



PLANNING STATEMENT

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF RETAIL UNIT (A1) AND OFFICES
(A2) TO COFFEE SHOP (A3) AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING
CENTRE (D2)
AT 77 HERBERT STREET, PONTARDAWE, SWANSEA, SA8 4ED**

on behalf of
Miss W. Vickery

Our Ref: 1946.a

Date: May 2026

Prepared by: Rhydian Gore

Checked by: Jason Evans

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	SITE DESCRIPTION	4
2.1	THE SITE	4
2.2	THE SURROUNDING AREA	5
2.3	PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES	7
3.0	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	8
4.0	LOCAL PLANNING POLICY	11
5.0	CONCLUSION.....	23

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Evans Banks Planning Ltd. has been instructed by Miss W. Vickery (the Applicant) to prepare a Planning Statement for the '*Proposed Change of Use of Retail Unit (A1) and Offices (A2) to Coffee Shop (A3) and Health and Wellbeing Centre (D2)*' at 77 Herbert Street, Pontardawe.
- 1.2 It should be noted that, despite its last known use as a retail unit and offices, the building benefits from an extant Planning Permission for the "*proposed change of use of retail unit (A1 use) and offices (A2 use) to retail unit (A1 use) and health and wellbeing centre (D2 use), and associated external alterations including terracotta render, composite cladding, and fenestration alterations*", granted under reference P2026/0049 on the 17th of April 2026. This Permission establishes the principle of a mixed use at the site, including a health and wellbeing centre (D2), and confirms that the existing scale, massing and built form are acceptable. The current proposal seeks to adapt this approved configuration to include a coffee shop (A3) to the front portion of the ground floor rather than a retail unit (A1), with a sauna, cold plunge area and changing rooms to the rear forming part of the health and wellbeing centre (D2), with the first floor then remaining as per the extant permission, being a yoga studio, all utilising the same established building envelope and overall profile.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement therefore forms part of the submissions of the application to be considered by the Authority, and provides information on the following points:
- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
 - A description of the proposed development
 - Consideration of relevant planning policy

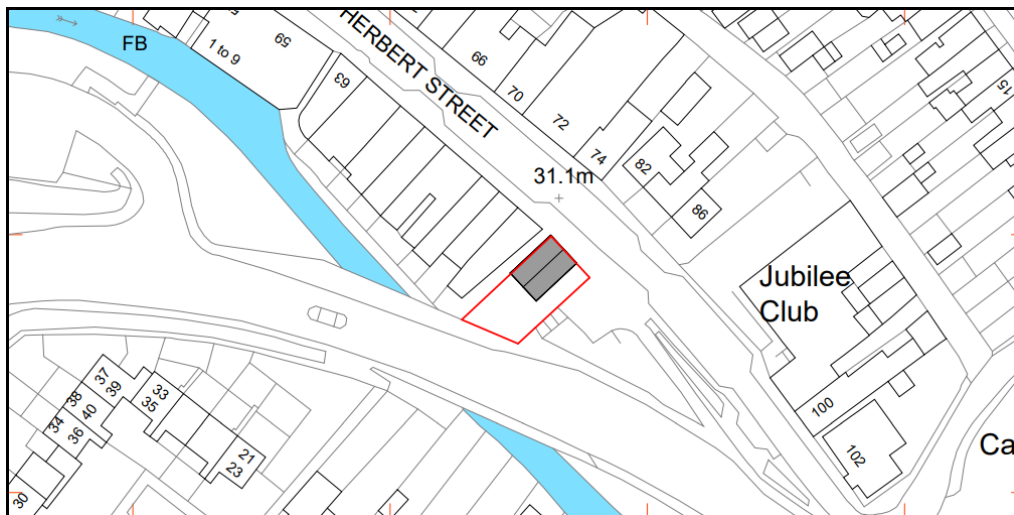
2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

- 2.1.1 The application site relates to an existing end of street building known as 77 Herbert Street (outlined in red below in Photograph 1 and Plan A), that is located in Pontardawe, Swansea.



