

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-2018:**

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE  
15 FEBRUARY 2018**

**REPORT OF: SERVICE  
DIRECTOR PLANNING**

	Agenda Item No. 5
<b>APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</b>	

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

Members are asked to determine the planning applications outlined in Appendix 1.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

To approve the applications subject to the conditions outlined in Appendix 1.

1. Application No: 17/1208 - Proposed use of land for the siting of Glamping Pods for Holiday Let, Pencaedraen Farm, Dinas Terrace to Coed Wernhir, Rhigos, Hirwaun, Aberdare.

## **APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL**

**APPLICATION NO:** 17/1208/10 (EL)  
**APPLICANT:** Mr Owens  
**DEVELOPMENT:** Proposed Use of Land for the Siting of Glamping Pods for Holiday Let.  
**LOCATION:** PENCAEDRAEN FARM, DINAS TERRACE TO COED WERNHIR, RHIGOS, HIRWAUN, ABERDARE, SA11 5NF  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 07/11/2017  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Rhigos

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to conditions**

### **REASONS:**

The proposal is in keeping with policies CS1 and AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and National Policy in that, the proposal to use the land for holiday leisure/ tourism purposes by the siting of 'glamping pods' is considered to be compatible with surrounding land uses, given its semi-rural location. Furthermore, the scale and appearance of the 'glamping pods' are considered acceptable. Overall, the scheme is considered acceptable in terms of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity of the closest dwellings and highway safety.

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### **REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE**

The proposal is not covered by determination powers delegated to Service Director Planning.

### **APPLICATION DETAILS**

Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of a parcel of land at Pencaedraen Farm, Rhigos from agricultural woodland to holiday leisure/ tourism purposes. The application also seeks permission for the construction of 10 no. glamping pods on the site, which is a parcel of land extending to 0.28ha. The glamping pods would be arranged in a linear layout along the southern boundary of the site, the remaining area at the north of the site would be reserved as an amenity area for occupants of the pods. Nine of the proposed pods would provide holiday accommodation with the tenth being utilised as a bathroom pod for shared use. Each pod would extend to 2.7 metres in width and 4.05 metres in length with a

curved roof design extending to a maximum 2.7 metres in height. They are free-standing structures, designed to accommodate 1-2 people. Access to the site would be obtained via the existing network of lanes which serve the farm.

The application is accompanied by a planning statement which comments that the applicant (landowner) is seeking to *“diversify his activities and to take advantage of their location, being close to the Brecon Beacons National Park, whilst still having immediate road access to the South Wales coastline in one direction, and to the Monmouthshire countryside and beyond in the other.”* It is also noted that the site is within walking distance of a range of tourist attractions to walkers, including Sgwd Gwladys, Horseshoe Falls, Sychryd waterfall and Dinas Rock.

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application site consists of a parcel of land extending to 0.28ha located within Pencaedraen Farm, Rhigos. Pencaedraen Farm lies to the south east of Pontneddfechan and close to the Brecon Beacons National Park. Along its southern boundary the farm immediately adjoins the A465 Neath-Abergavenny trunk road. Access is obtained to the farm via a private road leading south from Pontneddfechan. The road crosses the Neath river and passes the Dulais Rock quarry before winding its way up to the farm. The parcel of land, which forms the application site, immediately adjoins the southern edge of the farm access road in a relatively flat part of the farm. At the time of the site inspection, the land had been cleared of all vegetation. It is bounded to the south by a steep bank covered in trees, whilst to the east the land slopes steeply to a stream that springs out of the bank. The site is almost entirely surrounded by mature woodland. The access track that serves the site bounds the northern side of the site. The woodland and land immediately north of this is designed as a Special Area of Conservation (Coedydd Nedd a Mellte).

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

There is no planning history on the parcel of land in question.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised by posting site notices in the vicinity of the application site. No representations have been received.

## **CONSULTATION**

Transportation Section – no objections raised, condition requiring passing bays recommended.

Natural Resources Wales – no objections raised. Informative note relating to disposal of effluent (from septic tank) recommended.

Countryside, Landscape & Ecology – conditions suggested relating to landscaping and the submission of a site management plan.

Brecon Beacons National Park – no objections raised. It is considered that due to the siting, character and small scale nature of the proposed development, it is unlikely that it would have an adverse impact on the National Park.

Public Health & Protection – no objections raised.

Land Reclamation and Drainage – no objections raised, condition suggested requiring details of drainage arrangements be submitted.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – no objections raised.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

Indicates that the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary close to the border with the Brecon Beacons National Park. The land in question does not fall within a designation but does border a Special Area of Conservation (SAC – Coedydd Nedd a Mellte (part)).

**Policy CS1** places an emphasis on building strong, sustainable communities. This will be achieved by encouraging a strong, diverse economy which supports traditional employment and promotes new forms of employment in the leisure and tourism sectors.

