PLANNING STATEMENT

Including Design and Access Issues

Clients: Mrs A. E. Webb, Mr. D. H Sigley Ferns, and Mr. M. J Sigley-Brown

Location: Land to west of Whitehaven & at the front of Wyn Dene, Leek Road, Longsdon, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9QF.

Proposal: Outline planning application for the erection of two houses on the eastern part of the site; the closure of two existing access points onto Leek Road; and the construction in the front garden of Wyn Dene of a new shared access onto Leek Road to serve the two proposed houses, Wyn Dene and a fourth house which already has planning permission (Council ref: SMD/2014/0748). The work includes the re-alignment of the access to the proposed house; and the creation of a field access track on Plot 2;

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk
December 2016

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This outline application is submitted for the residential use of, and the construction of two houses on the eastern part of the site and the construction of a new shared access on the western part of the site together with the closure of two existing accesses, the construction of a field access on Plot 2, and the re-alignment of the approved access to a house approved by planning permission SMD/2015/0634.

2 APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SETTING

2.1 The application site consists of land in two ownerships – the western part of the site belongs to the owner of Wyn Dene and the eastern part to the applicants. The western part of the application site is part of the front garden of Wyn Dene. The eastern part of the application site is a former field which is a mixture of marshy grassland, semi-improved neutral, species-rich grassland, and continuous willow scrub which is beginning to colonize the entire site. Details of the species on this site are provided in the ecology report submitted with the application.

2.2 There is a continuous species-rich hedge or row of mainly hawthorn trees along the road frontage and a similar species-rich hedge or row of trees along the eastern side of the site. The front garden of Wyn Dene has two existing access points onto Leek Road at the eastern and western extremities ends of the road frontage and consists mainly of lawn with a row of heavily pruned lime trees along the frontage and occasional mature trees in the lawns and around the site. Details of the trees on the application site are provided in the tree schedule and Drawing No. THL-0464 submitted with the application.

3 PLANNING HISTORY AND PLANNING POLICY

Planning history:

3.1 In the last five years there have been the following applications on the two pieces of land that comprise the application site:

- *Wyn Dene:*
    - SMD/2014/0748 – Approval with conditions of a full application for the erection of a single dwelling between Wyn Dene and the next-door house, “Nearacre”, to the west. This house has not yet been built.

    - DOC/2015/0073 – Discharge of pre-commencement conditions on SMD/2015/0748.

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

Land adjacent to Whitehaven:

- SMD/2015/0634 - Outline planning permission refused for the erection of two dwellings. This was refused for three reasons, namely that:
  - The proposed houses were inappropriate in the Green Belt and were contrary to Core Strategy policy SS6b;
  - The proposed two houses would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would be contrary to Core Strategy policy DC1.
  - The proposed access was unsafe.

Planning Policy

3.2 The relevant Development Plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (adopted 2014). The application site is in the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration; in particular the Green Belt policies in the Framework.

3.3 Relevant policies in the Core Strategy include policies:

- SS6b - Smaller Villages Strategy;
- H1 - New Housing Development;
- R2 - Rural Housing;
- DC1 - Design Considerations
- T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport.

3.4 The policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with the pertinent Development Plan policies are set out in more detail, where relevant, in the "Case for the Proposed Development" later in the Statement.

4 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The application seeks outline permission for the residential use of the land including a new shared access with Wyn Dene and the proposed house to the west of Wyn Dene. Two existing accesses on the application site will be permanently closed and blocked and the existing western access at Wyn Dene widened to provide a single shared access. The hedges on the road frontage and on the eastern side of the site would be retained to provide a screen and for nature conservation and landscape reasons. Access to a field to the south is to be provided on the south-western side of Plot 2 as without it the field would be landlocked and could not be used for grazing.

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

5 DESIGN ISSUES

5.1 **Appearance, Scale**, **Layout and Landscaping:**
These are matters for a future reserved matters application and do not form part of this application. The submitted Site Plan is purely indicative. The suggested houses are detached and would probably contain four or more bedrooms.

5.2 **Access** – a new shared access would be provided in the western part of the front garden of Wyn Dene. The new access would serve Wyn Dene, the new house to the west of Wyn Dene and the houses on the land adjacent to Wyn Dene.

