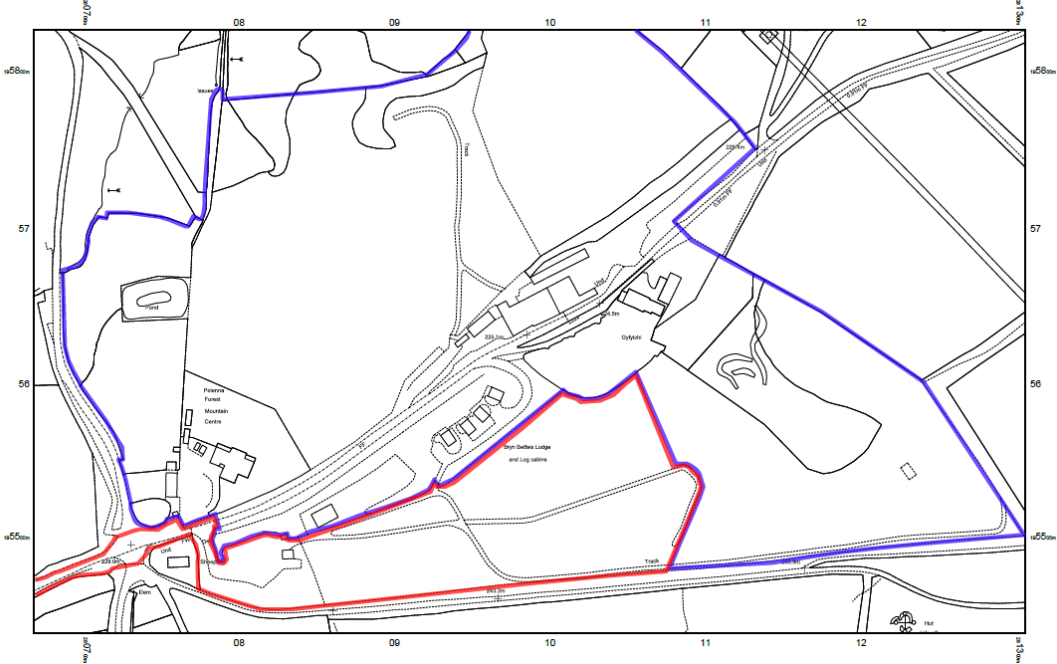


Supporting Statement

Land at Bryn Bettws Lodge
Gyfylchi Farm Road
Pontrhydyfen

April 2023



Overview	
Client	This document has been prepared on behalf of Bryn Bettws Lodge Ltd.
Proposed Development	The enquiry relates to a full planning application for the change of use of agricultural field to allow seasonal camping for up to 10 months a year.
The Site	Land at Bryn Bettws Lodge, Gyfylchi Farm Road, Pontrhydyfen
Application	This document is accompanied by the following plans and documents: • Site Location Plan • Planning Application Form • PAC Report • Supporting Statement (this document) • Transport Statement
Site	
Site Address	Land at Bryn Bettws Lodge, Gyfylchi Farm Road, Pontrhydyfen
Site Description	The application Site comprises of a parcel of undeveloped land which is currently used as a campsite for part of the year under permitted development rights. The scheme represents an expansion of the Bryn Bettws Lodge & Bryn Bettws Cabins Glamping Grounds. Bryn Bettws Lodge/Cabins are located at Gyfylchi Farm Road, east of Tonmawr, Pontrhydyfen and is central to the primary cycling and walking trails within the Afan Forest Park. A high-quality tourist destination has been provided by this rural business in Port Talbot for many years, but due to its recent exponential growth, it is now vital to scale up appropriately to assure its positive and successful progression. <i>Fig.1 Site Location Plan</i> 

The business has been advised by Visit Wales that by gaining full planning permission for this campsite, a three-star rating would be achieved.

In terms of the prevailing area, it is predominately rural fields or woodland. According to National Resources Wales, the Site is very low risk of flooding from rivers, sea, surface water and small watercourses.

Access from the highway is via a lane shared with the aforementioned facilities, as described in more detail in the following sections. The field parcel itself is directly accessed from this lane from the northwest, which has been providing safe access to the Campsite throughout the peak season.

