

CADNANT

PLANNING

**FOREST HOLIDAYS, BEDDGELERT
DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT**
FOREST HOLIDAYS
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DRAFT FOR PRE-APPLICATION
CONSULTATION

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Design, Access and Planning Statement



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application by Forest Holidays, for full planning permission for proposals to enhance tourist accommodation and facilities at Forest Holidays, Beddgelert to deliver overall improvements to the site by way of relinquishment of 85 caravan and camping pitches in lieu of an additional 22 year-round, self-contained, self-catering holiday cabins, erection of a new reception and café building and overall improvements in terms of additional landscape planting and biodiversity enhancement.
- 1.2 Forest Holidays is an existing tourist accommodation site on the edge of the village of Beddgelert, providing a mixture of touring caravan and camping pitches, together with log cabins. Forest Holidays offers a unique and special way to enjoy the forest and help people reconnect with nature. The land at their sites is managed for conservation and to create spaces in nature for people to stay. Forest Holidays offers opportunities for people to discover the wonders of nature and help people experience and reconnect with forests, each other and rural communities.
- 1.3 Forest Holidays Beddgelert is one of 13 sites run by Forest Holidays throughout the UK. Forest Holidays create forest experiences for all the family and encourage guests to explore the rural communities where their sites are located.
- 1.4 The application at Forest Holidays in Beddgelert forms part of a wider visitor recreation masterplan for Beddgelert, prepared jointly by the applicant, Forest Holidays and Roberts Group, the owners of Cae Du and Cae Canol campsite in Beddgelert. The visitor recreation masterplan includes two separate planning applications; this one at Forest Holidays, and the second at Cae Du/Cae Canol by Roberts Group. The aim of the visitor recreation masterplan would be to develop and enhance the tourist accommodation provision within the village of Beddgelert by expanding the provision of holiday cabins at Forest Holidays, in lieu of existing touring caravan and camping pitches, and improving and expanding the provision of touring caravan and camping pitches at Cae Du and Cae Canol. This would ensure that expanding the holiday cabins at Forest Holidays would not lead to an overall loss of touring caravan and camping pitches in the village, as additional pitches would be proposed at Cae Du and Cae Canol campsite.
- 1.5 The visitor recreation masterplan would also seek to improve and upgrade the multi-user route which runs alongside Forest Holidays, into Beddgelert.

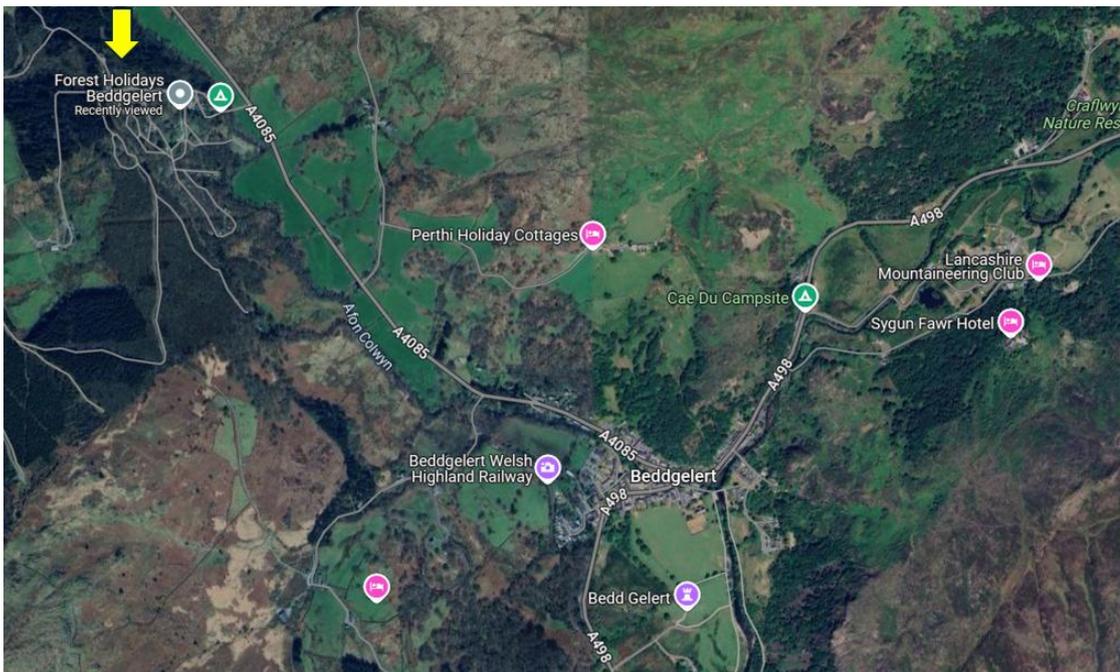
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- 1.6 The proposals at both sites seek to deliver significant environmental improvements by way of landscape planting and biodiversity enhancement.
- 1.7 Following the enactment of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the requirement for pre-application consultation on major development schemes was implemented. This includes the provision of a site area over 1ha. The proposed development exceeds the 1ha site threshold.
- 1.8 The requirement to carry out pre-application consultation falls under Section 17 of the Act and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) as amended by the 2016 Order. Guidance on carrying out the pre-application consultation requirements within the Act has been provided by the Welsh Government set out in Article 1 of the Town and Country Planning DMPWO (Amendment) 2016 'Guidance on Pre-application Consultation'.
- 1.9 This Design, Access and Planning Statement is issued as part of a suite of documents for Pre-Application Consultation prior to the submission of a formal planning application.
- 1.10 As required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order (Amendment) 2016 the statement aims to address the following matters;
- Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
 - Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
 - Explain the policy or approach adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and
 - Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.
- 1.11 This Design, Access and Planning Statement identifies the context of the application site and its surroundings, describes the proposed development, sets out the relevant planning policy and guidance, and discusses the main considerations of the proposed development.
- 1.12 The adopted development plan consists of the Eryri Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted in 2019.

2. The site and context

2.1 The application site forms part of the existing Forest Holidays site, located to the west of Beddgelert on the approach into the village from Caernarfon. The location of the Forest Holidays site is identified in Figure 2.1. The application site, as well as the surrounding local area, lies within Eryri National Park Authority area.

Figure 2.1 Aerial image identifying the location of Forest Holidays in the context of the local area



2.2 The application site comprises the easternmost part of the Forest Holidays site, as well as two other parcels of land within the site to accommodate a new reception and café building and a new natural play area. The extent of the application site is identified in red on the location plan provided in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Location plan identifying the application site in red



- 2.3 Vehicular access to Forest Holidays is provided via an existing access from the A4085 Caernarfon Road. The access road into the site then crosses a bridge over the Afon Colwyn and into the main Forest Holidays site. Upon arrival into the site, there is a car parking area near the Forest Retreat building which currently serves as a reception area.
- 2.4 The Afon Colwyn runs along Forest Holidays' eastern boundary with the Welsh Highland Railway running along the site's western boundary.
- 2.5 The proposed new reception and café building would be erected to the south of the existing car parking area with the new natural play area to be created in an existing green space to the north of the main car parking area.
- 2.6 Forest Holidays benefits from planning permission for 16 cabins (granted in July 2017) along with up to 85 touring caravan pitches and camping pitches.