Photograph 1



Plan A – Site Location Plan

2.1.2 The application building currently serves as a retail unit at the ground floor, and offices at the first and second floor, although it should be noted that the second floor has been used as a gym in recent years. The building is situated as the last property at the southernmost end of Herbert Street, off its southwestern flank. The Application building in its current form is visible in Photographs 2 (front), 3 (side) and 4 (rear) below.



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

2.1.3 The site is accessed via the southwestern flank of Herbert Street, just a matter of metres from the A474 and A4067 to the south. It should be noted that there is an existing car parking area to the rear of the building, which will be retained and utilised as part of the proposed development.

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

2.2.1 In the immediate sense, 77 Herbert Street lies within a mixed-use streetscape in the centre of Pontardawe, where buildings generally comprise commercial uses at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. To the north and south, adjoining properties follow this pattern, contributing to the vibrancy of the town centre. It should be noted that no changes to the existing parking or access to the site from Herbert Street are proposed as part of this development.

2.2.2 In the wider sense, Pontardawe is the third largest settlement in the County Borough, and the largest within the valley areas. The town benefits from excellent transport links, connecting to the M4 via the A4067, and serves as a hub providing access to Neath, Swansea, and the wider valleys. Nestled at the foothills of the Brecon Beacons and the

Black Mountain, Pontardawe lies along the River Tawe, which flows through the valley towards Swansea Bay.

- 2.2.3 Pontardawe also acts as a local town centre for the surrounding valley communities, offering a wide range of retail, leisure, educational, and employment opportunities. In recent years, the town centre has seen a number of regeneration initiatives, including upgrades to existing facilities and enhancements to the public realm. These improvements have created high-quality public spaces suitable for community events and festivals held throughout the year, increasing the accessibility and overall attractiveness of the town centre.
- 2.2.1 Within a short distance of the application site are the 'Pontardawe Jubilee', 'Pontardawe Post Office', 'Kitty's' and 'St Peter's Church' bus stops, which connect the area with Ystradgynlais, Neath, Swansea and beyond via the **56, 256, 903, 905, BDF1, X6, and X26** bus services respectively.
- 2.2.2 The site is also in close proximity to **Route 43** of the National Cycle Network, which connects Swansea to Coelbren. The site's proximity to this route, and the areas accessible via bicycle are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