Development Proposals

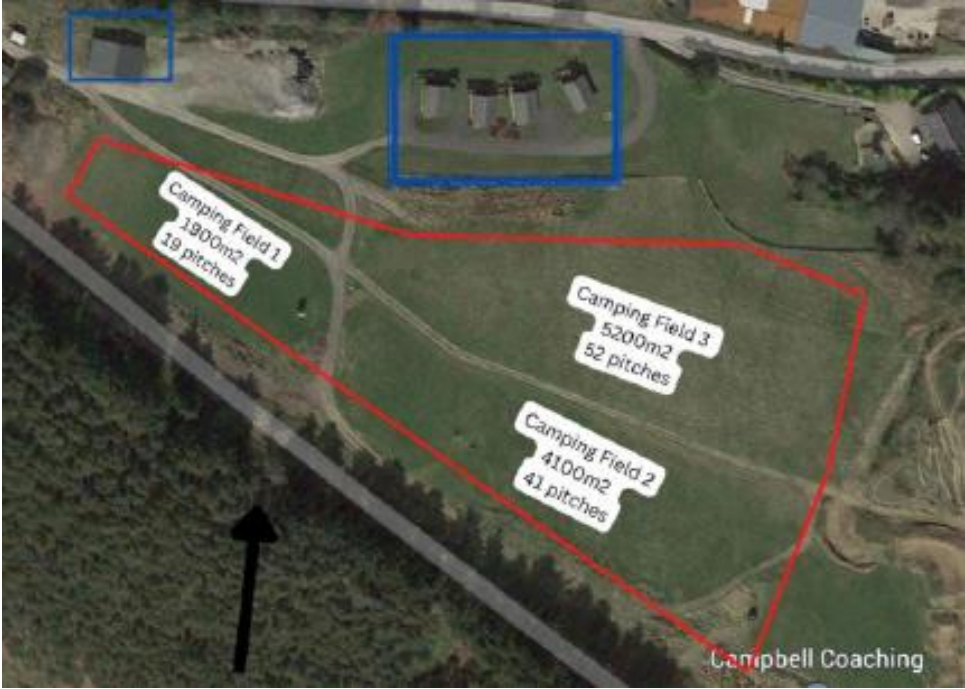
The Scheme

Bryn Bettws Lodge offers holiday accommodation within the mountains of Pontrhydyfen, inclusive of four self catering log cabins (Bryn Bettws Cabins Ltd) and rented rooms (Bryn Bettws Lodge Ltd) which are located northwest of the application Site. The main lodge is currently under long term lease from Neath Port Talbot Council. Due to the need to accommodate tourist demand for an extended period of the year and in order to continue to grow the business, it is necessary to establish a Camping Site.

The proposal seeks permission for the change of use of a 4.5 acre parcel of greenfield land into a campsite accommodating up to approximately 100 pitches. The proposed pitch sizes would be double the gold standard set out by the caravan and camping club.

The Site is split into 3 fields comprising of 3 designated camping areas which are already served by an appropriate and existing access point from the northwest. The campsite has been in successful operation through the most recent peak season and has proved to be an optimal location for the continued growth and diversification for this business. There are no physical structures or alterations proposed, and existing toilet and shower facilities would be used by the guests.

Fig.2 Camping Fields



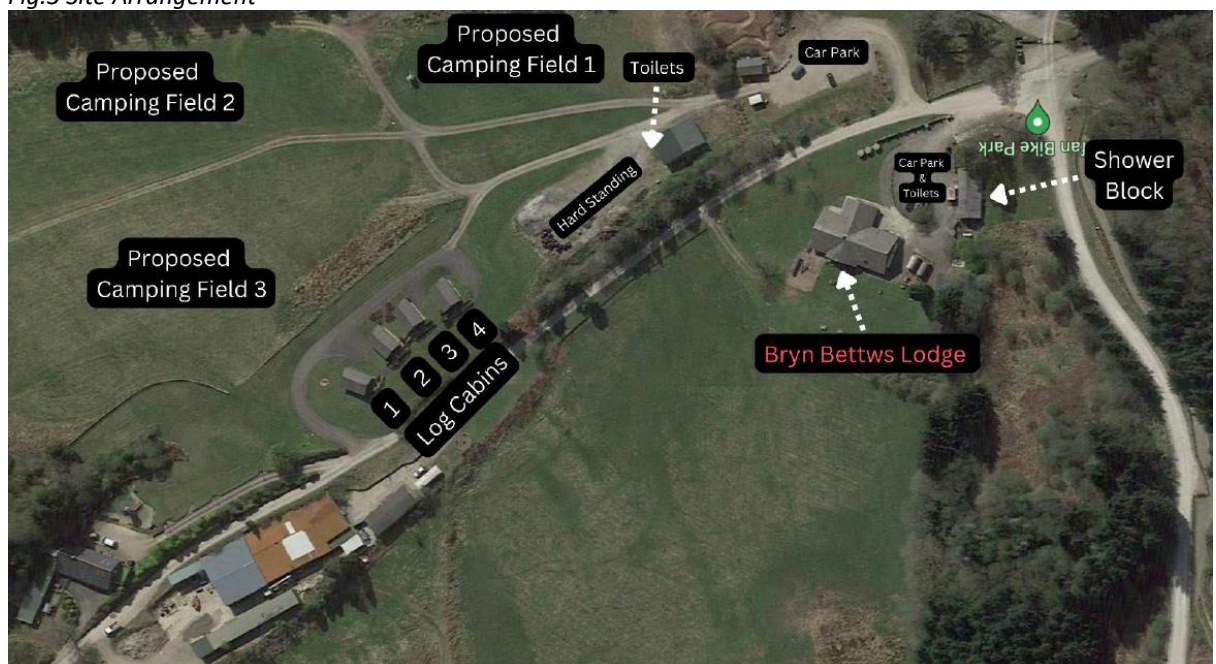
- Camping field 1 - This field is the lowest elevation and the flattest part of the field, it's also the closest to the existing showers and toilets. The field measures an approximately 1900m²
- Camping field 2 - This field is the highest elevation of the fields. The field measures an approximately 4100m²
- Camping field 3 - this field is the middle elevation of the fields and is slightly more inclined than the other 2 fields, however it's still good ground and suitable for tents and caravans. The field measures an approximately 5200m²

