

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

**Number: 3**

**Application Number: C25/0186/11/LL**

**Date Registered: 21/03/25**

**Application Type: Full**

**Community: Bangor**

**Ward: Bangor - East**

**Proposal:** Proposed development for the change of use of an existing property to form 13 self-contained residential flats (C3 use) along the lower ground floor, ground floor, first floor, second and third floors. The proposal also attempts to retain an element of commercial floor area on the ground floor to submit to retail purposes (A1).

**Location:** Halifax, 243 - 245 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1PA

**Summary of the Recommendation:** TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

## 1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to change the use of an existing 5 floor mid-terrace property into 13 self-contained residential flats (use C3) retaining an element of commercial floor area on the ground floor. The proposal does not include any external works. All the residential flats will be one-bedroom units and will be dispersed across every floor. All flats have been designed to fit within the existing floor plan as much as possible and all units will be fitted with the necessary facilities, a bathroom, a bedroom area and a combined kitchen and living space.
- 1.2 All flats will be accessible by stairs connected to an access point at the rear of the building (on the lower ground floor). The development will also include a refuse storage and bicycle storage on the lower ground floor.
- 1.3 The proposed development also includes a revised plan for the ground floor, inclusive of retail use (A1). The retail space will face the high street whilst both flats being provided towards the rear of the building will be on this floor. The property will retain its shop front but would provide a smaller retail unit than the original commercial space (reduction of 137m<sup>2</sup> to 43m<sup>2</sup>).
- 1.4 The building is located in the middle of Bangor High Street, within the development boundary of the Sub-regional Centre as defined by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan. It is also located within the Conservation Area and within the Defined Town Centre and Main Shopping Area.
- 1.5 The information submitted for consideration as part of the application includes:
  - Planning Statement
  - Welsh Language Impact Assessment
  - Green Infrastructure Statement

## 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 Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act, and in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

## 2.3 Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 adopted 31 July 2017:-

ISA 1: Infrastructure Provision

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

AT 1: Conservation Areas

MAN 1: Proposed developments in town centres

MAN 2: Principal retail areas (the Retail Core)

PS 4: Sustainable transport, development and accessibility

PS 5: Sustainable development

PS 15: Development of Town Centres and Retail

PS 17: Settlement Strategy

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

TAI 1: Housing in the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Service Centres

TAI 9: Sub-dividing existing properties into self-contained flats and houses in multiple occupation

TAI 15: Threshold of affordable housing and their distribution

ISA 5: Provision of open spaces in new housing developments

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing (April 2019)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (July 2019)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Housing Developments and Educational Provision (November 2009).

## 2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing

Technical Advice Note 18: Transportation

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

### 3. Relevant Planning History:

C21/0207/11/TC - Application for a proposed development certificate to remove and rebuild front and rear elevation façade of the building: Approved 27/05/21

C12/0981/11/HY - An application to install internal illuminated signs- Approved 30/08/12

C02A/0659/11/LL – Installation of ramp: Refused 16/01/03 (Refused on appeal 22/10/03 - Ref. Q6810/A/03/1121652)

### 4. Consultations:

Community Council: No response received

Transportation Unit: No response received

Strategic Housing Unit: 32% of those on Cyngor Gwynedd's Housing Register are looking for one-bedroom properties and 8% of those on the Tai Teg register are looking for this type of property.

The proposal will meet the recognised need and a contribution of 20% will be expected towards affordable housing.

Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water): Request a condition to protect the public sewer system  
Guidance for the applicant

The Welsh Language Unit Overall, sufficient evidence was presented to support the "neutral" conclusion of the Language Statement however express concern regarding the number of flats that have been granted permission in Bangor recently.

Public Protection: Request conditions to ensure sufficient sound insulation between the shop and flats and to regulate construction working hours

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and neighbours were notified. No observations were received in response to the public consultation.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

