give cause to any harm to the role and function of the town of Ruthin, and will in fact support its role and function as a market town in the County. The scale and nature of the proposed development will not pre-determine or prejudice the emerging LDP which remains some time from adoption, and there is no strategy in place at this time to address the ongoing shortfall in view of the time-expired nature of the adopted LDP. The proposed development would not be premature;
 - The delivery of 2. no. affordable homes, which is a material planning consideration that should be afforded significant weight in favour of the proposed development. This will comprise a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments and houses (including apartments) accessible by local people living in the Ruthin and East HMA, providing for both people look to upsize and downsize; and
 - The creation of a high-quality, safe and accessible living environment which is proportionate to the size of the site and settlement, contributes to its character and appearance, is respectful of surrounding land-uses/users, and is consistent with the placemaking aspirations set out in PPW11.

Economic Benefits

- 7.3. The proposed development will deliver the following **Economic** benefits:
- The creation of direct construction jobs (on and off-site) over the lifetime of the build programme, and indirect jobs through the local supply chain via the purchase of goods and services;
 - Increased local expenditure (convenience, comparison, leisure, services) to help support and sustain the local community and businesses;
 - Annual Council Tax contributions to Denbighshire County Council from the 20. proposed new dwellings;
 - Gross Value Added to the local economy generated by future residents of the proposed development; and
 - Contribution to local education and off-site open space provision where this is justified by up-to-date evidence.

Environmental Benefits

7.4. The proposed development will deliver the following **Environmental** benefits:

- The re-use of a previously developed and now redundant parcel of land within the defined urban area of Ruthin;
- Existing tree species within the Site will be retained wherever possible. Soft landscaping, including new tree/shrub planting across the Site, has the potential to secure net gains in biodiversity as illustrated on the submitted Landscape Strategy Overview;
- The proposed development is not expected to give cause to the loss of any features of significant ecological value, nor cause harm to any protected species. Further survey work will be undertaken to supplement the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Roost Assessment undertaken to date;
- The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems which will not increase or exacerbate flood-risk elsewhere, and the Site is not at risk of flooding;
- There are no sources of contamination associated with the Site which have been identified as a concern to the proposed land-use;
- Development on a sustainable site which provides the opportunity for future residents to travel by foot and public transport to access shops, education, jobs and services, reducing the reliance on private car travel and with it providing for a reduction in carbon emissions. New footway provision will be provided to facilitate and encourage safe pedestrian movements;
- The Site's sustainable location means that future residents will enjoy very good access to education, shops and services by walking and cycling consistent with the conclusions set out in Sections 4 and 6 of the accompanying Transport Statement. The level of car parking is designed to meet requirements whilst at the same time meeting wider sustainable and climate change objectives. The availability of cycle stores will add to the Site's sustainability credentials. Where the use of the private car is required, the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on the highway network and road safety; and
- Construction of energy efficient homes using established techniques which the Applicant applies to all of its new-build properties.

Cultural Well-Being

7.5. The proposed development will deliver the following **Cultural** benefits:

- The Applicant recognises the need to safeguard the Welsh language and the need to encourage and provide for its use. Accordingly, the Applicant is agreeable to the provision of bilingual signage within the proposed development amongst other measures such that the proposed development has the potential for a positive community and linguistic impact;
- The proposed development will not cause and significant harm to the setting and significance of any existing heritage assets nor assets of cultural significance, and the loss

of the existing local historic asset should be balanced against the wider benefits associated with the proposed development; and

- There is no evidence to suggest or support any view that the proposed development could not be integrated within the settlement, and nor that it would impact on the cohesion of the community. The proposed development would not be harmful.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. This Statement is submitted in support of a detailed Application for the proposed development of previously developed land south of Rhos Street in Ruthin.
- 8.2. The description of development for which detailed planning permission is sought is:
- “Demolition of all existing buildings, structures and site clearance; erection of 20 no. dwellings and associated infrastructure works comprising access, drainage and open space provision”***
- 8.3. This Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development will be consistent with and supported by the Denbighshire LDP and other material planning considerations in the form of PPW 11, Technical Advice Notices, and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.
- 8.4. The proposed development will deliver much-needed new market and affordable homes on a previously developed and now redundant parcel of land with the defined development boundary of Ruthin. The delivery of the proposed new homes will support the role and function of the town of Ruthin, whilst at the same time will make a valuable contribution towards the housing needs of Denbighshire County. The requirement for Local Planning Authorities to meet their housing requirements is a key sustainability objective of PPW11.
- 8.5. In the overall planning balance, the proposed development will deliver sustainable development on a sustainable Site and is considered to be acceptable; accordingly, the Applicant kindly requests that planning permission be granted.

