

FIGURES:

N/A

APPENDICES:

APPENDICES	TITLE
2.1	SCREENING OPINION REQUEST
2.2	SCREENING OPIINION
2.3	INFORMAL SCREENING ADVICE

Our Ref: UG1986

25th February 2022

Mr D Cross
Planning Officer
Planning and Building Control
Civic Centre
Castle St, Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8AN

Dear Mr Cross,

Request for Screening Opinion under Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017: Proposed development at BikePark Wales, Gethin Woods, Merthyr Tydfil.

Please find enclosed information on development proposed at BikePark Wales. This information is provided for the reference of the Local Planning Authority for the purpose of providing an EIA screening opinion. The proposed development involves alterations to the BikePark Wales masterplan proposals that was granted full planning permission on the 9th January 2020 (application ref: P/19/0073). The previous permission has been commenced. The previously approved development was deemed EIA development and an Environmental Statement was submitted as part of the planning application. The proposed development seeks to replace parts of the existing scheme and, importantly, will result in a decrease in the number of accommodation units on the site. It is considered the amended masterplan proposals will have no greater impact than the already approved masterplan proposals.

The information provided below is that required by the Planning Authority in order to allow it to make a screening opinion, as set out in the Regulations 2017. Information includes: a plan sufficient to identify the land; a description of the development (including a description of the location of the development and the physical characteristics of the development); a description of the aspects of the environment that are likely to be affected by the development; (a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from (i) residues, emissions and waste and (ii) the use of natural resources including soil, land, water, biodiversity; and a summary position on whether the development is considered to be EIA development.



The Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of the following:

- a reduction in the number of accommodation units from 39 to 27;
- an increase in toilet pods from 2 to 4;
- an additional workshop for maintenance of service vehicles;
- an additional shower and toilet block;
- an additional overnight bike storage area; and
- the provision of two stretch tents for outdoor dining.

A breakdown of the changes between the scheme approved under (P/19/0073) and the proposed scheme are outlined on the following page. There are 34 structures proposed within the woodland on the proposed masterplan proposals; whereas, there were 41 structures proposed within the woodland on the approved masterplan proposals.

Item	Approved Scheme	Proposed Scheme
Shepherds huts	4	3
Camping Pods	21	19
Landpods	9	0
Cabins	5	5
Toilet pods	2	4
Workshop pod	0	1
Linen stores	0	2
Toilet block	1	0
Changing village (showers and toilets)	0	1
Overnight bike storage	0	1
Stretch tents (for eating/drinking)	0	2
Play area	1	0
Total structures	41	34

The Site

BikePark Wales is located in the Gethin Woods to the west of the A470 and the settlement of Abercarnaid. BikePark Wales is a purpose built mountain bike centre that has been delivered within the Gethin Woodland environment. The Park consists of world-class mountain bike trails, an access road from the A470, a series of parking areas and a central complex which includes the main centre building that acts as a headquarters to Bike ParkWales staff and provides visitors with key services (food and beverage; bike hire and maintenance; bike purchase and toilet and shower facilities). The bike trails are located to the west of the parking areas and central complex on elevated ground. The proposed development would be located on and adjacent to the parking areas and central complex. A site location plan and draft illustrative masterplan is enclosed. This land is previously undeveloped and includes the following habitat types: semi-natural broad-leaved woodland; dense continuous scrub; semi-improved acid grassland; and small areas of ephemeral.

In respect of designations, parts of the site are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. These are the Abercarnaid Fields and Craig Gethin SINC. The Development Advice Map for Wales identifies that the development site is located in Flood Zone A, which TAN 15 considers to be “at little to no risk of flooding”. A stream is located adjacent to the site. The Development Advice Map identifies that this has a low risk of flooding. The exception to this is a small section, which is identified as having a medium risk. This was accounted for in the approved scheme drainage design, which remains unchanged by this proposal.





An aerial view of the site, and a series of recent site photographs are provided below.

Aspects of the Environment that Could be Affected by the Development

As required by the Regulations, the below analysis identifies aspects of the environment that could be affected by the development.

Ecology - Part of the development is to be delivered on undeveloped land and that could result in harm to protected species and result in the loss of valuable existing natural habitat. An ecological assessment of the site was provided with the original application, and this identifies potential effects on protected species. The application was granted as it was concluded that the ecological impact was acceptable, subject to mitigation. A review of the amended masterplan proposals has been undertaken and identified that the impact on site ecology is likely to be reduced by the amendments. The reduction in the overall amount of structures could reduce the impact from development.