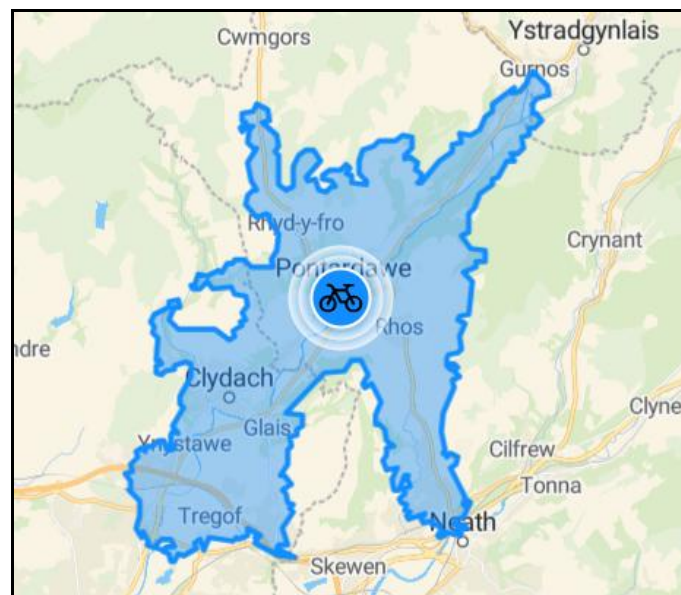


Figure 1 – 30 Minute Radius Map

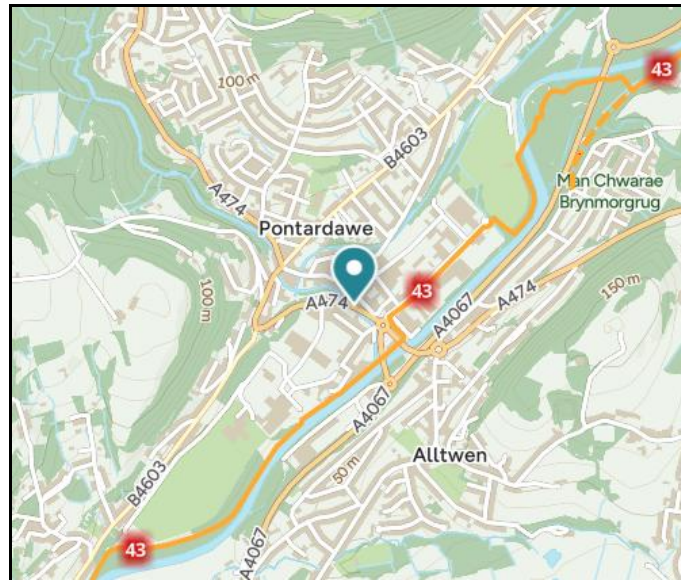


Figure 2 – National Cycle Network Map

2.3 PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES

2.3.1 Taking into account the local context and the aspirations of the Applicant for the site, the following design principles and parameters have influenced the design of the proposal subject of this planning application: -

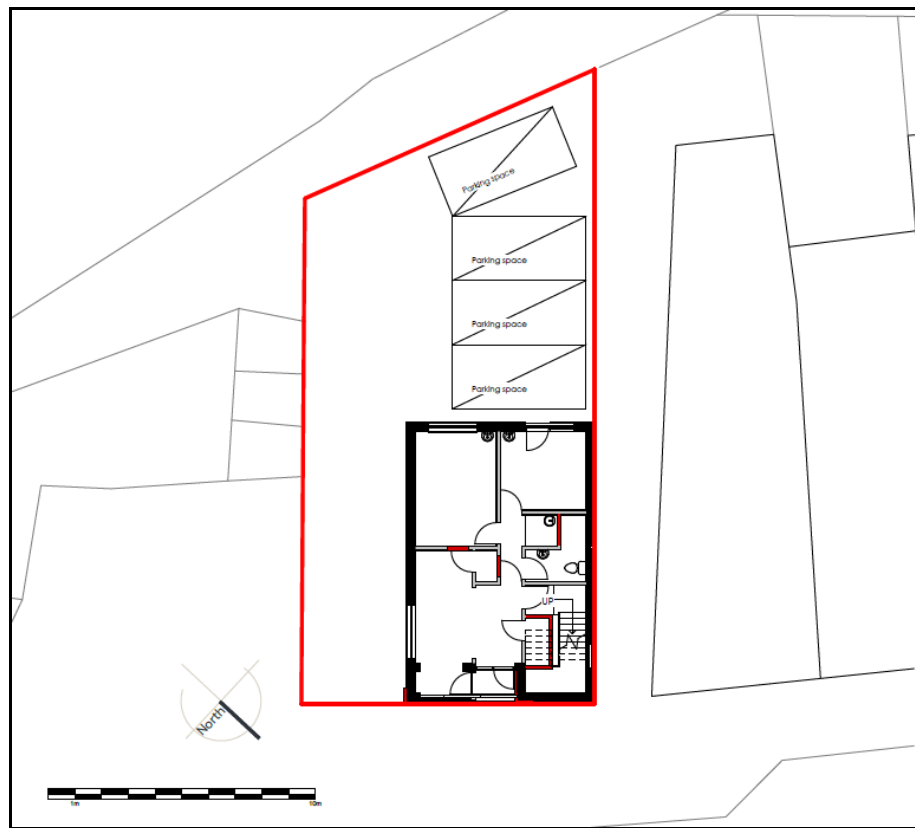
- **Scale** – To make efficient use of the application site but to be respectful of nearby residential properties.
- **Layout** – To ensure that the proposed layout is appropriate for the size and location of the application building.
- **Design** – To largely retain its existing external appearance, but to be influenced by the requirements of the Applicants business.
- **Access** – To be accessed directly via an existing access point for efficiency of use and provide a safe means of access to and from the site in terms of both vehicular and pedestrian.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The development subject of this statement is for the change of use of a retail unit (A1) and offices (A2) to a coffee shop (A3) and health and wellbeing centre (D2), at 77 Herbert Street, Pontardawe. The following information therefore provides details of the proposed change of use and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying information.

