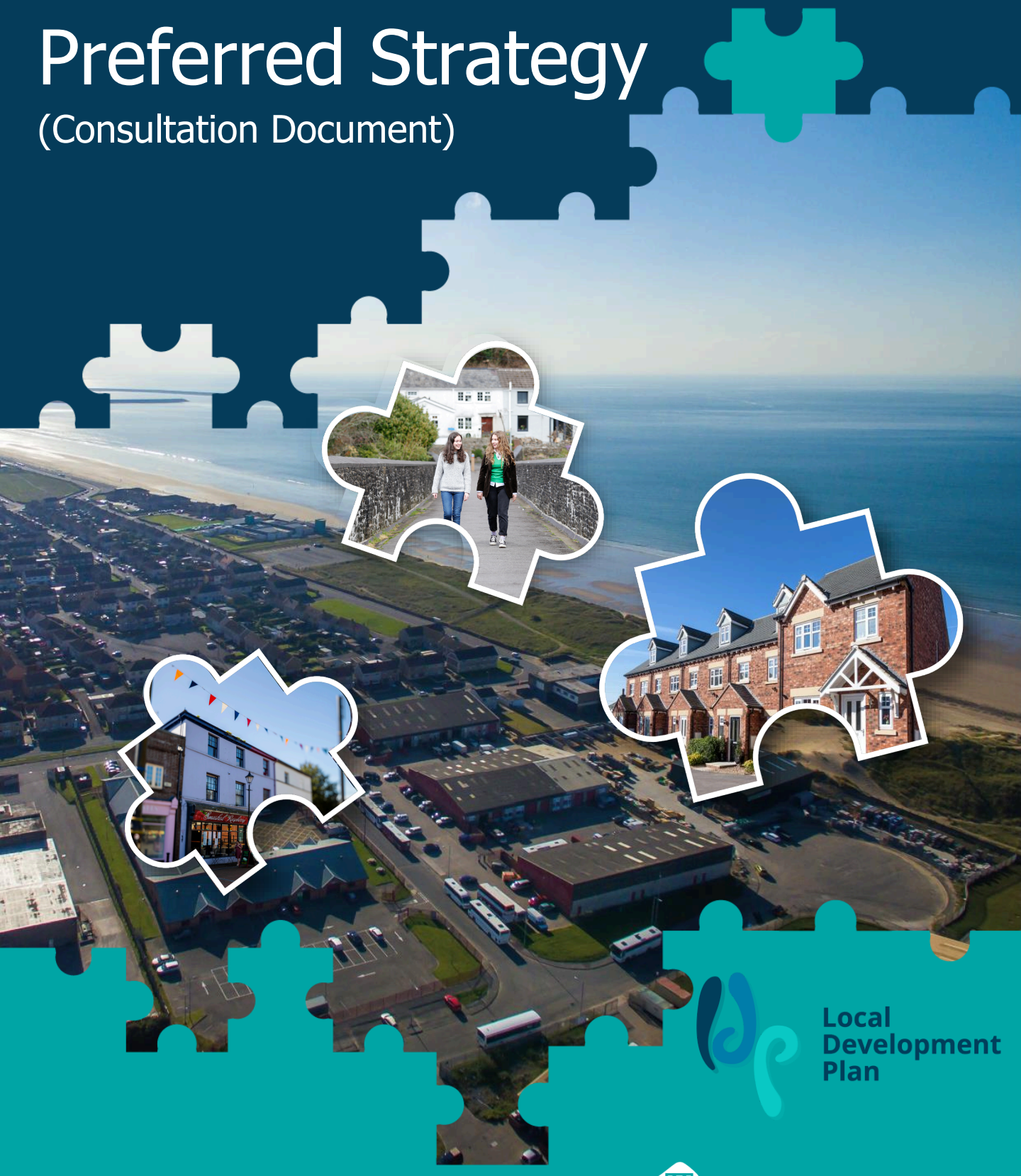
Neath Port Talbot Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) (2023-2038)

Preferred Strategy

(Consultation Document)



Local Development Plan

December 2024

Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Note to Reader

This note outlines the purpose of the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy and how to comment on the document. This note does not form part of the Preferred Strategy document itself.

Purpose of the Document

Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC) is working on a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the period 2023-2038. The RLDP will allocate land for homes, employment and protect the unique environment of NPT. The RLDP will, upon adoption, replace the current adopted LDP and be the basis for land use planning decisions.

This is the first statutory consultation stage into NPTC's RLDP preparation process and provides a strategic direction for the development and use of land within NPT.

The Preferred Strategy sets out:

- The key issues, a vision and objectives for the RLDP to address;
- The preferred level of growth and a broad spatial distribution of this growth;
- Strategic policies that will help deliver the Strategy; and
- The key housing and employment sites that will deliver the Strategy.

Consultation

The Council is seeking views on all aspects of the strategy and approach set out in this Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy document.

Consultation on the Pre-deposit (Preferred Strategy), Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Candidate Sites Register (CSR) will take place between **midday 12th December 2024 and midday 6th February 2025**.

How to Make Comments

Comments can be submitted:

Directly Online at: www.npt.gov.uk/ldp/consultation

Alternatively:

By E-mail to: ldp@npt.gov.uk

Or

By Post to:
Mr Ceri Morris
Head of Planning and Public Protection
Neath Port Talbot Council
The Quays
Brunel Way
Baglan Energy Park
Neath
SA11 2GG

Our preference is that you submit your comments directly online via the consultation portal: www.npt.gov.uk/ldp/consultation following the instructions on how to submit a comment.

Comments via e-mail or post will need to be submitted using the 'Preferred Strategy Representation Form', available on our website or on request from the LDP Team at **ldp@npt.gov.uk or 01639 686821.**

The deadline for comments is midday on Thursday 6th February 2025. Comments received after the deadline will not be accepted.

The Preferred Strategy is also available in Welsh, either via the online Consultation Portal or by request. Should you need this document in another format, then please contact the LDP team at **ldp@npt.gov.uk** or **01639 686821**.

All comments received will be available for public inspection and cannot be treated as confidential. The NPT Planning & Public Protection Service Privacy Statement can be viewed at: www.npt.gov.uk/16275

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Chapter 1
Introduction



1 Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 All local authorities in Wales are required to prepare and adopt a Local Development Plan (LDP), which sets out locally specific planning policies and proposals to shape the future development of their areas over a fifteen year period. Development plans underpin the planning system and the Local Development Plan sets the context, proposals and policy approach for planning decision-making across the local authority area. Local Development Plans have to be prepared in accordance with national planning legislation and guidance and national and regional strategies and policies, and need to be reviewed at least every four years, to ensure that they remain up-to-date and relevant.

1.1.2 Neath Port Talbot's first Local Development Plan was formally adopted in January 2016 and covers the plan period of 2011 - 2026. It currently remains the plan that is in force for the county borough area. However, work has now started on the new Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for Neath Port Talbot (NPT) which will replace the current plan. This document (the *Preferred Strategy* or *Pre-Deposit Plan)* comprises a draft outline of the council's initial proposals, setting out the overall strategy and approach to be taken for the Replacement Local Development Plan. It is being published now for public consultation and debate.

1.2 What is the Replacement Local Development Plan?

1.2.1 The Neath Port Talbot Replacement Local Development Plan, once it is formally adopted, will set out where and how new development will take place and will include a range of planning policies specific to the local area that will direct how planning applications are dealt with. It will include site allocations for different land uses (such as housing or employment), areas, places and features to be protected, conserved and safeguarded and strategic and detailed policies to deliver identified objectives including addressing the climate and nature emergencies, safeguarding the environment, and delivering high-quality placemaking and design.

1.2.2 All planning decisions must be made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Once adopted, the new Replacement Local Development Plan will have the statutory function of being the basis for determining all planning applications in Neath Port Talbot.

1.3 Background

1.3.1 A full review of the current Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026) commenced in January 2020 and the finalised Review Report was published in July 2020[1]. The Review Report summarises the findings of the Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and changes in legislation, guidance and evidence base information since the plan was adopted. It reviews each element of the plan in detail together with the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) findings and identifies the parts of the plan that are continuing to function satisfactorily, elements where issues or changes in circumstances have arisen, and areas that need to be re-addressed in the Replacement Plan.

1 https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/13823/ldp-review-report-july-2020.pdf

1.3.2 The preparation of a Replacement Local Development Plan is an involved process with a number of statutory stages. The first step is to agree with Welsh Government how consultation will be undertaken (the Community Involvement Scheme), the timetable for plan preparation, and the resources that the authority will expend in plan preparation. This is the *Delivery Agreement* (DA), a statutory requirement of the Plan preparation process.

1.3.3 The first Neath Port Talbot Delivery Agreement was approved and agreed with the Welsh Government in 2022 and work subsequently commenced on the Replacement Local Development Plan. Following delays because of a requirement for additional housing to be identified in addition to existing infrastructure and viability matters that required additional time to overcome, a second Delivery Agreement was prepared and approved by Welsh Government in October 2023, providing for an amended timetable for plan preparation. The Delivery Agreement sets out a 3.5 year process to anticipated adoption of a Replacement Local Development Plan in April 2027, covering the plan period 2023 to 2038.

1.3.4 The *Candidate Sites* stage is the first major evidence gathering stage in the plan preparation process, when suggestions for sites suitable for development are invited (the call for candidate sites). The first call for sites for the Replacement Local Development Plan took place in spring 2022 inviting submissions from developers, landowners and the public for sites for new development, redevelopment or protection in the Replacement Local Development Plan. Subsequently, a second call for sites was undertaken in November / December 2023. The sites submitted during this process, together with sites identified as part of the urban capacity study and liaison with landowners, have played an important part in shaping the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy.

1.3.5 Further details are available on the Replacement Local Development Plan website[2].

1.4 What is the Preferred Strategy?

1.4.1 The Preferred Strategy is the first statutory consultation stage of the Replacement Local Development Plan, as required by Local Development Plan Regulations 14 and 15. It provides the proposed strategic direction for land-use planning in Neath Port Talbot over the period 2023-2038, and provides the framework for the future preparation of more detailed policies, proposals and land use allocations that will be included in the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan.

1.4.2 The Preferred Strategy addresses the national, regional and local context and identifies the locally specific economic, environmental, social and cultural key issues and challenges within Neath Port Talbot. To respond to these key issues and challenges, a vision and set of objectives have been developed and are set out in Chapter 4.

1.4.3 The strategy aims to provide realistic options for the scale of future growth in population, housing and jobs and establishes the spatial distribution of growth across Neath Port Talbot to meet the evidenced needs of the communities and direct development to the most sustainable locations and address the key issues. This is set out in Chapter 6.

1.4.4 The Preferred Strategy is underpinned by a number of strategic policies to implement the strategy and address the plans identified objectives. It also includes those Key Sites, identified as being integral to the delivery of the Replacement Local Development Plan, as set out in Chapters 8 and 9.

2 Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2023-2038 - Neath Port Talbot Council (npt.gov.uk)

1.4.5 In accordance with the statutory requirements, the Preferred Strategy has been subject to an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, Well-being of Future Generations Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment. The Preferred Strategy has also been screened for the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Both assessments have been published alongside the Preferred Strategy for consultation.

1.5 Next Steps

1.5.1 Representations received at the Preferred Strategy stage, including new candidate site submissions, will be considered alongside the on-going evidence gathering and reported back to Neath Port Talbot Council. Any suggested amendments will further inform preparation of the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan which will set out detailed policies and site allocations and must also be considered and approved by Neath Port Talbot Council before a statutory minimum six-week period of public consultation due to be held in November - December 2025.

1.5.2 Beyond the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan stage, the Replacement Local Development Plan and accompanying documents will be submitted to Welsh Government for independent Examination in Public. Following the conclusion of the Examination, a binding Inspector's Report will be submitted to the Authority and adoption of the Replacement Local Development Plan by Neath Port Talbot Council is required within eight weeks of receipt. On adoption it will become the development plan for determining planning applications in Neath Port Talbot.

1.6 List of Evidence Based documents

1.6.1 A number of background evidence base documents and papers have also been prepared and should be read for further detail on specific aspects of the Preferred Strategy:

Table 1.6.1 List of Evidence Based documents

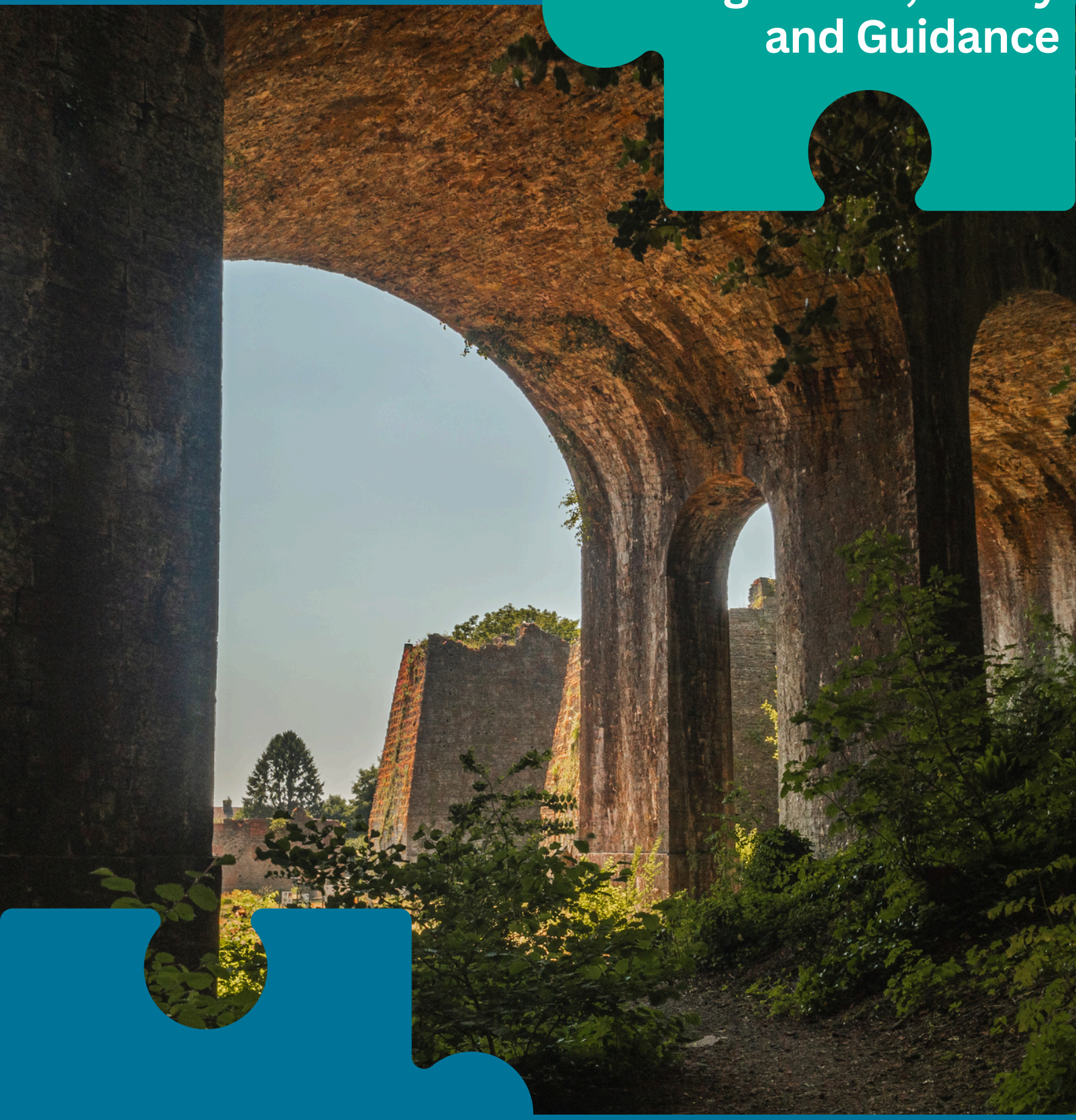
Document	Description
Candidate Site Registers	Register of candidate sites submitted to the Council by developers, land owners and interested parties for consideration of future development or protection during the two calls for sites and one urban capacity call.
Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA)	The appraisal considers the likely social, economic, environmental and cultural effects of the RLDP. The ISA incorporates a Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment.
ISA Non-Technical Summary	Non-technical summary of the ISA.
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	This assessment tests whether the RLDP would be likely to have significant effects on any sites that are of European importance.

Document	Description
Economic and Housing Growth Assessment (E&HGA)	An assessment of the strategic and functional housing and economic relationships in Neath Port Talbot. Considered the potential future economic growth, the amount and make up of employment land and future household growth.
Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)	An assessment to review the existing housing market, consider the nature of future need for market and affordable housing and specialist housing provision to inform policy development.
Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA) (Stage 1)	This Stage 1 assessment was commissioned jointly with other authorities within the region. The stage 1 is a desk-based study to assess the potential flood risks across the study area from all sources of flooding.
Employment Land Review (ELR)	An assessment of the supply and demand for employment land in Neath Port Talbot, looking at the quality, distribution and quantity of available employment sites and premises and the suitability of sites to meet future demand.
Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA)	Provides a strategic overview of Neath Port Talbot's Green Infrastructure and nature network, identifying the existing network, the resilience of the network and identified the key issues and opportunities for Green Infrastructure.
Renewable and Local Carbon Energy Assessment (RLCEA)	An assessment of renewable and low carbon energy, considering existing and potential energy demand, energy generation, potential renewable and low carbon energy opportunities and potential targets and policies for the RLDP.
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	Under Part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act, a study to assess the future accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community.
High Level Viability Study (HLVS)	A high-level, plan-wide viability assessment undertaken by the Council to assess development viability across the Housing Market Areas within Neath Port Talbot.
Green Wedge Assessment	An assessment to review existing Green Wedge designations in the adopted LDP (2011-2026) and consider whether there is a need to designate Green Wedges in the RLDP.

