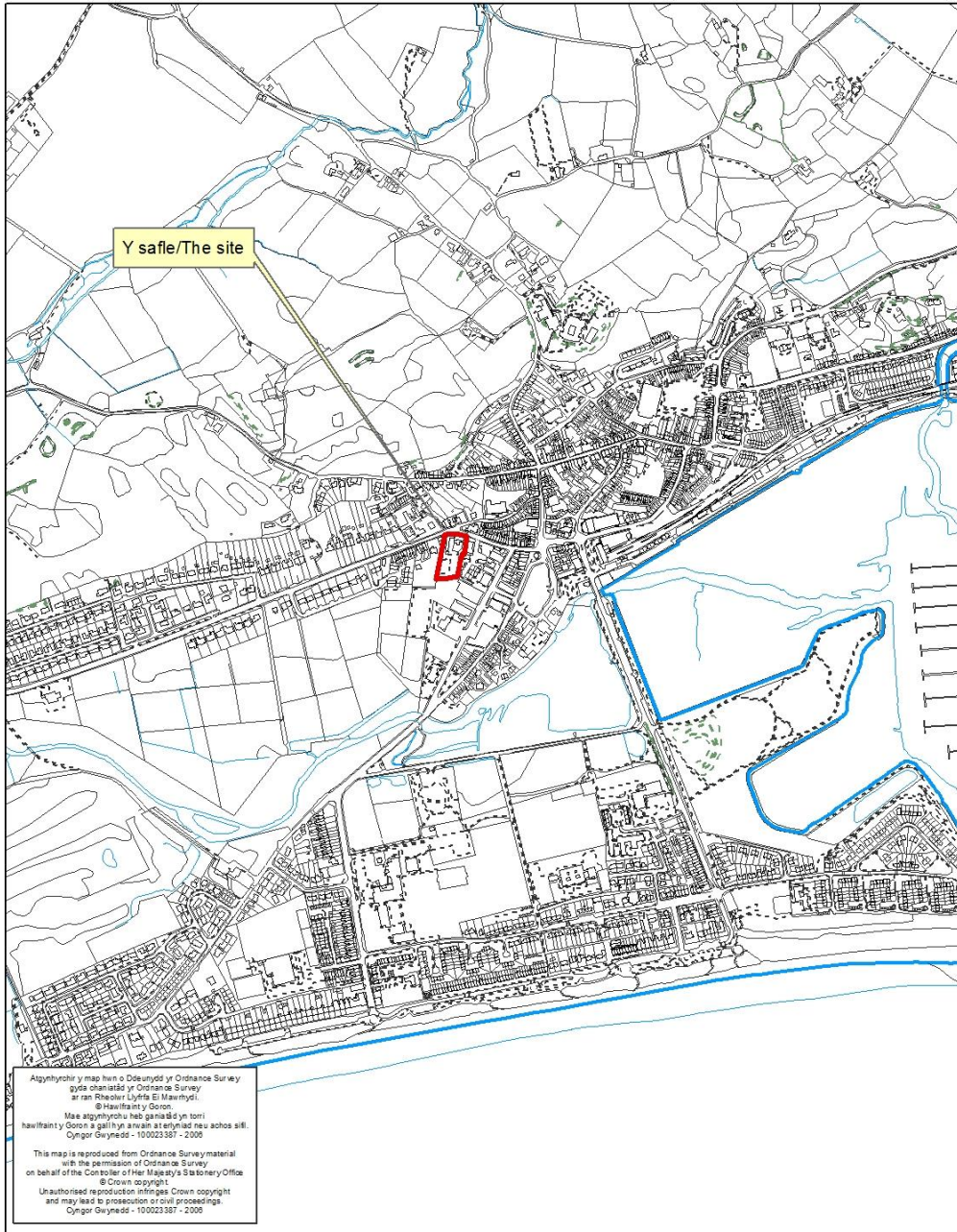


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Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C14/1118/45/LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C14/1118/45/LL
Date Registered: 03/02/2016
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community: Pwllheli
Ward: Pwllheli North

Proposal: DEMOLISH EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF RETIREMENT LIVING HOUSES (30 UNITS) ALONG WITH COMMUNAL FACILITIES, LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING.

Location: LAND NEAR ALA COTTAGE, ALA ROAD, PWLLHELI, LL535BU

Summary of the APPROVE SUBJECT TO 106

Recommendation:

1. Description:

1.1 The application was deferred at the Planning Committee on 22 February 2016 in order to receive further information relating to the open market price of the units, viability matters and an explanation as to why the design was for a three-storey house.

1.2 This is a development to demolish existing buildings and construct a new building to provide 30 retirement apartments along with community facilities for the residents within the development. The 30 retirement apartments would include 17 one-bedroom apartments and 13 two-bedroom apartments.