**Policy AW2** promotes development in sustainable locations.

**Policy AW5** sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

**Policy AW6** sets out the criteria for new development in terms of design and place-making.

**Policy AW8** requires Rhondda Cynon Taf's distinctive natural heritage be preserved and enhanced by protecting it from inappropriate development.

**Policy AW10** states that development proposals will not be permitted where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity due to noise pollution or any other identified risk to the environment, local amenity and public health and safety.

### National Guidance

Planning Policy Wales Chapter 3 (Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions), Chapter 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast) and Chapter 8 (Transport), set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

## **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

## **MAIN ISSUES**

As set out above, this application comprises two elements, the first being the change of use of the land at Pencaedraen Farm, Rhigos from agricultural woodland to holiday leisure/ tourism purposes and the second being the siting of 10 no. glamping pods.

With respect to the change of use of the land, the key consideration in determining this element of the application is the compatibility of the proposed activity with surrounding land uses. With respect to the construction of the glamping pods, the key considerations are the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the immediate area and the impact of the operation of the use upon the woodland and neighbouring Special Area of Conservation (SAC) site. The potential impacts of the resulting scheme upon highway safety and the amenity of neighbouring residents are a further consideration.

### Principle of Development

The land, which is the subject of this planning application, forms part of the agricultural unit known as Pencaedraen Farm. The application site consists of a parcel of land extending to 0.28ha which lies approximately 200 metres west of the main farmhouse. The application seeks to utilise the land for holiday leisure/ tourism purposes by the siting of 10 no. glamping pods.

As set out above, the key consideration in determining this element of the application is the compatibility of the proposed activity with surrounding land uses. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary in the middle of the open countryside, close to the boundary with the Brecon Beacons National Park area. Whilst development in this location would ordinarily be contrary to local policy AW 2; national policy does not hold this as a barrier to development, as rural areas are the type of location that are typically associated with this kind of tourism use. National policy is supportive of sustainable tourism proposals in rural areas on account of the fact that it contributes to a healthy, diverse economy. National policy does however caution that proposals need to be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment. As such careful consideration must be given to the layout of the proposal and design of the

structures so as to ensure that they do not impinge on the character and appearance of the area/countryside; particularly its landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value. This matter is considered in greater detail in the next section of the report.

Notwithstanding the above, in principle, there is no policy objection to the principle of tourism-related development in this location, outside the defined settlement boundary. It is considered that policy CS 1 of the Local Development Plan generally supports tourism-related development in appropriate locations within the Borough as it provides a strong, diverse economy. This is further supported by national policy in chapters 7 and 11 of Planning Policy Wales.

### Character and Appearance

As set out above, the application proposes the siting of 10 no. glamping pods on the land. Nine of these would be used to provide short term holiday accommodation, with the tenth providing bathroom facilities. The pods are pre-fabricated units which are placed on the ground on a 'mobile steel base'. The pods themselves are relatively modest structures with an overall height of 2.7 metres and floor area of 11 square metres. They would have a curved roof design with elevations clad in timber ship-lap panelling. Whilst the siting of the pods would clearly affect the character of the small area of land concerned, the adjacent woodland, in visual terms, would be largely unaffected by the proposal. Furthermore, given their location and topography of surrounding land, the pods would be largely screened from view of the nearest main road and distant views of the site would be obscured by the dense woodland that surrounds the site. Overall, whilst the structures would obviously form visible features in the immediate context of the site, given that they are contained upon a relatively small parcel of land, that is well screened and would be constructed in appropriate materials, it is not considered that the design or siting of the proposed pods would result in a visual intrusion in the landscape that would be harmful to the wider setting of the woodland or countryside.

### Amenity

As set out above, being part of a farm, the site is located in a broadly rural location. As such, the closest dwelling to the west is Ynysgambwlch Farm, which lies approximately 0.56km away. To the north, the nearest dwellings (on Dinas Road and Coed y Rhiadyr) in the village are approximately 240 metres from the site. Given the separation distances involved, combined with the topography of the intervening landscape and dense woodland, the development would be broadly screened from view of these properties. As such, it is not considered that the development of the glamping facility and its operation would result in any loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring residents.

### Highway Safety

In order to aid in the assessment of the scheme upon highway safety, consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Transportation Section. Their assessment comments that the site is accessed via a single width access track, which varies in width between 2.7m-3.0m, and allows for single vehicular passage only. There are also three bridges at the access to the site one which is maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taff Council ( Craig-Y-Dinas Bridge).