## 5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

### The principle of the development

- 5.1 The property is located within the Bangor development boundary as included in the LDP and as the site is located within the boundary of the Sub-regional Centre, the principle of developing the site must be considered against Policy TAI 1 of the LDP.
- 5.2 The indicative housing supply level for Bangor over the Joint Local Development Plan period amounts to 969 units - 393 on designated sites and 576 on windfall sites. During the period between 2011 and 2024, a total of 737 units were completed in the city and the windfall land bank, i.e. sites with extant planning permission on sites not designated for housing, stood at 286 units as of April 2024, with further permission for 70 units on sites designated for housing in the JLDP. It is noted that the Plan notes an indicative figure of 115 houses on two further sites that have been designated for housing in Bangor but have not received planning permission.
- 5.3 Taking all of the above information to account, it is noted that the provision is already met through the sites in the land bank. In such circumstances, consideration will be given to the units that have been completed thus far within the tier of the Main Centres. Policy PS 17 in the LDP states that 53% of the housing growth will be located within the Sub-regional Centre and Urban Service Centres. A review of the situation in relation to the provision within the Sub-regional Centre tier and Urban Service Centres in April 2024 indicated that, based on the 2155 units foreseen in the indicative supply, that 1,189 units had been completed and that there were 425 additional units in the land bank (and expected to be completed) and 446 units on housing designations but which had not been granted planning permission. This therefore means there is a shortfall of 95 units in terms of the windfall provision within this tier.
- 5.4 The observations of the Planning Inspector are also noted regarding the existing shortage in housing provision in Bangor are reinforced by an appeal decision for 4 flats on higher floors in another building on Bangor High Street (ref. appeal CAS-02351-T1Y3R70) when the Inspector noted:

*"5: Strategic Policy PS 17 in the JLDP states the general approach to the location and distribution of developments within the area of the Plan, including making it compulsory for a higher proportion of new developments (53%) to happen within a settlement tier of the Sub-regional Centre and Urban Services Centre. Policy TAI 1 of the JLDP notes Bangor as the area's Sub-regional Centre where housing to meet the strategy of the Plan would be provided through housing designations and suitable windfall sites within the development boundary, based on the indicative provision.*

*7.....the housing provision foreseen in the JLDP is indicative rather than fixed. Moreover, I acknowledge that it cannot be fully guaranteed that all designated sites and windfall sites will become available."*

And the Inspector concluded:

*"10. Based on the evidence to hand, I reach the conclusion that the additional 4 units noted in the appeal proposal would make an appropriate contribution to the local housing supply in accordance with Policies 17 and TAI 1 of the JLDP."*

- 5.5 Given the above, it is considered that, by adding 13 residential units to the housing stock, this development would help to contribute towards the LDP's housing targets in a way that responds positively to the requirements of the local housing market and, therefore, it is believed that the proposal can be accepted under TAI 1 and PS 17 of the LDP.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

5.6 Policy TAI 9 of the LDP approves the sub-division of existing properties into self-contained flats, provided they conform to a number of criteria as follows: -

- *The property is suitable for conversion to the number and type of units being proposed without the need for significant extensions and external adaptations* - the proposal involves using the existing construction without the need for extensions and, therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of complying with the first criterion.
- *It will not have a detrimental impact on residential amenities. In this regard, each proposal must show that it contains sufficient space for parking and refuse storage.* - given the central location of the site in the city centre which makes it accessible to a variety of travel modes other than the private car, parking requirements can be relaxed in accordance with relevant national advice (see the below assessment) and, therefore, it is not believed that parking spaces would be required within the site itself. The plan also includes plans a bicycle storage facility and a refuse storage space in the basement of the building.
- *If designated parking spaces cannot be provided, the proposal should not exacerbate existing parking problems in the local area* - given the central location of the property within the city where several public car parks are available, it is not believed that approving the proposal would worsen the parking situation in this part of the city nor would it have a significant impact on road safety or the local roads network.

5.7 Given the above assessment, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable based on the requirements of Policy TAI 9 of the LDP.

### **Appropriate Housing Mix**

5.8 Policy TAI 8 encourages a better housing balance in local communities. The Housing Mix assessment, which is part of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment submitted, notes that the projections of the Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment 2018-2023 show a continuous growth in the number of 1 and 2 people households against a consistent shortage of suitable property. In addition, evidence was presented from local selling/letting agencies regarding the current nature of the market for 1- and 2-bedroom flats and they report that there is a consistently high demand that is not met by turnover or a new supply. Although there is a good provision for the student accommodation market in Bangor, the assessment notes that there is a substantial shortage in the young professionals' market for "affordable" high-quality units, with one or two bedrooms, such as something to bridge the gap between moving from home/student accommodation and saving enough money to buy a first home.

5.9 Having given consideration to the above, it is believed that sufficient evidence has been submitted that there is a local demand for the size and type of units being proposed here and, therefore, that the housing mix is appropriate and complies with policy TAI 8.