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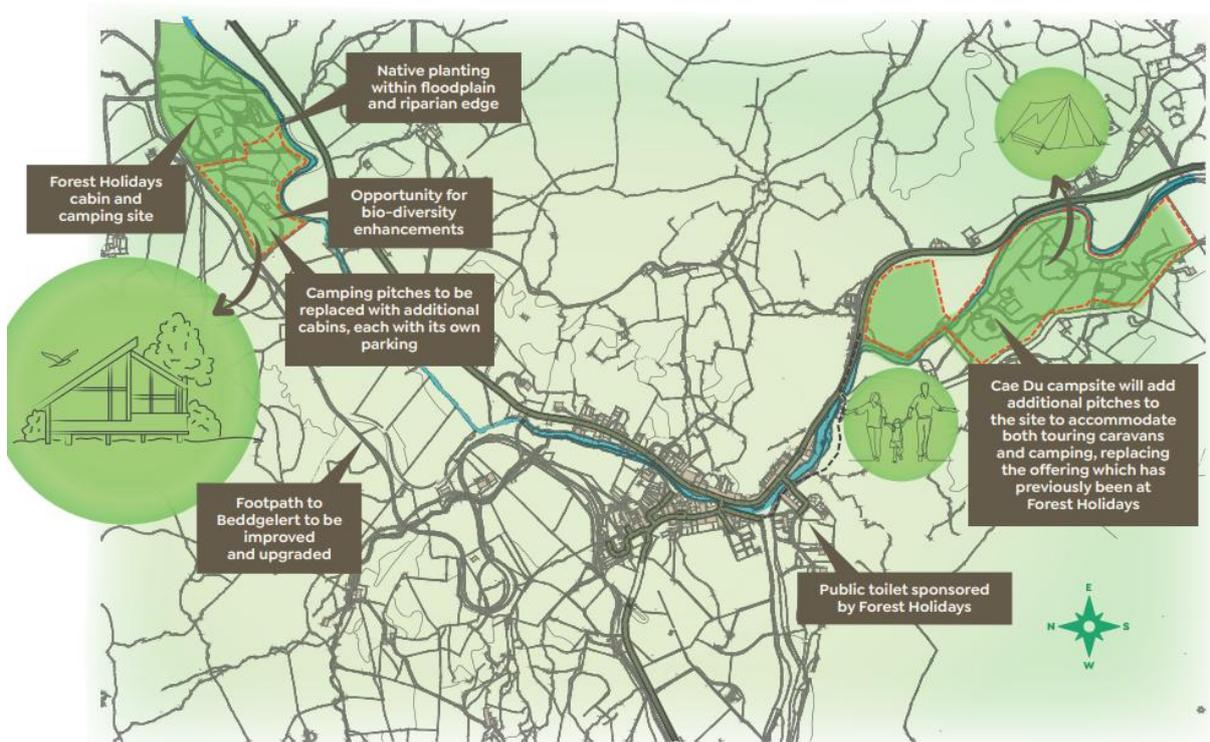
- 2.7 Since opening in Summer 2018, the 16 cabins at Forest Holidays have proved to be very popular, and are often fully booked throughout the year, averaging an occupancy of 97% per annum. The cabins have assimilated well into the site and the wider landscape, with the approved landscaping scheme now establishing and maturing well. The cabins have also delivered significant year-round support to the local economy of the village of Beddgelert.
- 2.8 The application site as well as all areas within Eryri National Park Authority is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve, which have been designated due to the proven quality of the night sky being outstanding. Land to the north of the A4085 is designated as an Area of Natural Beauty.

3. The proposed development

Background

3.1 The applicant, Forest Holidays, has collaborated with Roberts Group (applicant for a proposal at Cae Du and Cae Canol Campsite), to develop a Visitor Recreation Masterplan involving both Forest Holidays and Cae Du and Cae Canol sites, which would support the local tourism economy of the village of Beddgelert in a way that aligns with the thrust of the Gwynedd & Eryri 2035 Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the Visitor Recreation Masterplan for both Forest Holidays and Cae Du/Cae Canol.

Figure 3.1 Visitor Recreation Masterplan for both Forest Holidays and Cae Du/Cae Canol



3.2 Due to the success of the cabins, both for Forest Holidays and the local economy, Forest Holidays wish to expand the provision of cabins on site. In order to accommodate further cabins, these would replace existing touring and camping pitches within the site.

3.3 The Cae Du and Cae Canol site requires significant investment to bring the site up to modern day standards and provide the same high-quality offering to its visitors that the

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Roberts Group provide on all of their other existing sites. In order to make that investment viable, Roberts Group wish to explore increasing the number of touring and camping pitches at the site. In this regard, both Roberts Group and Forest Holidays have been working together to rationalise but preserve the two distinctively different overnight offerings available at Beddgelert, so that each business can concentrate on their core activities.

- 3.4 The submitted Visitor Recreation Masterplan provides a schematic overview of the proposal including opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling access into the village as well as providing significant benefits in terms of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement to green infrastructure networks.
- 3.5 It has been clear that the lack of provision of touring and camping pitches at Cae Du and Cae Canol over three consecutive seasons due to lack of trading by the previous owner has had a detrimental impact on the vibrancy and support for businesses in the village of Beddgelert.
- 3.6 Whilst we consider that expanding the provision of cabins at Forest Holidays would continue to support the local economy leading to spin-off spending within businesses in Beddgelert, the spin-off spending from visitors staying in touring caravans and camping pitches differs from those staying in cabins. Therefore, in order to retain the economic benefits from touring and camping pitches for the benefit of the village and its businesses, it is proposed to increase the touring and camping pitches Cae Du and Cae Canol. This would retain the economic spin-off spending benefits from visitors of the touring and camping pitches within the village, whilst replacing the touring and camping pitches with additional cabins at Forest Holidays.

Use, amount, scale and layout

- 3.7 This application relates to proposals to enhance tourist accommodation and facilities at Forest Holidays, Beddgelert to deliver overall improvements to the site by way of relinquishment of 85 caravan and camping pitches in favour of an additional 22 year-round, self-contained, self-catering holiday cabins, erection of a new reception and café building and overall improvements in terms of additional landscape planting and biodiversity enhancement.

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- 3.8 Forest Holidays benefits from planning permission for 16 self-catering, self-contained holiday cabins (NP2/11/31G, granted 06 July 2017), along with up to 85 touring caravan pitches and camping pitches for year-round occupation.
- 3.9 Within the application site, there is consent for 85 85 touring caravan pitches and camping pitches for year-round occupation, which are served by existing access roads and hardstanding areas. The existing access road serving this part of the site would be retained in part, whilst other parts of the hardstanding would be removed and would be planted as part of the proposed scheme. This would reduce the overall amount of hardstanding within this part of the site, providing an overall environmental benefit.
- 3.10 The proposal would see the 85 year-round touring caravan and camping pitches being relinquished in lieu of 22 self-contained, self-catering holiday cabins, which would be in addition to the existing 16 holiday cabins, providing an overall 38 holiday cabins at the Forest Holidays site.
- 3.11 The location of the proposed cabins have been carefully considered to integrate into the landscape, with their locations taking account positioning of existing trees. The proposed holiday cabins would provide a mixture of holiday accommodation units comprising of the following:
- 4 x 1-bed hideaway cabins (blue);
 - 10 x 2-bed cabins (orange);
 - 6 x 3-bed cabins (green); and
 - 2 x 4-bed cabins including 1 x 4-bed tree house cabin (mauve).
- 3.12 An extract of the proposed site layout plan is provided in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Extract of proposed site layout plan



3.13 The proposal also includes the erection of a new reception and café building to the south of the existing car parking area on the approach into the park. The new building would be the first area on the site where visitors would check-in at reception, which would include a small seating area for visitors wanting tea/coffee/cold drink and a small selection of snacks, alongside a small retail area and a disabled toilet and baby changing area. The new building would also act as a meeting point for rangers and would provide an external area for dog/bike washing.

3.14 A new natural play area would also be provided near the main car parking area on the approach into the site, in an area which is currently a grassed open space.

