Report of the Chief Officer Economy and Planning

Application Reference
P/2026/0158

Applicant
Mrs Barbara Griffiths

Agent
Mr Robert Jones

Site Address
18 THE BEECHES, WREXHAM, LL12 7BL

Description of Development
NEWID DEFNYDD O ANNEDD DOSBARTH C3 I DŶ AMLFEDDIANNAETH DOSBARTH C4 (5 PRESWYLYDD) / CHANGE OF USE FROM CLASS C3 DWELLING TO CLASS C4 HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (5 OCCUPANTS)

Ward
Acton and Maesydre/Gwaunyterfyn a Maes-y-dre

Community
Acton/Acton

Recommendation
Grant

Officer Report

Site Description

A mid-terrace 2 storey, 3 bed dwelling located within a predominantly residential area. The site and its adjoining properties are accessed via a separate lane which runs alongside Price's Lane. Playing fields lie directly opposite the site across Price's Lane and a row of mature trees lie on an area of grassland that separates Price's Lane from The Beeches.



Proposal

The application seeks approval for the change of use of an existing dwelling to a HMO.

Internally on the ground floor, the existing longe/diner would be converted to a kitchen/lounge/diner and the existing kitchen and existing living room would be converted to 2 separate bedrooms, each with an en-suite. The first floor will remain as having 3 bedrooms and a bathroom but with 2 of the bedrooms each having an en-suite. There would therefore be a total of 5 bedrooms, an increase from 3.

Externally, no changes are proposed to the front elevation. However, to the rear a single glazed door would replace an existing window to provide external access between the rear garden and the proposed kitchen/lounge/diner.

The rear garden would remain unchanged.

The area to front of the property currently provides parking for 2 cars and the proposal intends to create an additional parking space by removing the existing grass and hedgerow along the front boundary.

The applicant has confirmed the property will be occupied by 5 tenants. The proposed use therefore falls within Use Class C4.

Reason for Committee Determination
Objections from 3 or more individuals
Objection from Community Council
Local Member request

Site History
P/2025/0847 - Change of use to HMO. Refused 2nd March 2026

Development Plan
Future Wales
Policies 1, 2 and 20.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan
PS1 - Location of Development (Settlement Limit)
PS2 -Location of Development (Material Detrimental Affect)
PS3 - Location of Development (Brownfield)
PS4 - Location of Development (Maintain Settlement Pattern)
PS11 - Biodiversity
GDP1 - General Development Principles
H4 - Sub-division of Dwellings
EC6 - Biodiversity Conservation
EC14 - Protection of Controlled Waters
T8 - Parking

Local Planning Guidance Notes
LPG5 - Housing in Multiple Occupation
LPG16 - Parking Standards
LPG21 - Space Around Dwellings
LPG32 - Biodiversity and Development

Consultation Responses
Community Council:
No response

Local Members:
Councillor Becca Martin
Requests the application to be reported to committee. This application has already been refused on highways grounds and I have previously submitted concerns around parking, flooding, environmental amenities and room sizes.

Councillor Corin Jarvis
Requests the application to be reported to committee and makes the following comments:

1.Highway and Pedestrian Safety - Very narrow access street with limited manoeuvring space. Existing driveway accommodates only three vehicles; proposal may require space for five. Potential increased on-street parking

causing obstruction and safety risks. No pedestrian footpath along the row of houses.

2.Residential Amenity and Noise - Mid-terrace property with shared party walls on both sides. Increased occupancy likely to result in additional noise affecting neighbours. No consultation undertaken with surrounding residents.

3.Impact on Character and Community Cohesion - Proposal sits outside the established accommodation model for the area. Potential negative impact on neighbourhood character and residential amenity. Concerns regarding increased risk of antisocial behaviour.

4.Flooding and Drainage Issues - Site and neighbouring properties have a history of flooding. WCBC has previously removed hard-standing driveways in the area to reduce surface-water issues. Flooding problems reportedly persist; proposal may worsen existing issues.

5.Waste Management - Application lacks sufficient detail on waste storage for five occupants. Only states that waste should be stored at the rear of the property, which may be inadequate.

Natural Resources Wales:
No objection. Based on the email received from the planning case officer dated 26 January 2026 for the previous application (Ref: P/2025/0847) NRW are satisfied that there is unlikely to be a source of additional nutrients and/or a pathway for impacts. Advise it would be reasonable for the Council to screen out this proposal as not likely to have a significant effect on the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC in relation to nutrient inputs.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water:
No objections. Suggest a condition about surface water and addition of advisory note.

