



Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021

Adopted November 2010

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Foreword

As Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation, I am pleased to introduce the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan, which was adopted by Caerphilly County Borough Council on 23rd November, 2010.

The LDP allocates land for essential new development and in doing so it places great emphasis on sustainable forms of development. The LDP seeks to protect the environment for the future needs of our children as well as for our current needs.

The LDP places great emphasis on ensuring that there is a viable future for our many Towns, Centres and Villages across the whole of the County Borough. Importantly it allocates land for housing, employment and community facilities, providing certainty to developers and infrastructure providers, which is vitally important when investment decisions are being made.



Councillor Rob Gough

Cabinet Member, Transportation & Planning
Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The County Borough needs a planning policy framework in which everyone can have confidence and which is up to date and relevant. The adoption of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan by the Council provides that framework.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Chief Planning Officer, Mr Pat Mears and his staff for being the first Unitary Authority in Wales to prepare and adopt a Local Development Plan. This has been no mean achievement and reflects the quality and commitment and dedication of our staff in Caerphilly.

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Appendices are available as a separate document.

Introduction

Development Plan Process

0.1 The Local Development Plan is the statutory framework for the development and use of land within Caerphilly County Borough. It replaces existing Structure Plans, Local Plans, and the Council Approved Unitary Development Plan, April 2003. This introduction outlines the role of the Plan, its relationship to other strategies and guidance, and the consultation process.

The Development Plan and the Planning System

0.2 The Town and Country Planning system is designed to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. It seeks to reconcile the development needs of the population with the wider environmental concerns for the conservation of the man-made and natural environment. It also aims to ensure that the most efficient use is made of limited land resources, whilst at the same time stimulating the local economy, for the benefit of present and future generations.

0.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough to act as a single framework for the

control of the development and use of land within its administrative boundary.

0.4 The LDP provides the development strategy and policy framework for the development and conservation needs of the County Borough for the fifteen-year period, from 2006 to 2021. The LDP will be used by the Council to guide and control development, providing the basis by which planning applications will be determined consistently and appropriately.

0.5 The focus of the LDP is to be clear, transparent, concise, accessible to the public and easier to review in the future.

0.6 The preparation of the LDP has had regard to European legislation and national planning policy. Various background reports and other technical data referred to as the 'Evidence Base' have informed the Plan's development strategy, policies and proposals.

0.7 The adopted LDP replaces the existing combination of structure plans, local plans and the Council-Approved Unitary Development Plan, which currently provide the planning policy framework for the County Borough.

0.8 As a part of the LDP process the Council has engaged with residents, service users, stakeholders and partners in a meaningful and cost effective way. The Government's stated intention in changing the planning system is to make it:

- faster;
- more responsive to change; and
- improve community involvement in the plan preparation process.

The Local Development Plan Purpose

0.9 The purpose of the LDP is to:

- Provide a practical and detailed basis for the control of the development and use of land through the 'development control' system. It will provide potential developers with a clear indication of the type and location of development which the County Borough Council would accept and encourage, and an equally clear indication of the circumstances in which development will be resisted
- Afford protection to the natural and built environment to ensure that in the long term the most valuable aspects of the environment are conserved for the benefit of future generations
- Provide an incentive to developers by allocating land for particular types of development, thus stimulating the use and development of land. The Plan, therefore, has a promotional role in the development of the County Borough and provides a framework for investment decisions
- Bring local and detailed planning issues before the public. The LDP provides a clear indication of the likely land-use changes within the County Borough, and how those changes are likely to affect specific interests. Arrangements are made for people and organisations to comment on the policies and proposals in the Plan and so influence its content

0.10 The LDP covers all types of development and use of land. It is concerned with land-use issues and spatial planning, rather than the management of land and/or development priorities or programmes.

National and Regional Planning Guidance

0.11 In Wales, planning policy and the implementation of primary legislation has been devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). While there are many similarities to the guidance in England, the systems do diverge however, and Westminster guidance is not directly applicable in Wales, except for matters that relate to England and Wales together or to the UK as a whole.

0.12 In preparing its LDP, the Council has had regard to:

- The Wales Spatial Plan (produced by WAG)
- The Wales Transport Strategy (produced by WAG)
- National Planning Policy (produced by WAG):
 - Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (2002)
 - Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW) (2000)
 - Technical Advice Notes (Wales) (TANs) (a series)
 - Minerals Technical Advice Notes (Wales) (MTANs) (a series)
 - Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement for Minerals
 - Planning Circulars (a series)

0.13 The Welsh Assembly Government has encouraged collaborative working between local authorities to create a sub-regional context for strategic planning basis. The Council has input into various regional and sub-regional plans and strategies, with the LDP having regard to their content:

- The South East Wales Development Strategy (SEWEF)
- The Regional Transport Plan (Sewta)
- The Waste Strategy and the Regional Waste Plan (SEWRWG)
- The Regional Technical Statement for Aggregate Minerals
- The Regional Household Apportionment (SEWSPG)

Council Strategies

0.14 The Local Development Plan is one of four key strategies that Local Authorities in Wales have to prepare. The other three are:

- The Community Strategy
- The Children and Young People's Plan
- The Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy

0.15 The Local Development Plan is a key means of delivering the land use elements of these and other strategies. The four strategies should all link together to achieve their various aims.

Plan Preparation Procedure and Delivery Agreement

0.16 Guidance on preparation procedures can be found in the following:

- Local Development Plans: Policy on Preparation of LDPs (WAG 2005)

- Local Development Plan Manual (WAG 2006)
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 - Welsh Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 2839 (W.203)
- Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (WAG 2006)

0.17 The Local Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the WAG approved Delivery Agreement (DA) which contains the following:

- The Community Involvement Scheme (CIS), and
- The timetable for the preparation of the Plan

0.18 The CIS sets out the Council's principles, strategy and mechanisms for early and continuous community and stakeholder engagement throughout the LDP process. This is a fundamental element of the new development plan system. These principles ensure that community involvement carried out by, or on behalf of, the Council is done in a way that is consistent, coherent and co-ordinated. The Council has complied with the requirements for community engagement set out in the CIS.

0.19 The Council's project management timetable details the various stages of the preparation of the LDP, how the process of plan preparation has been project-managed and the resources that have been required at each stage.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

0.20 Under Section 62 (6a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local authorities are required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of development plans. The SA balances economic and social justice criteria with environmental issues. In addition, the EU's Directive (2001/42/EC)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requires that protection of the environment be given a high priority in the preparation of development plans. The SA and SEA can be handled in one assessment process, as the SEA forms an integral part of the SA.

0.21 The SEA/SA process ensures that sustainability is at the heart of decisions at every stage of plan preparation. The purpose of the SEA/SA is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of LDP proposals and policies to ensure that they accord with the principles of sustainable development as well as improving the environmental performance of the Plan as a whole.

0.22 The following SEA/SA reports were prepared and published for consultation purposes, alongside the Deposit LDP:

Part One

- The Scoping Report
- The Review of Relevant Plans, Programmes and Policies
- The Assessment of the Preferred and Alternative Strategies

Part Two

- The Environmental Report
- The Habitats Regulation Assessment

0.23 The European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires a habitats regulation assessment (HRA), encompassing an appropriate assessment (AA), to be undertaken for any plan or project that may have an effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European designated site. European designated sites are defined as Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Whilst there are no Ramsar sites or SPAs in the County Borough, Caerphilly has one SAC, namely Aberbargoed Grasslands.

Tests of Soundness

0.24 As an integral part of the new development plan system it is the responsibility of the appointed independent Inspector to consider the soundness of the Development Plan as a whole during the Examination into the Plan. A straightforward interpretation of “sound” is that it “shows good judgement” and “is able to be trusted”. Local Development Plans Wales - Dec 2005, provides 10 criteria for assessing ‘Soundness’, which relate to the process by which the Local Development Plan has been prepared by the Council, its consistency and its coherence and effectiveness. A self assessment in respect of the soundness of the LDP has been undertaken and can be viewed at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

0.25 To ensure that time is not spent examining in detail a plan that is procedurally unsound the Inspector carried out an early screening of the LDP to ensure that it has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme. It is in the Council’s interest therefore to ensure that the Delivery Agreement including the Community Involvement Scheme has been adhered to throughout the plan preparation process. It is also the responsibility of all stakeholders in the process to facilitate the process by meeting the requirements made of them as outlined in the Delivery Agreement.

Form of the Plan

0.26 The LDP comprises three parts:

- Section A The Development Strategy
- Section B County-Wide Policies
- Section C Area Specific Policies

0.27 **Section A** comprises a written statement that presents the Council’s Development Strategy and the strategy policies that will deliver it over the Plan period. In this respect, Section A indicates: the general provision to be made for housing, employment, retail and transport

throughout the Plan period; defines the settlement strategy and the road hierarchy; provides an indication of where improvement and protection of the strategic highway, leisure and infrastructure network will be pursued and provides an indication of the areas within the County Borough where policies for restraint will be appropriate. Section A identifies the broad Aims of the Plan and provides the Objectives that need to be met to achieve these Aims.

0.28 **Section B** comprises the criteria-based policies against which development proposals submitted as planning applications across the whole of the County Borough will be determined.

0.29 **Section C** contains the site-specific allocations where development is expected to locate, and where land use protection areas are to be found. The realisation of these land allocations within the lifetime of the Plan will ensure the success of the development strategy.

0.30 At the end of Section C there is a list of **Appendices** providing supporting information to the main body of the LDP text. These Appendices form part of the LDP and have been referenced throughout the main document as appropriate.

0.31 The **Proposals Map** shows the geographical location and extent of the site-specific development and protection policies that are designated within the LDP.

0.32 Alongside the Plan, a Constraints Map has been produced which shows the geographical location and extent of constraints to development arising outside of the LDP. It includes the location of features such as sites of special scientific interest, conservation areas and flood plains. Although the Constraints Map is not part of the LDP the Council will also have regard to these factors where relevant in the consideration of development proposals. The matters shown on the Constraints Map are in some cases designations by statutory bodies other than the Council, and may be subject to change. The Council Web Site will host the dynamic Constraints Map, which will illustrate the up-to-date data at www.caerphilly.gov.uk.

0.33 The LDP should be read as a whole, many of the Plan's objectives, strategies and policies are crosscutting and inter-related. Decisions on development proposals will have regard to the relevant policies in the Plan and the requirements of National Planning Policy.



Supporting Documents and Strategies

0.34 The LDP is the only document that the planning authority is statutorily required to produce as the framework of the land-use element of the planning system. However, the planning system is far more than a development control framework. It also has a major role in community regeneration, environmental improvement, setting quality standards and encouraging development. The LDP is designed to be part of a package of documents and strategies that support and strengthen each other.

0.35 There are three types of supporting document:

- **Background Papers** which set out the detailed information and reasoning behind the policies and proposals (for example: Topic based Papers and documents detailing the SA / SEA / HRA processes)

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- **Action Plans** which set out a framework for the development of and improvement to specific locations linking management proposals and action programmes to the land-use framework in the LDP (Town Centre Action Plans, Local Action Plans, Conservation Area Enhancement Plans)
- **Design Guides / Development Guides** which set out in detail the standards which development conforming to the policy criteria of the LDP must adhere to (Obligations SPG, Development Design Guides, Site Development / Design Briefs and Conservation Area Design Briefs)

0.36 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) will be produced and will be the subject of appropriate public consultation. SPG is not part of the LDP itself. Where appropriate in the LDP, cross-reference is made to supporting documents, which should be read in conjunction with the land-use policies and proposals so that advice and guidance is both clear and complete.

The Status of the Document and Cancellations

0.37 The LDP will become operative on the date it is adopted by the Council for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. As a consequence of the adoption of the LDP the following plans will be cancelled:

Unitary Development Plan

- i Council Approved Unitary Development Plan (April 2003)

Relevant Structure Plans

- ii Adopted Gwent Structure Plan (March 1996)
- iii Mid Glamorgan County Structure Plan: Approved Plan Incorporating Proposed Alterations No.1 (September 1989)

Local Plans

- iv Adopted Islwyn Local Plan (January 1996)
- v Adopted Caerphilly Basin Local Plan (October 1983)
- vi Adopted Nelson and Treharris Local Plan (September 1983)
- vii Adopted Upper Rhymney Valley Local Plan (March 1986)
- viii Adopted Mid Rhymney Valley Local Plan (July 1986)

0.38 For the avoidance of doubt, the following plans are also cancelled:

- i. Approved Rhymney Valley District Local Plan (November 1996)
- ii. Mid Glamorgan County Draft Replacement Structure Plan 1991-2006: Incorporating Proposed Modifications to the Deposited Plan (March 1996) Approved November 1996
- iii. Mineral Local Plan for Limestone Quarrying in Mid Glamorgan, Deposit Report (March 1995)
- iv. Gwent Aggregate Minerals Local Plan, Modified Draft Plan (April 1988).

National, Regional and Local Context

Delivering Sustainable Development

- 0.39 The Government of Wales Act 1998 placed a duty upon the National Assembly for Wales to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its function. This was translated into action through the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme Starting to Live Differently (2004).
- 0.40 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 placed a requirement upon Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their County Borough, exercising the function with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

National Planning Guidance

- 0.41 In producing the LDP, the Council has had regard to national planning policies. The Assembly Government's national land use planning policies are set out in Planning Policy Wales, Circulars and Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (MIPPS) supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

Minerals Planning Policy

- 0.42 Mineral Planning Policy Wales (MPPW) sets out the land use planning policy of the Assembly Government in relation to mineral extraction and related development in Wales, which includes all minerals and substances (including onshore oil, gas and coal bed methane) in, on or under

land extracted either by underground or surface working. MPPW is supplemented by Mineral Technical Advice Notes (MTANs) and Ministerial Interim Minerals Planning Policy Statements (MIMPPS).

Repetition of National guidance

- 0.43 In accordance with guidance contained in LDP Wales, LDPs should have regard to national planning policies, but they should not repeat them. The LDP should therefore be considered in conjunction with the Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide, which identifies those areas where clear statements of national development control policy should not need to be repeated as local policies in the LDP. It should be noted therefore that the LDP only provides the policy framework for issues of a locally distinct nature. **Development Proposals that do not present specific locally distinct issues will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of National Planning Policy.**
- 0.44 Caerphilly County Borough Council is the Mineral Planning Authority with responsibility for planning control over minerals exploration and working within the County Borough. There is no companion guide to MPPW. However, the Council considers that, on minerals issues, national policy and guidance is sufficiently clear and therefore will be relied upon in the determination of planning applications in relation to mineral extraction and related development, in conjunction with any relevant countywide policies and site-specific policies contained within the LDP.
- 0.45 National policy and guidance, taken together with the policies in the LDP, set out the planning framework for Caerphilly County Borough. It is important to remember that policies are interrelated and must be read together to understand their combined effect upon a planning proposal.

The Wales Spatial Plan

- 0.46 The Wales Spatial Plan, approved by the Welsh Assembly in 2004, provides a broad strategic framework for development and other plans.
- 0.47 The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update divides South East Wales functionally into three zones. The City and Coast zone includes the M4 corridor and the cities of Cardiff and Newport, just south of Caerphilly County Borough. The central zone, termed the Connections Corridor, links the prosperous City and Coast zone to deprived communities in the Heads of the Valleys Plus zone.
- 0.48 The bulk of the County Borough, containing over 80% of the population, lies in the Connections Corridor, with the remainder in the Heads of the Valleys zone. The Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan carries this sub-division further by defining a 'Southern Connections Corridor' (SCC) in which development pressures from Cardiff and Newport are strongest where the environment is under particular pressure, and a 'Northern Connections Corridor' (NCC) where the County Borough's major conurbation is situated and where the capacity for economic growth is greatest.
- 0.49 The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update identifies 'Key Settlements' in each of the six areas of Wales. These key settlements are seen as locations for growth and for the provision of services and employment for the wider catchment areas they serve. Unlike the other five areas of Wales, the South East Area section of the WSP does not identify all the key settlements in the region but only the 14 'primary' key settlements. These include Caerphilly and Blackwood. One area section, Pembrokeshire, also identifies 'local centres'.

0.50 The Caerphilly LDP develops the WSP strategy in more detail by identifying a further three important Key Settlements (Bargoed, Ystrad Mynach and Risca/Pontymister) in addition to Caerphilly and Blackwood. For the purposes of the LDP, these settlements have been termed 'Principal Towns'. The Plan also identifies four other centres, equivalent to WSP 'Local Centres,' namely Newbridge, Nelson, Bedwas and Rhymney.

0.51 The other five area sections of the WSP also grouped related and complementary Key Settlements into 'hubs' offering a wider range of facilities and greater economic potential than the individual settlements on their own. The Caerphilly LDP identifies such a 'hub' in the mid valley conurbation that encompasses Blackwood, Ystrad Mynach, Bargoed and Newbridge, together containing a population of 65,000.

Turning Heads - A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys (2006)

- 0.52 The Heads of the Valleys Strategy sits firmly within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan and has provided the broad framework for change within the Heads of the Valleys Area. The Strategy was developed around five priority themes:
- An attractive and well-used natural historic and built environment
 - A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities
 - A well-educated, skilled and healthier population
 - An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience
 - Public confidence in a shared brighter future

0.53 The Heads of the Valleys Strategy Area includes the Upper Rhymney Valley and the Upper Sirhowy Valley areas encompassing the settlements of Princetown, Rhymney, Abertyswg, Pontlottyn, Fochriw, Deri, New Tredegar, Bargoed, Aberbargoed, Gilfach, Argoed, Markham and Hollybush. The development strategy for the Plan harnesses and exploits the opportunities afforded to the north of the County Borough brought about by the Heads of the Valleys Strategy.

Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 - Housing

0.54 The Plan ensures that sufficient land is available in the County Borough for all the services required by its residents. Land requirements are largely dependent on the number of residents; therefore the future population level for which provision has to be made has been fundamental to the development of the Plan. The most basic and important requirement for residents is a home, and land for housing is the largest single land use that the Plan has to accommodate. Therefore, the issues of population and housing have been integral to the development of the Plan.

0.55 Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 Housing states: "The latest Assembly Government National and Sub-National Household Projections for Wales should form the starting point for assessing housing requirements. Within each region local planning authorities should work together collaboratively, and with appropriate stakeholders as necessary, to apportion to each authority the Assembly

Government household projections, or agree their own regional policy-based projections."

0.56 The latest Assembly Government household projections have indicated that an increase in the number of households within the South East Wales Region of 108,900 between 2003 and 2023 is required to meet future population growth. In line with WAG policy, Caerphilly County Borough Council has worked with the other 10 unitary authorities in the South East Wales region through the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) to consider the WAG regional household forecasts and to apportion the projections across the region. Based upon factors such as previous house building rates, current land availability and environmental capacity, SEWSPG resolved that an apportionment figure of 9,750 dwellings over the Plan period was appropriate for Caerphilly County Borough. The results of this exercise have been incorporated in a Memorandum of Understanding. The apportionment figure proposed by SEWSPG has been accepted as the highest point considered within an identified range and through the over-allocation of land for housing has been accommodated within the LDP in order for Caerphilly to meet its regional responsibilities.

Regional Transport Plan

0.57 The South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) has prepared the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) for South East Wales. Sewta is required to deliver and implement a Regional Transport Plan under the Transport (Wales) Act 2006. The RTP will form the blueprint for sustainable, integrated transport in the region based on policies to improve accessibility and increase the use of sustainable modes of travel. The RTP will provide the framework for delivering the Assembly Government's integrated transport strategy within South East Wales.

0.58 The Council have had continuous dialogue with Sewta in developing the Plan to ensure that there is a clear and unambiguous relationship between policies in the LDP and the emerging RTP in order to deliver real transport improvement on the ground that are closely integrated with existing and future land use proposals.

South East Wales Regional Waste Plan

0.59 The Regional Waste Plan (RWP) provides the framework for developing an integrated network of waste management facilities to treat and dispose of waste in South East Wales. The document was subject to a 1st Review, the contents of which has been approved by the constituent authorities of South East Wales and the document has been given due regard in the preparation of the LDP. The Review sets out a Regional Waste Strategy indicating the preferred mix of waste management/resource recovery technologies and capacities for managing the forecast arisings of all controlled waste streams and a spatial element that guides the location of new facilities.

South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party - Regional Technical Statement

0.60 Minerals Planning Policy Wales (2000) has set out the overarching policy guidance for all types of mineral extraction in Wales. The guidance provides positively for the working of minerals resources to meet society's needs and advocates identifying areas for future working where practicable and by safeguarding mineral resources from permanent development that would prevent their future working.

0.61 The South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) is charged with producing a Regional Technical Statement (RTS), which assumes only low growth in the use of primary aggregates and allocates the production to individual mineral planning authorities on the basis of environmental capacity. It is assumed that any additional growth in demand will be met from secondary or recycled aggregate, although there are indications those alternative sources of aggregate have limited potential for growth.

Caerphilly CBC Community Strategy: Community Planning in Action

0.62 Under the Local Government Act 2000 the Council has a duty to prepare a community strategy for the County Borough. The Community Strategy sets out the overarching strategic framework for all other plans and strategies for the County Borough. The LDP has considered the aims and objectives of the community strategy that relate to land use in the development of objectives for the Plan.

0.63 'Community Planning in Action' sets out how the Council in partnership with other agencies and local communities will make the County Borough a place where people:

- like to live and want to stay and make a home - the Living Environment Theme;
- can find opportunities for (paid and unpaid) work that is rewarding - the Regeneration Theme;
- can develop a range of interests, knowledge and activities – the Education for Life Theme; and
- can lead a full, healthy life and get treatment, support and care as and when required – the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Theme.

0.64 The Community Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough has the following overarching principles:

- To develop and maintain partnership-based planning and delivery of services to achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental well-being.
- To promote a culture where there are opportunities for all regardless of colour, ethnic origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or nationality.

0.65 The four themes have Strategic Partnerships in place to deliver the visions and meet the objectives outlined in the Community Strategy. The LDP will facilitate the delivery of the land use elements of the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy, Living Environment Strategy and The Smart Alternative (the Regeneration Strategy) in particular.



Key Land Use Issues

Introduction

0.66 In order to ensure a robust basis for the development strategy, a review has been undertaken of the social, economic and environmental data available for issues affecting the County Borough. A detailed discussion of the broad issues that are relevant to the LDP is contained in the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report'. A review of the data supports many of the issues identified through the pre-deposit public consultation exercise with key stakeholders and is summarised in this section.

Social

0.67 The population of the County Borough has remained relatively stable over the last decade at around 170,000. However there has been significant change in the distribution of the population within the County Borough, with the loss of population in the north and an increase in population in the south. For example, the population of the Upper Rhymney Valley has fallen by 8% between 1991 and 2001 from 30,625 to 28,111 whereas over the same period the population in Caerphilly Basin has increased by 4% from 50,765 to 52,996 (Censuses 1991 and 2001).

0.68 Although the population of Caerphilly has been constant, the number of houses required for residents has increased because of the long-term trend towards smaller households, which is caused by several factors. There has been a long-term trend for families to have fewer children compared to past rates. The break up of households due to divorce, and the increasing numbers of single-parent families, has led to smaller households. There has been a significant increase in elderly households, reflecting both increased longevity and relative decline in the provision of institutional care (Office for National Statistics).

0.69 According to Government projections both the population and number of households in South East Wales could increase over the Plan period even more rapidly than recent trends suggest (WAG 2003-based Population and Household Projections). The Plan consequently assumes an increase in the population of Caerphilly due to higher levels of in-migration than those currently experienced, leading to a population of 177,500 in 2021, and the need for 8,625 new dwellings over the Plan period (Population and Housing Background Paper).

0.70 11 of the 110 statistical areas in Caerphilly County Borough are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005).

0.71 The highest overall concentration of deprivation in the County Borough is located in the Upper Rhymney Valley and the Upper Sirhowy Valley areas (Heads of the Valleys Regeneration area), although there are pockets of deprivation in the Northern and Southern Connection Corridor (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005).

0.72 Average houses prices in the County Borough have risen steadily since 2003, with the average house price for the County Borough now having reached £133,000 (February 2008).

There are substantial differences in prices across the County Borough, with prices in the south of the County Borough significantly higher than in the north (Land Registry).

Economic

0.73 Despite seeing large declines; the manufacturing sector remains the largest employment sector in the County Borough. The sector remains overrepresented in the County Borough when compared to Wales and Great Britain, so increasing the significance of these declines to the Caerphilly economy. The sector however is in long-term decline in the UK and its significance to the Caerphilly economy in terms of employment is likely to gradually decrease over the coming years. However the structure of the manufacturing sector in Caerphilly has been changing. Those in decline have been the traditional/basic manufacturing activities, whilst more high-value activities have been growing, particularly small and medium size operations (Employment Site Supply and Market Appraisal Study, Atkins 2006). It should be noted that a significant proportion of jobs are not located on industrial estates, for example the retail sector.

0.74 The Employment Site Supply and Market Appraisal Study undertaken in 2006 indicated that 123.71 ha of allocated employment land was vacant and readily available for employment development. This has since been adjusted to 101.9 ha, due to changing circumstances. 90% of this land is located in the Northern Connections Corridor, the majority of which is on two sites; namely the Oakdale Plateaux (44.9 ha) and Ty Du, Nelson (18.8 ha).

0.75 Only 72.3% of working age residents (aged between 16 and 64 for men and 16-59 for women) in the County Borough are economically active, compared to 75.2% in Wales and 78.5% in Great Britain (Census 2001).

- 0.76** The proportion of the Caerphilly population with no qualifications is 39.8%. This is far higher than that of England and Wales (29.1%) and Wales alone (33.0%). Similarly the proportion of the Caerphilly work force qualified to degree level or equivalent (12.1%) is considerably lower than that of Wales (17.4%) and England and Wales (19.8%) (Census 2001).
- 0.77** 31,400 Caerphilly residents commute outside of the County Borough to work, equal to 46.6% of the total workers in Caerphilly. Overall, there is a net out-commuting of 15,300 workers to jobs outside of Caerphilly.
- 0.78** The largest commuting destination is Cardiff, which accounts for over 11,000 or 28.5% of out-commuters. Rhondda Cynon Taf is the largest source of in-commuting, with a total of 4,000 people working in Caerphilly. This shows that whilst the most obvious commuting flows between Caerphilly and Cardiff are strong, there is also a high level of lateral commuting across the Valleys (Statistics on Commuting in Wales, 2002 – Based upon the 2002 Welsh Labour Force Survey).
- 0.79** Congestion problems combined with Government policies to limit car usage and car parking as well as the growing emphasis on the environment means that access to public transport will become an increasingly important element in the viability of employment sites. Different modes of transport (private and public) as well as reliable transport links will therefore be key to the success of future employment sites.

- 0.80** 73% of households in the County Borough have access to a motor vehicle compared to 76% of the Welsh Average (Welsh Transport Statistics 2006).
- 0.81** When travelling to work, 76% of residents travel by car, compared to 8% by public transport with the remainder travelling by foot or by bicycle. 6.5% of the population work at home, which is an increasing trend (Office of National Statistics).
- 0.82** Major retail investment in relation to improvements to comparison goods provision have been achieved by large-scale extensions to existing town centres, such as the Castle Court development in Caerphilly and the North Blackwood Retail Park.

Environmental

- 0.83** Nearly 80% of the County Borough is countryside that forms an important visual and recreational resource for both residents and visitors.
- 0.84** Caerphilly has one European designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the County Borough, namely Aberbargoed Grasslands. This grassland area is of importance for the Molinea Meadows and Marsh Fritillary Butterfly.
- 0.85** The County Borough has 10 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 5 have been designated for their biological interest and 5 for their geological interest. There are also 4 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 190 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Furthermore, 6 Special Landscape Areas (SLA) have been designated in order to protect those areas considered to be important to the overall landscape, history, culture, biodiversity and geology of the County Borough, along with 4 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs), designated to protect the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough.

- 0.86 The County Borough has 14 Conservation Areas and 356 Listed buildings. There are 46 scheduled ancient monuments and 4 historic parks and gardens.
- 0.87 For the period 2005/06, household refuse and other Council waste in Caerphilly County Borough stood at 121,395 tonnes. There was an average annual growth in waste of 3.2% over the previous 7-year period compared with the South East Wales average of 2.3% (Regional Waste Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2007).
- 0.88 Within the County Borough there are resources of coal, sand and gravel and other minerals that need to be identified and safeguarded in the LDP.

Vision Statement

- 0.89 In considering how the LDP should guide and manage future development in the County Borough, a clear vision of what the County Borough should look like in fifteen years time has been developed.
- 0.90 The Vision Statement for the LDP outlined below has been derived from the Community Strategy through a series of workshop sessions with key stakeholders as an integral part of the pre-deposit public participation exercise. The key policy issues that reoccurred throughout each of the workshop sessions have shaped and informed the Vision Statement for the LDP.

Vision Statement:

“The Development Strategy for the Local Development Plan will capitalise on the strategic location of Caerphilly County Borough at the centre of the Capital Network Region. It will ensure that the needs of all the County Borough’s residents and visitors are met and the regeneration of our towns, villages and employment centres and the surrounding countryside is delivered in a well-balanced and sustainable manner that reflects the specific role and function of individual settlements.”



- 0.91 There are a number of key concepts in this vision that guide the Plan's aims and strategy:
- "The strategic location of Caerphilly County Borough" - exploiting the proximity of the County Borough to the major economic hubs of Cardiff and Newport is one of the central aims of the Council's regeneration strategy while the Mid valleys and the Heads of the Valleys corridors both pass through the County Borough offering opportunities further north.
 - "Regeneration... delivered in a well-balanced and sustainable manner" – the Plan seeks to balance environmental, economic and community interests and needs, to create a sustainable future for all of the County Borough's residents.
 - Reflecting "the specific role and function of individual settlements" - the Plan identifies a sustainable role for all the towns and villages in the County Borough and promotes appropriate development or restraint in each so that all parts of the County Borough will benefit.

Aims

- 0.92 The aims of the LDP are:
- To protect the environment as a whole whilst balancing the need for development with the need to conserve valuable resources.
 - To ensure that new development minimises emissions of greenhouse gases as far as is practically possible in order to mitigate the effects of climate change.
 - To underpin all development with the principle of good design, that meets a diversity of needs; which uses resources efficiently; and which makes adequate provision for recycling and waste management.
 - To make Caerphilly County Borough a clean, green, safe and pleasant place to live and work with decent public services.
 - To enhance the vibrancy and diversity of local communities, in order to ensure good health and social cohesion.
 - To ensure equal opportunities for all to proposed and existing facilities and services within and outside the County Borough.
 - To provide a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and protects the environment; where public transport, walking and cycling provide real travel alternatives.
 - To increase the economic prosperity of the people and communities of the County Borough through the provision of land for employment opportunities, supported by appropriate housing and ancillary facilities and services (including community and health facilities, recreation, leisure etc).
 - To contribute to improving public health, by promoting land use developments that contribute to healthy lifestyles and well



- being.
- To use resources efficiently making the best use of our assets.
- To improve education facilities to 'up skill' the population.
- To promote Caerphilly County Borough as an area in its own right.

Key Objectives

0.93 The objectives of the Plan have been derived from land-use issues emanating from the four themes of the Community Strategy (Living Environment, Regeneration, Education for Life and Health, Social Care and Well-Being).

