

Report of: Director of Place and Engagement

Subject: Implications of Welsh Government Permitted Development Right Changes to Camping for the National Park Article 4 Direction

Decision Required: Yes

Recommendation:

The Authority is recommended to:

- a. Note the Welsh Government's amendments to permitted development rights for temporary recreational campsites, including the retention of the 28-day limit within National Parks and the introduction of prior notification requirements;
- b. Agree that the Authority will not immediately reintroduce an Article 4 Direction in relation to camping, but will monitor the implementation and impacts of the amended permitted development rights for one year before determining whether further action is justified.

1. Key Messages

Welsh Government has amended permitted development rights for temporary recreational campsites through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2026. The new provisions came into force on 1 June 2026, with the prior notification procedure taking full effect from 1 September 2026.

The Authority's existing Article 4(1) Direction removed permitted development rights for 28-day camping, caravans and mobile homes. Unless the Authority reintroduces an Article 4 Direction for camping under the amended legislation, that element will cease to have effect on 1 September 2026. The caravan and mobile home elements will remain in force because the relevant legislation has not changed.

The amended rights retain the 28-day limit within National Parks, National Landscapes and World Heritage Sites, while allowing up to 60 days elsewhere. They also introduce a prior notification process from 1 September 2026, requiring operators to notify the Local Planning Authority prior to their operation each year. This prior notification process enables consideration of specific matters including toilet and wastewater arrangements, waste disposal and vehicular access.

The amended regime addresses some of the risks that led to the Authority's Article 4 Direction, but not all potential landscape, biodiversity, heritage setting and community impacts. Officers therefore recommend that the Authority does not immediately reintroduce an Article 4 Direction for camping, but monitors the implementation and

impacts of the amended permitted development rights for one year before determining whether further action is justified.

2. Background

On the 7th May 2025 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park introduced an Article 4 (1) Direction [1-Article-4.pdf](#) to remove permitted development rights for 28-day camping, caravan and mobile homes within the National Park.

The measures followed considerable research over a number of years and a public consultation undertaken across 3 months in 2024 and in January and February 2025. The proposals aimed to address a range of concerns including visual impact on landscape, threats to biodiversity, impacts on local infrastructure and communities including noise and highway impacts.

The Article 4 Direction came into effect on 1 January 2026. An Article 4 Direction means that planning permission is required for development which would normally be permitted development.

In 2025 Welsh Government also ran a formal consultation in relation to a number of potential changes to permitted development rights in Wales. These included potential changes to permitted development rights in relation to camping. The original consultation document is available here: [Changes to permitted development rights | GOV.WALES](#) The original consultation from WG proposed extending the number of days allowed for temporary uses of land for camping from 28 days to 60 days across all locations in Wales. It also proposed introduction of a prior notification procedure for all campsites (meaning those proposing to use land for camping purposes are required to notify the Local Planning Authority, who may then require further information through a prior approval process).

The National Park Authority considered a response to the original Welsh Government consultation on the 18th June 2025 (paper available here: [22-25-PD-Changes-Consultation.pdf](#)). The NPA response noted that whilst the principle of establishing a prior notification procedure for campsites was supported, the extension of time to 60 days was of concern. Officers also raised concerns regarding some limitations on matters LPAs were able to consider through the prior notification process. Other organisations including Landscapes Wales also raised concerns that the initial proposals paid insufficient attention to Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 in having regard to the purposes for which National Parks are designated and suggested that a differing time period should apply within National Parks and National Landscapes because of the landscape sensitivity.

As a result of consultation feedback, WG amended the proposed changes in relation to the permitted development rights for National Parks and National Landscapes, retaining the existing number of days that the permitted development rights were applicable for to 28 days.

The legislation specifically excludes the following from the permitted development rights:

(a) on a site of a scheduled monument;

- (b) on a site in a special area of conservation;
- (c) in a safety hazard area;
- (d) in a military explosives storage area;
- (e) on a site of special scientific interest;
- (f) on a Ramsar site;
- (g) on a site of a listed building;
- (h) on a site in a special protection area;
- (i) on a site within Flood Zones 2
- j) on land within 100 metres of a protected dwelling other than for the use of any private way;
- (k) for the siting of any caravan except a caravan which is used as a motor vehicle designed or adapted for human habitation

Under the prior notification procedure, anyone using the permitted development right must notify the Local Planning Authority. The developer must each calendar year apply for confirmation as to whether the prior approval of the authority is required as to – i) arrangements for toilet and wastewater facilities, ii) arrangements for waste disposal facilities, and iii) the proposed means of vehicular access to the site at which the development is to be carried out

Essentially – if the local planning authority has concerns regarding any of the three aspects above it can require prior approval, which is the submission of further information in the form of an application form, site plan and details of matters relating to toilet and wastewater facilities, waste disposal facilities, siting of pitches and amenities, details of access and dates on which the site will be used. The Local Planning Authority may grant prior approval unconditionally or subject to conditions reasonably related to the subject matter requiring prior approval.

