

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0094
Site Address:	Welsh Assembly Government Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ
Development:	Proposed installation of additional solar PV panels and associated infrastructure on the roof of the existing office building and energy centre building.
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	13th May 2026
Application Expiry Date:	30th September 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	27th May 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to a large detached building known as the Welsh Government Offices, located at Rhyd-Y-Car in Merthyr Tydfil. The modern three-storey building is curved, similar to a horseshoe shape, featuring a large façade with two front projecting gables. The external elevations of the building are finished with brickwork, aluminium windows, and slate roof tiles. The building is bound to the front by vegetation and to the rear by a large parking area. Near the eastern boundary of the site is a single-storey, pitched-roof building referred to as an energy hub. This building contains various plant and apparatus associated with the heating of the Government Offices and the external materials feature brickwork, aluminium doors, and slate roof tiles.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to install roof-mounted solar panels on the inside roof slope above the principal elevation of the Government Offices and on both sides of the Energy Hub.

The solar panels would each measure 1m x 1.6m and would be mounted on rails, resulting in the panels being approximately 0.1m above the roof plane. A total of 270 solar panels would be installed on the main building and 109 panels on the Energy Hub.

The proposed development seeks to provide an energy efficient site.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/23/0043 Install roof solar panels
Approved: 15 Aug 2023

P/26/0146 Install battery energy storage systems (BESS) and associated external plant equipment within the existing plant compound, to include the erection of replacement enclosures and associated works.
Approved: 03 Aug 2026

CONSULTATION

Ecology Officer: No objection.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to adjoining occupiers and a site notice erected in the vicinity of the site. No letters of representations have been received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

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

Local Planning Policies

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

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EcW8 Renewable Energy

In addition, the application will be determined having regard to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 4, Sustainable Design
- Note 5, Nature and Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider in the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposed development would be acceptable in principle in this location, and whether it would result in an acceptable form of development with regard to its impact upon the character and appearance of the premises and the wider street scene. The impact upon residential amenity and ecology are also important considerations.

The application site lies within the settlement boundary and is supported by LDP Policy SW4, provided it complies with other relevant planning policies.

Given the nature of the development, LDP Policy EnW8 is also relevant. This policy states that the use of renewable energy will be supported as a means of reducing the local carbon footprint.

The proposed development is therefore supported in principle and would comply with LDP Policies SW4 and EnW8.

The proposed solar panels would be mounted approximately 0.1m above the roof pitches of both buildings. The siting of the panels on both buildings would be visible when viewing the premises from the wider area. However, the proposed panels would not cause any significant harm to the appearance of the premises. Instead, the solar panels would appear fitting to the modern and irregular design of the buildings and would therefore be acceptable in this instance. The proposed development would therefore accord with LDP Policy SW11.

The proposal has been considered in respect of its impact upon neighbouring occupiers. Given the nature and siting of the development, and its distance from neighbouring properties, the proposal would not cause any harm to surrounding residential amenity. It is also noted that no representations were received following the publicity exercise. The proposed development would therefore comply with LDP Policy SW11.

In respect of ecology, the application is supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement. Given the proposal involves works to the roofs of the buildings and the site is located directly adjacent to areas of woodland, the Council's Ecologist requested a bat survey. Consequently, '*Bat Survey: Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1DH*' has been submitted in support of the proposal. The survey did not find any evidence that the buildings were being used by bats, and the Ecologist is satisfied with the survey effort.

In respect of biodiversity enhancements, a plan has been submitted illustrating that an oak tree, hawthorn, and hazelnut tree would be planted on green spaces near the entrance of the site. The plan also incorporates details relating to planting and management to ensure the successful establishment of the trees.

As such, the proposed development accords with the requirements of LDP Policy EnW1 and PPW.

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.

Having regard to the policy context above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and 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:

Drawing Title: Area of Works 2 Proposed Energy Centre Layout & Elevations, Drawing No: AL05 Rev 1, Received on 02 June 2026.

Drawing Title: Proposed Tree Planting, Drawing No: AL06, Received on 25 August 2026.

Drawing Title: Area of Works 1 Proposed Main Building Layout, Elevations, Drawing No: AL03, Received on 26 August 2026.

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

3. **In the first planting season (March to May) after the development hereby approved coming into beneficial use**, the planting shall be provided in accordance with approved plan Drawing Title: Proposed Tree Planting, Drawing No: AL06. The scheme of planting shall be maintained as such in perpetuity.

Reason - In the interest of biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales 12, The Environment Wales Act and Policy EnW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Development Plan (2016-2031).

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 *G. Davies*

PP. Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 2nd September 2026