0.94 Each of the key objectives outlined below contribute to the achievement of one or more of the aims of the Plan and also serve to address the eight component parts that realise the Vision and the Development Strategy of the Plan.

1. Accommodate sustainable levels of population growth.
2. Ensure that the County Borough is well served by accessible public open space and accessible natural green space.
3. Ensure the effective and efficient use of natural and built resources while preventing the unnecessary sterilisation of finite resources through inappropriate development.
4. Ensure that the environmental impact of all new development is minimised.
5. Improve energy, waste and water efficiency while promoting environmentally acceptable renewable energy to maintain a cleaner environment and help reduce our impact on climate change.



6. Encourage waste management based on a hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recovery (including material recycling, energy recovery and composting) and safe disposal.
7. Encourage the re-use and / or reclamation of appropriate brownfield and contaminated land and prevent the incidence of further contamination and dereliction.
8. Concentrate new development in appropriate locations along existing and proposed infrastructure networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and to public transport in order to sustain and complement the role and function of individual settlements.
9. Ensure an adequate and appropriate range of housing sites are available across the County Borough in the most suitable locations to meet the housing requirements of all sections of the population.
10. Ensure that all new development is well designed and has regard for its surroundings in order to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur.
11. Identify, protect and, where appropriate enhance, valuable landscapes and landscape features and protect them from unacceptable development.
12. Identify, protect and enhance sites of nature conservation and earth science interest and ensure the biodiversity of the County Borough is enhanced.
13. Create appropriate new landscape and ecological features and habitats as an integral part of new development wherever appropriate.
14. Manage, protect and enhance the quality and quantity of the water environment and reduce water consumption.
15. Reduce the impact of flooding by ensuring that highly vulnerable development is directed away from areas of risk wherever possible.

16. Reduce congestion by minimising the need to travel, promoting more sustainable modes of transport and making the most efficient use of existing transport infrastructure.
17. Capitalise on Caerphilly's strategic position further developing its role as a commercial and employment centre in the heart of the Valleys City Region with strong links to the Heads of the Valleys area and as the smart alternative for locating development to Cardiff and Newport.
18. Provide and protect a diverse portfolio of employment land for a variety of employment uses, focusing in particular on higher value employment opportunities and sites to meet local need, including waste management facilities.
19. Encourage the development of high quality, all season tourist attractions and tourist accommodation that complements the natural and built environment of the County Borough.
20. Maximise the efficient use of the existing infrastructure and encourage the necessary improvements to the network to sustain necessary levels of development at appropriate locations across the County Borough.
21. Protect and provide a wide range of community and health facilities which are appropriately located and easily accessible, and which meet the needs of all sections of the population.
22. Maintain the vitality, viability and character of the County Borough's town and village centres and re-establish them as a focus for economic activity and community pride.
23. Maintain, enhance and develop a hierarchy of town and village centres which are easily accessible, and which meet the needs of all sections of the population.
24. Protect and enhance the overall quality of the historic natural and built environment of the County Borough.

Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring

- 0.95** Monitoring is a crucial part of the development plan process, providing the basis for the review of the Plan, and the preparation of modifications where necessary. The essential outputs of monitoring are to identify matters that may affect the planning and development of the County Borough, and to record the progress of implementation of the Plan. The results of this monitoring will form the basis for a review of the Plan, and the preparation of modifications where necessary. The current intention is that the LDP will be subject to review on a four-year cycle.
- 0.96** The Council will therefore establish a framework to monitor progress on the implementation of the policies and proposals in the LDP. This will aim to identify the key challenges, opportunities and possible ways forward for revising and adjusting the LDP policies. Existing information will be used as far as possible for this purpose, but it is recognised that for some purposes it may be necessary to set up special procedures to capture the required monitoring information.



- 0.97 WAG Planning Guidance requires authorities to prepare an annual Monitoring Report that identifies the main issues arising from the monitoring exercise: the report will also incorporate the results of the SEA/SA monitoring. These reports will be prepared for the financial year, and will be published within six months of the end of the year.
- 0.98 In order to monitor the Plan, key performance indicators will be identified and monitored to measure its overall effectiveness. The following sets of indicators have been identified in planning guidance and during plan preparation:
 (a) national core indicators;
 (b) SEA/SA indicators; and
 (c) strategic policy indicators.
- 0.99 LDP Wales identifies national core output indicators, the first two of which are specified in the Regulations, as shown in **Appendix 17**.
- 0.100 The SEA/SA Scoping Report identifies the indicators and targets that will be used to monitor progress on sustainability issues, and for convenience these are shown in **Appendix 18**.
- 0.101 In order to monitor the policies in the LDP, targets and indicators have been identified to assess whether the Strategic Policies are achieving their stated objectives: these targets and indicators are identified at **Appendix 19**.
- 0.102 The progress on these targets and indicators will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), although in view of the large numbers of indicators only those most critical for assessing progress on the Plan will be included. The indicators will be refined and extended as the Monitoring Framework is developed: for example, efforts will be made to develop indicators for the Countywide policies, although there are well known problems in doing this with, for example, protection policies.
- 0.103 Progress on the site allocation policies contained in Section 3 of the LDP will be reported in the Implementation Section of the AMR.

Implementation

- 0.104 In general, it is expected that the retail and housing allocations will be delivered by the private sector, including housing associations (Registered Social Landlords, or RSLs). The private sector is also expected to make a contribution towards much of the public infrastructure, including transport improvements and leisure, educational, and community facilities.
- 0.105 It must be appreciated that the ability of the private sector to deliver the above will be heavily influenced by external economic circumstances, including the UK and World economic cycles. For this reason it is highly likely that delivery of housing completions in particular will vary considerably over the 15 year period of the Plan.
- 0.106 Public sector budgets will be more constant, but will also vary over time. In particular, most public sector capital programmes have relatively short time horizons, i.e. three or five years, so it is impossible to be precise about the implementation of much of the infrastructure over a 15-year time period. Beyond the first five years, facilities have therefore been scheduled to the “2nd Phase” or “3rd Phase” of the Plan Period, meaning the years 2011-2015 and 2016-2021 respectively.
- 0.107 More detail on delivery and implementation is provided in **Appendix 20** to this Plan.

Section A: The Development Strategy

The Development Strategy

- 1.1 Pressure for development, the availability of suitable sites, the willingness of the private sector to invest, the sensitivity of the environment and the basic transport and service infrastructure vary widely across the County Borough. It is therefore necessary to guide development within a broad strategic framework.
- 1.2 In line with government guidance and the principles of sustainability underpinning the LDP, a Development Strategy is put forward for the LDP based on three broad areas:
- o **The Heads Of The Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA)**
 - o **The Northern Connections Corridor (NCC)**
 - o **The Southern Connections Corridor (SCC)**

Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA)

- 1.3 The Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area (HOVRA) is characterised by the highest levels of unemployment, social deprivation and population loss in the County Borough and has difficulty in attracting private sector

employment. It is therefore recognised by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Council as a regeneration priority area. The HOVRA is the subject of comprehensive community regeneration initiatives by the Council including, social and economic measures as well as the land-based measures contained in the LDP's development strategy.

- 1.4 In recent years the HOVRA has experienced unprecedented levels of public investment in its infrastructure, in particular in the transportation network, which to date has not been accompanied by significant private sector investment. The Development Strategy of the Plan seeks to attract development to this area and exploit and build on this investment. It therefore designates land for a wide variety of land uses across the HOVRA to not only meet the role and function of individual settlements but also to positively regenerate those areas over the Plan period.

- 1.5 The choice of housing in this area is particularly limited and in some villages up to 90% of housing is pre-1914 terraced housing and generally where this figure is lower, most of the remainder is public sector housing. It is likely that the lack of choice of modern housing is a major factor in the continued out-migration of younger and more affluent families from this area. In order to address this issue approximately 24% of all new housing sites allocated in the Plan are located in the HOVRA. This reflects the strategic desire to allow for development opportunities that will diversify the housing stock and help to

retain and attract people to the north of the County Borough. In order to encourage developers to locate in the HOVRA 45% of the land for housing is greenfield.
















- 1.7 **Bargoed is the Principal Town** in the HOVRA, which provides a wide range of functions and services for the surrounding settlements that are not available elsewhere in the north of the County Borough. The Development Strategy of the Plan seeks to **elevate the status of Bargoed within the Heads of the Valley Region** as a whole by allocating major redevelopment sites, including a major new retail and entertainment site, a district library and office sites within the town centre to transform the Town over the Plan period.
- 1.8 No new sites are identified for employment in the HOVRA. Instead the emphasis will be on the redevelopment and regeneration of existing allocated sites to make them more attractive to inward investors. Approximately **5% of land** identified for employment purposes is located in the HOVRA.
- 1.9 The HOVRA's potential contribution to the **Valleys Regional Park** is immense and the Development Strategy will ensure the positive protection and development of the surrounding countryside. A large part of the area has been shown to be highly valued and sensitive environmentally **and as a consequence 67% of** the surrounding countryside is subject to environmental protection.

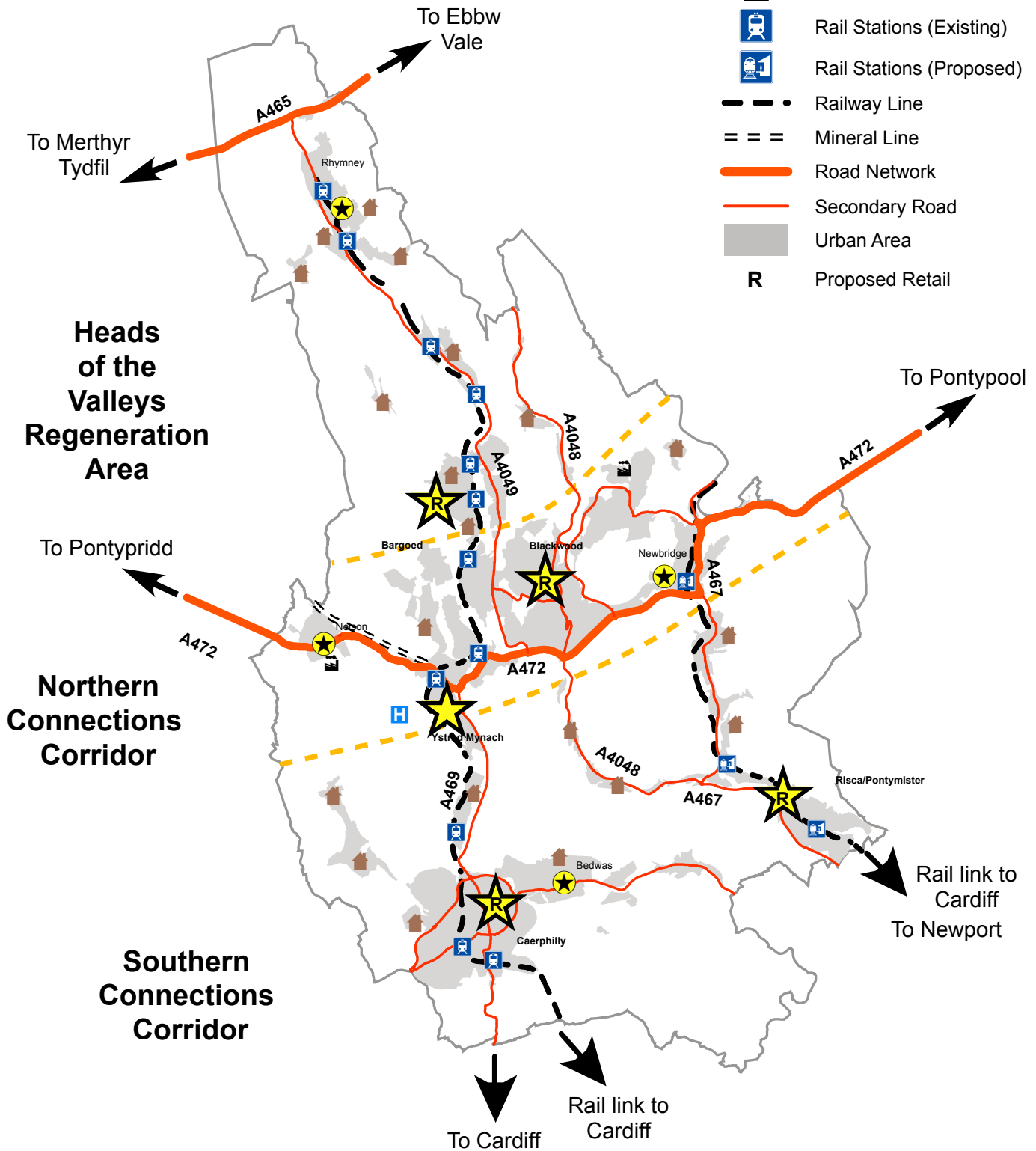
The Northern Connections Corridor (NCC)

- 1.10 The Northern Connections Corridor comprises a contiguous area of urban development spanning the mid valleys area. The settlement pattern in this area is more like a conventional urban conurbation rather than the traditional linear settlements typical of the Valleys. The Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) has been successful in attracting substantial public and private investment that has succeeded in transforming this part of the County Borough in recent years.
- 1.11 As a result of the development strategy contained within the Caerphilly County Borough Unitary Development Plan that actively targeted housing and employment growth to the mid valleys area, the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) has experienced significant levels of house building over the last ten years. Whilst this has led to an increased diversity in the housing stock in terms of the type of houses available, the area does not provide sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of all sectors of society. The Development Strategy seeks to address this issue and the Plan sets targets for the provision of affordable housing based on a robust assessment of viability - **10% of housing in the Newbridge area and 25% in the rest of the Northern Connections Corridor area.**
- 1.12 Within the NCC new housing development is targeted largely to brownfield sites within existing settlements with only limited new

Key Diagram

Detailed diagrams for each strategy area are available in Section C. The Introduction in Section C elaborates on the role of centres.

-  Administrative Boundary
-  LDP Strategy Areas
-  Local Centres
-  Principal Towns
-  Residential Settlements
-  Hospital
-  Employment
-  Rail Stations (Existing)
-  Rail Stations (Proposed)
-  Railway Line
-  Mineral Line
-  Road Network
-  Secondary Road
-  Urban Area
-  Proposed Retail



greenfield releases. **68%** of all housing proposals in the NCC are located on brownfield sites. Where greenfield sites have been released this is considered necessary to diversify the existing housing stock and make those areas more attractive to future inward investment.

- 1.13 The LDP continues to target new employment growth to the NCC. In this context the success of **Oakdale Business Park** (one of the largest industrial plateaux in South Wales) is critical in terms of ensuring economic prosperity for residents for the County Borough and, in particular, in realising one of the main regional functions of the NCC - offering much needed employment opportunities to residents in the HOVRA. **86%** of employment allocations are within this strategy area.
- 1.14 The role of the NCC will increase in importance over the Plan period as the Principal Town of **Ystrad Mynach** has become the location for a number of vital public services including a college for further education, a new police station, the new Council Headquarters and the new local general hospital. The presence of all these major services means that Ystrad Mynach is a significant employment centre.

The Southern Connections Corridor (SCC)

- 1.15 The Southern Connections Corridor (SCC) is under great pressure for development arising from the growth in the M4 Corridor and has limited capacity for development without causing environmental harm. A large part of the area has been shown to be highly valued and sensitive environmentally **and as a consequence 76%** of the surrounding countryside is subject to environmental protection.
- 1.16 Within the SCC the Plan seeks to consolidate development within existing settlement boundaries, as a consequence **96%** of all

housing sites are located on brownfield sites. As a general principle the required infrastructure improvements will be secured as an integral part of the development of sites in the SCC.

- 1.17 As a result of development pressure from Newport and Cardiff the SCC has experienced significant levels of house building over the last ten years. Whilst this has led to an increased diversity in the housing stock in terms of the type of houses available, the area does not provide sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of all sectors of society. The Development Strategy seeks to address this issue and the Plan sets targets for the provision of affordable housing based on a robust assessment of viability - **40% in the Caerphilly Basin** (excluding the Aber Valley) and **10% in the Lower Islwyn** part of the Southern Connections Corridor and the Aber Valley.
- 1.18 No new sites are identified for employment in the SCC. Instead the emphasis will be on the redevelopment and regeneration of existing allocated sites to make them more attractive to inward investors. Approximately **8% of land** identified for employment purposes is located in the SCC.



The Eight Key Components of the Strategy

- 1.19 Eight component parts form the Development Strategy and underpin the policies in the LDP. They are to:
1. Target development to reflect the roles and functions of individual settlements
 2. Allow for development opportunities in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area
 3. Promote a balanced approach to managing future growth
 4. Exploit brownfield opportunities where appropriate
 5. Promote resource efficient settlement patterns
 6. Ensure development contributes towards necessary infrastructure improvements
 7. Ensure development provides necessary community facilities
 8. Reduce the impact of development upon the countryside

Target development to reflect the role and function of individual settlements

- 1.20 The role and function of individual settlements is a key factor in determining how the strategy responds to their individual needs. In order to target development appropriately the Plan identifies:
- 5 Principal Town Centres - Bargoed serving that part of the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area within the County Borough, Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach in the Northern Connections Corridor, and Caerphilly and Risca / Pontymister in the Southern Connections Corridor;

- 4 Local Centres - Rhymney in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, Newbridge and Nelson in the Northern Connections Corridor, and Bedwas in the Southern Connections Corridor; and
- Residential settlements – other areas within settlement boundaries that have neighbourhood shops and/or individual units serving more immediate needs.

1.21 The town centres in the County Borough perform a variety of roles. They are major employers, providers of services, such as banks, building societies, libraries and estate agents, and also provide the main shopping provision for local areas. The retail sector is an important provider of employment, particularly within the five Principal Towns. Shopping is both an essential activity in everyday life and also a leisure-time pursuit. As a result, the calibre of shopping provision in retail centres makes a major contribution to people's perception of the quality of urban life generally.

1.22 Whilst the LDP is required to identify sites for new development, it does not mean that all uses are acceptable in all settlements. The appropriateness of uses will be considered against the role and function of each settlement as set out in Section C of the Plan, with only appropriate land uses being allocated in the Plan.

1.23 In those areas identified as having a residential role, the provision of additional housing appropriate to the scale of the settlement will help to diversify the housing stock including the distribution of affordable housing, where there is evidence of need.

Allow for development opportunities in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

1.24 In the past it has proved difficult to attract private investment into the northern part of the County Borough, but recently there are indications that this is changing. The

Welsh Assembly Government has prioritised this part of the County Borough as an area for regeneration by including it in the Heads of the Valleys Programme area. This Programme supports the Council's own priorities for regeneration.

- 1.25 The HOV programme forms one facet of the Welsh Assembly Government's future development aspirations for the South East Wales Region. At the heart of the vision for SE Wales is a network of strong, sustainable communities spreading prosperity from the two major centres of Cardiff and Newport to valleys across the region.
- 1.26 Within Caerphilly County Borough, it is envisaged that proposals for Bargoed, as the principal town in the HOVRA, will be a catalyst for further investment across the wider area. The Plan will facilitate other development opportunities in the area through the allocation of a range of sites across all settlements, having regard to their role and function, in order to deliver more affordable and attractive housing, a better range of local services, transport and employment opportunities and a variety of retail and leisure facilities.

Promote a balanced approach to managing future growth

- 1.27 Future population projections are fundamental in the determination of the number of additional dwellings that will be required on sites across the County Borough over the Plan period. Assumptions made in this regard impact on all other areas of the Plan, most noticeably the need for employment opportunities for local residents and the need for an efficient public transport and highway infrastructure network to enable people to access services and facilities.

- 1.28 The development assumptions underpinning the strategy for the LDP are outlined in a series of background papers to the Deposit LDP, but the key assumptions are summarised here for ease of reference.

Key Assumptions:

- o **Population Growth** - the Plan makes provision for a moderate level of population growth, leading to a population for Caerphilly of 177,500 in 2021, and implying a total housing requirement over the Plan period of 8,625 dwellings, of which a proportion will be affordable.
- o **Economic Growth** - the future population levels imply a need for land to accommodate for a growth in employment opportunities to increase economic activity rates, which are lower than the Welsh average. A total of 101.9 hectares of employment land will be allocated for employment use over the Plan period, and, as well as this, a number of existing employment sites.
- o **Transportation** - future population growth has the potential to increase congestion. However, a more sustainable approach is adopted aiming to encourage reduced greenhouse gas emissions through modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, particularly utilising the rail links through the Ebbw and Rhymney Valleys, as well as more efficient use of the existing road network.
- o **Community Infrastructure** - An increase in the population will place additional pressure on the network of facilities necessary to support sustainable communities (waste, education, leisure, renewable energy etc). Policies in the Plan will ensure that the network of community facilities will be developed in parallel with new housing.

o Environmental Protection –

Development to be directed to parts of the County Borough that have the environmental capacity to accommodate it without causing undue harm to areas that are valued for their intrinsic value in terms of biodiversity, landscape, historic or conservation interest.

Managing Growth

1.29 The Strategy promotes a more balanced approach to managing future housing and employment growth, in which development opportunities in the Southern Connections Corridor (SCC) and Caerphilly Town in particular are principally limited to brownfield sites as this strategy area is under the greatest pressure for development and has only a limited capacity for further development without significant environmental impact. More significant development opportunities on brownfield and greenfield sites are proposed where appropriate for principal towns and local centres in the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) and the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA) in order to spread prosperity throughout the County Borough.

1.30 The Strategy also recognises the existence of a major urban conurbation in the NCC and Greater Bargoed HOVRA area, which because of its central location, could provide the main driver for the regeneration of the County Borough as a whole. The NCC contains a number of complementary ‘urban hubs’, namely Ystrad Mynach, Blackwood, Oakdale and Newbridge.

Blackwood is the principal retail centre, Ystrad Mynach has administrative, health and further education roles and a new rail service has been introduced in Newbridge. Together with the major employment site at Oakdale / Pen y fan, these ‘hubs’ of activity form a powerful driver for economic growth and provision of urban facilities in the County Borough.

Exploit brownfield opportunities where appropriate

1.31 The County Borough has significant areas of brownfield land available for redevelopment across the whole area as a result of economic and public sector restructuring. The location of many of these sites is largely predetermined by the industrial and cultural heritage of the area. The most important sites are:

- o Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area
 - Bargoed Plateau, Aberbargoed (11.8 ha)
- o Northern Connections Corridor
 - Oakdale Colliery (58.2 ha)
 - Penallta Colliery, Ystrad Mynach (31.87 ha)
- o Southern Connections Corridor
 - Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas (23 ha),
 - Land at Pontypandy, Caerphilly (7.58 ha)
 - Risca Foundry (3.3 ha)
 - Ness Tar (12.3 ha)



1.32 Where brownfield sites exist and the redevelopment of these sites for alternative uses would be viable and realistically likely to be developed within the Plan period, these sites have been allocated for appropriate forms of development. These allocations include all of the significant brownfield land listed above, which have been allocated for a range of uses, with the exception of Ness Tar, which is not anticipated to come forward during the lifetime of the Plan due to the severity of constraints associated with the site.

1.33 In determining the most appropriate use of all brownfield sites, consideration has been given to the need to reserve land for employment or urban facilities as well as ensuring that development would not have an adverse effect on the role and function of the County Borough as a whole. It is important to note that the Southern Connections Corridor is particularly well provided for in terms of large brownfield sites and the Plan aims to balance the need to redevelop these brownfield sites against the need to ensure that growth is managed across the whole of the County Borough in order to promote regeneration in the more deprived areas, where fewer significant brownfield opportunities exist.

Promote resource efficient settlement patterns

1.34 A key part of the Strategy is to promote resource efficient patterns of development across the whole of the County Borough. The LDP actively promotes a positive approach to energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste management and conservation measures in both the siting and design of new developments.

1.35 A crucial mechanism for achieving resource efficient settlements and indicating where growth will be permitted is the designation of settlement boundaries. The settlement boundary performs a number of important

strategic functions, namely: it defines the area within which development would normally be allowed, taking into account all other material considerations; it promotes the full and effective use of urban land and thus concentrates development within settlements; it prevents the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development and fragmented development; it prevents inappropriate development in the countryside and is a powerful tool to guide development control decisions thus providing certainty to the public and developers. Settlement boundaries have been delineated in accordance with the role and function of specific settlements.

1.36 Many settlements in Caerphilly are former mining communities with individual identities and the delineation of settlement boundaries in accordance with the role and function of these settlements will seek to retain and reinforce the identities of the settlements in addition to achieving resource efficient settlements.

1.37 Existing land allocations and other areas of open land within existing settlement boundaries have been rigorously reassessed with a view to reallocating land where appropriate for alternative land uses. Care has been taken to ensure that vulnerable land uses such as open space, leisure land and community uses have sufficient protection to avoid their loss to more profitable development such as housing. Where land is identified as being surplus to requirements and its development would result in the efficient use of land within settlement limits, it has been released for alternative forms of development.

1.38 Given the topography of the area and the way in which rapid urbanisation took place in the nineteenth century, a significant amount of urban development in Caerphilly has taken place within the flood plains of the Rivers Ebbw, Sirhowy and Rhydney

and its tributaries. As a result of this historic development, large areas within the Principal Towns of Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly and Risca/Pontymister lie within flood plains. It is therefore inevitable, despite the overall aim to avoid flood risk areas, that some existing development will be vulnerable to flooding.

- 1.39 Some flexibility is necessary however to enable the risks of flooding to be addressed whilst recognising the negative economic and social consequences of precluding investment in existing urban areas, particularly within the Principal Towns and the benefits of reusing previously developed land. In assessing the suitability of previously developed land for new development a judgement has been made in terms of the social, environmental and economic benefits of redeveloping sites.
- 1.40 As a general principle the Plan seeks to locate development away from the floodplain. However where development is considered appropriate having regard to the role and function of settlements and can be justified within the context of TAN 15, suitable mitigation measures will need to be incorporated within the design of any new development to ensure that it is as safe as possible. In particular, where development is proposed in vulnerable areas, the need for a flood consequences assessment will be highlighted as a requirement of any future planning application on sites allocated in the LDP. These assessments will be prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency. Wherever possible in such locations, redevelopment will also

be planned in such a way as to provide increased protection for existing vulnerable urban areas.

- 1.41 The provision of an efficient transport system through both a modal shift towards a more sustainable form of transport and improvements to the strategic road network is an important part of moving towards a more sustainable, resource-efficient settlement pattern across the whole County Borough allowing further improvements to the strategic road network where appropriate to address issues of accessibility and regeneration.
- 1.42 In the longer term a significant switch from car to public transport is planned and therefore settlements with good access to existing rail services along the Rhymney Valley and Ebbw lines, with regular links to Cardiff, will be favoured, particularly for high-density development. Rail corridors are seen as the most appropriate locations for future development that are likely to generate large numbers of journeys.
- 1.43 The Plan also identifies opportunities where higher density development schemes will be particularly appropriate due to the proximity of the site to the transportation network and in particular public transport. A balance will need to be struck between safeguarding key sites close to transportation nodes for facilities such as park and ride and redeveloping them to accommodate public transport friendly development opportunities.
- 1.44 In achieving a balanced approach to growth, consideration must be given to the disposal of waste. In the past waste has been perceived as a problem that is conveniently and cost effectively disposed of in landfill. It is now widely recognised that this disposal approach is unsustainable in the long-term because of the growing volume of waste produced, the risk of environmental pollution and

the lack of sites available to accommodate landfill in Caerphilly County Borough. The Plan seeks to address this issue through the development of an integrated and adequate network of modern, well designed and well managed hierarchy of waste management / resource recovery facilities across the County Borough to serve the needs of the population.

Ensure development contributes towards necessary infrastructure improvements

- 1.45 The sustainable provision of adequate and efficient infrastructure, including utilities such as water supply, sewers, waste management, electricity, gas and telecommunications, is crucial for the sustainability of the County Borough. Enabling new development, which is appropriately serviced by such infrastructure, is essential to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the County Borough. New development will place additional pressure on utilities both strategically and on a site-specific basis. Where necessary improvements are not envisaged by the utility provider within the development timescale, contributions which are directly associated with a development have been identified to enable prospective developers to factor in the necessary costs into their development finance at an early stage.
- 1.46 One of the key objectives of the LDP is to reduce congestion by engendering a more sustainable transport system that seeks to minimise the need to travel, promotes alternative modes of transport to the car, and makes the most efficient use of existing transport infrastructure. This will enable people and businesses to have easy access to goods and services that support their economic and social life without damaging the environment.

- 1.47 Trends in car usage point to increasing congestion in the County Borough and, in the past 10 years, there has been a significant increase in congestion within the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors, especially at critical parts of the strategic network, e.g. along the A472 road corridor and the key junctions along the A468. This is not sustainable, as new development will exacerbate the problems of congestion if it is not mitigated by appropriate investment in infrastructure. Residential developments will, therefore, be required to contribute toward improvements to the strategic road network and other necessary infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the public transport system where necessary through planning obligations or a community infrastructure levy as appropriate.

Ensure development provides necessary community facilities

- 1.48 The Council plays a major part in the provision and management of well-designed open space and appropriate play facilities, providing a diverse network of parks, informal and formal recreation areas and children's play areas across the County Borough. In some parts of the County Borough, such as the densely populated Caerphilly Basin, pressure on existing leisure facilities is significant and residential development will generate additional pressure for localised open space and play facilities. In order to address this, new housing development will be required to ensure that sufficient levels of well designed open space and appropriate safe play facilities are provided onsite in order to serve the needs of residents.

1.49 The inclusion of formal and informal open spaces within new development is important for a number of reasons, namely: it provides for the recreational needs of local residents and there are significant health benefits by increasing exercise opportunities that enable greater physical activity; it enhances the quality of life of residents and contributes to their sense of well being; it can positively contribute to the built environment; and it can contribute to biodiversity, the conservation of nature and landscape, air quality and the protection of groundwater.

1.50 In addition to on-site requirements, residential development is likely to generate additional pressure on wider strategic leisure infrastructure such as leisure centres, playing fields and parks. Consequently, housing developments will be required to contribute towards improvements to the network of leisure infrastructure through planning obligations or the community infrastructure levy as appropriate.

1.51 New housing development will also increase pressure on other community facilities such as community centres and schools. The capacity of schools in particular is limited by WAG guidance and therefore the generation of additional pupils as a result of new developments may result in the requirement for new and improved facilities.

Reduce the impact of development upon the countryside

1.52 In some parts of the County Borough any further growth outside settlement boundaries would result in the development of particularly sensitive areas such as Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILL). This is particularly the case in the Southern Connections Corridor. In such areas the ability of the environment to accommodate development without undue harm is very limited, particularly where further constrained by topography.

1.53 The distribution of the designation of such valued and sensitive areas gives a broad indication of environmental capacity in different parts of the County Borough. Where settlements are identified for growth in line with their role and function, care has been taken to ensure that the environment has the capacity to accommodate it whilst having regard for the need to protect and/or conserve those aspects of the natural environment that are valued for their landscape, biodiversity or agricultural interest. Where greenfield sites have been



identified, primarily in the Heads of the Valleys or Northern Connections Corridor areas, consideration will be given to the potential for the development of the sites to realise landscape enhancement and biodiversity gain as a result of their development. This will include the need to consider the creation and maintenance of green corridors for the movement of all species.