From the information submitted with the application, it is understood that the units would be sold on a 125 year lease with the accommodation needing to be occupied by a person aged over 60 years or in the case of a couple that one of them is aged over 60 years and the other is aged over 55 years. The development would be a combination of a three and two-storey building and would include the following:-

- Ground floor - 11 retirement apartments, communal lounge and kitchen, mobility scooter storage area, office, toilets, stores, machine room, visitor bedroom, bins/recycling storage area and a lift.
- First floor – 14 retirement apartments, stores, machine room and lift.
- Second floor - five retirement apartments, communal roof terrace, kitchen, toilet and lift.

It is intended to finish the development's roof with slates and the exterior walls would be a combination of coloured render, buff coloured bricks and an element of red bricks, along with an element of zinc cladding. There would be a vehicular and pedestrian access off Ala Road. It is intended to also obtain a pedestrian access to link to the Lidl car park towards the southern boundary of the site. The development would include 22 parking spaces, including a car port which also operates as a bat roost. The proposal also includes landscaping.

1.3 The site is located within the development boundary of Pwllheli, with the southern part of the site forming a part of a larger site that has been designated for redevelopment within the GUDP. Part of the site's access road falls within the Conservation Site with the remainder of the site abutting the Conservation Area. The entire site lies within the Llŷn and Bardsey Island Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. To the north lies a Class 1 road (A497), namely Ala Road. To the north-east of the site lies a police station and to the east lies a church and commercial garage. To the south lies the Lidl site and to the west lie dwelling houses. The Neigwl residence lies on the western boundary also, which is a Grade II listed building. The entire site lies within a C1 flooding zone.

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1.4 The following documents were received as part of the planning application:-

- Flood Consequence Assessment
- Design, access and sustainability statement
- Planning Statement
- Community and linguistic statement
- Bat survey
- Step 1 Extended Habitats Survey
- Planning and Affordable Housing Liabilities Statement
- Housing supply and demand report
- Statement of community involvement
- Trees survey
- Arboriculture report
- Drainage report
- Japanese Knotweed survey
- Transport Statement
- Planning conditions report
- Utilities Report
- Contaminated land part 1 and 2 reports

1.5 The application is submitted to Committee as it relates to five or more houses (apartments).

2. Relevant Policies:

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

POLICY A1 - ENVIRONMENTAL OR OTHER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - Ensure that sufficient information is provided with the planning application regarding any environmental impacts or other likely and substantial impacts in the form of an environmental assessment or assessments of other impacts.

POLICY A2 - PROTECT THE SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITIES - Safeguard the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.

POLICY B3 – DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING - Ensure that proposals have no adverse effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and that they conform to a number of criteria aimed at safeguarding the special character of the Listed Building and the local environment.

POLICY B4 – DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR THAT AFFECTS THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS - Ensure that proposals within conservation areas, or which affect their setting, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

POLICY B7 - SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE - Refuse proposals which will damage or destroy archaeological remains which are of national importance (whether they are registered or not) or their setting. It also refuses any

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development that will affect other archaeological remains unless the need for the development overrides the significance of the archaeological remains.

POLICY B12 – PROTECTING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS - Safeguard landscapes, parks and gardens of special historical interest in Wales from developments which would cause significant damage to their character, their appearance or their setting.

POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable damage to protected species and their habitats unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN - Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

POLICY B23 – AMENITIES - Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aiming to safeguard the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

POLICY B25 – BUILDING MATERIALS - Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that the building materials are of high standard and in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

POLICY B27 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES - Ensure that permitted proposals incorporate high quality soft/hard landscaping which is appropriate to the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

POLICY B29 – DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT RISK OF FLOODING - Manage specific developments in the C1 and C2 flood zones and direct them towards suitable land in zone A unless they conform to a series of criteria relevant to the features on the site and to the purpose of the development.

POLICY B32 -

POLICY B35 – AVOIDING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES - Ensure that measures are taken to deal with invasive species where the development involves the disturbance of soil that is contaminated by invasive species.

POLICY C1 – LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT - Land within town and village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

POLICY C3 – RE-USING PREVIOUSLY USED SITES - Proposals will be approved that prioritise re-using land and buildings previously developed and located within or around development boundaries, provided that the site or the building and the use are suitable.

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POLICY C7 – BUILDING IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER - Proposals for new developments or for adapting and changing the use of land or buildings will be refused unless consideration is given to specific environmental matters. Proposals must conform to specific criteria relating to building in a sustainable manner, unless it can be demonstrated that it is impractical to do so.

POLICY CH3 - NEW HOUSES ON UNALLOCATED SITES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND URBAN CENTRES – Approve the construction of houses on appropriate unallocated sites within the development boundaries of the Sub-regional Centre and Urban Centres.

POLICY CH6 – AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS ON EACH DESIGNATED SITE IN THE PLAN AREA AND ON UNDESIGNATED WINDFALL SITES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND THE URBAN CENTRES – Refuse proposals to develop housing on sites that have been designated for housing or on windfall sites within the development boundaries of the sub-regional centre and the urban centres where it is not possible to comply with criteria controlling affordability and the local need of the development.

POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL - Refuse proposals for residential/business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals.

POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS - Development proposals will be approved if they can conform to specific criteria regarding the vehicular access, standard of the existing road network and traffic calming measures.

