PLANNING APPLICATION
SUPPORTING STATEMENT
(including Design & Access)

IN RELATION TO:

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF
UP TO 12 DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE
ON LAND AT WYCHWOOD, FOUR CROSSES, SY22 6RF

On Behalf Of
WYCHWOOD TRUSTEES
PLANNING APPLICATION
SUPPORTING STATEMENT
(including Design & Access)

APPLICANT’S DETAILS
Wychwood Trustees

PROJECT
Proposed Development of up to 12
Dwellings at Wychwood, Four Crosses

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Statement

1.1 This document provides supporting information in respect of a planning application by the Wychwood Trustees for the development of up to 12 dwellings, and associated infrastructure, on land at Wychwood, Four Crosses.

1.2 The information contained in this statement is intended to provide a concise overview and explanation of the background to the proposal, and in particular:
   • The policy context within which the application should be considered and determined;
   • An assessment of the planning merits of the application; and
   • Consideration of site specific planning issues.

The information contained in this document is supplementary to that provided on the completed planning application forms and is to be regarded as forming part of the application. The information contained in this statement is also intended to assist the Planning Authority in determination of the proposals.

Background to the Development

1.3 The development site lies in a sustainable location at the centre of the settlement of Four Crosses, in close proximity to a range of services and facilities and well enclosed by the existing built form of the settlement.

1.4 The site is level and comprises the existing bungalow ‘Wychwood’, its residential curtilage and surrounding land. Whilst the surrounding land is in agricultural use, the irregular shape of the land (due to the presence of Wychwood within it), that it can only be accessed via a small bridge structure over the Sarn Wen Brook and its close proximity to surrounding residential properties mean that the land is of limited agricultural value.

1.5 Residential development is therefore proposed on the site as it is considered that this will better utilise the site, will integrate with the site’s environment and make a sustainable contribution to the amount, variety and choice of housing in the settlement.
2 THE SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

2.1 This section explains the nature of the proposed development site and its immediate environment. It also sets the context for demonstrating that the site is suitable for the proposed development.

The Site and its Environs

2.2 The proposed development site is located within the village of Four Crosses close to the Welsh / English border. Four Crosses lies in a strategically important location on the junction of the B4393 (that links Llanfyllin to Shrewsbury) with the A483 (Swansea to Manchester) Trunk Road. It therefore benefits from good transport links to the local centres of Welshpool (8 miles), Oswestry (8 miles) and Llanfyllin (10 miles) and the regional centre of Shrewsbury (14 miles).

2.3 The development site itself can be accessed directly off the B4393 and the site location is identified in Figure1 below.

Figure 1: Extract of Google Aerial imagery, with site identified
2.4 Four Crosses offers a wide range of services and facilities within a short walk of the site, including the Primary School, Community Centre, GP Surgery, Supermarket, Post Office, Petrol Filling Station, Public House/Hotel, Café, Hair Salon, Veterinary Surgery, Recreational Facilities, Place of Worship and Commercial/Industrial Premises. In addition, the site is located next to public transport links to area and regional centres such as Oswestry, Welshpool and Shrewsbury which offer a full range of services, facilities and employment opportunities. The site is therefore in a highly sustainable location.

2.5 Development on the site is unconstrained and can be served by mains utilities, with connections to electricity, water and sewerage infrastructure easily achievable. Whilst it is recognised that the site adjoins the Sarn Wen Brook, the development advice mapping accompanying Welsh Government’s Technical Advice Note 15 (see figure 2, below) identifies that the site lies wholly outside of areas at risk of flooding.

Figure 2: Extract of Welsh Government’s Development Advice Mapping (with site location identified)
The Proposed Development

2.6 Proposed Use

The proposal is for a housing development of up to 12 dwellings. The planning application is submitted in outline, with all matters reserved apart from access. A detailed scheme for the site, including the precise mix of dwellings, their layout, landscaping, detailed design and appearance has therefore yet to be drawn up. Nonetheless, an indicative site layout has been provided that illustrates that the site can accommodate the anticipated number of dwellings with ease.

2.7 Design Principles and Concepts

Whilst a detailed design has not been produced a scheme can be provided that will respect and enhance the existing built form of the settlement. It is also recognised that the site lies adjoining the Sarn Wen Brook. The indicative site layout therefore identifies how the site can be developed whilst maintaining access to this watercourse corridor for maintenance purposes and to improve the ecological value of the corridor.

2.7.1 Character (including appearance, layout, scale, amount and landscaping)

It is envisaged that the proposed development will respond to the local vernacular of recent developments in the settlement, as it will:

• Comprise of dwellings no greater than two storeys in height;
• Consist of up to 12 dwellings, a scale and density of development that is similar to existing residential developments within the settlement, whilst also ensuring the efficient use of land;
• Be accessed from a single access point off the B4393; and
• Be constructed from materials such as facing brickwork, painted render, slate or tile roofs and stained or painted timberwork to reflect existing materials used in the settlement.