Document	Description
Key Issues, Vision and Objectives Background Paper	This Paper identifies the Key Issues, Vision and Objectives for the RLDP. The issues and priorities identified will be taken forward in the RLDP and inform the approaches to be taken within the Plan.
Strategic Highway Assessment	An assessment of the potential impact of the scale and location of development proposed in the Preferred Strategy using the Welsh Government South West and Mid Wales Transport Model.
Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Background Paper	A report to consider the location and quality of agricultural land, setting out how the Council, through its assessment of Candidate Sites and Urban Capacity Sites, will consider the need to minimise the loss of Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV).
Growth and Spatial Options Paper	A paper considering the potential and realistic growth and spatial options for the RLDP, having regard to legislation, characteristics and constraints within Neath Port Talbot, key issues, Welsh Government projections and economic forecasts.
Urban Capacity Study (UCS)	A study considering potential development opportunities to inform the identification of site allocations, assist to demonstrate delivery of the windfall allowance and form a register of suitable sites which fall below the threshold for allocation within the RLDP.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	An assessment of the infrastructure requirements needed to support future development, including provision for new roads and education facilities.
Settlement Assessment	An assessment of the role, function and sustainability of settlements within Neath Port Talbot. The aims of the assessment are to identify a settlement hierarchy to identify the most sustainable settlements and those that have capacity for future growth.
Population and Housing Topic Paper	A background paper to look at the emerging evidence and approach taken in the Preferred Strategy relating to Population and Housing, including Affordable Housing and Gypsies and Travellers.
Welsh Language Topic Paper	A background paper to look at the emerging evidence and approach taken in the Preferred Strategy relating to the protection and promotion of the Welsh Language.

Document	Description
Employment Topic Paper	A background paper to look at the emerging evidence and approach taken in the Preferred Strategy relating to the Economy and Employment.
Education Topic Paper	A background paper to look at the emerging evidence and approach taken in the Preferred Strategy to education provision.
Transport Topic Paper	A background paper to look at the emerging evidence and approach taken in the Preferred Strategy relating to the Transport Network.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Sets out the methodology that will be used to assess landscape quality across the County Borough, including re-assessing existing SLA designations in the adopted LDP (2011-2026) and an assessment of proposals for developments within SLAs.
Key Sites Paper	A background paper providing further detail on the Key Sites identified in Chapter 9 of the Preferred Strategy.
Tests of Soundness Self-Assessment / Collaboration Paper	A self-assessment against the tests of soundness and an overview of the regional collaboration undertaken in preparation of the Preferred Strategy.

Chapter 2
Legislation, Policy and Guidance



2 Chapter 2 – Legislation, Policy and Guidance

2.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

2.1.1 The Replacement Local Development Plan (including its Preferred Strategy) must have regard to and be in general conformity with any relevant national, regional, and/or local legislation, regulations, strategies, policies and guidance. The main relevant documents are outlined below.

2.2 National Context

Legislation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Planning (Wales) Act 2015

2.2.1 These Acts constitute the main primary legislation setting out the legal basis of the planning system and planning controls that regulate development in Wales. The 2004 Act introduced the Local Development Plan system, while the 2015 Act made further amendments including the introduction of an additional regional tier of governance to be provided by Corporate Joint Committees, with the requirement that regional *Strategic Development Plans* should be prepared. Neath Port Talbot is within the South West Wales region but work on the South West Wales Strategic Development Plan has not yet commenced.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

2.2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires all public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development requiring all four aspects of well-being: social, economic, environmental and cultural to be addressed and improved. The statutory purpose of the planning system requires all planning authorities to exercise their functions in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, and this is defined in the Well-being Act: "*Sustainable Development* means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals".

2.2.3 The sustainable development principle requires the needs of the present to be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2.4 There are seven Well-being goals set out in the Well-being Act:

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

2.2.5 In order to demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to the Well-being goals and sustainable development principle in the decision making process, public bodies are required to have regard to the 'five ways of working' contained in the Well-being Act. These require consideration of:

- Involvement;
- Collaboration;
- Integration;

- Prevention; and
- Long term factors.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

2.2.6 The Environment Act introduced the concept of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including the National Natural Resources Policy, and the requirement for the production of a State of Natural Resources Report by Natural Resources Wales, together with the production of Area Statements to provide a local evidence base.

Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

2.2.7 Following work by the Welsh Government to consolidate legislation, the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 came into force on the 4th November 2024 and replaces the following legislation:

- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Act 1953
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016

2.2.8 To support the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2024, the following secondary legislation also came into force:

- The Applications for Scheduled Monument Consent (Wales) Regulations 2024
- The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Procedure and Interest Rate) (Wales) Regulations 2024
- The Listed Buildings (Exempt Religious Buildings) (Wales) Regulations 2024
- The Listed Buildings (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2024
- The Scheduled Monuments (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2024
- The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 (Consequential Provision) (Secondary Legislation) Regulations 2024

2.2.9 Moving forward, in the legislative context for the historic environment, the new legislation listed above will be referenced in the Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance where applicable.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

2.2.10 The Active Travel Act introduces measures to promote walking and cycling as a means of transport for short journeys. It requires local authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and to deliver improvements in active travel routes and facilities.

2.2.11 It also requires local authorities to identify and propose suitable routes for active travel and produce Active Travel Network Maps, identifying timescales for implementation.

National Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021)

2.2.12 *Future Wales – the National Plan 2040* is the national development framework for all of Wales and sets the overall direction for development in Wales up to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system. The priorities include:

- Sustaining and developing a vibrant economy;

- Achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience;
- Developing strong ecosystems; and
- Improving the health and well-being of communities.

2.2.13 Future Wales sets out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the planning system at a national, regional and local level can deliver it. It provides strategic direction for Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans and supports the determination of Developments of National Significance. The Replacement Local Development Plan will need to be in conformity with all the provisions set out in Future Wales.

2.2.14 Future Wales sets out its vision in terms of eleven outcomes to be achieved by 2040:

2.2.15 ***A Wales where people live…***

1. ...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
2. ...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
3. ...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
4. ...in places with a thriving Welsh Language
5. ...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
6. ...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
7. ...in places where travel is sustainable.
8. ...in places with world-class digital infrastructure
9. ...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution.
10. ...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
11. ...in places which are decarbonised and climate resilient

2.2.16 Future Wales also identifies broad areas for growth and development, protection and transport connectivity, together with planning principles and policy.

2.2.17 It sets out a total of 36 policies, 18 of which are national policies that apply across the whole of Wales, with a further four relating specifically to the south west region which includes Neath Port Talbot. The policies most relevant to Neath Port Talbot and the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy are outlined below.

Policy 1 - Where Wales will Grow: Three National Growth Areas are identified including one in the South West Wales Region. Policy 1 is supplemented by ***Policy 28 - National Growth Area - Swansea Bay and Llanelli*** which incorporates significant parts of Neath and Port Talbot. The policies indicate that economic and housing growth, essential services and facilities, advanced manufacturing, transport and digital infrastructure should be focused within the National Growth Area.

Policy 2 - Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration - Strategic Placemaking: Key placemaking principles are set out to be applied when determining the pattern and location of new development. Placemaking principles are outlined, including creating a mix of uses and variety of house types and tenures, building places at a walkable scale, ensuring development is built at appropriate densities and integrating green infrastructure.

Policy 6 - Town Centre First: Indicates that significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure, and public service facilities must be located within town and city centres and that a sequential test must be used in determining the locations for such developments.

Policy 7- Delivering Affordable Homes: Re-affirms Welsh Government's aspiration to deliver significant levels of affordable housing, including through the planning system.

Policy 8 – Flooding: Supports flood risk management that facilitates sustainable economic and national growth, promoting nature-based solutions and seeking to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits from flood risk management infrastructure.

Policy 9 - Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure: Requires action toward safeguarding and creating resilient ecological networks and promoting effective green infrastructure through placemaking. Existing and potential areas of importance for ecology and green infrastructure should be identified in development plans to promote and safeguard their functions and opportunities.

Policy 11 - National Connectivity and Policy 12 - Regional Connectivity: Covers improvements to the rail, bus, strategic road network and national cycle network. Sets out that Planning Authorities must maximise opportunities arising from investment in public transport and must integrate site allocations, new development, and infrastructure with active travel networks with new development contributing towards their expansion and improvement where appropriate.

Policy 16 - Heat Networks The towns of both Neath and Port Talbot are identified as district heat network priority areas.

Policy 17 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure and ***Policy 18 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance:*** a significant area of the valleys of Neath Port Talbot is identified as part of a pre-assessed area for wind energy.

Policy 31 - South West Metro: Proposals are supported and growth and regeneration should be planned to maximise the potential opportunities arising from better regional connectivity.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), 2024

2.2.18 Planning Policy Wales gives more detailed information and guidance on the implementation of planning policy and achieving sustainable development in Wales. It integrates the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act provision into national planning policy. Planning Policy Wales sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with an emphasis on placemaking, which is embodied as a fundamental principle to achieve sustainable places and cohesive communities.

2.2.19 The document is structured into four main sections:

- *Strategic & Spatial Choices:* covering placemaking in action and strategic placemaking
- *Active & Social Places*: covering housing, travel and transport, retail / commercial activities and community uses;
- *Productive & Enterprising Places*: covering economic uses and infrastructure, energy and material resources;
- *Distinctive & Natural Places*: covering the historic environment, green infrastructure, air quality, soundscape and de-risking.

Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan

2.2.20 The Economic Action Plan supports the delivery of Prosperity for All – the national strategy for Wales. It supports inclusive growth based on strong foundations, future industries and productive regions. It aims to build resilience and future proof the economy and identifies

high value manufacturing, tradable services (e.g. sale of online services), and enablers (e.g. digital or renewable sectors) as national thematic sectors and tourism, food, retail and care as foundational sectors. The plan also introduces a new regionally focused model of economic development.

Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy, 2021

2.2.21 Welsh Government published Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy in March 2021, with the overarching vision to achieve 'An accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system', with the primary aim to create a more prosperous, green and equal society for all. It sets out three priorities for the next 5 years:

- Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel.
- Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable, and efficient transport services and infrastructure.
- Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

Welsh National Marine Plan 2019

2.2.22 The Welsh National Marine Plan sits alongside Future Wales in identifying opportunities and guiding inshore and offshore development. It is intended to help manage increasing demands on the marine environment and support the economic development of marine sectors at appropriate locations whilst incorporating environmental protection and social considerations. Full details are available on the Welsh Government website[3].

National Planning Guidance

2.2.23 Further guidance is available from Welsh Government in a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), available on the Welsh Government website[4]. The current list is below in table 2.2.1.

Table 2.2.1 Technical Advice Notes

Number	Title	Date
MTAN 1	Aggregates	March 2004
MTAN 2	Coal	January 2009
TAN 2	Planning and Affordable Housing	June 2006
TAN 3	Simplified Planning Zones	November 1996
TAN 4	Retail and Commercial Development	November 2016
TAN 5	Nature Conservation and Planning	September 2009
TAN 6	Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities	July 2010
TAN 7	Outdoor Advertisement Control	November 1996
TAN 10	Tree Preservation Orders	October 1997
TAN 11	Noise	October 1997
TAN 12	Design	March 2016
TAN 13	Tourism	October 1997

3 https://www.gov.wales/welsh-national-marine-plan

4 https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-notes

Number	Title	Date
TAN 14	Coastal Planning	November 2021
TAN 15	Development and Flood Risk (2004)	November 2021
TAN 16	Sport, Recreation and Open Space	January 2009
TAN 18	Transport	March 2007
TAN 20	Planning and the Welsh Language	October 2017
TAN 21	Waste	February 2017
TAN 23	Economic Development	February 2014
TAN 24	The Historic Environment	May 2017

2.3 Regional Context

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the Strategic Development Plan

2.3.1 Four Corporate Joint Committees were established in 2021 covering the whole of Wales. The Corporate Joint Committees have responsibility within each of the four regions for strategic development planning; regional transport planning; and the improvement of the economic well-being of each area.

2.3.2 The CJCs are required to prepare Strategic Development Plans and Regional Transport Plans for their regions with the intention of ensuring that key issues, development and associated infrastructure is addressed in an integrated and comprehensive way across a wider geographical area.

2.3.3 For the Strategic Development Plan, the first stages will be for the Corporate Joint Committee to formulate and agree the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement, and subsequently a 'Preferred Strategy' and 'Deposit Plan', following the general approach taken with Local Development Plans. The Strategic Development Plan will need to be agreed for submission for Public Examination. Once adopted, SDPs will establish strategic planning policy at the regional level.

2.3.4 The Corporate Joint Committee published its Corporate Plan in March 2023, detailing the ways in which it will develop arrangements for strategic planning and for transport, whilst being able to deliver the aspirations for energy and economic development. Whilst work on the Strategic Development Plan has not formally started, cross boundary collaboration on projects is advancing to inform Replacement Local Development Plans across the region and to provide the building blocks for the Strategic Development Plan. Opportunities have also been taken to rationalise and standardise methodologies for evidence gathering.

Regional Technical Statement Second Review (RTS2)

2.3.5 In relation to minerals, NPT is part of the South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (SWRAWP) who commissioned the preparation of RTS2 which was published and endorsed by the Council in 2020. The purpose of an RTS is to ensure that local planning authorities provide adequate reserves of aggregates for the construction and other industries in the most sustainable manner reasonably achievable. The RTS2 considers landbank reserves and sets out apportionments for a 25 year period from 2016 up to 2041. Progress towards meeting the apportionments set out in RTS2 is monitored annually and set out in the SWRAWP Annual Report, the latest of which available is the 2022 report.

Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales and the Regional Transport Plan

2.3.6 *The Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015 - 2020):* The four authorities in South West Wales worked collaboratively to create an overarching Local Transport Plan for the Swansea Bay City Region, replacing the previous Regional Transport Plan. The City Region Local Transport Plan sets out a vision for a better connected region together with 6 objectives. It then goes on to outline four local programmes of transport projects, one for each of the local authority areas. The local programme of transport projects for Neath Port Talbot identifies and prioritises some 30 schemes across the county borough. Full details of the *The Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales* are available on the Neath Port Talbot website[5].

5 https://www.npt.gov.uk/1461

2.3.7 The forthcoming *Regional Transport Plan* is being prepared by the Corporate Joint Committee and will set out policies and high-level interventions to guide the development of the regional transport network over the period 2025-2030. It will explain how the objectives of *Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy* will be developed by the Corporate Joint Committee in the south west Wales region. The development of the Plan is at an early stage; once adopted it will replace the existing Joint Local Transport Plan.

Swansea Bay City Deal

2.3.8 The Swansea Bay City Deal, signed in March 2017, is a £1.3bn investment programme comprising eleven strategic projects across the Swansea Bay City Region, expected to boost the regional economy by an estimated £1.8bn and generate almost 10,000 new high-quality jobs. NPT has led on three of the eleven projects:

- Homes as Power Stations;
- Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Services; and
- Steel Science

2.3.9 Full details are available on the City Deal website[6].

South West Wales Area Statement

2.3.10 The Area Statements were prepared as a collaborative response (co-ordinated by Natural Resources Wales) to Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy, setting out key challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources.

2.3.11 The South West Wales Area Statement outlines the key challenges facing the area, what can be done to meet those challenges, and how we can better manage our natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

2.3.12 The South West Wales Area Statement covers four main themes:

- Reducing health inequalities;
- Ensuring sustainable land management;
- Reversing the decline of, and enhancing, biodiversity; and
- Mitigating and adapting to a changing climate (cross cutting theme)

2.3.13 Information for the area is given about broad habitats; protected areas; national forest inventory; data on compliance with Water Framework Directive requirements; common land; and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

2.3.14 The South West Wales Area Statement is available on Natural Resources Wales' website[7].

2.4 Local Context

Recover, Reset, Renew: The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027

2.4.1 The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the next five years, including recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and how the authority will reset and renew to face future challenges.

6 https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales

7 https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/?lang=en

2.4.2 The Corporate Plan followed on from the *Let's Talk* campaign, an extensive open-ended public engagement exercise undertaken during 2020 and 2021, and was further informed by written responses and questionnaire responses about the draft plan (See Neath Port Talbot Council Cabinet Reports and appendices)[89].

2.4.3 The Corporate Plan (2022) sets out key issues and trends to be addressed and includes a *vision* which comprises four key objectives:

- All children get the best start in life;
- All communities are thriving and sustainable;
- Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations;
- Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs.

2.4.4 *Recover, Reset, Renew* is available on the Neath Port Talbot website[10].

Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan 2023 - 2028

2.4.5 The Well-being Plan is prepared by Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board, and was published following public consultation in May 2023. The Plan sets out local well-being objectives; steps to be taken to achieve the objectives; timescales and responsibilities and details about how the steps will be achieved in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

2.4.6 The local well-being objectives mirror the Council's corporate plan objectives:

- To ensure all children get the best start in life;
- To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable;
- To ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations;
- To ensure there are more secure, green and well paid jobs and that skills across the area are improved.

2.4.7 The Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan is available on the Public Services Board website[11].

Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Duty Plan 2023 - 2026

2.4.8 Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the Council needs to 1: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and 2: Promote the resilience of ecosystems whilst undertaking its functions. The Biodiversity Duty Plan demonstrates how Neath Port Talbot will fulfil that duty and will act as a driver for conservation activities throughout the county borough. The latest version of the Biodiversity Duty Plan was approved in December 2023.

2.4.9 The specific actions of the Biodiversity Duty Plan have been drawn up in line with the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales objectives:

1. Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels;
2. Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management;

8 https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=158&MId=10330

9 https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=158&MId=10376

10 www.npt.gov.uk/7751

11 www.npt.gov.uk/psb

3. Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation;
4. Tackle key pressures on species and habitats;
5. Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring;
6. Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

2.4.10 Further information including the full list of Biodiversity Duty Plan actions are available on the Neath Port Talbot website[12].

Neath Port Talbot Culture Strategy 2023

2.4.11 The Neath Port Talbot Culture Strategy has a vision that by 2030 Neath Port Talbot will *become a nationally recognised destination with a reputation for a high-quality, accessible and varied offer of sport, heritage, arts, and culture for both visitors and residents.* It identifies five main themes:

1. Innovation
2. Energy
3. Wellness
4. Talent
5. Welsh at Heart

2.4.12 A total of 57 specific *actions* are identified classified within the five themes to deliver the vision. Full details of the actions and further information including the full Culture Strategy document are available on the Neath Port Talbot website[13].

