

PLANNING AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club, Oakwood Playing Field, Pontrhydyfen

Prepared by LRM Planning Ltd on behalf of
Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club

April 2026



PLANNING
LIMITED

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Project:	Pontrhydyfen RFC	Job Number:	25.163
Client:	Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club	Date:	29/04/2026
Author Initial:	CW	Reviewer Initial:	RJ
Issue:	1	Status:	Final
File Origin:	25.163/6. Reports		



1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application, submitted on behalf of Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club (RFC) ('the applicant'), for the proposed development of a clubhouse building and associated landscaping, access, sustainable drainage and site works at the Pontrhydyfen RFC Oakwood Playing Field in Pontrhydyfen.
- 1.2 There are currently no clubhouse or changing room facilities at the playing field. As such, Pontrhydyfen RFC are currently utilising a separate facility located approximately 1km north of the site, at the Miners Arms on Lewis Street in Pontrhydyfen. This current arrangement means players from both the home and travelling teams, as well as all match officials and other users, are required to travel between the playing field and the remote changing facility during game days. This also means that the club is unable to host away teams for post-match meals, refreshments and the like in close proximity to the playing field. Support for this new facility would therefore vastly enhance the matchday experience for players, staff and supporters, whilst also providing a contemporary community facility in an accessible and attractive setting.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement and accompanying technical reports provide an explanation of the proposal and how it represents an appropriate and acceptable use of the land. The full suite of documents submitted comprises:

DOCUMENT / DRAWING	REF. (IF APPLICABLE)	PREPARED BY
Planning application forms	March 2026	LRM Planning
Cover letter	March 2026	LRM Planning
Planning and Green Infrastructure Statement	April 2026	LRM Planning
Site location plan	4206-PEN-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1000 S0, Rev. P3	Pentan Partnership Architects
Proposed site plan	4206-PEN-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1010 S0, Rev. P7	Pentan Partnership Architects
Proposed elevations	4206-PEN-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1200 S0, Rev. P3	Pentan Partnership Architects
Proposed floor plans	4206-PEN-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1100 S0, Rev. P5	Pentan Partnership Architects
Proposed bike and bin store details	4206-PEN-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1300-S0-P1	Pentan Partnership Architects
Pontrhydyfen RFC digital visualisation	N/A	Pentan Partnership Architects

Transport statement and travel plan	March 2026	Miles White Transport
Proposed access arrangement option 1	25140-SK01 Rev. A	Miles White Transport
Proposed parking arrangement option 1	25140-SK03 Rev. A	Miles White Transport
Swept path analysis – coach entering option 1	25140-SPA01 Rev. A	Miles White Transport
Swept path analysis – coach exiting option 1	25140-SPA02 Rev. A	Miles White Transport
Noise assessment	March 2026	InAcoustic
Site investigation	TI-250326-TF-25-583-CA-01	Terra Firma
Site assessment survey	December 2025	Ecological Services Ltd.
Tree survey	March 2026	Treescene
Tree constraints plan	March 2026	Treescene

- 1.4 The following sections discuss the site and its context; the proposed development; a summary of pre-application discussions; planning policy context; a green infrastructure statement; an appraisal of the development; and a conclusion in respect of the application submitted herein.

2 Site description and context

- 2.1 The site is located outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary of Pontrhydyfen village, situated in the county borough of Neath Port Talbot. The village lies north of the Afan Valley from Cwmafan, with the settlement limits only some 350m apart as the crow flies, though the walking distance between the two is around 750m via footpaths, and the driving distance is nearer to 1.5km. Cwmafan is a large village, with a defined Local Centre, to the south of Pontrhydyfen and approximately 3.2km north of the District Centre of Port Talbot, and around 8.5km to the south-east of the town centre of Neath. The River Afan and National Cycle Network route 887/Richard Burton Trail also run parallel to the western boundary of the site, with the nearest point of the waterbody being approximately 60m to the south-west. The walking route adjacent to the site is identified as a Public Right of Way ('PROW') (ref. PROW 41/130.PT/1).
- 2.2 The site of the proposed development is part of the wider Pontrhydyfen RFC Oakwood Playing Field and is located along the western side of the pitch. The site currently accommodates a 30m² storage shipping container, which has been informally adapted to provide limited sheltered viewing, together with an overflow car parking area accessed via Oakwood Avenue. The east, south, and southwestern boundaries of the playing pitch are bound by low-level vegetation and trees which are part of the wider woodland habitat surrounding the playing field. This leaves the proposed development area and the existing car park to the north as the only two areas adjacent to the pitch that are developable without impacting upon existing green infrastructure assets.