Highway Officer:
No objections provided further details are provided regarding cycle parking.

Contaminated Land Officer:
No Comments

Public Protection Officer:
No objections. Suggest addition of informatives including the need to apply for a HMO Licence prior to occupation and the requirement to comply with the Rent Smart Wales Scheme.

Publicity Undertaken:
Notification Letters: Sent to 6 neighbouring properties.

Responses to Publicity:
Total representations received: 26 from 25 individuals objecting to the application.

Objecting: 25

The objections relate to highway safety and parking impacts, harm to residential amenity, safety concerns and fear of crime/antisocial behaviour, conflict with the character and function of a family-oriented residential area, loss of family housing, over-intensification, drainage issues, environmental damage and infrastructure capacity concerns. A number of objectors also highlight that a similar proposal was previously refused, and that the issues leading to refusal have not been addressed in the current application. A more detailed summary is provided below:

Highway Safety, Parking and Access - The Beeches is a narrow access-only road, in places with no footpaths, existing on-street parking is heavily constrained, a five-bed HMO is expected to generate at least five vehicles, plus visitors, risk to children walking to and from school and users of the adjacent cycle lane, obstruction of emergency and service vehicles, overspill parking onto grass verges and shared accesses including wheelchair access. Inability of the site to physically provide the required off-street parking and ongoing construction vehicles already causing obstruction and verge damage.

Harm to Residential Character and Community Cohesion - The Beeches is a long-established, family-orientated estate, introducing a HMO would result in a more transient population, loss of community stability and cohesion, fear of setting a precedent for further HMO conversions, properties were designed and historically used as single-family homes, a HMO is considered out of keeping with the character of the street and concerns that the proposal prioritises profit over community well-being.

Intensity of Use, Noise and Disturbance - Over-intensive use of a modest 1930s dwelling, increased comings and goings at unsociable hours, noise to adjoining properties, heightened disturbance due to unrelated occupants with differing lifestyles and risk of anti-social behaviour.

Drainage, Flooding and Infrastructure Capacity - The area has a documented history of flooding, reliance on old drainage and sewer infrastructure, addition of multiple bathrooms increasing water and foul drainage load, hardstanding for parking reducing natural drainage. Residents report the regular use of sandbags and concern that additional intensification would exacerbate flooding and sewage back-ups.

Waste Management and Environmental Health - Significant increase in waste from multiple occupants, insufficient external space for bins and recycling, risk of vermin (rats and mice already reported locally) and visual harm to the street scene from excess bins.

Impact on Green Infrastructure, Trees and Biodiversity - Damage to grass verges used informally for parking, harm to protected trees (TPOs) from vehicle compaction, removal of established hedgerows with nesting birds. Mitigation proposals (rear fruit trees, bat/bird boxes) considered inadequate.

Enforceability of Occupancy Limits - Skepticism that a condition limiting occupation to five residents is realistic or enforceable. Fear of additional occupants, partners, and visitors increasing impacts beyond assessed levels.

Background

A previous application to change the use of the dwelling to a HMO was reported to Planning Committee on 2nd March 2026 and was refused for the following reason:

There is inadequate provision for off-street parking on site. The development is therefore likely to increase demand for on-street parking in the vicinity of the site to the detriment of highway safety. The development therefore conflicts with policies GDP1 and T8 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

This proposed development has been amended to address the reason for refusal. The front garden area would be altered to provide additional off-street parking provision. The existing driveway would be widened to provide three off-street parking spaces within the site curtilage. The existing hedgerow and grassed area to the front of the property would be remove and replaced with a permeable hardstanding. The amendments take account of the recommendations previously provided by the Council's Highway Officer.

Principle of Development

The site lies within recognised settlement limits where the principle of development is generally considered acceptable. The proposal is therefore compliant with policy PS1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Policy H4 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan allows for the subdivision of dwellings where:

a) sub-division is possible without major alterations, extensions, or additional new buildings which would significantly alter the character of the original dwelling; and
b) proposals accord with Policy GDP1; and
c) adequate private open space is available;
d) the proposal would not result in the over-concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation to the detriment of crime levels, the social fabric of the area, and the amenity of existing residents.