Project Overview

- 3.2 The proposal seeks to reuse the existing building with limited external alterations to its overall scale or form. The change of use focuses on internal reconfiguration only, allowing the building's established footprint to be utilised efficiently and sustainably. The front portion of the ground floor will provide a coffee shop, and although it is of an A3 use, it remains in line with the policies within the LDP for Town Centres and ensures the continuation of the character of Herbert Street. The core of the building will be converted to a health and wellbeing centre, with the rear part of the ground floor accommodating a cold plunge and sauna area, as well as changing rooms. The first floor will provide individual therapy and treatment rooms, with the second floor then dedicated to yoga and group-based wellbeing activities. This arrangement has been carefully designed to ensure that the proposed uses are compatible with neighbouring properties and do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity.
- 3.3 The site is located within a highly sustainable town centre location, benefiting from excellent accessibility to local services, public transport and active travel routes. The availability of parking to the rear of the property further supports the suitability of the proposed mixed-use arrangement. The Site Layout Plan below illustrates the internal layout and proposed uses in more detail.
- 3.4 The Site Layout Plan below illustrates the proposals in more detail below.



Plan B – Site Layout/Block Plan

Internal Accommodation

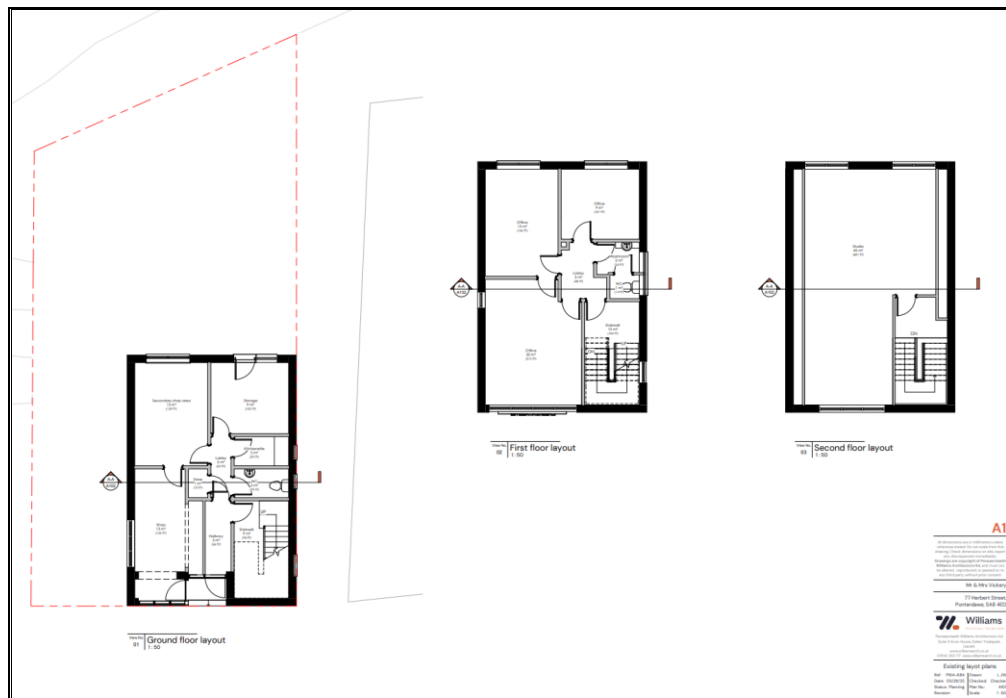
3.5 The internal layout of the building will be as follows:

