CHECKLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC CELLS

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a planning application to **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council** in respect of a proposed installation of photovoltaic cells on the roof of **Checkley Community Centre, Uttoxeter Road, Checkley, ST10 4NB.**

This Statement describes the proposed installation, its context and history and the design principles that have been adopted in the preparation of the plans.

The property does not lie within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, neither it in a Conservation Area. The building is not listed.

History of the Proposal

During 2008 representatives from Village Hall and Community Centre Committees across the District were invited to a meeting by the Council in Longsdon to discuss the issue of renewable energy. Representatives from Checkley Community Centre went to this meeting and having meet the renewable energy experts subsequently submitted a number of grant applications for the installation of photovoltaic cells onto the roof of the Community Centre.

Two grants have been successful subject to the granting of planning permission.

Appraising the Context

Checkley Community Centre is on the A522 between Tean and Fole on the road to Uttoxter. The Centre lies to the north of the road next to the Hutchinson Memorial School. The site benefits from a large car park and mature trees act as a boundary. The majority of the residential property lies to the south of the A522.

The roof is not overshadowed which would affect the efficiency of the PV cells.

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Description of the Building

The Community Centre is a single storey brick built building and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The building has a pitched roof (approximately 25°). The Centre is fully booked every day and provides a unique opportunity for a range of community groups and other users to meet in a pleasant and safe environment.



South Elevation - Main Entrance

Design Component

The existing building is not to be extended in any way by the proposals. An energy assessment has been carried out to determine the suitability of the building.

Use

This proposal is for the installation of 66no photovoltaic cells on the south facing roof of the Centre. The configuration is 4 rows of 14 panels with a row of 10 at the bottom.

Amount

Each cell measures 1,318mm by 994mm by 46mm deep, covering an area of 1.31m.

The array of cells would cover an area of approximately 92.4m2. Each cell weighs 16kg.

Approximately 45% of the south facing roof area would be covered and the cells will meet the electricity needs of the Centre (currently 11,500kw per year) and it is anticipated that the excess generated will be fed back into the national grid. The metering system will be housed internally to the building and the cables will lie in the loft space and will not be visible.

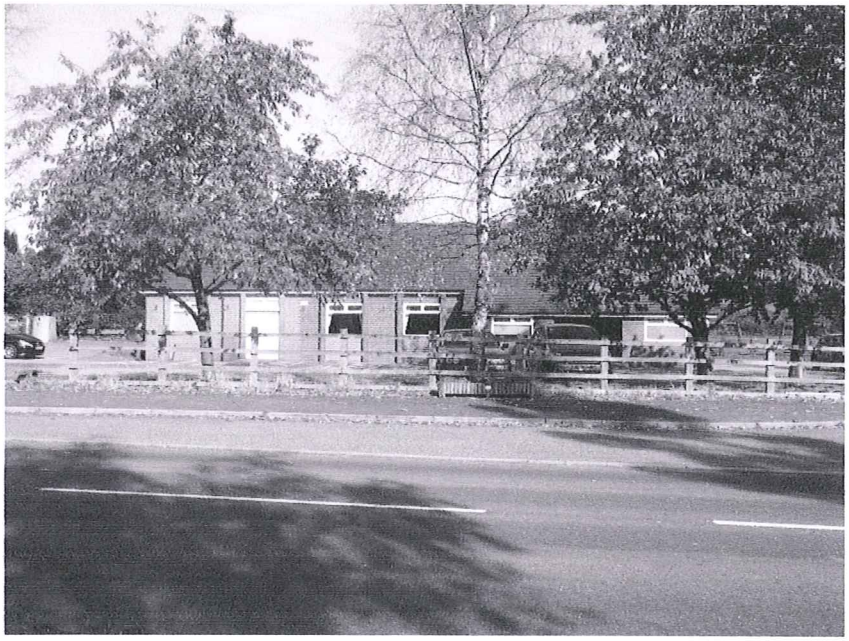
Layout and Scale

The cells will be cited in the centre of the roof as illustrated on the attached drawings.