- 1.54 Energy conservation makes a positive contribution to the protection of the environment through a reduction in the release of harmful emissions into the atmosphere. In addition, renewable energy technologies such as microgeneration have an important role to play in the built environment. However, there are a number of renewable energy sources that have the potential to have an adverse impact on valued aspects of the countryside, for example the potential impact of wind-generated energy on the landscape. The energy provision benefits of renewable energy schemes therefore need to be balanced against the potential impact of such development on the landscape and on sites of ecological interest.
- 1.55 Coal underlies the majority of the County Borough. The seams outcrop in the north and south of the County Borough, whilst in the middle they are overlain by sandstone. Coal has been worked extensively in the past by both opencast methods and deep mines. Minerals Planning Policy Wales aims to provide positively for the working of mineral resources to meet society's needs. It therefore advocates that mineral resources should be safeguarded from permanent development that would prevent their future workings. The strategy balances the need for the safeguarding of nationally important mineral resources, (e.g. coal, sand, gravel) against the potential impact of such development on the landscape and on sites of ecological interest. The Plan seeks to fully take into account the impact of proposals

for the extraction of minerals on the amenity of residents, and its implications for the safeguarding or enhancement of the natural environment to facilitate the future tourism development potential of the area.

- 1.56 The Council sees the countryside, which makes up nearly 80% of the land area of the County Borough, as a positive asset that can strengthen regeneration strategies and maximise tourism opportunities that provide an enhanced quality of life for all, including providing benefits to people's health and well-being. In particular the Plan seeks to develop opportunities for the County Borough to contribute to the Valleys Regional Park – a network of countryside recreation areas linked by strategic footpaths and cycleways.

Overview

The Plan's Development Strategy splits the County Borough into three strategy areas for the development and use of land, and provides the context and framework for the more detailed policies in Sections B and C. The Strategy policies deliver the wider aims and objectives of the strategy and are supplemented by more detailed policies in Section B (Countywide policies) that provide the policy framework for the determination of planning applications and Section C (Area Specific policies).

Strategy Policies

Development Strategy - Development in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

- SP1 Proposals in the Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area will be required to:
- A Promote the north of the County Borough as a tourist, employment and residential area at the heart of the valleys city region and
 - B Provide appropriate forms of growth in response to the role and function of settlements and
 - C Serve to address existing problems of deprivation in order to sustain and develop communities in a manner that is consistent with the underlying principles of sustainable development

(Key components met: 1, 2, 3 & 5)

- 1.57 The Development Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area seeks to exploit appropriate development opportunities where they exist in the more deprived northern part of the County Borough, with a view to creating a viable future for all of the communities in this area. The Strategy will seek to accommodate new housing in villages where there is a need to diversify the housing stock in order to retain the existing population and regenerate existing communities. New housing development in this area will be complemented by provision for new and improved employment and tourism opportunities, new community facilities and improvements to the public transport system and the strategic highway network.

Development Strategy - Development in the Northern Connections Corridor

- SP2 Development proposals in the Northern Connections Corridor will promote sustainable development that:
- A Focuses significant development on both brownfield and greenfield sites that have regard for the social and economic functions of the area
 - B Reduces car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel
 - C Makes the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure
 - D Protects the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development
 - E Capitalises on the economic opportunities offered by Oakdale / Penyfan Plateau

(Key components met: 1, 3, 4, 5 & 8)

- 1.58 The Strategy seeks to capitalise on the development opportunities in the Principal Towns of Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach, as well as the Local Centres of Newbridge and Nelson and the economic opportunities offered by the Oakdale / Penyfan plateau by providing for a range of uses that reflect the roles and functions of settlements in order to enhance quality of life for residents. Development in the Northern Connections Corridor will be targeted to settlements with good public transport links to encourage travel by sustainable modes.



- 1.59 Brownfield sites will be utilised in preference to greenfield sites where feasible, subject to satisfactory environmental and community safeguards. Proposals for the reclamation and beneficial after-use of contaminated land will be considered favourably.

Development Strategy - Development in the Southern Connections Corridor

SP3 Development proposals in the Southern Connections Corridor will promote sustainable development that:

A Uses previously developed land within settlement limits

B Reduces car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel

C Makes the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure

D Has regard to the social and economic function of the area and

E Protects the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development

(Key components met: 1, 3, 4, 5 & 8)

- 1.60 The Southern Connections Corridor and, in particular Caerphilly Town, is currently the County Borough's most attractive area to potential investors, but a strategy which relies solely on the south of the County Borough for economic progress is unsustainable in the long term. In light of this the Strategy seeks to make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure by limiting development to opportunities to redevelop previously developed land (brownfield) where feasible, subject to satisfactory environmental and community safeguards and consideration of the role and function of settlements within the strategy area.

- 1.61 The Strategy is underpinned by a balanced approach to managing future growth through resource efficient settlement patterns that reduce the need to travel.

Settlement Strategy

SP4 The Council will support existing settlements, which will be enhanced based on their role and function in the settlement strategy:

Principal Towns:

- o Bargoed (HOVRA)
- o Blackwood (NCC)
- o Ystrad Mynach (NCC)
- o Caerphilly (SCC)
- o Risca / Pontymister (SCC)

Local Centres:

- o Rhydney (HOVRA)
- o Nelson (NCC)
- o Newbridge (NCC)
- o Bedwas (SCC)

Residential Settlements:

- o All other villages within defined settlement boundaries

(Key components met: 1 & 3)

- 1.62 The role and function of individual settlements underpins the Strategy for the County Borough. The Strategy identifies five Principal Towns and four Local Centres based on their functions as major employers, retail centres, providers of services and centres of population. These are shown on the Key Diagram. The Plan seeks to enhance these areas based on their current role and function in order to respond appropriately to the economic, social and environmental needs of individual settlements.

- 1.63 The Strategy also seeks to enhance existing residential areas within settlement boundaries that have neighbourhood shops and/or individual units serving more immediate needs.

Settlement Boundaries

SP5 The Plan defines settlement boundaries in order to:

- A Define the area within which development would normally be allowed, taking into account material planning considerations
- B Promote the full and effective use of urban land and thus concentrate development within settlements
- C Prevent the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development and fragmented development
- D Prevent inappropriate development in the countryside

(Key components met: 1, 3, 5 & 8)

1.64 A key mechanism for achieving resource efficient settlements and to indicate where growth will be permitted is the designation of settlement boundaries. The delineation of settlement boundaries across the County Borough is determined by the functional analysis of the strategy areas, namely the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, the Northern Connections Corridor, the Southern Connections Corridor and by the specific role and function of individual settlements.

Place Making

SP6 Development proposals should contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features through:

- A An appropriate mix of uses that reflect the role and function of settlements
- B A high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness
- C Design in accordance with best practice in terms of designing out crime
- D A location and layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles and provides full, easy and safe access for all
- E The incorporation of resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation, and where appropriate the use of sustainable drainage systems
- F The efficient use of land, including higher densities where development is close to key transport nodes
- G The incorporation and enhancement of existing natural heritage features
- H The incorporation of mitigation measures that improve and maintain air quality

(Key components met: 1, 3, 5 & 8)



1.65 The LDP Strategy seeks to ensure that sustainable places are created that are socially cohesive, enhance quality of life, meet the needs of current and future residents and reflect the role and function of settlements. The promotion of good design, sustainable transport, resource efficiency and the enhancement of natural heritage will contribute to developments that encourage a sense of place and identity, whilst reflecting local distinctiveness.

Planning Obligations

SP7 The Council will seek to secure Planning Obligations (S106 Agreements) where they are necessary to remove obstacles to planned development, meet local needs and make development more sustainable. Such obligations will include:

- A Infrastructure for walking, cycling, public transport, parking**
- B Schools and ancillary facilities**
- C Community Facilities**
- D Strategic highway improvements in the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors**
- E Flood defence measures required to mitigate the risk of flooding**
- F Formal and informal open and leisure space**
- G Affordable housing and**
- H Other facilities and services considered necessary**

(Key Components Met: 1, 3, 6 & 7)

1.66 New development has the potential to increase pressure on existing community infrastructure and facilities such as transportation networks, schools, lifelong learning facilities, open space and other facilities. The provision of adequate infrastructure and services are a prerequisite of development taking place, as it is crucial for the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the County Borough.

Where appropriate, the Council will seek obligations to mitigate against the effect of development. In line with national guidance the Council will negotiate obligations where these are necessary, relevant to planning, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.

1.67 In the case of previously used land, the Council will take into consideration abnormal costs associated with the redevelopment of a site when negotiating the level of planning obligation to be sought. Where a developer considers that the level of obligation sought may affect the viability of a development proposal to an unacceptable degree the Council will require the developer to provide sufficient evidence to support this position as part of the planning obligation negotiation process.

Minerals Safeguarding

SP8 The Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of minerals by:

- A Safeguarding known resources of coal, sand and gravel and hard rock**
- B Maintaining a minimum 10-year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national guidance**

(Key components met: 3, 5 & 8)

1.68 The Strategy will balance the need for the safeguarding of nationally important mineral resources (e.g. Coal, Sand, Gravel) against the potential impact of such development on the landscape and on sites of ecological interest. It advocates that mineral resources as indicated on the Proposals Map should be safeguarded from permanent development that would prevent their future working.

Waste Management

SP9 The Council will implement a sustainable, integrated approach to waste management, which minimises the production of waste and its impact on the environment, and maximises the use of unavoidable waste as a resource. To assist in this aim the following land-use commitments are made:

- o **All allocated and protected class B2 industrial sites are designated as potentially suitable locations for new in-building waste management facilities, which provides substantial choice in meeting the estimated land requirement of up to 10.4 ha**
- o **The Area of Search maps identified in the RWP are adopted as appropriate advice as to where developers should first seek sites for in-building and open air facilities**

(Key components met: 3 & 5)

1.69 In line with the National Waste Strategy and the Regional Waste Plan (RWP), the Council will seek to promote the reduction, re-use and recycling of materials in order to reduce land take-up for waste facilities.

1.70 Advances in technology and the introduction of new legislation, policies and practices mean that many modern waste management / resource recovery facilities on the outside look no different to any other industrial building and on the inside contain industrial de-manufacturing processes or energy generation activities that are no different to many other modern industrial processes in terms of their

operation or impact. The designation of all allocated and protected use class B2 industrial sites as suitable in principle for in-building waste management facilities, represents a substantial choice of sites compared with the maximum estimated need of approximately 10.4 ha of land which the RWP calculates will be required for such facilities.

1.71 The RWP contains Areas of Search maps (refer to Constraints Maps) for use in identifying new sites for in-building and open-air waste management / resource recovery facilities. Developers are encouraged to use the recommendations to identify suitable candidate site locations. Any sites identified in this way for development proposals for Waste Management Facilities will be judged on their own merits and in accordance with all the provisions of the Plan.

Conservation of Natural Heritage

SP10 The Council will protect, conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage of the County Borough in the consideration of all development proposals within both the rural and built environment

(Key components met: 3 & 8)

1.72 The term Natural Heritage covers the geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value of the County Borough. It embraces the relationships between landform and landscape, habitats and wildlife and the natural and built environment. It also includes natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows and rivers. The natural heritage is not confined to the countryside or designated sites and is just as prevalent and important in our urban areas. The natural heritage is a positive asset that enriches people's quality of life and promotes the regeneration of areas.

- 1.73 Almost 80% of Caerphilly County Borough Council is classified as countryside, i.e. lies outside of defined settlement boundaries. Whilst change is inevitable and opportunities for growth and development of the Borough need to be provided, respecting the unique and distinctive features or characteristics of the natural heritage of the County Borough is essential in protecting, conserving, enhancing and managing the valuable features in both the natural and built environment.

Countryside Recreation

- SP11 Access to opportunities for enjoyment of the County Borough will be promoted and encouraged where the proposals are sustainable in terms of its impact on the natural heritage, the local community and the rural environment within which they are located**

(Key components met: 1 & 8)

- 1.74 The County Borough has considerable potential for the development of recreation, tourism and access based on its natural resources and heritage for both local people and visitors and tourists to the immediate and surrounding area. The countryside of the County Borough and its amenities such as the rivers, mountains, country parks, cycle and walking routes, commons and listed buildings all contribute to the many opportunities available for the enjoyment of the County Borough.

- 1.75 All of these opportunities and more will be encouraged and welcomed as part of the continued development of the County Borough. However, the principles of sustainable development need to be taken into consideration and all countryside recreation proposals should be consistent with these principles. The need to conserve or enhance features of significance and value to the local, region and nation

should be factored into any proposal, and mitigation and/or compensation sought where necessary.

Development of the Valleys Regional Park

- SP12 Development proposals that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park will be permitted provided that there is no adverse impact on areas of recognised environmental or landscape importance**

(Key components met: 2 & 3)

- 1.76 The development of a Valleys Regional Park is a key opportunity to attract tourists and investments to the County Borough, particularly within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, including the sensitive development of country parks.

- 1.77 Whilst development proposals that would contribute to the delivery of the Valleys Regional Park will be considered favourably, such as visitor attractions or employment opportunities, it is important that proposals do not have a negative impact on existing areas of environmental importance.

Leisure Centre in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

- SP13 The Council will support the development of a leisure centre within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area**

(Key components met: 2 & 7)

- 1.78 The Council will seek to exploit development opportunities for the delivery of a new leisure centre in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area. This is identified as an opportunity to significantly improve the County Borough's strategic leisure infrastructure through the replacement of existing ageing facilities.

Total Housing Requirements

SP14 The Council has made provision for the development of up to 10,269 new dwellings in the County Borough between 2006 and 2021 in order to deliver the 8625 new dwellings required to meet the moderate growth strategy. This 19% over provision allows for flexibility and choice.

(Key components met: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 8)

- 1.79 The Local Development Plan ensures that sufficient residential land is made available to meet the future needs of communities for both market and affordable housing. On the basis of sites allocated for housing under **Policy HG1**, as well as completions, units under construction and allowances for windfall sites, small sites, conversions, demolitions and bringing empty properties back into beneficial use, the Plan makes provision for 10,269 dwellings. This represents 1,644 (19%) residential units more than the 8,625 units required to meet the dwelling housing requirement identified by the moderate growth strategy. This allowance provides for choice and flexibility. The assumptions used to underpin this housing land provision are set out in the Population and Housing Background Paper.
- 1.80 Opportunities for residential development will be distributed across the whole County Borough, in line with the role and function of individual settlements. In particular, housing development will be targeted at settlements with good rail and bus services and also former mining villages that require additional housing in order to promote

and sustain them as viable residential areas. Furthermore, brownfield sites will be promoted over greenfield sites where appropriate.

Affordable Housing Target

SP15 The Council will seek to deliver through the planning system at least 964 affordable dwellings between 2006 and 2021 in order to contribute to balanced and sustainable communities

(Key components met: 1 & 3)

- 1.81 The Council aims to ensure that everyone in the County Borough has access to a good quality home that meets their housing requirements and the provision of a choice of housing that is affordable to the local population is vital in achieving this. A shortfall of affordable housing is a significant issue facing residents in the County Borough. Indeed, the Local Housing Market Assessment (2007) indicates that there is a Borough-wide shortfall of 516 affordable units per annum.
- 1.82 The target of at least 964 affordable dwellings reflects the number of units that it is expected can be delivered across the County Borough through the use of planning obligations on qualifying sites coming forward for development over the Plan period and through affordable housing exceptions proposals. The target of at least 964 dwellings delivered through the planning system forms part of a wider total of 3664 affordable dwellings which it is estimated could be provided using all other delivery mechanisms in response to levels of need.

Managing Employment Growth

SP16 The Council has made provision for the development of 101.9 hectares of employment land in the County Borough between 2006 and 2021. This requirement will be met principally through the development of a range

of employment sites including the following:

A Business Parks

B Primary Industrial Estates

C Secondary Industrial Estates

(Key components met: 1, 2, 3 and 4)

1.83 In order to provide sufficient employment opportunities for the residents of the County Borough, 101.9 hectares of land has been allocated for new employment development. This represents the provision of a range of employment sites across the County Borough, with the Oakdale / Penyfan plateau in the Northern Connections Corridor providing a significant opportunity to act as a powerful driver for economic growth in the County Borough.

1.84 This policy incorporates flexibility, as the County Borough's economy gradually changes from one dominated by heavy industry and manufacturing to a predominantly service sector economy, as well as, in many cases, promoting the redevelopment of brownfield land for employment use.

Promoting Commercial Development

SP17 The Council has made provision for the development of 29.3 hectares of commercial sites, and identified five principal town centre boundaries, two primary retail areas, three commercial opportunity areas and two retail warehouse parks, in order to enhance the commercial sector in terms of service provision and employment:

A Commercial Development Sites

B Principal Town Centre Boundaries

C Primary Retail Areas

D Commercial Opportunity Areas

E Retail Warehouse Parks

(Key components met: 1, 2 & 3)

1.85 In order to enhance commercial service provision and increase the employment opportunities for the residents of the County Borough, a range of commercial development sites have been identified where appropriate in the five Principal Town Centres and the four Local Centres. Town Centre Boundaries have been designated for the five Principal Towns and a Primary Retail Area is defined for both Blackwood and Caerphilly. Further Primary Retail Areas may be designated in Bargoed and Caerphilly in the future but these depend on commercial redevelopment schemes going ahead.

1.86 In addition, a Commercial Opportunity Area has been identified for each of the principal towns of Bargoed, Blackwood and Caerphilly where office development might prove particularly beneficial. However, this will not preclude such proposals anywhere else inside the designated town centres apart from within the Primary Areas. Finally, Retail Warehouse Parks have been defined for both Blackwood and Caerphilly and it is intended that these areas be developed first in preference to other edge of centre locations for their respective catchments. These policy initiatives aim to provide yet another significant set of opportunities to drive further economic growth in the County Borough.

Protection of Strategic Leisure Network

SP18 The Council will protect important networks of public open space, natural green space and recreational facilities from inappropriate development

(Key components met: 1 & 8)

1.87 Access to public open space, natural green space and recreational facilities are important in promoting public health and wellbeing and enhancing quality of life for both residents and visitors. The Council will therefore seek to protect these land uses to avoid their loss to more profitable developments such as housing and as an integral part of the Council's strategy to provide doorstep access to countryside and leisure facilities within the County Borough to improve the public health of the resident population.

Transport Infrastructure Improvement

SP19 The Council will seek to implement improvements to the existing transport infrastructure that:

A Address social exclusion by increasing accessibility to employment, services and facilities throughout the County Borough and/or

B Assist in regenerating the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area through creating and improving transport links to the settlements in the Northern and Southern Connections Corridors, and/or

C Reinforce the role and function of settlements, and/or

D Reduce the level of traffic movements and/or congestion, within any identified air quality management area, and/or

E Promote the most efficient use of the transport network

(Key components met: 1, 2 & 3)

1.88 Whilst recognising that there are major problems in the County Borough with congestion it will take many years to change the transportation system significantly. The road network plays a critical role in improving accessibility to employment opportunities, to shopping centres and to community and other facilities. Transport infrastructure improvements will aim to encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling as alternatives to the car. The strategy must continue to provide an efficient transport system for the existing settlement pattern whilst moving towards a more sustainable, resource-efficient settlement pattern and transport system across the whole County Borough.

1.89 The strategy will build on the significant improvements to the strategic transport network over the last decade and will promote further improvements to ensure that the network as a whole functions in an efficient manner, having regard to the role and function of settlements and the links between them.

Road Hierarchy

SP20 A road hierarchy is defined as follows:

A The Strategic Highway Network

B County Routes

C Distributor Roads

D Access Roads

(Key components met: 3)

1.90 The establishment of a road hierarchy will facilitate the efficient use of the highways network by ensuring that traffic is channelled onto the most appropriate routes in order to maintain appropriate environmental, amenity and safety conditions. The roads identified at each level of the hierarchy are set out in **Appendix 16**.

Parking Standards

SP21 In order to implement the Parking Standards laid out in the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008, the Council will identify the following Parking Zones

A Town Centres

B Urban Areas

C Suburban Areas

D Countryside

E Deep Rural

(Key components met: 1)

1.91 The 2008 CSS Parking Standards sets out the parking requirements for all development proposals within the County Borough. In a change from former standards operated by the Council, these standards are not only specific to land uses, but are also related to where the proposal is physically located. Consequently the respective zones need to be identified in order that the respective parking requirements can be applied. The Parking Zones have been identified in accordance with the zone types and parameters set out in the CSS Parking Guidelines.

Community, Leisure and Education Facilities

SP22 The Council has safeguarded suitable land for the development of community, leisure and education facilities in order to ensure that an adequate network of provision can be made at accessible locations across the County Borough to contribute to the health, social care and well being of residents over the Plan period

(Key components met: 1, 2, 5 & 7)

1.92 Providing a range of community facilities that are accessible to as many people as possible is fundamental in terms of securing sustainable communities. Such facilities are valuable not only in terms of the facilities they provide, but are also important in terms of the employment they can generate and in terms of attracting people to live within an area. Within the County Borough there are many competing needs for the development and use of land. The Council is committed however to facilitating the development of a strategic network of accessible community facilities to meet the health social care and well being of the residents of the County Borough over the Plan period.

1.93 Care needs to be taken to ensure that sites that are suitable for the development of much needed facilities such as surgeries, youth centres, formal outdoor leisure facilities etc are not developed for alternative more profitable land uses such as housing but are safeguarded for the development of such facilities by the Council and partner organisations such as the Local Health Board over the Plan period.



Section B:

Countywide Policies

2.1 Paragraph 2.13 of Local Development Plans Wales states *“The LDP should contain a succinct set of area wide policies, which set out the general criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be considered. Such policies will ensure that development accords with the vision and objectives set out in the strategy.”*

2.2 This Chapter sets out those policies that are to be applied equally across the whole of the County Borough. The Countywide Policies together form the Development Control framework, and are more restrictive than the more promotional Strategy Policies in Section A and the area specific policies in Section C. This section provides the basis for the guidance to developers that will allow the Strategy to be delivered.

Welsh Assembly Government - National Planning Guidance

2.3 The policies in this section have not been drafted to accord with specific land-uses. They are drafted to reflect general and strategic issues in a format based on policy function. This approach has reduced duplication that has been evident in previous development plan documents.

In addition, the policies in this section, as far as is reasonably possible, do not re-iterate national policy and consequently some more familiar policy content from previous development plans is not included. Therefore, it is important that full account is taken of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (MIPPS) issued since then and also the Technical Advice Notes (TAN) issued on individual topics/issues.

2.4 Where the following countywide policies discuss matters covered by national guidance they have included specific local requirements. Also, the reasoned justifications to the policies do not provide a comprehensive background for the policy requirement. This information is contained in the topic background papers that support the LDP. Overall these policies accord with the guidance laid out in WAG Guidance for Countywide Policies.

2.5 Generally the policies apply to all development proposals. However, within some policies there are some controls or requirements that only apply to specific circumstances or land-uses. In these circumstances, the policy is drafted to make it clear exactly where it applies. It should be noted that, due to the layout of the Countywide Policies, the relevant policy criteria for any one proposal is likely to be contained across a number of policies. **Consequently all the Countywide Policies should be considered in respect of all development proposals as a matter of course.**

Plan Policies

Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion

CW1 Development proposals that are likely to generate a significant number of trips will only be permitted provided:

- A Walking and cycling are modes of travel which have been actively encouraged for short trips to and within the development and to nearby services and facilities, including public transport nodes, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure**
- B Provision has been made for ease of cycling, including secure bike storage and cyclist facilities**
- C It has been demonstrated that where a significant number of freight trips will be generated, the least environmentally damaging route will be utilised**
- D The use of Green Travel Plans has been encouraged, where appropriate**

2.6 Development proposals have the potential to generate significant numbers of trips, either as an origin (e.g. housing, industry [freight movements]) or as a destination (e.g. employment and retail / leisure uses). As part of their design and layout, such developments should minimise car borne trips. Where significant numbers of freight trips are involved, such as those associated with mineral extraction or possibly land reclamation, the least environmentally damaging route is to be utilised. For the

purposes of this policy the term “cyclist facilities” could include changing areas and showers. The term “significant” is defined in the guidelines for Traffic Impact Assessments, Institute of Highways and Transportation. There is also guidance on this matter within PPW, TAN 18.

2.7 Addressing social exclusion is a critical element in regenerating disadvantaged areas throughout the County Borough. Improving the ability of residents to access services and facilities is a key factor in realising changes to these areas. Whilst it is acknowledged that a significant proportion of the improvement will be through non-land-use related factors. However physical access to services and facilities can be enhanced by appropriate location and design. This policy seeks to maximise this potential.

2.8 Green Travel Plans are a means of ensuring a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport. It is envisaged that developers will be encouraged to enter into such arrangements, particularly in relation to the development of employment sites that currently tend to be inaccessible, other than by car.

Amenity

CW2 Development proposals must have regard for all relevant material planning considerations in order to satisfy the following requirements:

- A There is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land**

- B The proposal would not result in over-development of the site and / or its surroundings**
- C The proposed use is compatible with surrounding land-uses and would not constrain the development of neighbouring sites for their identified land-use**
- D Where applicable, the viability of existing neighbouring land uses would not be compromised by virtue of their potential impact upon the amenity of proposed new residential development**

2.9 Proposals for development have the potential for causing undue nuisance that adversely affect the amenity of adjoining land-uses. The effects are predominantly, though not entirely, related to residential uses. Consequently the policy will apply to all forms of development in all locations. The policy addresses two sides of the issue, firstly the adverse effects of a development on adjoining uses, and secondly whether the development of a new residential site would prejudice existing land-uses that would have detrimental effects upon the amenity of those new residents.

Design Considerations - Highways

- CW3 Development proposals must satisfy the following highways requirements:**
- A The proposal has regard for the safe, effective, and efficient use of the transportation network**
 - B The proposal ensures that new access roads within development proposals are designed to a standard that:**

- i Promotes the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before that of the private car, and
- ii Safely and effectively accommodates the scale and nature of traffic, which those roads are intended to serve

C Parking, appropriate servicing and operational space have been provided in accordance with the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008

D Where access onto a highway is required the proposal takes account of the restrictions relevant to the class of road as designated in the road hierarchy ensuring movements and speeds are controlled through appropriate design, in order to ensure highway safety and amenity

2.10 The detailed requirements to be observed with regard to the provisions of criterion D are listed in **Appendix 16** - Road Hierarchy and Movements Restrictions.

Natural Heritage Protection

CW4 Development proposals that affect locally designated natural heritage features, will only be permitted:

- A Where they conserve and where appropriate enhance the distinctive or characteristic features of the Special**



Landscape Area (SLA) or Visually Important Local Landscape (VILL).

B Within, or in close proximity to sites designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Green Corridors, or Local Priority Habitats and Species, where proposals either:

- i Conserve and where appropriate enhance the ecological or geological importance of the designation, or
- ii Are such that the need for the development outweighs the ecological importance of the site, and where harm is minimised by mitigation measures and offset as far as practicable by compensation measures designed to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall value of the area or feature.

2.11 The natural heritage of the County Borough is diverse and contains specific biodiversity protection areas from European to local designations, together with local landscape designations. It is important that these are protected from inappropriate development. This policy test applies to any development proposal that would, or would be likely to, have a detrimental effect upon the distinctive biodiversity, geological or landscape features and characteristics of the County Borough. The level of potential harm will be assessed, taking into account, mitigation, compensatory and restoration measures.

2.12 Minerals underlie the majority of the County Borough, and the Council aims to balance the need to conserve the distinctive features and characteristics of the natural heritage with the need to safeguard nationally important mineral resources. Proposals for mineral workings are subject to national policy tests, as set out in Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW), 2000, Minerals

Technical Advice Note 1 (Aggregates) (MTAN1) and Minerals Technical Advice Note 2 (Coal) (MTAN2). The implications of such proposals will also need to be considered in respect of the distinctive features and characteristics of the natural heritage identified within the Plan.

Protection of the Water Environment

CW5 Development proposals will only be permitted where:

A They do not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the water environment, and

B Where they would not pose an unacceptable risk to the quality of controlled waters (including groundwater and surface water)

2.13 Whilst the Environment Agency Wales has a regulatory role in relation to water quality, the planning system has a crucial role to play in limiting the adverse effects of development on the water environment.

2.14 Climate change, increases in populations and changes in lifestyle have all had an impact upon the water environment and the pressures upon it. Climate change will affect the amount of rain that falls, it will impact upon river flows, replenishing of groundwater, the quality of water available and incidents of flooding, particularly localised, flash flooding. The demands and pressures on water resources will also change, with the scale and nature of the problem differing across Wales, as will the approach to dealing with the problems. The approach to the protection of the water environment will need to take into account the quality and quantity of the local water resource, and how this impacts upon the wider environment in terms of preventing further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems, associated habitats, fisheries, promoting the sustainable use of water, and controlling water abstractions. This is particularly

important in terms of any development proposals that are likely to impact on the rivers Rhymney, Ebbw and Sirhowy.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection

- CW6 Development proposals on sites containing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, or which are bordered by one of more such trees or hedgerows, will only be permitted provided that:**
- A Where arboricultural surveys are required, they are submitted and approved, including any mitigation, compensation or management requirements, as part of the planning application.**
 - B Root systems will be retained and adequately protected for the duration of all development activity on site.**
 - C Development proposals have made all reasonable efforts to retain, protect and integrate trees, woodlands or hedgerows within the development site.**
 - D Where trees, woodlands or hedgerows are removed, suitable replacements are provided where appropriate.**

2.15 Trees, woodlands, and hedgerows make a positive contribution to both the natural and built environment. They enhance the amenity value, character and diversity of the landscape, provide vital habitat for biodiversity and offer substantial environmental benefits such as offsetting of noise and improving air quality. Trees can occupy a substantial part of a development

site and because of their potential size can have a major influence on the planning and use of the site. Arboricultural surveys evaluate trees and hedgerows, assess the effects of development and propose suitable mitigation. Detailed assessments, including topographical surveys, tree surveys / categorisation, tree constraints plans and arboricultural implications assessments, provide important information on the quality and quantity of trees present and identify mitigation of the potential impacts of development, including the construction process, on trees and hedgerows and their root systems.

- 2.16 Effective measures should be taken to protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows that have been identified as worthy of retention through the arboricultural survey process. These features, if integrated sensitively and with due care, will enhance the quality of the development and amenity, safeguard biodiversity and natural heritage resources and minimise loss of trees and woodlands.
- 2.17 Where the loss of quality trees, woodlands and hedgerows is unavoidable, the loss should be minimised by providing appropriate replacements. This will ensure that the overall amenity, landscape and ecological value of the site and its setting is conserved.
- 2.18 Requirements to be observed in respect of trees and woodland are detailed in Supplementary Planning Guidance: Trees and Development – A Guide to incorporating Trees in Proposals for Developing Land.