Appearance

- 3.15 The proposed cabins would reflect the appearance and design of the existing log cabins at Forest Holiday, with the external walls comprising of tongue and grooved timber cladding to be stained in a dark oak or similar colour, interlocking roof tiles on a pitched roof and timber eaves. These have been designed to integrate effectively within their setting in a woodland location. The timber would be sourced sustainably so as to minimise environmental impact.
- 3.16 The new cabins would involve the construction of a modular pre-cast concrete raft floor with supporting ring beam, supported above ground level on a series of mini-piles, reflecting the design of the existing cabins. The piles are driven into the ground by a specialist, low-impact, bottom-driven piling rig, set on rubber tracks and with a gross weight of 1.5 tonnes. Its size and weight ensure that it can operate within a woodland setting without causing significant compaction to forest soils.
- 3.17 The proposed reception and café building would also reflect the same appearance with tongue and grooved external timber walls, a steel profile sheeting anthracite coloured roof, with timber framed windows and doors.

Landscaping

- 3.18 The overall landscaping proposals for the site include:
- Returning hardstanding that isn't being built upon to grassland. Proposing grassland mixes that will respond well to shaded woodland conditions.
 - Increase the areas of marshy grassland that could follow relaxed mowing regimes
 - Introduce flowering meadow seed to communal play areas to increase botanical diversity found within these areas of the site.
- 3.19 The current Beddgelert Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan, July 2018, will need to be updated to reflect the maintenance and monitoring of the increased undisturbed grassland areas proposed within the new site plans.
- 3.20 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies the need for 64 trees to be removed. The landscaping plans therefore incorporate the replanting of woodland in addition to ground floor planting. The replanting of trees has been determined by a ratio of 3:1 with tree species selection determined by those currently present within the 2023 Ecological Monitoring Report. The tree planting strategy aims to:

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- Uphold the current diverse mixture of broadleaf species
 - Provide a range of newly planted trees of varying size.
 - Enhance the woodland understorey with shrubs and scrub.
- 3.21 Hard landscaping would be kept to a minimum and would comprise of:
- 1.2 wide paths of permeable construction for footpath access to cabins - possible use of wood chip or loose local aggregate, with the exception of accessible cabins which follow DDA guidelines. The existing cabins provide this provision.
 - Extensions to existing road network to provide vehicle access to cabins - 6 m wide
 - Parking facilities.
 - Recycling facilities
- 3.22 Botanical diversity would be incorporated into the site through planting of ground cover, understory planting and grasslands.
- 3.23 Shrubs and scrub have been introduced as a form of screening and to diversify the habitat around new cabins. These may be managed in the future to become woodland or maintained as mid to low level vegetation. They would utilise native species and would be planted to provide scalloped edges where possible to provide a variety of microclimate for foraging mammals and invertebrates.
- 3.24 Around the river all existing riparian vegetation is to be retained to ensure that there are no changes to the stabilisation of the riverbank. They form a natural area of grassland enclosure to the marshy grasslands and will provide an important buffer to the extended marshy grasslands.
- 3.25 Several areas within the site will benefit from larger areas of permanent grassland and meadow. These areas can be located on the planting plan and would need to be met with the appropriate aftercare and maintenance plan. This will include:
- Relaxation of mowing regimes in the marshy grassland habitat areas leading to an increase in plant diversity.
 - Previously comprised hard standing, but which were returned to grass supporting ruderal species providing habitat for invertebrates which would not otherwise necessarily use the site.
 - Managing those areas by encouraging a transition towards grassland more similar to undisturbed grassland on site.

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- 3.26 The proposals also include the provision of a natural play area which would repurposes fallen timber from the site in a sustainable way to offer natural play using constructed balance beams and climbing equipment made from tree trunks.
- 3.27 The application is accompanied by a Landscape Proposals document prepared by LandStudio which provides further details of the proposed landscaping proposals for the site.

Access

- 3.28 Vehicular access would continue to be provided via the existing vehicular access from Caernarfon Road and no alterations are proposed to the access or car parking arrangements on the arrival into the site.
- 3.29 Car parking spaces for each holiday cabin would be provided from the partially redesigned internal access road which serve the holiday cabins. Two car parking spaces would be provided for each unit located on plot so as to maintain an intimate feeling and also to provide natural surveillance of the holiday cabin.

4. Policy context

4.1 National and local planning policy guidance considered relevant to the principle of this development is set out in this section.

National planning policy and guidance

4.1 This development relates to a holiday cabins, touring caravan and camping site and relevant national planning policy is set out in:

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12, (2024);
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities;
- TAN 12: Design;
- TAN 13: Tourism;
- TAN 18: Transport;
- TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language;
- TAN 23: Economic Development.

4.2 Relevant national planning policies are listed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Summary of national planning policy and guidance

Policy	Summary of policy
PPW: Chapter 5: Productive and Enterprising Places	<p>Economic Development For planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long-term prosperity, jobs and incomes.</p> <p>Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services.</p> <p>Tourism Tourism involves a wide range of activities, facilities and types of development and is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. Tourism can be a catalyst for regeneration, improvement of the built environment and environmental protection.</p> <p>The planning system encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, urban regeneration and social inclusion, while recognising the needs of visitors and those of local communities. The planning system can also assist in enhancing the sense of place of an area which has intrinsic value and interest for tourism.</p>

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		Planning authorities should adopt positive approaches to proposals which utilise previously developed or disused land and water bodies for tourism uses.
TAN Design	12	The Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion, at every scale throughout Wales. Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 identifies that an understanding of landscape and townscape quality, including its historic character, is fundamental to the design process.
TAN Tourism	13	TAN provides guidance on tourism related issues in planning including matters relating to hotel development and recognises that hotel development can bring benefits for the local community to support amenities and activities for residents and tourists. It is guided that hotel development should be compatible with neighbouring uses.
TAN Transport	18	<p>The main aim of TAN 18 is ensuring that new development is located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.4 of TAN identifies that the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport is complex and varied. The development of land is dependant, in part, upon transport infrastructure and services to function efficiently. By influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.</p> <p>TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, in particular ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.</p>
TAN Planning and the Welsh Language	20	<p>TAN 20 provides guidance on the consideration of the Welsh language as part of the Local Development Plan making process.</p> <p>In determining individual planning applications and appeals where the needs and interests of the Welsh language may be a material consideration; decisions must, as with all other planning applications, be based on planning grounds only and be reasonable. Adopted development plan policies are planning grounds, including those which have taken the needs and interests of the Welsh language into account.</p>
TAN 23 Economic Development		<p>TAN 23 also provides guidance on matters relating to economic development and recognises the diverse range of employment uses that are present in the economy in Wales.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.2.1 advises that <i>“the economic benefits associated with development may be geographically spread out far beyond the area where the development is located. As a consequence it is essential that the planning system recognises, and gives due weight to, the economic benefits associated with new development”</i>.</p> <p>Section 2.1 relates to the weight to be given to economic benefit. Paragraph 2.1.1 advises that it should not be assumed that economic objectives are necessarily in conflict with social and environmental objectives. Often these different dimensions point in the same direction. Planning should positively</p>

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	<p>and imaginatively seek such 'win-win' outcomes, where development contributes to all dimensions of sustainability.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.1.2 advises that where economic development would cause environmental or social harm which cannot be fully mitigated, careful consideration of the economic benefits will be necessary. There will of course be occasions when social and environmental considerations will outweigh economic benefit. The decision in each case will depend on the specific circumstances and the planning authority's priorities.</p>
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Building Better Places (July 2020)

- 4.3 In July 2020, the Welsh Government issued the document Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures.
- 4.4 The document emphasises the importance for the consideration of health and well-being throughout the planning system of Wales.
- 4.5 The document sets out ways in which future development and the planning system must move forward following the significant impact that Covid-19 has had on communities. It emphasises the importance of:
- reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors,
 - creating neighbourhoods,
 - exercise and rediscovered transport methods,
 - green infrastructure, health and well-being and ecological resilience.
- 4.6 The document recognises that the planning system must ensure the chosen locations and resulting design of new developments support sustainable travel modes and maximise accessibility by walking and cycling. New development should improve the quality of place and create safe, social, attractive neighbourhoods where people want to walk, cycle and enjoy.
- 4.7 Building Better Places recognises that during this time we have also seen a renaissance of local service provision from smaller retailers or businesses, in both rural and urban areas; this entrepreneurial spirit should be recognised and supported by the planning system.
- 4.8 The planning system strongly supports a diverse, sustainable tourism and culture industry. It brings jobs and income into Wales, and it enables people worldwide to enjoy and experience Welsh hospitality, landscape and culture. It is important that any new

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investment works with our cultural and historic assets to maximise benefits and positively contribute to sustainable development.