Their assessment notes that the proposal could result in up-to an additional 18 trips per day along the access lane, thereby increasing the potential for reversing movements along the narrow access track, which is not illuminated and which lacks positive surface water drainage. Whilst some concern is expressed in this regard, it is noted that there is scope for the applicant, who is in control of the land which adjoins the access lane, to provide a number of localised passing bays at strategic locations (bends) to overcome this concern. As such, should Members be minded to approve planning permission, a condition to this effect is recommended.

In terms of car parking, 9 accommodation pods (each serving 1-2 residents) are proposed, which would generate a parking requirement of no off-street car parking spaces. Whilst the application is not accompanied by a formal parking layout it is clear that there would be sufficient space within the site to accommodate this number of vehicles.

Given the above, their observations conclude by raising no objections to the application, as such, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of highway and accessibility issues and therefore is in compliance with Policies AW2 and AW5 of the Local Development Plan.

#### Ecology and Landscape considerations

The application site is positioned in a countryside location, with the pods themselves being located on a clearing within an area of woodland. It is also important to note that the site lies in close proximity to Coedydd Nedd A Mellte Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As such, it is necessary to consider the impacts of the development upon both the landscaping of the site and matters of ecology.

Whilst the topography of the site lends itself to the siting of the pods, being adjacent to, and broadly level with the access track, at the time of the site inspection it was clear that clearance works had already been undertaken. Whilst initially it felt it may be beneficial to request an ecological assessment, in order to understand the impacts of these works, Natural Resources Wales observations of the scheme did not make any requests for supporting information and concluded by raising no objection to the application in ecological terms. Notwithstanding the view of Natural Resources Wales, the Council still consider it appropriate to request additional information, in the form of a management plan for the site. The submission of this information can be secured via the use of a suitably worded condition and would help to control both the initial phases of setting up and the operation of the 'glamping'

site. The purpose of this is to ensure that its operation in the long term would not indirectly result in any adverse effects upon the quality of the neighbouring SAC. In addition to this a landscaping condition is also suggested to include details of replacement landscaping, which would remedy some of the habitat loss that has recently occurred on the site. Having discussed this with Natural Resources Wales, they have confirmed that they are supportive of this approach.

Overall, given NRW's response, it is not considered that any impacts upon ecology, which would arise from the scheme, would be so great as to warrant the refusal of the scheme. It is also considered any adverse impacts resulting from the clearance of the site could be mitigated by replacement landscaping and the long term impacts of the operation could be limited by the submission, and approval, of management plan for the site. This information could be secured through the use of an appropriately worded condition, should Members be minded to approve planning permission.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is liable for a charge under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) however, the CIL rate for this type of development as set out in the Charging Schedule is £nil and therefore no CIL is payable.

### Conclusion

Having taken account of all of the issues outlined above, it is considered that the submission represents a holiday leisure/ tourism use that it compatible with its rural setting. Furthermore, the scale and appearance of the glamping pods themselves are considered acceptable. Therefore, the scheme is considered acceptable in terms of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, upon residential amenity and highway safety. It is also considered that any impacts, upon landscape and ecology, arising from the operation of the use could be adequately managed by the use of an appropriately worded condition. Therefore the proposal is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions specified below.

### **RECOMMENDATION: Grant**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with



the approved plan(s) no(s):

- Site Location Plan
- Standard Quality Pod detail
- Site Layout Plan – scale 1:500

and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 07/11/17 unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. The proposed development shall only be occupied as holiday units and no unit shall be occupied by any individual, family or group for more than a continuous period of two months in any calendar year.

Reason: The site is unacceptable for general residential use by reason of its unsustainable location, outside of settlement limits in accordance with Policy AW2 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plans, development shall not commence until details of 3no passing bays along the access lane have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to beneficial use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and free flow of traffic.

5. No development shall take place until drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into beneficial use until the drainage works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate disposal of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. Prior to commencement of development details of a management plan for the 'glamping facility' hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan should include;

- a) A figure/plan which relates the location of the site to the adjacent Special Area of Conservation.
- b) Details of measures to ensure that construction and operation of

the Glamping facility does not impact on the adjacent SAC; to include issues such as site lighting, drainage, camp fires, fire wood collection, sewage, litter and access and use of the adjacent SAC by campers using the Glamping facility(to include information provided to Glampers)

- c) Details of annual management plan progress reporting to the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter, the development shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the approved management plan.

Reason: To enhance and afford protection to the adjacent designated Special Area of Conservation in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 7. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a comprehensive scheme of landscaping for the site. This shall include details of:

- a) Remedial tree management works and tree protection measures within the Glamping site
- b) Landscaping details for the Glamping site to include measures to provide ecological compensation for the areas of woodland cleared to create the Glamping plateau.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 8. All planting, seeding or turfing in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the building(s) or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**as amended by**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**15 FEBRUARY 2018**

**REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR PLANNING**

**REPORT**

**APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED  
FOR APPROVAL**

**OFFICER TO CONTACT**

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**See Relevant Application File**

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