Protection of Open Space

CW7 Proposals for development on areas of open space within settlements will only be permitted where:

- A The amount of open space remaining in the neighbourhood would still be adequate to serve local needs**
- B The site has no significant value as a recreational resource or an area of visual amenity**

Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities

CW8 Proposals that would result in the loss of a community and/or leisure facility will not be permitted except where:

- A A comparable replacement facility can be provided by the developer either on or off site, and within easy and convenient access on foot or by bicycle, or**
- B It can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements**

Protection of Rural Commercial Facilities

CW9 Proposals that would result in the loss of a shop or public house in defined villages will not be permitted except where:

- A The local community would continue to be served by another existing and comparable facility that is located within easy and convenient access by foot or bicycle; or**
- B There is evidence that the current use is not, and could not reasonably be expected to become, financially viable; and**
- C The developer can demonstrate that the premises, if non-operational, has been vacant for over a year and that the premises have been actively marketed for that use for lease or sale over a similar period of time at a reasonable rental or purchase price**

2.19 Local leisure and community facilities are important to the health, social, educational and cultural needs of the County Borough, as well as its economic well-being. In addition these facilities often provide the key elements to achieving more sustainable settlements by providing facilities within easy reach of people by foot or bicycle. Consequently this policy seeks to retain such facilities. This policy is, therefore, to apply to all proposals that lead, or could lead, to the loss of a facility.

2.20 There is a need to ensure that village shops and village pubs, which provide a benefit to the local population and help make rural communities sustainable, receive appropriate protection. This policy is intended to prevent the loss of such businesses in rural communities by change of use which otherwise would remain financially viable and/or could be sold to a new operator who would continue the service. The settlements to which this policy applies are defined as Argoed, Deri, Draethen, Fochriw, Groeswen, Hafodyrnys, Hollybush, Markham, Princetown, Rudry, Trinant, and Wyllie.

Leisure and Open Space Provision

CW10 All new housing sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings or exceeding 0.3ha in gross site area will be required to make adequate provision for:

- A Well designed useable open space as an integral part of the development; and**
- B Appropriate formal children's play facilities either on or off site and**
- C Adequate outdoor sport provision either on or off site,**
To meet the needs of the residents of the proposed development

2.21 The design and layout of new residential development should incorporate adequate areas of useable public open space as an

integral part of the development. Care should be taken to ensure that where amenity open space is incorporated into the layout of the site it should be designed in such a way as to exploit site topography, create open views and avoid incidental areas of un-useable space. Where sufficient open space exists adjacent to the development site, developers will need to consider how to exploit this resource and thus provide well-designed public links within the development to these areas of land through a new footpath and/or cycle path provision.

2.22 The amount of land required for children's play and outdoor sport provision is based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard, which recommend a minimum provision of 2.43 hectares per 1000 population. Precise requirements for each site will need to be agreed with the Council as local factors may require amendment to these standards, for example the location and quality of existing provision. The leisure background paper provides an indication of the types of facilities that may be sought on allocated housing sites.

2.23 Where necessary the Council will seek to enter into planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) in order to secure the appropriate provision of such facilities.

Affordable Housing Planning Obligation

CW11 Legal agreements will be required to ensure that there is provision of an element of affordable housing, in accordance with an assessment of local need, for all allocated and windfall housing sites that:

- A Accommodate 5 or more dwellings or**
- B Exceed 0.15ha in gross site area, or**
- C Where the combined product of adjacent housing site proposals would exceed the thresholds set in A or B above**

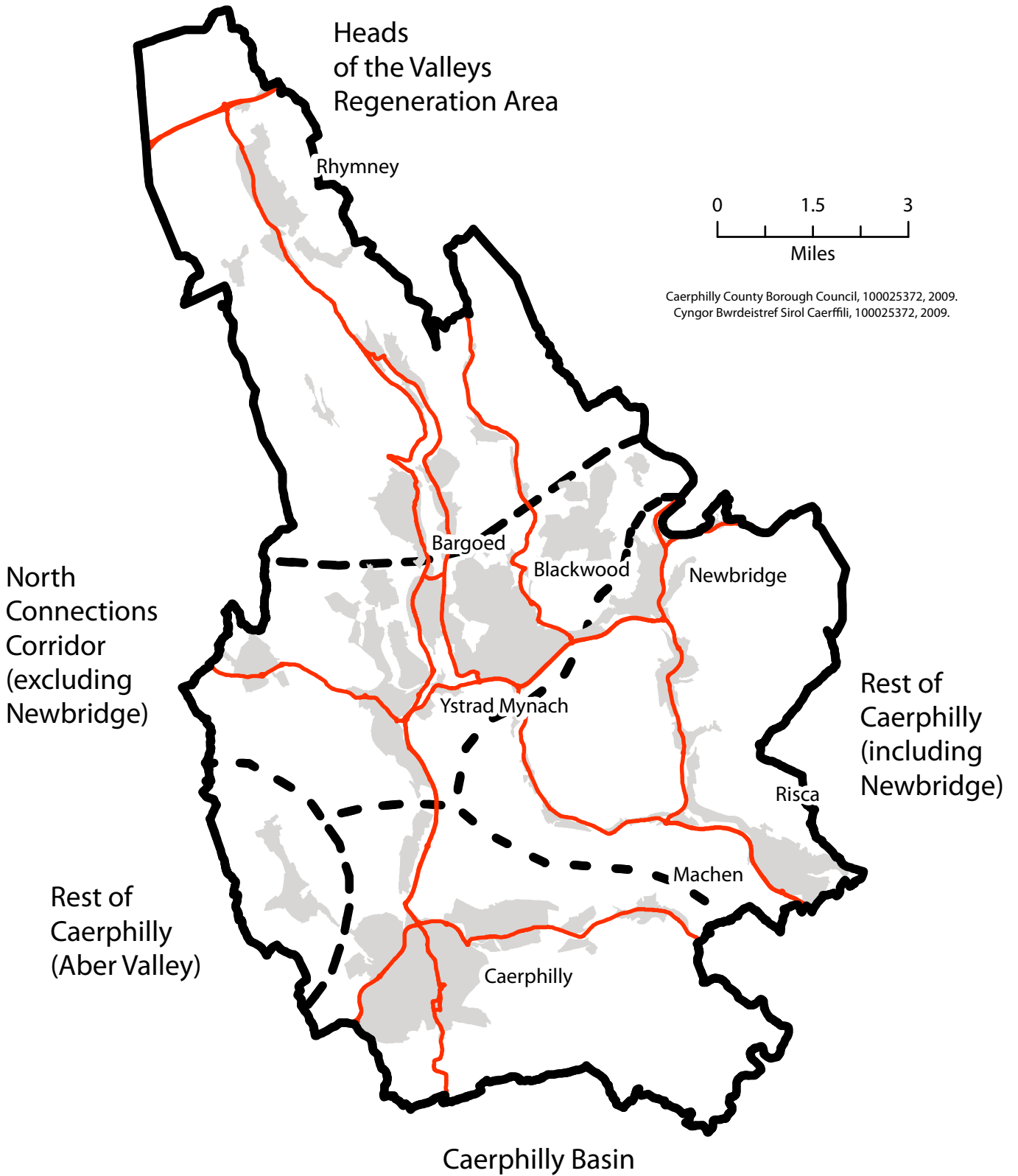
Where there is evidence of need, the Council will seek to negotiate the following affordable housing targets of:

- o **40% of the total number of dwellings proposed on sites within the Caerphilly Basin (excluding Aber Valley)**
- o **25% in the Northern Connections Corridor (excluding Newbridge) and**
- o **10% in the Rest of Caerphilly County Borough (including Aber Valley and Newbridge but excluding the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area)**

2.24 There is a significant need for affordable housing in the County Borough and therefore seeking appropriate levels of affordable housing is justified as a means of contributing to mixed, balanced and sustainable communities through the provision of housing for all sectors of the population.

2.25 These targets should be treated as indicative as, at planning application stage, site-specific requirements will depend on the current market conditions having regard for the most up to date Local Housing Market Assessment, recent Viability Assessments and information from the Council's Housing Division. The targets assume that no grant or public subsidy will be used. Should grant funding be available, a higher level of affordable housing may be sought. In

Area Specific Affordable Housing Targets



the case of sites assessed and formally concluded by the Council as being in locations of high affordable housing need and possessing locational or other attributes of particular suitability in terms of meeting such need, the Council may seek to negotiate levels of affordable housing provision up to 100%, having regard to all relevant considerations including the viability of such provision.

- 2.26 Further information on affordable housing requirements is provided in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

Affordable Housing Exception Sites

CW12 Permission will be granted for small affordable housing sites in or adjoining rural settlements on land where housing would not normally be permitted and where:

- A The site is solely for affordable housing and there are suitable arrangements to ensure that the housing is affordable and made available for initial and subsequent occupation by those in need of affordable housing**
- B A genuine local need for affordable housing has been identified in the village or settlement**
- C It can be demonstrated that the need for affordable housing in the village or settlement cannot be satisfactorily met within the settlement or within a nearby settlement**

D The site is at an appropriate scale and is in keeping with the form and character of the settlement

- 2.27 Exceptions sites are a potential means of delivering affordable housing in rural areas. Such developments must relate to rural settlements and be on sites where development is strictly controlled and new-build housing would not normally be permitted. Exceptions sites should be at an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement to ensure that communities are balanced and would normally accommodate no more than 5 dwellings.
- 2.28 Planning permission will be subject to a planning condition or obligation to ensure that the affordable housing will remain available in perpetuity to meet local housing needs. The release of exceptions sites will only be appropriate where there is evidence of local need and this need cannot be addressed within the particular settlement or an adjoining one. In the context of this policy 'local need' means a person or household who lives within and/or has a family connection to the settlement in question or an adjoining settlement, and is in affordable housing need.
- 2.29 The 'rural settlements' to which this policy applies are Princetown, Llechryd, Argoed, Markham, Hollybush, Deri, Fochriw, Hafodyrynys, Trinant, Machen, Rudry, Draethen, Wyllie, Cwmfelinfach, Ynysddu and Wattsville.
- 2.30 It will be necessary for exceptions proposals to meet all the other relevant criteria including in particular the requirements of **Policies CW2 and CW3**.

Use Class Restrictions - Business and Industry

CW13 Development proposals on industrial estates will be subject to the following restrictions:

A On sites allocated or identified as Business Parks, development will only be permitted if it is:

- i within use class B1
- ii to provide an ancillary facility or service to the primary employment use

B On sites allocated or identified as Primary Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:

- i within use classes B1, B2 or B8
- ii an appropriate sui generis use
- iii to provide an ancillary facility or service to the primary employment use

C On sites allocated or identified as Secondary Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:

- i within use classes B1, B2 or B8
- ii an appropriate sui generis use
- iii to provide an ancillary facility or service to the primary employment use
- iv an acceptable commercial service unrelated to class B uses

2.31 The majority of industrial estates in the County Borough comprise businesses that are categorised within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and County Planning Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), however there are also examples of Sui Generis uses on a number of sites. Every industrial site that is allocated or protected for use class B2 is considered suitable, in principle, for the location of in-building waste management facilities. This commitment is also referred to in Policy SP9, and both policies fulfil the requirements of the National Waste Strategy and the Regional Waste Plan (RWP). Examples of appropriate Sui Generis uses would include

a builder's merchant, a freight contractor's yard, vehicle depots and taxi control offices. Examples of commercial services unrelated to use class B which might be considered acceptable would include indoor health, fitness and play facilities, training facilities, day nurseries, and a commercial and vehicle repair and maintenance business.

Use Class Restrictions - Retail

CW14 Development proposals incorporating a change of use from class A1 retail premises to another use will be subject to the following restrictions:

A Within identified Principal Town Centres, changes of use of the ground floors of class A1 retail premises to other uses will only be permitted where:

- i The commercial vacancy rate of the centre has been over 10% for over a year and
- ii For a change to residential use the property is located on the edge of the centre

B Within identified Primary Retail Areas, the change of use of the ground floors of class A1 retail premises to residential use will not be permitted

C Within identified Primary Retail Areas, proposals for new, or the change of use of the ground floors of class A1 retail premises to other class A uses will only be permitted where the total cumulative number of such units would not exceed 10% of the total number of commercial units within the Primary Retail Area

2.32 Some uses, such as employment and retail uses, need to be protected to maintain their overall vitality and viability. Consequently the protection of the uses that are permitted within these areas is important. In addition it is preferable to protect the identified use of allocations in the LDP to ensure that the needs of the County Borough are met. Consequently this

policy applies to proposals for both new development, which establishes new uses, and to changes of use proposals that seek to change the existing use of premises. The “edge” of the defined retail centre is taken to mean at or near the point where the retail frontages of the shopping area meet predominantly residential frontages, such as often occurs in older linear shopping centres comprising rows of terraced units.

General Locational Constraints

CW15 Development proposals will be considered against the following criteria, where they apply:

- A Development proposals will not be permitted if they prejudice the implementation of wider comprehensive redevelopment or constrain the development of any adjacent site for its allocated land-use**
- B Within settlement boundaries proposals for all types of development accord with the role and function of the settlement within which they are located, and**
- C Outside settlement boundaries proposals will not be permitted unless the proposed development is either:**
 - i Associated with either agriculture, forestry or the winning and working of minerals or
 - ii For the conversion, rehabilitation or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings, or
 - iii For recreation, leisure and tourism proposals that are suitable in a countryside location or

- iv Associated with the provision of public utilities, infrastructure and waste management facilities that cannot reasonably be located elsewhere or
- v Associated with the reclamation / treatment of derelict or contaminated land

2.33 Minerals development is unique in that it can only happen where the minerals occur. There are substantial mineral resources within the County Borough, including resources of shallow coal, limestone, sandstone and sand and gravel all of which are indicated on the Proposals Map. In addition some of the coal resources in the County Borough also have the potential to contain economically viable amounts of coal bed methane and licenses have been granted in two areas under other regulations for the exploration of on shore oil and gas.

2.34 Any proposals for the winning or working of minerals will be considered in the context of national guidance together with the countywide policies and appropriate site-specific policies contained within the LDP. Development proposals that do not present specific locally distinct issues will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy.

Locational Constraints - Retailing

CW16 Outside of the defined Principal Town Centres proposals for new retail stores or for additional retail floorspace will only be permitted where:

- A The vitality and viability of nearby Principal Town Centres will not be undermined, taking into account the cumulative effects of other approved retail developments, recently completed developments and Plan commitments, and**
- B The proposal would not undermine the Council’s retail strategy, a**

Town Centre Action Plan or any regeneration plans that the Council has formally approved, or

C The proposal is:

- i A new retailing unit of 1000m² or less in size, or the change of use of such a size, and
- ii To serve neighbourhood needs, or is ancillary to another commercial use

**Locational Constraints -
Retail Warehousing**

CW17 Proposals for new retail warehouse units, or for change of use to retail warehouse units, on sites outside of the designated Retail Warehouse Parks will only be permitted if there are no suitable sites or units available within those Parks or within the defined Principal Town Centres

**Locational Constraints -
Housing for People in Need of Care**

CW18 The development of housing offering an element of care, either through change of use or new development, will be permitted where:

- A It is located within defined settlement boundaries**
- B There is safe and easy access to existing community facilities, local shops and services**

2.35 There are a number of people living within Caerphilly County Borough that have specific housing needs as a result of disabilities or other support needs. Whilst many special needs can be addressed through support in existing homes, the range of needs varies and therefore there is a need for a flexible approach to allow for the needs of those requiring care.

2.36 For the purposes of this policy, 'housing for people in need of care' refers to proposals for nursing homes, sheltered housing, extra or close care housing, continuing

care retirement communities or other similar types of development where an element of care is provided as part of the development. The policy relates to both new developments and the change of use to housing with care developments through the conversion of an existing building or buildings. Such facilities can serve the needs of elderly people and/or people with disabilities.

2.37 It is likely that the residents of housing with care developments have specific mobility needs and therefore it is particularly important that developments are accessible to services and facilities such as GPs surgeries or shops.

2.38 In order to ensure that residents of housing with care developments are integrated within the wider community, sites should be located within defined settlement boundaries. It may be appropriate for these types of development to be located on allocated housing sites provided other policy considerations can be met, although it is important that such developments do not constrain the wider development of an allocated site.

**Locational Constraints - Rural
Development and Diversification**

CW19 Rural Development and Diversification schemes will be permitted where:

- A They are consistent in scale and compatible with their rural location, including the retention and enhancement of existing natural heritage features**
- B That where buildings are required to deliver the scheme, existing buildings are reused where possible, or the new buildings relate to an existing group of buildings**
- C They will be complementary to, and not prejudice, the operation of the existing business**

- 2.39 Rural industry has, in general been in decline for many years, and this has been reflected in the loss of many of our traditional farms, farming practices and other rural industries and practices within the County Borough. As a result, many of these rural industries have now diversified into facilities such as tourist accommodation, boarding kennels, riding schools or small-scale rural industries such as wood processing.
- 2.40 Rural diversification and development can contribute to the rural economy, can sustain rural communities, can provide tourism opportunities for the borough and continue to protect the rural landscape and character. Many activities, industries and services can be located within the rural environment without any detrimental impact upon the character and value of the countryside.
- 2.41 For the continued integrity of the natural heritage and the protection of the rural character of the County Borough, it is often more appropriate to diversify existing facilities such as farm complexes rather than provide new facilities. Diversification is essentially changing an existing facility that is no longer suited to its original purpose to another use that will benefit the local environment, economy and people.
- 2.42 All proposals for rural development or diversification schemes will need to demonstrate that they are compatible with their rural location. The scale and nature of the development should not have an unacceptable impact upon the rural character or the area by way of

design, noise, smell, visual or traffic impact. Immediate and distant views should be considered. Where new buildings or facilities are required then evidence as to why existing buildings are not suitable for the proposed use will be required. If extensive new or replacement buildings or facilities are required, it will be considered that development or diversification is unlikely to be appropriate for a rural location.

Locational Constraints - Conversion, Extension and Replacement of Buildings in the Countryside

CW20 The conversion, extension or replacement of a building outside settlement boundaries will be permitted where:

- A The proposed use, scale, form, siting, design and materials are suitable within its context**
- B A conversion is justified by demonstrating that:**
- i The building is not makeshift in nature and is of permanent, substantial construction, and
 - ii The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion or rehabilitation without major alteration or reconstruction
 - iii The building is capable of accommodating the proposed use without materially changing its existing character
 - iv The development does not result in the domestication or urbanisation of an otherwise rural setting or the unacceptable loss of undeveloped countryside
- C Extension is justified by demonstrating that:**
- i The scale, form and design of the extension respects the scale and character of the original building, which remains the dominant element;
 - ii The extension does not result in the loss of undeveloped countryside

- iii The extension does not result in the domestication or urbanisation of an otherwise rural setting

D Replacement is justified by demonstrating that:

- i The existing building is structurally unsound and not capable of rehabilitation or conversion to an alternative use without major alteration or rebuilding
- ii The use of the existing building has not been abandoned
- iii The use cannot practicably continue to be accommodated in the existing building and
- iv All practical appropriate alternatives for reuse have been examined

2.43 Many buildings outside settlement boundaries become unsuited to the purpose for which they were originally built, and without beneficial use can become redundant and fall into disrepair. When assessing planning applications for the reuse or adaptation of a building, the primary considerations will be whether the nature and extent of the new use and the detail of any changes to the building are acceptable in planning terms.

2.44 When permitting development beyond the settlement boundary a careful balance is required to conserve, protect and enhance the rural environment through a sensitive approach to design including scale, form, siting and the use of materials, all of which should be appropriate to the context of the proposed development. Careful consideration should be given to the character of the building and its immediate and wider setting.

2.45 Proposals for the conversion of buildings outside of the settlement boundary should respect local building styles and materials and should be sympathetic to the character of the original building and the locality. For conversion to be acceptable the building

should be structurally sound and capable of conversion or rehabilitation without major alteration or reconstruction; it should be of permanent and substantial construction and should not result in the domestication or urbanisation of an otherwise rural setting. Buildings that are ruinous or abandoned would not normally be considered suitable for conversion.

2.46 The existing building may require an element of extension to enable a new use to be accommodated. Where an extension is proposed it should respect the character, size and scale of the host building, with the original structure remaining the dominant element. Particularly careful scrutiny will be given to proposals that would further extend buildings that have previous extensions, in order to ensure that the scale and character of the original building is not compromised. Proposals should respect the character and setting scale of both the host building and its immediate and wider surroundings and should not lead to an unacceptable loss of undeveloped land

2.47 In order to maintain appropriate forms of development in the countryside and avoid their replacement with inappropriate development, replacement buildings will only be permitted where part D can be satisfied. This policy is designed to ensure that where buildings are clearly ruinous or abandoned they are not classed as buildings that require rebuilding; and that where buildings are replaced, the new development is sympathetic to its location in terms of both use and design.

Locational Constraints - Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites

CW21 Proposals for Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites, including on land outside of defined settlement boundaries, will be permitted provided:

A The site is well related to community facilities and services

- B The site can accommodate residential and home-based business uses without detriment to amenity and character of the area**
- C The site is capable of being served by utilities including waste disposal and recovery**

2.48 This policy relates to applications for both permanent and transit gypsy and traveller caravan sites. As with other types of housing, it is important that gypsy and traveller communities have the same opportunity as the settled population to access facilities and services such as schools or GP surgeries. For this reason, the preferred location for sites is inside or on the outskirts of built-up areas, although suitable sites in rural or semi-rural settings would also be acceptable.

2.49 Many gypsies and travellers run businesses from the site on which their caravans are stationed and therefore sites should only be permitted where this mix of uses can be accommodated without detracting from the amenity of local residents or character of the local area.

2.50 Proposals for gypsy and traveller caravan sites must also generally comply with other policies identified in the Plan, including design considerations.

Locational Constraints - Minerals

CW22 Development proposals which may impact on minerals safeguarding areas will be considered against the following requirements, as applicable:

A Proposals for permanent development uses within identified mineral safeguarding areas will not be approved unless:

- i The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral is no longer of any value or potential value, or
- ii The mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place, or
- iii There is an overriding need for the development, or
- iv The development comprises infill development within a built up area or householder development or an extension to an existing building

B Proposals for development uses of a temporary nature within identified mineral safeguarding areas will not be approved unless they can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit mineral extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed

Locational Constraints - Mineral Site Buffer Zones

CW23 Development proposals for sensitive or minerals development will not be permitted within the mineral site buffer zones identified on the proposals map

2.51 Buffer zones aim to reduce the conflict between mineral working and other sensitive land uses as a result of noise and dust from mineral extraction / processing and vibration from blasting. No new mineral development will be permitted within the buffer zone to prevent encroachment towards the sensitive land uses. No new sensitive development will be permitted both to prevent any encroachment but also to prevent an additional constraint for the mineral working.

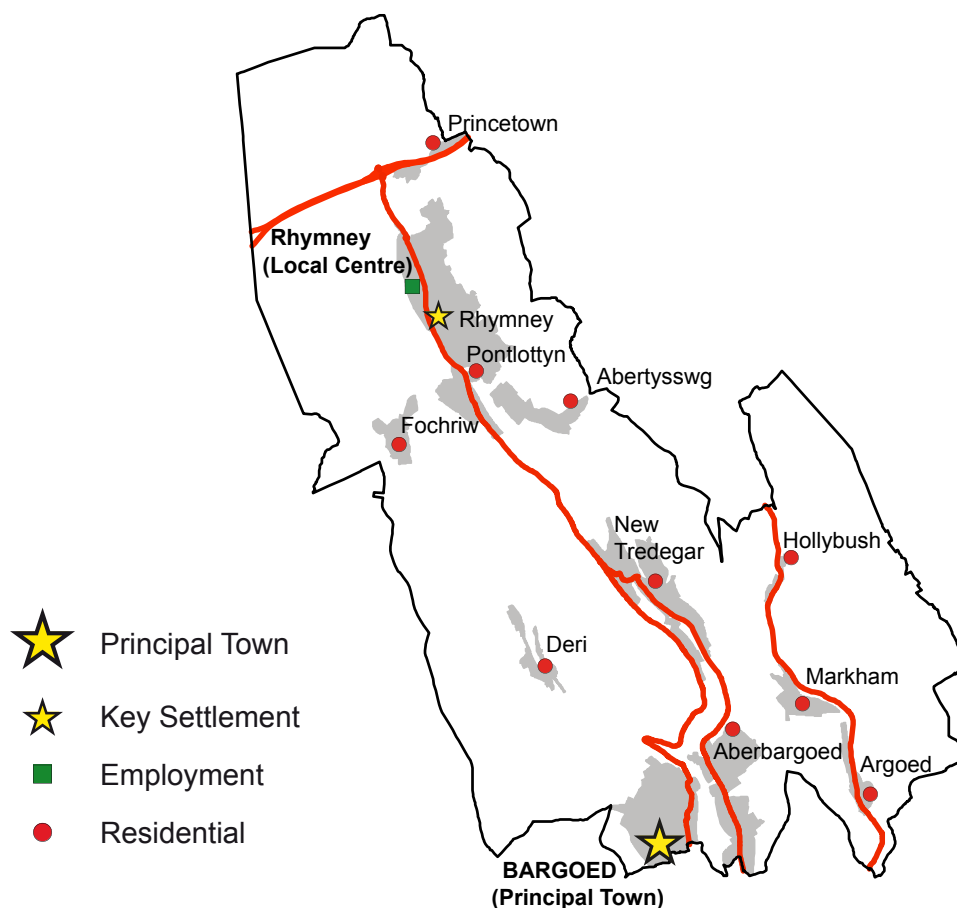
2.52 In line with national guidance, buffer zones have been delineated around active, inactive and dormant mineral sites. In relation to active and inactive sites, the buffer zones are drawn from the outer edge of the permission boundary. The extent of the buffer zone reflects the known effects of mineral working at the site and may exceed the minimum distances set out in MPPW, MTAN1 and MTAN2. For dormant sites, where there is no experience of the impact of mineral extraction operations, the minimum distances set out in guidance will apply.

2.53 Whilst dormant sites retain permission, full modern conditions would be applied to the extant permission in accordance with national guidance prior to any working recommencing on site. National guidance also recognises the importance of determining the future use of dormant and inactive sites to give certainty to local communities that may be affected by future mineral operations. Having regard to this, the Council will continue to review, on an annual basis, those sites that have not worked to any substantial extent in the preceding two years and will consider an appropriate strategy for the future use and restoration of those sites, which may include Modification, Suspension, Discontinuance, Revocation or Prohibition Orders where appropriate.

Section C: Area Specific Policies

Strategy Area 1: Heads of the Val

Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA)



SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

3.1 **Bargoed** is the principal town in the Caerphilly County Borough part of the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA). As the main town, Bargoed provides a range of functions and services for the surrounding settlements that are not available elsewhere in the Caerphilly part of the Heads of the Valleys area. The importance of the town is recognised by the Heads of the Valleys programme and as such the Welsh Assembly Government designates it as a regeneration priority area.

It is anticipated that the development of the 'Angel Way' Relief Road will serve to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of the town and will act, as a catalyst to attract much needed public and private investment into Bargoed Town Centre.

3.2 The emphasis in Bargoed will be on restructuring and redeveloping the existing town centre to ensure that it is a viable retailing, leisure and employment centre and that it is fit for purpose in

Valleys Regeneration Area (HOVRA)

the 21st century. The Plan will also make sufficient provision to diversify the housing that is available within the area. The redevelopment of the town will improve the image of the whole of the HOVRA and will improve the range of important services and the leisure and retail offer available to the northern parts of the County Borough.

- 3.3 Bargoed and its suburbs are also part of the mid valleys conurbation and the town has an important role to play in the growth and well being of the County Borough as a whole. In particular, there may be an opportunity for Bargoed to develop as a centre for leisure activities for a large part of the County Borough if current interest by the private sector in developing a multiscreen cinema and other leisure facilities can be incorporated into the town centre redevelopment scheme.
- 3.4 A number of allocations policies will be implemented with the purpose of developing Bargoed's role as the Heads of the Valleys' Principal Town. **CM4.2** allocates a major site for retail and entertainment facilities, to be integrated into the existing town centre. A new district library and a Council 'customer-first' centre are proposed in **CF1.10**. The town will also gain a role as a centre for office-based employment through the implementation of **CM4.3** and **CM5.1**.
- 3.5 **Rhymney** is the local centre for the HOVRA and it has the potential to provide a tourism gateway into the County Borough from the Heads of the Valleys area and further afield. Centrally located in terms of the HOVRA it is uniquely placed to help change the perception of the subregion through enhancing the visitor and tourism role the area has to offer, by for example the development of the Valleys Regional Park. A Health and Social Care Resource Centre is proposed for Rhymney to serve the north of the Borough. There are countryside recreation facilities in the area, which, together with the strategic cycle routes and footpaths that run throughout the area, contribute to the considerable potential for enjoyment of the rural environment that Rhymney has to offer.
- 3.6 The area is also well served by the Rhymney to Cardiff Railway line, which now benefits from four trains an hour between Bargoed and Cardiff. However, for the rail network to offer an attractive alternative to the car for travel from the HOVRA to Cardiff, further improvements to provide a half hourly service to Rhymney are needed.
- 3.7 As indicated, Rhymney also comprises a significant amount of employment land on existing industrial estates. The changing pattern of employment land requirements indicates that these sites offer the opportunity to accommodate alternative uses, whilst retaining an employment function, potentially diversifying the role of Rhymney to the benefit of the whole area.
- 3.8 Rhymney's identified role as a local centre will be facilitated through allocations under **CF1.2**, which will enable the development of the proposed Health and Social Care

Resource Centre, and **CM4.1**, which will allow for new retail development on the edge of the town centre.

- 3.9 Road access to the Upper Rhymney Valley has been improved with the recent development of the new road at New Tredegar. When the Angel Way Relief Road is completed in 2009, road access from north to south will be improved in this area too.
- 3.10 However, there is a continued need to improve the road network at key locations - in particular the substandard section of the A469 between New Tredegar and Pontlottyn - to bring the network up to a standard required to meet the needs of the 21st Century. **Policy TR8** seeks to address this, to ensure the HOVRA is to function effectively and in particular for the potential and benefits of Bargoed to be fully realised.
- 3.11 The Upper Rhymney Valley offers the most significant potential in terms of energy production within the county borough due to the presence of coal resources at Nant Llesg and the potential of the Upper Rhymney Valley area in terms of renewable energy generation. However, the area is also a principal gateway to the northern end of the County Borough and is particularly prominent when viewed from the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road. The Plan seeks to balance the merits of renewable energy schemes and the safeguarding and potential development of minerals in this area against the objective of safeguarding the landscape from further degradation and, where possible, securing landscape enhancement. Due to its prominence, any

proposals for development associated with energy generation within the Upper Rhymney Valley will need to recognise that development must be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner. Development proposals should, where appropriate, secure effective landscape rehabilitation and enhancement as an integral part of the scheme. Proposals will also need to be consistent with the wider regeneration strategy and enhanced recreational and tourism role envisaged for this part of the Plan area.