Landscape and Visual Effects - The proposed changes to the approved masterplan would still result in additional physical structures within the site. The reduction in the structures would lessen the potential visual effects of the proposal.

Flooding and Water Resources - The extension to the Park would increase areas of hardstanding (parking areas and access routes etc). This could increase the risk of flooding onsite and offsite. Vehicles accessing these areas could also reduce water quality around and downstream of the site.

Local Highway Network - The proposed development is required to accommodate and cater for visitors to the site. Additional vehicles associated with the development could have a negative effect on the local highway network. The proposed amendments would generate vehicle trips, but would not impact on the total / maximum numbers previously assessed. Therefore transport effects would likely be very limited. Transport not previously deemed to be an EIA subject.

Ground Conditions - No additional hardstanding would be required beyond what is already there, i.e the amendments would be on existing hardstanding. The accommodation would also now be raised off the floor. The amendments would not therefore increase hardstanding in themselves though they would require surface drainage arrangements and some would have foul connections. The drainage design remains unchanged apart from minor amendments to foul connections for some of the pods. It is also worth noting that flooding and water was discounted from the original EIA by the Authority. Therefore any effects are likely to be very minor.

Pollution, Odour and Light Spill - The additional vehicles visiting the site could increase the risk of fuel spillages and reduction in air quality levels. Odour might result from the proposed uses. Sections of the extended area of the Park would also need the lit. This could result in light spillage from the site to the surrounding area.

Socio-Economic - The proposed development would increase the number of visitors to the site. More visitors to the Park would provide the opportunity for Bike Park Wales to increase the number of employment opportunities at the Park. More visits would also increase opportunities for local overnight accommodation providers, since a number of the new visitors would require overnight accommodation offsite.

Likely Significant Effects of the Development on the Environment

As required by the Regulations, the below analysis identifies potential significant effects of the proposed development on the environment.

Ecology and Site Habitat - Much of the development would be delivered on previously developed land that has little / no ecological value. The other areas of the site that are proposed to be developed have previously been granted permission for redevelopment as part of the previous application. An ecological assessment of the site was provided with the original application, and this identifies potential effects on protected species. The application was granted as it was concluded that the ecological impact was acceptable, subject to mitigation. Wildwood Ecology have provided the following commentary on the proposed changes:

"In response to the updated Masterplan received on 08/12/2021, the changes noted from the previous revision are:

- a) A reduction in the number of camping pods to be installed in the woodland camping area during Phase 3.*
- b) The location of the shower block and changing village to be constructed during Phase 3 is now to be built slightly to the north of the previous planned position.*

I can confirm that no further ecological impacts are anticipated due to these changes other than those discussed in the Ecological Impact Assessment and Wildlife Protection Plan.

The reduction in the number of camping pods is likely to reduce the amount of vegetation clearance required in the woodlands during Phase 3. The shower block and changing village is to be located on an area that is currently hardstanding with no ecological impacts anticipated at present for these works.”

Any effects are therefore likely to be reduced from those previously considered and can be fully addressed via the previously agreed mitigation.

Landscape and Visual Effects - The proposed changes to the approved masterplan would result in additional physical structures within the site. The additional structures could have a wider landscape and visual impact. The changes from the previously approved scheme are very minor, and the visual envelope of the site is very limited, so the proposal is unlikely to have significant visual effects. The reduction in the number of structures within the woodland and the softer external materials will allow the structures to blend in with the surroundings more effectively. The proposal will have no greater visual impact than the previously approved scheme.

Flooding and Water Resources - As part of the development a bespoke drainage strategy (foul and surface) will be provided. The drainage strategy is as per previously agreed with the Planning Authority and Drainage Authority with the exception of a few minor amendments for connections to the amended structures. The approach remains the same through ensuring that significant flood risk and water resource effects are unlikely. This would ensure that current greenfield runoff rates are maintained. To ensure that the new development does not result in additional pollution, appropriate pollution control measures would be integrated into the development drainage design. Subject to the implementation of an appropriate drainage strategy, it is considered that there would likely be no adverse effects on flood risk and water resources. A drainage strategy would be included in the submitted planning application.