POLICY CH36 – PRIVATE CAR PARKING FACILITIES - Proposals for new development, extension of existing development or change of use will be refused unless off-street parking is provided in accordance with the Council’s current parking guidelines and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the distance from the site to a public car park.

Supplementary Planning Guidance – Development Briefs (2009)
 Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning for Sustainable Building (April 2010)
 Supplementary Planning Guidance - Affordable Housing (November 2009)
 Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh Language (2009)
 Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning obligations (2009)

2.3 **National Policies:**

Planning Policy Wales - (Edition 8, January 2016)
 Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing
 Technical Advice Note 12: Design
 Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk.
 Technical Advice Note 18: Transportation
 Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh language

3. **Relevant Planning History:**

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3.1 C10D/0247/45/AM - Residential development of 28 houses together with formation of new vehicular access, estate road and associated works - The application was submitted to Committee on 28 February 2011 when it was resolved to approve the application subject to signing a 106 agreement binding six units as affordable houses. The application remains unresolved as no 106 agreement has been signed.

3.2 C10D/0246/45/CR - Demolition of two associated outbuildings linked to a listed building - Land near Ala Cottage, Ala Road, Pwllheli - Approved 28 April 2011.

3.3 C09D/0398/45/AM – Outline application to demolish a house, a former veterinary surgery and outbuildings and construct 28 houses. The application was withdrawn on 26 January 2010.

3.4 963 – Construction of new house near Veterinary Surgery, Pwllheli - Approved 21 September 1949.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Approve subject to the applicant ensuring that there are affordable houses within the scheme in accordance with Gwynedd Council's requirements according to the size of the development or that they pay a financial amount in accordance with these requirements so that Gwynedd Council can construct affordable houses in another site in the town. Concern was also expressed as they are houses for elderly people, it could place additional strain on the town's surgery which is already under pressure due to the failure to attract doctors to such rural areas.

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal. The access is comparable to that approved for the previous housing development and the parking provision within the site complies with the CSS Wales parking standards requirements. I recommend conditions relating to providing the parking area prior to occupation, construction of the access, visibility splays, highways act licences and agreements.

Natural Resources Wales: Observations of Natural Resources Wales (12 February 2016)
Withdraws its objection to the application but recommends imposing conditions on any planning permission relating to the submission of site level plans, the ground floor of the building to be no lower than 3.87 AOD, including additional trees within the landscaping plans, lighting levels and in accordance with the mitigation recommendations in the bat report.

Welsh Water: Recommend including conditions relating to surface water, foul water and land drainage on any planning permission.

Public Protection: Not received.

Biodiversity Unit: Information has now been submitted:

- Response to the letter of NRW 08/12/2015 (E2110151429), including the amended plans.

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- Amended Landscaping Plan (2101-01E)
- Bat investigation and monitoring statement

I wish to include a condition that the details in these documents are followed to the letter. Furthermore, I agree with the observations of Natural Resources Wales that further larger trees need to be planted on the southern side of the site and on the western side of the site. A condition should also be imposed that this further information is submitted to the authority and Natural Resources Wales for approval before the work is commenced. A condition should also be imposed that the measures for dealing with Japanese Knotweed are followed in accordance with the information submitted in the plans.

Trees Unit: Happy with the information submitted. Propose conditions that the work complies with the trees report on the root protection plan, no work to be carried out on the trees without permission and trees to be replanted in ones are lost within five years.

Housing Strategic Unit: Unable to run an age report from the Tai Teg system but it is more likely that those on the waiting list are young people. Eighteen people have registered as being in need of a flat but the only information available relates to accommodation with 2+ bedrooms. Twelve have noted that they need a 2 bedroom property in Pwllheli but the exact age of these individuals cannot be confirmed. The Older People Accommodation Strategy is currently being developed but it is yet to be published.

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service: I have checked the application against the Historical Environment Record and have concluded that there are archaeological implications to the proposal. The buildings which are to be demolished are recorded on the 1844 title map and therefore they date back to the mid-nineteenth century at least. They have not been named on historical maps and it appears as if they originally included a house and outbuildings. Currently, we do not know whether or not there was any relationship between the group and the adjacent listed building ('Neigwl') or the nearby workhouse, established in the 1830s. The buildings have been adapted a number of times over the years and it is unclear how many historical fabric and detail still exists there, in particular on the inside. However, from the information available, it appears that the refurbishment work has consisted of additions rather than conversions and thus the buildings form a part of the historical townscape of Pwllheli.

We commented on previous proposals to redevelop the site (C10D/0247/45/AM), noting the historical interest in the building and recommending that the building was recorded archaeologically before being demolished. As it does not appear that the application has been implemented, this record was not created and the recommendation remains appropriate.

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As a result of the above-mentioned observations, Planning Policy Wales 2014 and the Welsh Office Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: appropriate archaeological mitigation measures are required. To achieve such mitigation measures, it is suggested that a condition is imposed for a programme of archaeological works on any planning permission.

Public Consultation:

A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertisement period has expired and two letters / items of correspondence have been received objecting on the following grounds:

- Road Safety.
- Manage the working hours when demolishing and constructing.