Neath Port Talbot Heritage Strategy 2024 - 2039

2.4.13 The Neath Port Talbot Heritage Strategy has the vision of *ensuring the conservation, protection and sustainability of Neath Port Talbot's heritage.* A set of objectives are identified under 5 key themes:

1. Understanding our heritage and its significance;
2. Conserving and investing in our heritage for future generations;
3. Capitalising and building on our heritage;
4. Positive management of our heritage; and
5. Celebrating and promoting our heritage.

2.4.14 A total of 71 objectives are identified to deliver the vision, classified under the themes and objectives. The full Heritage Strategy document, a summary document and full details of the objectives and actions are available on the Neath Port Talbot website[14].

Placemaking Charter Wales

2.4.15 Neath Port Talbot Council is a signatory of the Placemaking Charter Wales, a charter developed by the Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales along with the Placemaking Wales Partnership. Signatories pledge to involve the local community in the development of proposals, to choose sustainable locations for new development and to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport.

12 https://beta.npt.gov.uk/council-democracy-elections/strategies-plans-and-policies/biodiversity-duty-plan

13 https://beta.npt.gov.uk/council-democracy-elections/strategies-plans-and-policies/culture-strategy-2023/

14 www.npt.gov.uk/heritage-strategy

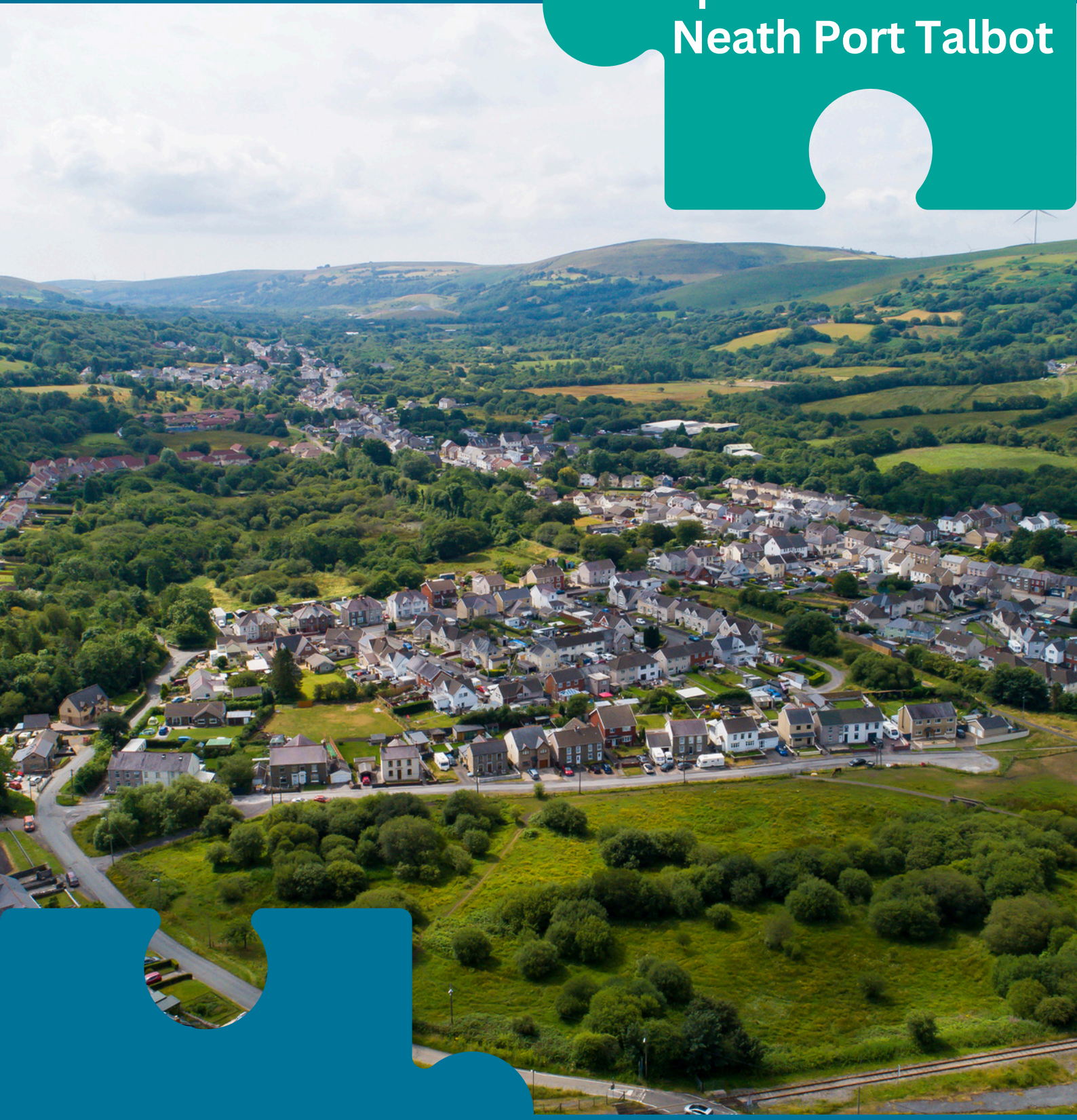
2.4.16 The Placemaking Charter Wales sets out six principles:

- ***People and community:*** The local community is involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as creating, integrating, protecting and/or enhancing a sense of community and to promote equality.
- ***Location:*** Places should grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.
- ***Identity:*** The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.
- ***Movement:*** Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.
- ***Mix of uses:*** Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.
- ***Public realm:*** Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive, with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable, with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

2.4.17 Full details of the Placemaking Charter are available on the Placemaking Charter Wales website[15].

15 https://dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter/

Chapter 3
Spatial Context of Neath Port Talbot



3.1 Spatial Context of Neath Port Talbot

3.1.1 The County Borough of Neath Port Talbot is located on the coast between the City & County of Swansea to the west and the County Borough of Bridgend to the east. Neath Port Talbot also shares boundaries with Carmarthenshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park.

3.1.2 At the time of the 2021 census, Neath Port Talbot had a resident population of 142,300, with 62,373 households. Around 70% of the population live in the three largest urban areas of Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe. Spatially, it covers an area of over 44,217 hectares, with varying physical, geographical and environmental characteristics across the County Borough. Our communities are steeped in a rich historical heritage and culture, with a number of distinct features that make Neath Port Talbot unique.

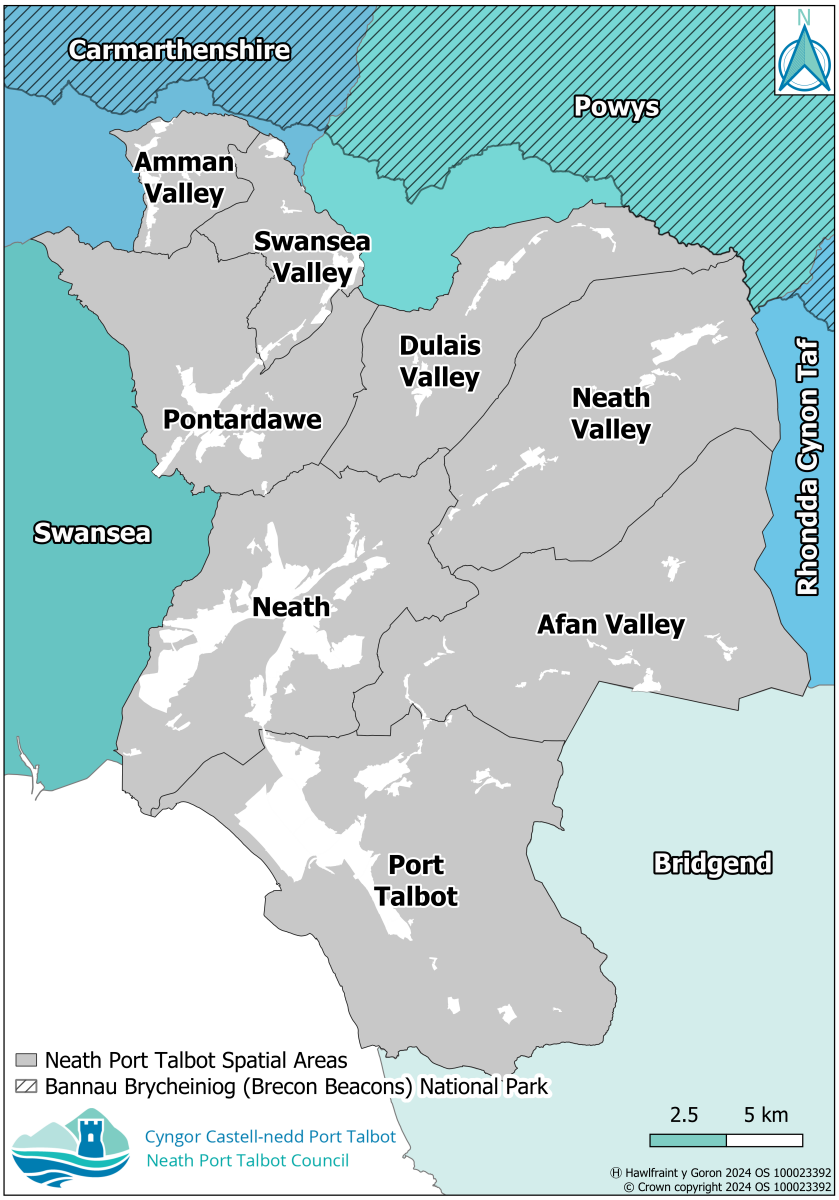
3.1.3 The coastal area encompasses a relatively narrow coastal strip extending around Swansea Bay where the main centres of population, employment and the M4 corridor are located, with the largest settlements being the towns of Neath and Port Talbot. Benefiting from good transport road and rail links, this area has seen the greatest concentration of housing and employment development over recent years.

3.1.4 The remaining areas are the 'valleys' areas and are characterised by the attractive landscape setting of river valleys separated by upland plateaus and mountains. The valleys area consists of five main valleys namely the Afan, Amman, Dulais, Neath and Swansea Valleys.

3.1.5 The valleys are rural in aspect and contain scattered communities throughout. While the individual valleys have strong individual characteristics and identities, they share common features and problems. Historically, large scale house building has predominantly been limited to Pontardawe and the Upper Swansea Valley.

3.1.6 To reflect the characteristics, the county borough has been divided into eight spatial areas, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

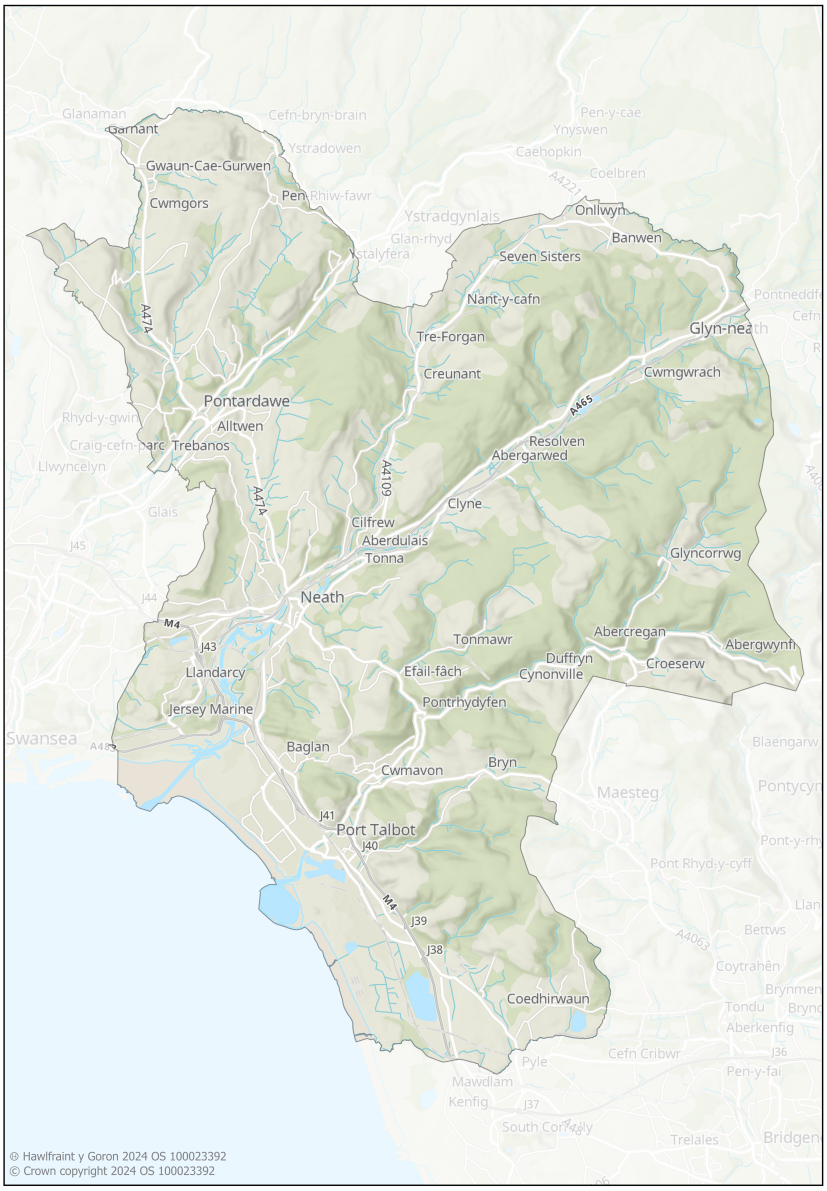
Figure 3.1 Spatial Context of Neath Port Talbot



Economy and Employment

3.1.7 According to the 2021 census, employment in the county borough consists of a relatively high proportion of jobs in the manufacturing and public sectors and a relatively low proportion in the service sector. The greatest concentrations of employment in the authority is along the coastal corridor and specifically around the M4, which reflects the major concentrations of industrial activity (especially around Port Talbot) and the distribution of transport connections with major employment sites. Beyond this coastal corridor, in the valleys, the stock of jobs is weaker and more dispersed. Here, transport connections are weaker and the majority of jobs are within small and medium sized enterprises.

Map 3.1 Topography & Main Settlements of Neath Port Talbot



3.1.8 There is a relatively high proportion of people employed in administrative and support work while the numbers employed in managerial and professional work and those who are self-employed are lower than the Welsh average. The proportion of people who are economically inactive is higher than the average across Wales and the population over 16 have lower qualifications than the Welsh average. According to the 2021 census, more people travel out of the County Borough to access work than those who travel inwards.

3.1.9 This work travel pattern reflects the fact that the County Borough is part of the broader Swansea Bay travel to work area. The landbank of industrial land with good access to road, rail and sea performs an important role in the sub-region, as will the University of Swansea Science and Innovation Campus on Fabian Way.

3.1.10 However, the recent closure of the blast furnaces at Tata Steel and the transition of the operation to greener steel production through an electric arc furnace over the next few years, alongside the announcement of the designation of the Celtic Freeport at Port Talbot means that the economic profile of the area is changing dramatically.

Transport and Infrastructure

3.1.11 The coastal corridor is traversed by the key road and rail infrastructure which underpins the county borough as a key employment area within the sub-region, providing connections eastwards, via the M4 and rail, to Cardiff and beyond, westwards to Swansea and to the Midlands via the A465 (T) Heads of the Valleys road. The dualling of the A465 north of Glynneath has been in progress for a number of years and is due for completion in 2025, and will allow stronger connections to the Midlands. Additionally, the Active Travel Network Map has seen a number of new schemes implemented across the authority. Lastly, the docks at Port Talbot are also an asset to the area providing for both general cargo and deep water facilities for bulk cargo.

Heritage

3.1.12 The area has a wealth of historical, archaeological and architectural assets, in particular relating to the area's industrial history in coal, iron, steel and copper. Neath Port Talbot was central to Wales' industrial revolution, particularly in coal mining, copper smelting, and iron production. The region is home to historic industrial sites like the Gnoll Estate, a former ironworks estate, and the Neath Abbey ironworks, once an industrial hub. The Swansea Canal and Tennant Canal are remnants of the region's strong transport links for trade and industrial activities.

3.1.13 It also has many older archaeological remains dating back to pre-Roman times, including Neath Abbey, one of Wales' largest and most important medieval monasteries, and Neath Castle, a well-preserved Norman fortification. Additionally, Margam Abbey and its associated parkland showcase medieval and post-medieval architectural features. All of these are important characteristics of the area that provide local distinctiveness and opportunities for tourism and recreation.

Landscape and Ecology

3.1.14 Neath Port Talbot has a varied landscape and a number of distinctive habitats ranging from coastal salt marsh and sand dunes through to ancient woodlands and upland areas of purple moor grass. Some of these habitats are of European, National or local importance. Large areas of the county borough contain conifer plantations and the area also contains important geological features including glaciated valleys and rock formations.

3.1.15 The area is characterised by its rugged uplands, including parts of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The Afan and Neath Valleys are notable features, with steep wooded hillsides and river systems. The valleys and hills are heavily forested, with commercial forests like Afan Forest Park offering recreation and wildlife habitats. The park is also known for its mountain bilking trails.

3.1.16 The county has an extensive coastline along Swansea Bay, featuring sand dunes, beaches, and the ecologically significant Crymlyn Burrows. This area includes salt marshes and mudflats that support a variety of birdlife and marine species. Rivers like the Neath, Afan and Dulais shape the region, providing important habitats for species like otters and salmon. Wetlands and marshes contribute biodiversity, supporting birdlife and rare plant species.

Natural Resources

3.1.17 The county borough contains mineral resources, some of which are significant on a UK scale. They are also important both in terms of their contribution to the Welsh economy and more locally in terms of employment.

3.1.18 The two major hard rock quarries in the area at Gilfach (Neath) and Cwm Nant Lleici (Pontardawe), supply high specification aggregates to both the regional and UK market. The availability of such aggregate is localised and strictly limited and represents the premium products of the hard rock quarrying industry.

3.1.19 Due to the extensive upland areas within the county borough, there is also significant potential for the exploitation of the wind resource, with *Future Wales* identifying part of the area as a Pre-assessed area for wind energy.

Chapter 4

Key Issues, Vision and Objectives



4 Chapter 4 – Key Issues, Vision and Objectives

4.1 Key Issues, Vision and Objectives

4.1.1 In order to set the overall aims and objectives for the Replacement Local Development Plan, it is necessary to identify and agree the *Key Issues* that the plan should focus on, the overall *Vision* for what the plan is trying to achieve, and from this to derive specific *Objectives* for the plan to address. This chapter outlines the way that this has been approached, the work undertaken and presents the resulting draft elements.