Local Highway Network - A Transport Assessment of the original development was produced and an updated assessment would be included in the planning application. The Transport Assessment that was submitted with the original application concluded that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the local highways network. The Transport Assessment submitted with the original masterplan proposals concluded that the “proposals will not have a material impact on safety relating to vehicles entering and exiting the site”. The reduction in the number of structures means the amended proposal won’t increase the total visitor trips to the site and would not increase the effects identified for the approved scheme.

Ground Conditions - A site investigation report was prepared for the original application. The report concluded that the ground conditions are acceptable and that there isn't evidence of contamination and little risk from coal mining activities. Even the extent of the amendments significant ground conditions effects are considered to be unlikely.

Pollution, Odour and Light Spill - The proposed alterations to the BikePark Wales masterplan will not result in the maximum vehicle trips. Appropriate pollution control measures would be incorporated into the drainage design of the site to prevent the spread of any oil or fuel spillages. In respect of odour, the proposed would result in the commission of distinctive odour (note: hot food is already cooked at the site). Furthermore, there are no sensitive receptors in close proximity to the Park. Finally, in respect of light spill, only small sections of the new development would be lit, and where required lighting would be low-level and would be subject to intelligent controls. Overall it is considered that there would be no significant effects on the environment relating to pollution, odour and light spill.

Socio-Economic - The proposed amendments are in line with the masterplan objectives to attract more tourists to the Park and Merthyr. Positive economic effects would therefore remain likely.

Proposed Planning Application Content

A summary of the environmental reports and drawings to be included in the future planning application which would ensure that all environmental effects are robustly examined and managed is provided below.

Drawings	Reports
1. Site location plan	1. Transport Statement
2. Masterplan	2. Ground investigation report (desktop)
3. Landscape masterplan	3. Drainage strategy
4. Elevations	4. Utilities strategy
5. Floorplans	5. Preliminary ecological appraisal & targeted surveys
6. Highway and access arrangement	6. Arboriculture survey
7. Drainage strategy	7. Landscape Appraisal
8. Site sections (existing and proposed)	

Summary Position

As outlined above, the planning application content that is being progressed has been selected to ensure that the key environmental factors are duly considered and the likely effects are fully set out for future consideration by the Planning Authority. As identified at the start of this EIA screening request the area of the proposed development falls below the designated threshold for EIA development. An Environmental Statement was previously prepared for the approved BikePark Wales masterplan. As part of this technical assessments were required for ecology and landscape and visual impact only. These assessments fully considered the likely effects of the development and they were used to conclude that the impact of the development was acceptable and therefore appropriate to be granted planning permission. The proposed scheme amendments are fully in accord with the principles of the previously approved development. It is not considered they would increase the extent of the effects previously identified. Rather it is considered that they would likely result in betterment as less accommodation would now be delivered in the woodland environment and there would be less disturbance to the woodland floor. In addition to this, the above proposed planning application content is being progressed to ensure that the

In light of this, the proposed development is not considered to be EIA development and it is respectfully requested that the EIA opinion adopted by the Planning Authority confirm this position.

The following items are included as appendices: Appendix A - Site Location Plan; and Appendix B - Draft Illustrative Masterplan.

Should you have any enquiries or require further information please contact me via the details below.

Yours sincerely

Liam Hopkins
Director

liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(WALES) REGULATIONS 2017

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE,
GETHIN WOODS, ABERCANAID, MERTHYR TYDFIL

SCREENING OPINION

A formal Screening Opinion has been sought by The Urbanists on behalf of Bike Park Wales (BPW) in relation to a proposed development involving the erection of camping pods within a woodland environment, together with a toilet pod, workshop pod, shipping container storage units with attached shower/changing rooms, a bike wash area, play area and workshop storage/maintenance shed. This proposal forms part of a wider development to expand the facilities provided by BPW, which was granted permission under application P/19/0073. In essence, the proposal is seeking to make amendments to the approved scheme.

Regard has been given to Section 9 of the Regulations, which deals with subsequent applications. The proposed development would need to be submitted as a new planning application given that it would involve changes to the approved scheme that are more than minor in nature. The proposal also seeks to include other structures that were not part of the original scheme and the changes would amount to a different description of development. As such, the proposal does not fall under the definition of a subsequent application.

Whilst works have commenced to expand the BPW facilities under planning permission P/19/0073, the proposed development would form an integral part of those more substantial works and it would not be possible to fully implement the proposal independently from each other. As such, it is necessary for this screening opinion to consider the proposal as part of the total development rather than in isolation.