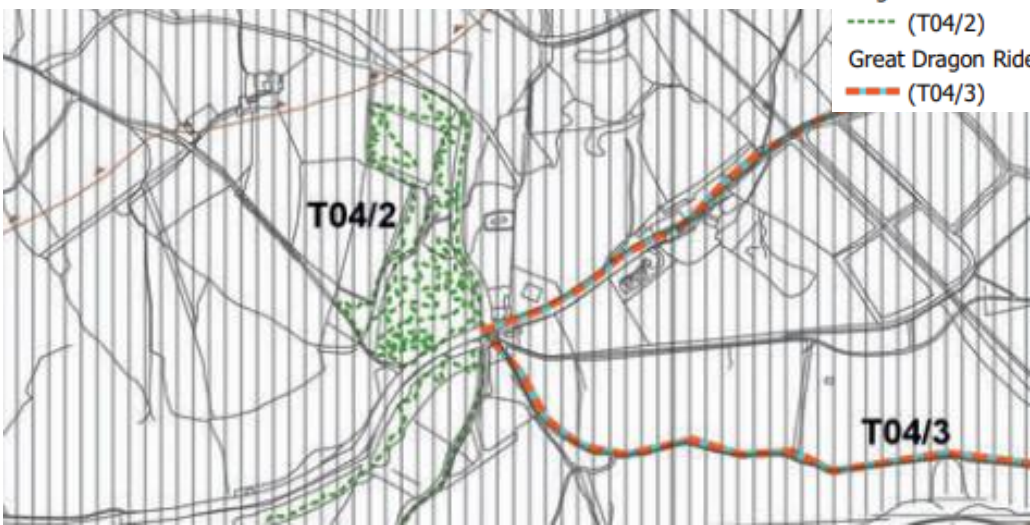
The camping field will be non-electric, offering a maximum stay duration of 7 days. The camping season is expected to begin in April and end in October. The wider site furthermore sees the occasional mountain bike race and cross-country running races throughout the winter, therefore, camping would be desirable for these weekends also. The market for the Campsite would be mainly but not limited to mountain bikers, walkers and families. The Campsite would be located within the heart of the Afan valley, and directly in the centre of all the main bike / walking trails. The business has received direct requests from mountain bikers and walkers to provide camping facilities.

Due to the ongoing catering for mountain bikers, walkers, events, and races, all the facilities required and set out by the caravan and camping club for campsites are already in place. There is secure bike storage on site as well as a bike wash down area. The road infrastructure, signage and lighting is also already in place offering good ingress and egress to the whole site. No new lighting is proposed as part of the scheme.

Washroom facilities are located in Bryn Bettws Lodges shower block building. These include 6 high quality showers and toilets, including disabled access within the designated shower block and a further 4 individual toilet cubicles on the camping field. The requirements for toilet/shower facilities are 1 per 30-40 pitches, therefore the existing level of provision exceeds the minimum requirements for the density of users proposed.

