

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0011
Site Address:	Gethin Woodland Centre A470 Pentrebach To Rhydycar Northbound Abercanaid Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1YZ
Development:	Non material amendment to planning permission P/19/0073 for adjustments to the chalet position, elevation design (position of windows and doors), changes to the internal floor layout and use of external materials. The addition of an ancillary free-standing bike lockers. Minor changes to layout around chalets including repositioning of pathways and to allow access to bike lockers.
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	12th February 2026
Application Expiry Date:	6th July 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	16th February 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The area of land to which this Non-Material Amendment is a woodland area which forms part of BikePark Wales, an outdoor activity centre specialising in mountain biking which operates in an extensive area of woodland in the north-west area of the Council's boundary.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Previously Approved Development

The site has been the subject of several planning applications. This includes P/19/0073, which granted consent to develop approximately 3.56 hectares of land for car parking, camping, a motorhome area, a chalet area, and ancillary buildings.

This Non-Material Amendment (NMA) relates solely to the approved chalet area, located near the eastern boundary of the site, where five visitor accommodation chalets are proposed. This specific area is currently occupied by scrub, shrubs, and mature trees, forming part of the wider wooded setting of Bike Park Wales. Open fields lie directly to the east.

Under the approved scheme, the chalets are arranged along the boundary, with pedestrian paths connecting them to the main car park. Each chalet features three bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, a combined dining and living area, and an attached storage unit. External finishes consist of shingle slate-effect roof coverings and brown horizontal wall boarding.

Crucially, within the boundary of P/19/0073, a later planning application P/22/0192 was approved on 17 February 2023. This granted consent for 29 camping pods, a changing village, a vehicle workshop, a children's play area, and associated infrastructure. While these two planning permissions physically overlap in some areas, the chalet area subject to this NMA was entirely excluded from the land associated with P/22/0192.

Proposed Non-Material Amendments

This application seeks permission for a non-material amendment to the approved (P/19/0073) scheme to reposition the chalets and associated access paths.

The proposed chalets retain the same internal layout and accommodation arrangement as the original scheme. However, the external appearance has been revised, and the roof covering is proposed to be metal sheeting, with the elevations finished in black coloured, timber cladding. Additional elevational glazing would be provided for the living/dining room area.

Rather than an attached storage unit, each chalet will now be served by a dark grey coloured, freestanding store which would be located at the rear/side corner.

Alongside this NMA, separate applications have been submitted to discharge Condition 7 (Lighting) and Condition 10 (Woodland Management Plan).

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/20/0277 | Discharge of Condition 6 (Wildlife Protection Plan) of planning permission P/19/0073
Approved: 07 Jan 2021 |
| P/26/0013 | Discharge of condition 7 (Lighting) of planning permission P/19/0073 for the 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.
Pending determination |

P/26/0086 Discharge of condition 10 (Woodland Management Plan) of planning permission P/19/0073 for 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
Pending determination

CONSULTATION

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

PUBLICITY

No publicity exercise was carried out nor it is required for this application.

Local 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 NMA:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW9 - Planning Obligations
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW12 - Improving the Transport Network
- 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
- Policy EcW10 Sustainably supplying Minerals
- Policy EcW13 Minerals Safeguarding

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

Welsh Government Planning Guidance: Approving Non-material Amendments to an Existing Planning Permission (July 2014)

The guidance advises that a non-material amendment will depend on factors such as the context of the overall scheme, the amendments being sought to the original planning permission, the specific circumstances of the site and the surrounding area, which will vary from one application to another.

In deciding whether or not a proposed change is non-material, consideration should be given to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made to the original planning permission. The guidance also identifies four tests, which local planning authorities may wish to consider when assessing and determining whether a proposed change would qualify as a non-material amendment. These are as follows:

- is the scale of the proposed change great enough to cause an impact different to that caused by the original approved development scheme; and,
- would the proposed change result in a detrimental impact either visually or in terms of local amenity?
- would the interests of any third party or body be disadvantaged in planning terms; or,
- would the proposed change conflict with national or development plan policies?