WIDER LAND USES

- 2.3 To the northwest and beyond the internal access road, the site adjoins Oakwood Avenue which is characterised by existing two-storey, detached dwellings finished with a mix of brick and render, with concrete roof tiles. To the east, the development site adjoins the pitch; and to the southwest, the site adjoins the Afan Valley Trail and dense woodland. The trail splits into two pathways to the immediate west of the site, with the Richard Burton Trail running northwards alongside the river Afan, and the other running northeast until it meets Oakwood Avenue.
- 2.4 Reflective of the location of the site adjacent to the Pontrhydyfen settlement boundary, the wider context is primarily residential in land use. This is characterised by a mixture of one and two storey, semi-detached and detached dwellings finished with painted render and brick with pitched roofs. Further into the village, there are examples of more traditional terraced housing. There are only a handful of non-residential uses in the village, comprising public houses, convenience store, hot food takeaway, community centre and places of worship.

ACCESS

- 2.5 The site is accessed via Oakwood Avenue which is a residential road that runs through the southern part of Pontrhydyfen from the B4287 Queen Street to the north-east of the site. It is subject to a 20mph speed limit and provides street lighting and footways along at least one side of the road from the lane serving the rear of properties on Pen-Hydd Street/Aqueduct Terrace.
- 2.6 The nearest bus stop is located on Queen Street, approximately 350m or a 5-minute walk to the northeast of the site. The bus stop is served by routes 59 (Neath – Pontrhydyfen), 83 (Port Talbot – Blaengwynfi/Glyncorrwg) and 902 (Pontrhydyfen/Port Talbot – Neath). Both the 59 and 83 buses provide hourly services from Pontrhydyfen to Port Talbot via Cwmafan, whilst the 902 bus is a once-a-day service to Neath. The nearest train station is located in Port Talbot which is accessible by bus, and provides connections to and from Swansea westbound, and Cardiff eastbound, where both locations provide regular services to regional and national destinations.

FLOODING

- 2.7 According to the Flood Maps for Planning (FMfP) produced by Natural Resources Wales, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 for fluvial and coastal flooding which denotes areas at little to no risk of flooding. Similarly, the FMfP recognise the site to lie within Flood Zone 1 for surface water flooding. In this regard, there is no flooding constraint to the development.

HERITAGE

- 2.8 In terms of heritage assets, there are no listed buildings, scheduled monuments, or conservations areas on or in close proximity to the site. The closest assets are the Bethel Chapel, a listed building located 150m north of the site, and the Pont Fawr Aqueduct / Viaduct, a scheduled monument located 200m north of the site. The Aqueduct is shown as a scheduled monument within the Cadw mapping, whilst both the Viaduct and the Aqueduct are shown as listed buildings. Further, the Cadw details appear to refer to the Viaduct (which was once an Aqueduct), which provides further uncertainty as to which is a scheduled monument, but in any case, both assets are sufficiently distant from the site as to not be affected by any proposals.

COAL MINING

- 2.9 The site is located within the High-Risk Coal Mining Reporting Area and is also identified as a Safeguarded Coal Resource in the Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan ('LDP').

ECOLOGY AND TREES

- 2.10 The site does not contain or lie immediately adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'), National Nature Reserves ('NNRs'), or Local Nature Reserves ('LNRs'). A site assessment survey by Ecological Services Ltd accompanies this application, and notes that the habitats to be impacted by the development proposals are small areas of semi-improved grassland, woody scrub, short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation.
- 2.11 A tree survey, conducted by Treescene, identified 22 trees/tree groups associated with the site. The survey identifies three category U and 16 category C trees/groups, denoted to be of low arboricultural value with a safe useful life expectancy of 10-20 years. The three other trees (ref. G4, T15 and G22) fall under category B, those with a life expectancy of at least 20 years. No trees are perceived to be in 'good' physiological conditions, where all range from fair to poor, with the report recommending the removal of three trees/groups (ref. T1, G4 and T6).

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.12 The relevant planning history on record associated with the site is as follows:

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
P1993/9392	Ball stop fencing	Withdrawn 22/02/1994
P1996/10325	Changing rooms	Approved 28/03/1996
P2008/0968	Single storey changing room facilities unit / building	Approved 14/01/2009

- 2.13 None of these previously approved facilities are currently existing on the site. The two most recent applications demonstrate that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council have supported the principle of a changing room on site in the past, including the relatively recent past of 2009, which creates a positive precedent in favour of this proposal.

