

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0036
Site Address:	Unit E Pengarnddu Industrial Estate Dowlais Merthyr Tydfil CF48 2TA
Development:	Non Material Amendment to shopfront previously approved under application P/26/0001
Case Officer:	Gareth Davies
Site Visit:	4th March 2026
Application Expiry Date:	24th April 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to the former Carpetright outlet located at the Dowlais Top Retail Park and is the middle one of the three units at this location. The site shares the retail park with Dunhelm, and B and M Bargains and car parking is also shared between these three units. Specifically, the application property is unit E a single storey purpose-built retail warehouse unit with a floorspace of approximately 930 sq. m. the property was previously occupied by Carpetright and has been vacant since that company went into administration in 2024.

The property is accessed via an access road from the Heads of the Valleys Road to the south of the site, and forms part of a wider retail offer in this area which also includes Asda to the south and a Lidl outlet to the south east.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks a non-material amendment to planning permission P/26/0001 which was granted consent on 2nd February 2026.

The proposed amendment relates to a change to the proposed front elevation of the shop unit.

The approved plan showed the original shopfront being stripped out in its entirety and replaced. The head of the shopfront was to be raised to the full height of the building with

full height glazed panelling either side of the entrance, in essence the entire shopfront was to be glazed up to the eaves level.

The applicant now wants to alter the agreed shopfront with a more modest proposal that will involve a profiled metal cladding to the whole front elevation above fascia level. Below fascia level there will be a modest glazed entrance set in the central third with brickwork containing poster displays either side.

Proposals for revised signage to the front elevation are being dealt with separately.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/26/0006 – Lawful Development Certificate for the installation of roof mounted solar panels –

P26/0002 – Canopy and Roller Shutter Door – Approved - 2nd February 2026

P/26/0001 – New shopfront – Approved - 2nd February 2026

P/25/0343 – Installation of plant, plant compound, and bin store - Approved - 2nd February 2026

P/25/0342 – Provision of two illuminated signs - Approved - 2nd February 2026

P/25/0256 – Variation of condition 1 of planning permission P/95/0607 to enable the unit to be used for the sale of convenience goods, carpets, and consumer durable goods , together with no more than 175 sq.m. gross floorspace of unrestricted ancillary comparison goods (Removal/Variation of Condition) – Granted 18th December 2025

P/96/0261 – Shop signs and poster panels – Approved with Conditions 16th August 1996.

P/95/0607 – Single storey retail unit – Approved with Conditions 1st March 1996.

CONSULTATION

None required or undertaken

PUBLICITY

None required or undertaken

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040: sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining, and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems, and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Policy 6 – Town Centre First, states: *‘To breathe new life into town centres, the Welsh Government has adopted a ‘Town Centre First’ approach. This puts the health and vibrancy of town centres as the starting point of locational decision-making. It also directs facilities and services to where intended users can easily walk, cycle and/or use public transport to access them.’*

This policy considers town centres are the most accessible parts of our towns and should be the focus of growth and regeneration. Such areas remain a focal point for communities and provide a hub for a variety of uses alongside retail.

Whilst policy 6 applies to development of a significant scale (defined broadly, where a facility will serve a town, city, or region-wide catchment), it is also recognised that planning authorities are encouraged to take a similar approach for smaller developments.

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12th Edition, February 2024:

Section 4.3.3 acknowledges that in order to ensure maximum contribution to the well-being goals the planning system must promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres. It must sustain and enhance the vibrancy, viability, and attractiveness of retail and commercial centres. It must also improve access to and within the retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport.

Section 4.3.8 notes that where a need for additional retail has been identified, planning authorities should consider the most appropriate form, scale, and location of this provision to best meet the need.

Section 4.3.14 sets out the requirement to consider the need for additional retail provision, having regard to the quantitative and qualitative need for both comparison and convenience goods.

Sections 4.3.18 – 4.3.23 emphasise a town centre first to the sequential approach for the location of new retail development before consideration is given to edge of centre and then out of town sites.

Section 4.3.20 states that new out of town retail developments or extensions to existing out of town development should not be of a scale, type, or location likely to undermine the vibrancy, attractiveness and viability of those retail and commercial centres that would otherwise serve the community. It also should not be allowed if they would be likely to put development plan retail strategy at risk.

Section 4.3.25 notes that retail developments outside of designated retail and commercial centres can impact on the viability and vibrancy of a centre. Such impacts, whether individually or cumulatively may include changes in turnover, trading ability, consumer choice, traffic and travel patterns, footfall, as well as affect centre regeneration strategies.

Sections 4.3.26 – 4.3.29 consider the potential retail implications a new retail development may have on designated retail centres, which may impact on their viability and vibrancy. Where appropriate retail impact assessments may be required and the use of conditions may be necessary to limit any changes over time i.e. loss of existing provisions, changes to the range of goods or the sub-division of units etc.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4, Retail and Commercial Development, November 2016:

Further guidance on retail proposals is set out in the TAN, including the tests of retail need, the sequential approach to site selection, retail impact assessments, and the use of conditions.

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy EcW3 - Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retailing Provision
- Policy EcW4 - Retail Allocation
- Policy EcW5 – Town and Local Centre Development
- Policy EcW6 - Out-of-Town Retailing Areas

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Section 96a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides the mechanism to approve non-material amendments to an existing planning permission. The main issue in determining this application is how the proposed change has been assessed against the four tests identified in the Welsh Government Guidance:

(a) Is the scale of the proposed change great enough to cause an impact different to that caused by the original approved development scheme?

No - Whilst the changes proposed are visually different and potentially not as visually pleasing as the original approved scheme the overall impact of the proposed changes are no different to those of the original approved scheme.

(b) Would the proposed change result in a detrimental impact either visually or in terms of local amenity?

No – as mentioned above the changes proposed will result in a shopfront with a more utilitarian appearance than that originally envisaged it does though remain acceptable in planning terms not least because it is similar to the shop frontages already established in this area. There is no other difference in terms of impact on local amenity which remains acceptable in planning terms. Other properties given their distance from the application site and their orientation relative to it would be unaffected by the proposed change.

(c) Would the interests of any third party or body be disadvantaged in planning terms?

No – Taking into consideration the context of the site and its relationship with other retail properties either side and to its rear, it is clear that there would be no adverse impact on third parties resulting from the proposed changes.

(d) Would the proposed change conflict with national or development plan policies?

There has been no change in planning policy since the original application was approved earlier this year. The proposed changes would still accord with planning policy as it now stands.

Other Considerations:

The following matters have also been taken into consideration:

1. Conditions on the existing consent

There are no conditions on the existing planning permission that would prevent the proposed change.

However, condition 2 of the original approval would now need to be amended to reflect the acceptability of the amended plan as a non-material amendment.

1. Previous Non-material Amendments

The existing planning permission has not been the subject of any previous applications for non-material amendments.

2. Previous Publicity / Consultation Responses

The representations received in response to the P/23/0053 planning application do not relate to any matters being considered under this non-material amendment.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the assessment and any other considerations identified above, it is concluded that the proposed amendments to the P/26/0001 planning application are sufficiently minor in nature and would constitute a non-material amendment. However, it is necessary to impose amended conditions to reflect the proposed changes .

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under Section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act) has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out in Section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by Section 8 of the WBFG Act.

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITION:**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: -

- Block and site location plan drawing no. ICE695-MERTHYR-SP01
- Revised shopfront and layout plan drawing no. ICE695-MERTHYR-PLN02.

Reason - To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 12.03.2026