As well as the objections noted above, objections were received which were not valid planning objections which included:

- Matters relating to the day-to-day running of the site when operational.

Five letters / items of correspondence were received which supported the proposal in principle but voiced concern about some aspects of the proposal, including:-

- Concern about the proximity of the building to tree roots on the boundary with nearby properties.
- Concern that a three-storey building was not in-keeping with the townscape.
- Concern that there was an excessive number of units on the site and unsure as to whether the price would be affordable to local people.
- Matters involving the day-to-day running of the company.

Eighteen letters / correspondences were received which supported / provided observations on the application on the grounds of:

- Lack of this type of accommodation in Pwllheli and the vicinity and there is a demand for it.
- The site is convenient and suitable for this type of development.
- The site is currently untidy and is an eyesore.
- Improves a dangerous corner of the road.
- Economic benefit to local businesses.

5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 The application site lies within the Pwllheli development boundary as shown on the GUDP proposal maps. No part of the site has been specifically designated for housing in the GUDP. Policy C1 of the GUDP states that land within town and

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village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. Furthermore, the policy states that new buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside (i.e. outside development boundaries and outside the developed form of rural villages) will be refused with the exception of development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

5.2 The site is also considered to be one that has been previously developed. Policy C3 of the GUDP states that proposals that give priority, wherever possible, to reusing previously developed land or buildings that are located within or near development boundaries, rather than using Greenfield sites, will be approved provided that the site or building and the proposed use are suitable and conform to the Plan's objectives and development strategy. The proposal would therefore make acceptable use of previously developed land.

5.3 Policy CH3 of the GUDP states that applications for the construction of houses on appropriate unallocated sites within the development boundaries of the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Centres will be approved. In relation to housing developments in town centres, Policy CH6 of the GUDP also applies. This policy states that proposals for housing developments on a site, or on part of a site that can accommodate five or more housing units will be refused unless they comply with the criteria of the policy. Criteria 1 of Policy CH6 asks for a percentage of the units provided to be allocated for general need for affordable houses, unless the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied, after considering all relevant factors, that it would be inappropriate to provide affordable housing on the site.

5.4 Consequently, and subject to assessment of the following issues: affordability, language and community, economic, visual, general and residential amenities, transportation, flooding and biodiversity, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable.

Affordable housing matters

5.5 The proposal concerns providing 30 retirement apartments. These apartments are self-sufficient and therefore fall to be considered under the GUDP's housing policies and not under the policies relating to residential/nursing homes. Policy CH6 of the GUDP states that a percentage (that will vary from site to site), of the units provided as part of the scheme on any site in Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Pwllheli should be ones that meet the need for affordable housing unless the Planning Authority can be satisfied, after considering all relevant factors, that it would be inappropriate to provide affordable houses on the site.

5.6 It is initially believed that the need for such a development, i.e. a development to be used by older people, needs to be considered. It is noted that the applicant has provided justification with the planning application for the development. In terms of the Pwllheli North ward (where the application site is located), information from the 2011 Census shows that 19.8% of the ward's population is aged 65 years and over (this figure is 24.7% for the Pwllheli South ward). In terms of the age group who would be eligible to live in the proposed units, namely people who are aged 60 or over, the Census notes that 26.7% of the population of the Pwllheli North ward fits into this category (this figure is 30.5% for the Pwllheli South ward). It is noted that the population of Gwynedd continues to age, and the 2011 population projections support this: [The information below is based on population projection information off the Stats Wales website]

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Growth rate projections for specific age groups (compared with 2011-based figures) for the select years - Gwynedd

| | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Children (0-15 years old) | - | -2.8% | -1.5% | -1.9% | +1.0% | +2.6% |
| Population aged 65 or over | - | +8.8% | +13.3% | +19.7% | +27.1% | +31.8% |
| Total population | - | +1.3% | +3.0% | +5.0% | +6.9% | +8.5% |

Projections of the percentage of the population belonging to the specific age groups in the select years - Gwynedd

| | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Children (0-15 years old) | 17.2% | 16.5% | 16.4% | 16.0% | 16.2% | 16.2% |
| Population aged 65 or over | 20.8% | 22.4% | 22.9% | 23.8% | 24.8% | 25.3% |
| Total population | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

- 5.7 In terms of considering the affordable provision in accordance with Policy CH6, note the following information provided by the Joint Planning Policy Unit:
- A total of 32 affordable units were relevant to consider in the Pwllheli Town Council area for the Gwynedd Joint Housing Land Availability Study 2014. According to the field work for this joint study (April 2014), sixteen of these units had been completed, whilst one of the other sixteen units had been commenced.
 - Four sites have been specifically designated for houses in Pwllheli in the UDP. It would be expected that developments on these sites would include an affordable housing element.
 - The information in relation to the Housing Land Availability Joint Study April 2013 suggests that 54 units can be provided on these sites up to the year 2018. When transferring the percentage of affordable units expected to be provided on these sites (as noted in the UDP) to this information, it would be expected for 20 affordable units to be provided on these sites in the period up to 2016.
 - The 2011 Census noted that 586 of the 1,154 household spaces occupied in the Pwllheli North ward (where this site is located) were owner-occupied. A total of 198 units were rented socially. In terms of the Pwllheli South ward, it is noted that 449 of the 966 household spaces occupied were owner-occupied, whilst 234 units were rented socially.
 - When comparing information in terms of median house prices (£115,000 based on 21 sales) with median income (£19,925) in 2013, it should be noted that the affordability ratio for the Pwllheli North ward is 5.8 i.e. the house prices median is 5.8 greater than

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the income median (household).¹ The affordability ratio for the Pwllheli South ward was 9.4 (Median house prices = £173,000 based on 19 sales; Median income = £18,476).