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposal seeks to develop a rugby clubhouse building and changing rooms with associated landscaping, access, sustainable drainage and site works at the home of Pontrhydyfen RFC at Oakwood Playing Field in Pontrhydyfen. The project is ambitious in its functions, necessary to meet grant funding requirements while aiming for a simple and refined presence in the beautiful valley setting.
- 3.2 The proposal seeks permission for a two-storey clubhouse building, which would represent a significant upgrade on the existing poor quality, remote facilities. The clubhouse will contain an open central seating area with capacity for 75 patrons, a kitchen and bar, a lobby and bathrooms on the first floor. There is also a means to partition part of the bar area, which will be both beneficial for community use as well as being able to be used during matches to demarcate, for example, a sponsors' area from the remaining floorspace. The ground floor will contain two changing room facilities, a medical room, lobby, gathering space and storage. A balcony terrace overlooking the field is proposed from the eastern elevation of the clubhouse.
- 3.3 The car park located to the north of the playing field will be accessed as it is at present, i.e., from the access road leading from Oakwood Avenue. The National Cycle Network route that currently runs along the access to the car park is proposed to be diverted away from vehicular traffic. The revised alignment will pass through the grassed verge to the south of the lane and will be delivered as a 3-metre-wide shared footway and cycleway.
- 3.4 As an established area of hardstanding, it is capable of being formalised to improve parking efficiency and, in turn, increase overall capacity. The proposal seeks to deliver on-site parking for players, supporters, club members and other users of the facility through regularising the existing car parking area to provide a total of 40 car parking spaces. This also includes provision for a team coach. The spaces will be informally delineated. The proposal also includes five cycle lockers adjacent to the playing fields, due north of the clubhouse.

4 Pre-application engagement

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

4.1 A pre-application meeting was held online via Microsoft Teams with Planning Officer Lewis Byng on Wednesday 28th January 2026. The meeting was attended by representatives from Pentan Architects and LRM Planning. The comments received were broadly positive with the Officer supporting the principle of the development. A written response was subsequently issued on the 17th February 2026, the key points of which are summarised below.

- The existing shipping containers were noted to be in a poor state and offer little in terms of character and visual appearance.
- The proposed siting of the clubhouse, below adjacent neighbouring properties and the A4107, was considered to offer natural screening and contributes towards softening the overall visual impact of the proposal.
- The design was also welcomed, considered to be 'interesting and contemporary', respectful of its traditional sporting context and neighbouring dwellings but with a modern twist that is favoured. Further, the use of timber and glazing proposed are considered to soften the massing impact of the structure.
- Potential impact on adjacent residential receptors was raised, thus a Noise Impact Assessment was requested to support the full application.
- The Officer noted that given the separation distance to neighbouring properties, it is likely that there will be an acceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of overbearing impact, overshadowing and overlooking.
- The application site was acknowledged to not be at risk of flooding.
- The Officer provided a reminder that a Green Infrastructure Statement would be required to accompany the full application. This must include compensation for any habitat loss, on-site ecological enhancements, and a full lighting scheme avoiding disturbance to adjacent habitats.
- The Countryside Access Team confirmed they were satisfied that the proposal could be implemented without any detriment to the nearby Public Right of Way.

4.2 Written responses were also provided by the Highways Officer and the Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) Team. These are summarised as follows:

- **The Highways Officer** noted that vehicular access into the site crosses a National Cycle Network route, which is not acceptable, and advised that an adoptable extension of Oakfield Avenue will be required. Concerns were also raised regarding the wider highway network approaching the site. It was therefore suggested that the full application should include a Construction Method Statement, Construction Traffic Route Plan and Swept Path Analysis for the largest vehicles anticipated to go to site. A drawing demonstrating the proposed car parking arrangement was also requested. It was subsequently agreed with the planning officer that the Construction Method Statement and the Construction Traffic Route Plan could be conditioned.
- **The Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) Officer** highlighted that the site lies within a Development High Risk Area for coal mining and is adjacent to former ironworks. A contamination risk assessment, including a ground-gas assessment, was therefore recommended, as well as standard contamination conditions.

5 Planning policy framework

- 5.1 The planning policy context for the determination of this application is provided by national and local planning policy guidance. National guidance is set out within Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, Planning Policy Wales, and the accompanying Technical Advice Notes. Local policy comprises the adopted Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan, and its supporting Supplementary Planning Guidance documents.