- 3.12 Residential development will be concentrated on Bargoed and Rhymney, together with **Pontlottyn, New Tredegar** and **Aberbargoed**, which have good access to the rail network. Small-scale housing sites are allocated in the primarily residential villages of **Princetown, Fochriw** and **Abertysswg**, where there is a need for modern housing to maintain the viability of these former mining villages. **22** new housing allocations across the Heads of the Valleys' smaller settlements are designed to introduce a range and choice of housing types and tenures in these locations and will strengthen their roles as residential centres. **Policies CF1** and **LE3** will allow the development of new community facilities in these settlements, enhancing their attractiveness as places to live.
- 3.13 The villages of **Argoed, Hollybush** and **Markham** in the Sirhowy Valley are primarily residential. Although they are located in the HOVRA, they have strong links with Blackwood, unlike the Upper Rhymney Valley settlements. In the Plan period, however, they are likely to develop links with Bargoed also, once the town centre has been redeveloped. No major change is envisaged in these rather isolated areas, though the surrounding countryside, which includes the Markham Colliery site, could make a significant contribution to the Valleys Regional Park.

3.14 It is recognised that the most northerly towns and villages in the County Borough will also look to Merthyr Tydfil and other towns along the Heads of the Valleys corridor for job opportunities and urban facilities. Good transport links to Merthyr Tydfil in particular are therefore important.

3.15 In terms of the Heads of the Valleys generally, the functionality of both the identified centres and residential villages will be strengthened by improving the transport links between them. This will be achieved through the implementation of **Policies TR1, TR4 and TR8**.

3.16 The area's potential contribution to the Valleys Regional Park (an initiative set out within the Wales Spatial Plan) is immense and requires positive allocations, including country parks (**Policy LE2**) and cyclepaths (**Policy TR1**), as well as designations designed to protect the dramatic landscape that underpins the Park's existence. Policies **SI1, NH1 and NH2** will serve to achieve this.

Area Specific Policies for HOVRA

SETTLEMENT IDENTITY

Green Wedges

SI1 Green Wedges are identified and will be protected at the following locations:

SI1.1 Llechryd and Rhymney

SI1.2 Fochriw and Pontlottyn

SI1.3 Rhymney and Abertysswg

SI1.4 Brithdir and Tirphil

SI1.5 Argoed and Markham

3.17 The need to define and maintain open spaces between and within urban areas and settlements to prevent coalescence is considered important for the County Borough to protect the integrity of both the built and natural environment. Within green wedges, it is intended to resist any development proposal that would not maintain this open character.

3.18 The HOVRA has five green wedges. Development proposals will only be considered where the use is either conducive to the existing character or enhances the character of the green wedge. A detailed description of the green wedge allocations can be found in **Appendix 3**.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

NH1 Special Landscape Areas are identified and will be protected at the following locations:

NH1.1 Upper Rhymney Valley

NH1.2 Gelligaer Common

3.19 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are local non-statutory designations that seek to protect areas that exhibit distinctive landscape, historical, cultural, biodiversity and geological features and characteristics within the County Borough. They are locally important elements of the natural heritage of the rural and urban environments, and provide a living history of the evolution of the area's landscape as well as cultural backdrop and visual setting. The designation of SLAs highlights the holistic consideration of the landscape, with emphasis placed on the 'special' nature of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics in these areas.

3.20 Two special landscape areas have been identified in the HOVRA. These areas will be protected from any development that would harm their distinctive features or characteristics. The policy is not designed to preclude development. However, an applicant will need to demonstrate that any development proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the specific distinctive features or characteristics associated with the SLA.

3.21 LANDMAP is the national information system for taking landscape into account in decision-making. It separates landscape into five aspect areas: geological landscapes, visual and sensory, landscape habitats, cultural landscapes and the historic landscapes. The system allows information to be gathered, organised and evaluated within a nationally consistent data set. All of the SLAs have been identified using LANDMAP information and SLA designation methodology. This recognises that an SLA may include small parts of the local landscape that do not display the same level of landscape importance. A detailed description of the SLA designations can be found in Appendix 1, which provides a breakdown of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics within each SLA.

Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs)

NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes are identified and will be protected at the following locations:

NH2.1 Northern Rhymney Valley

NH2.2 Manmoel

3.22 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs) are non-statutory designations that seek to protect the distinctive features or characteristics of the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough and how we perceive and respond to the landscape around us. VILLs have been identified using only the visual and sensory layer of LANDMAP. The HOVRA has two Visually Important Local Landscapes.

3.23 Development will only be permitted where it conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features or characteristics of the VILL. Development proposals should demonstrate that these features of the visual and sensory LANDMAP aspect layer are conserved and, where appropriate enhanced for the benefit of the visual landscape. A detailed description of the VILL designations can be found in **Appendix 2**, which provides a summary of the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features and characteristics within the VILL.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are identified and will be protected at the following locations:

NH3.1 River Rhymney

NH3.2 Pen March and Traed y Milwyr, Llechryd

NH3.3 Bute Town, Llechryd and Rhymney Grasslands, Rhymney

NH3.4 Nant Bargoed Rhymni, Darran Valley

NH3.5 Tair Carreg Moor, North West of Fochriw

NH3.6 Cwm-Llydrew Wood, South of Fochriw

NH3.7 Nant Bargod Flush, Deri

NH3.8 Cefn y Brithdir, South of Pontlottyn

NH3.9 Mile End Pond, Abertysswg

NH3.10 Y Graig Mire, South of Abertysswg

NH3.11 River Sirhowy

NH3.12 River Ebbw

NH3.13 Cwmsyflog Woodland, North of New Tredegar

- NH3.14 Coed Cefn-Rhychdir, North of New Tredegar
- NH3.15 Troed-Rhiw'r-Fuwch, North West of New Tredegar
- NH3.16 Parc Cwm Darran Larch Plantation, Deri
- NH3.17 Cefn Gelligaer, West of Deri
- NH3.18 Craig Ysgwydd-Gwyn, Deri
- NH3.19 Ysgwydd-Gwyn-Isaf Wood, South of Deri
- NH3.20 Coed Deri-Newydd, Deri
- NH3.21 Pont Caradog and Nant Llan Woodlands, East of Deri
- NH3.22 Tir-y-Ferch-Gryno, Brithdir
- NH3.23 Coed-y-Moeth and Cwmsyflog Hillside, Cwmsyflog
- NH3.24 Mynydd Manmoel, North of Manmoel
- NH3.25 Twyn y Bleiddiaid, South East of Manmoel
- NH3.26 Coed Waun-Bleiddian, North of Hollybush
- NH3.27 Hollybush Spring, Hollybush
- NH3.28 Llwyn-Bach Woodland, South of Hollybush
- NH3.29 Nant-y-Felin Wood, North East of Markham
- NH3.30 Markham Tips, North of Markham
- NH3.31 Pen-yr-Heol Meadows, Markham
- NH3.32 Markham Railway Line, Markham
- NH3.33 Pen- Rhiw'r-Eglwys, East of Markham
- NH3.34 Hafodrisclawdd, East of Markham
- NH3.35 Pen-y-Waun, South of Markham
- NH3.36 Markham Colliery, North of Markham
- NH3.37 Coed Argoed, East of Bedwellty
- NH3.38 Bedwellty Churchyard, Bedwellty

- NH3.39 Land opposite St Sannan's Church, Bedwellty
- NH3.40 Nant Cwm-Crach, Bedwellty
- NH3.41 Nant-Gau and Darran Woodlands, North of Oakdale
- NH3.42 Caeau Cwm-Corrwg, North of Oakdale

3.24 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are an important biodiversity resource covering significant areas of priority habitats and species. Designations are based on objective scientific criteria to accord with the (developing) Wales-wide guidelines. This policy applies to all sites that meet the criteria for designation.

3.25 Development will normally be permitted where it would not cause unacceptable harm to the particular features of the SINC. Where harm is unavoidable it should be minimised by effective mitigation measures to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area or feature. Where this is not possible, compensation measures designed to conserve, enhance and manage locally distinctive natural habitats and species should be provided, including for example details of restoration and reclamation schemes. A description of the designated SINCs can be found in **Appendix 4**.

MINERALS AND WASTE HANDLING FACILITIES

Minerals and Waste Handling Site

MW1 A railhead site is identified as suitable for minerals handling and despatch and rail transport related waste management facilities, as follows:

MW1.1 Cwmbargoed Disposal Point, north west of Fochriw

3.26 The Cwmbargoed Disposal Point complex straddles the boundary of Caerphilly

and Merthyr Tydfil County Boroughs. The majority of the site lying within Caerphilly County Borough is used for the preparation and despatch of coal. Other appropriate employment activities relying on the railhead facility and satisfying the sustainability principles of the Plan, for example waste management facilities and aggregates handling and despatch, would be acceptable. A detailed description of this site can be found in **Appendix 6**.

MINERALS

Mineral Site Buffer Zone

MN1 A 500m Buffer zone is identified in relation to the following site:

MN1.1 Fros Y Fran Open Cast Coal Site

3.27 The development restrictions associated with this zone are described in Policy CW23 in section two of the Plan.

Minerals Safeguarding

MN2 Minerals safeguarding areas are identified at:

MN2.1 West of Rhymney - Coal

MN2.2 East of Rhymney - Coal

MN2.3 South of Abertysswg - Coal

MN2.4 South of Fochriw - Coal

MN2.5 East of Markham - Coal

3.28 The Coal TAN (MTAN 2 - Coal) requires local planning authorities to safeguard coal resources for the future. The safeguarding of the resource does not indicate any presumption in favour of working but it prevents the sterilisation of the resource by other development.

3.29 Background Paper 5 provides detailed information on the coal resources within the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.



Allocated Housing Sites

HG1 Land has been allocated for housing across the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration area as follows:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Units
HG1.1	Land to the South of Merthyr Road	Princetown	4.02	140
HG1.2	Land East of Llechryd Bungalow	Llechryd	1.10	39
HG1.3	Old Barrell Store +	Rhymney	0.63	15
HG1.4	Lower Hill Street	Rhymney	0.30	10
HG1.5	Maerdy Garage adjacent to Maerdy House +	Rhymney	0.79	16
HG1.6	Maerdy Crossing	Rhymney	2.40	57
HG1.7	Former depot south of Pontlottyn Link Road	Pontlottyn	1.02	36
HG1.8	Heol Evan Wynne +	Pontlottyn	1.13	10
HG1.9	Greensway	Abertyswg	0.82	28
HG1.10	Land south west of Carn y Tyla Terrace +	Abertyswg	7.08	133
HG1.11	Land adjacent to Brynglas +	Pontlottyn	1.20	56
HG1.12	Land off Railway Terrace	Fochriw	4.20	147
HG1.13	Land at Graig Rhymney +	New Tredegar	2.61	30
HG1.14	Land adjacent to Abernant Road	Markham	2.34	82
HG1.15	Bedwellty Road	Aberbargoed	7.34	180
HG1.16	Land adjacent to Gelynos Avenue +	Argoed	0.72	13
HG1.17	Aberbargoed and District Hospital	Aberbargoed	0.56	20
HG1.18	Aberbargoed Plateau	Aberbargoed	11.80	413
HG1.19	Bargoed Retail Plateau	Bargoed	2.7	48
HG1.20	YGG Cwm Rhymni +#	Bargoed	0.62	28
HG1.21	Park Estate	Bargoed	1.50	53
HG1.22	Bedwellty Comprehensive School	Aberbargoed	1.88	74
TOTAL			56.76	1,628

+ The site had planning consent as of 1st April 2007

100% affordable housing site

3.30 The allocation of sites for residential development is important in ensuring sufficient land is available to meet future population requirements. In the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area, a total of **1,628** units have been allocated across a range of sites in order to offer choice and flexibility. This will contribute to the diversification of the housing stock and secure viable, sustainable futures for settlements in the Heads of the Valleys. In this area, **55%** of dwellings are allocated on brownfield sites.

3.31 Land allocated under this policy includes:

- Sites with planning consent for housing or

for a mix of uses incorporating housing as of 1st April 2007 (in some cases subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement).

- New sites that have been identified as suitable for residential development or for a mix of uses including housing as a result of a robust candidate site assessment process.

3.32 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 7**. In addition, surveys and further information that will be required to be submitted as part of future planning applications is set out in **Appendix 8**.

3.33 The proposed number of units identified for each site is indicative and higher or lower densities may be acceptable where the proposed development addresses other policy considerations including design, sustainability, and comprehensive development.

3.34 In addition to the affordable housing that will be secured through **Policy CW11**, one site is identified for 100% affordable

housing, which will contribute towards addressing affordable housing need in the area. The site identified is realistically likely to come forward for 100% affordable housing as a result of planning consents, the availability of social housing grant and land ownership. The promotion of other sites for 100% affordable housing will be favoured in sustainable locations where this will not undermine the aim of delivering mixed communities.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Allocations

EM1 The following site is allocated for development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8:

Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Type
EM1.1 Land at Heads of the Valleys +	Rhymney	5.2	Primary site

+ P/P 1st April 2007

3.35 This designated primary site currently houses a mixture of Use Classes, and as such, it is considered appropriate for class B1, B2 and B8 uses, namely offices, light and general industry, and warehousing uses.

Proposals for the development of the vacant land within this site are also expected to accord with those uses. A detailed description of this site allocation can be found in **Appendix 9**.

Employment Sites Protection

EM2 The following sites are protected for employment uses, in line with their status in the employment site hierarchy:

EM2.1 Land at New Tredegar	Primary site
EM2.2 Heads of the Valleys, Rhymney	Secondary site
EM2.3 Capital Valley, Rhymney	Secondary site
EM2.4 Maerdy, Rhymney	Secondary site
EM2.5 Angel Lane, Aberbargoed	Secondary site
EM2.6 Bowen, Aberbargoed	Secondary site

3.36 In addition to land allocated for future employment development (Policy EM1), a number of sites exist within the County Borough that already possess functioning employment uses. Such sites will be protected from development outside of those Use Classes indicated by the relevant categorisation (e.g. Use Class B1 only for

Business Parks). This protection policy is intended to operate in tandem with **Policy CW13** in this regard.

3.37 It is vitally important that in relation to the HOVRA, such sites are protected in order to meet the provisions of the strategy. If the aim of reducing economic and social disparities between the County Borough's northern settlements and elsewhere is to be realised, it is necessary for the area's existing employment functions to be retained.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Principal Town Centre Boundary

CM1 A boundary for the Principal Town Centre in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area is defined as follows:

CM1.1 Bargoed

3.38 Bargoed is the County Borough's third largest centre and, as such, is identified as

a Principal Town. Therefore, it is required to play a multi-functional role in terms of the services it delivers. Retailing is a vital component of this and, to this end, the policies in this Plan have been formulated with the aim of protecting and enhancing Bargoed's vitality and viability. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW14**.

3.39 There is a significant opportunity for a new retail and commercial leisure redevelopment at Bargoed's southern extremity. As such it is felt that the commercial leisure component is a new role for the town, which could form the basis for further provision of this nature.

3.40 This defined Principal Town Centre boundary is shown on the Proposals Map and is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

Principal Town and Local Centre Development Sites

CM4 The following Principal Town and Local Centre sites are allocated for development:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Proposal Type
CM4.1	The Lawn	Rhymney	7.3	Retail, Community Facilities
CM4.2	Bargoed Retail Plateau	Bargoed	2.7	Food Superstore, Retail, Cinema, Residential
CM4.3	Former Cinema, Hanbury Square +	Bargoed	0.1	Offices

+ P/P April 2008

3.41 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 10**.

Commercial Opportunity Area

CM5 A Commercial Opportunity Area is identified at the following location:

CM5.1 High Street, Bargoed

3.42 A Commercial Opportunity Area has been identified for the principal town of Bargoed where office development might prove

particularly beneficial. However, this will not preclude such proposals anywhere else inside the designated town centres apart from within the Primary Areas. This policy initiative aims to provide yet another significant set of opportunities to drive further economic growth in the County Borough. The boundary of the Bargoed Commercial Opportunity Area is shown on the Proposals Map. It is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities

- CF1 The following sites are allocated for new community facilities:
- CF1.1 North of Rhymney Cemetery, Rhymney – Cemetery extension
 - CF1.2 The Lawn, Rhymney – Health and Social Care Resource Centre / Further Education
 - CF1.3 Bryn Awel Primary School, Rhymney – New school
 - CF1.4 Fochriw Youth Centre, Fochriw – New youth centre
 - CF1.5 Leisure Centre, New Tredegar – New youth centre
 - CF1.6 Hanger 81, Aberbargoed – New youth centre
 - CF1.7 Adjacent to Ysgol Bro Sannan, Aberbargoed – School extension
 - CF1.8 Aberbargoed Primary School, Aberbargoed – School extension
 - CF1.9 South of Aberbargoed Plateau, Aberbargoed – Fire station
 - CF1.10 Hanbury Road Baptist Church, Bargoed – Library
 - CF1.11 Gilfach Street, Bargoed – Health centre

3.43 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 14**.

LEISURE

Protection of Formal Open Spaces

- LE1 Land is protected for open space and parkland uses at:
- LE1.1 War Memorial Park, Rhymney
 - LE1.2 Wellington Way, Rhymney
 - LE1.3 The Green, Abertysswg
 - LE1.4 King George's Field, Markham
 - LE1.5 Bargoed Park, Bargoed
- 3.44 Formal parks and gardens are attractive civic spaces for public enjoyment and should be protected as such. Incremental reductions in their boundaries in favour of built development should be avoided in order that they are present for future generations to experience.
- 3.45 Many parks are laid out with attractions such as floral displays, plant growing, sports pitches, children's playgrounds and ornamental water features. Whilst it is important to incorporate some flexibility for selective development that will consolidate these uses such as shelters, pavilions and storage buildings, it is vital that the leisure aspect is enhanced.



Allocation of Country Parks

LE2 Land is allocated for a new Country Park at:

LE2.1 Former Markham Colliery, Markham

3.46 Across the region, a number of country parks have been successfully developed on land that was once covered by heavy industry but now reclaimed. In order to continue this regeneration in selected locations for tourism purposes and to provide a network of amenity sites for walking, cycling, riding, picnics and wildlife conservation, land has been set aside for the development of a new country park.

3.47 Already there are cycle routes identified in the mid and lower reaches of the County Borough, and there is a need to further improve the infrastructure particularly in the Upper Sirhowy Valley. This will feed into the loops and links network that will in turn form part of the Valleys Regional Park.

Protection of Country Parks

LE3 Country Parks that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park are protected at the following locations:

LE3.1 Parc Bryn Bach, Rhymney / Tredegar

LE3.2 Parc Cwm Darran, Deri

LE3.3 Parc Coetir Bargod, Greater Bargoed

3.48 Country parks are large scale, less formal facilities that offer a valuable resource for recreational and tourism activities within a rural setting, close to the County Borough's main centres of population. In order to recognise their contribution to the landscape as tourism attractions in their own right and to ensure that they continue to serve this purpose, the Plan defines their boundaries so that they can be protected from any inappropriate development.

3.49 A number have been developed on land that was once covered by heavy industry but now reclaimed, with all offering a range of recreational activities. Already there are cycle routes identified in the County Borough, and the varied parks along the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw Valleys appear to offer potential for linking these. This will feed into the loops and links network that will in turn form part of the Valleys Regional Park.

Formal Leisure Facilities

LE4 Land is identified for leisure facilities including playing pitches at:

LE4.1 North of Glan y Nant, Rhymney

LE4.2 Former McLaren Colliery, Abertysswg

LE4.3 Pont Bren, Deri

LE4.4 Heol Fargoed, Bargoed

LE4.5 Former Bedwelty Comprehensive School, Aberbargoed

LE4.6 South of Gilfach, Gilfach

3.50 Playing pitches are an integral part of most communities' formal recreation provision. In measuring the quantity of facilities against the National Playing Fields Association 'Six Acre Standard', a shortage of playing pitches has been identified within the County Borough.

3.51 Whilst this reflects a national decline in provision, the NPFA standards are still intended as a firm aspiration for local authority land use policies in order that the decline can be arrested and reversed. As such a number of sites, often involving a wider regeneration of a settlement through reclamation or brownfield site use have been identified for new playing pitch development.

Protection of Informal Open Spaces

LE5 Land is protected for informal recreation and community uses at:

LE5.1 North of Memorial Park, Rhymney

LE5.2 Between Cwmsyflog and Brithdir, New Tredegar

LE5.3 Church Field, Gilfach

3.52 Open spaces of a less formal character are often vital elements in the suburban landscape, offering a visually attractive haven for wildlife. This can often involve the community in ownership and conservation projects. These areas may often be used for walking and can in some instances offer informal enjoyment for cyclists passing through the area.

TOURISM

Tourism Proposals

TM1 Sites are allocated for tourism related activities at:

TM1.1 Parc Bryn Bach, Rhymney / Tredegar

TM1.2 Winding House, New Tredegar

3.53 Situated just off the A465 road, Parc Bryn Bach is a significant attraction with a lake and visitor centre. It lies at the very northernmost tip of the County Borough, straddling the border with Blaenau Gwent County Borough and is already a venue for watersports and off-road quad biking. It is proposed to further develop the tourism features around the park with additional facilities on nearby land, such as footpaths and increased access points linked to an

afforestation scheme. Bryn Bach is likely to be one of the main park elements in the proposed Valleys Regional Park and could benefit from its close proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park.

3.54 A new museum for the County Borough is being developed at New Tredegar. Located at the former Elliott Colliery pithead building, the museum will house a range of artefacts relating to the area's cultural and industrial heritage within a listed building, together with interpretative and exhibition facilities. This is a major element in the regeneration of the area and will hopefully be a catalyst for further investment.

TRANSPORTATION

Cycle Routes

TR1 Land will be safeguarded to facilitate the following improvements to the cycle route network:

TR1.1 Rhymney Valley Linear Cycle Route - Heads of the Valleys to Bedwas / Caerphilly, HOV

TR1.2 Completion and Extension of Cycle Route NCN 46



TR1.3 Bargoed Country Park to Bowen Industrial Estate

TR1.4 Extension to the Sirhowy Valley Cycle Route

TR1.5 Local Links to Bargoed Town Centre

TR1.6 Link from Fochriw to NCN 46 via Rhaslas Pond

TR1.7 Local Cycle Link from Argoed to Oakdale

3.55 A key factor in delivering more sustainable transport is realising a significant increase in the number of shorter trips by walking and cycling. The provision of a high quality strategic and local network of dedicated routes for these modes is an essential element in realising this growth.

3.56 The specific route alignments for the above improvements have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. Indicative route alignments are shown on the LDP Proposals Map and only represent the general direction of the route. The indicative alignments on the Proposals Map, therefore, are not prescriptive.

3.57 In addition to the above potential schemes, Safe Routes to Stations and Safe Routes in Communities schemes will also be prioritised.

3.58 Priority will be given to the development of the HoVs NCN Route 46 along the HoVs corridor and strategic links from the Rhymney and Sirhowy Valleys to key locations.

3.59 The proposed cycle routes within the Heads of the Valleys area will promote regeneration and sustainability, encourage healthier lifestyles and increased physical activity, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the area.

3.60 The routes of former railway lines which have potential for transport related development will be safeguarded,

particularly those which facilitate walking, cycling rail freight or passenger movements.

3.61 Design layout for residential, employment, retail, leisure and other developments will be expected to incorporate provision for walking and cycling and where possible links / access to the developing walking and cycling networks.

Park and Ride Facilities

TR4 The following stations have been identified for new or improved park and ride provision:

TR4.1 Rhymney

TR4.2 Bargoed

3.62 The provision of park and ride facilities at stations increases access to the rail network and encourages car users to change to rail for a significant part of their journey.

3.63 The recent and ongoing frequency and capacity improvements on the Rhymney Valley line, in conjunction with the opening of the Ebbw Valley line for passenger services, provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage in the County Borough. There are now four trains per hour running from Bargoed to Cardiff and the provision of park and ride facilities at Bargoed will increase the potential for the public, particularly commuters, to access and utilise the improved rail services.

3.64 Funding is currently being sought for the final stage of the Rhymney Line frequency enhancements, which will provide a half hourly service to Rhymney. The provision of expanded park and ride facilities at Rhymney is closely linked to these frequency improvements, which will increase demand for the service and encourage greater use of park and ride facilities.

3.65 The specific land requirements for the above improvements have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. The LDP Proposals Map identifies the station locations that relate to the proposals, but does not seek to identify the land required. As such the allocations are indicative and should not be considered to be prescriptive.

New Roads to Facilitate Development

3.66 The Council has long considered that a relief road which would divert traffic away from the Bedwellty Lights junction in Aberbargoed should be pursued in conjunction with new housing proposals in the area. A Bedwellty Relief Road scheme has been identified in previous development plans and the Council remains committed to bringing it forward. However, doubts about the deliverability of the proposal during the Plan period have precluded the allocation of the scheme in the LDP.

3.67 Planning permission was granted in February 2009 for housing development on the LDP housing allocation site **HG1.15** - Bedwellty Road. The development on this site will provide the eastern portion of the Bedwellty Relief Road. However it would be unreasonable to expect the development to provide the full extent of the Relief Road and the council will need to identify funding to provide the remaining section.

3.68 The specific route alignment for the remaining section of the relief road has yet to be considered in detail. The council

remains committed to progressing the full scheme and will undertake the necessary detailed investigative and feasibility work required for determining the specific alignment and cost of the remaining section. During the Plan period the council will also identify and pursue opportunities for securing funding to facilitate the provision of the remaining section of the road.

Regeneration Led Highway Improvements

TR8 The following highway scheme is identified to facilitate the regeneration of the Heads of the Valleys Area:

TR8.1 A469 Bargoed and A4049 Aberbargoed to Rhymney

3.69 One of the main transport problems facing the Heads of the Valleys area is the poor standard of vehicular access. The completion of Angel Way will remove the problems associated with Bargoed Town Centre and the improvements to the A4049 have increased accessibility to New Tredegar. However significant problems still exist on both the A469 north from Bargoed and the A4049 north of New Tredegar.



In order to facilitate regeneration, and to fully enable the role and function of all settlements within the Heads of the Valleys area to be realised, improvements to this corridor will need to be undertaken as part of the overall regeneration package.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area

- 3.70 In the past the private sector has shown a reluctance to invest in this part of the County Borough. More recently there have been signs that this is changing but implementation of proposals in this area will still be more dependent on public finance than areas further south. Low land values and weak demand mean that significant contributions from planning obligations are unlikely in this area.
- 3.71 This area qualifies for both Heads of the Valleys Programme funding (which is a long term commitment from WAG for the whole Plan Period) and European Convergence Funding (2007-2013). It is a priority area for investment for the Council and for WAG and therefore substantial input of public sector funds is anticipated.

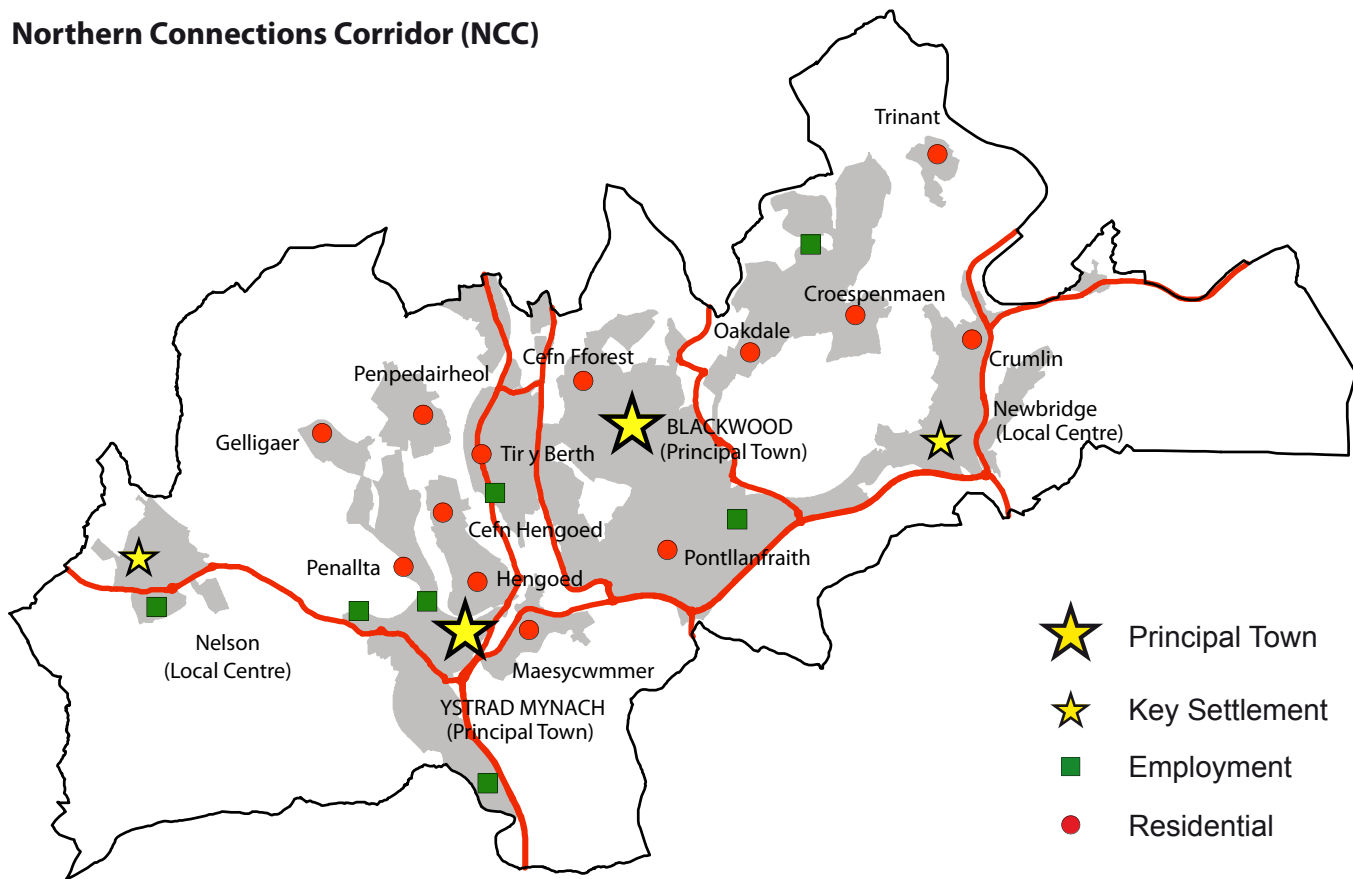
Risks

- 3.72 The risks to the Plan proposals for this area are primarily funding and investment related. There are no key infrastructure proposals that would exercise a 'blocking' effect on the development of sites or that would require alternative contingency strategies.

Section C: Area Specific Policies

Strategy Area 2: Northern Conn

Northern Connections Corridor (NCC)



SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

3.73 Since 1996, the Council Approved Unitary Development Plan has targeted new development towards the 'Area of Growth' that was centred along the A472 Mid Valleys Corridor. As a consequence the community plan areas of the Mid Valleys East and Mid Valleys West, which form the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) has become a focus for substantial private and public sector investment in recent years.

3.74 The NCC is a unique area of the coalfield. It comprises a contiguous area of urban development spanning the central Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw Valleys

where the topography favours east-west as well north-south movements. Thus the settlement pattern is more like that of a conventional urban conurbation rather than the traditional linear settlement structure of the typical Valleys town. The area, which stretches from Nelson in the west to Newbridge in the east and as far north as Bargoed, was home to 65,000 people in 2001 – a larger population than Cwmbran or Merthyr Tydfil.