Addressing each of the criteria:

a) Extensions / Alterations

No extensions are proposed and very limited external alterations are proposed. A single glazed door would replace an existing window on the rear elevation.

b) Compliance with policy GDP1

Issues of amenity and parking have been dealt with as set out below in the remainder of the report.

c) Private open space

The property has a garden area to the rear of around 108 sqm. This is considered sufficient to provide space for bins and cycle parking, external drying space and outdoor amenity space for the occupants of the property.

d) Concentration of HMO properties

Local Planning Guidance Note 5 (LPGN5) provides further guidance and advises that to enable HMO developments to take place so that smaller/more affordable units of accommodation can continue to be provided whilst at the same time as trying to avoid over concentrations of HMOs the Council will seek to ensure that proposals for new HMOs do not result in the number of residential buildings in use as a HMOs to exceed 10% within a 50 metre radius of the boundaries of the application site. It further indicates that where the concentration exceeds 10%, planning permission will not normally be granted unless there are relevant material planning considerations to justify doing so.

There are no properties within 50m of the boundary of the site that are currently in use as HMO's. If this property was granted permission to be used as an HMO, this would mean that 3% of the properties within 50m of the site boundary would be HMOs. On this basis, the proposed development would not result in over-concentration of HMOS within the immediate area. The proposal therefore complies with part d) of UDP policy H4 and also to the guidance set out in LPGN5.

Design

As noted above, only minimal alterations are proposed to the dwelling, involving the replacement of an existing ground floor window with a single glazed door. The external appearance of the property would therefore remain generally the same. The alterations would not have any impact upon the visual amenities of the surrounding area.

Having regard to the above, proposal is in accordance with UDP policy GDP1.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed replacement of an existing ground floor window with a single glazed door would not result in any additional of overlooking.

Whilst the number of bedrooms will increase from 3 to 5, it has been confirmed that the maximum number of occupants will be limited to 5 people. Given that the existing 3-bed dwelling could also potentially be occupied by 5 people, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in activity as a result of the proposal compared to the current lawful use. As such. there is no evidence before the Council to demonstrate that the proposed development would result in an unacceptable level of noise or disturbance.

In addition to requiring planning permission, the proposed HMO will also need a separate licence from the Council’s Public Protection Team. Licensed HMOs are

subject to conditions that require landlords to take all reasonable steps to control noise and antisocial behaviour. Breaching licence conditions can ultimately result in landlords being prosecuted and their licences being revoked. Accordingly, there are appropriate controls to deal with these matters should they arise

Taking this into account it is unlikely that the proposal would result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. There are also other appropriate controls in place if issues were to arise. The proposal therefore accords with UDP policies H4 and GDP1.

Highway Considerations

The property has as a driveway/parking area that can accommodate two cars. The previous application did not propose enlarging the driveway to provide an additional parking space. However, in response to the refusal of the earlier application, the applicant is now proposing extending the driveway to provide a third parking space. Undertaking this work could be done without planning permission under permitted development rights irrespective of whether planning permission is granted.

LPGN16 guidance sets out maximum parking provision of 3 spaces for the existing dwelling and maximum of 4 spaces for the proposed HMO. The parking provision for the existing dwelling is therefore 1 space below the maximum and this would remain the case if the property was used as a HMO. In addition, although the maximum parking provision for the proposed development represents an increase of 1 space compared to the existing use, the site is situated in a highly sustainable location with convenient access to local services, amenities, employment opportunities, the city centre, and public transport. In addition, a shed is to be retained within the rear garden to provide storage for bicycles. For these reasons, the shortfall of one parking space is unlikely to give rise to any significant impacts and is consistent with national policy in PPW12, which places walking and other sustainable modes of travel at the top of the transport hierarchy.

Data from the 2021 Census shows that 30% of households living in rented accommodation in the Acton/Maesydre Ward have no car or van, 44% of have access to 1 car or van and 21% have access to 2 cars or vans. Only a small percentage, 6% have access to 3 or more vehicles. In relation to the other objections raised on highway grounds, there is no evidence that the proposal would be a cause of harm to safety, congestion, or emergency access.

The Highway Officer has raised no objection on the basis that the provision of 3 spaces for the proposed HMO would provide the property with the same proportion of parking provision as the existing dwelling (i.e. both would have 1 space below the maximum). The request made by the Highway Officer for further details in respect of cycle parking is considered unnecessary. The shed referred to above is to be retained for this purpose and as such adequate provision for cycle parking is already on site.

Taking these factors into account, the proposed development is unlikely to result in parking or highway safety issues in the surrounding area and is considered to comply with UDP Policies GDP1 and T8.

