

Our Ref: 2575/02
Your Ref: P/26/0068

24th July 2026

Unit 5,
Triangle Business Park,
Pentrebach,
Merthyr Tydfil,
CF48 4TQ

BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

To whom it may concern,

RE: Proposed development at: BikePark Wales, Gethin Woodland Centre, Abercarnaid, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1YZ.

This Covering Letter accompanies supporting information to address concerns raised by the Planning, Public Rights of Way and Drainage Officers during the determination of the full Planning Application “*To resurface with tarmac the uplift track that currently serves Bike Park Wales*” (P/26/0068).

The following points are listed below with our responses in bold.

Pinch Point

Written confirmation that the pinch point shown on the plan, is the only one along the route, or provide an amended version of the plan.

Response: There are two narrower sections on the road, which operationally do not create any issues. The first is shown on the supporting plan 260716_OT_BPW26_Uplift Route_1-2500_A0-RevA and is a short section referred to as the ‘cut through’ which has been operational since May 2025 and functions well. Drivers have line of sight whether ascending or descending with a pull in or waiting bay midway along the narrower section. Buses travelling uphill have right of way and drivers also have radios. Important to highlight this is existing infrastructure and therefore not entirely relevant to the planning application which is for adding a 100mm surface onto the existing infrastructure/road.

The second pinch point is at ‘the tunnel’ which is a large steel culvert pipe which runs under the road and is a set width. Buses pass this section alternately one at a time, it is on a straight section of road with excellent sight lines and the ability for either bus to wait on either side. The bus travelling uphill has the right of way.

Visual Impact

A scaled plan identifying any sections of the track exceeding 7m in width.

Response: There is one section of the road that exceeds 7m in width – this is the pick-up area at the bottom of the road nearest the entrance, where riders queue and then load their bikes and board the buses. At this point the road is 14 metres wide for a length of 60 metres and the tarmac surface would include this, as per supporting plan 260716_OT_BPW26_Uplift Route_1-2500_A0-RevA.

Furthermore, the section that is wider than 7m is not visible from elsewhere in the wider area - e.g. the town or across the valley as it is screened by woodland.

Drainage and Surface Water

Details of any sections of the road to be widened into previously undeveloped ground.

Response: There are no sections of the road that are to be widened.

Existing and proposed drainage arrangements, management of surface water runoff and connection to watercourses. The submitted information must address not only reductions in silt runoff for ecological purposes, but also the potential morphological impacts on receiving watercourses arising from any increase in runoff rates.

Response: The drainage of the existing forest road follows standard forestry road drainage principles. The road surface has a crown and/or a crossfall which supports the shedding of water from the road surface to the surrounding ground. On the uphill side of the road, a roadside ditch is present between the upslope banking and the road. This serves both to protect the road helping to keep it dry from any upslope surface run off and to collect any water shed from the road itself by the crown of the road. The topside ditch connects to culverts at regular intervals as set out on the supporting plan 260716_OT_BPW26_Drainage Plan_1-2500_A0.

The culverts typically outflow water to vegetated ground where it can disperse over a distance.

The only exceptions are where the existing road intercepts an ordinary watercourse where the culvert allows the watercourse to continue under the road surface to the downslope side of the road and into the pre existing gully formed by water flow over time.

The proposed tarmacadam finish of this application will not impact or alter this existing drainage arrangement. The bound surface will continue to shed surface water to the immediate surrounding ground and the topside ditch and subsequently onwards via the culverts.

Ecology and Silt Runoff

Evidence demonstrating the extent of existing issues, and quantified details of the anticipated improvement in polluted surface water management.

Response: The existing surface is a compacted stone road with the proposed being the addition of 100mm of tarmac over the existing surface. A permeable surface in Sustainable Drainage Systems terms is one that achieves a minimum throughput of 400mm/hr. A good level of permeability in a surface may achieve 5,000mm/hr to 12,000mm/hr.

Compact Stone Roads: Compact stone and forest roads have very low infiltration rates. Compaction from heavy machinery and traffic seals the stone surface, this turns unpaved roads into highly impermeable surfaces, meaning almost all rain runs off instead of soaking in.

The surface of a compacted stone (or gravel) road is made of dense-graded crushed stone – in this instance from MOT Type 1 crushed aggregate.

