

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/25/0150

Site Address: Former William Hill Bookmakers
Poplar Way
Gurnos
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9SF

Development: Change of use from a betting shop to a tanning shop

Case Officer: Rebecca Owens

Site Visit: 27th May 2025

Application Expiry Date: 14th July 2025

Consultation reply date expired: 17th June 2025

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a small, detached, single storey building located within the settlement boundary. It is also within the Gurnos Local Centre and as such is in an area where there are a number of other commercial and retail uses.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought to change the use of the premises from a betting shop to a tanning shop which would comprise of two tanning rooms and a reception area. The premises currently has a door to the front and three blocked up windows. No external alterations are proposed.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/24/0041 Change of use from betting office to storage unit to be used in association with Premier store (at 23 Chestnut Way)
Granted planning permission on 19 April 2024

CONSULTATION

The following bodies were consulted and their responses are presented below:

Head of Engineering and Highways	No objection
Planning Policy officer	No objection

Environmental Health Manager

No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) 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.

National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Local Planning Policies

The following policies of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 are relevant to the determination of this application:

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- SW12 Improving the Transport Network
- SW13 Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- CW1 Historic Environment
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW2 Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- EnW3 Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species
- EnW4 Environmental Protection
- EcW3 Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retailing Provision
- EcW5 Town and Local Centre Development
- EcW9 District Heating
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In addition, the application will be determined having regard to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 3, Shopfront Design
- Note 4, Sustainable Design.
- Note 5, Nature and Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This application seeks permission to change the use of a vacant commercial unit from a betting shop to a tanning shop. It is noted that there has been a recent planning permission to change the premises into a storage unit to be used in association with nearby Premier store. It is not clear if this permission has been implemented and as such the existing use is accepted as being a betting shop.

Principle

The application site is located within the settlement boundary where development is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant policies and material planning considerations.

In this respect it is noted that the application site is located within the Gurnos Local Centre and as such is a favoured location for retail, leisure and other complementary development. Policy EcW5 supports development that enhances the vitality and viability of local centres and the reuse of a currently vacant unit would have a positive impact in this respect. It is recognised that the proposal would provide a use which does not fall within the A uses classes. However, as part of the previous planning application for the conversion of this unit into storage (planning ref: P/24/0041) it was established that the building had been vacant for over two years (now in excess of this). Having regard to this it is considered that the existing betting shop use is no longer economically viable. In addition, the proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses that would be detrimental to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the local centre, nor is it considered that the proposed use would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity and viability of neighbouring uses. Furthermore, despite being classed as a sui generis use, tanning salons are similar in nature to A1 uses such as hairdressers and is considered to be an appropriate alternative use within the local centre.

The proposal would result in the loss of a betting shop/bookmakers and since this is classified as a community facility, LDP Policy SW13, which seeks to protect and improve such facilities, is relevant. This policy states that development proposals that would result in the loss of an existing community facility would only be permitted where there is evidence that alternative provision of at least equivalent value to the local community can be provided nearby; or it can be demonstrated that existing provision is inappropriate or surplus to the needs of the community and is no longer required; or it can be demonstrated there is no longer a viable community use for the facility. In this instance it is noted that the betting shop/bookmakers are seeing a decline in custom as a result of the service being offered online. As such, numerous betting shops/bookmakers in the county borough, including the application site, have permanently closed. It is therefore considered that the existing betting shop/bookmakers would be deemed surplus to the needs of the community and is therefore no longer required. Furthermore, since the proposal would be used as a tanning salon, it would provide an alternative community facility. The proposed development would therefore accord with LDP Policy SW13.

Character and visual amenity

As no external alterations to the property are proposed there would not be any impact on terms of its general appearance. However, bringing a vacant unit back into beneficial use would have a positive impact in terms of the overall condition and maintenance of the building which in turn would improve its long term appearance.

In terms of the use itself, it is reiterated that the site is located in a local centre and as such is characterised by a mixture of retail, commercial and residential uses. It is not considered that a tanning salon would appear out of place within this context.

Having regard to the above the proposal is found to be acceptable in terms of its impact on character and visual amenity and as such would accord with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Residential amenities

Consideration has also been had for the impact of the proposal on the residential amenities of the neighbouring residents. In this respect it is noted that despite being within a local centre, there is also a high density of residential properties within close proximity to the site. As no external works are proposed to the property no concerns are raised with respect to overbearing impact, overshadowing/loss of light or loss of privacy. It is recognised that the use would result in a level of activity from comings and goings and as such may create some noise and disturbance. However, it is not considered that this would be any greater than that of a betting shop. In addition, it is located in a local centre where there a certain level of activity is to be expected give the other commercial uses in the area. In this respect it is also noted that no objections were received from the Environmental Health Manager or indeed following the publicity exercise. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity and would comply with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Parking and highway safety

It is noted that the site does not benefit from any off-street parking and no designated parking is included as part of the proposal. However, it is not considered that the proposed use as a tanning salon would generate a parking demand that would be greater than the existing betting shop use. Furthermore, the site is located in a sustainable location within a local centre and is therefore in close proximity to services, facilities and public transport links. There is also parking to the front for permit holders and a public car park in walking distance which would provide both short and longer term parking as well as accommodating other more sustainable means of travelling to the facility. As such, it no concerns are raised in respect to car parking or highway safety and no objection has been received from the Head of Engineering and Highways.

Ecology

It is recognised that chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12) requests that applications be supported by Green Infrastructure Statements (GIS). In this instance, due to the scale and nature of the development, which only relates to the change of use of the property, the submission of a GIS is deemed to be disproportionate and unreasonable. Notwithstanding this, ecological enhancement would be sought and secured by condition, which would contribute to the wider green infrastructure objectives. The proposed development would therefore comply with LDP Policy EnW1.

Conclusion

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 (Wales) 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 at 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.

Accordingly the following recommendation is made:

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

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Drawing Title: Proposed Site Block Plan, Drawing Number: 1114.03, Received 19 May 2025

Drawing Title: Proposed Drawings, Drawing Number: 1114.05, Received 19 May 2025

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

3. **BEFORE THE USE HEREBY APPROVED COMMENCES** a scheme for biodiversity enhancement, including a timescale for implementation, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason - Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) requires all development to maintain and enhance biodiversity and to accord with Policy EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission does not provide consent to undertake works that require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence.

All bats and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb a bat or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.

If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/apply-for-a-protected-species-licence/bat-licences/?lang=en>.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

Under these circumstances, an EPS licence is likely to be required to undertake the works within the law.

2. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

If works to any trees, hedgerows and/or other nesting bird habitat (including buildings with suitable features) are to be undertaken, they will take place outside of the bird nesting season. If the works must be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a breeding bird survey will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified will be protected until the young have fledged.

Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>) is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, will be devised and implemented.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 25.06.2025