Eich cyf / Your ref

Ein cyf / Our ref : 02/2021/0194

Dyddiad / Date : 21 April 2021

Rhif union / Direct dial : 01824 706727



Steve Grimster
Grimster Planning
5 Portal Business Park
Tarporey
Cheshire
CW6 9DL

Dear Sir / Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

CAIS / 02/2021/0194
APPLICATION:

CYNNIG / Residential development of 20 no. dwellings
PROPOSAL:
LLEOLIAD / Former Rhos Street School Rhos Street, , Ruthin
LOCATION:

I am writing in response to your pre-application enquiry dated 26/02/2021. Apologies again for the delayed response.

Planning history of the site

There are various permissions which relate to the previous use as a school dating back to 1980.

Planning policy context

All planning applications are assessed against the policies contained in the adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan (LDP) and in the guidance contained in relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), together with national planning policy and guidance set out in Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW 11 - February 2021) Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 and Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

The site is located within the Development Boundary of Ruthin and within 67m of a trunk road.

The relevant LDP planning policies that would be applicable for residential development in this location are as follows:

Policy RD1 – Sustainable development and good standard design

Policy RD5 – The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities

Policy BSC1 – Growth Strategy for Denbighshire
Policy BSC2 – Brownfield development priority
Policy BSC3 – Securing infrastructure contributions from Development
Policy BSC4 – Affordable Housing
Policy BSC11 – Recreation and open space
Policy VOE1 - Key areas of importance
Policy VOE5 – Conservation of natural resources
Policy ASA3 – Parking standards

The Council has adopted a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs) which amplify development plan policies and provide further information and guidance to developers. The following SPGs would apply to residential development in this location:-

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Access For All
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Affordable Housing
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Parking Requirements In New Developments
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Planning Obligations
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Planning and the Welsh language
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Recreational Public Open Space
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Residential Development
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Residential Development Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Residential Space Standards
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Trees & Landscaping
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Listed Buildings

In terms of national planning policy Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (PPW 11) and the following Technical Advice Notes (TAN) are considered to be of particular relevance to the proposal.

TAN 2 Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
TAN 12 Design (2016)
TAN 16 Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)
TAN 18 Transport (2007)
TAN 20 Planning and the Welsh Language (2017)
TAN 24 The Historic Environment (2017)

Principle of development

The site lies within the development boundary for Denbigh as defined in the adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan (LDP) and is not allocated for any specific land use. As such the principle of the development on the site is established and it may be appropriate for a range of uses, including residential.

Ruthin is identified as a lower growth town within the growth strategy of the plan, being a town expected to make a significant contribution to meeting the identified housing need of the area. Policy RD1 states that development proposals within development boundaries will be supported subject to compliance with detailed criteria. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

Other policy considerations

There are a number of other policy considerations that would need to be taken into account, these are as follows:

Heritage Assets

The existing school building is an imposing one that has been a key element in the street scene of Rhos Street and Ruthin in general. The school building has a close association with many local residents in Ruthin with multiple family generations having attended school there. It should be considered whether there is a possible scheme which would see conversion of the existing building rather than demolishing it.

The Council's Conservation Officer has sought advice from CADW who have stated that they would prefer that the original school building was retained and incorporated as part of the development. The building is a good example of a Victorian School and is of local historic interest having a positive impact on the street scene and surroundings.

Having regard to the comments received by the Conservation Officer and CADW, the building has the potential to be listed as being of local historical importance and therefore a scheme which retains the existing building is likely to be better received by the local community. The site is also directly opposite Rose Cottage which is a Grade II Listed Building which would need to be considered as part of any future proposal.

Please consider options where the original building is retained and incorporated as part of the scheme.

Affordable Housing and housing mix

Policy BSC 4 in the LDP states that all developments of 3 or more residential units are expected to provide a minimum of 10% affordable housing either on site on developments of 10 or more or by way of a financial contribution on developments of less than 10 units.

