

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013-2014

	Agenda Item No.6
<p>DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 3 APRIL 2014</p> <p>REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR PLANNING</p>	<p>APPLICATION NO: 13/1130 OBSERVATIONS REQUESTED BY ADJACENT PLANNING AUTHORITY: CARDIFF CITY COUNCIL - PROPOSAL: CREATION OF AN ACTIVITY RANCH COMPRISING THE ERECTION OF A HIGH-ROPES COURSE, SEGWAY TRAINING AREA AND ASSOCIATED ROUTES, ZIP- WIRE, PONY/HORSE Paddock WITH STABLE, MÉNAGE, CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AND ASSOCIATED STORAGE STRUCTURE AND SHELTERS AS WELL AS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO THE FORMER CLUBHOUSE TO ALLOW USE AS AN ANCILLARY CAFÉ AND MINOR RESURFACING OF PATHS AND PARKING AREAS. LOCATION: CASTLE HEIGHTS GOLF COURSE, RHIWBINA HILL, TONGWYNLAIS, CAERPHILLY</p>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To give this Authority's observations on the planning application which is to be determined by Cardiff City Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To forward the observations of this Authority to Cardiff City Council.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Cardiff City Council seeks this Council's observations on a planning application for the creation of an activity ranch comprising the erection of a high-ropes course, Segway training area and associated routes, zip-wire, pony/horse paddock with stable, ménage, children's play area and associated storage structure and shelters as well as internal and external alterations to the former clubhouse to allow use as an ancillary café and minor resurfacing of paths and parking areas.

The proposed development will occupy various areas on what was formerly an 18 hole golf course. The application site (89.4 Ha) straddles land within the administrative boundaries of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff therefore is the subject of parallel applications to both local planning authorities for the respective parts of the development that lie in each administrative area. The majority of the overall application site lies within Rhondda Cynon Taf (64.8 Ha), with the remainder comprising the high-ropes course, Segway training areas, parts of the children's play area, and former club-house lying solely within Cardiff (24.5 Ha).

The site formerly operated as two independent golf courses offering an 18 hole membership only club (Mountain lakes Golf Club) and a 9 hole 'pay-and-play' course (Castle Heights) and an 18 bay driving range. The present proposal will occupy areas on the 18 hole course such that this particular facility will no longer be available. The 9 hole course remains in operation for pay and play customers with no alterations proposed. The driving range may be partially brought back into use in the future, and does not form part of this application. Therefore, it is the following operational elements associated with the 'Mountain Ranch' that are the subject of the application:

- High ropes course (located within Cardiff LPA area) comprising erection of timber clad pitched roof storage building / shelter and ten 7m timber poles and a number of anchoring poles providing various high level obstacles for participants to negotiate before descending on a zip-wire.
- Segway training area (located within Cardiff LPA) comprising erection of a timber clad pitched roof storage building / shelter. The fencing and formation of short looping un-surfaced training track for the all-terrain Segways to follow do not comprise development.
- Zip-wire (to be located in Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA) comprise erection of a launch area, with associated timber poles, and zip-wire anchored land levels. No high level platform is required.
- Pony/horse paddock (located in Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA) incorporating the erection of a timber 'American Barn' stable building measuring 10.8m wide, 14.4m long, 2.13m in height to eaves and 3.6m to ridge.
- Ménage (located in Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA) comprising a fenced, level, sand surfaced area and associated timber clad pitched roof storage building / shelter,
- Children's play area (straddling boundaries of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff LPA areas) comprising erection of fenced, sand-surfaced area comprising entrance arch, various pieces to timber play equipment and two adjacent tepees.
- Alterations to former clubhouse (located in Cardiff LPA) comprising cladding of three elevations, timber screen to existing fire escape, alterations to fenestration and doors and internal alterations on ground and first floor to facilitate use as an ancillary café / function space
- Resurfacing car park areas and access track to paddock area (located principally in Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA) with dark chippings.

- Golf academy / archery area (located within Rhondda Cynon Taf) albeit this does not comprise any operational development, though the area used for archery will involve the erection of temporary protective fencing to safeguard against stray arrows.

It should be noted that the application is submitted retrospectively as all but the Archery, ménage shelter/storage and zip-wire are in place at the site.

The application is accompanied by the following:

- Planning Statement (including Appendices covering Landscape Assessment, Ecological Assessment and Traffic Generation Technical Note);
- Design and Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site comprises 89.4 hectares of primarily hilltop land straddling the border of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff and close to the border with Caerphilly County Borough. The site is for the most part a mature manicured golf course landscape comprising greens, fairways and intervening bushes and trees. The site is accessed from Heol Pen-y-Bryn which is part of the rural highway network that extends across the hilltop between Rhiwbina (Cardiff), Caerphilly and Tongwynlais.