3.75 The NCC has two complementary centres at its core, namely Ystrad Mynach (containing the County Borough Council's headquarters, a further education college and the site of a new local general hospital in the future) and

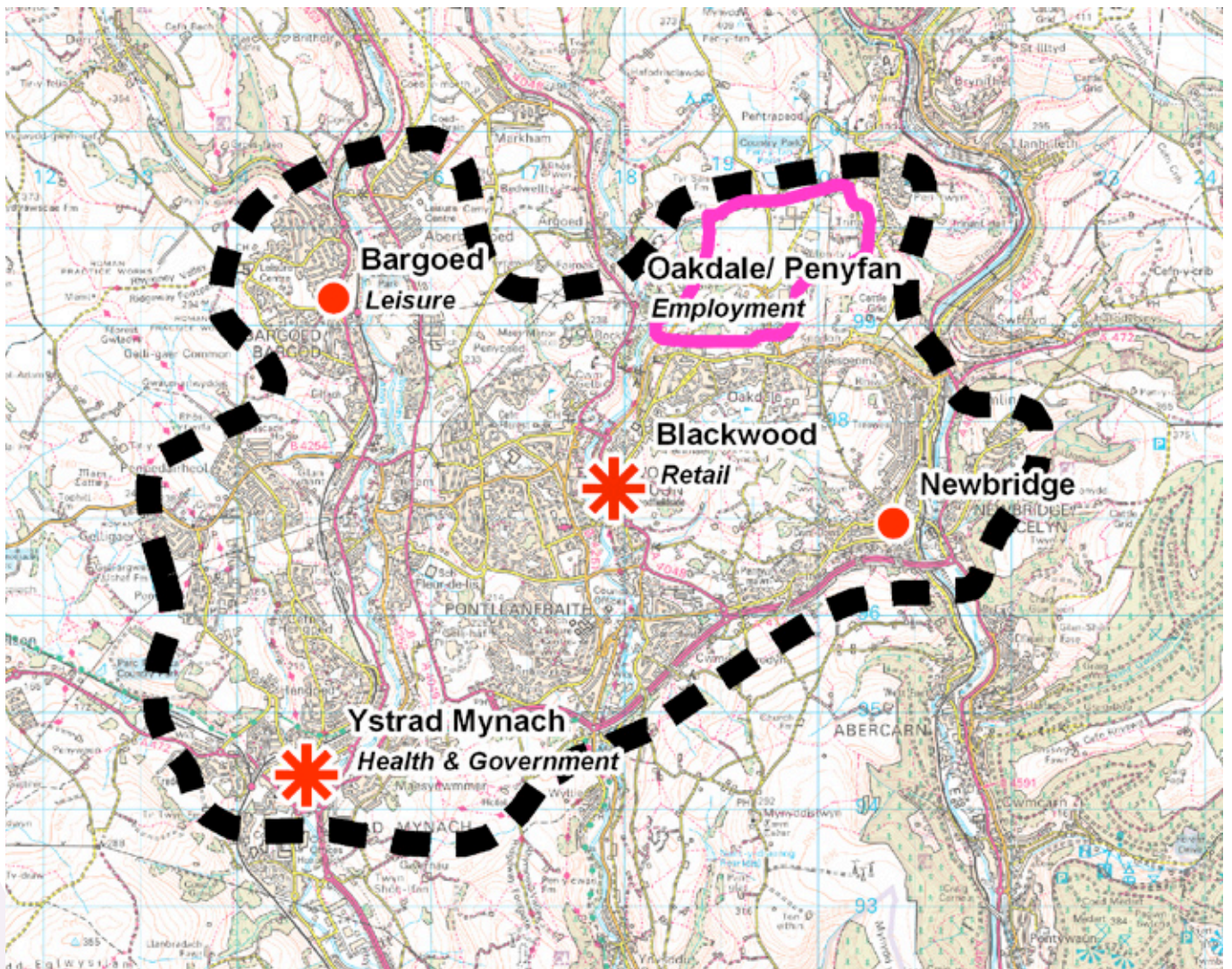
Connections Corridor (NCC)

Blackwood (the area's major retail centre). It also includes one of the largest employment sites in the valleys, namely Oakdale Business Park.

3.76 The A472 forms the main east west highway along the southern edge of the NCC. From Newbridge to Blackwood the road is dual carriageway, as is the A469 between Caerphilly and Ystrad Mynach. The recently

completed Sirhowy Enterprise Way links the major employment area at Oakdale / Penyfan to the A472 and also provides fast access to Blackwood Town Centre. Completion of the Angel Way Relief Road, which is being implemented as part of the Greater Bargoed Community Regeneration Scheme will ensure that the northern part of the NCC also benefits from good road access. **Policies TR5 and TR7** will enable

Mid Valleys Urban Conurbation



improvements to be implemented to the road network that will increase accessibility levels in and around the NCC and improve the efficiency of the existing highway network. There are still concerns over the A472 link between Crown and Cwm Du roundabouts, through Maesycwmmwr. The Council is investigating the potential and options for improvement along this section and, if appropriate, schemes will be identified in future revisions of the LDP as and when they arise.

3.77 The opening of the Ebbw Valley rail passenger service in 2008 means that both the eastern and western sides of the NCC have rail access to Cardiff. Improvements to the Rhymney Valley line have increased train frequencies to four an hour between Bargoed and Cardiff. These are significant developments in terms of facilitating sustainable development.

3.78 **Oakdale Business Park** together with Penyfan Industrial Estate comprises approximately a square kilometre (106 hectares) of existing and planned employment land. The Business Park has taken 6 years and over £10 million to reclaim, creating one of the largest employment plateaus in the South Wales Valleys. The site has already attracted major inward investment projects and proposals are in place for the future development of the site, providing a blend of properties to suit the needs of modern business. The success of the Business Park is critical in terms of ensuring economic prosperity for residents of the County Borough, and, in particular, in realising one of the main regional functions of the NCC – offering much needed employment opportunities to residents of the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area. Oakdale's continued allocation for employment uses under **Policy EM1**, as well as the protection of a number of sites under **Policy EM2**, will aid the process of economic growth within the area.

3.79 **Ystrad Mynach** and **Blackwood** together with the **Oakdale / Penyfan** employment site and **Bargoed** in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration area, form the core of the mid valleys conurbation. The principal towns in the conurbation have key roles as primary centres for the more deprived communities further north in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area. They have the potential to connect the most deprived parts of the County Borough in the north with economic, leisure and cultural opportunities offered in the Mid Valleys area and in the south of the County Borough.

3.80 **Ystrad Mynach** is well served in terms of the transportation network being located along the main Rhymney to Cardiff railway line, complemented by a Park and Ride facility. It is strategically located at the intersection of the A469 and A472 road corridors. Given its strategic location, the town has become the location for a number of vital public services including a college of further education and an area police station. Its role as the main centre for local government in the County Borough was enhanced with the completion of the new Council headquarters building at Tredomen. The most significant change will be the construction of a new local general hospital in 2010, which will serve the whole County Borough. The presence of all these major services means that Ystrad Mynach is also a significant employment centre, a role that will increase over the Plan period.

3.81 **Blackwood** is the principal town centre in the Mid Valleys East. The town has experienced significant levels of public and private investment in recent years with the development of substantial new retail units in both the north and south of the town. The town now contains more retail floorspace than any other town centre in the County Borough, including Caerphilly and as a result it is increasingly being recognised as an attractive sub regional shopping centre drawing people

from a wide catchment area. CACI (leading marketing experts) estimate that the town's annual turnover of comparison goods expenditure is approximately £46m and rank it as 22nd among Welsh retail centres.

- 3.82 The town is also easily accessible by car from Oakdale Business Park (the largest employment site in the County Borough) via the Chartist Bridge in the north. There is considerable potential therefore to exploit the relationship between the town and the business park.
- 3.83 Access to the town has improved dramatically with the development of the Sirhowy Enterprise Way and with the investment in the new Blackwood Bus Station. There is however a need to consider further improving the links to the town from the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area. There is a need to consider a more frequent public transport link to the Rhymney Valley Railway line at Ystrad Mynach and to consider new links to the Ebbw Valley Railway line at Newbridge. There is also a need to ensure that the strategic road network is upgraded at key locations, in order to ensure ease of movement between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach. This all points to the need for a comprehensive public transport network for the mid valleys conurbation. **Policy TR2** will allow for the provision of a new passenger service between Ystrad Mynach and Bedlinog, whilst **Policies TR3** and **TR4** will enable new stations to be provided at Nelson and Crumlin and park and ride facilities to be developed at Pengam and Ystrad Mynach, thus optimising the improvements made to the rail network locally in recent times.
- 3.84 Blackwood will be critical to the success of the NCC in servicing the needs of the population in the immediate and wider area including the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area. The emphasis in Blackwood over the Plan period will be to build on its existing strengths as an excellent sub regional shopping centre and continue to improve the retail offer of the town, whilst developing a new role as an employment centre, particularly for office development. **CM2.1**, **CM4.4** and **CM5.2** are intended to encourage new retail, commercial leisure and office development within Blackwood, thus allowing for the creation of a diverse local economy.
- 3.85 Local centres in the NCC include Nelson in the west whose importance will grow for tourism and employment and Newbridge in the east, which became an important sustainable development location when its new railway station opened.
- 3.86 **Nelson** is the most westerly settlement in the Mid Valleys West Community Plan area and is situated at a strategic location on the A472 approximately 2 miles from the Junction with the A470.
- 3.87 The village centre in Nelson offers a range of small shops and services to serve not only the Nelson area but also adjoining villages in Merthyr County Borough such as Treharris, Trelewis and Quakers Yard. Recent improvements to the central bus station have significantly improved the accessibility of the village centre to the surrounding area.
- 3.88 The national cycle route (47) runs through Nelson adjacent to the Wern Woodland Park and links the area to Penallta Community Park. Together these facilities provide a very attractive rural backdrop to Nelson. Wern Woodland Park also provides a valuable link for visitors to the area to a range of small shops and services within the historic village centre. Given the range of heritage and visitor attractions in the vicinity including Llancaiach Fawr living history museum, Nelson could have significant tourism potential. **Policy TM1** allocates Llancaiach Fawr as a tourist facility, thus recognising its importance in this regard and to the local economy more generally.

- 3.89 A major employment site is proposed at Ty Du, on Nelson's periphery. This land has been safeguarded for employment use for many years. Given the proximity of the Ty Du site to the prestige office complex in Ystrad Mynach an opportunity exists to promote Nelson as an excellent location for the development of innovative employment opportunities or as a centre for higher education facilities to complement the Tredomen Business Complex.
- 3.90 **Newbridge** is situated at a strategic location at the crossroads of the A472 and the A467. The opening of the Ebbw Valley Railway and the new rail halt in Newbridge connect the town with the Southern Connections Corridor and with the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area in the north. The improvements to the public transport infrastructure, which includes a significant park and ride facility, will offer opportunities for economic diversification and improve the prospects of attracting new investment into the town.
- 3.91 The town centre currently offers a wide range of small independent shops and services to serve not only the Newbridge area but also the surrounding area. The emphasis in Newbridge over the Plan period will be to build on its existing strengths as an excellent local shopping centre and continue to improve the retail offer of the town, whilst diversifying the town centre through the redevelopment of key brownfield sites to provide appropriate opportunities for new economic activity, cultural facilities at the 'Memo', housing, public open space and car parking.
- 3.92 The former South Celynen Colliery site lies within the Southern Connections Corridor but also falls within the immediate Newbridge hinterland. Consequently, the redevelopment of this site for housing will serve to diversify the housing stock within the area and it is anticipated that this, together with the wide range of leisure and sporting activities available in the area will help to encourage young people to remain within Newbridge.
- 3.93 Where there are suitable sites, residential development will be concentrated in the mid valleys conurbation, together with Nelson, Hengoed, Tir y Berth and Maesycwmmmer, which have good access to the rail network. Limited housing development will also be allowed in the villages of Gelligaer and Trinant, where there is a need for a greater variety of housing to maintain the viability of these settlements.
- 3.94 **Policy HG1** addresses the issue of housing specifically, in terms of allocating land for development within those settlements mentioned. Clearly however, community facilities and open space are necessary requirements for creating sustainable settlements. Consequently, **Policies CF1** and **LE1** will ensure that these facilities are in place.
- 3.95 The A472 is the primary east-west transport route in this area. The stretch between Newbridge and Blackwood is a modern dual carriageway but the remainder of the route is not up to the role that the strategy assigns to it. There are particular concerns over the link between the Crown and Cwm Du roundabouts, through Maesycwmmmer. The Council is investigating the potential and options for improvement along this section and, if appropriate, schemes will be identified in future revisions of the LDP as and when they arise.

- 3.96 The A472 continues outside the County Borough first to Abercynon in the west and to Pontypool in the east. The efficiency of these single carriageway sections of the A472 should also be examined in the context of the South East Wales integrated city region.
- 3.97 The welcome reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Ebbw Valley line in 2008 will not disguise the fact that the service will have to develop a link with Newport and offer a greater frequency of trains and a greater number of stations if it is to provide a truly sustainable alternative to road traffic in that area.

Area Specific Policies for the NCC

SETTLEMENT IDENTITY

Green Wedges

- SI1 Green Wedges are identified and will be protected at the following locations:
- SI1.6 Aberbargoed, Cefn Fforest and Pengam
- SI1.7 Penpedairheol, Gilfach and Tir y Berth
- SI1.8 Blackwood, Cwm Gelli and Cefn Fforest
- SI1.9 Blackwood, Oakdale and Penmaen
- SI1.10 Croespenmaen and Treowen
- SI1.11 West of Nelson
- SI1.12 Gelligaer, Penybryn and Penpedairheol
- SI1.13 Pengam, Blackwood and Pontllanfraith
- SI1.14 Newbridge and Abercarn
- SI1.15 Cefn Hengoed, Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach and Fleur de Lys
- SI1.16 Maesycwmmwr, Pontllanfraith and Fleur de Lys
- SI1.17 Maesycwmmwr and Ystrad Mynach
- 3.98 The need to define and maintain open spaces between and within urban areas

and settlements to prevent coalescence is considered important for the County Borough to protect the integrity of both the built and natural environment. Within green wedges, it is intended to resist any development proposal that would not maintain this open character.

- 3.99 The NCC has twelve green wedges, and all development proposals will only be considered where the use is either conducive to the existing character or enhances the character of the green wedge. A detailed description of the green wedge allocations can be found in **Appendix 3**.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

- NH1 Special Landscape Areas are identified and will be protected at the following locations:
- NH1.2 Gelligaer Common
- NH1.3 Mynydd Eglwysilan
- 3.100 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are local non-statutory designations that seek to protect areas that exhibit distinctive landscape, historical, cultural, biodiversity and geological features and characteristics within the County Borough. They are locally important elements of the natural heritage of the rural and urban environments, and provide a living history of the evolution of the area's landscape as well as cultural backdrop and visual setting. The designation of SLAs highlights the holistic consideration of the landscape, with emphasis placed on the 'special' nature of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics in these areas.
- 3.101 Two Special Landscape Areas have been identified in the NCC area. These areas will be protected from any development that would harm their distinctive features or characteristics. The policy is not designed to preclude development. However, an applicant will need to demonstrate that any development proposal will not have

an unacceptable impact on the specific distinctive features or characteristics associated with the SLA.

3.102 LANDMAP is the national information system for taking landscape into account in decision-making. It separates landscape into five aspect areas: geological landscapes, visual and sensory, landscape habitats, cultural landscapes and the historic landscapes. The system allows information to be gathered, organised and evaluated within a nationally consistent data set. All of the SLAs have been identified using LANDMAP information and SLA designation methodology. This recognises that an SLA may include small parts of the local landscape that do not display the same level of landscape importance. A detailed description of the SLA designations can be found in **Appendix 1**, which provides a breakdown of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics within each SLA.

Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs)

NH2 **A Visually Important Local Landscape is identified and will be protected at:**

NH2.3 Abercarn

3.103 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs) are non-statutory designations that seek to protect the distinctive features or characteristics of the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough and how we perceive and respond to the landscape around us. VILLs have been identified using only the visual and sensory layer

of LANDMAP. The NCC has one Visually Important Landscape.

3.104 Development will only be permitted where it conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features or characteristics of the VILL. Development proposals should demonstrate that these features of the visual and sensory LANDMAP aspect layer are conserved and, where appropriate enhanced for the benefit of the visual landscape. A detailed description of the VILL designations can be found in **Appendix 2**, which provides a summary of the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features and characteristics within the VILL.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

NH3 **Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are identified and will be protected at:**

NH3.1 River Rhymney

NH3.11 River Sirhowy

NH3.12 River Ebbw

NH3.41 Nant-Gau and Darran Woodlands, North of Oakdale

NH3.42 Caeau Cwm-Corrwg, North of Oakdale

NH3.43 Gwerthnor-Isaf Wood, South of Gilfach

NH3.44 Britannia Wood, South of Aberbargoed

NH3.45 Ty'n-y-Pwll Wood and Tip, South of Britannia

NH3.46 Mynydd Pen-y-Fan, South East of Manmoel

NH3.47 Pen-y-Fan-Fach Grasslands, Glandwr

NH3.48 Nant Gwynt Woodland, Glandwr

NH3.49 Pen-y-Fan Pond and Meadows, West of Pentwyn

NH3.50 Coed Trinant, East of Pentwyn

NH3.51 Pentwyn Fields, Pentwyn

- NH3.52 Pottery Road Slopes, East of Gelligaer
- NH3.53 Waun Rydd, Gelligaer
- NH3.54 Land South of Gelligaer Infants School, Gelligaer
- NH3.55 Cwm Afon Railway Line, West of Nelson
- NH3.56 Cwm Afon, West of Nelson
- NH3.57 Wern Woodland, Nelson
- NH3.58 Brooklands Marsh, North of Nelson
- NH3.59 Tredomen Tip Ponds, Nelson
- NH3.60 Llancaiach-Fawr Meadows, Llancaiach
- NH3.61 Coed Gelliau'r-Gwellt, East of Llancaiach
- NH3.62 Nant Caeach, North of Llancaiach
- NH3.63 Cefn Hengoed Hillside, North of Hengoed
- NH3.64 Penallta Meadows, West of Hengoed
- NH3.65 Gelligaer Court Meadows, North of Penpedairheol
- NH3.66 Tir Jack Slopes, East of Penpedairheol
- NH3.67 Upper Trelyn Woodland, South of Pengam
- NH3.68 Blackwood Golf Club Woodland, Cefn Fforest
- NH3.69 Coed y Gelli, North of Cefn Fforest
- NH3.70 Cwm Gelli Wood and Meadow, North of Cefn Fforest
- NH3.71 Blackwood Riverside Woodlands, North East of Blackwood
- NH3.72 Penmaen Carr, East of Blackwood
- NH3.73 Coed Duon, Blackwood
- NH3.74 Cefn Fforest Eco Park, Blackwood
- NH3.75 Penllwyn Woodlands, Pontllanfraith
- NH3.76 Nant yr Odyn, East of Pontllanfraith
- NH3.77 Crown Estate Meadows, Pontllanfraith
- NH3.78 Crown Roundabout Marsh, Pontllanfraith
- NH3.79 Trelyn Woodland and Meadow, Pontllanfraith
- NH3.80 Enterprise Way Grasslands, Pontllanfraith
- NH3.81 Coed Penallta and Railway Line, Ystrad Mynach
- NH3.82 Tir-Twyn Woodlands, Ystrad Mynach
- NH3.83 Coedcae Mawr, Ystrad Mynach
- NH3.84 Maesycwmmmer Woodland and Meadows, Maesycwmmmer
- NH3.85 Bryn Ysgafn Meadow, Fleur De Lys
- NH3.86 Victoria Road Slopes, Fleur De Lys
- NH3.87 Penmaen Woodlands, Penmaen
- NH3.88 Cwm Dows Valley, East of Penmaen
- NH3.89 Coed Cwm Philkins, East of Penmaen
- NH3.90 Cyncoed Fields, East of Penmaen
- NH3.91 Pentwyn-Isaf Woodlands, Pentwynmawr
- NH3.92 Glan-Brynar Woodlands, Pentwynmawr
- NH3.93 Greenlands Meadow, Pentwynmawr
- NH3.94 Ton-y-Pistyll Fields, Pentwynmawr
- NH3.95 Valentec Nature Reserve, North of Croespenmaen
- NH3.96 Pen- Rhiw Bengi Marsh, Oakdale
- NH3.97 Nant Philkins Fields, Oakdale
- NH3.98 Remploy Factory Grounds, Oakdale
- NH3.99 Penyfan Industrial Estate Woodland, Oakdale
- NH3.100 Pant Glas Meadow, Trinant
- NH3.101 Crumlin Old Farm Meadows, Crumlin

- NH3.102 Cwm Kendon, Crumlin
- NH3.103 Llanerch-Isaf Woodland, Crumlin
- NH3.104 Coed Goferau, Crumlin
- NH3.105 Pontbren, North of Crumlin
- NH3.106 Coedcae Watkin Dafydd, East of Crumlin
- NH3.107 Ty-Mawr Wood, Rhiw
- NH3.108 Pant-Ysgawen Fields, Treowen
- NH3.109 Pennar- Ganol, South of Newbridge
- NH3.110 Pen-Rhiw-Bica, South of Newbridge
- NH3.111 Coed Gawni, East of Newbridge
- NH3.112 Coed Cil-Lonydd, East of Newbridge
- NH3.113 Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge
- NH3.114 Coedcae Newydd, Gelligroes
- NH3.115 Ty Bach Marsh, East of Wyllie
- NH3.116 Heol-Ddu Woodlands, Wyllie
- NH3.117 Llanbradach Fawr Woodlands, North of Llanbradach
- NH3.118 Mynydd Bach Slopes, East of Llanbradach
- NH3.119 Coed Mawr, North of Llanbradach
- NH3.120 Mynydd Eglwysilan, North of Senghenydd
- NH3.121 Land at Tair Waun Uchaf Isaf and Cwmheldeg Farm, Senghenydd
- NH3.122 Nant Cae-Dudwg Mire, North of Senghenydd

3.105 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are an important biodiversity resource covering significant areas of

priority habitats and species. Designations are based on objective scientific criteria to accord with the (developing) Wales-wide guidelines. This policy applies to all sites that meet the criteria for designation.

3.106 Development will normally be permitted where it would not cause unacceptable harm to the particular features of the SINC. Where harm is unavoidable it should be minimised by effective mitigation measures to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area or feature. Where this is not possible, compensation measures designed to conserve, enhance and manage locally distinctive natural habitats and species should be provided, including for example details of restoration and reclamation schemes. A description of the designated SINCs can be found in **Appendix 4**.

MINERALS

Mineral Site Buffer Zones

MN1 **Buffer zones are identified around the following mineral sites:**

- MN1.2 Bryn Quarry – Active
- MN1.3 Hafod Fach Quarry – Active
- MN1.4 Gelligaer Quarry – Active
- MN1.5 Caerllwyn Quarry – Dormant
- MN1.6 Darren Felin Farm Gravel Pit – Dormant

3.107 The development restrictions associated with these zones are described in **Policy CW23** in section two of the Plan.

Minerals Safeguarding

MN2 **Minerals safeguarding areas are identified at:**

- MN2.6 East of Nelson – Coal
- MN2.7 North of Pentwynmawr – Coal
- MN2.8 North East of Nelson – Sand and Gravel

- 3.108 The Coal TAN (MTAN 2 - Coal) requires local planning authorities to safeguard coal resources for the future. The safeguarding of the resource does not indicate any presumption in favour of working but it prevents the sterilisation of the resource by other development.
- 3.109 Minerals Technical Advice Note 1 - Aggregates requires local planning authorities to safeguard land-based resources of sand and gravel as an alternative to marine supply.
- 3.110 Background Paper 5 provides detailed information on the coal and sand and gravel resources within the Northern Connections Corridor.

HOUSING

Allocated Housing Sites

HG1 Land has been allocated for housing across the Northern Connections Corridor as follows:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size. (ha)	Units
HG1.23	Land within curtilage of the Pentwyn Inn +	Trinant	0.4	19
HG1.24	Land off Brynhoward Terrace	Oakdale	2.20	77
HG1.25	Allotment Garden, Llwyn on Lane +	Oakdale	1.37	49
HG1.26	Blackwood Ambulance Station	Blackwood	0.68	24
HG1.27	Pencoed Avenue +	Cefn Fforest	1.87	65
HG1.28	Land east of Bryn Road	Cefn Fforest	0.68	24
HG1.29	South of Thorncombe Road +	Blackwood	0.34	12
HG1.30	Land at Hawtin Park	Pontllanfraith	5.55	194
HG1.31	Oak Terrace	Fleur-de-Lys	0.69	21
HG1.32	Tir-y-berth	Hengoed	4.95	173
HG1.33	Penallta Colliery +	Ystrad Mynach	27.18	689
HG1.34	Penallta Yard +	Ystrad Mynach	0.29	10
HG1.35	Land at New Road	Ystrad Mynach	0.54	18
HG1.36	Land off Valley View +	Hengoed	1.46	31
HG1.37	Greenhill Primary School	Gelligaer	2.8	32
HG1.38	Land to the east of Handball Court	Nelson	3.36	90
HG1.39	Former Cattle Market Site +	Nelson	0.62	12
HG1.40	Land at Gellideg Heights	Maesycwmmmer	3.91	137
HG1.41	Land at Ty Pwll +	Pantside	0.64	16
HG1.42	Land west of Old Pant Road	Pantside	2.2	56
HG1.43	The Stores, Albertina Road +	Newbridge	0.41	10
HG1.44	Land at Fields Park	Newbridge	2.30	80
HG1.45	Pennar Lane +	Newbridge	4.00	63
HG1.46	Chris Bowen Garage +	Newbridge	0.08	16

+ The site had planning consent as of 1st April 2007

TOTAL 68.52 1,918

3.111 The allocation of sites for residential development is important in ensuring sufficient land is available to meet future population requirements. In the NCC a total of **1,918** units have been allocated across a range of sites in order to reflect the role and functions of settlements. In this area, **68%** of dwellings are allocated on brownfield sites.

- 3.112 Land allocated under this policy includes:
- Sites with planning consent for housing or for a mix of uses incorporating housing as of 1st April 2007 (in some cases subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement).
 - New sites that have been identified as suitable for residential development or for a mix of uses including housing as a result of a robust candidate site assessment process.

3.113 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 7**. In addition, surveys and further information that will be required to be submitted as part of future planning applications is set out in **Appendix 8**.

3.114 A proportion of affordable housing will be required to be provided on sites allocated under this policy in accordance with **Policy CW11** where there is evidence of need.

3.115 The proposed number of units identified for each site is indicative and higher or lower densities may be acceptable where the proposed development addresses other policy considerations including design, sustainability, and comprehensive development.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Allocations

EM1 The following sites are allocated for employment uses, in line with their status in the employment hierarchy:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Type
EM1.2	Ty Du	Nelson	18.8	Business park
EM1.3	Plateau 1, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	30.2	Primary site
EM1.4	Plateau 2, Oakdale Business Park +	Oakdale	7.0	Primary site
EM1.5	Plateau 3, Oakdale Business Park	Oakdale	3.4	Primary site
EM1.6	Plateau 4, Oakdale Business Park +	Oakdale	4.3	Primary site
EM1.7	Hawtin Park north +	Gellihaf	4.5	Primary site
EM1.8	Hawtin Park south	Gellihaf	8.8	Primary site
EM1.9	Dyffryn Business Park north	Ystrad Mynach	4.9	Primary site
EM1.10	Dyffryn Business Park south	Ystrad Mynach	6.3	Primary site
EM1.11	Penallta Extension +	Hengoed	1.6	Secondary site

+ P/P 1st April 2007

- 3.116 The business park allocation at Nelson is designated solely for class B1 use which equates to office-based development. This is predominantly concerned with the service, commercial and financial sectors. The latter two particularly have an important role to play in terms of fostering entrepreneurialism and developing an enterprise culture, factors which are of key importance if the local, and indeed regional, economy is to grow in a sustainable fashion.
- 3.117 The designated primary sites currently house a mixture of Use Classes, and as such, they are considered appropriate for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8, namely offices, light and general industry, and warehousing uses.
- Proposals for the development of the vacant land within these sites are also expected to accord with those uses.
- 3.118 The site described as the Penallta Extension is considered suitable for appropriate sui generis uses in addition to Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Sui generis uses can play an important role in the economic fabric of the County Borough, although it is necessary to ensure that they complement and support other, neighbouring uses, rather than act in competition or be of detriment to them.
- 3.119 A detailed description of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 9**.

Employment Sites Protection

EM2 The following sites are protected for employment uses, in line with their status in the employment hierarchy:

EM2.7	Dwr Cymru Welsh Water Offices, Nelson	Business park
EM2.8	Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach	Business park
EM2.9	Plateau 2, Oakdale Business Park	Primary site
EM2.10	Penyfan, Croespenmaen	Primary site
EM2.11	North Celynen, Newbridge road)	Primary site (south of site access
EM2.12	Hawtin Park, Gellihaf	Primary site
EM2.13	Dyffryn Business Park	Primary site
EM2.14	North Celynen, Newbridge (north of site access road)	Secondary site
EM2.15	Croespenmaen	Secondary site
EM2.16	Britannia, Pengam	Secondary site
EM2.17	St. David's, Pengam	Secondary site
EM2.18	New Road, Tiryberth	Secondary site
EM2.19	Penallta	Secondary site
EM2.20	Newbridge Road, Pontllanfraith	Secondary site
EM2.21	Tram Road, Pontllanfraith	Secondary site
EM2.22	Switchgear, Pontllanfraith	Secondary site
EM2.23	Penmaen	Secondary site
EM2.24	Woodfieldside, Penmaen	Secondary site

3.120 In addition to land allocated for future employment development (**Policy EM1**), a number of sites exist within the County Borough that already possess functioning employment uses. Such sites will be protected from development outside of those use classes indicated by the relevant categorisation (e.g. use class B1 only for Business Parks). This protection policy is intended to operate in tandem with **Policy CW13** in this regard.

3.121 Tredomen Business Park is ideally suited as a location for high-quality, office-based uses, which are geared towards the growth of innovation and enterprise within the local economy. This is a key location in which to develop the concept of partnership working as a means of providing economic growth, particularly between the public and private sectors, given the presence of the Council's new headquarters building. As such this site is to be protected solely for Use Class B1. The designated primary sites currently house a mixture of use classes, and as such, are considered appropriate for Use Class B1, B2 and B8. On the defined secondary sites this protection policy allows the development of sui generis uses as well. Sui generis uses can play an important role in the economic fabric of the County Borough, although it is necessary to ensure that they complement and support other, neighbouring uses, rather than act in competition or be detrimental to them.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Principal Town Centre Boundaries

CM1 Boundaries for the Principal Town Centres in the Northern Connections Corridor are defined as follows:

CM1.2 Blackwood

CM1.3 Ystrad Mynach

3.122 This policy defines the boundaries of the two Principal Town Centres within the NCC. The Principal Towns possess a multi functional role in their delivery of services to the public within their catchment area. They are the main shopping centres, but also commercial service centres, community service centres, and centres for commercial leisure activities too. As such they are also major employers as well. Therefore, retail policies have been formulated which aim at protecting and enhancing their retail vitality and viability. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW14**.