FUTURE WALES: THE NATIONAL PLAN 2040

- 5.2 Future Wales is Welsh Government's top-tier national development framework. It is a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system over the next two decades. The key priorities include sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

PLANNING POLICY WALES

- 5.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal national planning policy document which sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government (WG) against which development proposals should be assessed. The latest version is the twelfth edition, published in February 2024.
- 5.4 The main thrust of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Placemaking lies at the heart of PPW, with policy and development management decisions required to seek to deliver development that adheres to these principles.
- 5.5 Paragraph 3.22 states that *"Planning authorities should develop and maintain places that support healthy, active lifestyles across all age and socio-economic groups."*
- 5.6 PPW states that a Healthier Wales can be achieved through improving access to services, cultural opportunities, green spaces and recreation facilities to support people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This contributes to creating the right conditions for better health, well-being and greater physical activity.
- 5.7 PPW appreciates the importance of community facilities and their contribution *"to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places."* Further, PPW recognises that recreational spaces provide a place for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax often in the presence of nature, and they contribute to our quality of life.
- 5.8 PPW states that *"planning authorities should provide a framework for well-located, good quality sport, recreational and leisure facilities, and develop clear policies for the provision, protection and enhancement of sport, recreation and leisure facilities."*

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES

- 5.9 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are of relevance in the consideration of these proposals.
- TAN 12 – Design (2016)
 - TAN 16 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)
 - TAN 18 – Transport (2007)

- 5.10 TAN 12 relates to Design and was updated in March 2016. It provides advice and information on a number of related areas including the definition of design for planning purposes; design considerations in planning decisions; and local planning authority design policy and advice.
- 5.11 TAN 16, Sport, Recreation and Open Space, published in January 2009 advises on the role of the planning system in making provision for sport and recreational facilities and informal open spaces, as well as protecting existing facilities and open spaces.
- 5.12 TAN 18, which was published in March 2007, deals with Transport matters, and advocates locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling; generally advocating development at sustainable sites.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 5.13 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with the sustainable development principles, and to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its content is sought to be delivered through the planning system via the intertwining of the Act through PPW.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.14 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the site comprises the Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan (LDP), which covers the period between 2011 and 2026.
- 5.15 The Authority is working on a Replacement LDP presently, with an amended RLDP timetable agreed at a full council meeting on the 26th February 2026. The Replacement LDP is scheduled for adoption in May 2028. It is currently at the Deposit Preparation Stage with consultation on the Deposit Plan anticipated to take place between November and December 2026.
- 5.16 The site lies outside the settlement boundary as defined by the Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan. This site is not otherwise subject to any designations.
- 5.17 Policies with a prefix of SP (strategic policies) are overarching policies relating to development in the county borough. They are supported by topic-based policies which indicate how the overall strategy of the plan will be implemented. Policy SP1 (Climate Change) states that an emphasis will be on sustainable growth which benefits Neath Port Talbot as a whole. It outlines that this will be achieved by, *inter alia*:
 - *The efficiency and sustainability of the County Borough's settlements will be enhanced through developing more cohesive and efficient settlements and settlement patterns, and consequently more sustainable travel patterns; and*
 - *Dependence on the private car and the need to travel in general will be reduced through promoting alternative means of transport and more efficient use of existing facilities, co-location and joint use of facilities."*
- 5.18 Policy SP2 (Health) states healthier, more active and safer lifestyles will be encouraged through the retention of a range of accessible leisure, recreational, health, retail, social, cultural and community facilities throughout the County Borough. Accessibility is also mentioned under SP2, as policies seek to improve accessibility between communities, encouraging active travel wherever possible. New developments are expected to be served by sustainable transport options.
- 5.19 Policy SP3 (Sustainable Communities) aims to deliver sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities. Linked to this is Policy SC1 (Settlement Limits) which requires that development

within settlement limits is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. Policy SC2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities) protects existing community facilities as they are identified as a vital part of the life of a community and can help create cohesive communities where people are able to meet and participate in a range of activities, making a fundamental contribution to ensuring the sustainability of community.