4.2 Key Issues and Trends

4.2.1 In identifying the Key Issues, challenges or drivers that will need to be addressed by the Replacement Local Development Plan, the first step was to compare, assess / amend and synthesise the issues identified in existing Neath Port Talbot plans and strategies, together with the other matters listed below:

1. The Key Issues from the first Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (these provided a starting point for the review);
2. Changes in legislation, policy and guidance;
3. The issues and findings of the Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Reports and Review Report;
4. New evidence and information from surveys and studies undertaken by the council and other bodies and changes in local and national economic or social circumstances (including the proposed restructuring within the steel industry, and the establishment of the Celtic Freeport, including the Port of Port Talbot among other matters);
5. The issues and themes that emerged from the *Let's Talk* and *Let's Keep Talking* initiatives which are being taken forward by both the Corporate Plan (Renew, Reset, Recover) and the Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan;
6. The issues identified by work undertaken in the preparation of the replacement Corporate Plan and the Well-being Plan.

4.2.2 In addition, there have been consultations with stakeholders as part of the process, resulting in a number of further amendments.

4.2.3 The above considerations have fed into the identification of 14 new Key Issues for the Replacement Local Development Plan, as set out below. The new Key Issues have been categorised into the topic areas derived from the structure used for Planning Policy Wales. Full details of the process and outcomes are given in the Key Issues, Vision and Objectives Background Paper.

Replacement Local Development Plan Key Issues

Overarching Issues

NKI 1 Climate Emergency: Action to tackle the causes of increasing climate instability and to address its current and future impacts has now become urgent.

NKI 2 Nature Emergency: Addressing the local and global decline in biodiversity has become urgent. All public authorities are required to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems to ensure a net biodiversity benefit from all new development.

NKI 3 Health and Well-being: Neath Port Talbot has an ageing population and one of the least healthy diets and lowest levels of physical activity in Wales resulting in increasing rates of obesity and ill health.

Strategic and Spatial Choices

NKI 4 Strategic Placemaking: The majority of Neath Port Talbot's population, economic and cultural activity, significant infrastructure and facilities are located in the coastal belt, resulting in geographical inequalities in well-being to the detriment of inland and valleys areas.

NKI 5 Placemaking in Action: There has been a perceived loss of natural, cultural and built heritage and character, including use of the Welsh language, across Neath Port Talbot's communities, natural environment, townscapes and landscapes coupled with a loss of role and purpose for many valley communities.

Active and Social Places

NKI 6 Moving: Transport links, especially for Active Travel and Public Transport are poor in many areas (particularly the valleys), causing disadvantage and having detrimental impacts on spatial inequalities, carbon footprints and health and well-being across the county borough.

NKI 7 Living: The need for additional homes of all types, including affordable housing and provision for Gypsies and Travellers, must be addressed.

NKI 8 Activities: In order to be sustainable, all communities need ready access to goods, services, jobs and local recreation and community facilities.

Productive and Enterprising Places

NKI 9 Economic Recovery: Major structural economic changes are in progress that are likely to have a transformative effect on the national and regional economies and locally on industry and employment uses within Neath Port Talbot (including proposed Freeport opportunities and steelworks transition). These changes will need to be fully addressed and potential benefits maximised.

NKI 10 Economic Infrastructure: The benefits of sustainable economic development and growth need to be spread across the county borough through the provision of appropriate modern economic infrastructure, including digital services and enhanced visitor attractions.

NKI 11 Energy: In order to meet ambitious climate change targets, Neath Port Talbot will need to harness its significant green energy resources and maximise decarbonisation in all sectors.

NKI 12 Material Resources and the Circular Economy: Neath Port Talbot's mineral resources and minerals infrastructure should be conserved and safeguarded while enabling an appropriate and proportionate contribution to mineral supply and ensuring adverse impacts are minimised, together with provision of appropriate waste treatment, recycling and disposal facilities.

Distinctive and Natural Places

NKI 13 Special Characteristics of Places: Neath Port Talbot's rich historic and natural environments, green infrastructure, soils, townscapes, landscapes and coastal areas need to be conserved, protected and enhanced to be enjoyed by future generations.

NKI 14 Environmental Qualities of Places: Flood risk, coastal and fluvial erosion, water resources and water quality are likely to become more significant concerns in future years and will need to be addressed alongside all types of pollution including air quality issues.

4.3 Vision

4.3.1 A *Vision* for the Replacement Local Development Plan also needs to be established setting out our aspirations for the county borough and expectations for how change and development should be accommodated over the plan period. The plan vision should be influenced by and be aligned with other similar visions set out in other relevant plans and strategies. Visions taken into account as part of this process include the first Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan Vision, the Future Wales (2040) Outcomes, and the Neath Port Talbot Well-being Objectives.

4.3.2 Future Wales and the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan all express their visions as a series of desired *outcomes*, and a similar approach is proposed for the Replacement Local Development Plan, identifying a desired *outcome* for each of the Key Issues / topic areas, as set out below.

4.3.3 As with the Key Issues, full details of the process of developing the Vision, including stakeholder input, are set out in the Key Issues, Vision and Objectives Background Paper.

Replacement Local Development Plan Vision

By 2038 Neath Port Talbot will be a place where:

1. ***The climate emergency is being positively addressed***: Neath Port Talbot will be on track to meet its agreed climate change targets and will be adapting appropriately to a changing climate.
2. ***The nature emergency is being positively addressed***: Neath Port Talbot will be delivering on-going net benefit for biodiversity, geodiversity and soils and will be promoting the resilience of ecosystems as a result of development proposals over the plan period.
3. ***Public health and well-being is improving***: Significant public health and well-being and environmental benefits for all including facilities for older people will be being delivered through new built developments.
4. ***Key valleys settlements have a more sustainable long-term future and the economic potential of the coastal belt is maximised while conserving and enhancing terrestrial and marine environments:*** Neath Port Talbot's position and role as a key economic driver within the Swansea Bay City Region will see significant new green technological developments and economic opportunities emerging associated with Swansea University Bay Campus, Baglan Energy Park and Harbourside employment areas. The benefits of this will be more equitably distributed through development of key / local settlements in each of Neath Port Talbot's valleys, valleys hubs in the Pontardawe and Glynneath areas, and an increasing emphasis on visitor attractions including heritage sites, outdoor adventure based attractions in the Neath and Afan valleys and traditional seaside attractions at Aberafan Beach.
5. ***The important natural, cultural and built heritage, including the Welsh language, across all Neath Port Talbot's communities is supported, enhanced and enriched through the application of placemaking principles:*** The distinctiveness and character of the three main towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, their individual histories, cultures and natural assets will be conserved, sustainably managed and enhanced. The distinctive and separate characters of each of Neath Port Talbot's five valleys will be conserved and enhanced through support and enhancement of their key settlements and distinctive environments.
6. ***Travel and transport is more sustainable, convenient, accessible and efficient:*** Improvements with an emphasis on Active Travel and public transport especially in the valleys areas will be improving accessibility for all communities.
7. ***The need for homes of all types across the county borough is being addressed***. Measures to enable and encourage new homes in sustainable locations will be addressing housing needs.
8. ***All communities have ready access to goods, services, jobs and community facilities***. Measures to enable and encourage the provision of services, employment and facilities in sustainable locations will be addressing community requirements.

9. ***The benefits of major national and local structural economic change are maximised:*** Ongoing structural economic changes affecting major local industries and employment are fully embraced and the potential benefits for health, well-being, employment, and the local environment are maximised for residents of Neath Port Talbot.
10. ***All areas of Neath Port Talbot are served by up-to-date physical and digital economic infrastructure:*** Improvements to economic infrastructure will be helping all communities to benefit from modern economic infrastructure appropriate for their economic, social, environmental and cultural needs and aspirations, while enhanced visitor attractions particularly in the Neath and Afan Valley areas will encourage growth in the tourism sector.
11. ***An important contribution to the energy needs of Wales is made:*** Measures taken to address energy demand and efficiency will be taking effect while appropriate benefit will be coming from Neath Port Talbot's renewable and low carbon energy generation potential, addressing carbon reduction targets and improving building efficiency.
12. ***Aggregate resources, reserves and infrastructure are conserved and safeguarded and appropriate waste treatment and disposal facilities provided to meet needs.*** Measures to safeguard aggregate resources and infrastructure, protect mineral reserves and enable their use when required together with the appropriate treatment, recycling and disposal of waste will be addressing all appropriate requirements.
13. ***Natural and historic assets and environments, biodiversity, green infrastructure, landscapes and coastal areas are conserved, protected and enhanced***. Appropriate measures will be conserving and enhancing the unique historic environment of Neath Port Talbot surviving from all periods from prehistoric hill forts to the key roles played in global industrialisation by the coal and metal industries, set in the spectacular natural setting of valleys and coast.
14. ***Flood risk, coastal and fluvial change and pollution issues are appropriately addressed and adverse impacts minimised***. Appropriate measures will be leading to a reduced risk from environmental change with reducing pollution levels.

4.4 Objectives

4.4.1 The Replacement Local Development Plan objectives are intended to set out what the plan is aiming to achieve in respect of each of the topics, in order to meet the outcomes contained in the vision. The objectives are therefore aligned to both the key issues and the outcomes, and are listed under the same topic headings.

4.4.2 For each topic, the current relevant Local Development Plan objective(s) has been taken as the starting point. The corresponding Replacement Local Development Plan Vision element (outcome) was then considered as a 'target' to which Replacement Local Development Plan policies and proposals should be addressed and against which they can be assessed.

4.4.3 This has resulted in 14 Replacement Local Development Plan objectives as set out below. As with the Key Issues and Vision, these have taken into account stakeholder engagement and full details of the development process are set out in the Key Issues, Vision and Objectives Background Paper.

Replacement Local Development Plan Objectives

NO1. Minimise the causes and adapt to the current and predicted impacts of climate change through:

- Minimising greenhouse gas emissions;
- Requiring appropriate location and design of development; and
- The protection and enhancement of all environmental assets required for climate adaptation and resilience.

NO2: Achieve a net biodiversity benefit and enhanced ecosystems resilience from new developments across the county borough.

NO3: Ensure all new developments provide a healthy local environment that encourages more active and healthier lifestyles for all age groups.

NO4: Realise the full benefits of green economic growth across the county borough to provide fully sustainable communities in all localities while conserving Neath Port Talbot's environment.

NO5: Support, enhance and enrich the distinctiveness of Neath Port Talbot's communities, including use of the Welsh language, through positive placemaking actions at a local level.

NO6: Reduce spatial inequalities in travel and transport across the county borough by improvements to Active Travel and public transport links and services, especially in valleys areas.

NO7: Deliver sufficient good quality new homes of the required types in the most suitable locations to meet the identified need.

NO8: Encourage and support the retention and provision of a mix of community, retail, employment and recreational facilities in appropriate locations across the county borough.

NO9: Encourage and enable the establishment and growth of new clean green technologies and industries to promote and maintain a leading role for Neath Port Talbot in the national and international renewables and industrial economies.

NO10: Ensure that all areas of Neath Port Talbot are able to benefit from economic growth and from modern economic infrastructure, including visitor attractions, appropriate to meet their economic, social, environmental and cultural needs and aspirations.

NO11: Enable Neath Port Talbot to make an appropriate contribution to renewable and low carbon energy generation while encouraging all appropriate steps to be taken to reduce energy demand and improve efficiency across all sectors.

NO12: Conserve and safeguard aggregate resources, reserves and infrastructure while making an appropriate and a proportionate contribution to the supply of aggregate to meet local, regional and national need while ensuring adverse impacts are minimised and the provision of appropriate waste treatment, recycling and disposal facilities and processes are facilitated.

NO13: Ensure the conservation, protection and enhancement of Neath Port Talbot's natural and historic assets and environments, green infrastructure, landscapes, undeveloped coast and coastal areas.

NO14: Ensure that environmental issues and future changes including flood risk, coastal and fluvial change and pollution issues are appropriately avoided, addressed and adverse impacts minimised.

Chapter 5
Settlement Assessment and Settlement Hierarchy



5.1 Settlement Assessment and Settlement Hierarchy

5.1.1 The *Settlement Assessment* is an assessment of the current role and function of all the existing settlements in the county borough and it forms an important part of the information database to inform the Replacement Local Development Plan. It constitutes an appraisal of the overall sustainability of each settlement following a detailed methodology, gathering together information from a variety of sources.

5.1.2 The information compiled includes the range of services and facilities available within each settlement or within a reasonably accessible distance (3 or 5 km) from each settlement (to assess the practicalities of using Active Travel modes), the availability of employment opportunities within or near to each settlement and the existence and frequency of public transport services.

5.1.3 The information sources used include 2021 Census information, public transport timetables, Council internal information, Google Maps, and site surveys. A detailed scoring system has then been applied to derive a sustainability score to identify relative sustainability. As a result of this process, Neath Port Talbot's settlements can be ranked to provide a *settlement hierarchy* to inform the policies and proposals of the Replacement Local Development Plan.

5.1.4 Full details of the assessment process and derivation of the settlement hierarchy are provided in the Settlement Assessment Background Paper.

5.2 The Settlement Hierarchy

5.2.1 The resulting full *Settlement Hierarchy* for Neath Port Talbot is set out in Table 5.2.1 below.

Table 5.2.1 Settlement Hierarchy

Spatial Area	Settlement	Final Category
Port Talbot	Port Talbot Town Hub	Principal Centre
Neath	Neath Town Hub	Principal Centre
Pontardawe	Pontardawe Town Hub	Principal Centre
Neath	Briton Ferry	Key Settlement
Neath	Skewen	Key Settlement
Port Talbot	Baglan	Key Settlement
Neath	Llandarcy / Coed Darcy	Key Settlement
Neath Valley	Glynneath / Pontwalby	Key Settlement
Neath	Cadoxton, Cilfrew & Aberdulais	Key Settlement
Port Talbot	Cwmafan	Key Settlement
Swansea Valley	Ystalyfera	Key Settlement
Neath	Jersey Marine	Local Settlement
Afan Valley	Croeserw & Cymmer	Local Settlement
Neath	Tonna	Local Settlement
Neath Valley	Resolven	Local Settlement

Spatial Area	Settlement	Final Category
Port Talbot	Goytre	Local Settlement
Neath	Dyffryn Clydach	Local Settlement
Dulais Valley	Crynant	Local Settlement
Neath Valley	Cwmgwrach / Blaengwrach	Local Settlement
Amman Valley	Gwaun Cae Gurwen & Cwmgors	Local Settlement
Neath	Crymlyn Burrows	Local Settlement
Swansea Valley	Cilmaengwyn / Godre'r Graig	Local Settlement
Amman Valley	Lower Brynamman	Local Settlement
Dulais Valley	Seven Sisters	Local Settlement
Port Talbot	Ten Acre Wood	Local Settlement
Afan Valley	Tonmawr	Local Settlement
Port Talbot	Coed Hirwaun	Local Settlement
Pontardawe	Fforest Goch	Village
Afan Valley	Blaengwynfi / Abergwynfi	Village
Neath	Ynysygerwen	Village
Amman Valley	Tairgwaith	Village
Neath Valley	Pentreclwydau	Village
Swansea Valley	Penrhiwfawr	Village
Neath Valley	Clyne	Village
Swansea Valley	Cwmllynfell	Village
Afan Valley	Pontrhydyfen & Efail Fach	Village
Pontardawe	Cilybebyll	Village
Neath Valley	Melincourt	Village
Port Talbot	Bryn	Village
Afan Valley	Glyncorrwg	Village
Dulais Valley	Onllwyn / Banwen	Village
Neath Valley	Abergarwed	Minor Settlement
Afan Valley	Cwm Ifan Bach	Minor Settlement
Dulais Valley	Pant y Ffordd	Minor Settlement
Port Talbot	Pen y Bryn	Minor Settlement
Neath Valley	Glyncastle	Minor Settlement
Afan Valley	Dyffryn / Cynonville	Minor Settlement
Afan Valley	Abercregan	Minor Settlement
Neath Valley	Cyd Terrace	Minor Settlement
Port Talbot	Eglwys Nynydd / St. David's Park	Minor Settlement

Chapter 6

Growth and Spatial Options



6.1 Growth Options

6.1.1 To consider the level of growth for the Replacement Local Development Plan, an Economic and Housing Growth Assessment has been undertaken, which has considered the strategic housing and economic relationships in Neath Port Talbot, including the geographical extent of the functional economic and housing market areas. The assessment considered the Tata steelworks transition, considering the potential implications on the local economy and identified the potential planned investment opportunities over the plan period, including the recent Celtic Freeport Designation.

6.1.2 In considering the level of future employment growth, a calculation of the amount and make up of employment land that would be required to accommodate future investment, and an assessment of the future household growth, accounting for demographic trends and the scale of labour force change required to support the presented forecasts of job growth, was produced. The approach provides a robust assessment of future need and aligns economic and housing growth.

6.1.3 Using the Economic and Housing Growth Assessment, and other evidence including the Local Housing Market Assessment, the Welsh Government projections and a review of past trends, a number of potential growth options were produced which explored the level of housing and economic need which could arise in Neath Port Talbot over the 15 year plan period 2023-2038. Further detail on all of the growth options considered is provided within the Economic and Housing Growth Assessment and the Growth and Spatial Options background paper.