The area surrounding the application site is predominantly rural comprising sporadic dwellings, farms and businesses.

Within the site there is a main driveway leading to car parking areas (space for approximately 200 cars), with the former clubhouse to the west, the driving range structure to the south and ancillary maintenance building to the east. Surfaced tracks lead off from the main access road to the west and south-west. The remainder of the site was occupied by the two golf courses. The 9 hole course continues to operate and occupy the southern part of the application site. The 18 hole course no longer operates and the developments described in this application (all bar the zip wire, ménage shelter / storage building, and archery area) are now all in place.

PLANNING HISTORY

Planning history records for that part of the development site that lies within Cardiff are held by that Authority.

PUBLICITY

Publicity of the planning application will have been undertaken by Cardiff City Council.

CONSULTATION

Consultations on the planning application will have been undertaken by Cardiff City Council.

POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant Development Plan is the adopted City of Cardiff Local Plan. The Cardiff Local Development Plan is at deposit stage, therefore of limited weight.

National Guidance

The relevant national policy and guidance is Planning Policy Wales:

Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability),
Chapter 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast),
Chapter 7 (Economic Development),
Chapter 8 (Transport),
Chapter 11 (Tourism, Sport and Recreation),
Chapter 13 (Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution),

Other relevant policy guidance:

PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;
PPW Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities;
PPW Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism;
PPW Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk;
PPW Technical Advice Note 16: Sport Recreation and Open Space;
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;
Manual for Streets

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

For the part of the development site that lies within Cardiff the principle of the development and other material planning considerations fall to Cardiff City Council to assess in its determination of the application. However, as this development straddles land within the administrative areas of both Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf and is the subject of parallel planning applications to both Authorities, clearly it has potential for significant effects upon Rhondda Cynon Taf. The chief planning impacts of the development of this fairly sizeable outdoor leisure and recreational facility on a disused golf course are the consequences for the protection, openness, character and appearance of the countryside at this location, the ecology and landscape of the site and surrounds, and transportation, access and highway considerations. Each of these issues is considered in detail in the report on the application submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taf (application reference: 11/1083) which appears elsewhere on this agenda. Members are respectfully advised to consider and determine that application before deciding on the observations to be returned to Cardiff City Council

The elements of the development that lie within the Cardiff part of the site (and do not form part of the application to Rhondda Cynon Taf) are the operations to form the high ropes course, Segway training area, part of the children's play area, and the alterations to the former clubhouse. It is considered that none of these elements, either in isolation or cumulatively with the remainder of the overall scheme, give rise any other planning issues from those identified above and discussed in more depth in the application submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taf. The principle of the development is acceptable as it is not dissimilar to the previous use recreational / sports use as a golf course. It is only realistically capable of being undertaken on the scale proposed in a countryside location. The development is sympathetic to its rural setting in terms of its design, scale and siting and is well screened and contained within the site such that it will not be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and Craig-yr-Allt Special Landscape Area in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The development does not have any significant impacts on ecological interests at the site although a population of Great Crested Newt is known to inhabit the Craig-yr-Allt Slopes SINC within Rhondda Cynon Taf, which the applicant will need to be made wary of. The existing access and parking arrangements, which are within Rhondda Cynon Taf are considered adequate to meet the needs of the development, therefore no highway objection is raised. The development does not conflict with relevant Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP policies.

In conclusion it is considered highly unlikely the development will have any significant impacts upon Rhondda Cynon Taf and therefore it is recommended that observations of no objection are returned to Cardiff City Council.

RECOMMENDATION: Raise no objection

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

3 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR PLANNING

REPORT

OFFICER TO CONTACT

**APPLICATION NO: 13/1130
OBSERVATIONS REQUESTED BY
ADJACENT PLANNING
AUTHORITY: CARDIFF CITY
COUNCIL - PROPOSAL:
CREATION OF AN ACTIVITY
RANCH COMPRISING THE
ERECTION OF A HIGH-ROPES
COURSE, SEGWAY TRAINING
AREA AND ASSOCIATED
ROUTES, ZIP-WIRE, PONY/HORSE
PADDOCK WITH STABLE,
MÉNAGE, CHILDREN'S PLAY
AREA AND ASSOCIATED
STORAGE STRUCTURE AND
SHELTERS AS WELL AS
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
ALTERATIONS TO THE FORMER
CLUBHOUSE TO ALLOW USE AS
AN ANCILLARY CAFÉ AND
MINOR RESURFACING OF PATHS
AND PARKING AREAS.
LOCATION: CASTLE HEIGHTS
GOLF COURSE, RHIWBINA HILL,
TONGWYNLAIS, CAERPHILLY**

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See Relevant Application File