5.3 The shared access has been discussed with the Highway Authority and the present proposal is considered acceptable and safe by the Authority. The two accesses onto Leek Road which are to be closed are a gateway in the north-east of the site and the eastern entrance to Wyn Dene.

6 THE CASE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The issues addressed are:

- Green Belt policy
- Core Strategy policy SS6b.
- Core Strategy policy DC1 (Design Considerations)
- Core Strategy policy T1. Access
- Ecology
- Trees
- Residential amenity
- Deliverable housing land supply

Each of the issues is dealt with in turn.

Green Belt policy and Core Strategy policy SS6b.

6.2 These two policies are considered together as the application site is in an area where both apply. It is the applicant's contention that the proposal is in accord with both national Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF and with Core Strategy for the reasons set out next.

6.3 The Core Strategy for the Moorlands does not contain a specific Green Belt policy and the national Green Belt policies as set out in the NPPF apply. New buildings in the Green Belt are considered inappropriate apart from certain listed exceptions which include "limited infilling in villages".

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

6.5 In the previous Local Plan the Green Belt washed over Longsdon and there was no development or settlement boundary for the village. In policy SS6b of the Core Strategy Longsdon is designated as a smaller village where new housing which meets a local need is acceptable and where such housing would be within a tightly drawn Infill Development Boundary which would accommodate infilling or redevelopment but would prevent peripheral expansion. This new housing can include both open-market and affordable housing; see paragraph 8.1.65 in the supporting text to the policy. However, these infill development boundaries have not yet been defined.

6.6 The key question is whether the proposed development is limited infilling and therefore appropriate development in the Green Belt and whether the proposed housing meets a local need.

6.7 It is the applicants' contention that the present proposal constitutes limited infilling and is in accord with NPPF Green Belt policy. The residential part of the site lies between two existing houses; the proposed access is within an existing domestic curtilage; and the proposal is for two houses only and not for more extensive development. Part of the site is an existing area of domestic curtilage within this landscape.

6.8 The application site lies within the loose ribbon of residential development on this, the south side, of Leek Road. The proposed development would be a continuation of an established linear pattern of development. The principle of allowing infill development in this ribbon of development and within the village was accepted by the Council in 2014 with the grant of planning permission for the proposed house to the immediate west of Wyn Dene. The application was considered acceptable in terms of the Development Plan (see Informative 1 on the decision).

6.9 The issues of scale, layout and design are dealt with later in this Statement.

6.10 It is contended that the lack of an infill Development Boundary should not prevent development which is in accord with the National Policy Planning Framework. The first revisions to the Local Plan were published in the year 2000 and yet sixteen years later there is no specific guidance as to where new residential development can be located in Longsdon. It may be some time before this guidance is available. To restrict new housing at a time when the District has a significant shortage of deliverable housing land would be unreasonable given that the site is located on a main road and bus route between Hanley and Leek and close to the church and village hall and pub.

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

6.11 Policy SS6b seeks to enable “new housing development which meets a local need including affordable housing”. “Local need” is not defined in the Core Strategy. It could be either “local” relating to the District as a whole or “local” in terms of the Parish. The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance “Housing for Local People and Affordable Housing (2005)” defines a “local person” on a District-wide level and not a Parish level. It is the applicant’s contention that in this case that local need relates to the District as a whole and not just Longsdon. The reasons for this contention are:

- The significant lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing land and the need for housing across the entire District.

- During the consultation on the emerging Local Plan the proposal for Longsdon consisted of a site for 13 houses plus a further constrained site for 5 houses. The target housing figure for Longsdon in the consultation was 20 houses for the period up to 2031. It is unlikely that this figure was produced based on the local needs of the Parish alone. The consultation also revealed that the local residents preferred limited infill development in the village compared to larger scale developments.

6.12 Even if “local need” refers to the village’s needs alone the only target figure appears to be that mentioned in the emerging Local Plan consultation and it is unlikely that this need has been met. The status of this target figure is also uncertain.

6.13 In addition, in two recent permissions for development in Longsdon there has not been any requirement that the houses should be for local need or affordable. These permissions are the one to the west of Wyn Dene and one at the former New Inn (SMD/2016/0542) where permission was given for the conversion of the former New Inn into residential use and the erection of two houses.