*Ground Floor – Coffee Shop, Store, Two WC's, Reception, Two Wet rooms,
and Plunge and Sauna Area*

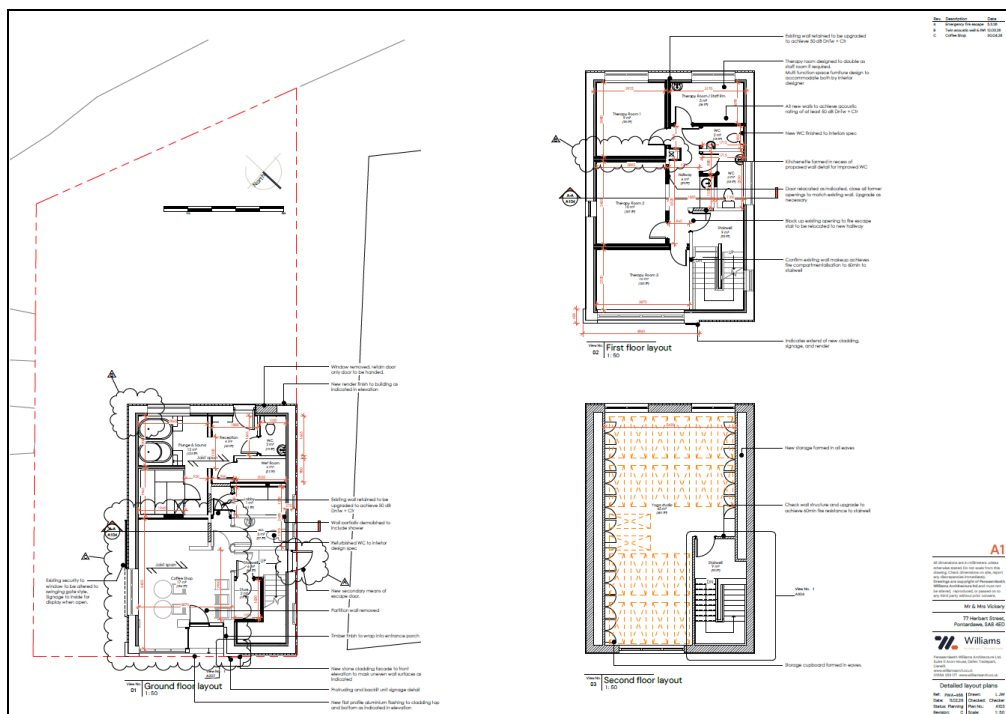
First Floor – Four Therapy Rooms, Staff Room, Kitchenette, Two W/C's

Second Floor – Yoga Studio

3.6 Plan C below illustrates the existing Floor Plans at the building, whilst Plan D then shows the proposed Floor Plans as part of this proposal.



Plan C – Existing Floor Plans



Plan D – Proposed Floor Plans

External Finishes

- 3.7 The external finishes of the building will largely remain as existing, with minor changes such as the replacement of PVC cladding with a Z-Clad stone face cladding system, a replacement slate roof with solar panels, grey PVC weatherboarding and rainwater goods, a new terracotta render finish, pressed aluminium cladding cap in dark grey/black, new vertical backlit signage and replacement signage to rear, manifestation decal to glass to shop front, and the replacement of any windows on a like for like basis and only where required. The existing and proposed elevations are reproduced below in Plans E and F below, showing the inconsequential nature of the minor additions.



