

*Hybrid Planning Application for full planning permission for the construction of a foodstore (use class A1), an employment unit (use classes B1/B2/B8) and associated car parking, landscaping, servicing and access; and outline planning permission for the development of employment units (use class B1/B2/B8) with all matters reserved*

# *Welsh Language Statement*

## *Incorporating Community and Linguistic Statement*

### **Pre-Consultation Draft**

**Aldi Stores Limited**

Land off the A525 (Lon Gwernydd), Ruthin, Denbighshire



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# 1 Introduction

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1.1 This Welsh Language Statement has been prepared on behalf of Aldi Stores Limited in support of their hybrid planning application described on the application form as follows:

*“Hybrid planning consent for:*

*1) full planning permission for the construction of a foodstore (use class A1), an employment unit (use classes B1/B2/B8) and associated car parking, landscaping, servicing and access; and*

*2) outline planning permission for the development of employment units (use class B1/B2/B8) with all matters reserved”*

1.2 This Assessment should be read alongside the supporting documents submitted with the full planning application.

1.3 Both national and local planning policy recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a planning matter stating that;

*‘The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being will depend upon a wide range of factors, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities and places. The land use planning system should take account of the conditions which are essential to the Welsh language and in so doing contribute to its, use and the Thriving Welsh Language well-being goal.’*

1.4 The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric of Wales. It is spoken by 19% of the population, and many others have some knowledge of the language or are in the process of learning it. There are substantial variations between the proportions of Welsh speakers in different communities, ranging from less than 8% in Blaenau Gwent to more than 85% in some parts of Gwynedd<sup>2</sup>.

1.5 As detailed in this document, local planning policy requires that a Community and Statement be provided in support of an application for development of the scale proposed.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 3.25 of PPW10

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 1.7.1 of TAN 20

## 2 Policy Review

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2.1 This Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the advice contained within the following policies and key advisory documents:

- Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (December 2018);
- Technical Advice Note 20 (October 2017) – Planning and the Welsh Language;
- Denbighshire Local Development Plan (June 2013); and
- Denbighshire Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh language (March 2014).

### **Planning Policy Wales**

2.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies for the Welsh Assembly Government and is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notices (TANs) of which TAN 20 specifically refers to planning and the Welsh Language.

2.3 Paragraph 3.25 of the PPW states that “*The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being will depend upon a wide range of factors, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities and places.*”

2.4 Paragraph 3.28 goes on to state that considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be taken into account by decision makers so far as they are material to applications for planning permission. Policies and decisions must not introduce any element of discrimination between individuals on the basis of their linguistic ability.

### **Technical Advice Note 20 – Planning and the Welsh Language**

2.5 The Technical Advice Note (TAN 20) provides guidance on how the Welsh language may be given appropriate consideration in the planning system and on compliance with the requirements of planning and other relevant legislation.

2.6 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It contains seven well-being goals which certain public bodies (including local authorities and National Park authorities) must seek to achieve in order to improve well-being both now and in the future. One of the well-being goals is a Wales of vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language.

2.7 The land use planning system should, where feasible and relevant, contribute to the future well-being of the Welsh language by establishing the conditions to allow sustainable communities to thrive.

2.8 Development plan policies that consider the Welsh language are material considerations. The TAN confirms that LPAs should determine planning applications in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In determining individual planning applications and appeals, considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be

taken into account so far as they are material. The Planning Act does not give any additional weight to the Welsh language above any other material consideration and decisions on all applications for planning permission must be based on planning grounds only and be reasonable.

## Denbighshire Local Development Plan

- 2.9 The Development Plan for Denbighshire comprises of the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006 – 2021 adopted in June 2013.
- 2.10 The LPD recognises that although there has been a small increase in numbers of Welsh speakers in urban areas, there has been a decrease in numbers of Welsh speakers in other communities in line with national trends. The LDP seeks to retain the distinctive bilingual nature of the County as set out in Objective 7 of the LDP ‘Welsh Language’.
- 2.11 Policy RD 5 of the LDP ‘The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities’ outlines the measures Denbighshire County Council will take in relation to the Welsh Language and states that in all planning applications ‘the needs and interests of the Welsh language will be taken into account’.
- 2.12 In order to assist the Council in their decision making, Policy RD5 requires that all applications be supported by a Community Linguistic Statement (CLS) for smaller proposals or a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment (CLIA) for larger applications. The threshold for the provision of a CLS is ‘5 residential units or more, commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more, development likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities, infrastructure projects with long term community impacts’ and the threshold for the provision of a CILA is ‘20 residential units or more, commercial, industrial or leisure/tourism development with a floor area of 3000m<sup>2</sup> or more, large scale infrastructure projects with long term community impacts’.
- 2.13 Policy RD5 also requires that ‘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’.
- 2.14 Detailed advice and guidance is set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh language set out below.
- 2.15 **Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh Language**
- 2.16 In addition to the Development Plan, the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) regarding Planning and the Welsh Language was adopted by Denbighshire County Council in March 2014.
- 2.17 The SPG published by Denbighshire County Council seeks to provide clear and concise guidance to support policies in the LDP, the SPG Planning and the Welsh Language has been published in support of LDP Policy RD5.
- 2.18 The SPG states that in most cases, mitigation will be sought rather than refusing applications on linguistic reasons alone.