- 4.9 Cultural and historic assets can help attract and complement investment into our communities. The document recognises that it is important that any new investment works with our cultural and historic assets to maximise benefits and positively contribute to sustainable development.

Local planning policy and guidance

- 4.10 The adopted development plan consists of Eryri Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted in February 2019. Table 4.2 provides a summary of local planning policy which is of relevance to the proposed development.
- 4.11 The adopted Eryri LDP provides two key objectives in supporting a sustainable rural economy within Snowdonia National Park. These are:
- Encourage sustainable economic growth by supporting a rural economy that provides employment opportunities and maintains thriving communities; and
 - Support tourism and outdoor recreation which maximise local economic benefits, minimise environmental impact and are in sympathy with the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park.
- 4.12 It is considered that the proposed development would embody the spirit of these objectives, as it would support an existing rural business within the National Park with minimal impact upon the environment, would support employment of local people, and would help to support tourism within the National Park and within the whole of North Wales.

Table 4.2 Summary of local planning policy and guidance

Policy	Summary of policy
Strategic Policy A: National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development	The LDP seeks to ensure that new development promotes the principles of sustainable development in ways which further National Park purposes and duty whilst conservation and enhancing the National Park’s ‘Special Qualities’. Proposals which compromise National Park purposes will be refused. There are a number of considerations listed that should be taken into account.
Development Policy 1: General	There are certain broad requirements which all development should meet if it is to be acceptable within the National Park. Proposals must be acceptable in terms of their impact on the landscape, natural environment and cultural heritage, opportunities for understanding and enjoyment,

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Development Principles	quality and design, sustainable use of resources, amenity, highway safety, flood risk and infrastructure. Development Policy 1 sets out an important context for the topic-based policies contained in the Eryri LDP.
Strategic Policy D: Natural Environment	The natural resources, biodiversity, geodiversity and 'Special Qualities' of the Snowdonia National Park will be protected from inappropriate development. Where development is deemed acceptable developers will be expected to ensure that the natural environment is protected and enhanced. Proposals should not adversely affect the National Park's biodiversity resources including designated sites from an international through to a local level, as well as wider biodiversity resources e.g. habitats and species outside designated sites
Development Policy 2: Development and Landscape	The scale and design of new development, including its setting, landscaping and integration should respect and conserve the character, qualities and views of the landscape. Unacceptable impacts on the landscape will be resisted and particular regard will be had to the protection of: i. The Snowdonia Dark Skies Reserve, in particular Core Areas. ii. The Dyfi Biosphere Reserve. iii. Section 3 areas of natural beauty. iv. Undeveloped coast. v. Panoramas visible from significant viewpoints. vi. Sensitive Landscape Character Areas as defined in the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents the Landscapes of Eryri and the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.
Development Policy 6: Sustainable Design and Materials	With regard to National Park setting and the Authority's commitment to social inclusion, development proposals will be required to take into consideration the following: i. Inclusive design ii. Landscape protection and enhancement iii. Biodiversity protection and enhancement iv. The Historic Environment v. Environmental sustainability vi. Cultural identity vii. An Integrated energy statement Natural Welsh mineral roofing slate or an approved equivalent material with the same colour, texture and weathering characteristics will be required on new buildings and extensions.
Chapter 6. Supporting a Sustainable Rural Economy	SNPA's objective in terms of the rural economy is to "Encourage sustainable economic growth by supporting a rural economy that provides employment opportunities and maintains thriving communities. Support tourism and outdoor recreation which maximise local economic benefits, minimise environmental impact and are in sympathy with the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park."
Strategic Policy H: A Sustainable Rural Economy	In order to create and retain a sustainable rural economy, SNPA will: Safeguard existing key employment sites at Bala, Dolgellau and Harlech. Support new employment and business development and the retention of existing employment the local service centres, service settlements and secondary settlements. The nature and scale of the development must be commensurate with the settlement's size and function.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Promote the re-use of underused or redundant land or buildings for economic or employment purposes. ii. Support the agricultural sector and opportunities for rural diversification that do not negatively impact on the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park. iii. Support tourism and recreation activity which maximise local economic benefits, minimise environmental impact and safeguard the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park. iv. Encourage proposals which would provide appropriate supportive infrastructures to sustain and promote the local economy. v. Support live-work units and home working.
<p>Strategic Policy I: Tourism</p>	<p>Tourism has been a traditional industry in Eryri and the surrounding seaside resorts for at least two centuries.</p> <p>Through tourism it is possible to achieve one of the statutory purposes of the National Park; that is to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park. The Authority aims to encourage sustainable tourism and ecotourism, maximising economic and employment benefits while safeguarding the environment as well as the interest of the local communities.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism is any form of development, management or tourist activity which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas.</p> <p>In order to create and retain sustainable or eco-tourism within the National Park and extend the visitor period while protecting and enhancing the landscape of the National Park and its special qualities the Authority will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support tourism and recreation development that is based on the principles of sustainable tourism. ii. Identify and promote areas of the National Park that attract visitors while ensuring that the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park are not affected. iii. Promote sustainable modes of transport for visitors to and from the National Park. iv. Support the accommodation industry by encouraging the improvement of the sustainability and quality of existing visitor accommodation.

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	<p>v. Encourage proposals which will promote the opportunity for the public understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park including proposals that will assist disabled people.</p>
<p>Development Policy 18: The Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of communities</p>	<p>Advises that the needs and interests of the Welsh language will be taken into account when determining all planning applications within the National Park.</p> <p>This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Supporting development which maintains or enhances the integrity of the Welsh language. ii. Refusing development which, due to its size, scale or its location, would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community. To be able to make an informed decision on applications that may have an effect on the future of the Welsh language within communities, applicants will be required to submit a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 'Community and Linguistic Statement' to accompany a planning application for unanticipated windfall sites of 5 or more residential units; a commercial, industrial or tourist development with an area of 1000m² or more; a development which is likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities and a tourism development creating ten or more holiday units. b) More detailed assessment in the form of a 'Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment' to accompany a planning application where developments are on a larger scale. Larger developments in this case are regarded as proposals which are substantially above the thresholds outlined in criterion (a) and are likely to be located on unallocated sites, have some significance beyond the National Park boundary and be unrelated to specific policies in the Plan. iii. Mitigating against any adverse effect through requiring, in appropriate circumstances a financial contribution through a Section 106 agreement. <p>Support will be given for development which maintains or enhances the integrity of the Welsh language and refusing development which due to its size, scale or its location would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community.</p> <p>The policy encourages the use of Welsh place names for new development, house and street names.</p>
<p>Development Policy 22: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites</p>	<p>Within the National Park new static caravan or chalet sites, or extensions to existing sites, which involve an increase in the number of static units will not be permitted.</p> <p>The redevelopment of sites which may include improving or extending facilities within existing site boundaries, reducing densities or other beneficial environmental improvements will be supported, if there is an overall improvement to the site and its setting in the landscape.</p>

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	<p>Exceptionally, static and chalet site areas may be enlarged, but without increasing pitches, where this would achieve clear overall environmental improvement, both to the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The replacement of static units with chalets or alternative accommodation units will be permitted where there is an overall improvement to the site and there is no unacceptable environmental or landscape impact.</p> <p>Proposals for the change of use of a static caravan or chalet from tourist use to residential use will not be permitted.</p>
<p>Static caravans and chalets Para 6.39</p>	<p>It is recognised that caravan and chalet sites provide important addition to the range of accommodation that is on offer to meet the varying needs of the visitors to the Park.</p>
<p>Tourist accommodation Para 6.38</p>	<p>The National Park needs to maintain a good range of quality accommodation for visitors.</p>

- 4.13 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 8: Visitor Accommodation also provides additional guidance in relation to proposals relating to chalet and static caravan sites advising that the Eryri LDP supports the environmental improvements and upgrading of facilities on such sites to reduce their impact on the landscape of the national park.