Welsh Government have published a new application form for the prior notification procedure on their website [Determination of whether prior approval is required: temporary recreational campsite | GOV.WALES](#). They have indicated that guidance on the changes and an update to Development Management Manual will be published shortly, however these are not yet available.

Officers consider that the prior notification procedure does allow for consideration of some matters that led to the PCNPA Article 4 being introduced, specifically highways matters, proximity to neighbouring dwellings (the 100 metres limit) and flood risk. Matters of biodiversity are addressed to some extent in that applications sites on SSSIs, RAMSAR sites, SPAs and SACs are not permitted, however the procedure does not allow for consideration of nearby ecological features or species which may move eg otters on adjoining sites. The prior notification procedure does not allow consideration of landscape capacity or landscape impacts, but the limit to 28 days within National Parks does limit this risk factor. The permitted development rights do not allow proposals on sites of scheduled ancient monuments or on sites of listed buildings but there may still be a risk to the settings of these sites which is not subject to the prior approval process. Based on these points, Officers consider it is not necessary to immediately reintroduce the Article 4 (1) Direction for camping, but that it would be prudent to monitor the implementation of the new permitted development rights for one year before this is re-assessed.

3. Consultation

The Welsh Government response to the consultation it undertook is available here:

[Changes to permitted development rights | GOV.WALES.](#)

4. Strategic Policy Context

The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic policy context. In seeking to understand the implications of the new legislative changes through monitoring over the course of the next year, the Authority will assess how the proposals interact with the Authority Well-Being Objectives for conservation, climate, connection and communities.

National Park Management Partnership Themes	Authority Well-being Objectives
Conservation – Conserving and enhancing natural beauty and wildlife	Conservation: To deliver nature recovery and connectivity at scale, so nature is flourishing in the Park, contributing to the protection of 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030
Climate and natural resources – Managing natural resources sustainably	Climate: To achieve a carbon neutral Authority by 2030 and support the Park to achieve carbon neutrality and adapt to the impact of climate change.
Connection – Conserving and enhancing natural beauty and wildlife	Connection: To create a Park that is a natural health service that supports people to be healthier, happier and more connected to the landscape, nature and heritage.
Communities – Landscapes for lives and livelihoods	Communities: To create vibrant, sustainable and prosperous communities in the Park that are places people can live, work and enjoy.

Legislative Background

Article 4(1) of the 1995 Order allows the National Park Authority, if it is satisfied that it is expedient that any permitted development rights should not be carried out unless permission is granted for it on an application, to give a direction that the permission granted by Article 3 shall not apply.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2022, amended the procedures for making, varying or withdrawing any direction made under paragraph (1). Article 4(1) Directions can be made with or without immediate effect. Article 4(1) Directions are normally made when the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened.

The Development Management Manual published by Welsh Government states:
3.2.10 In exceptional circumstances, the planning permission which the GPDO grants for a class of development may be withdrawn in a particular area by a direction made by the LPA or by the Welsh Ministers under article 4 of that order. Such action will rarely be justified unless there is a real and specific threat i.e. there is reliable evidence to suggest that permitted development is likely to take place which could damage an interest of acknowledged importance and which, in the public interest, should be fully considered through a planning application. Similarly, conditions should only be imposed on a planning permission to restrict or withdraw permitted development rights in exceptional circumstances.

In this case, the decision to limit days to 28 in National Parks and the requirement to undertake a prior notification is considered to assist in reducing the risk of landscape harm to the National Park, however careful monitoring is required for the next year to assess whether this is in fact the case. Monitoring will also be necessary to understand the impacts on biodiversity, highways and local communities as well as water quality.

5. Financial Considerations

- a. No fee is chargeable for prior notifications associated with campsites. The Authority also has not received fees for Article 4 camping planning applications in 2026. Set against this, however, is the fact that the introduction of the Article 4 Direction and now the Welsh Government prior notification process should assist in reducing Enforcement visits – as identified in previous reports on camping the Authority's Enforcement Officers spend considerable time investigating reported planning breaches for which no fee is provided. Having information on the locations in which permitted development rights are being utilised assists the Authority in monitoring authorised and unauthorised camping uses across the National Park.

6. Risk and Compliance Considerations

- a. There is a risk that the legislative changes and new prior notification procedure insufficiently protect the National Park against the landscape, biodiversity harm and community disturbance that the Authority's Article 4 Direction sought to address. This risk is mitigated however by the monitoring the Authority will seek to undertake over the next year on this matter.