- 5.20 Policy SP10 (Open Space) seeks to address inequalities in open space provision where possible through the planning system, by retaining and enhancing existing provision and requiring new development to make provision for open space where there is a need. The term 'open space' refers to publicly accessible recreational space and includes playing fields and sports pitches. It identifies that open space gives the opportunity for more active lifestyles and, together with improving walking and cycling routes, helps to create a more active environment. This is supported by Policy OS1 (Open Space Provision) which states that all opportunities to increase participation in healthy recreational activities will be taken.
- 5.21 SP20 (Transport Network) requires development proposals to be designed to provide safe and efficient access and promote sustainable transport. Developments also require appropriate parking provision. SP20 links to SP2 in that new development proposals should be accessible by a variety of means, not just private car, in the interest of creating sustainable communities. Walking, cycling and public transport play an important role in reducing the number of shorter journeys taken by car and contribute towards an aim of the Plan, to provide a sustainable more integrated transport network.
- 5.22 Policy SC1 (Sustainable Limits) which requires new buildings outside settlement limits to be associated with open space, be located adjacent to settlements, and be of an appropriate scale and form.
- 5.23 Policy BE1 (Design) is under SP21 (Built Environment and Historic Heritage) and emphasises the importance that new development achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces. It sets out a series of criteria that are sought to be achieved on new development proposals. This includes considerations of character, context, materials, highway safety, local features, security, transport connectivity, use of resources, drainage and layout
- 5.24 A summary of the pertinent LDP policies is provided below, listed in the order they appear in the LDP:

POLICY	RELATING TO
STRATEGIC POLICIES	
SP2	Sustainability
SP3	Sustainable Communities
SP4	Infrastructure
SP10	Open Space
SP16	Environmental Protection
SP19	Waste Management

SP20	Transport Network
SP21	Built Environment and Historic Heritage
Topic Based Policies	
SC1	Settlement Limits
SC2	Protection of Existing Community Facilities
II	Infrastructure Requirements
OS1	Open Space Provision
OS2	Protection of Existing Open Space
EC5	Employment Uses in the Valleys
EN8	Pollution and Land Stability
W3	Waste Management in New Development
TR1	Design and Access of New Development
BE1	Design

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)

5.25 In addition to the above policies, the following SPG are also relevant to this application:

- Open Space and Greenspace (July 2017);
- Planning Obligations (October 2016);
- Design (July 2017); and
- Parking Standards (October 2016).

6 Green infrastructure statement

- 6.1 The latest version of Planning Policy Wales, edition 12, was published in February 2024 and sets out the planning policies of the Welsh Government to ensure that the planning system contributes to sustainable development. The latest version introduces a requirement for all planning applications to be accompanied by a green infrastructure (GI) statement.
- 6.2 Para 6.1.12 of PPW states that *“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) has been applied.”*
- 6.3 The existing site features minimal biodiversity value, comprising a managed playing field skirted by trees along its eastern and southern boundaries and several shipping containers situated north and west. The ecological survey confirms that the habitats within the development footprint are of low ecological value and that the overall impact will be minimal. The tree survey also confirms that none of the trees associated with the application site are in good physiological condition.
- 6.4 The proposed development will have minimal ecological impact due to the siting of the building within the existing hardstanding. No trees will be impacted as a result of the proposals. Any biodiversity loss arising from the development will be offset through implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures recommended in the ecological report.
- 6.5 Given the limited baseline biodiversity value of the site, the scheme incorporates proportionate green infrastructure enhancements in line with recommendations from the ecological survey. The proposal will introduce new green infrastructure elements through the installation of bat and bird boxes along the building elevations and the incorporation of a raingarden, providing both surface water management and biodiversity enhancement.
- 6.6 Collectively, these measures will ensure the development provides a measurable net benefit to biodiversity consistent with the aims of Planning Policy Wales.

7 Appraisal

OVERVIEW

- 7.1 This section of the Planning Statement identifies the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assesses the scheme against pertinent considerations.
- The **principle** of development of this site in land use policy terms.
 - The **design** of the proposed development; including its impact on local **character** and **amenity**.
 - The amenity impacts of the development from the perspectives of **noise** and **lighting**.
 - The **highways** impact of the proposed development.
 - Other material considerations, including **green infrastructure, ecology, trees** and **drainage**.