The proposal is for the erection of 20 dwellings, 2 of which would be of an affordable tenure. The remaining 18 will be market sale properties.

There is a significant identified need for affordable housing in the area, detailed information relating to the identified need is attached to this response. The local housing market assessment also indicated a need for smaller properties, particularly 2 bed, it is noted that the proposed scheme is heavily weighted towards 3 bed properties.

The Strategic Housing Officer has provided an input on the proposals. They have stated that there is a very significant identified need for affordable housing in the area as shown in the attached housing market assessment information for the area. The proposal for 2 affordable housing units is considered acceptable but the preferred provision for would be for 1 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed to meet identified needs rather than the 2x 2 bed as proposed. Intermediate rent or social housing would both be acceptable tenures. A legal agreement will be required to secure the properties as affordable in perpetuity.

The housing mix proposed of 2 x 4 bed, 16 x 3 bed and 2 x 2 bed (affordables) does not meet the recommended mix set out in the published Local Housing Market Assessment (2019). The table below compares the proposed market housing mix with that required in the LHMA. The lack of provision of 2 bed market homes is of particular concern as there is evidence of high

demand for these smaller properties as demonstrated in the housing market assessment attached to this response.

	1 and 2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
LHMA mix	30%	35%	35%
Proposed mix	0%	89%	11%

A suggested market mix based on 18 market units is as follows:

	1 and 2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
LHMA mix	30%	35%	35%
Recommended mix (No. units)	6 units	6 units	6 units

If the developer wishes to retain the housing mix in the original proposal then this will need to be justified and evidence presented that the scheme would meet the identified housing need in Ruthin.

Open space

Policy BSC 11 requires new developments to provide open space in accordance with the County's minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population.

On the basis of 20 dwellings, no on-site open space provision is required as the threshold outlined in the Open Space SPG is 30 or more dwellings. However, the development would put an increased demand on existing open spaces and facilities and therefore a contribution towards improvements or creation of new facilities in the locality will be required.

The Open Space Calculator contribution for 20 dwellings would be a total of £24,744.32

There is an identified need for additional provision for children and young people and outdoor sports facilities in Ruthin as evidenced in the Denbighshire Open Space Assessment and Audit published in 2018.

Education

Objective 12 of Chapter 4 of the Local Development Plan identifies that the Plan will ensure that an adequate level of community infrastructure (including schools) will be provided alongside new developments. Policy BSC 3 seeks to ensure, where relevant, infrastructure contributions from development.

A development of 20 dwellings is likely to generate the need for 5 primary school children and 4 secondary school children places.

The Local Education Authority have been consulted, and based on current capacity at the local primary and secondary schools no financial contribution for education is required.

Ecology

Policy VOE 5 requires due assessment of potential impacts on protected species or designated sites of nature conservation, including mitigation proposals, and suggests that permission should not be granted where proposals are likely to cause significant harm to such interests.

This reflects policy and guidance in Planning Policy Wales (PPW 11) Section 6.4 'Biodiversity and Ecological Networks', current legislation and the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity SPG, which stress the importance of the planning system in meeting biodiversity objectives through promoting approaches to development which create new opportunities to enhance biodiversity, prevent biodiversity losses, or compensate for losses where damage is unavoidable.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW 11) sets out that "planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity" (Section 6.4.5). PPW also draws attention to the contents of Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which sets a duty on Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate they have taken all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. It is important that biodiversity and resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage when considering development proposals (Section 6.4.4).

No comments have been received by the County Ecologist on the enquiry. There are no significant trees or hedgerows associated with the site. The school building has been empty for some time and should be assessed for any biodiversity interest. Bats may be roosting and the County Ecologist can advise on appropriate assessment of the building. Under the Environment Act, new developments are required to demonstrate biodiversity enhancement and this will be required alongside any planning application submitted. You are advised to engage with an Ecologist at an early stage and the relevant surveys, mitigation and enhancements should be submitted with a planning application.

Sustainability

The site is located within the town of Ruthin which offers a good range of services and facilities. The town centre is within walking distance although it is uphill which presents challenges for less mobile people.

Denbighshire has declared a climate change emergency. The design of the properties should include renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and electric vehicle charging points as a minimum. Properties should be orientated to maximise solar gain and sustainable building materials used wherever possible.