The proposal in isolation would not fall within Category 10(b) of the 2017 Regulations, as it would comprise less than 1 hectare of urban development, which is not dwellinghouse development. However, when considering the scale of the development cumulatively with the consented extension to the mountain bike centre, the development would amount to more than 1 hectare of urban development. Furthermore, when considered in relation to the wider BPW facilities and associated trails, the overall development would likely exceed an area of 5 hectares.

The screening opinion has had regard to the guidance contained within W.O. Circular 11/99. Consideration has been given to the characteristics of the development, having particular regard to the criteria set out in paragraphs (a) to (g) of Section 1 of Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations.

Consideration has also been given to the environmental sensitivity of the site and the potential impacts the proposal would have on the site itself, or any area likely to be affected by the development, with regard to the matters set out in Section 2 of Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations.

The potential significant effects of the development have also been considered with particular regard to the matters set out in paragraphs (a) to (h) in Section 3 of Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations.

Below sets out the Screening assessment:

Characteristics of the development	
(a) The size and design of the development	The overall consented development would be carried out over an area of previously undeveloped land of approximately 1.13 hectares. It comprises the following elements:- Provision of 36 camping pods, 5 chalets, an area for 7 motorhomes, a bike hire building, bike hire handover structure, external catering unit, an office building, provision of storage containers, bike cleaning facilities, plant room building, toilet/shower blocks, sewerage treatment plant, play area, extension of existing terrace, trail maintenance storage yard, new access routes for pedestrians and vehicles, alterations to the existing parking areas/access routes, extension to the car park to accommodate 150 parking spaces and an overflow car park with 40 parking spaces. The proposed development would be located on a smaller part of the above mentioned land, which would likely be less than 1 hectare. The development includes the provision of 19 camping pods, 2 linen buildings, a workshop pod, a toilet and shower pod, shipping storage containers, a shower/changing block, bike wash facility, play area, a workshop storage/maintenance shed and associated access tracks.
(b) The accumulation with other existing development and/or approved development	The development would form part of the expansion of the existing mountain bike centre to provide new tourist accommodation, service and welfare facilities. The main welcome centre and existing car park currently occupies an area of approximately 1.5 hectares. The existing/permitted trails (over 45km) extend across Gethin Woods and cover a surface area of approximately 4.5 hectares. The proposed development would overlap the consented scheme, presenting changes to the

	design of the camping pods and toilet/shower blocks. There would be an overall reduction in the number of individual structures located within the woodland environment, alongside a new bike storage facility, a maintenance workshop and associated access and landscape works.
(c) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	The development indicates the potential to utilise solar panels on the roof of the bike storage units.
(d) The production of waste	The provision of toilet/shower blocks and accommodation will necessitate the need for additional on-site sewerage treatment systems. Alongside the consented self-catering chalets, some of the camping pods would also include toilet/kitchenette facilities that would generate additional waste.
(e) Pollution and nuisances	The consented scheme included the expansion of the car park, which would increase the potential for fuel/oil leaks into the ground, which may leach into nearby watercourses. There would also likely be an increase of silt that impacts on water quality. There would be potential for additional noise and disturbance in the area, which would likely continue into the evening, particularly given the provision of over-night accommodation. This is not of great concern, given the location of the development away from residential properties. Although the general nighttime activity may have ecological impacts through light pollution and disturbance and protected species. The proposal would reduce the overall number of camping pods, through the removal of the consented land-pods, which has the potential to reduce the level of activity in part of the site at different times of the day.
(f) The risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	The development does not include the use of hazardous materials or involve any operations that may otherwise indicate the potential for major accidents and/or disasters.
(g) The risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	An increase in vehicular traffic may have a slight impact on air quality in the area. However this is not likely to pose a risk to human health.