6.1.4 All of the growth options considered were streamlined to those considered to be realistic and deliverable options, following which, the 7 growth options set out below were subject to informal public consultation during 14th May - 5th June 2024:

Table 6.1.1 Growth Scenarios

Growth Scenario	Homes (Per Annum)	Homes Plan Period	Homes Plan Period (including 10% Flexibility)	Jobs (Per Annum)
1. Adjusted Core	130	1,950	2,145	121
2. Baseline Employment	161	2,415	2,657	130
3. Adjusted Supplementary	232	3,480	3,828	237
4. Average 15 year Past Delivery Rate	238	3,570	3,927	Not available
5. Population Growth - Long Term	261	3,915	4,307	181

Growth Scenario	Homes (Per Annum)	Homes Plan Period	Homes Plan Period (including 10% Flexibility)	Jobs (Per Annum)
6. Welsh Government 2018 Principal Projection	285	4,275	4,703	152
7. Housing Need (Local Housing Market Assessment)	296	4,445	4,890	Not available

6.1.5 A summary description of each of the 7 growth options is provided below:

- The **'Adjusted Core Scenario' (Option 1)** adjusted the baseline employment forecast and made some moderate economic growth assumptions arising from the Celtic Freeport designation and other potential investment opportunities.
- The **Baseline Employment (Option 2)** used the Cambridge Economic forecast, taking the macroeconomic trend, providing a 'base-case' which accounted for historic trend data, sectoral breakdowns and national trends.
- The '**Adjusted Supplementary Scenario' (Option 3)** is the most positive economic forecast which reflects a more ambitious assumption around future investment and assumes a higher level of growth arising from further investment opportunities associated with the Celtic Freeport.
- The **Average 15 year Past Delivery Rate (Option 4)** presents a dwelling-led growth scenario, which shows the average rate of build over the 15 year period 2008/09 – 2022/23, which equates to 238 homes per annum.
- The **Population Growth Long-term (Option 5)** re-bases the Welsh Government 2018-based Principal Projection to take into account mid-year estimates for 2019, 2020 and 2021 and assumes population growth will perpetuate the trends of the previous 10 years.
- The **Welsh Government 2018 Principal Projection (Option 6)** is modelled using the Principal Variant of the Welsh Government Official 2018-based Projection. The principal projection is based on the demographic trends of the previous 5 years.
- The **Local Housing Market Assessment (Housing Need) (Option 7)** considers the housing need in the draft Local Housing Market Assessment, based on the Welsh Government 2018-Based Principal Projection and covers the period 2021-2036. The Local Housing Market Assessment identified a backlog of affordable housing need of 542 dwellings per annum to be met over the first 5 years of the Plan. Together, the market and affordable housing needs over the 15 year period equate to 4,445 homes.

6.1.6 Under-delivery of housing in the current LDP has had implications for existing residents; with younger adults living in increasingly larger households. This was taken into consideration when modelling future projections by making an adjustment to Household Membership Rates, (the rate at which population is converted into households). The

adjustment would provide an uplift in housing need, assuming the development of additional homes would allow hidden households to make a choice to form their own households. Options 1-3, 5 and 6 include this adjustment.

6.1.7 The growth options presented above include a flexibility allowance of 10%, to account for some sites not coming forward as anticipated, as suggested as the starting point in the Development Plans Manual. This has been done for illustrative purposes at this stage to give a more accurate picture of the potential housing requirement figure arising from each growth option.

6.1.8 In order to present economic growth options in terms of jobs rather than employment, an increase of 2.98% was added to the employment figures presented in the Economic and Housing Growth Assessment to account for double jobbing (which is the long-term average rate of double jobbing).

6.1.9 Analysis of the growth options considered is provided in the Growth and Spatial Options background paper. Following this analysis, along with the Integrated Sustainability Assessment, informal public consultation and stakeholder engagement, **Option 3 the *Adjusted Supplementary* scenario** is considered to be the most appropriate growth option to take forward as the preferred level of growth for the Replacement Local Development Plan for the following reasons:

- It will promote an achievable but ambitious housing build rate considering past trends;
- Younger, hidden households as a result of low levels of house building in recent years are taken into account by the application of a Household Membership Rate adjustment;
- It is reflective of the economic context given the Tata Steelworks transition, yet supports the ambition for economic recovery supported by the Celtic Freeport and other planned investments.

6.1.10 Alongside the preferred level of housing and jobs growth, the amount of employment land required has also been explored and considered. This involved the conversion of jobs to floorspace and floorspace to land requirements. Factors including employment densities, past take up, allowing for improved availability, choice and flexibility, as well as plot assumption ratios were all taken into consideration. This analysis concluded that up to **57Ha of employment land** is needed to deliver the preferred level of growth option.

6.1.11 The Population and Housing Topic Paper has considered different levels of flexibility allowance which could be applied to the dwelling requirement. Given low past house-building rates, in order to provide maximum opportunity to meet housing needs and meet economic aspirations, it is considered appropriate to apply a 20% flexibility allowance.

6.2 Spatial Options

6.2.1 Deciding on where development should be distributed across Neath Port Talbot is a key consideration for the Preferred Strategy. This is an important task as it will have a major influence on the future of our communities. It is necessary that land is released not only to meet the preferred level of growth but to also address the identified key issues. Within the Development Plans Manual, the spatial strategy is deemed to underpin all elements of the plan.

6.2.2 Spatial options need to have regard to legislation, national planning policy, local and regional strategies. Furthermore, each spatial option must take account of the specific characteristics, assets and issues within Neath Port Talbot and seek to guide development in the way that respond to this.

6.2.3 In order to ensure that the spatial strategy is deliverable, it has to meet the needs of the local communities and also be viable so that public and private sectors are able and willing to invest in the identified areas. There are some key planning policy issues that need to be considered in the formation of the spatial strategy, as they are an integral part of any strategy. These include:

- Utilising previously developed land before greenfield sites in the first instance;
- Addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation;
- Promoting placemaking principles;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Promoting and protecting the Welsh Language;
- Maximising opportunities for green infrastructure enhancement; and
- Responding to the nature emergency through biodiversity net benefit.

6.2.4 Additionally, this spatial strategy must assist in the delivery of the Vision and Objectives.

6.2.5 In determining how growth should be distributed spatially across the authority, a number of spatial options were considered and consulted upon. These options were informed by a number of key pieces of evidence, such as settlement assessments, ecological and landscape designations, the Local Housing Market Assessment, renewable energy, flood risk, best and most versatile land, Welsh language sensitive areas, and brownfield land.

6.2.6 As the Council already has an adopted Local Development Plan, the existing Local Development Plan strategy has been assessed alongside five other alternative strategies to determine whether it remains appropriate within the current policy context. The six strategy options that have been considered are as follows:

- **Option A - Continue with the adopted Local Development Plan strategy**. The strategy aim here was to facilitate growth within Neath Port Talbot with a main focus on the coastal corridor, whilst reinvigorating the valleys. However, given the lack of delivery of strategic brownfield sites and low housing completions, this option was not deemed suitable.
- **Option B - Dispersed growth across the authority**. This option aimed at distributing development across the authority in accordance with the settlement strategy tiers. This would be through a series of small to medium sites with no reliance on individual large scale strategic sites.
- **Option C - National Growth Area and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure**. This option was aimed at building upon Future Wales as parts of Neath Port Talbot are within a National Growth Area, coupled with the transport improvements that are anticipated.
- **Option D - Building on key opportunities in the valleys.** This option sought to bring about improved benefits to the valleys' communities, through utilising key tourism and employment opportunities that are proposed for the area.

- **Option E - Town Centre First approach.** This option takes forward the approach set out in Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales that all development should be in town centres first, with a sequential approach taken moving outwards.
- **Option F - Hybrid of Option C and Option D**. This option brings forward the key elements of Option C - with Neath Port Talbot being in a National Growth Area, coupled with the transport improvements that are anticipated, whilst also building on key opportunities in the valleys.

6.2.7 A complete analysis of the six spatial options is contained in the *Growth and Spatial Options Background Paper,* where the advantages and disadvantages of each spatial option is considered. Each option has also been considered as part of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.

6.2.8 Following an analysis of the options, coupled with the informal consultation event and the output of stakeholder engagement sessions, it is considered that the **hybrid approach, Option F is the most appropriate** as it best aligns with the policy requirements of Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales and Llwybr Newydd - the Wales Transport Strategy.

6.2.9 By selecting **Option F**, this option will provide the majority of growth in the National Growth Area where there will be a co-location of jobs and homes, which will reduce commuting. The majority of development and investment will continue to follow market forces with housing, employment and commercial development focused across the National Growth Area and will maximise the opportunities from the Port, Freeport and Swansea Bay City Deal aspirations. This will enable development to be located close to the main centres of population (ensuring affordable housing is targeted in the areas of greatest need) and support the facilities and services in the town centres.

6.2.10 Neath and Port Talbot are identified within Transport for Wales' Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro. Sustainable development opportunities in these areas, will benefit from the potential Metro opportunities, the existing transport network as well as active travel routes, and will assist in promoting different forms of travel other than the private car. In other areas of the county borough, new and existing active travel routes will be implemented and the use of existing infrastructure will be maximised.

6.2.11 Option F will also bring forward proposed regeneration in the valleys communities by maximising on the key heritage, tourism and employment opportunities that are coming forward. These opportunities will act as a catalyst for long term improvements. In order to supplement this, modest growth that is proportionate to the role, function and tier of the settlement hierarchy, will be required in the valleys communities. The employment strategy will encourage tourism and smaller scale enterprises to maximise the potential from tourism opportunities and to meet the needs of local communities.

6.2.12 Within the Valleys Opportunity Area, Pontardawe and Glynneath are identified as *Valley Hubs*, in recognition of their important function in providing a range of services and facilities and with the geographical location providing important transport links to the wider area.

Chapter 7
Preferred Strategy



7 Chapter 7 – Preferred Strategy

7.1 Preferred Strategy

7.1.1 Building upon the vision and objectives outlined in the previous chapters, the Preferred Strategy seeks to **address the unique issues, characteristics, challenges and opportunities presented to Neath Port Talbot**, foster new development opportunities and complement the role of the Authority within the National Growth Area.

7.1.2 The Strategy provides an overall framework to shape Neath Port Talbot over the period of 2023 to 2038. It includes a land use structure that recognises the unique economic profile, challenges and opportunities and seeks to deliver a sustainable level of development to meet the plan's objectives. From the Growth and Spatial options outlined in the previous chapters, the Preferred Strategy is titled, **'Aiding economic recovery and valuing our unique opportunities in Neath Port Talbot'**.

7.1.3 This growth and spatial option builds upon the current LDP, sub-dividing the Authority into two strategy areas: ***Valleys Opportunity Area*** encompassing the spatial areas of the Afan Valley, Neath Valley, Dulais Valley, Swansea Valley, Amman Valley and Pontardawe, and ***Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area*** comprising of Neath and Port Talbot spatial areas. The Preferred Strategy seeks to address the climate and nature emergencies, safeguard the environment, and deliver high-quality placemaking and design.

Over the plan period, this will mean:

- Making provision for **4,176 homes** (including **20% flexibility allowance**) (**278 per annum**) to meet a **need of 3,480 homes**; and
- Supporting the delivery of **3,555 jobs** (**237 per annum**) and making provision for **57Ha of employment land**.

7.1.4 The Preferred Strategy takes into consideration the **unique economic opportunities** within the Authority including the key economic strategic location at the **intersection of the A465 Heads of the Valley Road and M4** within the Authority; the identification of Port Talbot and Neath in the **Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area in Future Wales**; recent economic growth resulting in limited availability of employment premises in the Authority; key developments in the Valleys including the **Global Centre of Rail Excellence and Wildfox Adventure Resort**; the growing tourism industry and renewable energy development opportunities in the Valleys; and the once in a lifetime opportunity of the **Celtic Freeport designation** and the potential to create a green investment and innovation corridor with key opportunities including floating offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and innovative fuels.

7.1.5 This is balanced against the **decline in the traditional Valley industries** and the **unique economic challenges associated with the Tata steelworks transition**, recognising the impact this transition will have on the area, given that manufacturing continues to play a significant role in the local economy and is part of the County Borough's economic fabric accounting for approximately 20% of the economic output compared to an average of 9% across the UK. Tata's proposal to build an **Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) on the steelworks site at Port Talbot** could help the County Borough and wider region diversify economically by fostering a modern, low-carbon industrial base that appeals to different sectors, such as renewables and high-tech manufacturing.

7.1.6 Responding to the fact that the Authority has an ageing population, is one of the least physically active and has one of the least healthy diets in Wales, with areas of poor public transport having detrimental impacts on spatial inequalities and limited economic opportunities, at the heart of the Preferred Strategy is a placemaking objective to ensure development is located in areas with access to public transport, facilities, services and green infrastructure.

7.1.7 In line with national policy, the Preferred Strategy seeks to ensure decisions on the **location of development will be made in the context of the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy** outlined in national policy which will help to reduce the need to travel, promote active travel, support public transport, provide Zero Emission Vehicle infrastructure, and help to achieve climate change goals.

7.1.8 In line with the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Preferred Strategy recognises this as a key issue and seeks to **tackle the causes of increasing climate instability** and address its current and future impacts through prioritising the use of previously developed land where this is unconstrained and is viable; avoiding areas of flood risk, and in line with the placemaking objective at the heart of the Preferred Strategy promote a range and choice of new housing and employment sites in sustainable locations with good access to employment, public transport, community facilities and shops.

7.1.9 The Preferred Strategy recognises that there are **significant environmental constraints** in the Authority including flooding, contamination, and topography which reduces the amount of previously developed land that can be sustainably used. In doing this, the Preferred Strategy identifies areas of greenfield sites. These have been identified following a search for development opportunities holding two Calls for Sites, undertaking an Urban Capacity Study and in line with national policy, following a site-search sequence which is detailed in the Key Sites Paper.

7.1.10 A detailed site assessment has been undertaken of all sites submitted which has taken into consideration the extensive constraints in the Authority, including areas of historic contamination, flooding, viability, topography, and Grade 1-3a Agricultural Land Classification in areas identified as being otherwise constraint-free and viable.

7.1.11 In line with the Welsh Government's declaration of a Nature Emergency in 2019 and Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Preferred Strategy recognises that the Council has a **statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity**. All sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites have been appraised by the Council's Ecology team and in line with Planning Policy Wales a step-wise approach has been taken in order to identify development opportunities.

7.1.12 Where development opportunities have been identified, they have been appraised in order to understand whether they are viable and deliverable.

7.1.13 In order to identify development opportunities in the viability-constrained Valleys Opportunity area, the Preferred Strategy recognises the **wealth of historical and natural assets in the Valleys Opportunity Area** and seeks to promote the development of these resources in order to provide economic and social opportunities for residents within these areas.

7.1.14 By seeking to build upon the rich historic and cultural fabric of the Valleys Opportunity Area, the Preferred Strategy seeks to protect, conserve and enhance these opportunities for future generations, which has been identified as a key issue for the RLDP.

7.1.15 The **level of growth** proposed is based on an **economic-led scenario**, which complements the approach taken across the region through using the same methodology as Swansea Council. As part of developing the Preferred Strategy, the Council has shared the methodologies of key studies with neighbouring authorities.

7.1.16 The economic-led scenario seeks to forecast how changes associated with the development of the Freeport, the economic transition associated with Tata Steelworks, and new developments in the Valleys such as GCRE and Wildfox will impact the economy of Neath Port Talbot, primarily focusing on direct and indirect jobs and uses an aspirational approach in forecasting the level of new investment that could be attracted to the area.

7.1.17 The Preferred Strategy seeks to deliver an average of **237 jobs per annum** over the Plan period through the allocation of approximately **57ha of employment land for B class uses**.

7.1.18 The majority of **employment land** will be allocated in the Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area. To be as flexible as possible, additional land is proposed to be allocated for complementary uses (for example in the case of the Celtic Freeport, renewable energy uses). **Key opportunities have also been identified in the Valleys Opportunity Area and a flexible policy approach has been developed** (and will be built upon within the Deposit Plan) in order to encourage development.

7.1.19 In order to ensure a sufficient level of population to meet the anticipated workforce needs, the growth scenario seeks to provide an **average of 232 dwellings per annum**.

7.1.20 This **level of housing** reflects the significant economic challenges and opportunities currently facing Neath Port Talbot. It takes into consideration the current levels of homelessness in the Authority and has been adjusted to address younger hidden household needs. It is considered to be deliverable, broadly aligning with the level of past delivery over the last 15 years, which equates to 238 homes per annum. To ensure this level of housing provision is delivered, noting previous past delivery constraints, initially, a flexibility allowance of 10% was included, however, to provide a greater resilience to ensure the overall housing need of 3,480 homes is met, a **20% flexibility** has been included. All sites have been assessed to determine whether they are suitable and deliverable (including viable).

7.1.21 In terms of the **location of growth**, recognising that the **Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area** has the greatest concentration of housing and employment, has a prominent location along the M4 Corridor, includes one of only three UK deep water ports, plays a key role in both the local, regional and national context, and has the majority of investment opportunities, the majority of development will be focussed in this area. The following list provides a summary of the strategy for this area, whereas further detail can be found within **Strategic Policy (SP6) 'Strategy Areas', within Chapter 8**.

- **Employment growth** will be focused around the development of the Freeport, the Port, and Baglan Energy Park to capitalise on market interest in the National Growth Area and Port Talbot steelworks to help with economic recovery;
- **Key housing sites** will be identified to help to deliver affordable housing in the areas identified as being in greatest need.
- There will be a **co-location of homes and jobs** to reduce commuting.

- **Maximise sustainable transport opportunities** and connectivity within the Swansea Bay region in order to reduce the need to travel by car and promote more sustainable modes of transport.

7.1.22 **The Valleys Opportunity Area**, reflecting the **traditional strong cultural heritage and community identity**, economic decline in traditional industries, and the abundance of heritage and natural resources, the strategy aims to recognise the unique character and maximise the opportunities for growth within these areas whilst preserving the rich heritage and natural resources. The following list provides a summary of the strategy for this area, whereas further detail can be found within **Strategic Policy (SP6) 'Strategy Areas', within Chapter 8**.

- **Key heritage, tourism, and employment opportunities** such as the Wildfox Adventure Resort, Global Centre of Rail Excellence, Neath Heritage Valley, mountain biking in Afan Forest and Waterfall Country will be maximised to act as a catalyst for long term improvements.
- **Pontardawe and its surrounds** will be identified as a **Valley hub** for housing development to help to deliver affordable homes for the valleys communities.
- Due to the multi-million pound improvement works on the A465, **Glynneath will be identified as a Valley hub** where enhanced opportunities will be sought.
- There will be **modest housing growth** proportionate to the size, role and function of existing settlements.
- The **employment strategy** will encourage tourism and smaller scale enterprises to maximise the potential from tourism opportunities to meet the needs of the local community.
- To capitalise on the **renewable energy generation opportunities** available in the area, in particular those identified in Future Wales.
- The provision of **first class broadband infrastructure** will be supported to facilitate a step change in working patterns that will **allow people to work from home** in a beautiful and active area, making the valleys a more attractive place to live and work.