Plan E – Existing Elevations



Plan F – Proposed Elevations

Parking and Means of Access

- 3.8 The proposed building is to be accessible via its main entrance and vehicular access via the southwestern flank of Herbert Street. It should be noted that this existing access and parking arrangement will be retained and utilised as part of this Application.
- 3.9 With regards to parking, it is proposed that the parking area can accommodate a total of 4 private spaces to the rear of the property, that are in accordance with the adopted standards of the *CSS Parking Standards Wales*. Plan G below illustrates the parking layout to the rear in further detail, while Photographs 5 and 6 show the location of the proposed car parking area.



Plan G – Proposed Parking Layout



Photograph 5 – Proposed Parking Area



Photograph 6 – Proposed Parking Area

Drainage

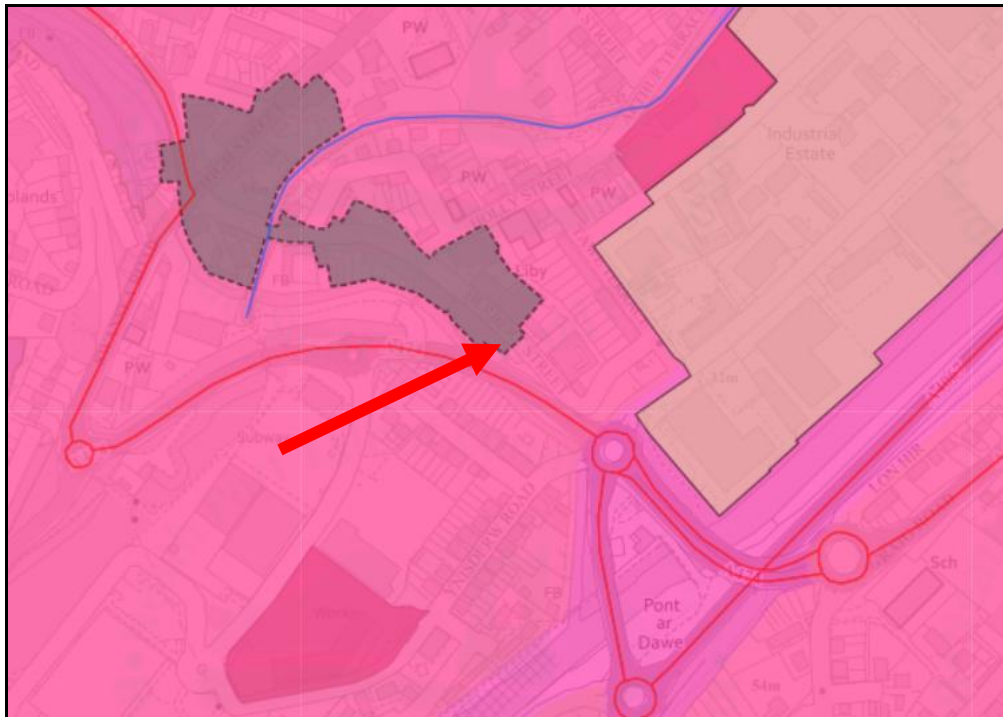
- 3.10 All surface water will be disposed of through utilising the existing means serving the building.
- 3.11 All foul water will be disposed of as existing.
- 3.12 It should be noted that the site lies within the Rivers and Sea Flood Zone 3, as identified on the Flood Map for Planning set out by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). As a result, a proportionate Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) accompanies this submission. The FCA demonstrates that the proposed development would not increase flood risk on or off site and confirms that appropriate mitigation measures can be incorporated to manage and reduce potential flood risk. The assessment concludes that the development can be delivered safely for its lifetime, in accordance with national planning policy and relevant technical guidance.

4.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.1 In terms of *Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site is positioned is the *Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP)*, adopted in January 2016. The relevant policies of this document have been referred to in the preparation of the proposal, including the following: -

- Policy SP 3 – Sustainable Communities
- Policy SP 6 – Development in the Valleys Strategy Area
- Policy SP 20 – Transport Network
- Policy SC 1 – Settlement Limits
- Policy EC 5 – Employment Uses in the Valleys
- Policy TR 2 – Design and Access of New Development
- Policy SP 15 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy BE 1 – Design

4.3.1 In terms of the LDPs Proposals Map, as can be seen from the extract below, the building (red arrow) lies within the defined Settlement Limits (SC 1) of the Town Centre (R2/1) and Sustainable Community (SP 3) of Pontardawe, with towns described in the LDP as being *“regionally important settlements providing the widest and most diverse range of functions. Located on the strategic road network, they are fully accessible by a range of transport options”*.



