

Planning Statement

Land at Springhill Farm
Selattyn
Oswestry
SY10 7NZ

Outline application for the construction of a Rural Enterprise Dwelling, detached garage and all associated works (all matters reserved)

August 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with an Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) made to Wrexham County Borough Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for the construction of a new rural worker's dwelling, detached garage and all associated works at Land at Springhill Farm, Selattyn, Oswestry, SY10 7NZ ("the Application Site").

1.2 The proposed development will provide an additional dwelling house on the existing farm, to house an essential rural worker.

1.3 This Planning Statement should be read in-conjunction with the other documents submitted in support of the application, principally comprising:

- Completed Outline Planning Application Form (with all matters reserved)
- Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal (to be kept confidential in the interests of commercial sensitivity)
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Soil Infiltration Test Results
- Dwg No: 77427 / RJC / 001 REV D – Site Location Plan
- Dwg No: 77427 / RJC / 002 REV B – Existing Block Plan
- Dwg No: 77427 / RJC / 003 REV E – Indicative Proposed Block Plan
- Dwg No: 77427 / RJC / 005 – Existing Uses Plan

1.4 This Planning Statement provides a balanced overview of the planning issues associated with the proposed development and is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.5 The information set-out within this statement confirms that the proposal can be delivered on-site without giving rise to any unacceptable or adverse impacts in planning-terms.

2.0 The Application Site & Background

2.1 The application site comprises approximately 0.09 hectares of agricultural land located on the south-eastern edge of the existing farm/equine complex at Springhill Farm.

2.2 The site is located very much amongst the existing complex of buildings and yards at Springhill, and as such will provide a dwelling within sight and sound of the existing business operated from the site for a worker to reside within.

2.3 At present, the application site comprises an area of mixed 'scrub' and hardstanding on the edge of the existing farm complex, and the proposed

dwelling will share a driveway with the existing farmhouse on-site. As such, no new vehicular access onto the public highway network is proposed.

2.4 The application site is located within an extremely rural and rugged corner of Wrexham County Borough, approximately 3.3km south-east of Glyn Ceiriog as the crow flies and approximately 9.2km north-west of Oswestry. The site is located within close proximity to the Local Authority boundary with Powys and to the national boundary with England (Shropshire). The site is accessed via a network of single-track country lanes which are in a poor state of repair; effectively meaning the farm is completely inaccessible during inclement winter weather.

2.5 In planning policy terms, the application site is located outside of any defined settlement/development boundary and is thus deemed to be located within the open countryside for the purposes of this planning application.

2.6 The site is not subject to any statutory protective designations in terms of ecology, flooding, landscape or heritage/conservation. Indeed, whilst the site is located within a Special Landscape Area (SLA) as per the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), it is not subject to an SLA designation within the unadopted Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP), which was found to be 'sound' after an examination in public.

2.7 The surrounding area is predominately agricultural in nature, largely comprised of upland grazing (livestock farming). The rural context of the site is shown below in Figure 1, with the application site itself being denoted by the red star:



Figure 1: Site Location & Context

2.8 This planning application follows on from a previous application on the same site for the same proposal, which was refused by the Local Planning Authority in November 2024 (under planning application reference P/2023/0372) for the following reason as listed on the Decision Notice:

1. *Insufficient justification has been put forward to demonstrate the functional need for a second dwelling/rural enterprise dwelling, the long-term viability of the rural enterprise which the dwelling is intended to support, and that the existing dwelling could not be adapted to meet the functional needs of the enterprise. The development fails to accord with Technical Advisory Note 6 Paragraph 4.4.1 (a) (c) and (d). Insufficient justification has therefore been put forward to demonstrate an essential need for the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside in support of a rural enterprise. Therefore, the development does not accord with policies SP2 and H7 of the Wrexham Local Development Plan".*

2.9 The current submission seeks to overcome the above reason for refusal.

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved for future consideration) for the construction of an additional dwelling house on-site at Springhill Farm. The development will comprise the erection of a dwelling house, a detached garage, the creation of a new residential curtilage, the installation of a package treatment plant and all associated works. As noted from the submitted drawings, the proposed dwelling will be sited immediately adjacent to the existing farm and stables complex at Springhill Farm, and also in close proximity to the exiting dwelling house.

3.2 Importantly, the siting of the proposed dwelling will be within sight and sound of the farm and stables complex; allowing the occupier (rural worker) to be readily available on-site to respond to any unexpected and out-of-hours situation on-site.

