

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is known as Croeserw Community Centre and comprises of a detached two storey building with associated car parking located at Bryn Siriol, Croeserw. The building has a current Sui Generic/A3 use class hosting mix of training and community uses.

The site is in a sloping hillside location with the land sloping downward to the north and west with a MUGA and primary school located to the west. To the south the land slopes upwards to a residential area where the properties on Pen Y Wern are elevated above the site. To the east and northeast is scrub and open countryside.

The application site is located within of the settlements boundary as defined by Policy SC1 of the NPTCBC LDP.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This is a full application for the change of use of a Community and Enterprise Centre from a Sui Generic/A3 use to use class D1 (community centre, hall, medical and dental) with ancillary (hairdresser) and the erection of temporary community centre building for a period of 12 months.

With regard to the Community and Enterprise Centre building, no external alterations are planned as part of this application though it should be noted that there is an extant planning consent P2025/0350 for external alterations to fenestration, air handling and a vehicle layby and an increase in internal floorspace in preparation for the change of use.

With regard to the temporary community centre building, it is proposed to be located on the southern side of the western car park of the site. The building would be a temporary cabin mounted on small pad foundations comprising of concrete slabs laid atop each other to provide a level site. The cabin would be flat roofed and measure 14.95m wide by 6.46m in depth with an eaves height of 2.95m. The building would be accessed on both the east and west elevations by ramps measuring 4.1m long, 1.8m wide and a height up to 20cm and with a 1m high railing around their perimeter. Fenestration would feature on both the north and south facing elevations.

The temporary building is proposed to perform some of the functions of the Community and Enterprise Centre including housing offices, a community space and hairdresser and welfare facilities whilst building works are being carried out. The temporary community centre building is intended to be in place for a period of 12 months while the works to the Community and Enterprise Centre are implemented.

NEGOTIATIONS

The proposed biodiversity enhancements were revised following advice from our ecologists.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history: -

P2011/0783 - Two storey detached Community and Enterprise Centre, with multi use games area and associated car parking and engineering operation. (Revised consultation period). Approved 17/1/12

P2013/0029 - Two storey detached community and enterprise centre with multi use games area and associated car parking and engineering operations (amendment to planning permission ref. P2011/0783 granted on 16/1/12 comprising of the re-siting of the building, car park and MUGA). Approved 9/7/13.

P2016/0409 - Change of use of part of Community Enterprise Centre (use class Sui Generis) to a separate cafe (operating hours 08:00 to 16:00) and takeaway and delivery services (operating until 23:30) (use class A3). Approved 15/7/16

P2025/0350 - Installation of new mechanical plant and associated ducting, alterations to existing building including new windows and a door, and construction of new vehicle layby. Approved 24/7/25

CONSULTATIONS

Drainage – No objection

Highways – No objection subject to condition

Biodiversity – No objections

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – No objections

Local Lead Flood Authority – No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

The neighbouring properties were consulted on 8/7/26.

Site notices were displayed adjacent to the site on 8/7/26.

In response, to date no representations have been received.

REPORT

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or wellbeing) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation set out below, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

National Planning Policy:

[Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#) is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. The development plan 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 wellbeing of our communities.

The following policy is of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 8 – Flooding

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

[Planning Policy Wales \(Edition 12, February 2024\)](#)

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places

PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. It encourages a wider, sustainable and problem solving outlook which focuses on integrating and addressing multiple issues rather than on an approach which is fragmented, un-coordinated and deals with issues in isolation. It provides an opportunity to remove any actual or perceived problems in current approaches and stimulate and support innovative and creative ideas as well as high standards of evidence and assessment to underpin the preparation of development plans and strategies and individual proposals. Monitoring and learning from development outcomes so as to drive sustainable improvements in planning practice is also important.

The following is of particular relevance in the assessment of this planning application:

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

PPW12 is supported by a series of more detailed [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design

Local Planning Policies

The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the [Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan](#) which was adopted in January 2016, and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Strategic Policies

- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- **Policy SP16** Environmental Protection
- **Policy SP21** Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Topic Based Policy

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy SC2** Protection of Existing Community Facilities
- **Policy EN6** Important biodiversity and geodiversity sites.
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy BE1** Design
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

- [Design](#) (July 2017)
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this application relate to the principle of the development, the impact on the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residents, and highway safety.

Principle of Development

With regard to the change of use to the Community and Enterprise Centre, the building currently hosts a mix of community (D class), business (B class) and retail (A class) uses. The proposal includes replacing some of the flexible enterprise/incubator enterprise spaces with healthcare (medical and dental) and replacing the ground floor café/takeaway with a waiting area. A space for a hairdresser would be retained as well as some unallocated areas which could be put to a future use. Though the balance and focus of the centre would be shifting from a more eclectic range of uses to a more healthcare focussed use, it should be noted that the building is not in the Croeserw retail centre R2/1 as allocated in the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan nor in a similarly allocated employment site. Overall while the use mix of uses within the centre would change, it would still be performing its function in delivering a mix of community, healthcare and ancillary retail uses and would comply with policy SC2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan by protecting and expanding a community facility.