Fig.3 Site Arrangement



	Access to the campsite is along a double width, forestry road, managed and maintained by National Resource Wales (NRW), the road is suitable for all campervans and cars. The access has been serving the visitors through peak season in 2022, including 100 extra campers most weekends on the proposed camping fields (operating temporarily under permitted development rights Class A). Additionally, the client has ensured that appropriate signage is placed at key points when entering the site, alongside providing a map that shows users how to access the site properly. There is a waste management contract in place for bins / recycling through Davis Skip hire Ltd. In respect of the cesspit, the foul waste collectors (Redwood Services) have confirmed that tanks are capable of 200 people on site per day and will be emptied annually. However, there is also an option for them to be emptied every 6 months.
Relevant Planning Policy	
National Policy	Relevant National Policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 11) adopted February 2021. Paragraph 5.5 Tourism of Planning Policy Wales identifies that the planning system encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, and social inclusion while recognising the needs of visitors and that of the local community. Specifically, within rural areas in which tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy.
Development Plan	Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 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 for the area comprises of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan, which was formally adopted by the Council on 27th January 2016, and within which the following policies are of relevance: <i>Fig.4 LDP Extract</i>  <u>Policy SC1 - Settlement Limits</u>

	This policy outlines that development outside of settlement limits, will only be acceptable if it constitutes small-scale expansion of an existing business, is a sustainable tourism or farm diversification proposal that is suitable in a countryside location. <u>Policy SP13 – Tourism</u> Sustainable tourism development, which is high quality shall be encouraged, alongside providing a flexible approach to the development of tourism facilities. <u>Policy TO1 – Tourism Development in the Countryside</u> Tourism proposals outside of the settlement limits will only be permitted where the following criteria are satisfied: - The proposal can be demonstrated to be viable and contributes to the quality and economic sustainability of the tourism industry; - it is demonstrated that either the proposal requires a countryside location or that it cannot be accommodated within an existing settlement; - the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the landscape, ecology, and cultural heritage and would not adversely impact upon the social, economic, environmental, or residential amenity of the area; - the proposal does not create unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic, cause a detriment to highway safety and access can be provided by a range of transport modes. - <u>Policy TR2 – Design and Access of New Development</u> Development proposals will only be permitted where they compromise the safe, effective, and efficient use of the highway, provide appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities.
Analysis	
Principle of Development	The principle of the development for this Site is robustly supported within the Local Development Plan under Policies SP13 and SP01 which seek to protect and enhance tourism facilities that contribute towards the quality and economic sustainability of the tourism industry, particularly within the countryside. Neath Port Talbot's tourism sector is expanding and making a significant and valuable contribution to the local economy, and the area has received significant investment in the tourism sector over the past few years, which has strengthened the industry's infrastructure and enhanced and improved visitor amenities and services. As a result, the region's annual tourist numbers have increased. The Council has a tourism action plan that encourages future growth while acknowledging the importance of the tourism sector to the regional economy. The LDP further supports this by adopting a flexible stance towards new tourism ideas and preventing the loss of existing facilities where possible. As set out within Policy SP01 certain proposals such as this, by their very nature will require a countryside location on the basis that the delivery of the development will have no detriment to the surrounding environment. It is therefore concluded that the required change of use for this Site is in accordance with the Local Development Plan and in line with the aspirations of Neath Port Talbot County Borough.
Highways and Access	The Site is currently served by two adopted highways to the west, which both adjoin B4287 and therefore provides access to the wider highway network of Neath and Port Talbot. Figure 5 shows a map of the adopted highways nearby the site.

The most suitable access point for the proposed development is via the track adjacent to Dan Y Coed (opposite Celyn House) which accesses the site from the C-Classified Tonmawr Road. A suitable Transport Statement is being prepared for the site, to demonstrate appropriate highway provisions to serve the development. Furthermore, as requested by the Highways Officer, a maintenance plan for the access track is in the process of being formalised between the landowner and NRW.

Fig.5 Map of Adopted Highways (the Site is approximately circled in purple)