3.3 As the application is submitted in outline (with all matters reserved), indicative scale parameters for the proposed dwelling and garage are provided below:

Element	Lower Measurement (m)	Upper Measurement (m)
Dwelling Height	6	10.5
Dwelling Width	6	14

Dwelling Length	8	16
Garage Height	4	5
Garage Width	5.4	6.4
Garage Length	5.5	6.5

3.4 The proposed development is shown indicatively on Drawing No: 77427 / RJC / 003 REV E. As shown on the plan, the site can be developed appropriately without causing any adverse visual impacts upon the character of the area.

3.5 A dedicated driveway parking/turning area is proposed on-site to serve cars/vehicles on-site, whilst a new package treatment plant and drainage field is proposed to appropriately deal with the foul water flows from both the proposed dwelling house and the existing farmhouse – with the current dwelling's existing septic tank to be decommissioned.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 *Future Wales: The National Plan 2024* is the Welsh Government's National Development Plan for Wales, and sets out the Welsh Government's objectives and aspirations for the nation moving towards 2040. At Policy 5 (Supporting the Rural Economy) it confirms its support for strong rural business and rural enterprises, stating:

"It is important that rural communities develop strong economies and support local enterprise. The presence of local rural business and employment opportunities can reduce the need for workers to travel long distances and reduce the reliance on larger economic centres.

Lack of employment opportunity is a key reason behind rural depopulation, particularly in the younger workforce; it can also contribute to deprivation and inequality. Developing local opportunities, particularly in higher paid sectors, is important to retain workers, broaden the skills base and help sustain communities. Rural areas should develop a broad economic base which supports a strong foundational sector, agricultural and forestry industry, innovative and emerging technology based enterprise, start-ups and micro businesses".

4.2 The Welsh Government considers that an efficient and flexible agricultural industry is essential for rural prosperity. To this end, Paragraph 5.6.8 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) states:

"Planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed

to meet the needs of changing farming practices or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation".

4.3 The adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1996-2011) is of primary relevance in terms of local planning policy in this instance. Policy H5 relates to Housing in the Countryside and states:

"Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where:

(c) an essential need to house a full time agricultural or forestry key worker can be established and

- ***i. the long term financial viability and functional management of the enterprise is proven; and***
- ***ii. the person, due to the nature of the work, has to live on the site rather than in a nearby settlement; and***
- ***iii. there are no suitable buildings nearby which could be converted into a dwelling; and***
- ***iv. the new dwelling is sited adjacent to an existing building, can be landscaped, and is of a form, bulk, design and materials which reflect the locality's rural character".***

4.4 Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Notes 02 (Agricultural Appraisals) and 13 (Housing in the Countryside) are also of some relevance.

4.5 Given the age of the Wrexham UDP, and the fact the evidence base underpinning its policies is now approximately 30 years old, it is noted the weight which can be given to its policies within the overall planning balance is now limited.

4.6 The un-adopted Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) is noted to still be a material planning consideration and recent appeal decisions within Wrexham have confirmed this to be the case. Of principal relevance is LDP Policy H7 (Housing in the Countryside). However, the policy in question simply refers to national planning policy on the topic of rural enterprise dwellings contained within Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6).

4.7 Section 4.4 of TAN 6 relates to *'new dwellings on established enterprises'* and indicates that permission may be granted for permanent dwellings on well-established rural enterprise units for essential workers who need to live on the unit where it can be demonstrated, in Paragraph 4.4.1, that:

- ***a) "there is a clearly established existing functional need;***
- ***b) the need relates to a full-time worker and does not relate to a part-time requirement;***

c) ***the enterprise concerned has been established for at least three years, profitable for at least one of them and both the enterprise and the business need for the job, is currently financially sound, and has a clear prospect of remaining so;***
d) ***(d) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling or by converting an existing suitable building already on the land holding comprising the enterprise, or any other existing accommodation in the locality which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker concerned; and***
e) ***other normal planning requirements, for example siting and access, are satisfied."***

4.8 Given the age of the Wrexham UDP, and the fact the un-adopted Wrexham LDP does not contain a policy position relating specifically to applications for rural workers' housing, it is considered the provisions of TAN 6, and its accompanying Practice Guidance for Rural Enterprise Dwellings, is of principal relevance to this application.

5.0 Principle of Development

5.1 The principle of the proposed development within this location is discussed and justified at-length within the accompanying Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal, which is for the sole viewing of the Local Planning Authority for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

5.2 Indeed, it is evident that there is an essential functional need for an additional rural worker to reside on the holding to deal with unexpected situations which arise outside of 'normal working hours' concerning the farming, equine and tourism businesses operated and run from Springhill Farm. Furthermore, the Time Test, Financial Test and Other Dwelling Test as outlined within TAN 6 have been met, and this is again discussed in detail within the accompanying Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal.