Detailed considerations

Density

A draft sketch layout for 20 dwellings on a site of 0.53ha of land, accessed off the A494 trunk road has been submitted with the enquiry. Local Development Plan Policy RD 1 test (ii) requires due consideration of the efficiency of use of land through achieving a suitable density of

residential development, referring to a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare, unless there are local circumstances that dictate a lower density.

The number of dwellings proposed on the site would appear to be acceptable. The density is above the 35/dpha in Policy RD at 37/dph. It is considered the higher density would reflect the nature of the site and the surrounding development pattern.

The proposed development will contribute to the housing targets set out within the LDP by the delivery of 20 units including 2 affordable units. This will contribute towards meeting the corporate priority of access to quality housing.

Layout

The plans submitted with the enquiry demonstrate that the dwellings will be positioned off a central cul de sac road with parking provided on site. The current building line is around 24m from the highway and the draft layout brings this right up to the road frontage. This matches the building line of the existing properties along Rhos Street but as the enquiry site is raised considerably above the road level this may lead to the proposed properties being overbearing in the street scene. Consideration should be given to either drawing the properties fronting the road back a few metres or introducing single storey homes to the frontage. If the original school building is to be retained, a parking and landscaped area should be considered to this area fronting the road.

A new access point is proposed which will cause a break in the prominent stone wall which is a feature of the street scene. There is an existing access point at the north-east corner of the site which could be used with minor widening which would allow the frontage wall to remain intact. Consideration should be given to using the existing access point.

A footpath is proposed to the west of the site which connects the site to the adjacent greenspace. Connections for pedestrians and cyclists is encouraged on new developments linking the site to the wider area.

Design/appearance/separation distances

No details have been provided on the design or materials proposed for the new dwellings. Each dwelling would be 2 storey in height with private garden and off road parking. The properties on Rhos Street are predominantly compact 2 storey homes of modest proportions. The sketch layout shows the new properties being built almost up to the wall fronting Rhos Street and as the ground level is raised here it is likely that the ground floor rooms of the new dwellings would be looking directly into the bedrooms of the existing properties opposite.



The separation distance would be as little as 11m between plots 19 and 20 and 19 – 25 Rhos Street. A similar separation distance of 11m is proposed between plots 1, 2 and 3 and Rose Cottage which although only single storey is a listed building and it is likely that the proposed development would have a negative impact on the setting of the listed building. The Residential Development SPG sets out minimum separation distances and requires a minimum of 21m between windows of principal rooms. It is recommended that the layout be revised to take account of this requirement. Consideration of single storey units to the road frontage should also be considered. If the original school building is to be retained, a parking and landscaped area should be considered to this area fronting the road.

The adopted Residential Space Standards SPG sets out minimum standards for internal floor area and private outdoor space and gardens for new developments, see below in relation to floor space standards:

Property Size	Minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) in Square metres to the nearest metre
1 bed	50
2 bed	65
3 bed	80
4 bed and more	100

From the information provided, it would appear that the proposals would meet the criteria set out in the Residential Space Standards SPG.

Landscaping

Hard and soft landscaping within the site should be carefully considered incorporating the principles of SuDS where possible. The submission of a fully detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme, along with details of long term management and maintenance responsibilities of landscaped areas within the development is advised.

Drainage

Local Development Plan Policy RD 1 test (xi) requires that development satisfies physical or natural environmental considerations relating to drainage and liability to flooding.

Please be advised that since January 2019, new legislation came into force which makes Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) a mandatory requirement on all new developments involving more than a single dwelling or a construction area more than 100m². You must apply to the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) for approval on these types of developments.

It is therefore expected that a detailed drainage strategy for the proposed site be developed as early as possible and early engagement with the Council's SAB Officers is recommended.

Drainage plans showing the proposed surface water drainage details and drainage strategy would then be required to be submitted with any future planning application.