Design Considerations

6.11 Core Strategy policy DC1 requires, amongst other things that new development must be of a high quality and be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout and landscaping, character and appearance. Whilst all these issues are reserved for future approval the indicative Site Plan shows that the plot sizes and the suggested house sizes are not out of character and the retention of the two hedges and trees on the residential part of the site and the retention of many of the trees on the part of the site in front of Wyn Dene are to be retained.

6.12 The suggested houses on the indicative site plan are similar in size to the house that has been approved to the west of Wyn Dene and to the houses beyond that to the

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

west. The proposed plot sizes, whilst smaller than some of the houses to the south of Leek Road, are still large and are approximately similar in size to the two houses to the east – Whitehaven and High View. There is also a shared access at Whitehaven and High View which includes access to a telephone exchange.

6.13 The residential part of the application site fronts onto Leek Road and has a generous length of roadside frontage. The mature hedge alongside the frontage screens most of the residential part of the site from view from the road and the visual impact of the proposed houses would as a result be limited. It is proposed that the hedge would be retained.

The proposed access

6.14 Discussions have taken place with Mr. Plant at Staffordshire Council and the submitted scheme has been agreed with Mr. Plant. The proposed sight-lines are shown on the submitted plans – 1447-01 and 1447-02. The drawings also show that the existing western access is to be widened and that the two other existing accesses on the site would be permanently blocked improving highway safety whilst serving the existing house and the three proposed houses through one access with acceptable sight-lines. As such the proposal is in accord with Core Strategy policy T1.

Ecology

6.14 The extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey (October 2015) report submitted with the application reveals that part of the proposed residential site contains semi-improved neutral grassland and that the hedges along the northern and eastern boundaries are species-rich. Whilst neither the semi-improved grassland nor the two hedges are protected the applicant proposes to retain the two hedges and if required is willing to prepare a mitigation scheme which might involve some of the land edged blue. The retention of the hedges could be covered by condition as could the mitigation scheme.

6.15 On the previous application on the land adjacent to Whitehaven the Council's ecologist had no objection subject to conditions relating to great crested newts, bats and a vegetation survey. All these requirements could be met through the suggested mitigation scheme.

Trees

6.16 None of the trees on the site are protected by Tree Preservation Order or are in a Conservation Area. The Site Plan (No. 1447-02) shows the tree which are to be removed and those which are to be retained. All but two trees on the site (T1 and T25) are Category "C" (low value) trees apart from one which is Category "U" (poor).

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk

6.17 The trees to be removed are:

- T2 & T3 – two European larches which would be affected by intrusion into their Root Protection Areas by the proposed re-alignment access to the proposed house to the west of Wyn Dene and the proposed turning head there.
- T4-T6. Pollarded limes.
- T19 & T20 – a larch and a birch.
- T22 – a Common Alder.

6.18 As can be seen on the Tree Schedule several of the trees require work on them but this is a matter for the landowners.

6.19 **Residential Amenity.**

6.20 The proposal is a joint scheme with the owner of Wyn Dene and as such the owner has considered any potential impact on residential amenity from the proposed access to be acceptable. There would still be a substantial garden in front of Wyn Dene.

Housing Land Supply

6.21 The NPPF requires that each local planning authority should have a minimum of five years supply of deliverable housing land with a 20% buffer where there has been a persistent under delivery of housing which is the case in the Moorlands.

6.22 There is a significant shortage of deliverable housing land supply in the Moorlands. On 31st March 2016 there was 1.87 years supply of deliverable housing land in the District compared to the need for five years supply plus 20%.

6.23 The lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing land in the District means that policies which restrict the location of for new housing development as well as those which provide positively for the delivery of new housing are out-of-date and as such should be given less weight (see NPPF para. 49). Such policies can include Green Belt policies and policy SS6b. This is based on the judgment in Richborough *Estates Partnership LLP v Cheshire East Borough Council and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government*.

6.24 Given the long-term and persistent shortage of deliverable housing land and the fact that the Council have been looking for new housing allocations for over 16 years it is contended that the proposed housing would bring material benefits to the District. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF indicates that where relevant policies are out-of-date local planning authorities should grant permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is the case here; the benefits significantly and demonstrably outweigh disbenefits, if there are in any.

KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd, 31A, St. Edward Street, Leek, ST13 5DN
T – 01538 386 808 M – 0796 877 4785 Email: ken@sgaplanners.co.uk