These four tests have been used in the determination of this application, as set out below

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Section 96a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides the mechanism to approve non-material amendments to an existing planning permission.

Main issues

The main issues in determining this application are whether the proposed changes to the location of the chalets and associated paths, the external appearance of the chalets, and the inclusion of separate storage buildings constitute a non-material amendment (NMA) to the development approved under application reference P/19/0073. The primary considerations in this respect are the impacts of these changes on the visual amenities of the area, ecology and light spill.

Visual Impact

Regarding the visual impact of the proposed repositioning of the chalets and paths, the changes do not alter the scale, number, or land use of the chalets. Furthermore, the alternative positioning remains closely aligned with the approved layout and footprint.

In respect of the alternative external materials, and the inclusion of glazed areas, the dark coloration of the external materials ensures that the buildings will blend against the dark backdrop of the trees in winter and the shade of the canopy in summer. Consequently, there will be no change to the visual impact on the surrounding countryside.

The visual impact of the storage units will be no greater than that of the previously approved pods, and their dark external colour will ensure no detriment to the development's appearance. These lockers will be sited adjacent to the chalets and, because they are freestanding, require no groundworks. This eliminates any threat to existing trees or root protection areas (RPAs).

Ecology

In terms of ecology and the alternative layout, the planning ecologist noted the submission of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The PEA advises that the site has not materially changed since previous surveys were undertaken, meaning the original

development methodologies remain accurate. The ecologist initially queried whether the layout adjustments would change the nature of ecological impacts or affect information within other approved submissions such as the Habitat Management Plan, Wildlife Protection Plan, and Woodland Management Plan etc, noting that any such impacts would require amended documents to be resubmitted.

As noted above, the chalet area forms part of a wider development. The overarching planning permission is supported by approved reports setting out strict protection measures for flora and fauna, including European and locally protected species. Site development must still fully adhere to these steps, and the repositioned chalets, paths, and storage facilities remain safely outside identified RPAs.

However, a detailed review of the PEA raised two specific concerns. First, a reference to the potential removal of mature trees and second, the citation of documents approved under planning permission P/22/0192 which does not incorporate the chalet area.

Addressing the trees first, clarification has been received confirming that the recommendations within the PEA are strictly precautionary. No mature trees identified will be felled or detrimentally affected by this proposed NMA.

Regarding the approved documents, the relevant P/22/0192 references cited in the PEA have now been formally submitted in support of this NMA. While some of these documents encompass the camping and shepherd hut areas rather than the chalet area, the underlying methodologies and strategies match those approved under P/19/0073. Because all tourist accommodation is contained within the same continuous woodland block, the approach to development, ecological protection, and habitat enhancement is identical.

Lighting and Light Spill

The incorporation of large glazed areas on the chalet frontages introduces potential light spill, which could impact both the visual amenities of the countryside location and local ecology.

However, the lighting assessment submitted in support of this application demonstrates that light spill will be strictly confined to the front of the chalets. It will not encroach upon vegetation identified as potential bat roosting or foraging habitat. Furthermore, the physical orientation of the chalets will naturally shield long-distance views into the site. The proposed lighting arrangement is therefore considered acceptable in both visual and ecological terms.

Other Matters

This NMA is accompanied by parallel applications (P/26/0013 and P/26/0086) seeking to discharge conditions relating to lighting and woodland management. Both submissions fully incorporate the revised chalet/path layout, designs, and lighting configurations. Viewed as a comprehensive package, both the non-material amendment and the condition discharges are fully acceptable. No other planning conditions are affected by this NMA.

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 WellBeing 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.

For the reasons outlined above, the scale of the changes to the development will not lead to an increased impact on visual amenities, will not materially affect ecology during either the construction or operational phases, and will not disadvantage any third parties.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 29.06.2026