Location of development	
(a) The existing and approved land use	The land lies adjacent to an existing mountain bike centre, the majority of which comprises previously undeveloped woodland. Planning permission (P/19/0073) has already been granted to expand the mountain bike centre to largely include tourist accommodation and additional car parking provision.
(b) The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	Approximately 0.7 of a hectare of the consented scheme lies within the Abercanaid Fields and Craig Gethin SINCs, which are designated for their Broadleaved Woodland habitats. Although mitigation/compensation measures have been identified as part of the planning permission, the scale and nature of the development would still result in some permanent loss, damage or erosion of those SINC environments. The proposed development would also lie partly within the Abercanaid Fields SINC. However, the existing trails (to the south-west of the development), are now located in the Gethin Forest SINC following the adoption of the Replacement LDP. This indicates that the land has some regenerative capacity, possibly due to the nature of the habitats, wide distribution and the narrowness/construction of the trails. There is a variety of protected species and habitats known within the site and in close proximity to the development, including reptiles, bats, Nightjar and fertility butterfly habitats. The development would have some impact on these protected species.
(c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: i. Wetlands ii. Coastal zones and the marine environment iii. Mountain and forest areas iv. Nature reserves and parks v. European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation vi. Area in which there has already been a failure to meet environmental	The development would be located in an area that is recognised as a Landscape of Historic Interest in Wales and is designated a 'special landscape area' within the LDP. With reference to LANDMAP, the site lies within an area considered to have an overall 'high' historic landscape value, particularly in relation to its integrity and survival. Additionally, under the visual and sensory layer, it is considered to have a 'high' character value. The existing mountain bike centre is largely screened from distance views and is situated in an area that was formerly used as a public carpark. The consented scheme will increase the urbanised environment, which extends into more exposed areas of the landscape. A mitigation strategy has been approved, which

quality standards laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered there is such a failure vii. Densely populated areas viii. Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	involves extensive tree planting that enables the development to be better absorbed within the wider landscape. Nevertheless, there would remain a significant change to the immediate character and landscape qualities from within Gethin Woods. This would be apparent both in terms of the scale of the physical changes to the environment but also in terms of the increase in activity in the area. The proposed timber camping pods would be located within a woodland environment where it would be screened from the surrounding area. However, the presence of a large number of structures and the loss of forest floor cover would unavoidably have a significant impact on the character the woodland environment. The storage units. Shower/changing block and maintenance workshop would be situated on an existing hardstanding in a more exposed part of the area where the built development would be more visible to the north of the site close to a woodland area. The proposed masterplan illustrates extensive tree planting would be introduced around the structures to screen the development from the wider landscape setting.
Types and characteristics of the potential impact	
(a) The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The development would have the potential to result in a permanent total loss of approximately 0.7 of a hectare of SINC quality environment (within Graig Gethin and Abercanaid Fields).
(b) The nature of the impact	The proposed development in combination with the consented scheme would result in a significant increase in the number of buildings and structures introduced to the distinctly rural/woodland environment. Given the scale and concentration of the development, which would essentially double the size of the mountain bike centre (not including the trails), there would be a significant change in the landscape character. There would be potential harm to the green infrastructure and a loss of tree cover both immediately and in the future as the general health of trees may decline. There are habitats that have the potential to support a variety of protected species, both within the development area and within the vicinity. The development would have the potential to result in the loss or displacement of some of these habitats within the site.

	The hardstanding areas and use of the land for parking vehicles, which form part of the consented scheme, may increase the potential for leaching of oils/fuel into the ground and the amount of silt entering nearby watercourses. The overall development would likely increase traffic movements to and from the site. This would put additional pressures along the access track leading to the site and at the junction on to the A470 trunk road.
(c) The transboundary nature of the impact	An increase in the number of visitors to the mountain bike centre may likely result in more traffic along the existing trails and access roads, which extend into the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough. However, the impacts of the development would largely be contained within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough around the existing welcome centre.
(d) The intensity and complexity of the impact	The existing mountain bike facility already has an impact on the woodland environment. There are likely to be further changes to the landscape character, which form an important context to the site. The degree of change and the extent the development can be absorbed within the landscape adds to the complexity of any assessment. Whilst measures to address direct impacts on habitats and species within the site could be addressed, there are complexities in relation to nearby protected species, such as the Nightjar and fertility butterfly habitats, which may be affected over time due to the increase in activity in the area.
(e) The probability of the impact	Although some of the impacts of the proposal may be minimised, there would evidently be a greater physical change to the landscape character and a reduction in the ecological value of the area.
(f) The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	There would be potential for the impact associated with the camping pods/chalets within the woodland area, to be reversed, insofar as, the removal of these structures may lead to the natural restoration of the woodland environment. However, it is uncertain whether its status as a SINC could be maintained in the long term.