5. Main considerations

- 5.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are as follows, and are then discussed in detail:
- Principle of development;
 - Economic benefits;
 - Social benefits;
 - Biodiversity;
 - Impact on landscape and trees;
 - Green Infrastructure;
 - Welsh language and culture; and
 - Drainage.

Principle of development

- 5.2 The adopted Eryri Local Development Plan (LDP) provides two key objectives in supporting a sustainable rural economy within Snowdonia National Park. These are:
- Encourage sustainable economic growth by supporting a rural economy that provides employment opportunities and maintains thriving communities; and
 - Support tourism and outdoor recreation which maximise local economic benefits, minimise environmental impact and are in sympathy with the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park.
- 5.3 It is considered that the proposed development would embody the spirit of these objectives, as it would diversify an existing rural tourism business within the National Park with minimal impact upon the environment, would continue to support a key employer of local people within the National Park, and would help to support tourism within the National Park and within the whole of North Wales.
- 5.4 Tourism has been a traditional industry in Eryri for at least two decades. Tourism enables the promotion of opportunities for understanding and enjoying the ‘Special Qualities’ of the National Park, which is one of the statutory purposes of the National Park.
- 5.5 Strategic Policy I: Tourism and Development and Policy 21: Tourism and Recreation support sustainable development proposals which do not adversely impact on the “special qualities” of the National Park.

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- 5.6 Strategic Policy I of the LDP specifically states that the Authority will seek to “*support the accommodation industry by encouraging the improvement of the sustainability and quality of existing visitor accommodation*”.
- 5.7 Forest Holidays is an existing tourist accommodation provider within the National Park. The proposed additional holiday cabins (in lieu of existing touring caravan and camping pitches), together with overall improvements to the site in terms of the provision of a new reception and café building, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement would provide additional high-quality self-serviced accommodation at Forest Holidays, expanding this type of holiday accommodation in the Beddgelert area.
- 5.8 The proposal also forms part of a wider visitor recreation masterplan for Beddgelert alongside a proposal to provide additional touring and camping pitches at an existing touring and camping site at Cae Du and Cae Canol Campsite. The applicants are working together to ensure that the overall tourist accommodation provision for Beddgelert continues to provide the all-important touring and camping pitches, together with higher quality self-catering accommodation, both of which support the local economy by leading to spin-off spending in the village of Beddgelert as well as the wider area.
- 5.9 The cabin, touring and camping site at Forest Holidays benefits from planning permission for year-round occupation by virtue of planning permission NP2/11/31G (06 July 2017). That permission consented the siting of 16 self-catering, self-contained holiday cabins and 85 pitches for touring caravans and tent pitches, also for year-round occupation.
- 5.10 In light of the above, the proposed development for the siting of an additional 22 holiday cabins should be assessed against Policy 22: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites of the Eryri LDP.
- 5.11 As the consented 85 touring and camping pitches enjoy year-round occupancy, they can be regarded in the same manner as a static/chalet site under terms of Policy 22.
- 5.12 Policy 22 of the Eryri LDP would allow for the relinquishment of the 85 year-round occupancy touring and camping pitches in lieu of the proposed additional 22 cabins, provided that the requirements of Policy 22 are complied with.
- 5.13 Pre-application discussions with the LPA confirmed that crucially, in order to comply with Policy 22, the overall site must not be enlarged, the number and the density of the

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chalets/static pitches must be reduced and there must be shown to be other beneficial environmental improvements within the site boundary and its setting within the surrounding landscape.

- 5.14 Consequently, and in principle, the proposed relinquishment of the existing 85 touring caravan and camping pitches in lieu of 22 additional cabins conform with Policy 22 of the Eryri LDP.
- 5.15 The proposed development would seek to reduce the overall density of the number of accommodation units within the Forest Holidays site, relinquishing 85 touring caravan and camping pitches for 22 cabin units. The layout of the site has been designed so as to work around existing site features, such as trees and internal access roads, with the proposed location of the cabins being positioned in existing areas of clearing, which are accessible from the internal access road.
- 5.16 The location of the cabins have also been selected so as to minimise their visual appearance within the site, but also from external views looking towards the site. Forest Holidays is generally very well screened from major public viewpoints and much of what is proposed as part of the proposals are not considered to be visible to passers-by as the cabins would be sited in existing developed areas within the site.
- 5.17 The proposal would see part of the internal access road removed and planted in lieu of the existing hardstanding, which would provide an overall biodiversity and environmental improvement to this part of the site.
- 5.18 The proposed development also includes a detailed landscape strategy that would include:
- Returning hardstanding that isn't being built upon to grassland. Proposing grassland mixes that will respond well to shaded woodland conditions.
 - Increase the areas of marshy grassland that could follow relaxed mowing regimes
 - Introduce flowering meadow seed to communal play areas to increase botanical diversity found within these areas of the site.
- 5.19 Replacement tree planting is also proposed at a ratio of 3:1 to replace existing trees which will be removed as part of the proposal by way of replanting of woodland in addition to ground floor planting. New hard landscaping would be kept to a minimum. The proposals also include the provision of a natural play area which would repurposes fallen timber from the site in a sustainable way to offer natural play using constructed balance beams and climbing equipment made from tree trunks.

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- 5.20 In addition to woodland enhancement by way of landscape planting, the proposals also include biodiversity enhancements with the addition of ecological features including 20 bat and bird boxes and a minimum of two reptile refugia/hibernacula.
- 5.21 The proposal would also seek to improve the overall customer experience by the erection of a new purpose-built reception and café building where customers approach into the site. this would provide additional facilities such as a bike and dog wash area and an area for the site wardens to meet.
- 5.22 It is considered that the overall improvements proposed as part of the proposed development would ensure that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy 22.

Economic benefits

- 5.23 A thriving and diverse local economy where sustainable tourism and other forms of employment in a working countryside complement agriculture-related activities is one of the Welsh Government's priorities for rural areas.
- 5.24 TAN 6 states that "*...the overall goal for the planning system is to support living and working rural communities in order that they are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable*".
- 5.25 PPW advises that the economic benefits of development are material considerations when determining planning applications.
- 5.26 The economic benefits of holiday parks and campsite sector in Wales is clearly demonstrated in recent figures published by UKCCA in their 'Pitching the Value: 2024 Economic Benefit Report: Holiday Parks and Campsites Wales' (February 2024). The recent publication notes that in 2022/23 it is estimated that the Welsh holiday park and campsite sector generated a gross direct visitor expenditure impact of £1.66bn in the economy. This visitor expenditure supports 30,726 FTE jobs and contributes £945.9m (including multipliers) of GVA to the economy. In addition to the figures above, money spent on maintenance by tourers and holiday caravan owners adds a further £92.8m of expenditure to the Welsh economy.
- 5.27 The 'Pitching the Value: 2024 Economic Benefit Report: Holiday Parks and Campsites Wales' Report notes ways in which holiday parks and campsite operators support their local communities through:

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- expenditure – 31% from the total survey sample cumulatively spent £13.4m per year in capital expenditure, operating expenditure, wages and salaries
- local community engagement – including hosting community events, promoting local business and causes, and fundraising for charities
- environmental activities – including support for recycling and biodiversity, water and energy conservation initiatives, renewable energy adoption and participation in the Green Tourism award scheme
- health and wellbeing – including providing cycle paths, promotion of wider community health and fitness sessions and healthy food options provided on-parks

5.28 The application is accompanied by an Economic Impact Assessment report. It identifies that the tourism industry is a core industry in Wales, being more important to the local economy in Wales than any other part of the UK, accounting for 4.9% of its economic output, compared to 3.7% as the UK average. Wales has some of the UK's most tourism-dependent local authorities, which includes Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy. Tourism contributes £6.9bn to the wider Welsh economy and supports almost a quarter of a million FTE jobs.