7.1.23 As part of the development of the Preferred Strategy, the Council has engaged with infrastructure providers. The **key infrastructure requirements** to help deliver this preferred strategy may include:

- **Improved road infrastructure** to support the delivery of key sites;
- Improvements relating to the South West Wales Metro, M4/A465 Junction, Active Travel Network, A465 Glynneath corridor;
- **Investment** focused around the National Growth Area that supports the South Wales Industrial Cluster, Baglan Energy Park, Port Talbot Steelworks, the Celtic Freeport, the Port and Swansea Bay City Deal aspirations that provide expansion opportunities, knowledge economy and green growth (net zero) options;
- **Tourism and innovation projects** in the valleys area such as Global Centre of Rail Excellence, Wildfox Adventure Resort, Biking in Afan Fforest, Heritage Valley Levelling up project; Waterfall Country and Gnoll Country Park will help develop Neath Port Talbot as a destination and to take advantage of our location as a gateway to Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park;
- Other infrastructure requirements where identified as further studies are undertaken.

7.1.24 The Preferred Strategy provides an appropriate balance of development to deliver the **plan's objectives and to address the key issues** that have been identified. The scale, location and strategic approach to development will, at a local level help to deliver the overall **vision for Neath Port Talbot** and at a national level will contribute to supporting and delivering the ambitions set out within Future Wales. The **economy of Neath Port Talbot** has undertaken a **major contextual change**, and the identified Strategy will **support future economic development** and provide a planning framework that **balances homes and jobs** and will foster new investment opportunities to aid the **economic recovery** and support the long-term potential of Neath Port Talbot.

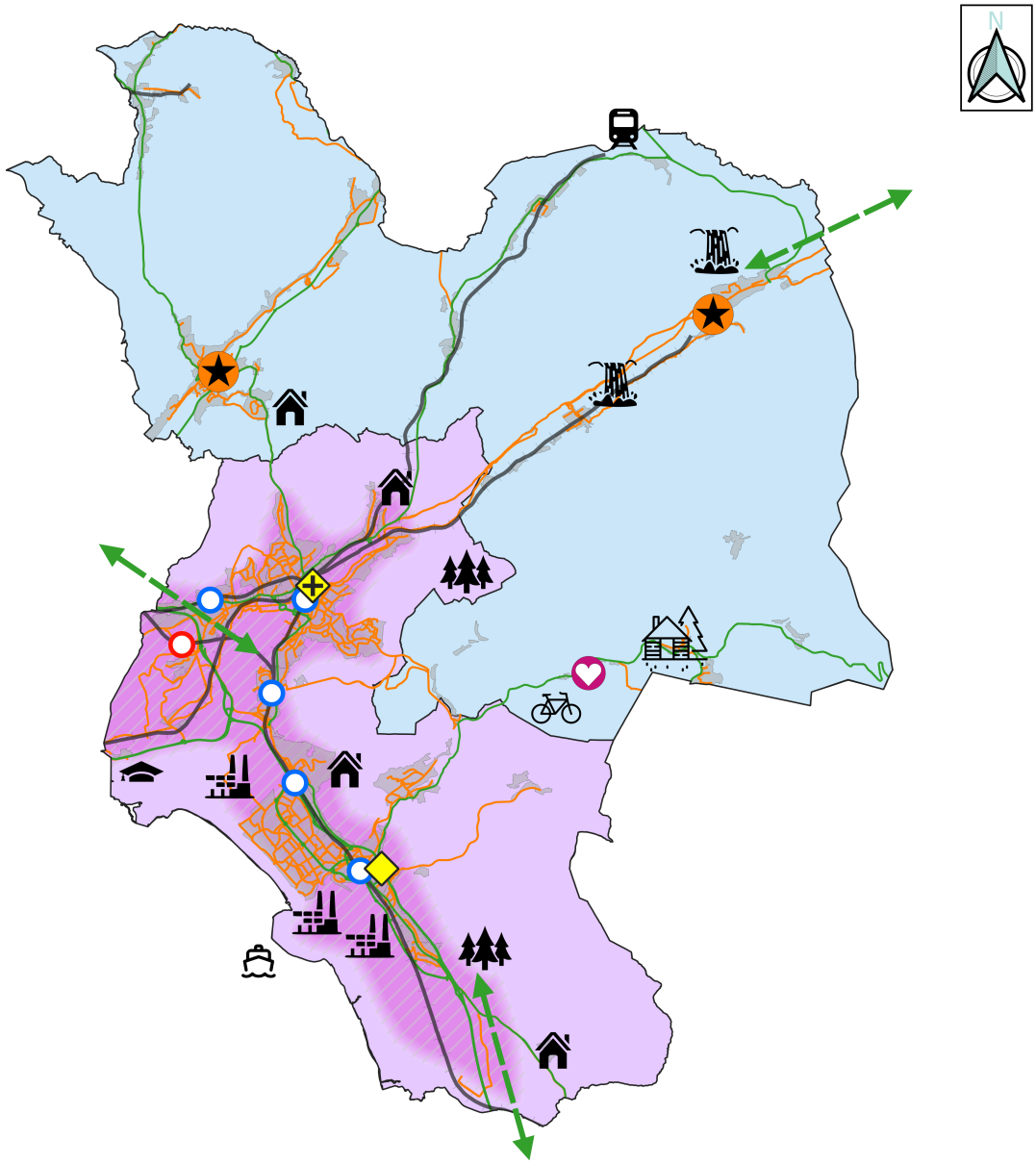
7.1.25 The approach taken will maximise opportunities within the urban area, respecting Neath Port Talbot's position within the regional context, facilitating developments of regional, national and international significance within the **National Growth Area, aligning to Policy 28 (National Growth Area – Swansea Bay and Llanelli) of Future Wales**. A number of key developments will be focused towards the urban area, with the strategy also recognising that new growth may be necessary to support sustainable rural communities, in accordance with **Policies 4 (Supporting Rural Communities) and 5 (Supporting the rural economy) of Future Wales**. Focusing on **our town centres**, the strategy recognises the importance of these areas as providing the greatest concentration of goods and services and being facilitated by the most **sustainable transportation links**.

7.1.26 The largest **urban towns of Neath and Port Talbot** are located within the N**ational Growth Area**, with the **valley towns of Pontardawe and Glynneath identified in the Strategy as 'Valley Hubs'**. In accordance with Future Wales Policy 6 (Town Centre First) development will, where possible, be directed to our town centres first, with the settlement Hierarchy identifying Tier 1 settlements around our largest town centres of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe. There are a number of constraints within our town centres, and the **Settlement Hierarchy** will direct developments to the Tier 1 settlements in the first instance, and where this is not feasible, towards the next tier of the hierarchy.

7.1.27 ***Overall, the strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable development that embeds placemaking principles at the heart, whilst sensitively respecting our built and natural environment for the long-term benefit of Neath Port Talbot and its residents.***

7.1.28 The **key diagram** below illustrates the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy. It shows the major roads, public transport hubs and connectivity; the National Growth Area and Coastal Corridor and Valley Opportunity Areas. It highlights the key employment and housing sites, as well as areas of potential investments.

Figure 7.1 Preferred Strategy Key Diagram



Legend		Legend	
	Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area		Provisional Transport Hub
	Valleys Opportunity Area		Active Travel Routes
	National Growth Area		Strategic Highways
	Settlements		Port
	National Connectivity		University
	Key Housing Sites		Global Centre of Rail Excellence
	Key Employment Area		Country Parks
	Valleys Hub		Valleys Regional Park
	Rail		Afan Forest Bike Park
	Existing Rail Stations / Metro Stations		Visitor Attraction - Waterfalls
	Potential New Metro Station		Wildfox Adventure Resort

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Chapter 8
Strategic Policies



Strategic Policies

8.0.1 The Strategic Framework outlines the strategic policies which support the implementation and delivery of the Preferred Strategy and Replacement Local Development Plan as a whole. These seek to respond to the Replacement Local Development Plan objectives to provide policies which will be relevant for the consideration of planning applications made in Neath Port Talbot up to 2038.

8.0.2 Strategic policies are interconnected and should be considered together rather than in isolation and should be viewed as a comprehensive framework where all policies contribute to the overall vision and objectives to address the Plan's key issues.

8.1 Strategic and Spatial Choices

8.1.1 At the heart of national planning policy is an emphasis upon the importance of placemaking.

8.1.2 Placemaking is defined in Planning Policy Wales as a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense and considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings.

8.1.3 Placemaking applies to all developments irrespective of size and should not add additional costs to a development. Instead it requires smart, multidimensional and innovative thinking to implement and should be considered at the earliest possible stage. It should also be proportionate to the type and scale of development proposed and balance the needs and viability of the development with the wider aspirations for placemaking and sustainability.

8.1.4 Planning Policy Wales emphasises that placemaking adds social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.

8.1.5 Neath Port Talbot Council is a signatory to the Placemaking Charter which was developed by Welsh Government, the Design Commission for Wales and the Placemaking Wales Partnership (a multi-disciplinary group representing professions and organisations working in the built and natural environment). The following Strategic Policy seeks to deliver on the pledges of this Charter. It sets out the strategic placemaking principles for development within the Authority and is supplemented by a number of other strategic policies including Strategic Policy 5 Placemaking in Action.

8.1.1 SP1 Strategic Placemaking

SP1 Strategic Placemaking

Development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution to sustainable places. The sustainability of communities will be enhanced, the benefits of the green growth economy[16] distributed, and the natural environment safeguarded through the implementation of the RLDP growth and spatial strategies. This will be achieved by:

1. Appropriate design, adaptation and mitigation measures to help address climate change;

2. Providing for an appropriate balance of homes and jobs;

3. Directing development to the most sustainable locations in accordance with the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy and defined settlement limits to promote health and well-being;

4. The creation of inclusive, safe and welcoming places, ensuring an appropriate housing mix to help support the Authority's housing needs and support the creation of vibrant and diverse communities;

5. Minimising the need to travel, utilising, and prioritising sustainable travel linkages, active travel networks and public transport options that are well connected, accessible, and reduce dependency on private vehicles;

6. Promoting the efficient use of land and resources;

7. Making efficient use of existing infrastructure and where required, make provision for new and improved infrastructure appropriate to the scale, type and location of proposed developments through the use of planning obligations;

8. A Green Infrastructure led approach and biodiversity net benefit;

9. The designation and protection of Green Wedges; Promoting and protecting our built and natural heritage, distinctive qualities and character of existing places, culture, and the Welsh language.

RLDP Objective: NO4

Reasoned Justification

8.1.1.1 Good design will be integral to ensuring places can address the needs of existing and future residents. This includes appropriate **design, adaptation and mitigation measures to help to address climate change** and ensuring the protection and betterment of natural spaces for the enjoyment of communities. New developments will need to ensure the positive, distinctive qualities and character of existing places and the countryside are valued and respected, this includes taking into consideration Neath Port Talbot's rich historic built environment, local character and identity.

8.1.1.2 The Plan seeks to ensure an **appropriate balance of homes and jobs** is planned for within the county borough, reflecting the current challenges and constraints. Planning for a balance between homes and jobs leads to more liveable, sustainable and resilient communities. This will ensure our residents can live closer to their workplaces, reducing the need for long commutes and businesses benefit from a local workforce.

16 The Green Growth Economy is an economic framework that aims to achieve sustainable economic growth while minimising environmental degradation, reducing carbon emissions, and promoting the efficient use of natural resources.

8.1.1.3 Strategic placemaking is essential to ensuring sustainable development. It requires developments to be located in accordance with the spatial strategy and to be **directed to the most sustainable locations** where services and facilities are available in accessible locations to support and promote health and well-being. Shorter commutes reduce stress and increase time for physical activities like walking or cycling, and improve overall well-being, leading to more vibrant, walkable neighbourhoods, which promote active lifestyles.

8.1.1.4 The need to provide access for all will require consideration at the earliest stages to ensure the **creation of inclusive, safe and welcoming communities**. All developments should promote equality of access for all our residents regardless of their age, ability or background. Creating accessible, vibrant, and diverse communities also reduces social isolation and provides opportunities for social interaction. The layout of public spaces, lighting and buildings should be designed to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The application of principles from the *Secure by Design initiative* should promote natural surveillance to improve the sense of security. Ensuring that places are safe also means considering resilience to environmental risks, such as flooding, climate change and other natural disasters. The integration of green infrastructure (such as sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) can help to address such issues. Housing developments will also need to provide an **appropriate housing mix**, supporting a variety of housing tenures and types to address a range of needs in line with the Local Housing Market Assessment, and contribute towards local affordable housing targets as set out in Policy SP8 Housing. Welcoming places are those that foster social cohesion, providing shared public spaces that encourage people to meet and interact, breaking down social barriers and fostering a sense of belonging.

8.1.1.5 Providing a mix of uses on larger sites will have the benefit of **reducing the need to travel** and subsequently the need to travel by car. Supporting active travel onsite will be essential to ensure modal shift, as well as connecting linkages which may exist on the periphery of development sites promoting overall access and connectivity. This includes ensuring sufficient access to existing and new walking, cycling, bus and train networks.

8.1.1.6 Developments will be required to make the most **efficient use of land** through bringing forward appropriate densities whilst considering our green infrastructure and biodiversity networks. Developments will be required to use sustainable materials and incorporate designs that minimise waste, promote energy efficiency and **reduce resource use** (such as minerals).

8.1.1.7 The protection of existing economic, digital, cultural and physical infrastructure; and the **efficient use of existing infrastructure** will be encouraged to reduce the impacts of new development. New infrastructure will be required, where necessary, to support new development and will be key to ensuring the delivery of sustainable communities and placemaking principles. Infrastructure may include the provision of affordable and specialist housing; educational provision and facilities; transport infrastructure and facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and vehicular traffic; Welsh language; green infrastructure including biodiversity enhancement; leisure, sport and recreational facilities; community facilities; healthcare facilities; and service and utilities infrastructure, including digital infrastructure. This list is not exhaustive and there may be others depending on the site-specific nature of proposed developments.

8.1.1.8 Securing a **Green Infrastructure (GI) led approach** to design will be essential to ensuring existing and new green infrastructure networks are enhanced and created to support development. Combined with a commitment to achieving **biodiversity net benefit** ensures development in Neath Port Talbot is sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally responsible. It prioritises the protection and enhancement of ecosystems for future generations and improves health and well-being. *Policy SP16 Green Infrastructure* and *Policy SP3 Nature Emergency, Biodiversity and the Natural Environment* provide more detail.

8.1.1.9 The **designation and protection of green wedges** are vital to strategic placemaking as they not only serve as a mechanism for controlling urban sprawl but also provide ecological, recreational and cultural benefits that enhance the overall quality of life within urban areas.

8.1.1.10 Neath Port Talbot has an outstanding collection of designated heritage assets, many of which have combined Scheduled Monument and Designated Listed Building status, illustrating their national importance and significance to the historic environment of Wales. Development should **protect and promote** such assets as our historic environment has played an integral part in the expansion of our communities and our **culture** over the centuries. Our **heritage** informs our sense of identity and distinctiveness, it boosts economic vitality and quality of living and offers opportunities for people of all ages to learn about the history of the area. The **Welsh Language** forms a significant part of our heritage and culture. Growing the Welsh language is a national ambition for Wales. Use of the Welsh language is promoted within Neath Port Talbot and the design of places can support opportunities for people to engage with, promote and protect the Welsh language and bilingualism. Developments will be assessed to consider their impact on the Welsh language.

8.1.2 SP2 Climate Change

SP2 Climate Change

Development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution towards mitigating, adapting and building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Proposals should take account of the need to:

1. Be designed in a way that incorporates energy efficiency measures, minimises energy consumption, encourages energy conservation and contributes to achieving low/ net zero carbon targets;

2. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and resources such as land, water and minerals;

3. Facilitate, where appropriate, renewable energy generation;

4. Be located within appropriate sustainable locations, which are supported through good design, digital connectivity and sustainable travel opportunities;

5. Avoid development in areas identified as being at risk of flooding or that increases the risk of flooding and coastal erosion;

6. Adopt sustainable construction practices;

7. Maximise Green Infrastructure opportunities (and nature-based solutions) and help wildlife and habitats adapt to the changing climate; and

8. Protect and enhance all environmental assets required for climate adaptation and resilience.

RLDP Objective: NO1

Reasoned Justification

8.1.2.1 On 30th April 2019, Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. The announcement drew attention in Wales to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence on climate change and as such, the latest changes to national policy and guidance reflect a priority for reducing the causes through mitigation, reducing the impacts (through adaption) and incorporating resilience against climate effects.

8.1.2.2 Neath Port Talbot Council developed its Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE) in May 2020 and declared a Climate Emergency in September 2022. The Council is working on updating its Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy strategy to produce a Net Zero Carbon Strategy and Costed Implementation/ Action Plan alongside the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Local Area Energy Plan 2024. These three strategies, alongside the Net Zero Bridging Report, are key documents setting out how NPT will achieve its local targets, including a target to be net zero.

8.1.2.3 Climate Change is affecting the environment in a number of ways. These issues are of fundamental importance to the Replacement Local Development Plan and have influenced every aspect of the Plan's development. Climate change is consequently seen as an overarching matter to be addressed by all topic areas.

8.1.2.4 Development will need to be designed in a way that **incorporates energy efficiency measures**, minimises energy consumption, encourages energy conservation and contributes to achieving low / net zero carbon targets. General resource efficiency of energy, heat and water is an essential element of good design. Minimising resource demand and conserving energy through new development has huge benefits, including assisting meeting UK targets

to tackle climate change, reducing the need to retrofit new homes, reducing pressure on local resources such as water resources, and reducing long-term running costs to individual householders. Detailed guidance referring to standards and design advice on how to achieve energy efficiency and conservation in buildings and developments will be set out within the development management policies of the Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

8.1.2.5 Directing development to the most sustainable locations will be key to ensuring the **sustainable and efficient use of energy and resources such as land, water and minerals**. Previously developed land will be prioritised, sustainable drainage utilised, active travel encouraged and density policies developed.

8.1.2.6 In addition to on-site integration, conservation and efficient use of natural resources and climate change mitigation methods, the Council will facilitate, where appropriate, **renewable energy generation** in order to mitigate the impact of climate change. Policy SP12 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, specifically relates to such developments.