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.2 The site comprises previously developed land in a sustainable location that adjoins the Pontrhydyfen settlement boundary. The proposal will continue the existing use of the site as a playing pitch. The principle of development outside of the settlement boundary is supported by Policy SC1. This policy enables development associated with open space which is located adjacent to settlements and is of an appropriate scale and form. The proposed clubhouse is ancillary to the playing field and is proposed to be located adjacent to the settlement boundary. The building demonstrates architectural quality, ensuring its scale and form is compatible with the surrounding residential character.
- 7.3 The proposed development directly addresses the needs of Pontrhydyfen RFC through providing an onsite clubhouse and changing rooms. Club members are currently required to travel over 1km from changing facilities to the playing field before and after games. The existing changing facilities are not fit for purpose and specifically do not provide the necessary facilities for female players. This current arrangement is both impractical and an inefficient use of land and resources, as well as being an inadequate facility for female players. Through locating the clubhouse adjacent to the playing fields, the proposal improves the accessibility and useability of the site, while also protecting the long-term future use of the site as a vital asset to the community. This outcome aligns with LDP Policy SP2 and Policy SP10.
- 7.4 Compliance with Planning Policy Wales is also demonstrated, which seeks to ensure that generators of travel demands are sited within existing urban areas that can be accessed by a range of sustainable transport modes. PPW also advocates the provision of adequate and efficient infrastructure in the interests of social and environmental sustainability, which encourages desirable ways of living and learning.
- 7.5 The proposed re-development of the sports pitch also ties in with the PPW assessment of the significance of community facilities in improving health, well-being and quality of life, which in tandem align with the overarching national sustainable placemaking outcomes. The proposal meets placemaking objectives by delivering a healthier Wales where the mental and physical well-being of the population is maximised, and where choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood. It also delivers a more equal Wales enabling people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
- 7.6 The proposal complies with LDP policies, including SP3 (Sustainable Communities) and SC2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities) as without investment, the club will struggle to attract players due to the lack of suitable changing facilities at the site, and post-match facilities for hosting refreshments.

- 7.7 The redevelopment will support the wider community by developing facilities that meet their needs and satisfy future demand, maximising partnership opportunities. It will also develop facilities that are environmentally responsible, sustainable and cost-effective, encouraging more participation in sports in line with policy LDP policy SP2 (Health).
- 7.8 Accordingly, as evidenced by the support the applicant has received from the Authority during pre-application discussions, the principle of the development is firmly established.

DESIGN

- 7.9 The clubhouse will be finished with natural timber and brick work, consistent with the surrounding residential area.
- 7.10 The brief places the changing rooms and related spaces within a solid brick plinth. A lighter first floor clad in timber contains the community room and bar, and this upper level is more open with extensive glazing to form views and connections with the playing field and the wider landscape.
- 7.11 The brick plinth provides security for a building in an isolated location. A separate entrance allows the changing rooms to be secured when unused, which enables the first-floor community space and bar to operate independently for community events. Access to the first floor is via stairs or a platform lift. The space is open and multi aspect and extends to a terrace overlooking the field. Temporary partitions allow adaptable use. The plan is arranged to face the playing field, which places the WCs, servery, and kitchen along the rear wall.
- 7.12 The building adopts a pitched roof barn form to achieve a simple and economical structure suited to the project budget. The recessed entrance for the community and bar area, along with the projecting window above, creates a draw and point of arrival from the primary approach to the north, and introduces a recognisable character within the otherwise regular form.
- 7.13 Material quality supports the delivery of a well-made and simple building. Brick, timber cladding, and a metal roof form a familiar and traditional palette that can be detailed to a high standard within a controlled budget. Crisp, elegant detailing playing an equally important role.
- 7.14 The proposed designs have been carefully considered and developed to ensure the siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatments have no adverse effect on the local and surrounding area.
- 7.15 Environmental sustainability is a central consideration, with a generous photovoltaic array proposed for the west facing roof. The design also responds to economic and social sustainability. It aims to serve its community, to be accessible and welcoming, and to support Pontrhydyfen Rugby Football Club in looking to a sustainable future.

IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND AMENITY

- 7.16 The design, by Pentan Architects, is befitting of the needs of the club and the site location, and corresponds to its context, resulting in a scheme that takes into consideration the wider setting.
- 7.17 The proposed building is entirely appropriate in its context adjacent to a sports pitch. The proposed building is aesthetically attractive and typically functional of a sports facility, providing the necessary supporting accommodation and storage for the sports pitches. The siting and relatively small size of the structure will have no adverse impact on the site and its surroundings.
- 7.18 The proposed clubhouse is necessary in order to provide dedicated changing and amenity facilities for Pontrhydyfen RFC. It would vastly improve upon the existing facilities and better cater for the various teams that would utilise the pitch across an array of age groups.