Whilst the application is in outline, with layout, scale and appearance reserved matters, the indicative site layout identifies 12 dwellings that, it is envisaged, will include:

- 6no. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses (identified on the indicative layout on plots 2, 3 and 4-7);
- 5no. 4 bedroom detached houses (identified on the indicative layout on plots 1, 8 and 10-12); and
- 1no. 4 bedroom large detached house (identified on the indicative layout on plot 9).

The indicative floor areas and upper and lower height, width and length of these dwelling types are also identified on the indicative site layout that accompanies the application (drawing SA31164_03).
The proposed development will therefore reinforce the character and built form of the settlement and provide additional dwellings promoting choice and variety in the dwelling stock.

The site is bounded predominantly by mature hedgerows and post and wire fencing. The development proposal affords the opportunity to enhance this with additional native landscape planting on site which will assist in integrating the development into its landscape setting whilst protecting the residential amenity of both existing dwellings neighbouring the site and proposed dwellings on site.

2.7.2 Environmental Sustainability

- Efficient Use and Protection of Natural Resources
  The development site itself is free from development constraints. Dwellings on the site will therefore be able to take advantage of passive solar heating and solar energy installations may be included within the detailed design of the development.
  The proposed development comprises of semi-detached and detached dwellings at a density that makes appropriate use of this site. Native landscape planting on the site will improve shelter in this location and will therefore assist in reducing energy loss. In addition, the applicant has strong links with the local community and is therefore committed to sourcing locally derived labour and sustainable materials wherever possible.

- Landscaping & Biodiversity
  Existing built development and vegetation, including mature hedgerows help to screen the site and there are limited public views of the site other than from the adjoining highway. It is therefore contended that the site has a limited impact upon its wider environment and landscape setting and would appear as a natural infilling of the built form of the settlement.
  Nonetheless, the proposed development will include native landscape planting to enhance the ecological value of the site and further assist in integrating the development into its landscape setting.

2.7.3 Movement

The range of services and facilities provided in Four Crosses are within easy walking distance of the development site and can be accessed via the existing footpath, which crosses the site frontage and will be extended into the site.
In addition, as previously detailed, Four Crosses benefits from public transport links to area and regional centres and the range of services and facilities those settlements provide.
The proposed development will therefore encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
2.7.4 Community Safety

The proposed development will enhance community safety in this location as additional dwellings will increase natural surveillance in the area.

2.8 Utilities and Drainage

The site can be served by mains electricity, water and foul drainage. Sustainable drainage systems will be utilised to dispose of surface water, which it is anticipated will include attenuation ponds with discharge to watercourse and soakaways. Porous surfacing and rainwater harvesting will also be used where appropriate. Such methods are considered to be the most appropriate, environmentally sensitive, disposal solutions available for the development proposal.

2.8 Access

The site benefits from an existing access onto the B4393, which benefits from good horizontal and vertical alignment in this location. This access will be improved to serve the proposed development and the existing footpath will be extended into the site. The site is also of sufficient size to enable the provision of an appropriate number of parking spaces and manoeuvring space for vehicles, including refuse vehicles, to ensure that all vehicles enter and exit the site in a forward gear.
3 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy

3.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 was adopted in December 2018 and is the key national land use planning policy document for Wales. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government’s land use planning policies with the aim to translate the Government’s commitment to sustainable development within the planning system. This is highlighted in the Introduction at paragraph 1.2, which details that the “primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales”, this should be considered during plan-making and decision-taking.

3.2 PPW provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 1.17). In this regard, it details that Local Planning Authorities should ensure that the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits of a proposed development are considered in the decision-making process, recognising that, in doing so, there may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal outweighs others. Key factors in the Local Planning Authority’s assessment process include:

- **Economic Considerations**
  Economic considerations include the contribution the proposed development makes to job creation, the growth and regeneration of the local area and the achievement of a more prosperous, low carbon, innovative and resource efficient Wales.

- **Social Considerations**
  Social considerations include the contribution the proposed development makes to meeting society’s needs (including housing), how people access employment, services and facilities and how they interact on a daily basis.

- **Cultural Considerations**
  Cultural considerations can include how far the proposal supports the provision of jobs and economic activity and how the area’s distinctive offer, including the Welsh language and landscape, is protected and promoted.

- **Environmental Considerations**
  Environmental considerations include how important features of the natural and built environment are protected and enhanced, how environmental risks are prevented or
appropriately managed and how efficient and most appropriate use of materials is made (e.g. by maximising energy efficiency, the efficient use of land and sustainable movement).

3.3 Planning Policy Wales specifically identifies the useful contribution that housing on infill and windfall sites can make to the delivery of housing stating, in paragraph 4.2.23, that proposals for housing on such sites within settlements should be supported where they accord with national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

Local Planning Policy

3.6 **Powys Local Development Plan**

Powys adopted its Local Development Plan (LDP) on the 17th April 2018. This document provides the local context in which planning applications should be assessed and determined. The LDP policies of most significant to the development proposal are as follows:

- **Strategic Policy SP1 – Housing Growth**
  This policy identifies that over the plan period 4,500 dwellings will be provided on a combination of sites, including both allocated sites and windfall sites that arise during the Plan period.

