

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 11/09/2023
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

**Number: 2**

**Application Number: C23/0432/11/LL**

**Date Registered: 26/05/2023**

**Application Type: Full**

**Community: Bangor**

**Ward: Dewi - Bangor**

**Proposal: Removal of the existing helicopter landing pad and construction of two new landing stages to support the existing hospital. The work will include re-grading the soft landscape to include a new access road, landing pads including all surface water drainage, markings and illuminated landing barriers, new safety fences and enclosures to maintain the helicopters.**

**Location: Helipad, Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd,, Bangor, LL57 2PW**

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

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## 1. Description:

1.1 This is a full application for the creation of a new landing facility for helicopters near Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor. The work would include:

- removing the existing helicopter landing pad
- creating two new landing areas by:
  - re-grading the landscape and creating two embankments with a circular shaped flat plot behind them
  - installation of hard standings for landing pads
  - surface water drainage work
  - installation of new illuminated landing barriers
  - erection of security fencing
  - creation of enclosures in order to maintain the helicopters
  - associated engineering work.

1.2 As a result of an assessment of the current service, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has reported the need to upgrade and improve the provision for landing helicopters at Ysbyty Gwynedd. It notes that the existing service has been very busy, particularly taking into account the fact that the county's population doubles during the summer months, as well as the presence of Eryri National Park in the area. The new facility would offer more capacity to receive patients and would create a landing facility for a broader range of helicopters, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

1.3 The landing pad is located approximately 150m to the east of the hospital, on a plot of sloped land on an elevated site above the city, which, according to the Civil Aviation Authority, offers very good flight paths into and out of the hospital grounds. The hospital stands on the southern peripheries of Bangor Subregional Centre in the suburb of Penrhosgarnedd and a vast number of developments have been recently approved within the hospital curtilage in order to maintain and enhance the facilities available there. The site is also partly located within the buffer zone of Crug Goetre Uchaf (CN376) Registered Monument.

1.4 The following documents were submitted to support the application:

- Feasibility report to improve the landing pad for helicopters at Ysbyty Gwynedd prepared by the UK Civil Aviation Authority
- Arboriculture Assessment and Method Statement
- Ecological Appraisal

## 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 made 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

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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.

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

PS 1: The Welsh Language and Culture

PS 19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment

PS 20: Safeguard and where relevant, improve heritage assets

ISA 2: Community Facilities

PCYFF2: Development criteria

PCYFF3: Design and place shaping

**2.4 National Policies:**

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, February 2021

TAN: Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN12: Design

**3. Relevant Planning History:**

3.1 A vast number of applications have been approved recently within the curtilage of the hospital in order to improve the facilities.

**4. Consultations:**

Community/Town Council: Not received

Welsh Water: Standard conditions and notes for the applicant

Trees Unit: There is no need to remove any trees to make room for the development and all engineering and construction work will be located outside the roots protection zone of the surrounding trees.

There will be no detrimental impact on the site's arboricultural value.

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Welsh Government (Transportation):	The Welsh Government does not wish to instruct on this application.
Natural Resources Wales:	No objection - observations for the applicant
North Wales Fire Service:	No observations to offer
Land Drainage Unit:	Due to the size and nature of the development, an application may need to be submitted to the SuDS Approval Body to be approved before construction work commences.
Transportation Unit:	No observations to make as it is deemed that the proposal will not adversely affect any road, or proposed road.
North Wales Police:	No observations to offer
Cadw:	Not received
Public Protection:	Not received
Civil Aviation Authority:	Not received
Public Consultation:	A notice was posted on the site and the advertising period has expired. No response was received to the consultation during the statutory advertising period.

## 5. Material Planning Considerations:

### Location, Design and Visual Impact

#### The principle of the development

5.1 Policy ISA 2 of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan supports plans that maintain and enhance community facilities if they meet a series of criteria and the criteria that are relevant to this plan are discussed below:

- i. *they are located within or adjoining development boundaries or they are located outside development boundaries but within clusters where the proposal will provide an essential facility to support the local community.*

The site is located immediately adjacent to the Bangor development boundary.

- iv. *that the proposal is of an appropriate scale and type compared to the size, character and function of the settlement.*

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When considering the status of Bangor as a Sub-regional Centre, and the site's existing use as the main health treatment location in North West Wales, it is believed that this facility is completely appropriate for the nature of the location and status of the settlement.

- 5.2 Therefore, it is considered that this is a scheme to enhance an essential service offered to the communities of Gwynedd and that it meets the relevant criteria as listed under Criterion 1, policy ISA 2 of the LDP and therefore the principle of the planning application is acceptable.