- Information from Gwynedd Council's Corporate Research Unit, based on 2013 data, notes that 64.7% of households were priced out of the market in the Pwllheli North ward. This figure is 74.2% for the Pwllheli South ward. This information is based on the number of households with an income that is less than 1/3.5 of the lowest quartile house price [lowest quartile house price in the Pwllheli North ward in 2013 = £98,250; Pwllheli South ward = £113,500].

Therefore on this basis, there is no doubt that we accept that there is justification to request affordable housing unless other matters such as feasibility prevents that.

5.8 However, in accordance with the policy as seen above, consideration must also be given to the financial feasibility of providing affordable housing on the site. It is noted in paragraph 10.6 of Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing, that the viability of a site will be a critical factor to consider in determining thresholds (for affordable housing), particularly on small sites. The impact of specific costs on the viability of a development is a factor which is considered in the first criterion of Policy CH6. This criterion states that a proportion of the units on a site of this type should be affordable, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that, having considered all the relevant factors, it would be inappropriate to provide affordable housing on the site. Paragraph 5.2.40 notes that "the Planning Authority will...negotiate with developers to include an element of affordable housing on sites that are the subject of this policy. Prospective developers will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate and justify how they have decided on the specific type of housing on the site and how this contributes to creating mixed communities."

5.9 As part of the application, the applicant submitted planning and affordable housing obligation statements. This document includes a viability assessment for the development and the applicant states that the costs associated with the development means that it would not be viable to provide a contribution towards an affordable housing provision or any other planning provision. Within this document it is also noted that the open market prices of one bedroom units is £157,000 and the two bedroom units are £215,000. The agent has confirmed that these figures continue to reflect the current situation in terms of the units' prices. These prices also reflect the fact that facilities / services will be available for the residents within the development. An assessment of the viability matters was undertaken by the Joint Planning Policy Unit by using a computing pack used to appraise the viability of developments. In addition, considerable discussions have taken place between the officers and the applicant regarding viability matters. Initially, a contribution of approximately 20% had been sought towards affordable housing. However, following undertaking the relevant viability assessments it became evident that this type of contribution would not be viable for the development. They had come to the conclusion, as a result of the assessments made by the Joint Planning Policy Unit, that it would be possible to have a contribution of 7%. This would be equivalent to approximately two affordable units on the site, or if it is a commutative contribution towards an affordable housing provision in the area, it would equate to approximately £94,000. However, the applicant continues to argue that it is not viable to have any contribution towards affordable housing as part of the development. Nevertheless, you will recollect that when the application was submitted to Committee on 22 February 2016, the applicant had offered a commutative sum towards affordable

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housing of £40,000 in order to proceed. Following the Committee's decision to defer the application at the Committee on 22 February 2016, the applicant was contacted regarding viability issues and why it was not possible to obtain a higher commutative sum. The applicant has now proposed an offer of £94,000 towards affordable housing which is in line with the amount that the Joint Planning Policy Unit's assessment had expressed as a possible offer.

- 5.10 This financial contribution towards an affordable housing provision off the site is to be welcomed and as there are feasibility issues associated with the proposal, it would be reasonable to accept this offer in this case. The proposal in question would contribute to provision of retirement accommodation locally where these types of homes are not available. The proposal would also be re-use brownfield land which was currently untidy and an eyesore and it would also bring economic benefits in terms of work (site manager to run the site following completion and building work associated with the development) and wider within the community with the residents using local facilities. Therefore, as a result of the viability issues with the development it was considered to be reasonable to accept the offer of £94,000 towards an affordable housing provision off the site, in this case, the proposal therefore complied with the requirements of policy CH6 of the GUDP.

Language and Community Matters

- 5.11 A language and community statement was received as part of the application. It is noted that a relatively high percentage of the population of Pwllheli can speak Welsh. The proposed development is located in a convenient area in Pwllheli, close to services and facilities, which is likely to have a positive impact on local services and shops. Consideration should be given to potential impact of the increase in the population as a result of the development, on the Welsh language. It could be the case that residents of such homes would not integrate as much with the local community as younger residents would as they are not able to do so due to restricted mobility. It is also noted, due to the local nature of care home residents, it is likely that the residents would be local people; however, this cannot be guaranteed. The development could mean that houses would be released for other people and it is important to consider the impact of this on the Welsh language. On the whole, it is not believed that the scale of the proposed development is likely to lead to a significant growth in the population that could have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language. Having said that, any impact will be wholly dependent on the language of residents. It is noted that there would be no assurance or way of managing who would live in the residential units or be employed there. The benefits of the development must be weighed up against the possible impact on the vitality of the Welsh language unless it is anticipated that the proposal will have a marked impact on the Welsh language or the community and that it would be acceptable from the aspect of Policy A2 of the GUDP.

