

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/25/0059
Site Address:	Dowlais Community Centre Station Road Dowlais Merthyr Tydfil CF48 3LW
Development:	Installation of outdoor classroom, polytunnel, fruit cage and raised planting beds along with other minor works
Case Officer:	Rebecca Owens
Site Visit:	12th March 2025
Application Expiry Date:	30th April 2025
Consultation reply date expired:	2nd April 2025

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a community garden located within the curtilage of a large community centre that also contains a boxing club and charity bookshop. The site is located within the settlement boundary and whilst the site is elevated it is relatively flat.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the installation of an outdoor classroom, polytunnel, fruit cage and raised planting beds along with other minor works.

The proposed outdoor classroom would comprise of a timber structure with a pitched roof that is enclosed to the lower half and open on the upper half of the elevations. It would have a footprint of 3.1m by 3m with a ridge height of 2.88m.

The polytunnel would be a semicylinder shape comprising of a frame covered with plastic sheeting. It would have a rectangular footprint 2.66m by 10.67m and a maximum height of 2.31m.

The fruit cage would be cuboid in shape comprising of a metal frame covered with netting. It would have a footprint of 6m by 3m and a height of 2m.

Six raised timber beds are proposed which would be 3.1m by 1.1m and 0.6m in height.

The other minor works proposed include:

- The provision of a cold frame (0.8m in width by 0.5m in depth and with a maximum height of 1.31m);
- The installation of two benches and
- The provision of a compost and hot composter.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/21/0377	Siting of two timber sheds (one for a charity bookshop and the other for use by the Youth and Play Project) Granted planning permission subject to conditions on 2 December 2021
P/18/0272	Erection of emergency escape stairs, insertion of new glazed entrance and extension to existing internal mezzanine area Granted planning permission subject to conditions on 1 October 2018
P/18/0071	Insertion of 14 No. roof lights to existing roof and insertion of patio doors into building Granted planning permission subject to conditions on 25 April 2018
P/02/0321	Erection of two storey boxing gym, single storey fitness suite and single storey reception area Granted planning permission subject to conditions on 4 October 2002

CONSULTATION

No consultation exercise was considered necessary in this instance.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, three 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
- SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
- SW11: Sustainable design and Placemaking
- SW13: Protecting and Improving Community Facilities

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.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The application site is located within the settlement boundary and as such the principle of development is acceptable subject to other relevant policies and material planning considerations. In this respect it is noted that the site is within a designated open space and the use is a valuable community facility. As such Policies SW10 and SW13 are relevant.

Policy SW10 of the LDP supports proposals that improve the quantity, quality or access to open space and notes that proposal that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on or result in the loss of open space will not be permitted. The proposal would result in a small area of open space being lost through the siting of the proposed structures. However, this would have a negligible impact on the open space as a whole and must be considered against the positive impact of the structures in supporting this community facility. Indeed policy SW13 supports the enhancement of community facilities. Thus on balance it is not considered that it would be justified to refuse the application on the loss of open space.

The application site comprises of a main building (with stone finish), two smaller detached buildings (of a render finish and of different designs) and timber sheds. The proposed structures would be located in the part of the site that forms a community garden and are considered to be of a typical design, scale and appearance. Indeed such structures would be considered common features within such uses and as such it is not considered that their addition within the grounds of the community centre would appear out of place or discordant. Furthermore, given their siting and the generous size of the site, they would not be readily visible from the public highway. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would harm the character of the main building or the visual amenity of the area in general. It is therefore found to comply with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Regard has also been had for the impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants. In this respect it is noted that the proposed structures would be sited a significant distance from any neighbouring properties and as such they would not have any adverse impact on residential amenity and would accord with Policy SW11. It is also noted that no representations were received following the publicity exercise.

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 installation of modest structures within the community garden, 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.

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 Plan and Drawings, Drawing Number: 1074.02, Received 5 March 2025.

Drawing Title: Proposed Garden Drawings, Drawing Number: 1074.03, Received 5 March 2025.

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

3. **BEFORE WORKS COMMENCE ON SITE** a scheme for biodiversity enhancement, including a timescale for its 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.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

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DATE: 04.04.2025