8.1.2.7 Developments will be located in **sustainable locations** in accordance with the settlement hierarchy which takes into consideration, **digital connectivity and sustainable transport opportunities**. The Council will seek to ensure that development incorporates measures to facilitate the use of sustainable transport for example Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) charging points and bike storage.

8.1.2.8 **Flood risk** is a concern for Neath Port Talbot due to its coastal context and location, the topography of its valleys and its historic settlement patterns. Development will need to be directed in accordance with national policy and guidance including the latest Technical Advice Note (TAN) on flood risk. Development should **avoid erosion-prone coastal areas** to protect natural habitats like sand dunes and wetlands while reducing the need for costly interventions like sea defences or repairs to damaged properties.

8.1.2.9 To ensure that finite resources are being used in a sustainable manner, Neath Port Talbot will seek to embed the principles of a circular economy and aim to reduce its emissions in its supply chains. Developments should where possible use secondary and recycled aggregates as part of the **construction process**. Wherever possible this should be done without taking materials off site. Developments should also take into consideration design issues such as solar orientation and insulation levels when designing new development.

8.1.2.10 **Nature based solutions** are considered a necessary approach in building resilience within new developments and existing communities where climate effects could be exacerbated as a result of new development. The Council will use its **Green Infrastructure Assessment** to guide the location of development and will seek to incorporate appropriate design measures. This will help our environment adapt to the impacts of climate change and respond to the ecological challenges, as well as helping to mitigate the causes.

8.1.2.11 **Environmental assets** are natural resources and ecosystems that provide essential services supporting life, human well-being and economic development. These assets include forests, biodiversity, wetlands, rivers, air and soil which provide natural flood defences, carbon sequestration and regulate temperature.

8.1.3 SP3 Nature Emergency, Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

SP3 Nature Emergency, Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Development proposals will be expected to address the nature emergency through achieving a net benefit for biodiversity and enhancing ecosystems resilience.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate:

1. How an overall net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved through the implementation of the proposal;

2. That all identified protected species and designated habitats present will be safeguarded and conserved in accordance with statutory requirements;

3. That the integrity of statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation will be protected and development is directed away from such sites where possible; and

4. Other non-designated sites or features improving the integrity and connectivity of ecological and green infrastructure networks are protected and enhanced.

RLDP Objective: NO2; NO3

Reasoned Justification

8.1.3.1 Wales first declared a Nature Emergency in 2019 and under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016[17]the Council has a statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions. In order to ensure that all new development proposals work towards meeting these obligations, a full range of measures are set out in this policy (Policy SP3) outlining measures to protect and enhance habitats and species and in Policy SP16 Green Infrastructure, outlining the approach to be taken to safeguard and extend green infrastructure networks.

8.1.3.2 Policy SP3 recognises the importance of Neath Port Talbot's natural environment and assets and seeks to ensure that they are safeguarded, maintained and enhanced not only for their intrinsic nature conservation and ecosystems resilience value, but also for the wider social, economic, health and community benefits that they provide. There is substantial growing evidence that there are positive health and well-being benefits of having access to the natural environment. Designated and non-designated sites and features bring multi-functional benefits in terms of biodiversity, nature conservation and opportunities to live healthy and active lifestyles.

8.1.3.3 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (Section 6 Duty) on public authorities in Wales. This duty requires that in the exercise of their functions, public authorities in Wales must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity by ensuring development does not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity.

8.1.3.4 All development will therefore be required to demonstrate that a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystems resilience will be achieved. A range of actions may be required including habitat creation or restoration, long-term management arrangements and other measures that enhance existing habitats and improve the ecosystems resilience. Benefits

17 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted

will need to be long term, measurable, demonstrable, and primarily provided within the development site. The **DECCA Framework** sets out the attributes that will need to be addressed:

- **D**iversity
- **E**xtent
- **C**ondition
- **C**onnectivity
- **A**daptability to change

8.1.3.5 Further details are available in Planning Policy Wales [18]and Technical Advice Note TAN 5[19].

8.1.3.6 Adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be addressed and biodiversity enhancements provided by following the step-wise approach required in national policy: firstly avoiding any impact, then minimising impacts, then undertaking mitigation measures and as a last resort only, compensating any negative impact. Where it is not possible to achieve on-site mitigation and enhancement, off-site compensation must be provided to ensure a **biodiversity net benefit**.

8.1.3.7 **Protected species and designated habitats** are defined by the list of habitats and species of principal importance for Wales, published under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act. Where present, measures to ensure their safeguarding and protection will need to be agreed as part of any planning proposals.

8.1.3.8 Many important areas for biodiversity have been identified and designated under international, national and / or local designations, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Development proposals will need to avoid **statutorily protected sites (including Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest)**, while the step-wise approach will be applied to **non-statutory sites (e.g. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation)**.

8.1.3.9 Many if not all proposed development schemes are likely to include or affect sites and features of biodiversity importance such as trees, hedgerows, wooded areas and water bodies. Any such **areas providing ecological value and green infrastructure benefits** will need to be protected and enhanced.

8.1.3.10 Sensitive design and choice of location of new development can have a positive effect on built and natural heritage. Similarly, all new development will be required to minimise its impact on natural systems, landscapes, species and habitats and where appropriate provide opportunities for the creation of new habitats or the sensitive enhancement of existing habitats.

18 https://www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales

19 https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-5-nature-conservation-and-planning

8.1.4 SP4 Health

SP4 Health

Development proposals will be required to make positive contributions to the health and well-being of communities, including the reduction of health inequalities through:

1. The development and enhancement of sustainable, safe and cohesive communities through the provision of local services, facilities and employment;

2. Reducing people's exposure to adverse environmental impacts on their health through enhancing local environments and addressing, where possible, all types of pollution;

3. Improving accessibility within and between communities will encourage healthier and more active lifestyles through improvements to the physical and built environment, including maintaining and / or enhancing the extent, quality and connectivity of the following:

- **Active Travel Network;**
- **Green Infrastructure Networks;**
- **Recreation space; and**

4. Providing good quality, energy efficient housing.

RLDP Objective: NO3

Reasoned Justification

8.1.4.1 Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles and identifying and securing the full range of services and facilities needed for good health.

8.1.4.2 Within Neath Port Talbot there are some significant health issues. The Well-Being Plan notes that Neath Port Talbot has one of the least healthy diets and lowest levels of physical activity. Air quality remains an area of concern and is a key priority in order to improve the health of current and future generations. There remain high concentrations of deprivation and poverty in areas of Neath Port Talbot. The most vulnerable are located in areas of higher environmental risk such as poor air quality. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these inequalities and there is a risk that responses to climate change could place a disproportionate burden on vulnerable people and more deprived communities.

8.1.4.3 The health and well-being of our communities is therefore crucially important to delivering long term sustainable development and placemaking. Key to this is ensuring **development and enhancement of sustainable, safe and cohesive communities** where people of all ages and backgrounds have access to good quality services and facilities that they need to live full, productive and prosperous lives. This will be achieved through the provision of facilities and services in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. Along with the protection of existing employment areas and the provision of new employment opportunities.

8.1.4.4 New developments will be required to ensure the quality of the local environment and the basic natural need it provides will be protected as these are of great importance to people's health and wellbeing. Reducing people's exposure to **adverse environmental impacts** will be achieved through seeking to improve air quality and remediate contaminated land.

8.1.4.5 Opportunities will be provided to encourage healthier, more active and safer lifestyles through seeking the retention of a range of accessible leisure, health, social, cultural and community facilities.

8.1.4.6 **Active travel opportunities** will be provided within new developments and opportunities will be explored to improve the accessibility between communities across the county borough more generally.

8.1.4.7 Existing **green infrastructure networks** will be protected, and new networks will be developed in order to encourage more active and healthy lifestyles.

8.1.4.8 Existing **recreational space** will be protected, and new recreational space will be sought as part of new developments.

8.1.4.9 New housing opportunities will be allocated to ensure the provision of **good quality, energy efficient housing**.

8.1.5 SP5 Placemaking in Action

SP5 Placemaking in Action

Placemaking seeks to ensure an appropriate mix of uses to support the creation of vibrant and sustainable communities.

Development proposals must demonstrate how they:

1. **Positively respond to the unique features and opportunities of its local context by ensuring high quality inclusive design, taking into consideration secured by design principles to reduce crime and the fear of crime;**
2. **Incorporate Green Infrastructure;**
3. **Seek to retain and protect existing and develop new recreation space and community facilities;**
4. **Ensure places have access to sustainable transport options;**
5. **Protect and promote the Welsh language and linguistic heritage;**
6. **Protect, conserve and enhance the built heritage, culture and natural environment;**
7. **Protect arterial gateways; and**
8. **Deliver an appropriate level of supporting infrastructure.**

RLDP Objective: NO5, NO8; NO3

Reasoned Justification

8.1.5.1 While Policy SP1 Strategic Placemaking outlines the strategic approach to placemaking across the county borough, Policy SP5, Placemaking in Action, addresses more specific design measures in order to ensure places can address the needs of current and future residents and create vibrant and sustainable communities.

8.1.5.2 **Good design** will include paying regard to general amenity as well as appearance, accessibility and resource use. Where a site is to be developed with a mix of uses, careful consideration will need to be given to the interaction and relationship between the uses to ensure that they are compatible and integrate with one another and existing adjacent uses. Detailed building design, from overall massing to finishing materials, plays an important role and should take account of and enhance the site's surroundings including other buildings, recreational spaces and topography. Consideration is needed to be given to size, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density; ensuring the amenity of neighbouring uses will not be affected.

8.1.5.3 Landscaping has an important effect and is a significant part of the overall design process. The design and layout of new development can also have a significant effect on public safety and the fear of crime. The Local Planning Authority is required to have regard to crime and disorder prevention and the design of development should be in line with **Secure by Design principles** to help to reduce opportunities for crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. The design and functionality of streets is considered a fundamental aspect in achieving sustainable placemaking to this end.

8.1.5.4 Recognising the importance of **Green Infrastructure**, in line with national policy, development proposals will be required to create, safeguard and enhance green infrastructure provision and maximise its functionality. Further information is provided within Policy SP16 'Green Infrastructure'.

8.1.5.5 **Recreational spaces and community facilities** will be retained and protected and developed in our communities as they fulfil multiple purposes, are vital for health, well-being and amenity, and contribute towards an area's green infrastructure. Planning Policy Wales defines recreational spaces as those that provide a space for play, sport, healthy physical activity and a place to relax, often in the presence of nature. Examples of community facilities include local shops, schools, cultural facilities, health-care facilities, libraries, allotments and places of worship.

8.1.5.6 In the interest of mitigating and reducing flood risk, development proposals should seek to retain, protect and develop new green infrastructure provision, recreation space and community facilities.

8.1.5.7 Development proposals will need to ensure they have access to **sustainable transport options** such as active travel and public transport in order to develop vibrant and sustainable communities. This should be taken into consideration during the preparation of proposals to ensure the end user is in mind at the earliest stage. Policy SP7 Sustainable Transport provides further detail with regards to the requirements for specific developments.

8.1.5.8 All future development proposals will be assessed to ensure that they will make a positive contribution towards strengthening local identity; achieve sustainable communities; encourage a more sustainable way of living; promote community cohesion and engagement and protect and promote the **Welsh language and linguistic heritage**. Growing the Welsh language is a national ambition for Wales. Use of the Welsh language is of key importance within Neath Port Talbot and the design of places can support opportunities for people to engage with the Welsh language, while social infrastructure may provide learning opportunities. Developments will need to promote the use of the language and avoid negative impacts on the use of the Welsh language. Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 highlights a number of potential measures to help manage the impact of development on the Welsh Language and to promote its use. Such measures will be incorporated into detailed policy in the Deposit Plan and expanded upon through the preparation of revised supplementary planning guidance.

8.1.5.9 Developments will need to **conserve, preserve and enhance the built and historic environment and cultural heritage** of our County Borough; and reflect the area's surroundings. The historical significance, cultural importance and architectural value of our communities is key to understanding Neath Port Talbot's identity and rich, historic past. Our **natural environment** will be conserved, preserved, and enhanced by ensuring developments achieve a biodiversity net benefit, contributing positively to biodiversity, ensuring that any potential negative impacts are outweighed by actions that enhance biodiversity.

8.1.5.10 Development proposals will also need to take into consideration the **arterial gateways** into the County Borough. These are areas adjacent to the County Borough boundary which are prominent when entering or leaving Neath Port Talbot and help to define the character and image of the area. There are concerns that previous developments within these areas have detrimentally affected the appearance of the locality and consequently the first impressions given to visitors and the overall image of the county borough. In order to ensure good quality design, new developments will be required to take full account of their visual impact when seen from the main transport arteries, with careful attention being paid to siting, design, appearance, massing and scale to minimise any visual intrusion and where appropriate enhance the visual aspects of the area.

8.1.5.11 All new development will be required to provide an appropriate level of **supporting infrastructure**. Further information is provided within SP1 ‘Strategic Placemaking’.

8.1.6 SP6 Strategy Areas

SP6 Strategy Areas

Two Strategy Areas are identified within Neath Port Talbot (and illustrated on the Key Diagram): The Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area (CCNGA) and The Valleys Opportunity Area (VOA).

The Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area

The Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area is where the majority of the County Borough's population, employment, key services and facilities are located and where the majority of development will be directed.

In the Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area, the strategy:

1. Capitalises on employment growth around the Freeport, the Port, and Baglan Energy Park to build upon market interest along the National Growth Area and Port Talbot Steelworks to help with economic recovery;

2. Identifies key housing sites to help deliver affordable housing in the areas identified as being in greatest need;

3. Co-locates homes and jobs to reduce commuting;

4. Maximises sustainable transport opportunities and connectivity within the Swansea Bay region and promotes more sustainable modes of transport; and

5. Enhances the Active Travel Network.

The Valleys Opportunity Area

The Valleys Opportunity Area is where key tourism, employment and heritage opportunities will be promoted to act as a catalyst for long term improvements.

Within the Valleys Opportunity Area, the strategy:

1. Identifies key tourism, and employment opportunities such as Wildfox Adventure Resort and Global Centre for Rail Excellence;

2. Maximises existing tourism and heritage locations such as Afan Bike Park, Waterfall Country and Neath Heritage Valley;

3. Identifies Pontardawe and its surrounds and Glynneath as Valley Hubs;

4. Recognises that there will be modest housing growth proportionate to the size, role and function of existing settlements;

5. Encourages tourism and smaller scale enterprises through the employment strategy to maximise the potential employment opportunities to meet the needs of the local community;

6. Provides opportunities for Renewable Energy generation;

7. Supports the provision of good quality broadband infrastructure; and

8. Enhances the Active Travel Network.

RLDP Objective: This policy will seek to address all new plan objectives.

Reasoned Justification

8.1.6.1 The focus of the strategy within Neath Port Talbot is twofold; it is to aid economic recovery and value the unique opportunities within the area.

8.1.6.2 Within the **Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area**, the strategy will seek to provide economic recovery through employment growth around the Freeport, the Port and Baglan Energy Park. This will be supported through the delivery of key housing sites that will help deliver affordable homes in areas identified as being in the greatest need. Developing these employment and residential areas will ensure that there is a co-location of jobs and homes, which will be supported through the provision of sustainable transport opportunities and connectivity in the Swansea Bay region. Furthermore, the colocation of jobs and homes will assist in creating sustainable, inclusive communities that have access to education, healthcare, retail and associated facilities, plus complementary uses. Opportunities to design and build for climate change resilient development will be supported to help reduce the impacts of climate change. This policy seeks to enhance the Active Travel Network. Completion of walking and cycling networks and key network links are required to access green infrastructure assets.

8.1.6.3 In the **Valleys Opportunity Area**, the strategy seeks to ensure that key tourism and employment opportunities are maximised. Within Neath Port Talbot, there are a number of valuable tourism assets, such as the Afan Bike Park; Neath Canal; waterfalls at Melincourt, Aberdulais and close links to the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons); Aberdulais Iron Works; Glyncorrwg Ponds and Mountain Bike Centre. Facilities such as the Afan Bike Park are of national significance, drawing in visitors year-round. Additionally, there are prospective schemes that are also progressing through the Planning stages, such as the Wildfox Adventure Resort and Rheola. Alongside the creation of jobs at the Global Centre of Rail Excellence, the Valleys Opportunity Area seeks to maximise these as a catalyst for long term improvements.

8.1.6.4 The Valleys Opportunity Area also identifies **Pontardawe** and its surrounds, **and Glynneath as Valley hubs**; Pontardawe due to its ability to deliver affordable homes given its focal location, and Glynneath due to the multi-million pound improvement works along the A465. The strategy for the Valleys Opportunity Area recognises that there will be proportionate, modest housing growth whilst balancing the employment benefits and opportunities presented by the tourism proposals on offer, to meet the needs of the local communities, which will be greater enhanced through the provision of improved broadband coverage in the area. The Valleys Opportunity Area is also an area that could provide opportunities for renewable energy generation (such as Wind, Solar and Battery Storage facilities). Opportunities to design and build for climate change resilient development will be supported to help reduce the impacts of climate change. This policy seeks to enhance the Active Travel Network. Completion of walking and cycling networks and key network links are required to access green infrastructure assets.