	The various buildings located around the welcome centre and the consented hardstanding area would likely have a more permanent impact on the landscape character.
(g) The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development	The development, together with the consented scheme and existing mountain bike centre, could potentially result in a permanent total loss of approximately 2.84 hectares of SINC quality environment (within Graig Gethin and Abercanaid Fields). The existing mountain bike facility largely comprises the main welcome centre and a hardstanding area, which occupies a former visitor car park. The consented scheme considerably expands the mountain bike centre, occupying a far greater area of undeveloped land. When taking into account the trails, this only further emphasises the extent of the impact the mountain bike centre has had on the character and use of the valley side. There are pre-existing issues with the contamination of surface water and silt entering into the existing watercourse. The proposal has the potential to exacerbate this issue, if not properly managed. Currently vehicles often park along the access tracks leading to the site during peak times. The increased attraction to the area would likely exacerbate this impact, giving rise to potential congestion concerns.
(h) The possibility of effectively reducing the impact	The findings set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment that accompanied the consented scheme is of relevance, given the integral relationship with the current proposal, which lies within the same development area. The Ecology chapter of the EIA concluded that with mitigation (which includes buffer zones, dark corridors, extensive planting and woodland/ecology management etc), there would be minor adverse impacts on a small part the SINC environments with some potential for minor positive impacts in some areas. Similarly, in respect of protected species and habitats, it was concluded that the consented development would result in no major impacts. A further statement has been provided by an ecologist, which indicates that the proposed development would not introduce any further ecological impacts. Therefore, it has been demonstrated

	that the potential harm to the ecological environment can be mitigated/compensated to a level that would not give rise to a significant impact. The Landscape chapter of the EIA noted that there is potential for significant visual effects on views within or near BPW, but longer views are not likely to be significantly effected. The introduction of a substantial amount tree planting across the site would assist in providing additionally screening of the development. In terms of landscape character, it is noted that the majority of the adverse effects of the landscape can be suitable mitigated through a strategic planting and management regime. Nevertheless, it notes that the residual effects in respect of landform & geology, landscape pattern & history, woodland, culture, sensory aspects, light and access to land around BPW would still have an overall effect of significant. Whilst the proposed development would in effect reduce the number of structures within the woodland environment, which may reduce some of the impacts on the landscape character, there would be new buildings introduced in other part so the site. It is evident that even with mitigation there would be a significant impact on the landscape character when taking into consider the wider existing and consented scheme. The hydrological impacts with silt and oil/fuel leaching into the watercourses can be effectively reduced with filtration systems provided in suitable locations and with the appropriate management of the watercourses. The introduction of additional parking within the site would alleviate some of the existing parking issues along the main access track leading to BPW.
--	--

Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that there are potential significant impacts on the landscape character of the land. In reaching this view, regard has been given to the details submitted in support of the screening request and the evidence within the EIA for the previously consented scheme (P/19/0073) of which this development forms part of. Therefore it is concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for the proposed development at the mountain bike centre.



P. J. Jones
Director of Neighbourhood Service

14th April 2022



Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

BPW Development - Pre-app & Screening Opinion [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

10 messages

Cross, David <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>
To: Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Thu, Apr 14, 2022 at 5:14 PM

Classification: NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**Classification: NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Afternoon Liam,

Please find attached a copy of our pre-application response. Following our meeting there is a point I have highlighted that we need to review further, which may necessitate the need for a S106 agreement to be put in place, to essentially avoid elements of two consented scheme being implemented piecemeal. I am sure it is not something that BPW would intend to do, but it would be an environmental risk that needs to be addressed nonetheless.

Attached is the screening opinion. It was necessary for me to consider both the proposal and the recently approved scheme. Previously we came to the conclusion that an EIA would be required and it was necessary for me to then consider whether the impacts would be different, having had sight of the assessments and mitigation measures as set out in the ES. I was satisfied in the assessment that with mitigation the ecological impacts would not be significant and the proposal would not alter that position. However, it was difficult for me to come to the same conclusion in respect of the impact on the landscape character, of which the ES notes that even with mitigation there would still be undoubtedly be a significant impact. Whilst I appreciate the goal is in essence to amend parts of the previous scheme, because it is a new application and there is a need to consider the environmental impacts of the overall development, I could only conclude that an EIA would be required in respect of the landscape impacts.