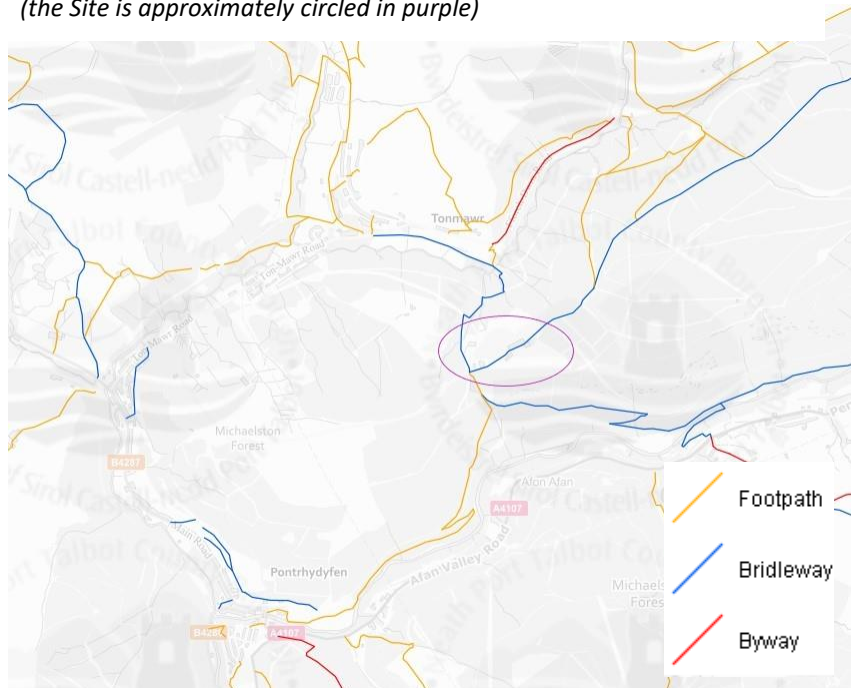
It is not anticipated that the ongoing campsite visitors would give rise to any highway safety as the existing access route has an excellent record for highway safety and has served as a sufficient means of access for the present campsite users throughout the busiest period of the year.

In accordance with Policy TR2, the Site benefits from direct access to the network of Public Rights of Way in the area (see Figure 6).

The lane within the site is designated as bridleway for the members of the public although it is of privately owned by the applicant. Likewise, there is a gated public footpath that extends southwards from the gateway of Bryn Bettws Lodge.

As a result, the campsite visitors will not heavily rely on the use of private cars during their stay. There will be choices of active travel to attend other activities in the immediate area, such as several races and seasonal events.

Fig.6 Map of Public Rights of Way (the Site is approximately circled in purple)



Amenity	Due to the remote location of the application site and the use, the proposal does not result in any unacceptable issues in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing. Furthermore, there are unlikely to be any overriding issues in terms of noise and disturbance.
Ecology	The Site comprises of heavily managed grassland, which is unlikely to be of ecological value and would be unaffected by the proposals. The scheme would furthermore not affect any of the trees situated on the southern boundary. There is no built development or lighting proposed as part of the Campsite which would disturb any existing habitats or species. The management of the Campsite will furthermore be of very low impact on the surrounding ecological environment, and it is deemed that the pitching of tents and parking of caravans will not cause any significant harm. There are no plans to disturb any of the surrounding woodland areas. The main attraction of the site is that it is such an undisturbed area, the owners wish to protect the unspoilt nature of the Site.
Landscape & Visual Impact	The existing lodge & cabins, as well as the proposed campsite are well secluded. Views of the Site are limited to a small visual envelope with a small number of local views, within a close proximity to the study site from adjoining footpaths and cycle tracks. In all locations, where views are afforded, these are generally minimal and filtered by intervening boundary vegetation. There are no conservation or landscape designations adjacent to or within the area. The temporary nature of proposals will ensure that both during the off season and into the future the landscape in this location will remain fundamentally unaffected by the proposed use, and could be fully restored to its natural state should this be required. The limited size, scale and mass of proposals compared to the wider area will ensure that any effects to landscape character will be localised and contained to within the site itself. The nature of the scheme is appropriate for a countryside setting and does not give rise to any harm to the surrounding landscape character.
Foul Drainage	The septic tank has a capacity of 1200 litres. The campsite accommodates approximately 100 visitors most weekends. The waste collectors have confirmed with the client that the tanks are capable of 200 people on site per day and will be emptied annually, or per 6 months, dependant on how busy time periods may be. Therefore, it is confirmed that there will be no unmanageable intensification of foul waste through this proposal.
Potable Water	It has been acknowledged that Welsh Water have advised that the water supply system in the immediate vicinity has insufficient capacity to serve the development and will also cause detriment to existing customers' water supply, however the applicant has confirmed that neither the current or proposed development use potable water supply from DCWW.
Conclusion	It is justified that the proposals are considered to be located within a suitable countryside location as per Policy SC1, which permits development outside of the settlement limits in this circumstance. The site is furthermore ideal for an increase in capacity of campsite users due to the excellent footway/cycleway links and the multitude of activities which take place in its immediate proximity. In line with the aspirations of Neath Port Talbot council for the continued support of the rural tourism industry, the proposals expand and diversify a growing and successful local business to meet a visitor demand without compromise, causing no harm to the surrounding area.