Appearance and Fixing

The cells will sit approximately 46mm proud of the roof and will be fixed as per the manufacturers instructions.

The cells will be visible from the car park and the adjacent school. The Committee have indicated that the school are welcome view the cells as part of any relevant lessons.



View from the opposite side of the A522

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This aspect of the Community Centre on which the cells are to be located is not overlooked by any residential property. The nearest residential property is sited on the corner of New Road and Uttoxeter Road and benefits from a mature hedge and a garden area between the house and the road. There are no windows in this elevation.

Access

The installation of the cells will not impact on the access to the building from the car park and internally there will be no alterations required. The cells can be easily accessed for any future maintenance works.

National Planning Policy Guidance

PPS1

National planning guidance PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development", expects the delivery of high quality development that is appropriate to its context.

PPS1 Supplemental on Climate Change

This Guidance notes that in particular, planning authorities should:

– not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate either the overall need for renewable energy and its distribution, nor question the energy justification for why a proposal for such development must be sited in a particular location

– ensure any local approach to protecting landscape and townscape is consistent with PPS22 and does not preclude the supply of any type of renewable energy other than in the most exceptional circumstances

Para 30 states that *planning policies should support innovation and investment in sustainable buildings and should not, unless there are exceptional reasons, deter novel or cutting-edge developments*

PPS22 Planning for Renewable Energy

Small Scale Renewable Energy Developments

Para 1.1 states that renewable energy development should be encouraged in locations where the technology is viable and the environmental, social and economics impacts are satisfactorily addressed.

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Para 18 – states that small scale renewable energy schemes utilising technologies such as solar panels, Biomass heating, small scale wind turbines, photovoltaic cells and combined heat and power schemes can be incorporated both into new developments and some existing buildings. Local planning authorities should specifically encourage such schemes through positively expressed policies in local development documents (policy F8 of the Local Plan).

For the purposes of this PPS, renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass. Policies in this statement therefore cover technologies such as onshore wind generation, hydro, *photovoltaics*, passive solar, biomass and energy crops, energy from waste (but not energy from mass incineration of domestic waste), and landfill and sewage gas.

Regional Planning Guidance

The RSS notes that Solar energy can, in the short term, be used throughout the Region mostly for passive heating of buildings and for plans facilitate the use of photovoltaic electricity generation technology as this becomes more economic (para 8.51 – Energy Policies)

The policy is concerned with respect to this type of proposal with minimising impact on the landscape, amenity, neighbouring uses and existing occupiers. There are no traffic implications in relation to this proposal.

Local Plan 1998

Three key policies apply.

Policy F8 Renewable Energy

Planning permission will be granted for development for the generation of power from renewable energy sources, unless the site lies within the green belt, provided that it does not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape or surrounding land uses and creates no unacceptable amenity or noise problems for local residents. This is of particular importance in relation to conservation *areas and in open countryside.*

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N8 Special Landscape Area

In the special landscape area permission will not be given for development which would materially detract from the quality of the landscape because of its siting, scale, design and material and associated traffic generation.

N9 Special Landscape Area

Within the special landscape area the local planning authority will promote and require especially high standards of design for development.

There is no particular local design style in this location which would be affected by this proposal. The Centre does not have any special design features which would be affected. No additional traffic will be generated.

Policies N8 and N9 require that all development proposals within Special Landscape Areas are of a high quality design, taking into account factors such as siting, scale and materials.

Summary

This proposal represents a unique opportunity for a local community centre to play an active role in the sustainability agenda. A number of grants have been applied for and the success of these applications depends on the proposal gaining planning permission. Both the national and local planning policy agendas support the installation of photovoltaic cells. The building is not overlooked by any residential property and the adjacent school has not cited any objections to the proposal which would in any case have any adverse impact on the day to day operation of the school. Indeed the projects represents a showcase opportunity for communities to actively begin to reduce their carbon footprints.

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