Kind regards

David Cross

Prif Swyddog Cynllunio / Principal Planning Officer

BSc (Cynllunio), Ma (Dylunio Trefol), MRTPI / BSc (Planning), Ma (Urban Design), MRTPI

Ffôn / Tel: 07761330341

E-bost / Email: david.cross@merthyr.gov.uk

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Uned 5, Parc Fusness Triongl / Unit 5, Triangle Business Park

Pentrebach, Merthyr Tudful / Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil

CF48 4TQ

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd hyn ddim yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r e-bost hwn ac unrhyw ffeiliau a drosglwyddir gydag ef yn gyfrinachol ac wedi'u bwriadu ar gyfer pwy bynnag y cyfeirir ef ato neu atynt. Mae cynnwys yr e-bost hwn cynrychioli barn y sawl a enwir uchod, felly nid ydyw'n dilyn ei fod yn cynrychioli barn Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful.

Darllenwch ein [hysbysiadau preifatrwydd](#) i ddarganfod mwy am sut rydym yn defnyddio eich gwybodaeth bersonol.

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr TudfulCanolfan Dinesig
Stryd Y Castell
Merthyr Tudful
CF47 8AN

Teleffon: 01685 725000

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to a delay.

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. The contents of this e-mail represent the views of the individual(s) named above and do not necessarily represent the views of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Please read our [privacy notices](#) to find out more about how we use your personal information.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Civic Centre

Castle Street
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8AN

Telephone: 01685 725000



<http://www.merthyr.gov.uk>

2 attachments

Bike Park Wales Pre-app PA.22.0011.pdf
874K

Bike Park Wales Screening Opinion.pdf
336K

Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 10:11 AM

To: Martin Astley <martin@bikeparkwales.com>, Dan Prescott <danprescott@tc-consult.co.uk>

Hi both,

See attached, pre-app advice and EIA screening opinion.

Frustratingly David has concluded that an EIA is needed on landscape and visual impact grounds. I am going to go back to him today to confirm that it is just landscape and visual impact that needs to be included. On those grounds, the production of the ES will be straightforward as it is just Peter updating his original chapter and us updating the intro chapters etc. This does, however, mean that the Authority has 16 weeks to determine the application, which needs to be factored into the programme. However, I would hope that determination could happen quicker given the extent of the changes.

Also, it is not conclusive on the need for further ecology surveys. It suggests an updated ecology report, but not implicit on extra surveys. I'll pick this up also with him.

I will give you a call later today, once you have had a chance to review.

Best regards

Liam

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | @TheUrbanists



2 attachments

Bike Park Wales Pre-app PA.22.0011.pdf
874K

Bike Park Wales Screening Opinion.pdf
336K

Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 11:00 AM

To: "Cross, David" <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

Bcc: Martin Astley <martin@bikeparkwales.com>, Dan Prescott <danprescott@tc-consult.co.uk>

Hi David,

I have had a chance to review and have a couple of clarifications:

1. EIA - Is it solely the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that needs to be included in the ES? The screening opinion would suggest so.
2. Surveys / reports - We discussed the need to not undertake further targeted ecology surveys. Has this been agreed, and is the reference to "new ecological survey report" referring to a PEA that confirms no change, or is it that the original surveys need to be updated?
3. Survey / reports - In the meeting we discussed that for many reports like transport and archaeology a covering statement that confirms no changes and why would be sufficient. It is intended to progress on that basis.

Best regards

Liam

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | @TheUrbanists



[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Cross, David <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>
To: Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 12:00 PM

Classification: **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Morning Liam,

In response the points you raise:

1. Yes the EIA would just relate the landscape issues as I was satisfied from the previous submission that with mitigation the impacts were not deemed to be significant. However, in relation to landscaping the reports previously noted, even with mitigation, there would still be significant impacts, albeit minor adverse in some cases.
2. In regards to ecology, it was highlighted by our ecologist that the original survey reports are now out of date and this is something that is also verified in the survey reports. As such, the findings of those report can't now be relied upon as there may be changes in circumstances, especially as some works have already started. I would suggest that either an updated report is provided or an addendum to the original report is provided which reviews the site again and identifies any change or confirms the areas that remain the same. The report should then update what the impact of the development would be and updates any mitigation measures and the management plan accordingly.
3. Regarding the other survey work, I think it would be appropriate for the original reports be provided, but where appropriate an addendum should be provided that considers whether the proposal would result in any change in the impacts and what the appropriate mitigation measures would be etc. So for the highway issues, this would probably be straight forward as I would imagine the proposal would likely result in a negligible change. In terms of archaeology, it would be appropriate to consider whether the proposed works would give rise to any new impacts, for instance the workshop building would be constructed in an area that was not previously intended to be developed. In all case, the mitigation measures would need to be updated to ensure it reflects the new proposal.

