

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0121
Site Address:	Gethin Woodland Centre A470 Pentrebach To Rhydycar Northbound Abercanaid Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1YZ
Development:	The provision of 21.no bike storage containers to serve camping and shepherd hut area
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	11th June 2026
Application Expiry Date:	30th July 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	2nd July 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The land subject to this application is a woodland area within BikePark Wales, an outdoor mountain biking centre operating in the north-west region of the Council's boundary.

In more detail, the site is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and is subject to a group Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Adjacent to the site are extensive parking and outdoor seating areas associated with the bike park, alongside a main building containing public facilities, including an indoor seating area, café, and shop.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The wider site has been the subject of several planning applications. This includes application P/22/0192, which granted consent for camping and shepherd hut pods, a changing village, a vehicle workshop, a children's play area, and associated infrastructure. The current application seeks consent to provide each permitted camping or shepherd hut pod with a separate secure bike locker/shed.

The proposed secure bike storage comprises of two distinct sizes and designs. To serve the 11 No. shepherd huts, mono-pitched locker type structures would be provided. These would each measure approximately 2.23m wide, 0.95m deep, 1.34m at the front and 1.58m at its highest point (rear). To serve the 10 No. camping pods, pitched-roof sheds would be provided, measuring approximately 1.52m wide, 2.74m deep, 2.1m to eaves level and 2.32m to ridge height. Both types of unit would be metal and finished in a dark grey colour.

The siting of the units would require stone areas for level siting but no groundworks or excavation.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

- P/19/0073 Provision of 36 camping pods and 5 chalets, erection of shower/toilet block and creation of play and picnic area. Construction of new parking area (150 spaces) with overflow carpark (46 spaces), together with a trail maintenance yard, new highway access routes, ground profile works, drainage, infrastructure and landscape works
Approved: 09 Jan 2020
- P/22/0192 Provision of 29 camping pods, changing village, vehicle workshop, children's play area and associated access, drainage and landscape infrastructure
Approved: 17 Feb 2023
- P/26/0101 Non-material amendment to planning permission P/22/0192 involving changes to the external appearance of the Shepherds huts an increase in number of shepherd's huts, a reduction in the number of pods, provision of hard standing area for camper vans, changes to pathways the internal layout of the shower block and drainage routes.
Approved: 29 Jun 2026

CONSULTATION

Planning Ecology Officer:	No objection
Environmental Health Manager:	No objection
Council's Arboriculturalist:	No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, site notices were 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:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy CW1 - Historic Environment
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW2 - Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- Policy EnW3 - Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species.
- Policy EnW4 - Environmental Protection
- Policy EnW5 - Landscape Protection
- Policy EcW7 - Tourism, Leisure and Recreational Development

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

- SPG 4: Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5: Nature and Development, May 2015

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider under the assessment of this application relate to the principle of development, landscape and visual amenity, ecology and impact upon the residential amenity of any neighbours.

Principle of Development

The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary; as such, the proposal constitutes countryside development under Policy SW4 of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

In countryside locations, Policy EcW7 of the LDP supports low-impact tourism, leisure, and recreation development. This support is subject to demonstrating a need for a countryside location, minimising environmental and amenity impacts, maximising positive effects on the local community, economy, and environment, and ensuring the development is of an appropriate scale to its surroundings.

The proposal complies with these criteria and can be supported in principle as the development would directly relate to an established tourism business, providing secure storage for visitor accommodation that has already been granted planning permission. The secure storage would actively enhance the site's visitor appeal and support the business's long-term viability.

The site is also situated within an area identified as a coal safeguarding zone, where LDP Policies EcW10 and EcW13 seek to protect mineral resources from permanent development that may hinder future extraction. In this instance, given the minor scale and nature of the proposal, the development would have a negligible impact on the safeguarding area and is highly unlikely to hinder any potential future mineral extraction.

Accordingly, the principle of development is considered fully acceptable.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

The application site lies entirely within the designated Merthyr West Flank Special Landscape Area (SLA 3), as defined by Policy EnW5 of the LDP. This designation recognises areas of high landscape importance. Policy EnW5 seeks to ensure that development proposals do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape, requiring schemes to respect local distinctiveness, safeguard significant landscape features, and secure appropriate enhancements or mitigation.

The immediate context of the site has evolved significantly over recent years through the establishment and subsequent expansion of the mountain bike centre and its associated car parking facilities. Planning permission P/22/0192 granted consent for further expansions, including extended hardstanding for parking, access tracks, camping pods, toilet/shower blocks, and chalets.

The proposed secure storage would be sited directly adjacent to the permitted camping pods and shepherd huts. Given their close functional relationship with these existing, dark-coloured structures, the small-scale units would integrate into their setting. The units would not result in any additional loss of woodland, would not appear incongruous, and would not result in a significant detriment to the visual qualities of the Special Landscape Area.

Consequently, the proposal fully respects the landscape character of the site and complies with LDP Policies EnW5 and SW11.

Ecological Impacts and Green Infrastructure

The Council's Ecologist and the Woodland Officer have raised no objections to the proposal. The application site is located within the Abercanaid Fields SINC and falls within Abercanaid group TPO.

A Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) has been incorporated into the covering letter submitted in support of the proposal. The GIS confirms that the secure bike storage would sit on the footprint created for the approved accommodation units, not require deep foundations, nor any loss of trees or habitat. Furthermore, this location was previously assessed under an Environmental Impact Assessment, and the surrounding woodland is subject to an approved planting scheme that would remain unaffected by the proposed bike storage sheds. The wider master plan for the site already includes extensive biodiversity enhancement and woodland management.

The details within the covering letter are noted. While the applicant mentions stone hardstandings, the approved accommodation units are actually designed on stilts to elevate them above the forest floor, minimising groundworks. However, given that the proposed storage units have a very small footprint and no objections were raised by the Ecologist or Woodland Officer, the applicant's method for providing a level surface is considered acceptable and does not warrant a refusal in this instance. Ultimately, the construction methods for the accommodation units are covered by a separate planning permission and do not impact the decision-making process for this specific application for secure bike storage.

Finally, in accordance with Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), developments should be supported by a GIS. Because this proposal is part of a much larger, previously approved scheme that secures comprehensive woodland management and a net increase in local biodiversity, requesting further stand-alone biodiversity enhancements for the storage is not deemed necessary or reasonable in this instance.

Consequently, the proposal complies with LDP Policies EnW1, EnW2, and EnW3.

Residential Amenity

There are no residential properties in the vicinity of the site. As such, the proposal complies with LDP policy SW11

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: Proposed Storage Shed, Received on 04 June 2026.

Drawing Title: BPW Landscape Masterplan, Drawing No: 18/461/01 P, Rev P, Received on 04 June 2026.

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

3. The external surfaces of the storage units hereby approved shall permanently be coloured dark grey.

Reason - To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy SW11 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



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 30.07.2026