- **Strategic Policy SP5 – Settlement Hierarchy**
  Identifies that Four Crosses is designated as a ‘Large Village’ and therefore benefits from a ‘development boundary’ shown on the settlement’s LDP inset map.

- **Strategic Policy SP6 - Distribution of Growth across the Settlement Hierarchy**
  Identifies that a significant proportion of the housing development required over the Plan period will be in delivered in ‘Large Villages’ on committed sites, allocations and other suitable sites within the development boundary.

- **Policy H1 - Housing Development Proposals**
  As with Policy SP6, this policy details that Large Villages are a focus for housing development on sites within the development boundary or on logical extensions outside of the development boundary for affordable housing.

- **Policy H4 – Housing Density**
  Policy H4 details that development proposals should seek to make the most sustainable and efficient use of land and, in this regard, identifies density guidelines for housing developments including a density guideline of 20 to 25 dwellings per hectare on sites within Large Villages. The supporting text to policy H4 details that the density guidelines apply to all housing developments whether on allocated, windfall or exception sites. Nonetheless, the supporting text also identifies that the density of development should take into account the character of an area.
4 PLANNING APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material circumstances which ‘indicate otherwise’. The Development Plan in Powys consists of the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP).

4.2 The LDP has an ambitious target for the provision of housing over the Development Plan period, as identified in Policy SP1. This target is to be met by the provision of housing on sites within development boundaries of settlements and also on exception sites that form logical extensions outside of development boundaries.

4.3 The proposed development is the provision of housing on a site within the development boundary of Four Crosses. Four Crosses is identified as being a ‘Large Village’ in the Plan’s settlement hierarchy and therefore a focus for housing development (Policy SP5). LDP Policies SP6 and H1 make clear that a proposal for housing development on a site within a ‘Large Village’ development boundary is, in principle, acceptable.

4.4 Policy H4 requires housing development in large villages to make most efficient use of land and indicates that, in large villages, density should be 27+ units per hectare. Whilst this application is in outline, it is for up to 12 dwellings with the indicative site layout illustrating how these dwellings may be accommodated on the site. The provision of 12 dwellings together with the existing dwelling Wychwood equates to 13 dwellings on a 0.514 hectare site (25 dwellings per hectare). This density of development is similar to, but greater than, the existing residential development ‘Y Clawdd’ directly opposite the application site. In addition, the proposed density of development is partially dictated by the site’s characteristics, including the need to retain ‘Wychwood’ and the need to provide access to the Sarn Wen Brook for maintenance. The proposed density of development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Policy H4.

Sustainable Development

4.5 As previously detailed, PPW states that the planning system provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.6 There are different dimensions to “sustainable” development: economic, social, cultural and environmental and it is considered that this development will contribute to all of these, as set out below:
- **Economic**
  The proposal will provide local employment during the construction phase and benefits the local economy through the use of local suppliers and services. The proposed dwellings will also accommodate additional residents in the community, within walking and cycling distance of the services and facilities provided in Four Crosses. Residents will therefore support local businesses and services such as the local public house, supermarket and Post Office.

- **Social**
  The development will make a significant contribution to Powys’ housing requirements including, the stock of affordable housing. Such provision will provide people with an appropriate level of residential accommodation to meet their needs and will therefore positively affect their health, well-being, quality of life and opportunities open to them. A proportion of the dwellings provided will be ‘affordable’ and will therefore assist in enabling local people to meet their housing needs within the area, ensuring that occupants continue to live within, and contribute to the vitality of, their local community. Additional residents in the local community also increase demand for, and therefore improve the resilience of, local community services, including the Primary School, Community Centre and Church.

- **Cultural**
  As previously detailed, cultural considerations include the provision of jobs and economic activity and how the Welsh language and landscape, is protected and promoted.
  The proposed development therefore provides cultural benefits through the creation of jobs during the construction phase of the scheme and will enable occupants of the proposed dwellings to support local community services and facilities and play an active role in community life. Whilst Four Crosses is not identified as a Welsh Language stronghold in the Local Development Plan, it is significant that the proposed dwellings will enable local people to remain within their community. The proposal is not considered to result in any unacceptable adverse landscape impact as the site lies within the built form of the settlement.

- **Environmental**
  The site is unaffected by any environmental constraints and no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts are therefore likely to arise as a result of the proposed development.

4.7 It is evident from the above information that the proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development and should be considered and determined in the context of Planning Policy Wales’ ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’.
5 CONCLUSION

5.1 This statement is submitted in support of an outline planning application for the development of up to 12 dwellings on land at Wychwood, Four Crosses.

5.2 The proposed development will contribute to the supply of open market and affordable dwellings on a site within the development boundary and built form of Four Crosses, a settlement identified as a focus for housing growth in the adopted Development Plan.

5.3 The application site is unconstrained and an indicative site layout is provided with the application that shows the site can adequately accommodate the proposed level of development.

5.4 No unacceptable adverse impacts have been identified as arising from the proposed development and the provision of housing development on the site complies with both national and local planning policy. The proposal also directly accords with the different dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, cultural and environmental, and should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development provided in Planning Policy Wales.

5.5 In view of the above we believe that the application should be supported.