

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Kate Glover - Development Control Case Officer

Reference: P/25/0135

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section

Ask for: David James

Extension: 7053

Date: 24th June 2025

Summary

No objection raised. The development meets the relevant Replacement LDP policies (SW4 & EcW2).

If minded to approve in principle, particular consideration should be given to the impact of the development on the character of the area, the impact on surrounding area and occupiers, and traffic generation and parking provision, and any other relevant risks to public health and safety, the impact on biodiversity interests and heritage assets (Policies SW11, SW12, CW1, EnW1, EnW3 & EnW4).

Observations in respect of the above development

1. Proposed Development

An application for the change of use of part of a valet center to provide a gym, at Horizon Unit 1 7B, Pant Industrial Estate, Pant, Merthyr Tydfil.

2. Development Plan Framework

The existing development plan framework in Merthyr Tydfil is provided by:-

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

The relevant LDP Objectives are:-

- *LDP Objective 1 Sustainable Population Growth: To encourage a sustainable level and distribution of population growth.*
- *LDP Objective 2 Welsh Language and Culture: To protect and enhance Welsh language and culture.*
- *LDP Objective 4 Regeneration: To promote the suitable reuse of previously developed land and the continued regeneration of local communities.*

- *LDP Objective 6 Sustainable Design: To promote high quality, sustainable and inclusive design and support measures which mitigate the predicted effects of climate change.*
- *LDP Objective 7 Transport: To support an integrated transport system, promote active travel and ensure new developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport links.*
- *LDP Objective 9 Heritage and Cultural Assets: To protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.*
- *LDP Objective 10 Biodiversity: To improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which support habitats and species of principle importance.*
- *LDP Objective 12 Economic Development: To provide and safeguard appropriate land for economic and skills development.*

The following development plan policies would apply:-

- *Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries*
- *Policy SW9: Planning Obligations*
- *Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking*
- *Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network*
- *Policy SW13: Protecting Community Facilities*
- *Policy CW1: Historic Environment*
- *Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience*
- *Policy EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species*
- *Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection*
- *Policy EcW2: Protecting Employment Sites*
- *Policy EcW9: District Heating*

The following supplementary planning guidance is applicable:-

- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Planning Obligations (March 2012)*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5: Nature and Development (May 2015)*

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Planning Policy Wales provide guidance on matters relevant to this application, namely:

- Placemaking in Action: Good Design Making Better Places
- Strategic Placemaking: Previously Developed Land
- Active and Social Places: Living in a Place
- Economic Infrastructure: Economic Development
- Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places
- Recognising the Environmental Qualities of Places

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016).

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

Future Wales provides guidance on matters relevant to this application, including, but not limited to:

- Policy 1: Where Wales will grow
- Policy 2: Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking
- Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

3. Policy Considerations

The site of the proposal is located within the Primary Growth Area, as defined by the LDP, and within the settlement boundary where development will be allowed subject to the proposals compatibility with other plan policies and material considerations (Policy SW4). It is also located within the Pant Industrial Estate Protected Employment Site (Policy EcW2).

Policy SW9 relates to planning obligations. Where appropriate and having regard to development viability, planning obligations will be sought for:

1. On site provision of affordable housing on sites of 10 homes or more at a level of:
 - 10% in the Primary Growth Area.
 - 5% in the Other Growth Area.
2. A financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing:
 - On sites of between 5 and 9 homes or;
 - On sites of 10 or more homes, where on-site provision is not appropriate.
3. The provision of open space on sites of 10 homes or more, where there is an identified need.
4. Other relevant obligations not included within the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 List of Infrastructure.

Given the nature of the proposal, on-site provision of affordable housing or open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing, would not be sought. Additionally, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would not be chargeable.

Policy SW11 advises that development must contribute to the creation of attractive and sustainable places through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. Where appropriate, new development will be required to (amongst other things):

- be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
- integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;

- not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design;
- allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards.
- provide adequate facilities and space for waste collections and recycling.

Considering the nature of the development, and the location of the site (in close proximity to commercial and industrial uses) consideration should be given to the above issues. The submitted plans indicate that the development would not benefit from dedicated off-street parking, however the larger unit has a shared car park. This should be checked against the Council's current parking standards, and the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW12 supports development that encourages a modal shift towards sustainable transport, including the enhancement of pedestrian, cycle, rail and bus facilities, in addition to any necessary road improvements. Developments will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy CW1 advises that the integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets. And that, development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, Locally Listed Buildings or structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance.

The application site is located within a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. As such, this, and any other relevant historic environment assets should be taken into consideration, and the views of the relevant Officer or external Heritage body sought in this regard, as appropriate.

Policy EnW4 advises that development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:

- Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;
- Land contamination;
- Hazardous substances;
- Land stability;
- Noise, vibration, dust, odour nuisance and light pollution; or
- Any other identified risk to public health and safety.

Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been incorporated to reduce, or minimise the impact identified to the lowest possible acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes. As such, the views of the Environmental Health department should be sought as appropriate.

Policy EcW2 states that at Pant Industrial Estate, and at allocated employment sites, development will be permitted if:-

- It is within Use Classes B1(b), B1(c), B2 or B8; or
- It provides an ancillary facility or service that supports the primary employment use, or
- It is an acceptable complementary commercial service outside class B uses, or
- It is an appropriate waste management facility compatible with existing industrial and commercial activities.

Development proposals for uses other than those stipulated and that would result in the loss of employment land / premises at the above sites will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable change in the nature of the employment site and where the existing use is inappropriate or the land / premises are surplus to the requirements of the employment market.

At existing employment sites and premises outside the sites identified development proposals for non B-class uses that would result in the loss of the employment land / premises will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is inappropriate or the land / premises are surplus to the requirements of the employment market.

It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in a loss of employment (Class B) land. However, it is noted that the existing valet center use would remain, with the gym operating from a part of the unit that is surplus to the requirements of the existing use. Moreover, a gym is considered to be an acceptable complementary commercial service outside class B uses. There are a small number of gyms, and similar uses, on Pant Industrial Estate, however, the proportion is low considering the size of the estate.

Additionally, there are a number of vacant units on Pant Industrial Estate, which are available for class B uses. This would indicate a current market surplus. Despite this, the majority of the industrial estate is occupied by class B uses. Considering this, and with the proposal being of a relatively small area, it would not lead to an unacceptable change in the nature of the employment site.

Given the above, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy EcW2.