- 2.19 For smaller developments, a Community and Linguistic Statement will be required. This statement will allow the developer to explain the proposal in more detail and explore the positive and negative impact of the proposed development on the Welsh language. It is acknowledged that smaller developments are not normally anticipated to have a negative impact on the Welsh language.
- 2.20 Detailed guidance on the preparation of CLSs is provided in Appendix 3 which highlights a number of topics to consider in relation to the impact of development on the Welsh language.

### **Summary**

- 2.21 The policy review indicates that land use planning and the location of new development has a role to play in the future of the Welsh language although a range of other factors are more likely to have a greater impact.
- 2.22 Although, in line with PPW and TAN20 policies, there is a need to understand the impact of new development on the existing Welsh language and culture within the area.
- 2.23 As such the adopted SPG acknowledges that mitigation measures will be sought to address Welsh language and culture issues resulting from new development proposals.
- 2.24 Furthermore, the proposed development exceeds the lowest threshold set out in Policy RD5 but falls under the second, higher threshold. As such a Community and Linguistic Statement is required. This approach has been confirmed by Officers at Denbighshire County Council during pre-application discussions.

## 3 Description of the Site and Surrounding Area

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- 3.1 The application site is located adjacent to the town of Ruthin which lies within the administrative boundaries of Denbighshire County Council (DCC) which is the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the County. The site lies on the fringe of the town, adjacent to an industrial estate and Ruthin Farmers Market which play important roles within the town.
- 3.2 The application site extends to 3.63Ha (8.97 acres) of land currently in agricultural use (improved grazing). The site is approximately rectangular in shape and is bounded by the A525 (known locally as Lon Gwernydd) to the west, Lon Cae Brics (Brickfield Lane) to the north, a minor watercourse to the east and farmland and the Ruthin Famers Market to the south. The wider area is dominated by employment and agricultural uses to the north, east and west and residential and educational uses to the south of the site. A three-arm roundabout is located a short distance to the south of the site which distributes traffic between the Ruthin North Link Road (A525) running east into the north of Ruthin and the town centre, Denbigh Road running south to the west of Ruthin, the town centre and settlements to the west of the town such as Llanfwrog and A525 (Lon Gwernydd) running north from Ruthin to Denbigh.
- 3.3 The application site is generally flat and lies below the level of the A525 which runs along the top of an embankment. There is a difference in land levels of circa 2.5m to 3m. The site is clear of vegetation with the exception of the improved grazing land however the eastern boundary includes mature vegetation following the line of a small watercourse. The southern, northern and part of the western boundaries are formed by mature hedgerows. The northern and southern boundaries also include a number of mature trees. A telegraph line runs along the western boundary. Access to the site is currently provided by a small field gate at the junction of the A525 and Brickfield Lane and a second field access providing access to the fields to the south of the site.
- 3.4 As detailed above, this hybrid application seeks part full and part outline consent for a range of retail and employment uses. Part A of the application relates to the elements for which full permission is sought and includes a foodstore (use class A1) an employment unit and an estate road into the site. (use class B1/B2/B8). Part B of the application seeks outline consent for a range of employment units falling within use classes B1/B2/B8with all matters reserved.

## 4 The Proposal

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4.1 This Statement is submitted in support of an application for hybrid planning consent, i.e. an application for part full planning permission, part outline planning permission. The description of development is set out as following on the application form:

*“Hybrid planning consent for:*

*1) full planning permission for the construction of a foodstore (use class A1), an employment unit (use classes B1/B2/B8) and associated car parking, landscaping, servicing and access; and*

*2) outline planning permission for the development of employment units (use class B1/B2/B8) with all matters reserved”*

4.2 The Planning Statement submitted in support of this application sets out the description of development in detail as follows.