### **General and residential amenities**

5.10 There is a mix of land uses in the vicinity of the application site including commercial/business uses and residential uses. Given that there will be no additions to the existing window openings or changes to the structure itself in light of the development, it is not believed that the proposal is going to significantly undermine the amenities of the residents of any nearby properties on grounds of overlooking and loss of privacy. It will not be damaging to the built quality of the Conservation Area either and, therefore, it is acceptable under policy AT 1

5.11 Concern was raised by the Public Protection service that the impact of noise could be harmful for the residents in the flats themselves in such a situation and they recommended that it would be essential that sufficient sound insulation was provided so that noise from the shop did not affect flats nearby and also that any noise from the flats did not cause any disturbance. It was

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

recommended that a planning condition be imposed to ensure appropriate insulation between the different units.

- 5.12 Taking the above assessment into account, it is therefore believed that, with an appropriate condition imposed to avoid noise damage, the proposal is acceptable based on the residential and general amenities of nearby residents and complies with the requirements of Policies PCYFF 2, PCYFF 3 and TAI 9 of the LDP.

### **Transport and access matters**

- 5.13 There is no land within the site to provide any type of car park and there is only access on foot to the property. Having said that, given its central location within the city (which has a number of public and private car parks nearby) together with its accessibility to various modes of transport, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable on the basis of parking and road safety requirements and complies with the requirements of Policy TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the LDP together with relevant national advice.

### **Sustainability matters**

- 5.14 Policies PS 4 and PS 5 of the LDP state that a development is located to reduce the need to travel by private transport and encourage opportunities for all users to travel as required and as often as possible by means of alternative modes, placing particular emphasis on walking, cycling and using public transport.
- 5.15 The building is located in the centre of the City of Bangor and within a site that can be described as sustainable. One of the most important aims of Welsh Government is to ensure that commercial development/use and employment use are directed to the town centres in the first instance, namely the most sustainable and accessible locations for the use. As well as the advantage of having sustainable and accessible links, directing developments to towns and cities is advantageous as a springboard for urban regeneration. Furthermore, the importance of securing developments that serve a town, city, catchment area or entire region benefiting from active travel infrastructure and public transport is noted. The principles included in 'Future Wales' are supported by the 'Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures' (July 2020). The document in question notes as follows:

*"The planning system must ensure the chosen locations and resulting design of new developments support sustainable travel modes and maximise accessibility by walking and cycling. New developments should improve the quality of place and create safe, social, attractive neighbourhoods where people want to walk, cycle and enjoy. We should not be promoting sites which are unlikely to be well served by walking, cycling and public transport. Urban design skills must be brought to bear and better space and capacity built on existing routes as well as new ones."*

- 5.16 Within the above context, it is believed that this application site is accessible to different modes of transport where there will be no extensive reliance on the use of the private car.

The advice contained in TAN 18: Transport, together with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which states the importance of walking and cycling as a mode of transport, has an emphasis on building sustainable and accessible infrastructure and structures in Wales. Bangor bus station is within a 5-minute walk of the site with a frequent public transport service, shops are within comfortable walking distance of the site and the train station is approximately 10-15 minutes walking distance which is also served by public transport and taxis. Given the above, it is believed that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policies PS4 and PS 5 of the LDP.



|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

## **Affordable Housing**

- 5.17 Policy TAI 15 seeks to ensure an appropriate provision of affordable housing within new housing developments. It has a threshold figure of 2 or more units in the Bangor Sub-Regional Centre in order to assess whether an affordable provision is viable. This proposal is for an increase of 13 residential units and, therefore, it must be assessed whether the contribution towards meeting the community's needs for affordable housing is possible. As Bangor is within the 'North and South Arfon Coastline' house price area of the Plan, it is noted that providing 20% of affordable housing is viable. Bearing in mind that this proposal is for 13 units, this equates to 3 units.
- 5.18 In this case, the applicant has proposed three of the units as being affordable residential units for local people, however it is noted that all of the flats are between 39m<sup>2</sup> and 41m<sup>2</sup> of floor area. Based on the information in the SPG: Affordable Housing (suggesting a presumed floor space of 46m<sup>2</sup> for an affordable one-bedroom flat with a communal entrance) together with a comparison with recent sales and rentals of similar flats in the area, it is believed that the market value of all these units can be deemed affordable without a discount arranged through a 106 agreement. Similarly, given the size and location of these flats, it is not expected that their prices will be out of reach of local residents and that all of these flats will be "affordable by design". It is acknowledged that the planning permission would continue for a period of 5 years and that property values could change during that period and, therefore, in this case it is considered that it is appropriate to impose a condition to ensure that the 3 units are affordable, and the value of the units could be confirmed at the time of building and an affordable arrangement ensured through a 106 agreement if deemed necessary at that time. To this end it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy PCYFF3 of the LDP.