3.123 The main thrust of the retail strategy is to continue to expand overall retail provision in the County Borough through the growth of high quality shopping centres which retain the best existing features combined with provision for new shopping investments and environmental enhancement. Therefore, policies seek to focus retail developments within existing shopping centres and defined edge of centre locations to accommodate specific types of stores.

3.124 Blackwood in the NCC (and Caerphilly in the Southern Connections Corridor), are by far the largest centres in terms of retail floorspace, service provision, and commercial leisure facilities, being an order of magnitude greater than the other three principal centres. Blackwood has also recently accommodated significant further retail development in North Blackwood and at Blackwood Gate. Therefore, the aim in both towns is geared more to maintaining

and enhancing this improvement in their status, viability and vitality. Blackwood is also a centre where one would expect new office developments to locate.

3.125 Although Ystrad Mynach contains both a Tesco superstore and a Lidl, it is more important for its office and health roles. It houses the main headquarters of the Council and a new hospital will soon be under construction in the town to serve the NCC and beyond. However, part of the town is subject to a flood risk designation. The detail of future development proposals within the flood risk area will need to address this issue.

3.126 These two defined Principal Town Centre boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map and are also shown on larger scale plans in **Appendix 11**.

Blackwood Gate Retail Warehouse Park Boundary

CM2 A boundary for the Retail Warehouse Park in the Northern Connections Corridor is defined as follows:

CM2.1 Blackwood Gate, Blackwood

3.127 Blackwood is one of the largest centres in terms of retail floorspace, service provision, and commercial leisure facilities. It has also recently accommodated significant further retail development at Blackwood Gate.

3.128 This particular Retail Warehouse Park has been given defined boundaries in order

to promote its development in advance of sites in other less appropriate out-of-centre locations. It was chosen to complement Blackwood's existing retail offer. The aim to give it development priority is, therefore, both sustainable and supportive of the aims of the retail strategy. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW17**.

3.129 The defined boundary of the Blackwood Gate Retail Warehouse Park is shown on the Proposals Map and is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

Protection of a Primary Area for the Blackwood Principal Town Centre

CM3 A Primary Retail Area is identified at the following location:

CM3.1 High Street, Blackwood

3.130 The boundary of the Blackwood Primary Retail Area has been tightly drawn in order to permit the accommodation of new A2 and A3 uses within the large remaining portion of the retail centre. Therefore, the policy does not limit these uses, because they also have their role to play in creating a vibrant town centre, but it lessens their adverse cumulative impact in the shopping core. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW14**.

3.131 The boundary of the Blackwood Primary Retail Area is shown on the Proposals Map. It is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

Principal Town and Local Centre Development Sites

CM4 The following Principal Town and Local Centre sites are allocated for retail, commercial leisure, and office developments:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Proposal Type
CM4.4	Car Park Site, Rear of High Street	Blackwood	0.1	Offices
CM4.5	Gateway Site	Newbridge	0.3	Offices
CM4.6	Penallta Colliery	Ystrad Mynach	2.0	Retail, Offices

3.132 A detailed description of this site allocation can be found in **Appendix 10**.

Commercial Opportunity Area

CM5 A Commercial Opportunity Area is identified at the following location:

CM5.2 High Street, Blackwood

3.133 A Commercial Opportunity Area has been identified for the Principal Town of Blackwood where office development might prove particularly beneficial. However, this will not preclude such proposals anywhere else inside the designated town centres apart from within the Primary Areas. This policy initiative aims to provide yet another significant set of opportunities to drive further economic growth in the County Borough. The boundary of the Blackwood Commercial Opportunity Area is shown on the Proposals Map. It is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities

CF1 The following sites are allocated for new community facilities:

CF1.12 East of Gelligaer Cemetery, Gelligaer – Cemetery extension

CF1.13 Greenhill Primary School, Gelligaer – New school

CF1.14 Maesglas School, Gelligaer – GP surgery

CF1.15 Ysgol Penalltau, Ystrad Mynach – New school

CF1.16 Oakfield Street, Ystrad Mynach – GP surgery

CF1.17 Ystrad Fawr, Ystrad Mynach – Local General Hospital

CF1.18 Memorial Hall and Institute, Newbridge – Library

CF1.19 Pantside, Newbridge – Community centre

CF1.20 Adjacent to Recreation Ground, Hafodyrynys – Community centre

3.134 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 14**.

LEISURE

Protection of Formal Open Spaces

LE1 Land is protected for open space and parkland uses at:

LE1.6 The Circle, Oakdale

LE1.7 Recreation Ground, Oakdale

LE1.8 Welfare Ground, Cefn Fforest

LE1.9 Sir Harold Finch Memorial Park, Pontllanfraith

LE1.10 Libanus Fields, Pontllanfraith

LE1.11 The Bryn, Pontllanfraith

LE1.12 Islwyn Park, Pontllanfraith

LE1.13 Caertwmpyn Park, Newbridge

LE1.14 Newbridge Rugby Ground, Newbridge

LE1.15 Trelyn Park, Fleur De Lys

LE1.16 Wern Crescent, Nelson

LE1.17 Institute Field, Hengoed

LE1.18 Maesycwmmmer Park, Maesycwmmmer

LE1.19 Ystrad Mynach Park, Ystrad Mynach

3.135 Formal parks and gardens are attractive civic spaces for public enjoyment and should be protected as such. Incremental reductions in their boundaries in favour of built development should be avoided in order that they are present for future generations to experience.

- 3.136 Many parks are laid out with attractions such as floral displays, plant growing, sports pitches, children's playgrounds and ornamental water features. Whilst it is important to incorporate some flexibility for selective development that will consolidate these uses such as shelters, pavilions and storage buildings, it is vital that the leisure aspect is enhanced.

Protection of Country Parks

LE3 Country Parks that contribute to the Valleys Regional Park are protected at the following locations:

LE3.4 Parc Penallta, Ystrad Mynach

LE3.5 Penyfan Pond, Croespenmaen

- 3.137 Country parks are large scale, less formal facilities that offer a valuable resource for recreational and tourism activities within a rural setting, close to the County Borough's main centres of population. In order to recognise their contribution to the landscape as tourism attractions in their own right and to ensure that they continue to serve this purpose, the Plan defines their boundaries so that they can be protected from any inappropriate development.
- 3.138 A number have been developed on land that was once covered by heavy industry but now reclaimed, with all offering a range of recreational activities. Already there are cycle routes identified in the County Borough, and the varied parks along the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw Valleys appear to offer potential for linking these. This will feed into the loops and links network that will in turn form part of the Valleys Regional Park.

Formal Leisure Facilities

LE4 Land is identified for leisure facilities including playing pitches at:

LE4.7 Panside, Newbridge

LE4.8 Adjacent to Ysgol Penalltau, Ystrad Mynach

LE4.9 Former Hospital, Ystrad Mynach

LE4.10 Land off Penallta Road, Ystrad Mynach

- 3.139 Playing pitches are an integral part of most communities' formal recreation provision. In measuring the quantity of facilities against the National Playing Fields Association 'Six Acre Standard', a shortage of playing pitches has been identified within the County Borough.

- 3.140 Whilst this reflects a national decline in provision, the NPFA standards are still intended as a firm aspiration for local authority land use policies in order that the decline can be arrested and reversed. As such, the former colliery waste tip has been identified for a new playing pitch development. Allotment gardening is a popular leisure pastime with an increased interest in the pursuit in recent years. As such, allotments are becoming increasingly in demand and suitable locations are required to be protected for this purpose throughout the County Borough, including land off Penallta Road, Ystrad Mynach.

Protection of Informal Open Spaces

LE5 Land is protected for informal recreation and community uses at:

LE5.4 Former Oakdale Colliery, Oakdale

LE5.5 Adjacent to Vernon Place, Croespenmaen

LE5.6 Rear of Oakdale Terrace, Penmaen

LE5.7 Upper Trelyn, Blackwood

LE5.8 Trelyn Farm, Blackwood

LE5.9 South of Islwyn Park, Pontllanfraith

LE5.10 South of Leisure Centre, Newbridge

LE5.11 Panside, Newbridge

LE5.12 Ynys Las, Nelson

LE5.13 Adjacent to River Rhymney, Tiryberth

LE5.14 Adjacent to River Rhymney, Hengoed

LE5.15 South of Brynawel Road, Hengoed

LE5.16 Maesycwmmmer Meadows, Maesycwmmmer

- 3.141 Open spaces of a less formal character are often vital elements in the suburban landscape, offering a visually attractive haven for wildlife. This can often involve the community in ownership and conservation projects. These areas may often be used for walking and can in some instances offer informal enjoyment for cyclists passing through the area.

TOURISM

Tourism Proposals

TM1 Sites are allocated for tourism related activities at:

TM1.3 Llancaiach Fawr and environs, Nelson

TM1.4 Maesycwmmmer Mill, Maesycwmmmer

TM1.5 Rhymney Riverside Walk, Rhymney - Cefn Mably

TM1.6 Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, Crumlin Arm

- 3.142 Tourism is a significant contributor to the County Borough's economy, with attractions such as Llancaiach Fawr Manor House forming part of a network of historic buildings and landscapes. Continuing their success is a prime objective of any tourism strategy, and developing other attractions is an effective means of promoting

regeneration and increasing economic activity in specific locations.

- 3.143 A linear route that can be developed along a network of informal green spaces is the Rhymney Riverside Walk. This currently follows the course of the River Rhymney southwards from Rhymney and is complete until the Tir-y-berth to Hengoed, Maesycwmmmer and Ystrad Mynach lengths in the Northern Connections Corridor, parts of which are missing. It thereafter links settlements in the Southern Connections Corridor to Machen, Draethen and Cefn Mably, where it also requires further development. The walk comprises of landscaped walkways with observation points maximising use of the river as a resource for tourists. It will benefit from protection in order to complete this long distance footpath route.

TRANSPORTATION

Cycle Routes

- TR1 Land will be safeguarded to facilitate the following improvements to the cycle route network:**
- TR1.8 Rhymney Valley Linear Cycle Route - Heads of the Valleys to Bedwas / Caerphilly, Northern**
- TR1.9 Network Links from Blackwood / Pontllanfraith**
- TR1.10 Newbridge / Crumlin to Crosskeys and Sirhowy Valley / Pontllanfraith Cycle Link**
- TR1.11 Local Links from Crumlin**
- TR1.12 Local Link from Penallta to Ystrad Mynach**

- 3.144 A key factor in delivering more sustainable transport is realising a significant increase in the number of shorter trips by walking and cycling. The provision of a high quality strategic and local network of dedicated routes for these modes is an essential element in realising this growth.

- 3.145 The specific route alignments for the above improvements have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. Indicative route alignments are shown on the LDP Proposals Map and only represent the general direction of the route. The indicative alignments on the Proposals Map, therefore, are not prescriptive.
- 3.146 In addition to the above potential schemes, Safe Routes to Stations and Safe Routes in Communities Schemes will also be prioritised.
- 3.147 The proposed cycle routes within the Northern Connections Corridor will promote regeneration and sustainability, encourage healthier lifestyles and increased physical activity, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the area.
- 3.148 The routes of former railway lines which have potential for transport related development will be safeguarded, particularly those which facilitate walking, cycling rail freight or passenger movements.
- 3.149 Design layout for residential, employment, retail, leisure and other developments will be expected to incorporate provision for walking and cycling and where possible links / access to the developing walking and cycling networks.

New Rail Passenger Service

TR2 The following railway line will be protected to facilitate the reopening of the line for passenger services

TR2.1 Cwmbargoed rail line between Ystrad Mynach and Bedlinog

- 3.150 The Cwmbargoed line, whilst operating as a freight line for the Ffos-Y-Fran mineral extraction works, remains as the last significant rail line within the County Borough that does not have passenger services. The Cwmbargoed line links Nelson

to Ystrad Mynach and the services on the Rhymney Valley line.

- 3.151 The reinstatement of this line for passenger services would facilitate movements to and from Nelson, particularly for the proposed employment uses at Ty Du. Currently, the reinstatement of the line does not form part of any current transport programme, but the Council will continue to pursue this through all possible avenues.

New Rail Stations

TR3 The Council will identify and safeguard land at the following locations for new rail stations:

TR3.1 Nelson

TR3.2 Crumlin

- 3.152 The Council is seeking a station at Nelson as part of any future development of the Cwmbargoed line for passenger services. This new station would provide a link to Ystrad Mynach and rail services on the Rhymney Valley line and provide a service for the proposed employment uses at the Ty Du site.
- 3.153 The reopening of the Ebbw Valley line for passenger services provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage in the County Borough. Whilst the new passenger services are welcome, the Council is still seeking the establishment of a station at Crumlin, which would assist in providing public transport to the main employment centre at Oakdale.
- 3.154 The specific land requirements for the new stations have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. The LDP Proposals Map identifies the general locations that relate to the proposals, but does not seek to identify specific sites for the proposals. As such the allocations are indicative and should not be considered to be prescriptive.

Park and Ride Facilities

TR4 The following station has been identified for an improved park and ride provision:

TR4.3 Pengam

- 3.155 The recent and ongoing frequency and capacity improvements on the Rhymney Valley line, in conjunction with the opening of the Ebbw Valley line for passenger services, provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage in the County Borough. The provision of park and ride facilities at stations increases access to the rail network and encourages car users to change to rail for a significant part of their journey. The expansion of park and ride facilities at Pengam will increase the scope for the public, particularly commuters, to access and utilise the improved rail services.
- 3.156 The specific land requirements for the Pengam improvement has yet to be considered in detail and the scheme is at an early stage of development. The LDP Proposals Map identifies the location that relates to the proposal, but does not seek to identify the land required. As such the allocation is indicative and should not be considered to be prescriptive.

Transport Improvement Schemes - Northern Connections Corridor

TR5 The following strategic network improvements have been identified in respect of a Northern Connections Corridor Obligation:

TR5.1 A467 Newbridge to Crosskeys

TR5.2 A467 Newbridge to Crumlin

TR5.3 A472 Ystrad Mynach to Nelson

TR5.4 Newbridge Interchange

TR5.5 A472 Crown Roundabout to Cwm Du Roundabout

- 3.157 The LDP will accommodate an increase in population during the Plan period and has allocated sites to cater for the housing, employment and other needs accordingly. This development will realise significant increases in traffic on the transport network of the County Borough, which will result in increased congestion. As a result general areas of improvement to the strategic network, which will seek to alleviate the cumulative impact of these developments, have been identified. Further work will be undertaken to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of development in the area and appropriate schemes will be progressed as part of the development of a Northern Connections Corridor Obligation.

New Roads to Facilitate Development

TR7 The following highway scheme is identified to facilitate new development:

TR7.1 Cwm Du Junction/Maesycwmmmer Junction

- 3.158 In order to facilitate the hospital development in Ystrad Mynach, improvements to the Cwm Du Junction (junction of A472 and A469) are required due to forecasted increased traffic flows. These works affect the roundabout, and sections of the A469 and A472, including the light controlled junction at Maesycwmmmer.
- 3.159 The specific route alignment for the above proposal has yet to be considered in detail. The LDP Proposals Map identifies a general direction for the route, but does not identify the land required for the proposal. As such the allocation should be considered as being indicative and not conveying any prescription of the route that will be determined by further work.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

Northern Connections Corridor

- 3.160 Although the private sector has shown a high level of interest in investing in this area in the past, there are relatively few new development sites proposed in the LDP compared to those that already have planning consent. This means that contributions from future planning obligations will be limited and the public sector will still be responsible for most infrastructure provision in this corridor.
- 3.161 This area qualifies for European Convergence Funding (2007-2013) but is not a priority location within that programme as it contains relatively few very deprived settlements. It does however contain the County Borough's principal new employment sites, which may be expected to receive strong financial support.

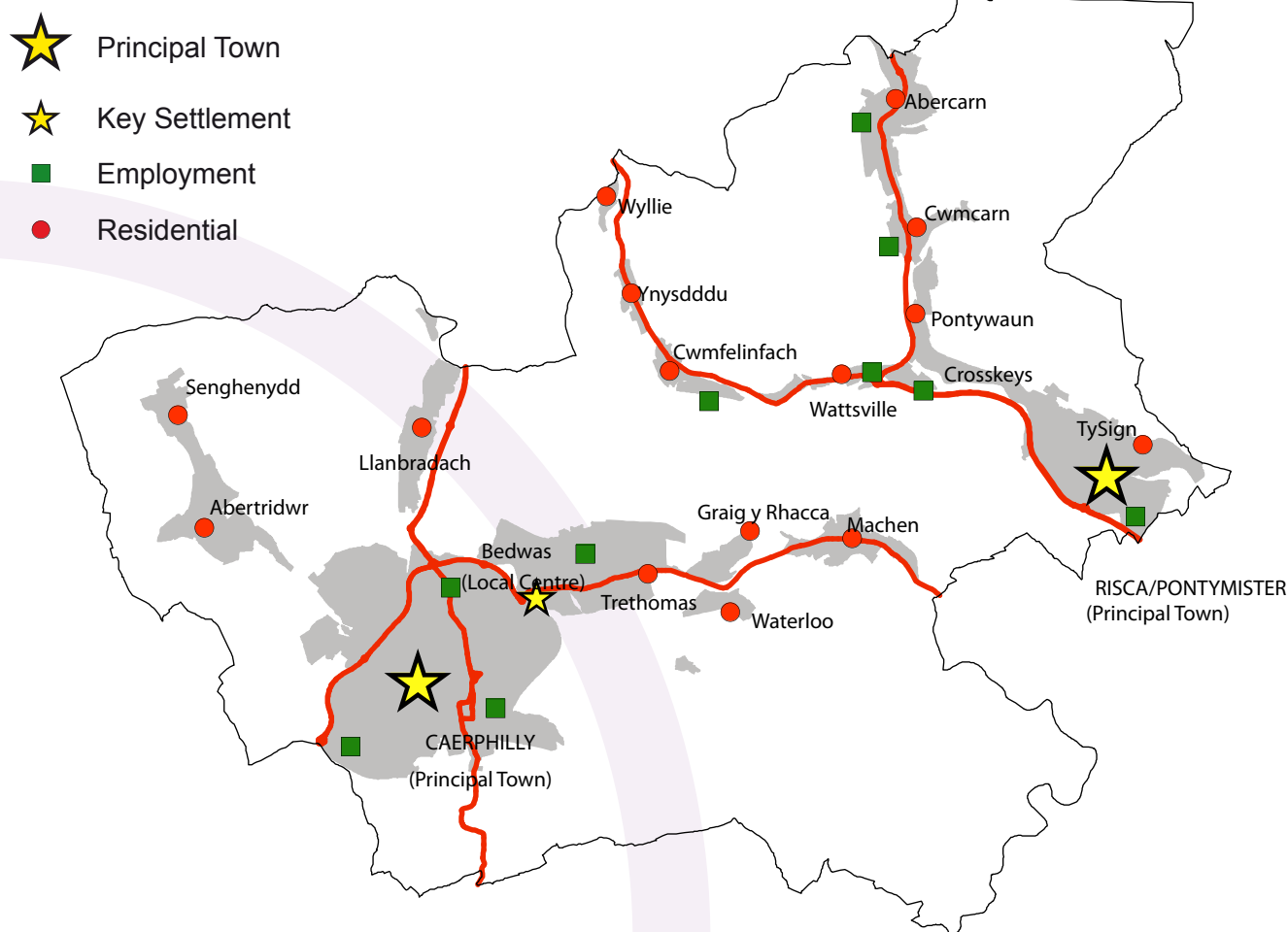
Risks

- 3.162 The major new hospital site is dependent on improvements to the A472 at Maesycwmmmer but both the hospital and associated highway improvements are fully funded.
- 3.163 There are no other allocations in this area that are dependent on a key element of infrastructure for their implementation, although in general, infrastructure provision will be expected to keep pace with development.

Section C: Area Specific Policies

Strategy Area 3: Southern Conne

Southern Connections Corridor (SCC)



SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

3.164 The Principal Towns of Caerphilly and Risca / Pontymister lie in separate river valleys, and therefore although both are part of the Southern Connections Corridor (SCC) they do not form a single conurbation like the key centres in the Northern Connections Corridor.

3.165 As Cardiff and Newport have become more successful, Caerphilly and to a lesser extent Risca have experienced increased development pressure. Significant levels of new development have occurred, particularly in the Caerphilly Basin as a result in recent years.

ctions Corridor (SCC)

- 3.166 Whilst there is a need for Risca / Pontymister and Caerphilly to continue to capitalise on their proximity to Newport and Cardiff respectively and exploit the economic opportunities that this can bring, there is also a need to ensure that these areas do not 'over-heat' to the extent that economic progress is outweighed by negative environmental effects of over development. The priority and emphasis in this area will be on the redevelopment of existing sites and not on the release of any substantial new greenfield land. The Plan will need to ensure, however, that all the brownfield sites are not developed for housing to the detriment of the important employment, retailing and service roles played by the local centres.
- 3.167 Of the smaller settlements in the SCC, Bedwas / Trethomas is by far the largest (population 8,000) and has a more local role in employment and cultural provision in the Caerphilly Basin.
- 3.168 The Caerphilly Basin is the only substantial district of the County Borough not to have a country park. In view of the importance of developing the Valleys Regional Park during the Plan period, the County Borough Council will investigate the possibility for creating a country park in the Caerphilly Basin area, linked into the emerging cyclepath network and complementing the already strong tourism offer of Caerphilly Castle.

Lower Islwyn Area

- 3.169 **Risca / Pontymister** is the main centre for services in this district. The College of Further Education at Crosskeys serves an even wider area. The commercial function of the area is largely overshadowed by its close proximity to Newport and to some extent Blackwood. However the possibility exists to restructure the town centre to attract inward investment and improve the attractiveness of the area to residents and visitors alike. **CM4.7, CM4.8** and **CM4.9** allocate land for retail developments within Risca / Pontymister, thus aiding the creation of a diverse local economy.
- 3.170 Scope exists to exploit the opportunities afforded by the re-opening of the Ebbw Valley railway line and the restoration of the canal. An opportunity exists to provide for new mixed-use development comprising employment, retailing and housing development on brownfield land adjacent to the River Ebbw. Care will need to be taken however as large areas of the valley bottom are identified as being at risk from flooding.
- 3.171 The A467 is the main route that links Abercarn and Cwmcarn to Risca, the M4 and Newport in the South. The A4048 links the Lower Sirhowy Valley to the nearby subregional centre of Blackwood and to employment opportunities in the NCC. The opening of the Ebbw Valley passenger line with stations at Abercarn, Cwmcarn, Crosskeys and Pontymister will improve public transport access to/from Newbridge in the north and to/from Risca, Cardiff (and eventually Newport) in the south.

3.172 **Abercarn, Cwmcarn, Ty Sign, Pontywaun, Cwmfelinfach, Wattsville** and **Ynysddu** are primarily residential villages, though most also have an employment role.

3.173 The surrounding countryside includes the Cwmcarn Forest Drive and the Sirhowy Country Park making the district significant for tourism and recreation. This role is planned to increase in the context of the Valleys Regional Park.

Caerphilly Basin

3.174 **Caerphilly** is the Principal Town in the Caerphilly Basin and it plays an important subregional role in relation to shopping, employment, leisure, and tourism. Proposals for development will be welcomed which support this role in a way that is compatible with the strategy and policies of the Plan. Appropriate allocations will be made within settlement boundaries to provide for this. As a significant employment location there will be a need to allocate land for employment use within the Caerphilly Basin. However the priority and emphasis will be to redevelop existing sites, including the town centre, to enhance its important role as a retail and employment hub.

3.175 Caerphilly town centre is an important retail area and offers an alternative to Cardiff for regular shopping needs. **CM2.2, CM4.10, CM4.11, CM4.12, CM4.13, CM4.14,** and **CM5.3** encourage the development of a range of complementary uses, namely retailing, commercial leisure and office development. **Policies EM1** and **EM2** will allocate and protect, as appropriate, suitable employment sites. Collectively, these

policies will ensure the creation of a diverse local economy for the benefit of the County Borough.

3.176 **Bedwas** has maintained a strong industrial base and the village accommodates two large successful industrial estates at Bedwas House and Pant Glas totalling approximately 61 hectares. The area will continue to provide such sites, via Policies **EM1** and **EM2**.

3.177 Proposals to enhance Bedwas Workmen's Hall and improve the surrounding area are part of a developing role for the village in the provision of cultural and recreational facilities for the Caerphilly Basin. The area could have tourism potential given its close proximity to Caerphilly Castle and to Caerphilly Town Centre.

3.178 The redevelopment of Bedwas Colliery will have a significant impact on the future role and function of Bedwas and Trethomas in this regard. This large brownfield site offers an opportunity to expand the residential role of Bedwas and also provide associated community and leisure facilities to further increase the attractiveness of the area. The redevelopment of the site would require substantial highway improvements to be undertaken in the area. It is envisaged that a new access road will be provided under **Policy TR7**.

3.179 There is also an opportunity to exploit the village's riverside location by developing a riverside park from an existing area of woodland meadow situated between Bedwas and Trethomas. **Policy TM1** sets aside Rhymney Riverside Walk in Bedwas for tourism use.

3.180 **Llanbradach, Abertridwr, Senghenydd, Trethomas, Graig y Rhacca, Waterloo, Rudry** and **Draethen** are primarily residential settlements. Llanbradach is the only area served by a railway station and a major park and ride facility is planned there under **Policy TR4**.

- 3.181 Land is allocated at the former paintworks at Waterloo for a housing development comprising 545 units. This represents an opportunity to help fulfil the housing needs of the County Borough's population through the redevelopment of a brownfield site. Provision will also be made for a primary school that will aid community development within the Rudry / Waterloo locality.
- 3.182 There is a need to establish more effective and transparent links to the public transport system in order to access Caerphilly Town Centre and the surrounding area. There is also a need to ensure that the strategic road network is upgraded at key locations, in order to ensure ease of movement within and beyond the Caerphilly Basin Area.
- 3.183 Caerphilly is only 17 minutes by train from the centre of Cardiff. This is an extremely important economic advantage that the Plan will seek to exploit. Road and rail links to Cardiff are particularly important as they serve not only local movements but also the massive commuter flows from further north in the Rhymney Valley.
- 3.184 Similarly, road and rail links to both Cardiff and Newport will be taken into account in the Plan's proposals for the Lower Islwyn area.
- 3.185 However the need to facilitate travel patterns within Caerphilly town centre must be tempered by environmental considerations, particularly in respect of air quality where some areas are failing air quality standards. A sustainable transport system for Caerphilly must ensure that travel patterns are accommodated whilst air quality within the built up area is improved. The Council are currently investigating measures to improve air quality within the town centre that will inevitably include some transport measures.

Area Specific Policies for the SCC

SETTLEMENT IDENTITY

Green Wedges

- SI1 **Green Wedges are identified and will be protected at the following locations:**

SI1.14 **Newbridge and Abercarn**

SI1.18 **Cwmcarn and Pontywaun**

SI1.19 **Cwmfelinfach and Ynysddu**

SI1.20 **Penyrheol, Hendredenny and Abertridwr**

SI1.21 **Llanbradach and Pwll-y-Pant**

SI1.22 **Bedwas and Caerphilly**

SI1.23 **Machen, Graig-y-Rhacca and Waterloo**

SI1.24 **Ty-Sign and Pontymister**

- 3.186 The need to define and maintain open spaces between and within urban areas and settlements to prevent coalescence is considered important for the County Borough to protect the integrity of both the built and natural environment. Within green wedges, it is intended to resist any development proposal that would not maintain this open character.
- 3.187 The SCC has eight green wedges, and all development proposals will only be considered where the use is either conducive to the existing character or enhances the character of the green wedge. A detailed description of the green wedge allocations can be found in **Appendix 3**.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

- NH1 **Special Landscape Areas are identified and will be protected at the following locations:**
- NH1.4 **North Caerphilly**
- NH1.5 **South Caerphilly**
- NH1.6 **Mynyddislwyn**

3.188 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are local non-statutory designations that seek to protect areas that exhibit distinctive landscape, historical, cultural, biodiversity and geological features and characteristics within the County Borough. They are locally important elements of the natural heritage of the rural and urban environments, and provide a living history of the evolution of the area's landscape as well as cultural backdrop and visual setting. The designation of SLAs highlights the holistic consideration of the landscape, with emphasis placed on the 'special' nature of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics in these areas.

3.189 Three special landscape areas have been identified in the SCC. These areas will be protected from any development that would harm their distinctive features or characteristics. The policy is not designed to preclude development. However, an applicant will need to demonstrate that any development proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the specific distinctive features or characteristics associated with the SLA.

3.190 LANDMAP is the national information system for taking landscape into account in decision-making. It separates landscape into five aspect areas: geological landscapes, visual and sensory, landscape habitats, cultural landscapes and the historic landscapes. The system allows information to be gathered, organised and evaluated within a nationally consistent data set. All of the SLAs have been identified using LANDMAP information and SLA designation

methodology. This recognises that an SLA may include small parts of the local landscape that do not display the same level of landscape importance. A detailed description of the SLA designations can be found in Appendix 1, which provides a breakdown of the distinctive landscape features and characteristics within each SLA.

Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs)

NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes are identified and will be protected at the following locations:

NH2.3 Abercarn

NH2.4 Rudry

3.191 Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILLs) are non-statutory designations that seek to protect the distinctive features or characteristics of the visual and sensory landscape of the County Borough and how we perceive and respond to the landscape around us. VILLs have been identified using only the visual and sensory layer of LANDMAP. The SCC has two Visually Important Landscape Areas.

