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## PLANNING COMMITTEE 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

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### **Attendance:**

Chairman: Councillor Elwyn Edwards

**Councillors:** Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Elin Hywel, Berwyn Parry Jones, Gareth T Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Cai Larsen, Dafydd Meurig, Gareth Coj Parry, Edgar Owen, John Pughe Roberts and Gruffydd Williams

**Others invited:** Elected members who had called in an application to the committee: Councillor Elin Walker Jones and Councillor Huw Wyn Jones

**Officers:** Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services – Monitoring Officer), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment), Gwawr Hughes (Planning Manager), Elen Morris (Planning Officer), Dafydd Jones (Solicitor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer).

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Louise Hughes, Huw Rowlands and Gareth A Roberts; Councillor Siân Williams (Local Member – application 5.2).

### **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS**

Councillor Menna Baines (who was not a Member of this Planning Committee), in item 5.1 C25/0052/25/LL on the agenda, because she knew the applicant's sister very well, who was also involved in the business.

The Member considered it to be a prejudicial interest and did not attend the meeting.

### **3. URGENT ITEMS**

As a point of order, it was reported that since the Chair was joining the meeting virtually, the Monitoring Officer would be announcing the results of the voting on the applications.

### **4. MINUTES**

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026, as a true record.

### **5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee considered the following applications for development. Details of the applications were expanded upon and questions were answered in relation to the plans and policy aspects.

**5.1 APPLICATION NUMBER : C25/0052/25/LL  
14 Llys Castan, Ffordd y Parc, Parc Menai, Bangor, LL57 4FH**

**A resubmission of an application to change the use of the existing B1 office unit into mixed-use consisting of a medical outpatient unit (use class D1) and office space (B1).**

Attention was drawn to the Late Observations Form.

- a) The Planning Officer highlighted that this was a resubmission of an application that had been refused in November 2025 for a change of use from an office to a mixed-use Office/Medical Outpatient Unit within a vacant unit at Llys Castan, Parc Menai, Bangor. It was highlighted that the proposal was to make internal alterations to the ground floor only with a site plan for 13 parking spaces next to the unit, and 13 additional adjacent spaces, which would give a total of 26 parking spaces for the unit.

The unit is located within Parc Menai which has been designated in the Local Development Plan (LDP) as the Main Business Site of the Sub-Regional Centre; which is reserved for certain employment uses. It was explained that alternative uses were only permitted in exceptional cases, and that the plan's policies promoted town centre developments in order to improve the vitality and viability of town centres.

It was noted that, ordinarily, the application would be determined under delegated rights, but correspondence had been received from two local members to Bangor calling in this application to the committee.

Reference was made to Policy CYF5 which states that proposals to release land on existing employment sites safeguarded for Use Class B1, B2 or B8 in accordance with Policy CYF1 for alternative uses will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Based on the information submitted, no special circumstances had been proven. In addition, the Local Planning Authority was not convinced that there were no suitable alternative sites within the development boundary for the proposed use.

It was noted that the agent had submitted additional information regarding properties that were unavailable at the time of completing the sequential assessment, along with confirmation of the reasons why they were not suitable. They had also highlighted situations where it was not appropriate to consider properties that are unable to meet the developer's commercial needs, and as a result, only sites that are available to rent are relevant in this case. Whilst the agent continued to be of the opinion that no other suitable property was available, the Local Planning Authority still believed that the proposal was contrary to Policy CYF5 of the LDP.

It was highlighted that policies PS15 and MAN 1 of the LDP opposed developments that would detract from the vitality and viability of town centres and retail areas, maximised opportunities to reuse suitable buildings in town centres, and opposed the extension of retail and leisure developments outside town centres unless they are supported by evidence of the need for additional provision, and meet the sequential approach set out in national planning policy. The Local Planning Authority continued to be of the view that the proposal could undermine the busyness, function and viability of Bangor City centre and therefore considered that the proposal did not comply with policy PS 15 and MAN 1 of the LDP.

It was reiterated that it should be ensured that the proposal complies with all the criteria of Policy ISA 2 of the LDP and, despite acknowledging all the background information submitted to explain the specialist and fairly unique nature of the proposed facility, it was considered that

the proposal was unacceptable based on principle as the proposed community facility was not located within the development boundary, near the development boundary, or within a cluster; the proposal was therefore contrary to the requirements of Policy PCYFF1 and ISA2 of the LDP.

It was reported that visual amenities, general and residential amenities, transportation and access issues, language issues, and biodiversity issues, had been fully addressed and assessed, as had all comments from those objecting.

Having considered all Planning considerations, it was considered that the proposal as submitted, was neither acceptable nor met the requirements of relevant policies. The Officers recommended that the application be refused.