7. Impact on our Public Sector Duties

7.1 Integrated Assessment Completed: No

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7.2 Equality, Socio-Economic, Health and Human Rights Impacts

A three stage Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Article 4 (1) Direction process. The responsibility for assessing impacts in relation to the permitted development rights for Wales sits with Welsh Government. As part of the monitoring of the impacts from the permitted development rights changes over the next year, PCNPA will monitor whether there are any impacts on equalities or specific groups as well as considering its socio-economic duty.

7.3 Welsh Language Impacts

The responsibility for assessing impacts in relation to the permitted development rights for Wales sits with Welsh Government. The impact on Welsh speaking communities is not a matter which is covered by the prior notification or prior approval considerations. There can be benefits from tourism in allowing visitors to the area to experience the Welsh language, folklore and culture. However in 2023 there were approximately 7,500 caravan and tent pitches in the National Park with either planning permission or operating under an exemption certificate. Therefore, there is already significant provision for this across Pembrokeshire. Campsites may cause some pressures on Welsh speaking communities, however some of these pressures such as highways access are now addressed through the prior notification process.

7.4 Section 6 Biodiversity Duty and Carbon Emission Impacts

As set out above, the prior notification procedure now addresses some of the biodiversity risks of harm that led to the Authority introducing its Article 4 (1) Direction. The permitted development rights do not apply under the changes in areas of Flood Risk that are 2 or 3 or within SACs, SSSIs or Ramsar sites. In addition, Regulation 60 of the Habitats Regulations imposes a condition on all permitted development which is granted planning permission by Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (“the GPDO”) to ensure that any permission granted under the GPDO is not in breach of the terms of the Habitats Directive. This condition provides that any development which is likely significantly to affect a European site or European offshore marine site (including cSACs), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, must not be begun unless the developer has received written notification of the approval of the local planning authority. These provisions provide protection for designated sites, however there is not specific protection for biodiversity features which are not within or which would specifically affect a SAC. It is also not a matter which the Authority can consider under the prior approval process. This is therefore a matter which the Authority would seek to monitor and understand better over the next year.

7.5 Well-being Goals for Wales and 5 Ways of Working (Sustainable Development Principles) Impacts

The responsibility for considering the permitted development rights against the Well Being Goals for Wales and the 5 Ways of Working sits with Welsh Government. In assessing impacts over the next year the Authority will consider these goals and the Sustainable Development Principles in reporting back to the Authority.

Well-being Goals for Wales

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Sustainable Development Principles

- Long Term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

8. Conclusion

The Welsh Government's amendments to permitted development rights for temporary recreational campsites introduce a new framework for managing camping activity in Wales. Within National Parks, the retention of the 28-day limit, together with the introduction of prior notification requirements and specific exclusions for designated environmental sites, provides additional safeguards when compared with the original consultation proposals. These changes address some of the matters that led to the Authority's Article 4 Direction, particularly in relation to access, wastewater, waste disposal, flood risk, proximity to dwellings and designated ecological sites.

However, the revised permitted development rights do not enable the Authority to consider all potential impacts through the prior approval process, including wider landscape capacity, the setting of heritage assets, nearby or mobile biodiversity species or interconnected features and some community impacts. As such, there remains a need to understand how the new regime operates in practice within the National Park and whether it provides sufficient protection for the special qualities of the area.

It is therefore considered proportionate for the Authority to monitor the implementation of the amended permitted development rights for a period of one year before determining whether to reintroduce an Article 4 Direction in relation to camping. This approach will allow the Authority to gather evidence on any impacts on landscape, biodiversity, highways, water quality, local communities, Welsh language considerations and wider public sector duties.

9. List Background Documentation:

- National Park Authority Papers - Confirmation of proposed Article 4(1) Direction for 28-day use of land for camping, caravans and /or mobile homes [1-Article-4.pdf](#)
- National Park Authority Papers - Response to Welsh Government Consultation on Changes to Permitted Development Rights in relation to Air Source Heat

Pumps, Off-street Parking EV Chargers, Temporary Camp Sites, Reverse Vending Machines, Development by Statutory Undertakers (electricity), Affordable Housing and Meanwhile Uses; and change to the definition of major development. [22-25-PD-Changes-Consultation.pdf](#)

- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2026 - [Gorchymyn Cynllunio Gwlad a Thref \(Datblygu Cyffredinol a Ganiateir\) \(Diwygio\) \(Cymru\) 2026 The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(Amendment\) \(Wales\) Order 2026](#)
- Welsh Government Consultation documents on permitted development rights and summary of responses [Changes to permitted development rights | GOV.WALES](#)

(For further information please contact Sara Morris,
sara.morris@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)