## **Linguistic matters**

- 5.19 As this is a development for more than 10 living units a Language Impact Assessment was submitted to support the application. This notes:
- The intention of the proposal is to help meet the demand for such accommodation which is lacking in Bangor.
  - The development would enable young professionals to stay in the community whilst also being close to their place of work.
  - Bangor is a sub-regional centre providing a range of amenities, services and employment opportunities with good accessibility through public transport to other urban centres.
  - The development would enable local people to stay in the area, accessing these services and facilities.
  - The development would retain an element of the ground floor area for retail purposes, which would contribute to employment opportunities in the area.
  - The property is currently empty, and it is likely that the smaller commercial floor area would be more appealing to a local business as rent prices are likely to be lower, whilst retaining a high street location.
- 5.20 The Language Unit was consulted and they noted that overall, sufficient evidence was presented to support the "neutral" conclusion of the Language Statement. However, it was emphasised that the number of flats already developed in Bangor must be a consideration. Between 2011 and 2014, a total of 327 flats were developed in the city, which is 44.7% of homes built during the period in question. Whilst acknowledging the concern of the Language Unit, as noted above, there is a demand within the city of Bangor for flats such as these and these units would be available to meet recognised needs within the local community. It is therefore considered that this application meets the requirements of policy PS 1 of the LDP.



|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

### **Town Centre**

- 5.21 The site is located within the boundary of Bangor City Centre and the Main Shopping Area and national and local policies try to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and their retail, service and social functions. In this case, commercial use would continue on the ground floor, retaining an active front facing shop window. Therefore, it is not believed that the development would undermine the role of the City Centre as it would sustain business activity and contribute towards the viability of the town centre. It is therefore considered that the application is acceptable under the requirements of Policy PS 15, MAN 1 and MAN 2 in relation to protecting the retail roles of town centres.

### **Open Spaces and Education Matters**

- 5.22 Policy ISA5: Provision of Open Spaces in New Housing Developments notes that new housing proposals for 10 or more houses are expected to provide a suitable provision of open spaces. However, section 3.4.1 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) states: Open Spaces in New Housing Developments states that a contribution towards children's play areas will not be sought from one-bedroom dwellings, student accommodation, sheltered and elderly housing, extra care facilities and other specialist forms of development where children in the 0-14 age range will not usually be residents. The 2011 Census does not indicate that children live in one-bedroom properties therefore there would be no need for an additional provision or a financial contribution in light of this proposed development.
- 5.23 The relevant policy within the context of educational contributions for residential developments is Policy ISA1 of the LDP. In considering the information in the SPG 'Educational Development' (which remains relevant) and Policy ISA 1 (Infrastructure Provision), an education contribution would not be relevant in terms of this proposal. The SPG states that one-bedroom units should not be considered in this regard and, therefore, there will be no need for a financial contribution consideration in light of this proposed development.

### **Other matters**

- 5.24 Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), deals with green infrastructure, net benefit to biodiversity, the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and trees and woodlands. A Green Infrastructure Statement was submitted with this application and changes to PPW have been considered. In this case, the development would have very little impact on biodiversity, but the Statement proposes some improvements in the form of nesting boxes and control over external lights and it is believed, given the urban nature of the site, that these are acceptable under policy PS 19 of the LDP and meet PPW objectives.

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 It is considered that the proposed use is acceptable and will not impair the area's character and will not cause unacceptable harm to amenities. All material planning considerations have been considered when determining this application; however, this has not changed the recommendation.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| PLANNING COMMITTEE                     | DATE: 14/07/2025 |
| REPORT BY ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT |                  |

## **7. Recommendation:**

7.1 To approve subject to conditions:

1. Time - Five years
2. In accordance with the plans
3. Restrict the use to C3 use class residential dwellings only
4. Restrict the construction hours
5. Sound insulation measures must be imposed and agreed.
6. The objectives of the Green Infrastructure Statement must be implemented
7. Affordable housing condition

Note: Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water)