4.3 Part 1 will consist of the following elements:

- At Plot 1, a new A1 foodstore comprising of:
  - A new A1 foodstore extending to 1,864sq.m gross external area, providing 1,786sq.m gross internal area and providing 1,315sq.m gross sales area, entrance area and canopy, trolley bay, plant area, back of house areas and loading bay;
  - 135 parking spaces including eight disabled spaces and nine parent and child spaces with associated circulation areas, pedestrian routes and ancillary parking infrastructure;
  - 12 cycle hoops offering parking provision for 24 bicycles;
  - Vehicular and pedestrian site access to internal estate road;
  - A service yard incorporating a 25m diameter turning area for HGVs and six staff parking spaces;
  - A totem sign, details of which will be addressed in a subsequent application for advertisement consent; and
  - Landscaping and boundary treatments
- At Plot 2, a new B2/B8 unit comprising of:
  - A single building extending to 716sq.m gross external area divided into three units which has the potential to be amalgamated to allow one or two units dependent on occupier interest:
    - Unit 1A offering 281sq.m to fall within use classes B1/B2/B8;
    - Unit 1B offering 186sq.m to fall within use classes B1/B2/B8;
    - Unit 1C offering 186sq.m to fall within use classes B1/B2/B8;
  - A communal parking and servicing area comprising of a 25m diameter service spin, 10 parking spaces including two disabled spaces;
  - Six cycle hoops providing storage for 12 bicycles;
  - A retaining structure to the rear of the units allowing for pedestrian access and bin store;
  - Vehicular and pedestrian access; and
  - Landscaping and boundary treatments



- Ancillary development consisting of:
  - A new vehicular and pedestrian access to the (A525);
  - Internal estate road, pedestrian routes and pedestrian crossings to allow future access to areas of the site to be developed at later stages (currently forming the outline element of the application);
  - Site levelling works; and
  - Landscaping and boundary treatments.

4.4 Part 2 of the application will consist of the development of circa seven further employment units to be occupied within uses B1/B2/B8. This phase of the development is proposed in outline with all matters reserved however the applicant has provided an indicative site layout in order to demonstrate that the proposed outline elements are feasible within the site. The indicative layout allows for B1/B2/B8 use class accommodation as follows:

- Unit 2 GIA – 570sq.m GEA – 620sq.m
- Unit 3 GIA – 423sq.m GEA – 460sq.m
- Unit 4 GIA – 893sq.m GEA – 954sq.m
- Unit 5 GIA – 661sq.m GEA – 716sq.m
- Unit 6 GIA – 376sq.m GEA – 416sq.m
- Unit 7 GIA – 1110sq.m GEA – 1,197sq.m
- Unit 8 GIA – 466sq.m GEA – 507sq.m

4.5 The above indicative layout would yield a total of 4,870sq.m GEA or 4,499 sq.m GIA. The final floorspace will be fixed in a future reserved matters application.

4.6 Part B will consist of outline consent for B1, B2 and B8 uses on the remaining site with all matters reserved with the exception of access which is addressed in this application.

4.7 It should be noted that as the elements set out in Part 2 of the application are proposed in outline and the figures detailed above, the floorspaces are indicative only and cannot be used as justification for the requirement to provide a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment. The total floorspace proposed as part of this application is 2,580sq.m GEA comprising of 1,864sq.m GEA A1 foodstore and 716sq.m GEA employment unit.

4.8 The proposed site layout is informed by the design parameters of the site, such as access to the A525, site topography and need to maximise development on site constrained by development viability.

4.9 The proposed orientation of the building allows the service area of the store to be positioned to the rear of the foodstore, for sufficient servicing to be provided for the first employment unit while not prejudicing the delivery of future employment development.

## 5 Welsh Language Assessment

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### Assessment Methodology

- 5.1 This section of the Statement will examine the impact of the proposed development in accordance with the criteria contained within Appendix 3 of the 'Planning and the Welsh Language' SPG published by Denbighshire County Council and with regards to LDP Policy RD5 and national planning policy included in PPW and TAN 20.
- 5.2 The assessment methodology comprises a series of questions to allow the developer and Local Planning Authority to make an assessment of the likely impact of a development proposal against four key areas:
- Community Engagement;
  - Population Profile;
  - Development Characteristics; and
  - Positive Promotional Mitigation Measures.
- 5.3 Each issue identified in Appendix 3 is considered in turn below, providing as much information as possible in order to inform the Council's decision-making process.

