

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0101
Site Address:	Gethin Woodland Centre A470 Pentrebach To Rhydycar Northbound Abercanaid Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1YZ
Development:	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.
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	11th June 2026
Application Expiry Date:	7th July 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	4th June 2026

APPLICATION SITE

This Non-Material Amendment relates to an area of woodland which forms part of Bike Park 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/22/0192, which granted consent to develop approximately 1.12 hectares of land for camping pods, changing village, vehicle workshop, children's play area and associated access, drainage and landscape infrastructure.

This Non-Material Amendment (NMA) relates solely to the approved camping area and changing village which are located more or less centrally within the boundary of the site. The camping area is currently occupied by scrub, shrubs, and mature trees, forming part of the wider wooded setting of Bike Park Wales. A car park associated with the site lies directly to the north. The changing village is located in an area which is currently occupied by hardstanding.

Under the approved scheme, the camping area would provide 24 units of holiday accommodation, comprising 21 pods and 3 shepherd huts which would be arranged in groups within a woodland although positioned around identified root protection areas. The accommodation would be constructed on stilts so to be raised above the ground.

Roads and paths would connect the accommodation to the main car parks and wider site. The pods would contain 1 bedroom and a living area, and the shepherd huts would contain 1 bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom. External finishes consist of back timber cladding and metal sheet roofs.

The changing village would provide storage via 4 No. shipping containers, 4 No. showers, 6 No. WCs and 2 No. sinks. The shipping containers and facilities would be clad in timber and include a flat roof, and appear to be one building.

Proposed Non-Material Amendments

This application seeks permission for a non-material amendment to the approved (P/22/0192) to provide 24 units of accommodation via 10 camping pods, 11 shepherd huts and 3 of the proposed pods would be replaced by campervan hookups.

The number of bedrooms and facilities provided in both the pods and the huts would remain the same as the approved scheme. However, each hut contains a shower-room and kitchen which are facilities that are not provided in the pods. Both pods and huts incorporate veranda areas and the revised plans show that drying cupboards incorporated into the verandas. The footprints and external materials of the units remain as approved.

To reflect the changes sought under this NMA, a separate application has been submitted to re-discharge condition 5 (foul drainage) of planning permission P/22/0192 for 29 camping pods, changing village, vehicle workshop, children's play area and associated access, drainage and landscape infrastructure (Full).

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/22/0192	Provision of 29 camping pods, changing village, vehicle workshop, children's play area and associated access, drainage and landscape infrastructure Approved: 17.02.2023
P/23/0089	Discharge of condition 6 (External Lighting) of planning permission P/22/0192 Approved: 20.12.2023
P/23/0231	Discharge of condition 3 (materials) of planning permission P/22/0192 Approved 21.12.2023
P/23/0241	Discharge of condition 4 (Construction Environment Management Plan) of planning permission P/22/0192 Approved 02.02.2024
P/23/0263	Discharge of condition 5 (Foul Drainage) of planning permission P/22/0192 Approved 04.06.2024

P/26/0012 Discharge of condition 5 (foul drainage) of planning permission P/22/0192 for 29 camping pods, changing village, vehicle workshop, children's play area and associated access, drainage and landscape infrastructure (Full)
Pending determination

CONSULTATION

Planning Ecology Officer: No objection
Environmental Health Manager: No objection
Engineering (Drainage): No objection

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 accommodation type and their repositioning within the accommodation area of the site, and the external and internal changes to the changing village constitute a non-material amendment (NMA) to the development approved under application reference P/22/0192. The primary considerations in this respect are the impacts of these changes on the visual amenities of the area, foul drainage and local ecology.

Visual Impact

The increased use of shepherd's huts in place of camping pods, alongside their repositioning, would not alter the visual appearance of the holiday accommodation. Furthermore, the provision of three motorhome pitches in place of three camping pods would not result in a material change to the visual impact of the proposal.

The external alterations to the changing village are minor and would not result in a material change to this area of the development.

Foul Drainage

A Foul Drainage Strategy (FDS) has been submitted in support of this application. This same strategy has been submitted under parallel application P/26/0012 to discharge Condition 5 (approval of a foul drainage strategy).

As this NMA seeks to alter the accommodation types and increases the number of showers within the changing village, these amendments have the potential to impact the flows and loads of foul water.

As noted above, the Head of Engineering (Drainage) has raised no objection to the proposal. The FDS confirms that the amendments will not result in a significant increase in

the hydraulic loads or flows produced by the development. Crucially, the changes to the holiday accommodation will not increase the overall guest capacity of the site, meaning there will be no additional pressure on the kitchen or shower facilities within the accommodation area. Furthermore, no increase in parking spaces is proposed, confirming that visitor numbers will remain static. Effectively, the alterations to the changing village simply provide more facilities for the same volume of people.

Consequently, the proposed foul drainage infrastructure is considered acceptable and does not constitute a material change to the approved scheme.

Ecology

In terms of ecology and the alternative layout, there are two distinct matters to consider and these are the impact of the repositioned accommodation, and the ecological impact of the underground pipework required to manage foul drainage.

The Planning Ecologist has not raised any objections but has queried whether all documents referenced in the NMA needed to be resubmitted, requested an updated biodiversity records search due to five additional dormouse records in Merthyr Tydfil, and noted the publication of a revised version of Planning Policy Wales (2024) (PPW).

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) submitted in support of the application advises that the site has not materially changed since previous surveys were undertaken, meaning the original development methodologies remain accurate. While a detailed review of the PEA raised initial concerns regarding the potential removal of mature trees, subsequent clarification confirmed that these recommendations are strictly precautionary; no identified mature trees will be felled or detrimentally affected by this proposed NMA.

In relation to the points raised by the ecologist, it is noted that the accommodation area and changing village form part of a wider development, the overarching planning permission remains supported by approved reports setting out strict protection measures for flora and fauna (including dormouse protection methodologies). As site development must still fully adhere to these approved documents, they are not required to be resubmitted as part of an NMA. Furthermore, reviewing the proposal against the requirements of an updated PPW or any new policy is not relevant to an NMA, as the amendments must be judged strictly on whether they introduce a material change to the original approval.

In regards to root protection, the installation of the foul drainage pipework introduces ground-disturbance risks to trees within the accommodation area. While most pipework is located outside of the identified Root Protection Areas (RPAs), some pipework is located within. Further to this the applicant acknowledges that additional protection of tree roots may be required during both the installation of the pipework and the micro-siting of the accommodation. To manage potential damage during these works, a hand-dig methodology has been submitted in support of the application. This methodology is specifically designed to manage any micro-siting of the accommodation and trenching or pipe-laying activities required for the foul drainage taking place within or near designated RPAs.

Other Matters

This NMA is accompanied by parallel application (P/26/0012) which seeks to discharge condition 5 relating to the management of foul drainage. The submission fully incorporates the revised accommodation and changing village. Viewed as a comprehensive package, both the non-material amendment and the condition discharge 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 foul drainage, 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