

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0146
Site Address:	Welsh Assembly Government Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ
Development:	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.
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	28th July 2026
Application Expiry Date:	25th August 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	30th July 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The application site comprises a small compound located within the grounds of the Welsh Government Offices at Rhyd-y-Car, Merthyr Tydfil. The compound has an area of approximately 17.2m and features a gravel hardstanding. It is currently enclosed on three sides by a timber 'hit-and-miss' fence, with the fourth side secured by wire mesh fence. Trees and shrubs bound the compound to the east and west. The site is located directly adjacent to a services building and a second compound, both of which contain various apparatus associated with the heating and power systems that serve the main office building.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full Planning permission is sought for the installation of three backup batteries to provide an alternative electrical power source in the event of a grid outage. Each battery unit measures 2.3m in height, 1.05m in width, and 1.4m in depth. The battery units would connect to the adjacent services building via cabling routed beneath an existing paved area and linked to a wall-mounted inverter. From the opposite end of the services building, the connection would extend to the main office building via an existing underground cable duct, requiring no additional external groundworks or excavation for this final link. As part of the proposal, the existing timber fencing would be replaced with a new 1.8m high green mesh fence to match the mesh fencing used on the eastern side of the compound.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

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

P/26/0094 Proposed installation of additional solar PV panels and associated infrastructure on the roof of the existing office building and energy centre building.
Pending determination

CONSULTATION

Planning Policy Officer: No objection
Planning Ecology Officer: No objection
Environmental Health Manager: No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, a site notice was displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of representation were received following 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
- EcW2: Protecting Employment Sites

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 key considerations for this application include the principle of development, visual impact, residential amenity, and ecology.

The proposal supports an energy supply to an existing office located within the settlement boundary, making the principle of development acceptable and in accordance with LDP Policies SW4 and EcW2.

In terms of visual impact, the site occupies a discreet location with no views from the nearby public highway. While the batteries and inverter box are utilitarian in their appearance, they would be positioned directly adjacent to existing silos used for a woodchip boiler, and would sit comfortably within an established service context. Accordingly, the proposal meets the requirements of LDP policy SW11.

As there are no residential dwellings in the vicinity, the proposal will not impact residential amenity, and, therefore, comply with LDP Policy SW11.

Regarding ecology, Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) requires applications to be supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement. The submitted covering letter adequately addresses green infrastructure in relation to the development. It is noted that minor ground works would be required for the installation of the poles to support the proposed green mesh fencing and the cables linking the batteries to the inverter box. However, no green infrastructure would be significantly impacted upon as a result of the works to install or maintain the proposed development.

In terms of biodiversity enhancement, the application identifies a mature tree which is directly adjacent to the site, and which would be used to site a bird box. Accordingly, the proposal would meet the requirements of 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.

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 plan:

Drawing Title: Proposed Location for Ducting and Battery Equipment, Drawing No. AL03 Rev A, Received on Received on 29 July 2026.

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

3. **Prior to the development hereby approved coming into beneficial use** the bird box shall be provided in accordance with approved plan Drawing Title: Proposed Location for Ducting and Battery Equipment, Drawing No. AL03 Rev A. The bird box 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. May', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 03.08.2026