### Community Engagement

- 5.4 The SPG provides the following guidance in relation to Community Engagement:

*'Demonstrate how you have consulted and engaged the local community on your proposals. This may range from consulting neighbours, community and voluntary groups, the Community Council or statutory organisations such as the Council. You should provide a short statement of the engagement and the opinion of those who have responded. This is your opportunity to share and explain your proposals with the local community before a formal application is made and if possible to seek their endorsement. The success of the planning application will not solely depend on community acceptance'*

- 5.5 In line with legislation (Planning (Wales) Act 2015), the applicant is currently undertaking a detailed pre-application consultation (PAC). The applicant has made a copy of all documents available to the Council and online via a dedicated website.
- 5.6 The applicant is also convening a pre-application consultation event on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at the Llanfrog Community Centre. Invitations have been sent to a broad range of local residents, elected members and other interested parties. On completion of this event and the PAC exercise, a detailed Scheme of Community Involvement (SCI) will be provided and the relevant findings provided in the final version of this document. The summary will include the reaction of the attendees to the proposed development as required by the SPG.

## Population Profile

5.7 The SPG provides the following guidance in relation to assessing Population Profile:

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

*Using the information gathered and your knowledge of the proposal you should be able to answer the questions below’.*

5.8 As part of the detailed retail planning assessment carried out as part of this planning application, the applicant has assessed a range of demographics and has assumed a catchment area for the proposed foodstore. As such, it is likely that the proposed development’s impact will be limited to these areas. The areas within the catchment are based on Denbighshire County Council wards and are as follows:

- Ruthin
- Llandyrnog (partial ward)
- Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd/Llangynhafal
- Llanarmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla
- Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern
- Efenechtyd

5.9 The SPG document provides up-to-date statistics for Welsh language use on a Community Council basis which partially correlate to the wards identified above.

Ward	Community Council	Population 2011	Population 2001	% Born In Wales 2011	% Welsh Speakers 2011	% Welsh Speak 2001	% Welsh Speak 1991
Ruthin	Ruthin	5,461	4,298	68%	42%	43%	44%
Llandyrnog (partial ward)	Llandyrnog	1,096	971	63%	33%	35%	34%
Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd/Llangynhafal	Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd	787	847	46%	31%	32%	28%
	Llangynhafal	634	660	60%	37%	37%	35%
Llanarmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla	Llanarmon-yn-Ial	1,062	1,078	49%	26%	25%	25%
	Llandegla	567	508	50%	27%	34%	28%
Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern	Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd	1,053	1,058	60%	48%	50%	58%
	Gwyddelwern	500	501	65%	61%	69%	69%
Efenechtyd	Efenechtyd	655	610	66%	55%	54%	51%
	Total/Average	11,815	10,531	58%	40%	42%	41%
	Denbighshire	93,734	93,102	58%	25%		

5.10 As detailed above, the proportion of the population in the catchment born within Wales is consistent with the average for Denbighshire at 58% however the average proportion of Welsh speakers in the catchment area is considerably higher than the average for Denbighshire; 40% of residents within the catchment are as opposed to 25% in Denbighshire as a whole. As such, although the proportion of Welsh speakers in this area is falling over time, the rate at which this metric is falling is in line with the national average, the proportion of Welsh speakers is high and it is considered that Welsh language and culture is relatively robust within this area in comparison to other areas within Denbighshire.

#### Development Characteristics

5.11 The SPG provides the following guidance in relation to assessing Development Characteristics:

*Describe the proposal and why you consider it complies with local and national policies. As a starting point you should clearly demonstrate that the proposal is compatible with the Denbighshire LDP. This should be done by not simply listing the policies and objectives of the Plan but include a fuller justification of the proposals and how they positively contribute to the implementation of the Plan. You should therefore be able to address and provide an answer to the following questions;*

5.12 The proposal is described in detail and addressed against local and national planning policy in the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application.

5.13 The SPD includes additional questions to be considered which are answered in turn below.

*Will the proposal create new opportunities to promote the language and local initiatives in the community?*

5.14 Aldi seek to employ Welsh speakers wherever possible and encourage Welsh speakers to converse with customers in Welsh.

*Are there appropriate local services such as shops, residential/community facilities to serve the development?*

5.15 Yes. The proposed development will provide a new discounter foodstore. The Retail Impact Assessment has found a quantitative and qualitative need for such a development in the local area. The store will benefit the employees of the proposed and surrounding employment units and neighbouring use such as the Farmers Market.

*Is the proposal sustainable in the long term?*

5.16 Yes. The Retail Impact Assessment has shown there is sufficient convenience goods expenditure with the catchment to sustain the proposed store going forward. There has also been shown to be an identified need for smaller commercial premises however due to the cost of installing a new access road, the site has not been developed. The inclusion of the foodstore allows the site to be brought forward.