5.29 Tourism is also a key employer in the Gwynedd area. Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, the economic value of the sector was estimated at c£1.4B, with c18,200 people working in the field. The value of the sector dropped significantly during the pandemic but the latest STEAM data report for 2022 evidences that the sector has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels. The following provides a summary of the statistics in relation to Gwynedd:

- Value to the economy (income) £1.5B (+23% on 2021)
- Number of FTE jobs 17,737 (+21% on 2021)
- Number of visitors 7.9M (+33% on 2021)
 - Number of day visitors 3.8M (+24% on 2021)
 - Number of staying visitors 4.1M (+43% on 2021)
- Number of overnight stays 20.4M (+32% on 2021)
- Average visit duration 5.0 nights

5.30 The Economic Impact Report identifies current trends in the tourism market as follows:

- Overseas residents' visits to the UK and UK residents' visits abroad remain lower than pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels from 2019; however, spending was higher in 2023 than in 2019 for both groups

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- The value of UK domestic tourism peaked in 2019 at c£92B. Despite the recovery from a low point of £34B in 2020, the Domestic Tourism market in the UK faces challenges on two fronts including the cost-of-living crisis affecting consumer finance, and the strong bounce-back in overseas holidays post-pandemic.
- In terms of the UK public's intent to take overnight trips, both within the UK and abroad:
 - Overnight domestic trip intentions were on par with levels anticipated in April 2023
 - For overnight overseas trips, intentions are above 2023 levels
 - The barriers to taking a UK overnight trip in the next six months are the rising cost-of-living, UK weather, and personal finances.
 - The composition of the Wales trip intender appears different to 2023. In 2024, they are more likely to be families and from outside of Wales – the proportion of Wales residents planning an overnight trip in Wales has declined.
 - Consistent with 2023 and previous years, Wales overnight intenders have more limited financial means than intenders to other UK destinations – Wales attracting the second highest proportion of visitors 'hit hard' or 'being cautious and careful' as a result of the cost-of-living crisis
 - Wales trip intenders in 2024 are most likely to be motivated by a Wales trip 'to get away from it all and have a rest' and 'family time with my partner'. Notably, the motivation 'to connect with nature/be outdoors' amongst Wales trip intenders has increased since 2023 (an increase that has not occurred across the UK).
 - The most popular intended activities for Wales trip intenders are 'walking, hiking or rambling', 'trying local food and drink' and 'visiting heritage sites' – the latter two increasing since 2023 (and not increasing across the UK)
 - Wales trip intenders are most likely to anticipate their overnight trip being in a 'traditional seaside town' or a 'countryside or village' – both higher than in 2023. 'Rural coastline' and 'mountains or hills' are also popular; the latter is higher than across the UK. Intention to take a trip to a 'city or large town' is lower than in 2023, and much lower than across the UK
 - Consistent with previous reporting, Snowdonia is the most intended destination for an overnight trip in Wales
 - Consistent with 2023, Wales trip intenders are more likely to be planning a longer trip of 4+ nights than a short break. This is a difference to all UK trips, which are more balanced towards shorter breaks, driven by a higher interest in city breaks. Notably, UK trips are set to be shorter than in 2023 – a shift that

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has not occurred for trips to Wales. Wales relative resilience in trip length could be driven by perceptions as a good-value destination.

- 5.31 The Economic Impact Report acknowledges that the popularity of short break holidays can have negative impacts, especially in areas such as Eryri National Park and Gwynedd as areas with highest densities of short-term holiday let accommodation and second home ownership and the inability of local people to purchase homes in these popular holiday destinations. Providing purpose built holiday accommodation such as those currently provided at Forest Holidays and are proposed as part of this application, could contribute towards alleviating some of that pressure, by providing short-term holiday let accommodation in the village, which could in turn reduce the pressure on the local housing stock in Beddgelert.
- 5.32 The Economic Impact Assessment identifies trends that visitors are actively seeking locations that prioritise their health and relaxation. The proposed development aligns with those trends by providing accommodation in a natural setting, with relaxation facilities and access to activity experiences.
- 5.33 Outdoor and adventure tourism, which includes physical activity, cultural exchange, and activities in nature, has gained popularity. Outdoor activities such as walking and cycling are readily available in the local area.
- 5.34 Consumers are increasingly conscious of the environmental and social impacts of their choices. Sustainability has become a significant factor in decision-making, including travel choices. Travellers are actively seeking sustainable options and eco-friendly accommodation. Forest Holidays has secured B Corp certification to evidence the validity of their socially sustainable operating model. The low carbon and eco-friendly approach of the developments align well with this growing client requirement.
- 5.35 The proposed development at Forest Holidays represents an investment of £8.1M in terms of construction cost and would support 16 additional part-time jobs and one additional full-time job. It is estimated that spend from additional visitors staying at the proposed additional cabins at Forest Holidays could represent a potential additional income of £650,000 per annum.

Social benefits

- 5.36 Forest Holidays is an important local employer, employing 14 full-time staff directly and a further 11 part-time members of staff, the vast majority of whom are local people, with

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over 50% of staff being Welsh speakers. Supporting the local supply chain is integral to Forest Holidays who seek to employ local contractors and tradespeople for site development and on-going site maintenance, as well as the use of local cleaners and laundry suppliers. There is a small shop on site which provides basic essentials for those staying on site. The extent of produce sold on site ensures that the provision does not deter visitors from supporting the local shop within the village, by only providing basic essentials, thereby encouraging spend within the local economy.

- 5.37 Forest Holidays are actively involved in community life within the village, providing funding towards public toilets whilst site managers and staff actively support local events and fundraisers including support for the local Cylch Meithrin, engagement with Ysgol Beddgelert through support with landscaping works and day trips. Forest Holidays are also actively involved in the Beddgelert Tourism Association, and have invested and supported the community WiFi project as well as volunteering days to support Eryri National Park Authority. The Welsh Highland Railway platform also adjoins the Forest Holidays site and the applicants assist with maintenance work.
- 5.38 The proposed development will contribute positively to the tourism function within this rural area of Eryri National Park, as well as the wider local area and other destinations which are popular with tourists. It is considered that the proposed scheme will offer economic benefits to the local area, which will contribute to the additional spend within the local economy.
- 5.39 The proposal will enhance the high-quality holiday accommodation provided at an established rural business, which would contribute towards increased local spend by visitors within the local economy by supporting existing and future businesses in the area.

Biodiversity

- 5.40 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment which identifies that the proposed development may impact on the following ecological receptors:
- Bats by way of roosting, foraging and commuting opportunity.
 - Breeding birds due to nesting opportunities throughout the site.
 - Otter by way of foraging and commuting habitat within the watercourse to the east.
 - Reptiles and amphibians due to presence of common species cannot be discounted.
 - Notable plants such as Bluebells (local priority species) which are present on site.

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- Invasive species such as Rhododendron and variegated yellow archangel which are present on site.
 - Priority habitat (river) adjacent to the site.
- 5.41 The proposal also offers opportunities for net benefit for biodiversity including birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and habitat through the provision of nesting boxes and bat boxes to be positioned on mature trees within the site, provision of reptile/amphibian refugia and enhancements to the existing/retained woodland at Forest Holidays.
- 5.42 Further details regarding the potential impacts on biodiversity and the proposed biodiversity enhancement can be found in the Ecological Impact Assessment.