Design and visual amenities

- 5.12 Policies B22, B25 and B27 of the GUDP are relevant to this application and involve design, finishes, appearances, visual amenities and landscaping. The building would have a frontage of approximately 31 metres with the county road that is located to the north and the building would be set-back from that county road to the south of the site for approximately 50 metres. The buildings proposed to be erected on the site are a mix of two and three-storey buildings, with their height varying between 6.5-10.5 metres above ground level. The three-storey parts will be erected along the site's frontage with the county road. Although the building is substantial it has been divided up in terms of its height, roof shapes and also proposes features such as gable ends and also a variety of materials on the exterior walls. The roofs would be a

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combination of ridge and hip-roofs covered in natural slate. The exterior walls would be a combination of coloured render, buff coloured bricks and an element of red bricks along with an element of zinc cladding. It is considered that such finishes would be acceptable and from looking at the nearby streetscene, elements of these finishes can be seen in nearby buildings such as the police station and the church. It is considered that interest has been created in the elevation facing Ala Road by having gable ends to break-up the frontage and also as there is variety in the height of the building and roof shapes. It is considered that this front elevation is the most important of the development in terms of how it will contribute to the streetscene. Although the proposal is partly three-storey, there are other three-storey buildings in the vicinity and it is not considered that a building of this height is out of place on the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal respects the site and its vicinity and that it is acceptable in terms of its scale, size, form, density, location and materials. It is not considered that the proposal would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the form and character of the townscape or have an unacceptable detrimental impact on views into/out of/across the centre. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of Policies B22 and B25 of the GUDP. Conditions would be required in order to agree on the colour of the slate and also in terms of submitting samples of the exterior materials to the Local Planning Authority for agreement.

5.13 The members had been concerned at the Committee on 22 February 2016 regarding the suitability of a partially three-storey building for older people. The agent has explained further that they had worked on over 1000 plans across the country and that their plans on the whole were between 3 and 4 storey in height with a number of those completed being 6 or 7 storeys high. The five schemes completed in north Wales (2 in Llandudno, 2 in Colwyn Bay and 1 in Llangollen) are all plans that include four-storeys in the design. The design usually includes one lift to all floors. This lift is maintained regularly and in the rare occasions when it breaks down, it is subject to a 24 hour call-out in order to reduce any inconvenience to residents. The upper floors are often popular with prospective buyers as often there is a better view and also due to the belief that there is better security.

5.14 A landscaping plan was submitted as part of the application. This plan displays an intention to reinforce the current growth on the site by planting additional trees on the western and eastern boundaries of the site as well as within the site. It is also intended to plant beds of shrubs within the site and also along the frontage with the county road. The trees intended to plant include the Juneberry (*amelanchier Canadensis*), Rosebud Cherry (*prunus Subhitella autumnalis rosea*), Rowan (*sorbus aucuparia aspelnifolia*) and the Swedish Whitebeam (*sorbus intermedia brouwers*). It is considered that this landscaping plan is acceptable and that it complies with Policy B27 of the GUDP. It is considered that a condition will be needed in terms of completing the landscaping plan in accordance with the plans submitted.

Conservation Matters

5.15 The dwelling house located on the western boundary of the northern part of the site is a Grade II listed building and therefore it is required to consider whether or not the proposal will disrupt the setting of that building. Currently, views of the listed building from the east have been blocked by the former veterinary surgery building. Due to the proposal to demolish this building, the building line of the proposal will be set back approximately 3 metres on the site, compared to the current situation. Although the majority of the part of the building abutting Ala Road is three-storey, the part located closest to the listed building has been reduced in height to be two-storey. There would be a gap of approximately 2 metres between the closest gable

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end of the proposed building and the listed building itself. Consequently, the aspect of the listed building from the eastern direction will improve, and will create a more open feeling. Therefore, in comparison with the current situation, it is not considered that the proposal would have an impact on the setting of the listed building and that it is thus acceptable in terms of Policy B3 of the GUDP.

5.16 Part of the site's access road falls within the Conservation Site of the town with the remainder of the site abutting the Conservation Area. Therefore, consideration must be given to Policy B4 of the GUDP and the need to maintain or enrich the character or appearance of the conservation area. The site, as mentioned in the letters of support, is currently in an unkempt condition and is an eyesore. Therefore, at the moment the site does not contribute towards the maintenance or enrichment of the conservation area. It is considered that the proposal, as explained previously, is a suitable design for the location. It is not considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to important views into/out of the conservation area. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy B3 of the GUDP.

5.17 The site lies within the Llŷn and Bardsey Island Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. Policy B12 states that consideration will be given to the information about the Historical Landscapes if the impact of proposals is on such a large scale that their impact would be greater than merely a local impact. In terms of its location within the town's built form, it is considered that the proposal would have a local impact and that it would not have a broader impact on the historical landscape. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy B12 of the GUDP.