Access / Highways and Parking

The acceptability of means of access is a standard test on most planning applications. Highways Officers have been consulted on the proposed access and highway arrangements. Based on the information provided, in principle are no objections to the proposal subject to the following:

- Internal estate road to be a minimum of 5m wide and footways/service margins to maintain a width of 2m throughout the site
- Opportunity should be taken to widen the existing footway fronting the proposed development site to a minimum width of 2m
- Gradients within the site should be in accordance with guidance provided in the DDA Act
- The access to the site to be designed in accordance with the guidance provided in TAN 18
- Provision of parking within the site to be in accordance with the guidance provided in Denbighshire County Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (Parking Requirements In New Developments)

The proposal involves the creation of a new access within the wall fronting Rhos Street. Officers are of the opinion that this wall offers a significant contribution to the character of the area and we ask that you consider it is retained and the existing access to the north east is used and improved instead.



LDP Policy ASA 3 and SPG Parking Requirements in New Developments set out the parking standards in Denbighshire. Ruthin falls within Zone 1 as set out in the SPG. The policy and SPG state that maximum parking standards should be provided and where it is not proposed then the developer will be required to show evidence of the scale of journeys to and from the site and how any resulting shortfall in parking provision will be catered for.

The sketch layout shows 41 parking spaces, based on the housing mix as proposed there would be a requirement for 58 parking spaces. Any application should be supported by a transport assessment that quantifies the volume of trips likely to be generated to and from the site and the adequacy of the parking provision proposed.

Welsh Language and Social and Cultural Fabric of communities:

The requirement to consider the needs and interests of the Welsh Language is set out in PPW 11; TAN 20 and Policy RD 5 of the Local Development Plan:

ii) More detailed assessment in the form of a “Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment” to accompany a planning application in **all settlements** where developments are on a larger scale comprising proposals of the following kind: **20 residential units** or more, commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 3000m² or more, large scale infrastructure projects with long term community impacts.

TAN 20 (2017) provides the most up to date guidance on the consideration of the Welsh Language.

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.

Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru

Under the UK wide Superfast Broadband Programme, the Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru scheme has been providing funding to support the roll-out of superfast broadband infrastructure across Wales. The County Council is supportive of this initiative as it has incorporated this into one of its corporate priorities. Hence the County Council is looking to ensure residents of new development have access to future-proofed, fast and reliable fibre broadband services, and is encouraging the installation of suitable fibre broadband connections in all new developments.

In this regard, you are encouraged to access the Openreach website through the following link. It has useful downloadable guidance for developers for installing fibre connections:

<https://www.ournetwork.openreach.co.uk/property-development.aspx>

If you are looking to work with Openreach on provision of a fibre broadband connection, you need to ensure your site is registered with them 9 months before the date you are looking for them to provide a service to the first new property. Their advice is that you contact them at least 8 weeks before you actually start work on site, to give enough time to get proposals drawn up and details agreed for incorporation into any scheme.

Pre-application Consultation requirements

Since 1 August 2016, all major development proposals are required to carry out pre application consultation in accordance with Article 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016 prior to submitting a planning application.

Please refer to the Welsh Government Guidance on pre-application consultation which sets out the procedures that will need to be followed.

Please note, whilst the Council has undertaken consultation with some internal consultees to inform our response to this enquiry, this does not negate the need for you to also engage and consult with statutory consultees, local Councillors, relevant Town and Community Councils and the public in accordance with Article 1 of the above Order. The Local Planning Authority cannot validate a major development planning application unless the pre application consultation has been carried out and a 'pre-application consultation report' will need to accompany any subsequent planning application.

Informal, without prejudice Officer Opinion of the proposal

The principle of housing development in this location is considered acceptable. It would be preferred that the original school building was retained and incorporated as part of the scheme with the wall fronting the road also retained and the existing access improved.

A number of comments have been provided within this response, and certain issues highlighted which will need to be considered and addressed if a proposal is progressed.

Progressing a Planning Application

Information on the validation requirements for development proposals is set out in the Denbighshire County Council Validation Guidance Note on the Councils Website.

In addition to detailed plans, the following Supporting documents would be required:-

- Pre Application Consultation Report
- Planning/Design and Access Statement
- Ecological Reports/Surveys including biodiversity enhancements on site
- Drainage Strategy and plans (SuDS approval would be required)
- Transport Statement
- Hard and soft landscaping scheme
- Community Linguistic Statement
- External lighting scheme

I would advise that this response is based on the information available. It does not constitute a formal determination under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Any opinions contained herein are those of the officer concerned and cannot be held as binding on the Council or its members.

Yours sincerely,

Luci Duncalf
Planning Officer

Attachments: Housing Market Assessment and Open Space Calculations