- b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, an objector to the application made the following observations:
- That he had sound local knowledge and a professional and business understanding of the proposal
  - That the officer's recommendation to refuse was robust as was a second report by an independent planning consultant.
  - That two local Members to Bangor had called in the application, believing that there was a sound basis for doing so. His role was to highlight the flawed basis of their decision and refute the false merits of the proposal: The Members believed that the justification for the proposal was,
    - Suitable and compatible use in Parc Menai
    - Precedent of comparative uses at Parc Menai
    - Meeting a need in the area
    - No other location – need to pick up/drop off patients outside the door
  - He submitted personal comments that refuted the above views.
    1. Policies PS13 and CYF1 – Parc Menai has been designated as a Main Employment Site, and was therefore protected, primarily for B1 Planning Uses. While Policy CYF5 allows consideration of alternative uses on such designated sites, this would be subject to a series of criteria. The proposal does not meet the exceptional circumstances required to justify a non-Class B1 Use in this location, so the protected nature of the site would be jeopardised.
    2. Policies PS15 and MAN1 – uses that are more appropriate to a town centre location, and that are proposed outside that location, must be justified by evidential need and the available sites must be subjected to sequential testing. In this case, the proposed use would be more appropriate in a town centre location, where suitable sites are available, and it would contribute to the vitality, viability and regeneration of Bangor City centre. The business model and what appears to be a 'need' in this location is strongly challenged. There is no specific requirement to locate the business in this particular location, or near Ysbyty Gwynedd.
    3. Policy ISA2 – the proposed use is defined as a community facility, which must be located within a defined development boundary. In this case, the proposed use and location is contrary to policy and jeopardises the principles of locating community facilities in sustainable locations.
    4. Policies PS4, PS5 and TRA4 – the key principle is to locate developments, primarily used by the public, in a sustainable location, accessible by other modes of transport,

including walking and cycling. In this case, the Officer's supportive position, together with that of the Transport Unit, is the subject of debate based on key information:

- that the parking requirements identified for the proposed use have been greatly underestimated.
- The Arriva 5A bus service is not a 'regular' one as referenced, realistically. A bus service to this location has been greatly influenced by Parc Menai's employment trend, so only a morning and evening bus service is provided for office staff arriving at and departing from Parc Menai businesses.

In summing up, he noted,

- There was no rational justification for locating the proposal at Parc Menai.
- For the second time, exceptional circumstances had not been proven to contravene established planning policy
- That other more appropriate sites are available in town centre locations
- That the Highways Unit's report is erroneous and factually incorrect.
- That he was asking the Committee to acknowledge the Officer's recommendation and refuse the application.

c) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant noted the following observations:

- The business would provide a specialist health service to local patients in response to the healthcare crisis in North Wales which has specialist waiting lists of up to 4 years.
- In 2023, the business, across its premises, had provided free access to 12,000 patients which resulted in the identification of 53 early cases of cancer.
- The unit at Parc Menai had been empty for a while. Although the unit has been on the market for 20 months, there has been no interest in office use and therefore, this clearly highlights that there is no demand for B1 use.
- Concerns suggest that a location in Bangor City Centre should be prioritised, but creating a health centre requires a calm environment, convenient access for vulnerable patients, good facilities, a door drop-off point and safe parking nearby. Realistically, Parc Menai is the only site that meets these requirements.
- The units in Bangor City Centre are unsuitable due to size, a lack of parking and its environment for vulnerable patients.
- That Cyngor Gwynedd has already accepted the principle – dentist and optician medical units already operate under the same use class in Parc Menai, why is it therefore not acceptable for this proposal?
- Planning policies should serve the people, not hinder improvements and access to people's healthcare. Asked the Committee to consider the wider picture and recognise the crisis and support the application in the interests of the community
- This is not just a decision for a building, but a decision that will give access to care and save lives

ch) Exercising the right to speak, one of the Members who had called in the application made the following observations;

- That Parc Menai's status as a Business Park had been meaningless in practice for years; an orthodontic business was granted permission by the Committee, and the concept was completely scrapped with Coleg Menai's application – despite officers having recommended that the application be rejected, it was permitted on appeal, and therefore, unlike the planning officers, PEDW (Planning and Environment Decisions Wales) did not recognise the Parc's status as a Business Park.

- The application granted permission by the Committee for an orthodontic business was granted primarily because of convenient access to a service. There had been a rationale to permit an orthodontic business because of accessible access, why not allow this?
  - Locating the business in the city centre would not be reasonable for many
  - It was essentially a consultation business with treatment rooms to support the consulting aspect. How different is this from going to get advice from a lawyer or accountant? – there were legal and accounting business units located in the Parc. What's the difference?
  - Patients are unable to get to the service in the city centre
  - Asking the Committee to approve the application.
- d) It was proposed and seconded to approve the application, contrary to the recommendation.