Impact on landscape and trees

- 5.43 The application site at Forest Holidays is located in a woodland setting on a part of the Forest Holidays site which currently accommodates 85 touring caravan and camping pitches. The additional cabins are proposed to be sited in existing areas of clearance within the forest, in areas which currently include areas of hardstanding for touring caravans or camping pitches.
- 5.44 The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which considers potential impact of the development on individual trees, groups of trees and a woodland.
- 5.45 Forest Holidays have a great deal of experience in installing cabins and associated infrastructure within woodland settings and have a proven track record of success with no adverse impacts to the health and vitality of the trees. The whole process is carefully orchestrated via their detailed 'Construction Environmental Management Plan' that has been used across their portfolio to ensure successful integration into the valuable woodland resource that is the principle of their business.
- 5.46 In order to accommodate the proposed development it is inevitable that some trees will require removal. Whilst unfortunate to lose any trees, this is an established woodland with a significant amount of surrounding tree cover. The loss of these trees will be completely unnoticed given their location in the centre of the woodland ensuring no loss in the amenity or landscape value they afford the wider locale. Most trees lost are early mature specimens that as well as clearing space for the cabins and new road will help create important open glades and provide space for adjacent canopy establishment.

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5.47 Impact upon trees can be summarised as follows:

- New access track and footpath - the proposed new access track and footpath alignment encroaches within the Root Protection Areas (RPA) of trees. To prevent damage to the trees these sections will be installed to a no-dig engineering solution.
- New cabins - the proposed new cabins encroach within the RPA of several trees. To prevent damage to any underlying tree roots the cabins will be supported on beams set on or above the existing ground level on a mini-piled foundation.
- Installation of cabin frame – upon completion of the piled foundation a working scaffold will be erected around the perimeter of each cabin location with the prefabricated panels moved by hand within this 'working area'. Where construction plant is required, they will be manoeuvred outside the RPA of trees. If movement is required within the RPA, ground protection boards/bogmats will be installed to ensure loads are evenly distributed and prevent compaction to underlying soils.
- Removal of the existing compacted road and touring caravan pitches - to reduce potential damage to underlying roots, these areas will be lightly scrapped with a non-toothed bucket on a mini excavator under supervision. Any exposed roots will be immediately backfilled with topsoil to prevent desiccation. Any damaged roots will be cleanly pruned using secateurs or sharp saw back to the next available inner node.

5.48 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies the need for 64 trees to be removed. The landscaping plans therefore incorporate the replanting of woodland in addition to ground floor planting. The replanting of trees has been determined by a ratio of 3:1.

5.49 If the working methods detailed in the Arboricultural Method Statement are followed, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment concludes that the impact on trees would be acceptable.

5.50 The application is also accompanied by a Woodland Management Plan 2024 which provides ongoing management and improvement of the amenity woodland within the Forest Holidays site. The plan incorporates and continues work set out in the 2017 Management Plan and aims to maintain, improve and enhance the landscape quality, amenity and ecological habitat value of the site whilst allowing continued development of the site in line with business requirements and budgets.

5.51 The aims of the Woodland Management Plan include:

- Maintain and develop a sustainable woodland structure that supports the landscape, ecological and recreational use of the site.

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- Improve the age structure and genetic suitability of trees across the site to ensure continuous and improving canopy cover over the site.
 - Maintain manage and improve the woodland understorey to support native species.
 - Develop and maintain a wider range of habitats to support and sustain local native wildlife.
 - Encourage the development of graduated woodland edges minimising risk to the adjacent railway.
 - Retain mature trees or tree parts where possible.
- 5.52 In terms of landscape impact, the areas which have been selected for the siting of the additional cabins have been identified taking into account any potential impact on view in towards the site. As previously mentioned, the cabins would be sited in locations which currently accommodate touring caravan and camping pitches, which can be used all year round.
- 5.53 The proposed cabins would have a natural wooden cladding finish reflecting the existing cabins on site, which allow them to integrate effectively into their woodland setting. Forest Holidays is a very well screened site, with limited views into the site. Trees which are proposed to be removed are mainly located within the site itself, which would not change the visual impact as a result of the loss of these trees.

Green infrastructure

- 5.54 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12), 2024 advises that the quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. It advises that with careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.
- 5.55 PPW advises that a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications and should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.
- 5.56 The application is accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement which identifies the following:

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- Minimal habitat losses will result from proposals, impacting woodland, amenity grassland, marshy grassland, and hardstanding.
- An extensive area of existing hardstanding will be removed and replanted under the proposals.
- Planting should be like-for-like (or better) of the habitat lost and should maximise native species.
- Habitat management should be for the duration of the development.
- Additional opportunity exists to enhance retained habitat which should be detailed within a Habitat Management Plan.
- Wildlife boxes have been recommended in addition, to benefit species.
- The provision of mitigation will result in clear net benefits for biodiversity, compliant with local policy and the Step-Wise Approach as detailed within PPW.

Welsh language and culture

- 5.57 Development Policy 18: 'The Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of communities' of the Eryri LDP seeks to take account of the needs and interests of the Welsh language when determining planning applications. The policy advises that tourism developments creating 10 or more holiday units should be accompanied by a Community and Linguistic Statement.
- 5.58 The application is accompanied by a Community and Linguistic Statement which identifies that the proposal has the potential to beneficially support the Welsh language through increasing the visibility of the Welsh language on site, raising awareness of Welsh language and culture with Eryri National Park and providing an opportunity for Welsh speaking visitors to liaise in Welsh during their stay.
- 5.59 Forest Holidays wants to ensure that the Welsh language is actively promoted at their Beddgelert and Garwnant sites and have sought the assistance of the Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu Team to develop this offering and have developed a Welsh Language Development Plan which has been submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner to seek comment and approval.
- 5.60 The Welsh Language Development Plan will enable Forest Holidays to further support staff members with developing their Welsh language skills, whilst also improving their ability to engage with Welsh speaking guests and promote the Welsh language to all visitors.

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- 5.61 Forest Holidays are committing to measures which are set out in the Welsh Language Development Plan as ways to provide Welsh language services and support the Welsh language. These will be implemented as part of the Welsh Language Development Plan, which will be reviewed every three years. Some of the measures include:
- Welsh speaking staff wear a company approved name badge which identify them as Welsh Speakers using the Welsh flag as identification.
 - Welsh speaking team members encouraged to wear the laith Gwaith orange pin badge at work.
 - All directional signage presented in both Welsh and English.
 - Enhance bilingual communication with customers over the phone, when replying and sending emails and letters, on marketing materials, email signatures, social media profiles and posts, publications and digitally on their website.
 - Welsh language training for staff.
 - Advertisement of new jobs roles bilingually.
- 5.62 The development therefore has the potential to beneficially impact the Welsh language through raising awareness of the Welsh language and culture amongst visitors and providing enhanced opportunities for Welsh speaking employees at Forest Holidays to use their Welsh language skills in the workplace, where they are respected and valued.

Drainage and flood risk

- 5.63 The application is accompanied by a Drainage Strategy which sets out a surface water management for the site.
- 5.64 All surface water drainage for the development is designed to incorporate SuDS principles including roof drainage from new buildings discharging directly to the ground via infiltration strips and road drainage is managed through porous surfaces or edge infiltration.
- 5.65 In terms of foul water drainage, the development would use the existing activated sludge treatment plant. The wastewater generated from daily uses flows by gravity into the primary settlement chamber. Effluent is the transferred in a controlled manner to the main biological treatment unit. The system complies with the current Natural Resources Wales (NRW) permit.
- 5.66 The Drainage Strategy acknowledges that NRW is revising the discharge permit to reflect the Special Area of Conservation designation for the Glaslyn catchment. These

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changes will require treatment plant upgrades to ensure compliance, incorporating modern technologies to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs.