Plan H

Policy SP 3 – Sustainable Communities

- 4.2 Policy SP 3 (*Sustainable Communities*) states that the delivery of “*sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities and the conservation of the countryside*” will be promoted by “*the identification of a settlement hierarchy that reflects the role and function of settlements*”. New development will therefore be steered towards the more sustainable locations of the county.
- 4.3 The proposed development is located within Pontardawe. Table 3.1 of the LDP ‘Settlement Hierarchy for Neath Port Talbot’ identifies Pontardawe as a ‘Town’, being a regionally important settlement that offers a wide and diverse range of services and functions, with strong accessibility and adequate transport links. It is 1st out of a 6-tier hierarchy, highlighting that it is considered to be an extremely sustainable settlement by the Authority.

-
- 4.4 In light of the above, the application site is clearly positioned well within the Settlement Hierarchy and will therefore promote sustainable development in adherence to the requirements of Policy SP 3.

Policy TR 2 (Design and Access of New Development)

- 4.5 Policy TR 2 (Design and Access of New Development) provides the overarching framework for ensuring that development proposals achieve safe and appropriate access arrangements. For development proposals to be permitted they must accord, where relevant, to four criteria. Taking into account the nature and form of the application proposal, it is considered that three are of relevance to the proposed development and an assessment of the application proposal against each now follows:
- 4.6 Criterion 1 requires that the development “*does not compromise the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway network and does not have an adverse impact on highway safety or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation*”. The proposed development seeks to utilise the existing access arrangements serving the site from Herbert Street, which have historically accommodated commercial traffic without issue. The nature of the proposed change of use will generate low levels of vehicle activity and will not adversely impact on the operation or safety of the surrounding highway network.
- 4.7 Criterion 2 requires that the development provides “*appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities*” and that access arrangements allow for the safe manoeuvring of service vehicles. The proposed layout incorporates sufficient space within the site to accommodate parking and manoeuvring in a safe and efficient manner. The existing hardstanding allows for the safe turning of vehicles within the site, ensuring that the proposal accords with the requirements of Criterion 2.
- 4.8 Criterion 3 requires that the development is “*accessible by a range of travel means, including public transport and safe cycle and pedestrian routes*”. The site benefits from established pedestrian footways along Herbert Street and lies within the heavily urbanised town centre of Pontardawe, with an abundance of public transport services operating in the area. The retention of the existing access, as well as the site’s

extremely sustainable location, therefore, ensures that the development remains safely accessible by a range of travel modes.

- 4.9 In conclusion, it is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with all relevant aspects of Policy TR 2 (Design and Access of New Development).

Policy BE 1 (Design)

- 4.10 Policy BE 1 (Design) provides the overarching framework for high-quality design within Neath Port Talbot. For development proposals to be permitted they must accord, where relevant, with a series of criteria. Taking into account the nature and form of the application proposal, it is considered that a number of these criteria are of direct relevance to the proposed development and an assessment against each now follows:
- 4.11 Criterion 1 requires that development “*complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment*”. The proposed development has given full consideration to its setting within an established town centre, ensuring that the development for a coffee shop and health and wellbeing centre is appropriate, and remains inconsequential in its surrounding commercial setting. The proposal makes efficient use of the existing building, with limited alterations to its internal layout and external appearance, in line with the Applicant’s business requirements. This also satisfies the requirements of Criterion 2, insofar as the development respects the site’s topography and its position within the wider industrial context, without affecting any townscape, skylines or landscape features.
- 4.12 Criterion 4 then requires that the proposal does not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community. The application site is located within a town centre, and thus surrounded by a number of mixed-use properties, making it a very appropriate location for a development of this kind. The operational characteristics of the health and wellbeing centre are considered to be low-impact and are not considered to give rise to noise, disturbance or amenity concerns. The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access point to the parking area,

which provides suitable visibility and has historically served a commercial use without issue. As such, the proposal satisfies the requirements of Criterion 4.