- Typical Infiltration Rate: 0.05 to 5 mm/hr.
- Real-World Impact: An infiltration rate of 0.5 mm/hr is commonly used by hydrologists as a baseline, which means the road is nearly impermeable during heavy storms.
- Source: US Forest Service Research and Development

Tarmac Roads: Standard tarmac (asphalt) roads are highly impermeable. Their infiltration rate is very low and often close to zero, allowing rainwater to run off the surface. Because it repels water, a traditional 100mm tarmac road prevents water from soaking into the ground, transferring runoff into local drainage systems.

- The Rate: The infiltration rate of standard, dense-graded tarmac is typically between 0.00 and 0.5mm/hr.

The proposal to add a tarmac surface to the compact stone road: Both surfaces have extremely low permeability and shed water to the local drainage system; the existing surface performs in this way, as would the proposed surface.

Both surfaces have such low permeability they can essentially be considered impermeable. Therefore, the proposed will not have an impact on the existing drainage systems in use.

The reality of stone roads is that they will lose some of the fines from the road surface to water erosion in wet weather, or to airborne dust in dry weather. The ecologist is simply stating what is happening now on any forest road anywhere within the woodland, or indeed any other forest road or woodland for that matter as they are trafficked or subject to weather erosion.

This effect or impact will be reduced with a tarmac surface, as it becomes a bound surface so not prone to dust or fine particle washout and is therefore a net gain to the area, the amount is not measurable in

quantifiable terms but is understood to be factual moving from an unbound surface to a bound surface which is sufficient justification to support the change in surface.

A relevant example for a prior stone forest road with standard forestry road drainage being upgraded with a Tarmac surface, would be the Cwmcarn Forest Drive, which has been in situ with a Tarmac finish now for many years.

Ecology and Lighting (Construction Phase)

Update the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Response: The CEMP has been edited and updated to reflect the agreement not to work at night to avoid any potential ecological disturbances. Please refer to: Construction Environmental Management Plan_BPW Road Surfacing_updated.

Highways Requirements

Details of construction phase parking areas and wheel cleaning facilities. With regard to the location of these areas, any changes to the application (red line) boundary.

Response: The vehicles will be using the existing forest road to access and exit the site, the same road as all staff and customers use. There is no change to existing arrangements as this is existing functional infrastructure and a compacted hard stone road not a 'brownfield' or new construction site that would require wheel wash to clear mud.

Any vehicles associated with the works being parked onsite will be parked at the 'Y' junction midway along the road which is identified in the CEMP as the compound area and sits within the site location plan.

The works are expected to take 6 weeks to complete and will require approximately 150 tarmac lorries over that period, or average 25 per week, 5 per day.

The site has excellent access from the A470 roundabout.

Public Rights of Way

Scaled plans showing how resurfacing will accommodate PRow crossing points. Details of drainage arrangements at these locations. An updated CEMP confirming that the PRow team will be consulted prior to works to agree appropriate management during the construction phase.

Response: The proposed works are an upgrade of an existing stone forest road – adding 100mm of tarmac onto the surface, there is no new construction or changes to the road and the drainage remains unaffected. The crossing points remain as they are today, aside from an additional 100mm depth of tarmac which will be tapered out to avoid a small step at these points (see supporting plan 260717_OT_BPW26_PROW Section_1-50_A3).

There is a short section of the road where there is an existing bridleway sharing the route. The existing bridleway surface is a hard compacted stone road and has been like this for over 12 years, therefore the addition of a tarmac surface layer over this short section has a negligible difference in the hardness of the bridleway, as the existing current surface is also very hard. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and the PROW Officer.

Please note the CEMP has been updated to include consultation with the PROW team prior to work beginning.

Other

Part of the Uplift Track falls within the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The same proposal was submitted to them at the same time, and the application (26/0323/FUL) was approved by the Council on the 30th of June 2026. The application was approved on the same drainage and ecology details as set out in this Covering Letter.

Please note that the Site Location Plan that is currently visible on the Planning Portal is incorrect, please refer to 260129_OT_BPW26_Site Location_1-2500_A0, submitted alongside this Covering Letter.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via the details on the application form.

Yours faithfully,

Angelika Varudvari,
Assistant Planner.