Natural Environment

PPW12 requires development to provide a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) i.e. a better outcome than if the site was left undeveloped. Failing to provide such a benefit is a valid reason for refusal. Every application regardless of size must not only mitigate any negative impacts of the development but also have a positive benefit for biodiversity which will be in place for the lifetime of the development. Enhancements should be onsite, proportional to the size of development, tailored towards features valuable in the area or providing linking habitats in a Green Infrastructure Plan.

The application is accompanied by Green Infrastructure Statement. This acknowledges that there will be some limited vegetation loss to the front of the property. However it confirms that there would be a number of ecological enhancements in the rear garden to ensure the provision of net benefit to biodiversity. The following measures are proposed:

- Planting of two native fruit trees in the rear garden (Apple (Malus domestica) and Plum (Prunus domestica). Which are stated to provide valuable seasonal foraging opportunities for birds, pollinators, and invertebrates, while also contributing positively to the wider green infrastructure network within residential environments.
- Installation of two integrated biodiversity features. - A Vivara Pro WoodStone bat box will be installed at a high level on the rear elevation of the dwelling and a Vivara Pro WoodStone bird nest box will be installed within the rear garden or on the rear elevation of the property.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development complies with paragraph 6.4.5 of PPW12, UDP policy PS11 and LPG32.

Flood Risk

Objectors have raise concerns about flooding. However, Flood Maps for Planning do not show the site to be at risk of surface water flooding. Having regard to this, the proposed development is unlikely to result in significantly increase the risk of surface water flooding and the concerns raised in this respect are unsubstantiated. There is also no evidence before the Council to demonstrate that the development would make any existing drainage issues in the area worse and it is of note that Welsh Water raise no such concerns.

The proposal therefore complies with UDP policy GDP1.

Drainage

The proposal has been considered in relation to nutrient impacts on the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Taking account of the 'Flows and Loads – 4 Sizing Criteria, Treatment Capacity for Sewage Treatment Systems - Code of Practice' and based upon the current 3-bedroom dwelling

with 5 Persons, the proposed 5 Person HMO would not result in an increase in foul discharge from the site. As such a likely significant effect on the SAC can be ruled out, and no further assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development would not conflict with policy EC6.

Other Considerations

In terms of the other objections raised these are addressed as follows:

Highway Safety

Construction-related parking is temporary in nature and does not form part of the operational use of the development. Any highway safety concerns arising during the construction phase are addressed through separate highways legislation rather than through the planning system.

Harm to Residential Character and Community Cohesion

Although the introduction of a HMO represents a material change of use, national and local planning policy does not preclude HMOs in residential areas provided they do not result in demonstrable harm to residential character or amenity. The proposed development would not automatically establish a precedent for future development elsewhere, as each subsequent application would be assessed independently against policy and site-specific circumstances. One HMO would also not materially affect the overall family housing supply, particularly where there is no evidence of HMOs within a 50m radius. Moreover, the strategic placement principles set out Policy 2 of Future Wales requires providing a mix of house types and tenures. The proposed development accords with Future Wales Policy 2.

Intensity of Use, Noise and Disturbance

This concern relates to the behaviour of individual occupiers rather than the use of the land. Planning controls deal with the latter rather than the former. Noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour are primarily managed through environmental health and statutory nuisance powers rather than through the planning system.

Waste Management and Environmental Health

A suitably worded condition could secure adequate refuse and recycling storage is provided and retained for the lifetime of the development. Issues relating to vermin or improper waste storage fall within the remit of environmental health legislation and can be addressed separately should problems arise.

Trees and Biodiversity

No works are proposed near to existing trees.

Enforceability of Occupancy Limits

Occupancy limits are a commonly used and lawful planning control for HMOs and are capable of being enforced where there is evidence of breach. While planning enforcement is reactive, the presence of a clear and precise condition

provides an appropriate mechanism to control the intensity of use and allows the Local Planning Authority to take action should the approved limits be exceeded.

Conclusion

The proposed development would not result in an over concentration of HMOs in the locality and is unlikely to give rise to any adverse planning policy, design, environmental, highway infrastructure or other concerns. It will also provide a much-needed form of affordable residential accommodation. It therefore accords with relevant national and local planning policies and guidance.

Condition(s)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiry of five years from the date of this permission.

2. The development shall only be carried out in strict accordance with the details shown on the following plan(s) and document(s):

   Proposed Ground Floor Plan A038.A009 Rev P04

   Proposed First Floor Plan A038.A010 Rev P03

   Proposed Site Location Plan A038.A002 Rev P03

   Proposed Elevations A038.A011 Rev P01

   Proposed Elevations A038.A012 Rev P01

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the measures to deliver net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) as detailed in the Green Infrastructure Statement dated 9th March 2026 have been implemented in full. The measures shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development.