- 5.67 The development site has been designed to ensure cabins are located outside the 100-year and 1,000-year flood zones. All cabins have been sited outside the flood risk areas, negating the need for a Flood Consequence Assessment.

6. Other design considerations

Materials

- 6.1 The proposed cabins would reflect the appearance and design of the existing log cabins at Forest Holiday, with the external walls comprising of tongue and grooved timber cladding to be stained in a dark oak or similar colour, interlocking roof tiles on a pitched roof and timber eaves. These have been designed to integrate effectively within their setting in a woodland location. The timber would be sourced sustainably so as to minimise environmental impact.
- 6.2 The new cabins would involve the construction of a modular pre-cast concrete raft floor with supporting ring beam, supported above ground level on a series of mini-piles, reflecting the design of the existing cabins. The piles are driven into the ground by a specialist, low-impact, bottom-driven piling rig, set on rubber tracks and with a gross weight of 1.5 tonnes. Its size and weight ensure that it can operate within a woodland setting without causing significant compaction to forest soils.
- 6.3 The proposed reception and café building would also reflect the same appearance with tongue and grooved external timber walls, a steel profile sheeting anthracite coloured roof, with timber framed windows and doors.
- 6.4 Hard landscaping would be kept to a minimum and would comprise of:
- 1.2 wide paths of permeable construction for footpath access to cabins - possible use of wood chip or loose local aggregate, with the exception of accessible cabins which follow DDA guidelines. The existing cabins provide this provision.
 - Extensions to existing road network to provide vehicle access to cabins - 6 m wide
 - Parking facilities.
 - Recycling facilities

Environmental sustainability

- 6.5 The application site is located in a rural area which also has public transport services from the village of Beddgelert, providing access to popular tourism locations in the locality. More details are provided in section 7 of this Statement.

Community safety

- 6.6 The application proposes to additional high-quality cabin accommodation within the existing Forest Holiday site, in lieu of existing touring caravan and camping pitches. Given that the Forest Holidays site is already enclosed by definitive site boundaries, albeit with pedestrian access to recreational routes and the Welsh Highland Railway to the west of the site, the development is not considered to alter the community safety aspects of the site.

7. Accessibility

Planning policy

- 7.1 The relevant national policies and guidance relating to accessibility are set out within:
- Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12, (2024); and
 - Technical Advice Note 18 'Transport' (2007).
- 7.2 The relevant planning policy within the adopted LDP is:
- Strategic policy: Accessibility and Transport.

Movement to, from and within the development

- 7.3 Vehicular access to the Forest Holiday site is provided via an existing entrance from the A4085. No alterations are proposed to the existing access.
- 7.4 Internally, access would be provided to the proposed cabins via the existing internal access, which would be altered in places with some additional new internal access road and some being removed and returned to soft landscaping.
- 7.5 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan. The Transport Statement identifies that the proposed siting of 22 additional cabins in lieu of 85 existing touring/camping pitches would result in 7 fewer trips in the AM peak period and PM peak periods. The traffic distribution will be similar to the current use of the site, with the exception of having fewer trips.

Sustainability

- 7.6 The site benefits from being located on the edge of the popular tourist village of Beddgelert, which is accessible from Caernarfon to the north-west, Capel Curig/Betws y Coed to the north-east and Porthmadog to the south.
- 7.7 There is a comprehensive network of Public Rights of Ways (PRoWs) which are suitable for both cyclists and pedestrians. There is a bridleway that runs along the site's western boundary close to the West Highland Railway and there are connecting footways providing links to Beddgelert Forest and into the village of Beddgelert.

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- 7.8 The closest bus stop to the site is Beddgelert campsite bus stop located at the site entrance and is served by the S3 bus. This service runs from Beddgelert to Bangor and provides an hourly service from this stop.
- 7.9 The village of Beddgelert has access to public transport and is served by S4 as well as S3. This service runs every 2 hours (weekdays) and provides access from Beddgelert Pen y Pass to Porthmadog via Beddgelert and Beddgelert to Caernarfon.
- 7.10 Whilst there isn't a public railway station, Beddgelert does benefit from access to the restored heritage railway; Welsh Highland Railway, which is a 25-mile long restored narrow-gauge heritage railway operating between Caernarfon and Porthmadog, passing through numerous popular tourist destinations. Trains operate within the summer months and additional trains may run according to demand.
- 7.11 The nearest station on the Welsh Highland Railway line is located directly adjoining Forest Holidays and is known as the Meillionen halt. The halt is for customers of the location and provides access to both Caernarfon and Porthmadog. Passengers wishing to alight the train at Forest Holiday must inform the guard as soon as possible as it is not a scheduled stop.
- 7.12 The application is also accompanied by an Interim Travel Plan which details that sustainable travel will be promoted for local trips with origins at the camp site and also details that a daily mini bus service will provide guests with an alternative means of accessing Beddgelert as opposed to driving by private car.
- 7.13 A Travel Plan Coordinator will be appointed to implement the measures detailed within this Travel Plan and provide annual updates for the visitor. In addition the Travel Plan Coordinator will liaise with the local authority about the success of the Travel Plan.

Parking

- 7.14 Each cabin will be provided with cycle parking at a rate of one space per person for each cabin.
- 7.15 There is a car park provided at the entrance to the site with 22 spaces, 2 of which are disabled bays. There will also be 77 parking spaces provided spread out between all cabins. This is approximately 2 spaces per cabin. The car parking will also have one EV charging station per cabin with a further 2 charging stations at the reception.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This application relates to proposals at Forest Holiday to improve the overall tourism accommodation through the siting of 22 additional cabins in lieu of 85 touring caravan and camping pitches, together with overall improvements to the site by way of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement and the erection of a new reception and café building. The proposals would form part of a Visitor Recreation Masterplan involving Forest Holidays as well as Cae Du and Cae Canol sites, which would support the local tourism economy of the village of Beddgelert in a way that aligns with the thrust of the Gwynedd & Eryri 2035 Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan.
- 8.2 The Visitor Recreation Masterplan provides a schematic overview of the proposal including opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling access into the village as well as providing significant benefits in terms of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement to green infrastructure networks.
- 8.3 Both Forest Holidays and Roberts Group have been collaboratively working together to deliver schemes at both Forest Holidays and Cae Du Campsite that would deliver economic benefits for the tourism and visitor economy of Beddgelert.
- 8.4 Expanding the provision of cabins at Forest Holidays would continue to support the local economy leading to spin-off spending within businesses in Beddgelert. The spin-off spending from visitors staying in touring caravans and camping pitches differs from those staying in cabins. Therefore, in order to retain the economic benefits from touring and camping pitches for the benefit of the village and its businesses, it is proposed to increase the touring and camping pitches Cae Du and Cae Canol. This would retain the economic spin-off spending benefits from visitors of the touring and camping pitches within the village, whilst replacing the touring and camping pitches with additional cabins at Forest Holidays.
- 8.5 The proposed development at Forest Holidays can be supported under Strategic Policy I: Tourism and Development and Policy 21: Tourism and Recreation, which support sustainable development proposals which do not adversely impact on the “special qualities” of the National Park. As Forest Holidays benefits from planning permission for holiday cabins and year round touring and camping pitches, the additional cabins at Forest Holidays can be supported under policy 22 of the Eryri LDP. The proposals would deliver overall improvements to the site in terms of biodiversity

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and landscape enhancements, as well as improving the overall facilities on site by way of a new reception and café building and new natural play area.

- 8.6 By virtue of the siting, scale, design and landscaping of the development, the proposal would not result in any adverse impacts upon the character of the surrounding landscape, and would deliver economic and social benefits locally, including beneficial effects in terms of the Welsh language and sustainable transport.
- 8.7 As demonstrated throughout this report, we consider the proposal to be in accordance with the adopted policies within the LDP, as well as the overarching principles of the PPW.

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