With regard to the siting and use of the cabin, this would be a temporary measure while the approved works to Community and Enterprise Centre are carried out and would enable the continued delivery of community space, health services and the hairdresser for the duration of these works.

Impact on Visual Amenity

There would be no external alterations to the Community and Enterprise Centre as part of this application for the change of use and as such there would be no impact to visual amenity. However, it should be noted that there is an extant consent, reference P2025/0350, where external alterations to the fenestration, air handling system and parking bay have previously been considered and determined to be acceptable.

With regard to the temporary cabin, it is proposed to be located on a car park at a lower level from the public highway and set back from the road with an intervening sloping grass verge. The cabin is of a functional design and is proposed to have uPVC windows and doors, and the building be finished in a RAL9010 white. The siting of the building would be for a limited time period with the proposal requesting 12 months. Given the temporary nature of the consent proposed, it is not considered that there would be an adverse effect on visual amenity or existing character of the area. It is proposed that a suitably worded condition be imposed should consent be granted requiring that the temporary cabin be removed no less than 12 months following its initial siting.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would subsequently accord with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Impact on Residential Amenity

With regard to the Community and Enterprise Centre, no external alterations are planned as part of this application that could introduce any adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts. With regard to the proposed change of use, the building would continue to host a mix of uses not overly different from those already undertaken within the building with the main change being the removal of the A3 café and an increase in the space dedicated to use class D1 health and dental uses and as such the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring Nos 1 to 11 Pen Y Wern to the south.

With regard to the temporary cabin, No. 2 Bryn Siriol is the closest dwelling located approximately 19m to the southwest and situated at a higher level than the cabin. No windows face towards this dwelling that would introduce an overlooking impact. Given the orientation of the cabin to the northeast, the scale of the proposal and its siting at a lower level, the proposal would not have an adverse overshadowing or overbearing impact.

With regard to No. 1 Pen Y Wern, this dwelling is located approximately 27m southeast of the proposed cabin and is sited on a higher level than the proposal. Windows serving offices in the proposed cabin face towards the side of No. 1 at an oblique angle, however given the separation distance, intervening boundary hedging and change in levels there would not be an adverse overlooking impact introduced by the proposal. Given the orientation of the cabin to the northwest, the scale of the proposal and its siting at a lower level, the proposal would not have an adverse overshadowing or overbearing impact on No. 1.

In light of the aforementioned information, it is not considered that the proposed use would detrimentally impact upon the residential amenity of the surrounding

properties. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies BE1 & EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Drainage

The authority's Drainage Section was consulted on the proposal and offered no objections or comment on the proposed change of use or temporary cabin.

Local Lead Flood Authority

With regard to the site being partly within the Natural Resources Wales zone 2 surface and small watercourses, a flood consequences assessment was submitted alongside the planning application, and the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) was consulted on the proposal. The LLFA offered no objection to the proposal and had no record of historic flood events. The agent confirmed that they also had no record of flooding on the site. The LLFA queried how future occupants would be made aware of flood risk. It is noted however that the building is currently in use and that the temporary cabin would not be in flood zone. It is recommended however, that an informative be added to any consent granted advising on the potential of flood risk and guidance on flood warnings and flood resilience measures.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

The Local Highways Authority was consulted on the application and offered no objection to the proposal subject of the submission of a Car Park Management Plan and a Construction Method Statement.

However, it should be noted that the construction works to the Community and Enterprise Centre to enable the change of use were approved under planning consent P2025/0350 and that no such conditions were proposed by highways for that consent or otherwise imposed. Regarding the temporary cabin, this would involve the delivery of a pre-built structure of a limited scale to the corner of a car park, and it is considered that the submission of a Car Park Management Plan and Construction Method Statement would be excessive given the relatively modest extent of the works.

The proposed development would result in the displacement of nine parking spaces due to the placement of the temporary cabin. However, this would be limited to the duration of the works to the Community and Enterprise Centre when it would be inoperative during the refurbishment works and with the temporary cabin operating at a significantly lower staffing level with 9 staff envisaged. It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use and temporary cabin would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and would subsequently be in accordance with Policy TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Contaminated Land

The site is located in an area of potential land contamination and the authority's Contaminated Land officer was consulted on the proposal. The officer commented that with the relatively minor change of use they did not have any concerns regarding contaminated land or mining gas risk.

Biodiversity / Ecology

As identified above, Policies EN6 and EN7 of the Local Development Plan will be of relevance insofar as there is a need to ensure any impacts on biodiversity/ natural features are appropriately assessed and, where applicable, mitigated.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that;

The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15 of PPW 12) has been applied.

A biodiversity enhancement plan was submitted stating the development will provide a 4 bird boxes of varying types to be affixed on the eastern elevation at eaves level, which will be secured by a suitably worded condition.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011–2026) adopted January 2016.

It is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that would have no unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residents and highway safety. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies SP11, SP15, SP16, SP21, SC1, R2, EN6, EN7, EN8, SRA2, TR2 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Council's well-being objectives and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