4. The use of the premises shall be restricted to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) occupied by no more than 5 no. individuals.

5.

The vehicular parking area as shown on the plan numbered A038.A004 Rev P02 shall be kept free of any obstruction and made available solely for the parking of vehicles in connection with the approved use at all times.

6. Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling as a House in Multiple Occupation, a bin storage area shall be provided in accordance with a details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The bin storage area shall thereafter be retained solely for the storage of bins.

7. No surface water from any impermeable surfaces within its curtilage shall be allowed to drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system.

Reason(s)

1. To comply with Section 91(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

2. To comply with Section 71ZA(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

3. To ensure the development delivers net benefit to biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 6.4.5 of Planning Policy Wales 12.

4. To ensure no detriment to the River Dee/Bala Lake as a result of increased foul flows in accordance with Policy EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

5. To provide for the parking of vehicles clear of the highway in the interest of traffic safety in accordance with Policies GDP1 and T8 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

6. To ensure adequate storage for bins if provided in accordance with policies H4 and GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

7. To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment in accordance with Policy GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Notes

It is advised that there is a need to apply for a HMO licence from Wrexham County Borough Council prior to the first occupation of the premises as a HMO. There is also a need to comply with the Rent Smart Wales Scheme.

In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Technical Advice Note 12 (Design), the applicant is advised to take a sustainable approach in considering water supply in new development proposals, including utilising approaches that improve water efficiency and reduce water consumption. We would recommend that the applicant liaises with the relevant Local Authority Building Control department to discuss their water efficiency requirements.

The planning permission hereby granted does not extend any rights to carry out any works permissions required by the Water industries Act 1991. Any alterations to existing premises resulting in the creation of additional premises or merging of existing premises must also be constructed so that each is separately connected to the Company's water main and can be separately metered. Please contact our new connections team on 0800 917 2652 for further information on water and sewerage connections.

The applicant is also advised that some public sewers and lateral drains may not be recorded on our maps of public sewers because they were originally privately owned and were transferred into public ownership by nature of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011. The presence of such assets may affect the proposal. In order to assist us in dealing with the proposal the applicant may contact Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has rights of access to its apparatus at all times.

All works in relation to the implementation of this permission, including deliveries to and /or leaving the site, should be undertaken only between the hours of 07.30 to 18.00 Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 14.00 on a Saturday, and at no time on a Sunday or a Bank Holiday. Outside these times, any works which are audible beyond the site boundary have the potential to cause unreasonable disturbance to neighbouring premises. The applicant is advised that the Council has the option to control construction noise by serving a Control of Pollution Act 1974, Section 60 Notice where deemed necessary, and failure to comply with such a Notice can result in prosecution.

The applicant is further advised that any complaints received relating to noise of any type from the development may also be investigated using the Council's Standardised Procedure for Dealing with Noise Nuisance Complaints. This is done under the Statutory Nuisance provisions provided within the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and legal action may be taken where appropriate.

The applicant must adhere to the times given above wherever possible. If, however, there are urgent or unavoidable circumstances requiring work outside of the specified times, permission to proceed may be sought by contacting Environmental Health & Housing Standards at healthandhousing@wrexham.gov.uk or 01978 292040. Please use the same contact details for any other enquiries regarding construction / demolition site noise.

Burning of waste generated from construction activities is not considered to be an appropriate method of disposal and action may be taken as follows:-

- Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 anyone found disposing of construction site waste by burning is likely to be in breach of their duty of care with regard to waste disposal;
- Under the same Act an abatement notice may be served where smoke is judged to be causing a nuisance to neighbouring properties. Failure to comply with the requirements of the notice can result in prosecution;
- Under the Clean Air Act 1993 it is an offence for a commercial activity to burn anything that gives rise to dark smoke.

To prevent offences under the above named Acts there should be no bonfires on the site, to include the prohibition of the burning of cleared vegetation. The applicant should contact the Council's Environmental Health & Housing

Standards Team on healthandhousing@wrexham.gov.uk or 01978 292040 for further advice and information

The Applicant is advised that under the dust from construction and / or demolition activities can be judged to be causing a statutory nuisance to neighbouring properties. A legal notice can be served requiring that any dust nuisance is abated, and failure to comply with the requirements of the notice can result in prosecution. The applicant should contact the Council's Environmental Health & Housing Standards Team on healthandhousing@wrexham.gov.uk or 01978 292040 for further advice and information.