*Is there adequate infrastructure provision to serve the development?*

5.17 Yes. The proposed development includes a sub-station to serve the site and utilities providers have confirmed there is sufficient capacity to serve the development.

*Does the employment meet primarily local needs, especially younger age groups?*

5.18 Yes. The employment related development is anticipated to generate 18 jobs as part of the full application and a further 122 jobs (estimated) as a result of the outline element of the application. The proposed retail element of the application will generate up to 40 jobs across a range of roles and skill levels, although it is not considered to be an employment use. Aldi provide graduate and apprenticeship roles targeted at younger age groups.

*How many jobs will be created or safeguarded?*

5.19 A total of 58 jobs will be created as part of the first stage of development (foodstore and Unit 1) with a further 122 jobs to be provided from the remainder of the site.

*Are the required labour skills available locally?*

5.20 Yes. Aldi provide training for all new recruits including apprentices, graduate roles and managerial training.

*Are there other similar developments with planning permission in the area?*

5.21 No. There is demonstrable market demand for small commercial premises and a discounter foodstore.

*Is the proposal likely to result in further investment? of a similar kind?*

5.22 Yes. The proposed development will open up the wider application site for development. The inclusion of the foodstore has subsidised the construction of the access to the site. It has been demonstrated that employment development alone would not be sufficient to develop a new access to the site. The access road will therefore act as a catalyst for future development.

*Is training required to re-skill the local workforce and will this include Welsh language training by the developer?*

5.23 Aldi seek to employ Welsh speakers within all developments in Wales. Welsh speakers are encouraged to converse with customers in Welsh where appropriate.

*How will new wage levels compare with the average wage levels in the area?*

5.24 Aldi pay the national living wage.

Positive Promotional Mitigation Measures.

5.25 The SPG provides the following guidance in relation to assessing Positive Mitigation:

*'There may be several opportunities for a developer to positively contribute to maintain thriving local communities. If after completing the work on the statement it indicates a potential negative impact on a community. Certain promotional or mitigation measures associated with the proposal might offset these weaknesses.'*

- 5.26 All Aldi's stores in Wales include signage in the Welsh language, including store opening hours, directional signage within the car park and store etc. and Welsh speakers are encouraged to engage with customers in Welsh.
- 5.27 Aldi seek to stock Welsh products where possible and promote locally sourced and Welsh products within the store in order to promote and strengthen Welsh identity and culture. Examples of such products include Welsh lamb, Welsh potatoes and Welsh butter.
- 5.28 Aldi seek to work closely with the local communities which they serve and from which their customers and employees are drawn from. Such initiatives include sponsorship of sports teams, supporting local causes and charitable donations.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.29 It is considered that the proposed development will have a positive impact on the Welsh language and on Welsh culture. The proposed development will provide an opportunity for local residents, many of whom are Welsh speakers to live and shop regularly without the need to travel significant distances.

## 6 Summary and Conclusions

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6.1 This Welsh Language Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Aldi Stores Limited in respect of their hybrid planning application which seeks full planning permission for an employment unit and A1 foodstore along with ancillary development such as a new access to the A525 and outline planning permission of further employment development.

6.2 The total floorspace of the proposed development is over the 1,000sq.m threshold which requires a Community and Linguistic Statement (CLS) but below the 3,000sq.m threshold for which a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment is required. As such a CLS has been prepared. This approach was agreed with officers of Denbighshire County Council during pre-application advice discussions.

6.3 This Statement considered the impact the proposed development will have on Welsh language and culture and is summarised as follows:

- Welsh language speakers are employed wherever possible and are encouraged to converse with customers in Welsh;
- Aldi seeks to employ staff from the surrounding area across all grades including apprenticeships, graduate jobs and management and provides training across all grades. Aldi also pay over the minimum wage;
- Aldi stock and promote Welsh produce wherever possible;
- Welsh signage is included in all stores in Wales;
- Ruthin and the surrounding area benefits from a higher incidence of Welsh speakers than the Denbighshire and National averages. Welsh culture and the Welsh language is considered to be robust in the surrounding area; and
- Aldi will undertake a detailed Pre-Application Consultation including a community consultation event in order to assess support within the community.

6.4 Having regard to the assessment carried out in this Statement, it is concluded that the proposed development will have a positive impact upon the Welsh Language in the local area. As such, it is considered that the proposed development accords with PPW, TAN20 RD5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan and the guidance set out in the Planning and the Welsh Language SPG.





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