- 7.19 Overlooking the playing field half-way line, the proposal presents the best opportunity for viewing matches whilst locating the building a suitable distance from nearby dwellings.
- 7.20 Due to site elevations, the building sits below the adjacent residential dwellings along Oakwood Avenue, where it is proposed to be orientated eastwards, away from existing dwellings and towards the playing field. The building is also set back from the site boundary and adjacent dwellings by the cycle path. The scale of the clubhouse being two storeys, is consistent with the adjacent dwellings and its location and orientation ensure no overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

NOISE

- 7.21 A Noise Assessment prepared by InAcoustic accompanies this application, given the proximity of the nearest residential receptors to the northwest, as discussed in the pre-application process. A baseline assessment of evening ambient noise levels was taken, which was largely influenced by road traffic, river noise, and existing sports activity. Against this baseline, InAcoustic assessed the impacts of internal music being played during events, and the external use of the terraced areas. Each individual impact was assessed, as well as the combined effects of music and use of the terrace by up to 30 patrons, and even in the scenario where both conditions were at play, the report concluded a worst-case scenario increase of ambient noise of +0.5dB, which is significantly below the threshold of perceptibility, and thereby does not alter the character of the existing sound environment. strongly
- 7.22 Accordingly, the report concludes that even under robustly assessed, worst-case operating conditions, noise emanating from the proposed clubhouse would have imperceptible to negligible effects on all residential receptors, requiring no specific mitigation to control any noise emissions. Accordingly, noise is not a determinative factor in the consideration of this planning application, as compliance with local and national policy is demonstrated, including PPW and LDP policy EN8.

LIGHTING

- 7.23 No detailed external lighting scheme has yet been prepared; however, the proposals do not include any form of floodlighting for the pitch. Lighting is expected to be limited to low-level fixtures along the pedestrian route between the car park and the clubhouse, together with modest security lighting around the building, all for the safe movement of pedestrians as opposed to lighting the playing field. All lighting will be designed and positioned sensitively to minimise spill and reduce potential disturbance to neighbouring residents and nocturnal wildlife using the surrounding area.

HIGHWAY

- 7.24 The site lies in a broadly sustainable location in the context of its use and users, with good pedestrian and cycle links to the pitch available, with convenient and regular public transport links also available. Given that a large number of Pontrhydyfen RFC players, fans and other potential users live within close proximity of the site, there is expected to be significant volumes of travel to the pitch on foot.
- 7.25 Following comments from the Highways Authority regarding the suitability of the surrounding road network as part of the pre-application enquiry, a swept path analysis has been undertaken to assess vehicle movements to and from the site. This assessment confirms that the local highway network can safely accommodate the largest vehicles anticipated to access the development. This is shown in the accompanying swept path analysis drawings contained with the accompanying Transport Statement and Travel Plan, prepared by Miles White Transport.
- 7.26 Cycle parking is provided in a covered and secure external store that is easily accessible for users of the development. Five cycle lockers are proposed close to the pitch, north of the clubhouse, contributing towards reducing the car parking demand and encouraging active travel. The Neath

Port Talbot Parking Standards SPG requires that one cycle space is required per 40sqm of public floor space or per 100 seats for Stadia use. The public area of the clubhouse measures 112m², therefore three spaces are required by policy. The level of cycle parking proposed therefore exceeds policy requirement and is acceptable.