Reason: That there were 'special circumstances' here and therefore the application complied with policy B1. It would be difficult for vulnerable people to access such a service in the city centre.

- dd) During the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made by the Members:
- That the location was suitable and convenient for patients
  - That Bangor City Centre is not suitable for this type of service – need convenient access for vulnerable patients.
  - Improving Bangor City Centre or improving patient service? – access to the City Centre is difficult – North Wales Health Services need a boost
  - Patient care is important.
  - Changing people's shopping habits is needed in order to regenerate the City centre.
  - Concern again that comments had not been received from Bangor City Council - what can the Committee do to facilitate this?
  - That such a resource is needed, but is here the most suitable place?
  - The Council was being criticised for moving businesses/services from the high street
  - That there was a medical centre development for the City Centre which will be located near the bus station and within walking distance.
  - Approving this would detract from the regeneration of Bangor City Centre – it would set a precedent.

In response to a question as to whether there were other vacant units at Parc Menai, it was confirmed that there were vacant units there, and that this had been submitted as part of the application by the agent.

**RESOLVED: To APPROVE contrary to the recommendation.**

**CONDITIONS:**

1. **5 years**
2. **In accordance with the plans**
3. **When the use hereby approved terminates, the use must be reinstated back into B1, B2 or B8 use.**

**5.2 APPLICATION NUMBER C24/0705/35/LL  
Plas Newydd Residential Care Home, High Street, Cricieth, LL52 0RR**

**Demolition of existing building and redevelop the site for 9 independent living flats (C3) with extra care service for those over 55 years old, 100% affordable**

Attention was drawn to the Late Observations Form.

- a) The Planning Manager highlighted that this was a full application for the demolition of an existing vacant building (but which had previously been in use as a care/nursing home), and the redevelopment of the site by erecting a new building which would provide 9 affordable independent living C3 use flats with an extra care service for those over the age of 55.

It was explained that the proposal involved the erection of a 4-storey building, which would be slightly higher and set back within the site compared to the existing building. The ground floor would include a main entrance and foyer along with communal areas for residents and staff in the form of a shared living area, an outdoor decking or terrace to the rear, an office, toilet and kitchen plus one living unit. The rest of the living units would be spread over the three floors above and in the form of one-bedroom units. Each unit would provide an open plan living/kitchen area and a bathroom.

The site is situated within the development boundary of the town of Cricieth with the A497 class 1 road running parallel to the front of the site, and the Cambrian Coast Railway directly adjacent to the rear. It was reiterated that the site of the application forms part of a striking streetscape when approaching the town of Cricieth from the west.

It was reported that the proposal had been presented as separate living units, use C3 with extra care for those over the age of 55, with all units being affordable. It was accepted that the valuations for the units were appropriate for the location and for this type of development with a discount level of 30% being acceptable. It was noted that the floor area of the flats was in line with relevant guidelines relating to the size of affordable units. The evidence presented did not give absolutely clear justification of the need for the units, but it is widely recognised that there is a need for affordable one-bedroom units in Gwynedd; the proposal would provide for that need subject to a condition to secure their tenure as affordable units and for people over the age of 55.

It was expressed that policy ISA 2 in the LDP aims to protect existing community facilities and opposed loss or change of use. It was highlighted that a statement had been received from the agent confirming that the previous use of the property as a home had been decommissioned and that the building would no longer be suitable for this use. It was also noted that the statement also argues that the proposal provides a suitable facility for the community that enables older people to live in their community with suitable care; to this end, due to viability implications for continuing to improve the existing home, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of policy ISA 2.

It was pointed out that discussions had taken place between officers from the Planning Authority and the agent which highlighted concern about the design of the proposal. It was specifically noted that the proposed building would not blend in well with the surrounding area as it would dominate and be excessive within the local landscape. In response, the agent had confirmed that the applicant would not carry out any change to the design because the number of units needed to be kept as it was to ensure that the development was viable, and the need had been evidenced. As no proposal had been made to alleviate officers' concerns in relation to these issues, it was not considered that the current proposal was acceptable because of the detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area, and that it was contrary to the relevant requirements of policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the LDP together with the advice within Technical Advice Note 12: Design.