### **General Amenities**

- 5.3 Generally, policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the Joint Local Development Plan encourage the approval of proposals for new developments as far as they do not have a detrimental impact on health, safety or the amenities of the residents of local properties or on the area in general.
- 5.4 This development is concealed from the majority of nearby viewpoints. Public footpath number 39 in the Community of Bangor runs past the northern boundary of the site, however, there is a mature hedge between this path and the site. The majority of the views from the site are from a distance and in the context of the existing developed site and the hospital nearby. When considering the local landscape and existing trees and hedges surrounding the site, it is not believed that there will be a significant change to the view of the site as observed from the outside.
- 5.5 Of course, there is potential for noise and disturbance to emanate from this type of facility but this is unlikely to be significantly worse than what already happens. There will not be a significant increase in the use made of the site, instead, it will be possible to deal more efficiently with the transport that needs to use the landing pads, particularly in an emergency when more than one helicopter will need to land in a short space of time.
- 5.6 In addition, the site is approximately 200m from the nearest residential houses and it is not believed that there will be a significant additional harm caused to the amenities of local residents deriving from the development. Therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable under the requirements of policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the LDP.

### **Archaeological Matters**

- 5.7 The site is also partly located within the buffer zone of Crug Goetre Uchaf (CN376) Registered Monument, a mound that dates back to prehistoric times. Considering the distance between the site and the monument, as well as the land formation and other developments between the two locations, it is not believed that there will be any impact on the layout of the monument deriving from this development and therefore the application is acceptable under policy PS 20 of the LDP.

### **Biodiversity Matters**

- 5.8 The site is mainly located on green land with trees and shrubs around the boundaries. An ecological assessment of the site was submitted and this concluded that there is no special biodiversity interest to the site itself, although the boundaries are of significance to wildlife and are visually important. The report recommends safeguarding biodiversity features by drawing up a Conservation Building Control Plan and Biodiversity Management Plan for the site.
- 5.9 In addition, an arboriculture report was submitted, confirming that there would be no harm to the trees and hedges from adhering to appropriate measures when undertaking work on the site.

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Therefore, it is believed, by imposing an appropriate condition to ensure that the recommendations of the above reports are followed, that this development would be acceptable in relation to policy PS 19 of the LDP.

### **Language Matters**

- 5.10 In accordance with the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, it is a duty when making a decision on a planning application to consider the Welsh language, where it is relevant to that application. This is reiterated further in para. 3.28 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021), and Technical Advice Note 20. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities' (adopted July 2019), provides further guidance on how it is expected for Welsh language considerations to be incorporated in each relevant development.
- 5.11 It is noted that there are some specific types of development where the proposal will be required to submit a Welsh Language Statement or Report on the Welsh Language Impact Assessment. The thresholds in terms of when it is expected to submit a Statement/Report have been highlighted in Policy PS1 of the Joint LDP, along with Diagram 5 of the SPG. In terms of the type of developments in question, the following is noted: The proposal does not reach the thresholds to submit a Welsh Language Statement or a Report on a Welsh Language Impact Assessment. However, Appendix 5 of the SPG notes that every housing development, retail, commercial or industrial development where there is no need to submit a Welsh Language Impact Statement/Assessment should show how consideration has been given to the language.
- 5.12 The proposal submitted is for improvements to a community resource on a site that is already in use for the same purpose and there will be no significant change in the nature or density of that use. This is not a development where there is a need to submit a formal assessment of the impact on the language and considering that this is fundamentally a proposal to improve the day-to-day management of an existing facility, it is not believed that there will be any linguistic impact from the development. Considering that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is a public body with its own language policy, which is consistent with national standards, it is expected that any signs displayed on the site will respect the historical culture of the area and will therefore comply with policy PS 1 of the LDP.

### **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 As a result of the above assessment, it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to any relevant planning policy within the LDP, and that the proposed development is appropriate for the site and that it would help achieve an objective of strategic importance. Consideration was given to all material planning issues and it is not believed that the proposal is likely to cause any unacceptable additional detrimental impact to nearby residents or the community in general.

### **7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To approve the application subject to conditions relating to the following:
1. Time (five years)
  2. In accordance with the plans
  3. The recommendations of the Arboriculture Assessment and Method Statement and Ecological Appraisal must be followed
  4. Welsh Water Condition to protect the sewerage system.

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Notes

1. Welsh Water
2. Natural Resources Wales
3. Land Drainage Unit