- 7.27 With regards to car parking, the accompanying Transport Statement applies the Council's Parking Standards SPG for a Class D2 sports club with a licensed clubhouse in Zone 4. The SPG requires of one commercial vehicle space and, for licensed premises, one parking space per three non-resident staff and one space per 5 sqm of public floor area. On this basis, the 112 sqm public area generates a requirement for 22 spaces, with a further two spaces for staff, giving a total of 24 spaces for the clubhouse use. Additional provision for players and officials is then calculated, with the Transport Statement applying a ratio of one space per three players/officials, resulting in a requirement for approximately 15 spaces. The combined requirement is therefore 39 car parking spaces plus one coach space. In response to a request from the Highways Authority during pre-application discussions, a drawing detailing the proposed car parking arrangement has also been prepared and is contained within the Transport Statement. The existing car park is to be formalised to provide 40 generously sized car parking spaces together with a dedicated coach space, thereby meeting the SPG requirement. This confirms that the proposed parking provision is appropriate, policy-compliant and sufficient to meet the operational needs of the club.
- 7.28 The proposed access arrangement includes the realignment of the shared footway/cycleway to the south of the upgraded vehicular access serving the car park. The revised alignment will run through the grassed verge to the south of the lane and will be delivered as a 3-metre-wide shared footway and cycleway, creating a safer and more legible route for both cyclists and pedestrians. A 1-metre verge will provide a clear buffer between the access and the shared route, improving separation and user safety. Full details of the design and alignment are set out in the proposed access arrangement drawing, within the Transport Statement.
- 7.29 The proposed access and parking arrangements demonstrate an accordance with LDP policies SP20 and TR2. Further, dependence on the private car will be reduced due to many players and officials living locally to the site, as well as the proximity of the site to bus stops. Together, these promote alternative means of transport in line with PPW and LDP policy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.30 **Green infrastructure** – Given the limited impact upon existing green infrastructure assets on site and its immediate proximity, and in accordance with PPW, green infrastructure enhancements will be commensurate with the scale of development. In this regard, the proposal is able to provide bat and bird boxes in appropriate positions on the building elevations, as well as the incorporation of a raingarden, which offers benefits from a surface water management perspective, as well as biodiversity enhancement, in comparison to the existing site context.
- 7.31 **Ecology and trees** – The proposed development will have minimal ecological impact given the existing baseline condition of the site as a managed playing field with boundary vegetation of low ecological value. The accompanying ecological and arboricultural reports confirm that the proposals will not give rise to any adverse impact in this regard. Together, these findings demonstrate that the scheme can be delivered without materially affecting the ecological or arboricultural baseline of the site.
- 7.32 **Drainage** – Sustainable drainage proposals will be subject to a separate application via Sustainable Drainage Approving Body (SAB) approval, in relation to which a pre-application advice request will be submitted. The site is in Flood Zone 1, which indicates land at little or no risk of flooding, therefore there are no issues from a flooding perspective.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of proposals for a new two-storey clubhouse building at Pontrhydyfen RFC, together with landscaping, access improvements, sustainable drainage, formalisation of on-site car parking, and other associated works.
- 8.2 The principle of the development is established by its extant lawful current use and compliance with local and national policy. In this regard, the development complies with local policy direction, in particular surrounding the protection of open spaces and the development of cohesive and efficient settlements through the co-location and joint use of facilities. Additionally, the development improves community facilities that encourage a healthier lifestyle, supporting key principles of both local and national policy.
- 8.3 The proposals have been subject to positive pre-application discussions between the applicant and the Local Authority, where the response was positive in terms of principle and approach, and robust accompanying documents have been prepared in response to comments raised during that process.
- 8.4 The scheme has been carefully arranged to ensure minimal impact on neighbouring residents, with the siting and scale of the building reflective of surrounding properties. The Noise Assessment confirms that no adverse effects are anticipated due to the imperceptible to negligible differences in noise impact arising, ensuring no detriment to local amenity.
- 8.5 Highways impact has been assessed within the accompanying Transport Statement, which concludes that the proposed will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network. This is determined in recognition that the majority of users will travel to and from the site by active modes of travel, and the proposed car parking facility meets SPG standards on car parking provision. A Travel Plan has also been formulated to promote access to the site by active and sustainable modes of transport, thereby reducing reliance on single occupancy private car usage.
- 8.6 The enhancement of the existing access arrangement ensures that the site is accessible and that pedestrian safety is prioritised. Manoeuvrability for vehicles on site has also been tested via swept path analysis in order to ensure users are able to access and egress the site safely. A drainage solution has been reached and there are no flooding concerns relating to the site. There are no identified constraints in respect of ecology or trees, and green infrastructure enhancements are proposed.
- 8.7 Wellbeing goals of the WFGA are adhered to through this application in that there would be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the application being approved and development being carried out. PPW brings the objectives of the Act into clear focus in a planning context, and it is demonstrated through the planning policy analysis undertaken herein that compliance with PPW, and thus the WFGA, is achieved.
- 8.8 In conclusion, the proposal will deliver a much-needed contemporary clubhouse facility for Pontrhydyfen RFC in proximity to the playing field. This will replace the inadequate and remote current provision with a modern, functional building that supports the sporting and social activities of the club. The development will provide appropriate changing, social and ancillary accommodation on site, improving the ability of the club to host matches and community events and supporting its long-term operation. As a modest but valuable community asset, the clubhouse will vastly enhance the playing experience and community provision without giving rise to any unacceptable impacts, as evidenced in the supporting documentation. On this basis, it is respectfully recommended that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council approve the application.

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