3.192 Development will only be permitted where it conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features or characteristics of the VILL. Development proposals should demonstrate that these features of the visual and sensory LANDMAP aspect layer are conserved and, where appropriate enhanced for the benefit of the visual landscape. A detailed description of the VILL designations can be found in Appendix 2, which provides a summary of the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features and characteristics within the VILL.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation will be protected in the following locations:

- NH3.1 River Rhymney
- NH3.11 River Sirhowy
- NH3.12 River Ebbw
- NH3.123 Pwllgwinau, East of Newbridge
- NH3.124 Gwyddon Valley Woodlands, Abercarn
- NH3.125 Cwm Pennar, Abercarn
- NH3.126 Tyle-Coch Wood, North of Abercarn
- NH3.127 Coed Ffordd-Fawr, Abercarn
- NH3.128 Cwm Hafod-Fach Woodlands, North of Abercarn
- NH3.129 Distillery Pond, Abercarn
- NH3.130 Mynydd y Lan, West of Cwmcarn
- NH3.131 Sychpant Farm, West of Cwmcarn
- NH3.132 Cil-Fynydd, Cwmcarn
- NH3.133 Mynydd y Lan Woodlands, Cwmcarn
- NH3.134 Cwm Gofapi Woods, Cwmcarn
- NH3.135 Cwmcarn Slopes, Cwmcarn
- NH3.136 Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire / Brecon Canal
- NH3.137 Coed Mam-Gu, Crosskeys
- NH3.138 Twmbarlwm, North of Risca
- NH3.139 Cwm-y-Nant, Risca
- NH3.140 Ty-Sign Meadows, Risca
- NH3.141 Mynydd Machen, West of Risca
- NH3.142 Coed y Mochyn, Risca
- NH3.143 Darran Woodland, Fernlea
- NH3.144 Risca Quarry, Fernlea
- NH3.145 Nant-y-Draenog, East of Wyllie
- NH3.146 Pontgam Terrace Meadows, Wyllie
- NH3.147 Craig y Prisiad Woodlands, Ynysddu
- NH3.148 Mynydd y Grug, West of Cwmfelinfach

- NH3.149 Twyn yr Oerfel, South of Cwmfelinfach
- NH3.150 Sirhowy Country Park Meadows, Cwmfelinfach
- NH3.151 Nant Hafod Tudor, East of Cwmfelinfach
- NH3.152 Ochryth Grasslands, Ochryth
- NH3.117 Llanbradach Fawr Woodlands, North of Llanbradach
- NH3.153 Nant Owen Field, North of Llanbradach
- NH3.118 Mynydd Bach Slopes, East of Llanbradach
- NH3.154 Mynydd Dimlaith and Cwm-y-Bwch, South East of Llanbradach
- NH3.155 Coed y Brain, Penyrheol
- NH3.156 Nant y Aber
- NH3.157 Ty'n-y-Parc, Abertridwr
- NH3.158 Craigyfedw, Abertridwr
- NH3.159 Cwm yr Aber, South of Abertridwr
- NH3.160 Mynydd Meio, South of Abertridwr
- NH3.120 Mynydd Eglwysilan, North of Senghenydd
- NH3.161 Nant Cae'r-Moel Swamp and Woodland, Senghenydd
- NH3.162 Glawnant Field, Senghenydd
- NH3.163 Gypsy Lane Wetland, South of Groeswen
- NH3.164 Caerphilly Common, South of Caerphilly
- NH3.165 Warren Drive Meadow, South of Caerphilly
- NH3.166 Nant Gwaunybara Mire, East of Caerphilly
- NH3.167 Ty-Melyn Coppice, South of Watford Park, Caerphilly
- NH3.168 Coed y Maerdy, East of Caerphilly
- NH3.169 Thornhill Quarries, Thornhill
- NH3.170 Caerphilly / Machen Disused Railway, East of Trethomas
- NH3.171 Berth Goch Wood, North of Trethomas

- NH3.172 **Graig-y-Rhacca Woodlands, Graig-y Rhacca**
- NH3.173 **Graig-y-Rhacca Grasslands, Graig-y-Rhacca**
- NH3.174 **Machen Woodlands, Machen**
- NH3.175 **Coed Pen-Llyn, Machen**
- NH3.176 **Tudor Gardens Quarry, Machen**
- NH3.177 **Coed Cefn-Pwll-Du, South of Machen**
- NH3.178 **Coed Craig Ruperra, East of Draethen**
- NH3.179 **Ruperra Castle and Grounds, Draethen**
- NH3.180 **Ruperra Woodlands, East of Draethen**
- NH3.181 **Coedcefnporth, Cefn Mably**
- NH3.182 **Wernddu Woodlands, Rudry**
- NH3.183 **Cefn Onn Ridge, South of Wern Ddu**
- NH3.184 **Mynydd Rudry Common, Rudry**
- NH3.185 **Rudry Woodlands, Rudry**
- NH3.186 **Coed y Squire and Coedcae, Rudry**
- NH3.187 **Blaengwynlais Meadows, Rudry**
- NH3.188 **Nant Du Woodland, Rudry**
- NH3.189 **Cwm-Crynant Woodland, South of Rudry**
- NH3.190 **Nant Fawr, South of Rudry**

3.193 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are an important biodiversity resource covering significant areas of priority habitats and species. Designations are based on objective scientific criteria to accord with the (developing) Wales-wide guidelines. This policy applies to all sites that meet the criteria for designation.

3.194 Development will normally be permitted where it would not cause unacceptable harm to the particular features of the SINC. Where harm is unavoidable it should be minimised by effective mitigation measures to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall nature conservation value of the area or feature. Where this is not possible, compensation measures designed to conserve, enhance and manage locally distinctive natural habitats and species should be provided, including for example details of restoration and reclamation schemes. A description of the designated SINCs can be found in **Appendix 4**.

MINERALS

Mineral Site Buffer Zones

MN1 **A buffer zone is identified around the following mineral sites:**

- MN1.7 **Machen Quarry - Active**
- MN1.8 **Cefn On Quarry - Dormant**
- MN1.9 **Cwmleyshon Quarry - Inactive**
- MN1.10 **Blaengwynlais Quarry - Inactive**
- MN1.11 **Pontymister Quarry - Dormant**

3.195 The development restrictions associated with this zone are described in Policy CW23 in section two of the Plan.

Minerals Safeguarding

MN2 **Minerals safeguarding areas are identified at:**

- MN2.9 **The southern outcrop, Caerphilly / Lower Islwyn – Coal**
- MN2.10 **East of Llanbradach – Sand and Gravel**
- MN2.11 **South East of Machen – Sand and Gravel**
- MN2.12 **East of Gwernleyshon Farm – Sand and Gravel**
- MN2.13 **West of Cefn Mably Farm Park - Sand and Gravel**

3.196 The Coal TAN (MTAN 2 - Coal) requires local planning authorities to safeguard coal resources for the future. The safeguarding of the resource does not indicate any presumption in favour of working but it prevents the sterilisation of the resource by other development.

3.197 Minerals Technical Advice Note 1 - Aggregates requires local planning authorities to safeguard land based resources of sand and gravel as an alternative to marine supply.

3.198 Background Paper 5 provide detailed information on the coal and sand and gravel resources within the Southern Connections Corridor.

HOUSING

Allocated Housing Sites

HG1 Land has been allocated for housing across the Southern Connections Corridor as follows:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Units
HG1.47	Land west of the A467 and Afon Ebbw +	Abercarn	8.7	269
HG1.48	Twyncarn House #	Cwmcarn	0.39	26
HG1.49	Land at Hillary Rise +	Pontywaun	1.10	20
HG1.50	Land adjacent to Pen-y-Cwarel Road	Wyllie	1.60	56
HG1.51	Land north east of Llanarth Street +	Wattsville	2.16	30
HG1.52	Land at Station Approach, Risca +	Risca	0.51	10
HG1.53	Rom River +	Risca	1.9	38
HG1.54	Eastern part of land adjacent to River Ebbw	Pontymister	1.38	48
HG1.55	Suflex Factory	Pontymister	2.1	88
HG1.56	Tyn y Waun Farm +	Machen	0.77	10
HG1.57	Waterloo Works +	Waterloo	17.00	545
HG1.58	Former Petrol Filling Station, Newport Road +	Trethomas	0.19	10
HG1.59	The Grove +	Trethomas	0.46	13
HG1.60	Bedwas Colliery	Bedwas	36.22	630
HG1.61	St. James Primary School	Caerphilly	2.98	49
HG1.62	Land at Venosa Trading Estate	Caerphilly	4.55	130
HG1.63	Land at Pontypandy Industrial Estate +	Caerphilly	7.58	199
HG1.64	Cardiff Road / Pentrebane Street +	Caerphilly	1.12	127
HG1.65	Land between Van Road / Maes Glas, and the Railway +	Caerphilly	1.77	62
HG1.66	Gas Works Site, Mill Road +	Caerphilly	2.20	55
HG1.67	Caerphilly Miners Hospital	Caerphilly	3.26	114
HG1.68	Castlegate +	Caerphilly	24.1	259
HG1.69	Hendre Infants School	Caerphilly	0.46	16
HG1.70	Cwm Ifor Primary School	Caerphilly	2.8	46
HG1.71	Land east of Coedcae Road	Abertridwr	0.78	27
HG1.72	Windsor Colliery	Abertridwr	5.51	193
HG1.73	Land below Coronation Terrace +	Senghenydd	0.76	12
HG1.74	Jeremy Oils +	Llanbradach	1.80	45
TOTAL			134.15	3,127

+ The site had planning consent as of 1st April 2007

100% affordable housing site

3.199 The allocation of sites for residential development is important in ensuring sufficient land is available to meet future population requirements. In the Southern Connections Corridor a total of 3,127 units have been allocated across a range of sites in order to reflect the role and functions of individual settlements. In this area, 96% of dwellings are allocated on brownfield sites. Greenfield sites have been allocated where they have existing planning consent or are required to support the viability of individual settlements.

3.200 Land allocated under this policy includes:

- Sites with planning consent for housing or for a mix of uses incorporating housing as of 1st April 2007 (in some cases subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement).
- New sites that have been identified as suitable for residential development or for a mix of uses including housing as a result of a robust candidate site assessment process.

3.201 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 7**.

In addition, surveys and further information that will be required to be submitted as part of future planning applications is set out in **Appendix 8**.

3.202 The proposed number of units identified for each site is indicative and higher or lower densities may be acceptable where the proposed development addresses other policy considerations including design, sustainability, and comprehensive development.

3.203 In addition to the affordable housing that will be secured through **Policy CW11**, one site is identified for 100% affordable housing, which will contribute towards addressing affordable housing need in the area. The site identified is realistically likely to come forward for 100% affordable housing as a result of the availability of social housing grant and land ownership. The promotion of other sites for 100% affordable housing will be favoured in sustainable locations where this will not undermine the aim of delivering mixed communities.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Allocations

EM1 The following sites are allocated for employment uses, in line with their status in the employment hierarchy:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Type
EM1.12	Land at Caerphilly Business Park +	Caerphilly	3.6	Primary site
EM1.13	Land at Trecenydd +	Caerphilly	2.2	Secondary site
EM1.14	Land at Western +	Caerphilly	1.1	Secondary site

+ P/P 1st April 2007

- 3.204 The designated primary sites currently house a mixture of Use Classes, and as such, they are considered appropriate for classes B1, B2 and B8 uses, namely offices, light and general industry, and warehousing uses. Proposals for the development of the vacant land within these sites are also expected to accord with those uses.
- 3.205 The sites at Trecenydd and at Western are considered suitable for appropriate sui generis uses in addition to Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. The sites in question either currently accommodate uses that would be amenable to the location of sui generis development within the immediate vicinity, or adjoin sites of this nature. Sui generis uses can play an important role in the economic fabric of the County Borough, although it is necessary to ensure that they complement and support other, neighbouring uses, rather than act in competition or be of detriment to them.
- 3.206 A detailed description of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 9**.

Employment Sites Protection

EM2 The following sites are protected for employment uses:

EM2.25	Pantglas, Bedwas	Primary site
EM2.26	Caerphilly Business Park	Primary site
EM2.27	Prince of Wales, Abercarn	Secondary site
EM2.28	Nine Mile Point, Cwmfelinfach	Secondary site
EM2.29	Blackvein, Wattsville	Secondary site
EM2.30	Newtown, Crosskeys	Secondary site
EM2.31	Park Road, Risca	Secondary site
EM2.32	Rogerstone Park, Pontymister	Secondary site
EM2.33	Bedwas House, Bedwas	Secondary site
EM2.34	Pontygwindy Road, Caerphilly	Secondary site
EM2.35	Trecenydd, Caerphilly	Secondary site
EM2.36	Western, Caerphilly	Secondary site

- 3.207 In addition to land allocated for future employment development (Policy EM1), a number of sites exist within the County Borough that already possess functioning employment uses. Such sites will be protected from development outside of those Use Classes indicated by the relevant categorisation (e.g. use class B1 only for primary sites). This protection policy is intended to operate in tandem with **Policy CW13** in this regard.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Principal Town Centre Boundaries

- CM1 Boundaries for the Principal Town Centres in the Southern Connections Corridor are defined as follows:

- CM1.4 Risca / Pontymister
 CM1.5 Caerphilly

- 3.208 This policy defines the boundaries of the two defined Principal Town Centres within the Southern Connections Corridor Strategy Area. The five Principal Towns

possess a multi functional role in their delivery of services to the public within their catchment area. They are the main shopping centres, but also commercial service centres, community service centres, and centres for commercial leisure activities too. As such they are also major employers as well. Therefore, retail policies have been formulated which aim at protecting and enhancing their retail vitality and viability. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW14**.

3.209 The main thrust of the retail strategy is to continue to expand overall retail provision in the County Borough through the growth of high quality shopping centres which retain the best existing features combined with provision for new shopping investments and environmental enhancement. Therefore, policies seek to focus retail developments within existing shopping centres and defined edge of centre locations to accommodate specific types of stores.

3.210 In terms of the Southern Connections Corridor, Caerphilly is by far the largest centre in terms of retail floorspace, service provision, and commercial leisure facilities, being an order of magnitude greater than the other three principal centres. The town centre has recently experienced significant new retail development, but substantial opportunities still exist for new development at the Gallagher retail warehouse park, and there is currently planning consent for a large-scale redevelopment of part of Cardiff Road. Therefore, the aim in both towns is geared more to maintaining and enhancing this

improvement in their status, viability and vitality. Caerphilly is also a centre where one would expect new office developments to locate. However, part of the town is subject to a flood risk designation. The detail of future development proposals within the flood risk area will need to address this issue.

3.211 Risca / Pontymister is also an important retail centre and has potential for significant new retailing provision. However, part of the town is subject to a flood risk designation. The detail of future development proposals within the flood risk area will need to address this issue.

3.212 The defined boundaries of these two Principal Town Centres are shown on the Proposals Map and are also shown on larger scale plans in **Appendix 11**.

Gallagher Retail Warehouse Park Boundary

CM2 A boundary for the Retail Warehouse Park in the Southern Connections Corridor is defined as follows:

CM2.2 Gallagher Retail Park, Caerphilly

3.213 Caerphilly town centre has experienced significant new retail development, and substantial new retail development is underway at the northern end of Gallagher Retail Warehouse Park. Two units with consent from phase two remain to be built as does the proposed redevelopment of the Focus store and its site.

3.214 This Retail Warehouse Park has been given a defined boundary in order to promote its development in advance of sites in other less appropriate out-of-centre locations. It was chosen to complement Caerphilly's existing retail offer. The aim to give it development priority is, therefore, both sustainable and supportive of the aims of the retail strategy. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements

of **Policy CW17**. However, a part of the retail warehouse park is subject to a flood risk designation. The detail of future development proposals within the flood risk area will need to address this issue.

- 3.215 The defined boundary of the Gallagher Retail Warehouse Park is shown on the Proposals Map and is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

Protection of a Primary Area for the Caerphilly Principal Town Centre

CM3 A Primary Retail Area has been identified at the following location:

CM3.2 Castle Court, Caerphilly

- 3.216 It is appropriate to identify a Primary Retail Area in Caerphilly town centre where protection of the retail function is intended to be absolute, in order to ensure the maintenance of shopping interest and vitality. The further concentration of service outlets (A2 uses) such as banks, building societies and estate agents, and food and drink establishments (A3 uses) in the heart of shopping centres would result in a

loss of retail units and the risk of creating 'dead frontages'. In order to strike a policy balance between protection and flexibility, a Primary Retail Area has been identified for Caerphilly town centre, because it will be vibrant enough to maintain full occupancy of A1 retail units within its core. This policy is intended to operate in tandem with the requirements of **Policy CW14**.

- 3.217 The boundary of the Primary Retail Area for Caerphilly has been tightly drawn in order to permit the accommodation of new A2 and A3 uses within the large remaining portion of the retail centre. Therefore, the policy does not limit these uses, because they also have their role to play in creating a vibrant town centre, but it lessens their adverse cumulative impact in the shopping core. However, at Castle Court, the units may be occupied by Class A3 use proposals up to that number which is in accordance with the planning permission.
- 3.218 The boundary of the Caerphilly Primary Retail Area is shown on the Proposals Map. It is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

Principal Town and Local Centre Development Sites

CM4 The following Principal Town and Local Centre sites are allocated for retail, commercial leisure, and office developments:

	Site Name	Settlement	Size (ha)	Proposal Type
CM4.7	Former Palace Cinema +	Risca / Pontymister	0.2	Food Store
CM4.8	Adjacent to Lidl	Risca / Pontymister	0.5	Retail
CM4.9	Foundry Site	Risca / Pontymister	5.6	Food Superstore
CM4.10	Gallagher Retail Park Extension +	Caerphilly	3.3	Retail Warehousing
CM4.11	Gallagher Retail Park Redevelopment +	Caerphilly	2.3	Retail Warehousing
CM4.12	Park Lane	Caerphilly	0.3	Commercial Leisure
CM4.13	Cardiff Road +	Caerphilly	1.1	Food Store, other Retail
CM4.14	Castlegate +	Caerphilly	3.5	Retail, Offices, Hotel

+ P/P April 2008

3.219 A detailed description of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 10**.

Commercial Opportunity Area

CM5 A Commercial Opportunity Area is identified at the following location:

CM5.3 Castle Street to Piccadilly, Caerphilly

3.220 A Commercial Opportunity Area has been identified for the principal town of Caerphilly where office development might prove particularly beneficial. However, this will not preclude such proposals anywhere else inside the designated town centres apart from within the Primary Area. This policy initiative aims to provide yet another significant set of opportunities to drive further economic growth in the County Borough. However, most of this Commercial Opportunity Area is subject to a flood risk designation, and so the detail of future development proposals within the area will need to address this issue. The boundary of the designation is shown on the Proposals Map. It is also shown on a larger scale plan in **Appendix 11**.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities

CF1 The following sites are allocated for new community facilities:

CF1.21 West/east of Abercarn Cemetery, Abercarn - Cemetery extensions

CF1.22 Pencerrig Street, Llanbradach - GP surgery

CF1.23 Senghenydd Health Centre, Senghenydd - GP surgery

CF1.24 Ysgol Ifor Bach, Senghenydd - New school

CF1.25 Cwm Ifor Primary School, Caerphilly - New school

CF1.26 Adjacent to Penyrheol Cemetery, Caerphilly - Cemetery extension

CF1.27 Hendre Junior School, Caerphilly - School extension

CF1.28 St James Primary School, Caerphilly - New school

CF1.29 Town Centre, Caerphilly - Library / Customer First Centre

CF1.30 Castlegate, Caerphilly - GP surgery / residential home for elderly

CF1.31 Old Nantgarw Road, Caerphilly - New cemetery

CF1.32 Workmen's Hall and environs, Bedwas - Cultural centre

CF1.33 Former Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas - New school

CF1.34 Former Cray Valley Paint Works, Waterloo - New school

CF1.35 Former Bus Station, Crosskeys - College extension

CF1.36 Palace Cinema, Risca - Library

CF1.37 South of Danygraig Cemetery, Risca - Cemetery extension

3.221 Detailed descriptions of these site allocations can be found in **Appendix 14**.

LEISURE

Protection of Formal Open Spaces

LE1 Land is protected for open space and parkland uses at:

LE1.20 Cwmcarn Memorial Green, Cwmcarn

LE1.21 Waunfawr Park, Crosskeys

LE1.22 Tredegar Park, Risca

LE1.23 Ty Isaf Recreation Ground, Pontymister

LE1.24 Pontymister Athletic Ground, Pontymister

LE1.25 Senghenydd Welfare Park, Senghenydd

- LE1.26 **Abertridwr Park, Abertridwr**
- LE1.27 **Llanbradach Park, Llanbradach**
- LE1.28 **Aneurin Park / Penyrheol Cemetery, Caerphilly**
- LE1.29 **Morgan Jones Park, Caerphilly**
- LE1.30 **Lansbury Park, Caerphilly**
- LE1.31 **Dafydd Williams / Owain Glyndwr Parks, Caerphilly**
- LE1.32 **Adjacent to Church and War Memorial, Machen**

- 3.222 Formal parks and gardens are attractive civic spaces for public enjoyment and should be protected as such. Incremental reductions in their boundaries in favour of built development should be avoided in order that they are present for future generations to experience.
- 3.223 Many parks are laid out with attractions such as floral displays, plant growing, sports pitches, children's playgrounds and ornamental water features. Whilst it is important to incorporate some flexibility for selective development that will consolidate these uses such as shelters, pavilions and storage buildings, it is vital that the leisure aspect is enhanced.

Allocation of Country Parks

- LE2 **Land is allocated for a new Country Park at:**
- LE2.2 **Bedwas Community Park, Bedwas**

- 3.224 Across the region, a number of country parks have been successfully developed incorporating both derelict and open land. In order to ensure that such parks are accessible in all locations for tourism purposes and to provide a network of amenity sites for walking, cycling, riding, picnics and wildlife conservation, land has been set aside for the development of new country parks.

- 3.225 Already there are cycle routes identified in the mid and lower reaches of the County Borough, and there is an opportunity to further link into the infrastructure (such as the Rhymney Valley Linear Route to Bedwas, **TR1.13**). This will feed into the loops and links network that will in turn form part of the Valleys Regional Park.
- 3.226 Country parks are large scale, less formal facilities that offer a valuable resource for recreation activities near enough to the County Borough's main centres of population but completely rural in character. In this case provision is to be made initially for a 'pocket park' serving the wider Caerphilly Basin area and in particular the proposed mixed use development on the adjacent Bedwas colliery site. The re-profiled spoil tips to the north of the colliery site are proposed for a country park in the longer term.
- 3.227 Pocket parks are defined as areas of open space with planting that enable the enjoyment of attractive surroundings. It is a development of this concept that is proposed at Bedwas Community Park together with a significant informal element, giving the overall site the character of a small country park.
- 3.228 It is proposed that a swathe of land extending from the River Rhymney adjacent to Bedwas House Industrial Estate to the north east of the Graig y Rhacca housing estate in Trethomas is included in the park designation. This park will incorporate a range of both formal and informal leisure uses including sports pitches, allotments and a village green.

3.229 A priority is to conserve sensitive areas of woodland and where possible enhance the landscape. It is hoped to balance these needs with increased local residents' use and enjoyment of the countryside through improved footpaths and access points here.

Protection of Country Parks

LE 3 A Country Park that contributes to the Valleys Regional Park is protected at the following location:

LE3.6 Sirhowy Valley Country Park, Ynysddu / Crosskeys

3.230 Country parks are large scale, less formal facilities that offer a valuable resource for recreational and tourism activities within a rural setting, close to the County Borough's main centres of population. In order to recognise their contribution to the landscape as tourism attractions in their own right and to ensure that they continue to serve this purpose, the Plan defines their boundaries so that they can be protected from any inappropriate development.

Formal Leisure Facilities

LE4 Land is identified for leisure facilities including playing pitches at:

LE4.11 Llanbradach Plateau, Llanbradach

LE4.12 Former Bedwas Colliery, Bedwas

LE4.13 Adjacent to Bedwas Comprehensive School, Bedwas

LE4.14 Adjacent to St Cenydd School, Caerphilly

LE4.15 Castlegate, Caerphilly

3.231 Playing pitches are an integral part of most communities' formal recreation provision. In measuring the quantity of facilities against the National Playing Fields Association 'Six Acre Standard', a shortage of playing pitches has been identified within the County Borough.

3.232 Whilst this reflects a national decline in provision, the NPFA standards are still intended as a firm aspiration for local authority land use policies in order that the decline can be arrested and reversed. As such a number of sites, often involving a wider regeneration of a settlement through reclamation or brownfield site use have been identified for new playing pitch development.

Protection of Informal Open Spaces

LE5 Land is protected for informal recreation and community uses at:

LE5.17 West of Commercial Street, Senghenydd

LE5.18 Heritage Park, Abertridwr

LE5.19 Risca Quarry, Risca

LE5.20 Holly Road, Risca

LE5.21 North of Pontymason Lane, Risca

LE5.22 Former Energlyn Sidings, Caerphilly

LE5.23 Pontypandy, Caerphilly

LE5.24 East of Mornington Meadows, Caerphilly

LE5.25 Castle View, Caerphilly

3.233 Open spaces of a less formal character are often vital elements in the suburban landscape, offering a visually attractive haven for wildlife. This can often involve the community in ownership and conservation projects. These areas may often be used for walking and can in some instances offer informal enjoyment for cyclists passing through the area.

TOURISM

Tourism Proposals

TM1 Sites are allocated for tourism related activities at:

TM1.6 Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, Crumlin Arm

TM1.7 Nantcarn Valley, Cwmcarn

TM1.8 Rhymney Riverside Walk, Rhymney - Cefn Mably

TM1.9 Caerphilly Castle Grounds, Caerphilly

3.234 Potentially the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal is a valuable tourism resource, not only as a working route for boats but for its likely links into a wider waterways network. It is also a thriving nature corridor with towpaths and the Celtic Trail cycleway running alongside. As such there are attractive amenity areas, which are linked together by the proposed route of the canal that will make it an attractive development for tourists.

3.235 A linear route that can be developed along a network of informal green spaces is the Rhymney Riverside Walk. This currently follows the course of the River Rhymney southwards from Rhymney and is complete until some lengths in the Northern Connections Corridor. It thereafter links Llanbradach, Bedwas, Caerphilly, Trethomas, Machen, Draethen and Cefn Mably in the Southern Connections Corridor, where it also has missing sections requiring further development. The walk comprises of landscaped walkways with observation points maximising use of the river as a resource for tourists. It will benefit from protection in order to complete this long distance footpath route.

3.236 Surrounding Caerphilly Castle, the grounds are an integral element of the castle's overall setting and character, and serve an important leisure function near the town

centre. As such the land requires protection so that it can continue be used by castle visitors and host major tourist events such as the 'Big Cheese' festival.

TRANSPORTATION

Cycle Routes

TR1 Land will be safeguarded to facilitate the following improvements to the cycle route network:

TR1.13 Rhymney Valley Linear Cycle Route - Heads of the Valleys to Bedwas / Caerphilly, Southern

TR1.14 Caerphilly Basin Radial Routes

TR1.15 Link from Crosskeys NCN47 to Newbridge

3.237 A key factor in delivering more sustainable transport is realising a significant increase in the number of shorter trips by walking and cycling. The provision of a high quality strategic and local network of dedicated routes for these modes is an essential element in realising this growth.

3.238 The specific route alignments for the above improvements have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. Indicative route alignments are shown on the LDP Proposals Map and only represent the general direction of the route. The indicative alignments on the Proposals Map, therefore, are not prescriptive.

3.239 In addition to the above potential schemes, Safe Routes to Stations and Safe Routes in Communities Schemes will also be prioritised.

3.240 The proposed cycle routes within the Southern Connections Corridor will promote regeneration and sustainability, encourage healthier lifestyles and increased physical activity, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the area.

3.241 The routes of former railway lines which have potential for transport related development will be safeguarded, particularly those which facilitate walking, cycling rail freight or passenger movements.

3.242 Design layout for residential, employment, retail, leisure and other developments will be expected to incorporate provision for walking and cycling and where possible links / access to the developing walking and cycling networks.

New Rail Stations

TR3 The Council will safeguard land at the following location for a new rail station:

TR3.3 Energlyn / Churchill Park

3.243 The provision of a new station at Energlyn will improve access to the rail network for the local community and encourage greater use of rail services along the Rhymney Line, which now benefits from a frequency of four trains per hour from Bargoed to Cardiff. Funding is currently being sought for the final stage of the Rhymney Line frequency enhancements, which will provide a half hourly service to Rhymney. The provision of a new station at Energlyn is being progressed as part of this wider scheme.

3.244 The specific land requirements for the new stations have yet to be considered in detail and the schemes are at differing stages of development. The LDP Proposals Map identifies the general locations that relate to the proposals, but does not seek to identify specific sites for the proposals. As such the allocations are indicative and should not be considered to be prescriptive.

Park and Ride Facilities

TR4 The following station has been identified for new or improved park and ride provision:

TR4.4 Llanbradach

3.245 The recent and ongoing frequency and capacity improvements on the Rhymney Valley line, in conjunction with the opening of the Ebbw Valley line for passenger services, provides an excellent opportunity to increase rail patronage in the County Borough. The provision of park and ride facilities at stations increases access to the rail network and encourages car users to change to rail for a significant part of their journey. The provision of a park and ride facility at Llanbradach will increase the potential for the public, and particularly commuters travelling to Cardiff, to access and utilise the rail service instead of making the journey by car.

3.246 The specific land requirements for the above improvement have yet to be considered in detail. The LDP Proposals Map identifies the station location that relates to the proposal, but does not seek to identify the land required. As such the allocation is indicative and should not be considered to be prescriptive.

Transport Improvement Schemes - Caerphilly Basin

TR6 The following strategic network improvements have been identified in respect of the Caerphilly Basin Obligation:

TR6.1 Tafwys Walk

TR6.2 Trecenydd Roundabout

TR6.3 Pwllypant Roundabout

TR6.4 Bedwas Bridge Roundabout

TR6.5 Piccadilly Gyratory

TR6.6 Penrhos to Pwllypant

TR6.7 Pwllypant to Bedwas

3.247 The LDP will accommodate an increase in population during the Plan period and has allocated sites to cater for the housing need accordingly. This housing development will lead to significant increases in traffic on the transport network of the County Borough, which will result in increased congestion. As a result, specific improvements to the strategic network in the Southern Connections Corridor have been identified, which will alleviate the cumulative impact of the housing development. These schemes will be realised through a planning obligation levied against all residential developments.

New Roads to Facilitate Development

TR7 The following highway scheme is identified to facilitate new development:

TR7.2 Bedwas Colliery Access Road

3.248 The Bedwas Colliery site has been identified for mixed-use development. However, the existing potential points of access for the site are substandard and therefore the proposed development of the site will necessitate the construction of a new access road by the developer.

3.249 The specific route alignment for the above proposal has yet to be considered in detail. The LDP Proposals Map identifies a general direction for the route, but does not identify the land required for the proposal. As such the allocation should be considered as being indicative and not conveying any prescription of the route that will be determined by further work.

Highway Corridor Safeguarding

TR9 Land will be safeguarded to the south east of Caerphilly town to prevent development that would prejudice the possible future construction of the Caerphilly South East Bypass

3.250 Transport, and in particular problems of congestion and queuing traffic, are a significant contributing factor towards the air quality issues facing Caerphilly Town Centre. Some improvements, which aim to help alleviate the traffic issues in the town centre, have been considered as part of the LDP process, most significantly the identification of a southern bypass for Caerphilly.

3.251 In order to ensure that any improvements to the transport network will result in the desired improvement of air quality in the town centre, comprehensive investigation of the sources of the problem, and assessment of the alternative options will need to be undertaken. However it is important to ensure that whilst the necessary investigative work is underway, no development is permitted that could potentially prejudice the future alignment of a bypass. On completion of the work the Council will either seek to confirm the safeguarded route for the development of a bypass or will remove the safeguarded corridor from the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

Southern Connections Corridor

3.252 The private sector has shown a high level of interest in investing in the Southern Connections Corridor, and in the Caerphilly Basin in particular, with land prices high compared to the rest of the County Borough. This means that it is feasible for contributions from planning obligations to play an important role in providing much of the infrastructure necessitated by growth. However, the public sector will still need to finance current infrastructure deficiencies in the area.

3.253 This area qualifies for European Convergence Funding (2007-2013) but is not a priority location within that programme as it contains relatively few very deprived settlements. It does contain

a number of large brownfield, partly contaminated sites that should qualify for appropriate government aid to secure their redevelopment.

Risks

- 3.254 Improvements to the transport infrastructure in particular, must proceed in parallel with development if severe traffic congestion is to be avoided in the Caerphilly Basin. Deteriorating air quality in and around Caerphilly town centre could prevent further development there if not addressed. Flood risk must be addressed in the Risca / Pontymister area for the proposals in that area to be realised.



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Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.