Archaeological Matters

5.18 Observations received from the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service state that there are archaeological implications to the proposal. The buildings which are to be demolished date back to the mid-nineteenth century at least, and although the buildings have been adapted over the years, it appears that this has taken the form of additions, rather than alteration and therefore the buildings form a part of the historic townscape of Pwllheli. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service does not object to the proposal but recommends imposing a condition in terms of completing a programme of archaeological work before the development is commenced. As a result, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of policy B7 of the GUDP.

General and residential amenities

5.19 Existing houses lie opposite the site to the north and adjacent to the site to the west. It is not considered that the houses to the north of the site are affected by the proposal and the amenities of the residents of those houses will not be affected. The Neigwl dwelling house is located approximately 2 metres to the west in terms of the front of the proposed building and the boundary of the Arddol property, which is also to the west of the site, is located approximately 6 metres from the rear wing of the proposed building. Although a high stone wall separates the site from the garden of the adjacent property, as well as mature trees, the western appearance of the proposed building includes windows. There are no implications in terms of overlooking from the ground floor windows; however, there is potential for overlooking from the higher floors. Windows would be available on the second floor level in the western gable end in the three-storey element of the development facing Neigwl, which has a first floor window in its eastern gable end. However, it is not considered that the proposal would cause direct substantial overlooking to this property as sections of the development's roof would cut across the windows. A large number of windows are to be seen in the rear wing of the two-storey section of the development. However,

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to reduce the potential for overlooking, the plan has incorporated apartments located on an angle with the windows set in a way that would not directly look into the nearby properties. It is considered that this would reduce overlooking between the development and existing houses. It is also intended to carry out additional planting near the boundary in an attempt to reduce overlooking. However, it is inevitable that some overlooking will happen within settlements which have a high density of development, but it is not considered that the amenities of the occupants of the adjacent property would be significantly harmed as a result of the proposed development. It is not considered that the proposal would lead to an overdevelopment of the site and although the development could increase the traffic using the site compared with the existing situation, it is not considered that this increase would have a significant impact on nearby residents. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to cause significant harm to the amenities of the local neighbourhood and is acceptable in terms of Policy B23 of the GUDP.

Transport and access matters

5.20 Two accesses currently serve the site. The proposed buildings will be located across the most western access and thus the proposal as part of the application is to use the access on the eastern side of the site that is located near the church. This access would allow access towards the rear of the site for vehicles where 22 parking spaces would be located. The Transportation Unit has no objection to the proposal. The Transportation Unit's observations state that the access is comparable to the access approved for the previous housing development and the parking provision within the site complies with the requirements of the Wales parking standards. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal complies with policies CH33 and CH36 however it is recommended that conditions are imposed on any permission in relation to providing the parking area prior to occupation and for the access to be constructed in accordance with the plans.

Flooding matters

5.21 The entire site lies within a C1 flooding zone as shown on the development and flooding advice maps associated with TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk. Therefore, a flooding consequence assessment was submitted as part of the application. When dealing with the application, many amendments and additions have been made from the perspective of the flood consequence assessment. The applicant held a meeting with Natural Resources Wales and an amended flood consequence assessment was received. In addition, the red line of the application site has also been amended to include the land in the south-western corner of the site, which had been noted originally as a potential extension to the Lidl car park, and that mainly in an attempt to overcome the concerns of Natural Resources Wales in terms of being able to impose a condition to manage the land levelling work that was needed to create a site for compensatory storage in terms of water as a result of raising levels in other parts of the site. Consequently, Natural Resources Wales has withdrawn its objection by now. However, they have recommended including conditions on the planning permission from the perspective of the details of the current and proposed site levels and that the finished floor level of the development should be no lower than 3.87m AOD.

5.22 A residential development is defined as a development that is very vulnerable within TAN 15 and thus a development of this type should not be approved within a C1 zone unless it complies with specific criteria within policy B29 and TAN 15. In this case, the proposal forms part of the Local Planning Authority's strategy by means of its location within the centre's development boundary and also as a section of the site has

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been designated as a redevelopment site in the GUDP. The proposal would also be located on previously developed land. The proposal has now been able to show that the potential consequence of any flooding for this specific type of development is acceptable and thus, in its current form, it complies with the requirements of Policy B29 of the GUDP and also to the advice provided in TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk.

Biodiversity matters

5.23 As part of the application, a part 1 extended habitats survey and a survey of the presence/absence of bats were submitted. The bats survey showed that no bats used the site to hibernate but that it was mainly used by the lesser horseshoe bats and pipistrelle bats in the summer. Also, it showed that other species of bats used the garden to hunt. As part of the proposal, plans were submitted which showed a proposal to create a bat roost in a part of the new building's roof-space and in the roof of the car port to be located within the site. As a result of the concerns of Natural Resources Wales and the Biodiversity Unit, further information was submitted including amended plans for the bat roost to be located within the main building's roof-space and a bat inspection and monitoring statement. As a result of receiving this additional information, Natural Resources Wales and the Biodiversity Unit are satisfied with the proposal, although they did note that conditions would have to be imposed on any planning permission. These conditions relate to undertaking the work in accordance with the details included in response to Natural Resources Wales' letter 08/12/2015 (E2110151429) which includes amended plans, Amended Landscaping Plan (2101-01E) and a bat inspection and monitoring statement; more trees need to be planted on the southern side of the site and western side of the site; lighting levels shown on the plans to be adhered to. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of Policies A1 and B20 of the GUDP as a result of imposing appropriate conditions.