- 4.13 Criterion 5 requires that important local features, including biodiversity and ecological connectivity, are retained and enhanced as far as possible. While the site is limited in terms of its existing green infrastructure, consisting of a few low-quality ornamental plants, a proportionate level of enhancement will be delivered through the installation of two bird boxes. This ensures that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are incorporated where feasible.
- 4.14 The above therefore ensures that the requirements of Criterion 5 are fully supported and satisfied by the application proposal.
- 4.15 Criterion 9 states that drainage systems must be designed to limit surface-water run-off, manage flood risk and prevent pollution. The site lies within a recognised flood zone; however, with the development being for a conversion, no changes are proposed to the existing scale and footprint of the building, and thus no further surface-water drainage arrangements are required, ensuring that the development accords with Criterion 9.
- 4.16 However, it should be noted that as the site lies within the Rivers and Sea Flood Zone 3, as identified on the Flood Map for Planning set out by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), a proportionate Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) accompanies this submission. The FCA demonstrates that the proposed development would not increase flood risk on or off site and confirms that appropriate mitigation measures can be incorporated to manage and reduce potential flood risk. The assessment concludes that the development can be delivered safely for its lifetime, in accordance with national planning policy and relevant technical guidance.
- 4.17 In conclusion, it is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with all relevant aspects of Policy BE 1 (Design).

Policy SP 15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

- 4.18 Policy SP 15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) states that important habitats, species and sites of geological interest will be protected, conserved, enhanced and appropriately managed. This includes internationally and nationally designated sites, regionally and locally important areas, and key natural heritage features. Development proposals must therefore demonstrate that they will not adversely affect such interests and, where possible, will provide opportunities for enhancement.
- 4.19 Firstly, it should be noted that a Green Infrastructure Statement accompanies this submission and confirms that there is limited existing green infrastructure present within the site boundary, in the form of low-quality ornamental plants, as the site is almost entirely hard surfaced.
- 4.20 Notwithstanding the above, biodiversity enhancements are proposed in the form of the installation of two bird boxes to the building. This measure will ensure that the proposal results in a proportionate biodiversity enhancement, contributing to improved habitat provision within the local area. This ensures that the proposal delivers appropriate ecological benefits and protects nearby ecological interests in accordance with the relevant requirements of Policy SP 15.
- 4.21 In summary, the proposed development presented by this application fully complies with the guidance and requirements of the relevant adopted local planning policy.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposal represents an opportunity for the change of use of a retail unit (A1) and offices (A2) to a coffee shop (A3) and high-quality health and wellbeing centre (D2), at an appropriate and sustainable location at 77 Herbert Street, Pontardawe.
- 5.2 The details presented have given full consideration to those of the adopted local planning policy. The net result is for a new coffee shop to the ground floor, and a high-quality health and wellbeing centre at the rear part of the ground floor, as well as the first and second floors, in order to accommodate the Applicant's growing business needs. Due to the building already accommodating a retail unit at the ground floor, and previously offices at the first and second floor, as well as being located within the town centre of Pontardawe, it can be deemed that the site represents an extremely sustainable and suitable location for a development of this nature. Therefore, the proposal represents a development that is respectful of its position within the existing locality, and in relation to nearby properties, as well as being harmonious with the existing urban setting of the area.
- 5.3 The proposal has ensured that it has a regard for biodiversity at its core, through the introduction of two bird boxes on site, in order to increase biodiversity levels.
- 5.4 Therefore, the proposal adheres to the requirements of all relevant elements of both national and local planning policy, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.