5.3 With regards sustainability, the proposal would see an additional rural worker and their family be retained within a traditional Welsh, rural, isolated community; strengthening the social sustainability of the area.

5.4 Furthermore, the development would preserve the character of the rural landscape and would seek to utilise traditional and local materials and tradespeople; contributing towards environmental and economic sustainability in the locality. In addition, the dwelling would seek to be highly insulated, which would be detailed further within a future reserve matters application.

5.5 In addition, the application would provide for additional soft landscape planting and measures to secure a net benefit for biodiversity; further adding to the environmental sustainability of the scheme.

5.6 Having regard to the above, the proposal is acceptable in-principle in this location owing to the requirements and eligibility of the subject rural enterprise, in-line with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 6, UDP Policy H5 and unadopted LDP Policy H7.

6.0 Design & Visual Impact

5.1 The application is submitted in outline, with all matters reserved for future consideration. Notwithstanding this, the dwelling would be of an overall modest scale and would benefit from screening in the form of existing hedgerows, as well as screening provided by the nearby farm buildings and a detailed native species soft landscaping scheme which will come forwards as part of a future reserved matters application.

5.2 Thus, it is clear the site can be suitably developed as proposed without causing any adverse impacts in terms of the visual amenities of the area and the wider rural landscape.

7.0 Movement & Access

7.1 The dwelling would be accessed via the existing dwelling's vehicular access off the public highway network, and no improvements to the existing access are necessary or proposed as part of this application.

7.2 There is sufficient parking and turning space within the site to serve the proposed dwelling and its occupants.

7.3 The existing access benefits from adequate visibility, and there would be no appreciable impact caused upon the wider public highway network.

7.4 In any case, 'access' is a reserved matter and therefore will be considered in-full as part of a future reserved matters application.

8.0 Ecology

8.1 As noted, the application site comprises an area of mixed 'scrub' and hardstanding and is of no overall ecological value.

8.2 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Arbor Vitae, which confirms that the proposed development

will impact upon approximately 150m2 of patchy ruderal vegetation, which the report confirms is of negligible ecological value.

8.3 The submitted report further confirms that the two small existing built structures on the site do not provide suitable habitat for any protected species such as birds or bats.

8.4 In terms of any other potential impacts upon any other protected species, the report confirms any impacts are highly unlikely.

8.5 Please also refer to the Green Infrastructure Statement submitted in support of the application with regards to green infrastructure and net benefits for biodiversity.

9.0 Foul Drainage

9.1 The application proposes the installation of a new private package treatment plant, discharging into a new drainage field, to serve both the existing farmhouse and the proposed dwelling. This is in accordance with the requirements of WGC 008/2018. Indeed, the old and dis-functioning septic tank currently serving the farmhouse will be decommissioned as part of the proposed development.

9.2 The results of percolation testing have been submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that the use of a drainage field is feasible in the proposed location.

9.3 The application site is located within the freshwater catchment of the River Dee & Bala Lake SAC, and as such the proposed system has been designed to be compliant with the requirements of NRW's Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive Special Areas of Conservation. Indeed, the proposed foul drainage system will be compliant with the following excerpt from the published advice, and can therefore be 'screened out' as unlikely to cause a significant effect upon the integrity of the SAC:

"private sewage treatment systems discharging domestic wastewater to ground, built to the relevant British Standard (BS 6297:2007+A1:2008) having a maximum daily discharge rate of less than 2 cubic metres (m3) and where the drainage field is located more than 40m from any surface water feature such as a river, stream, ditch or drain and located more than 50m from a SAC boundary and at least 50m from any other known discharge to ground"

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 This application seeks Outline planning permission for the construction of an additional rural worker's dwelling on-site at Springhill Farm.

10.2 On the basis of the information provided by the Applicant, there is a clear functional and welfare need for an additional rural worker to live on the holding in order to provide the requisite supervision of the farming, equine and tourism businesses which are operated from the site, and to respond to emergency or unexpected situations which occur outside of 'normal working hours'.

10.3 The proposal is compliant with the requirements of TAN 6 and the TAN 6 Practice Guidance for Rural Enterprise Dwellings, in that it provides an additional residential dwelling for an essential rural worker to meet the functional needs of a rural enterprise, where there are no alternative dwellings or buildings capable of conversion which could meet the need identified.

10.4 This Planning Statement also outlines that the development would not cause any harmful impacts upon the character of the rural landscape, the natural environment and highway safety; and nor would it cause any other adverse impacts in planning terms.

10.5 In light of the above, the proposal is compliant with the relevant local and national planning policy requirements, and it is therefore respectfully requested that outline planning permission be granted for the development.