As a side note, one of the things to bear in mind is that there would potentially be two consented schemes, so we need to make sure that the new reports/addendums also pick up on the previous mitigation/compensation requirements to ensure there is some consistency.

Kind regards

David Cross

Prif Swyddog Cynllunio / Principal Planning Officer

BSc (Cynllunio), Ma (Dylunio Trefol), MRTPI / BSc (Planning), Ma (Urban Design), MRTPI

Ffôn / Tel: 07761330341

E-bost / Email: david.cross@merthyr.gov.uk

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Uned 5, Parc Fusness Triangl / Unit 5, Triangle Business Park

Pentrebach, Merthyr Tudful / Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil

CF48 4TQ

From: Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>
Sent: 19 April 2022 11:00
To: Cross, David <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: BPW Development - Pre-app & Screening Opinion [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Hi David,

I have had a chance to review and have a couple of clarifications:

1. EIA - Is it solely the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that needs to be included in the ES? The screening opinion would suggest so.
2. Surveys / reports - We discussed the need to not undertake further targeted ecology surveys. Has this been agreed, and is the reference to "new ecological survey report" referring to a PEA that confirms no change, or is it that the original surveys need to be updated?
3. Survey / reports - In the meeting we discussed that for many reports like transport and archaeology a covering statement that confirms no changes and why would be sufficient. It is intended to progress on that basis.

Best regards

Liam

Liam Hopkins | Director

[Redacted]

The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF
029 2023 6133 | 07375571222
www.theurbanists.net | @_TheUrbanists

[Redacted]

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

[Redacted]
<http://www.merthyr.gov.uk>

--

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | @TheUrbanists



[Quoted text hidden]

Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 12:03 PM

To: Martin Astley <martin@bikeparkwales.com>, Dan Prescott <danprescott@tc-consult.co.uk>

Both,
See below. The ecology surveys is the critical matter. We need a call with the ecologists to map this out, but it is going to impact on the programme.
Liam

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cross, David** <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | @TheUrbanists



Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 12:06 PM

To: Amy Williams Schwartz <awilliamsschwartz@wildwoodecology.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cross, David** <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

Date: Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 12:00 PM

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | @TheUrbanists



Martin Astley <martin@bikeparkwales.com>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 12:54 PM

To: Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>, Dan Prescott <danprescott@tc-consult.co.uk>

Hi Liam,

Wildwood have already done what he is asking for (I think?) as I'd foreseen this issue at the end of last year. Could you take a look at the attached letter and updated WPP and quote and see if you think this covers what is needed please?

Thanks

Martin



Martin Astley /// Founder & CEO
Tel: 07739 360 986
Web: www.bikeparkwales.com
Gethin Woodland Centre
Abercanaid
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1YZ



[Quoted text hidden]

3 attachments



WWE20037 - BPW - ecology survey update 29.11.21.pdf

520K



WWE20037 - Bike Park Wales, Merthyr Tydfil - Wildlife Protection Plan Rev F.pdf

2622K



Quote for Wildwood WPP updates to begin phase 3.docx

2506K

Cross, David <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 3:17 PM

To: Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Classification: **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Afternoon Liam,

Further to my comments below, I think the attached comments from our ecologist may be of further assistance.

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



Pre_App Bike Park Wales.pdf

434K

Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>

Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 3:32 PM

To: Martin Astley <martin@bikeparkwales.com>, Dan Prescott <danprescott@tc-consult.co.uk>, Amy Williams Schwartz <awilliamsschwartz@wildwoodecology.com>

Martin and Dan,

These are the surveys that the Authority wants updated.

I have included Amy so that we can brief and pick up with Wildwood.

Liam

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cross, David** <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | [@_TheUrbanists](#)



Pre_App Bike Park Wales.pdf
434K

Liam Hopkins <liam.hopkins@theurbanists.net>
To: "Cross, David" <David.Cross@merthyr.gov.uk>

Thu, Apr 21, 2022 at 9:35 AM

Thanks David - helpful.
We will undertake the updated PEA and send across for review.
Liam
[Quoted text hidden]

Liam Hopkins | Director



The Urbanists | The Creative Quarter | 8A Morgan Arcade | Cardiff | CF10 1AF

029 2023 6133 | 07375571222

www.theurbanists.net | [@_TheUrbanists](#)