In terms of the rear elevation of the building, and given that the building will be set further back with a significant increase in the rear bulk and mass of the new building compared to the existing building, this would appear overwhelming and oppressive when viewed from adjacent buildings and from the outside areas. This elevation would also extend beyond the rear of the adjacent buildings, and is likely to result in a significant enclosure effect of the gardens and rooms at the rear of these buildings. It was noted that an external balcony would extend out from the rear of the building, and its location and height would overlook the existing private grounds of adjacent buildings. In addition, there would be an increase in the number of relatively large glass openings at the rear and due to their presence on higher floors, they will also add to the appearance of over-looking. It was therefore considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and would not comply with Policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP which seeks to prevent unacceptable adverse effects on the amenity of occupiers of local residences.

It was noted that visual amenities, general and residential amenities, transportation and access issues, language issues, and biodiversity issues, had been fully assessed and were acceptable. Having considered all Planning considerations, it was considered that the proposal as submitted, was neither acceptable nor met the requirements of relevant policies. The Officers recommended that the application be refused.

- b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, an objector to the application made the following observations:
- That she was representing her parents, the owners of Hen Berllan, which is located next door to the site of the application.
  - That she welcomed the officers' conclusions which highlighted that the proposal is not suitable for the site.
  - The proposal would replace a 3-storey building with a 4-storey building plus extend it further to the rear. As the officers had noted, this would appear dominant and excessive within the local landscape and would not integrate with adjacent streets.
  - That the officers' comments reflected the concerns of residents who shared their objection – the proposal would introduce a structure that is inconsistent and oppressive, completely unlike the character of neighbouring properties.
  - It would have a significant impact on neighbouring residents – a higher scale and the extension to the rear would seem domineering and oppressive from the property next door – Hen Berllan.

- The proposed balcony and top-floor openings would directly overlook private lands and would lead to a clear loss of privacy – the proposal creates significant harm to the living conditions of nearby residents.
- Neither the design, scale nor form of the proposal were acceptable
- Asked the Committee to refuse the application in accordance with the recommendation.

- c) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the agent noted the following observations:
- The proposal would provide 100% affordable units for local people in response to the need for sustainable dwellings.
  - The introduction of the apartments would free up housing for the County's young families.
  - That Medicare (the applicant) is already offering Gwynedd 6000 hours of domiciliary care per month, along with access to 84 dementia beds on their sites – this highlights their expertise and care for residents.
  - That the units are a means of keeping people in their own homes and taking pressure off nursing beds.
  - The applicant is ready to discuss this vital local housing provision with the officers.
  - That issues such as design, mass and amenity are the considerations that are holding back the decision – these should be outweighed by the obvious need for this type of housing in Cricieth and in Gwynedd.
  - That the delay by Gwynedd planning officers for additional information and revisions is economically unviable – the proposal must be viable to provide 100% affordable units.
  - Work could start immediately – the SAB (SuDS Approval Body) has already approved – the Planning Department is holding this vital proposal back.
  - That the revised plan is marginally larger than the existing property – this allows for the maximum possible number of units on site and makes the best use of the land.
  - Providing fewer than nine units would be unjust and impractical for a site of this size.
  - The design is considerate of materials and colour palettes that blend in with the local pattern – a contemporary and fit-for-purpose design.
  - For the committee to be aware, a planning inspector may agree with the applicant by stating that the provision of housing is more important than the design of the scheme, in cases where demand is very obvious.
  - Providing housing in an area where there is evidence of need should be more important than design – design is a matter of opinion, a trivial matter given the need.
  - A similar application was recently approved in North Wales where it was found that the need had won over size and design considerations.
  - The building contributes to a positive response to the housing crisis in the area.

- ch) The Local Member, although having had apologised, had presented the following observations:
- That she opposed the application because of the visual impact of the development and its impact on the residential amenities of nearby neighbours
  - Health and Safety concern due to proximity to the railway
  - Parking concerns
  - It would cause disruption in light of any demolition

- d) It was proposed and seconded to refuse the application.
- dd) During the ensuing discussion, the following observation was made by a Member:
- That Gwynedd planning policies were not trivial.

**RESOLVED To delegate powers to the Head of Environment Department to refuse the application:**

- 1. It is not considered that the design of the proposal, in terms of layout, scale and mass adds to enhancing the character and appearance of the site context nor does it fully integrate within the context of the immediate streetscape and its prominent location in this part of Cricieth. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the relevant requirements of policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan, 2017 together with part 2.6 of Technical Advice Note 12: Design, which states that design which is inappropriate in its context, or does not take advantage of opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area, should not be accepted, as it will have detrimental effects on existing communities.**
- 2. Due to the scale, mass and location and certain features to be included in the proposed development, it would lead to an intrusive and domineering impact on adjacent properties and their curtilage. It is therefore considered that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of residents of local properties contrary to criterion 7 of policy PCYFF2 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan, 2017.**

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 13:50

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**CHAIR**