5.24 A trees survey and arboriculture report was submitted as part of the application. Also, a tree preservation plan was received. The observations of the Trees Unit on the proposal were received and they are satisfied with the information submitted. If the application is approved, conditions will be needed in terms of work to comply with the trees report and tree preservation plan, no work to be carried out on the trees without permission and trees to be replanted if ones are lost within five years of the development work.

5.25 A Japanese Knotweed survey and plan were submitted as part of the application. This information shows that Japanese Knotweed and horsetail are located in parts of the site. The Japanese Knotweed is located further towards the south of the site and the horsetail is located towards the eastern boundary of the site. Both are invasive species and a plan has been submitted for their disposal. If the application is approved, a condition will be required to ensure that the disposal work is completed in accordance with the information included in the Japanese Knotweed survey. If the species are disposed from the site in accordance with this work, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to Policy B35 of the GUDP.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 The proposal concerns providing 30 retirement apartments. These apartments are self-sufficient and therefore fall to be considered under the GUDP's housing policies. Policy CH6 of the GUDP states that a percentage (that will vary from site to site), of the units provided as part of the scheme on any site in Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Pwllheli should be ones that meet the need for affordable housing unless the Planning Authority can be satisfied, after considering

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all relevant factors, that it would be inappropriate to provide affordable houses on the site. As part of the application, the applicant submitted planning and affordable housing obligation statements. This document includes a viability assessment for the development and the applicant states that the costs associated with the development means that it would not be viable to provide a contribution towards an affordable housing provision or any other planning provision. An assessment of the viability matters was undertaken by the Joint Planning Policy Unit by using a computing pack used to appraise the viability of developments. In addition, considerable discussions have taken place between the officers and the applicant regarding viability matters. Initially, a contribution of approximately 20% had been sought towards affordable housing. However, following undertaking the relevant viability assessments it became evident that this type of contribution would not be viable for the development. It was concluded, as a result of the assessments undertaken by the Joint Planning Policy Unit, that it would be possible to obtain a contribution of 7%. This would be equivalent to approximately two affordable units on the site, or if it is a commutative contribution towards an affordable housing provision in the area, it would equate to approximately £94,000. The applicant had originally offered a commutative sum of £40,000 but this has now been increased to £94,000. This financial contribution towards an affordable housing provision off the site is to be welcomed and as there are feasibility issues associated with the proposal, it would be reasonable to accept this offer in this case. The proposal in question would contribute towards a provision of local retirement homes and where such homes are not available at present. The proposal would also re-use a brownfield site that is currently untidy and an eyesore and it would also reap economic benefits. Consequently, as a result of viability matters relating to the development, it is considered reasonable to accept the £94,000 offer towards the provision of affordable housing off the site, and thus the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy CH6 of the GUDP.

6.2 The site lies within a C1 flooding zone and the proposal is for a development that is very vulnerable on flooding grounds. Since the application was submitted to the Committee on 22 February 2016, flooding matters have been resolved to the satisfaction of Natural Resources Wales and it is now considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to the requirements of Policy B29 of the GUDP and the advice given in TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk. However, conditions will need to be imposed from the perspective of the details of the current and proposed site levels on any planning permission.

6.3 In addition, since the Committee on 22 February 2016, Natural Resources Wales and the Biodiversity Unit have been convinced that the proposal is not likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable harm to protected species and thus it complies with policy A1 and B20 of the GUDP. Appropriate conditions in relation to biodiversity will be required on any planning permission.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve subject to signing a 106 Agreement for the commutative sum of £94,000 towards affordable housing and to conditions -

1. Commence within five years
2. In accordance with plans.
3. Agree materials for the external elevations and roofing slate.
4. Highways conditions to include - parking spaces to be operational prior to the occupation of the units, completion of the access in accordance with plans, access to

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be completed with compacted and levelled rocks and to ensure that the surface water system is completed.

5. Natural Resources Wales conditions in terms of flooding matters - site level plans, ground level to be no lower than 3.87m
6. Natural Resources Wales and Biodiversity Unit conditions in terms of landscaping matters, lighting levels and in accordance with the bats details submitted.
7. Welsh Water conditions relating to surface water, foul water and land drainage.
8. Work to comply with the trees report and tree root preservation plan.
9. No work to be carried out on trees without permission.
10. To replant trees lost within five years.
11. To complete a programme of archaeological work.
12. Undertake the work in accordance with the recommendations in the Land Contamination Report.
13. Need to eradicate Japanese knotweed.