8.2 Active and Social Places

8.2.1 SP7 Sustainable Transport

SP7 Sustainable Transport

Development must be in accordance with the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and be supported by appropriate transport infrastructure. Proposals will need to:

1. **Enable opportunities to enhance the active travel network;**
2. **Safeguard and support opportunities to enhance the public transport network;**
3. **Provide an appropriate level of parking provision for a range of parking needs including infrastructure which caters for future technological developments such as low emission and/ or electric vehicle charging points;**
4. **Ensure alternatives to road transport for freight are protected and / or enhanced through the safeguarding of Ports, Harbours, Docks, Rivers and Rail.**

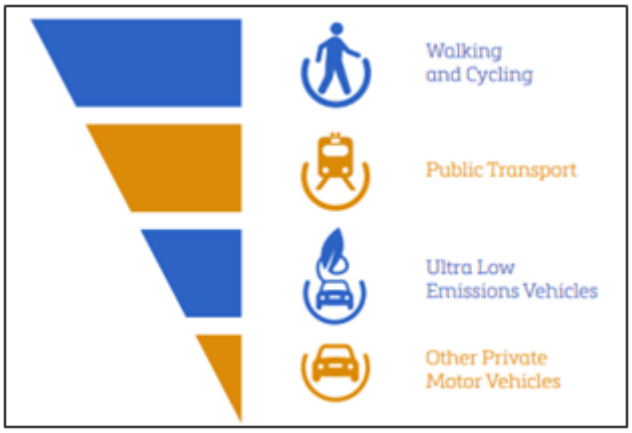
RLDP Objective: NO6

Reasoned Justification

8.2.1.1 Development Plans provide a means of integrating land use and transportation planning. Neath Port Talbot is on the important strategic M4 corridor, important strategic road and rail networks that link Wales with the rest of the UK. The County Borough is a location of national importance for port and energy related economic activities supporting the movement of freight by alternative means is therefore important. In accordance with Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18, this policy enables, safeguards and supports proposed improvements to transport infrastructure.

8.2.1.2 In accordance with national policy, decisions will be made in the context of the **Sustainable Transport Hierarchy**: Development should seek to reduce the need to travel, promote active travel, support public transport and zero emission vehicle infrastructure, ahead of the private car. Taking this approach will support the transition away from private car usage towards sustainable modes of transport and promote an integrated approach to transport and land use planning through development proposals.

Figure 8.9 Sustainable Transport Hierarchy



8.2.1.3 The Policy seeks to reflect Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 which prioritises bringing services to people to reduce the need to travel; enable easy movement of people and goods through accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure; and encouraging people to transition towards using sustainable transport. Llwybr Newydd sets out the national framework for future regional and joint local transport plans to come forward. The Authorities in South West Wales are working with Transport for Wales to prepare a Regional Transport Plan to replace the existing Joint Local Transport Plan. As part of this work the Council will seek to explore proposals for a South West Wales Metro as outlined in Future Wales. The Strategic Policy seeks to reflect and align with the objectives of the Regional Transport Plan relating to safety and security, connectivity and accessibility, quality and efficiency, environment and land use and regeneration.

8.2.1.4 Proposals will need to enable opportunities to utilise and where necessary enhance the **active travel network**, through improvements to existing or proposed active travel routes, improving the access to existing or proposed routes, or making connections to existing or proposed routes. Active travel opportunities should be taken into consideration during the identification of a site and the development of proposals for the site.

8.2.1.5 Development proposals should safeguard and support opportunities to **enhance the public transport network**. Transport schemes will be supported where they result in benefits to the environment, economy, health and well-being of the community. The provision of choice of transport modes is important in achieving sustainable development, as is the integration of modes of transportation. Encouraging walking and cycling through the improvement of infrastructure and accessibility will not only have environmental benefits but also promote healthier lifestyles, contributing toward placemaking, health and well-being objectives.

8.2.1.6 Developments will be required to provide an appropriate level of **parking provision** for a range of parking needs, incorporating **low emission / electric charging infrastructure**. Parking provision for both motor vehicles and bicycles will be required to be incorporated into developments focusing in particular on meeting the needs of residents.

8.2.1.7 Given the historic industries of the County Borough, there are a number of alternatives to road transport for freight movement in Neath Port Talbot. Any development that would prejudice the existing or future use of **Neath Port Talbot's harbours, docks, wharfs and rail connections and sidings** for the movement of freight will be resisted unless it is demonstrated that the route is unsuitable for transportation use.

8.2.1.8 Reflecting the historic industries, Neath Port Talbot also has a number of **disused or redundant railway lines** which have the potential for redevelopment as sustainable or active transport corridors. In line with national planning policy, disused infrastructure will be safeguarded where there is a realistic prospect of its reuse for transportation, or where it is appropriate to be developed for a walking and cycling route. Development which would inhibit the potential re-opening or re-use will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that the route is unsuitable for a future transportation use.

8.2.2 SP8 Housing

SP8 Housing

A range of accommodation needs will be addressed through the following measures:

1. **Identifying a Housing Requirement:**
   a. **To meet housing needs of the economic recovery strategy for 3,480 dwellings will be met through the provision of 4,176 dwellings between 2023-2038 including a 20% flexibility allowance.**
2. **Identifying an Affordable Housing Target.**
3. **To deliver affordable homes by:**
   a. **Setting thresholds and targets requiring housing developments to contribute to affordable housing provision; and**
   b. **Providing a framework for considering proposals for affordable housing exception sites.**
4. **Meeting Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs by:**
   a. **The allocation of site(s); and**
   b. **Providing a framework for considering proposals for Gypsy and Traveller sites.**

RLDP Objective: NO7

Reasoned Justification

8.2.2.1 The strategy seeks to deliver population growth to meet the projected level of economic growth over the Plan period, having also taken into consideration the objective to facilitate economic recovery.

8.2.2.2 The Plan provides a framework for the development of 4,176 additional residential units. This is greater than the identified housing need in order to provide a 20% flexibility allowance for sites not coming forward as anticipated.

8.2.2.3 A **Flexibility Allowance** of 20% has been included due to evidence of previous under-delivery of housing within the County Borough. This allowance will ensure that a sufficient number of sites are available for development in order to address the key issues and achieve the Plan's vision and objectives and provide a wide degree of flexibility in the future and support the delivery of as many opportunities as possible as they arise during the Plan period.

Components of the Housing Requirement

The housing supply (4,176) is made up of a number of components:

Table 8.2.2.1 Components of the Housing Requirement

Element	Component of Housing Supply	No. Housing Units
A	Total completions (small & large)	100
B	Units with planning permission (large sites)	405

Element	Component of Housing Supply	No. Housing Units
C	Units with planning permission (small sites)	195
D	New housing allocations	2,561
E	Large windfall sites (10+ units)	420
F	Small windfall sites	495
G	Total Housing Provision	4,176

8.2.2.4 There is a need to provide for a mix of housing tenures, types, and sizes of homes in accordance with the council's latest Local Housing Market Assessment.

8.2.2.5 The delivery of **affordable housing** is a key objective of the Plan's Strategy, that seeks the delivery of sufficient good quality new homes of the required types in the most suitable locations to meet the identified need.

8.2.2.6 The draft Local Housing Market Assessment is currently being reviewed by Welsh Government officials. The draft Local Housing Market Assessment identifies that there is a need for **164 affordable homes** per annum.

8.2.2.7 The provision of affordable housing will be implemented through the use of planning conditions, obligations and / or legal agreements between the council, Developers and Registered Social Landlords.

8.2.2.8 Development viability is a key aspect of securing affordable housing through new developments. The overall affordable housing target will depend on the viability of the area.

8.2.2.9 Within the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan, affordable housing targets will be identified building upon the work already undertaken through the high-level viability report.

8.2.2.10 Neath Port Talbot has a well-established community of **Gypsies and Travellers**. The council has assessed the accommodation need for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites over the Plan period up to the end of 2036. The Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2022 identifies no need in the short term and 10 pitches in the long term. In accordance with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Council will undertake a new Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment every five years.

8.2.2.11 A detailed policy will be prepared for the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan to address the need and provide a criteria based policy to assess proposals for new sites or pitches throughout the Plan period. This will ensure that an effective mechanism of meeting need is established.

8.2.2.12 Future requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and the on-going take up of pitches will be closely monitored having regard to the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment, using the monitoring framework and Annual Monitoring Report.

8.2.3 SP9 Retail and Commercial Centres

SP9 Retail and Commercial Centres

The vitality, viability and attractiveness of retail and commercial centres will be supported through:

1. The identification of a retail and commercial hierarchy within which appropriate retail and complementary uses will be protected and encouraged;

2. Ensuring development proposals are in keeping with the defined role of each centre in the retail and commercial hierarchy; and

3. The control of inappropriate new retail and/or commercial centre uses outside the identified retail and commercial hierarchy.

RLDP Objective: NO8

Reasoned Justification

8.2.3.1 Retail and commercial centres are hubs of social, cultural and economic activity, and the focal point for a diverse range of services which support the needs of local communities. These centres not only provide facilities during the daytime, but they also support the evening and night time economy.

8.2.3.2 The role of traditional town centres as predominantly A1 shopping units has changed significantly over recent years, and their future will involve repurposing centres to create multi-functional retail, commercial and service centres to meet the needs of the communities that they serve. This policy adopts a more flexible approach to non-retail uses, in line with Future Wales.

8.2.3.3 Complementary uses, for the purposes of this policy, include commercial, leisure, higher education, visitor accommodation, cultural and arts facilities, residential, community and public service facilities. By allowing complementary uses, this will assist in the long-term viability and vitality of retail and commercial centres ensuring that they will function as places and spaces for socialising, working, studying and enjoying.

8.2.3.4 The **retail hierarchy** will be revised as part of the retail evidence base that will inform the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan. Noted below is the existing hierarchy established in the Adopted Local Development Plan:

Table 8.2.3.1 Retail Hierarchy

LDP Hierarchy Tier	Centre
Town Centre	Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe
District Centre	Skewen, Briton Ferry, Taibach and Glynneath
Local Centre	Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Ystralyfera, Crynant, Resolven, Croeserw, Heol Jiwbil (Cwmafan), Fairwood Drive / Lodge Drive (Baglan), Pentwyn Road (Baglan), Fairway (Sandfields) and Margam

8.2.3.5 In line with National Policy, **new retail facilities** should be directed to the town, district and local centres. Development proposals in Retail and Commercial Centres will apply the Placemaking in Action principles in Policy SP5, ensuring that Centres are attractive, safe and welcoming. The schemes must be proportionate in scale, nature, size and character taking into account the placemaking principles. Furthermore, they will be accessible for all and prioritise sustainable transport; and will be well served by active travel infrastructure and public transport.

8.2.3.6 Applications for **retail development outside of designated town, district or local centres** will need to ensure that they follow National Policy in the application of the assessment of need, as well as the application of a sequential test. Furthermore, all retail planning applications or site allocations of 2,500sqm or more gross floorspace that are proposed on the edge or outside designated retail and commercial centres should be supported by a **retail impact assessment** to ensure that the proposal will not impact on the viability or vibrancy of a centre.

8.2.3.7 In considering proposals for additional convenience and comparison retail proposals the Council will consider how proposals contribute to national policy "Town Centres First" objectives to support diverse multifunctional centres that function beyond the traditional role of town shopping centres, expanding their role as places which offer opportunities to access a range of shopping, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as places of employment, education, civic identity and social interaction.

8.2.3.8 **Small local shops** that help provide a day to day shopping function for local communities within settlements not within existing town, district or local centres will be addressed as part of Policy SP5 Placemaking in Action, and fall under the classification of ‘Community facilities’.

8.2.3.9 The relationship between the **existing out of town retail parks** and the surrounding areas, including the impact to Town, District and Local Town Centres will be assessed through the Retail Study.

8.3 Productive and Enterprising Places

8.3.1 SP10 Tourism

SP10 Tourism

Tourism can be a catalyst for regeneration, and development proposals relating to the visitor economy, will be supported through the following:

1. Encouraging high quality sustainable tourism development that contributes to the diversity and quality of accommodation and attractions; Supporting opportunities for a variety of tourism developments that do not adversely impact upon the natural and built environment, cultural and linguistic heritage;

2. Supporting developments that are in an appropriate location in relation to their intended tourism related use; and

3. Resist proposals which would result in the loss of tourism facilities.

RLDP Objective: NO10

Reasoned Justification

8.3.1.1 Tourism in Neath Port Talbot is a growing industry which provides a vital and valid contribution to the local economy and supports rural diversification. Over recent years the authority has seen considerable investment in this industry which will strengthen tourism infrastructure and increase and improve facilities on offer to local residents and visitors. Therefore, tourism proposals will be utilised over the Plan period to provide opportunities for the valleys.

8.3.1.2 A focus for the future is to encourage **high quality sustainable tourism**. The council will encourage a range of tourism facilities to be developed. Tourism developments will be required to demonstrate that they are **located in an appropriate** location in relation to their intended use and demonstrate that they do not negatively impact the built and natural environments, cultural and linguistic heritage.

8.3.1.3 Proposals that would result in the **loss of tourism facilities** will be resisted unless evidence is provided showing that they are no longer viable and there is no potential for the facilities to be reused for tourism purposes.

8.3.2 SP11 Economic Recovery

SP11 Economic Recovery

Economic recovery will be supported through:

1. **The allocation of 57 Hectares (ha) of employment land;**
2. **Safeguarding existing employment areas;**
3. **Resisting the loss of employment uses both within and outside of designated areas;**
4. **Fostering development of key economic opportunities including the Celtic Freeport;**
5. **Facilitating new opportunities arising from industrial decarbonisation including growth in the green economy;**
6. **Embracing rural regeneration opportunities and taking a flexible approach to employment opportunities in the valleys; and**
7. **Supporting employment opportunities and complementary facilities including training and working hubs.**

RLDP Objective: NO4, NO9; NO10

Reasoned Justification

8.3.2.1 Neath Port Talbot is located in a key strategic economic location and has seen considerable economic growth since 2001 with an average job creation, according to the most recent Office of National Statistics dataset, of between 633 and 667 jobs per annum. The county borough forms part of the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area as identified in Future Wales and part of the Swansea Bay Regional Deal. The M4 passes east-west through the county borough and then intersects with the A465 Heads of the Valley Road which provides strategic access to the West Midlands. The county borough benefits from the London-West Wales railway line and has one of the three deep water ports in the UK.

8.3.2.2 Unlike many other Authorities in the UK, manufacturing continues to play a key role, accounting for approximately 20% of economic output compared with 15% in Wales and 9% in the UK. This is due in part to the steelworks in Port Talbot and associated supply chain. Significant economic restructuring is currently taking place following the announcement by Tata Steel in September 2023 to replace the existing two blast furnaces at Port Talbot with an electric arc furnace. To inform the Replacement Local Development Plan evidence base, alongside Swansea Council, a Housing and Economic Growth Assessment has been undertaken.

8.3.2.3 This Strategic Policy seeks to support economic recovery through **allocating 57ha of employment land** (as identified as the need in the Housing and Economic Growth Assessment), **safeguarding existing employment areas** which provide a range of employment facilities within local communities and **resisting the loss of employment uses both within and outside of the designated areas** in order to ensure that there is sufficient land available for new development (including opportunities associated with Green Growth) and existing business expansion. Specific employment allocations will be set out in the

Deposit Plan and detailed development management policies will be prepared for the safeguarding of existing employment areas and employment uses outside of designated areas.

8.3.2.4 The Strategic Policy also seeks to build upon the Welsh and UK Government designation of the **Celtic Freeport** in 2023 to create a *green investment and innovation corridor* with key opportunities including floating offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and innovative fuels on sites in and around Milford Haven and Port Talbot ports. **Potential Key Sites** have been identified in the National Growth Area in order to build upon the Freeport designation, support economic recovery and provide green growth opportunities.

8.3.2.5 Within the **Valleys**, to maximise employment opportunities, rural regeneration opportunities will be embraced as a catalyst for new development. Key potential sites such as the Global Centre of Rail Excellence and Wildfox Adventure Resort have been identified and a flexible approach will be taken to enhance employment opportunities.

8.3.2.6 Across the authority, recognising the significant economic restructuring taking place, the council's employment policies will seek to foster economic opportunities and support recovery. The council will seek to enable the development of complementary facilities such as **training and working hubs** in order to provide training and re-skilling opportunities.

8.3.3 SP12 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

SP12 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Opportunities for Renewable and Low Carbon energy developments and associated infrastructure will be supported where appropriate. This will be achieved by:

1. Making a proportionate contribution to meeting national renewable energy targets and energy efficiency targets;

2. Identifying renewable energy generation targets, criteria-based policies, local search areas and / or allocations for the county borough;

3. Promoting the optimisation of renewable and low carbon energy supply and distribution options for local communities;

4. Ensuring that development will not have an unacceptable impact on the environment and amenity of local residents, and takes into consideration any cumulative impacts.

RLDP Objective: NO9 and NO11

Reasoned Justification

8.3.3.1 As a result of increasing concern regarding the production of greenhouse gases and the implications for climate change together with the availability of energy resources, the production of energy from renewable resources and the need to make efficient use of energy has become increasingly important. In accordance with national guidance therefore, the strategy seeks to deliver a proportionate contribution to meeting Wales' **national renewable energy targets and energy efficiency targets**. In order to reduce the overall need to generate electricity; energy conservation and efficiency measures will be encouraged in all new development.

8.3.3.2 In accordance with the requirements set out in Planning Policy Wales, the Deposit Plan will include **Renewable Energy Generation targets. An interim Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment** has been prepared which assesses the opportunities for renewable energy generation across the County Borough, taking into account energy generation factors such as wind speed, constraints and new development opportunities (candidate and urban capacity sites). A **Building Integrated Renewables Assessment and Heat Network opportunities mapping** has also been undertaken.

8.3.3.3 Further assessment work will be undertaken to inform the setting of the renewable energy targets and evidencing whether **local search areas or renewable energy allocations** will be included within the Deposit Plan, taking into account national targets and relevant policies set out in Future Wales including **Pre-assessed areas for Wind and Heat priority areas.**

8.3.3.4 Renewable and low carbon energy development can include schemes such as on-shore Wind Farms, Energy from Waste (EfW), Combined Heat and Power (CHP), Biomass, Hydro-Power and Solar technologies. Associated infrastructure may include proposals for sub stations and battery energy storage systems (BESS). Whilst developments will be encouraged in principle, as a result of the significant potential in Neath Port Talbot for wind farm development, the Plan seeks to regulate the exploitation of renewable energy while

achieving an acceptable and sustainable balance with **protecting the environment and the amenity of local communities**. The Deposit Plan will include clear **criteria based policies** against which all future proposals will be assessed.

8.3.3.5 Proposals to **develop new and expand existing local energy networks** will be supported, particularly where they make use of on-site or locally generated renewable energy sources. Developments will be expected to explore energy supply opportunities from renewable and low carbon energy sources and energy supplies originating from fossil fuels should only be used as a last resort. This will help to enhance the existing energy distribution networks and concentrate new energy infrastructure investments where most needed to bring wider community benefits.

8.3.3.6 The **cumulative and adverse impacts of energy developments** and their associated infrastructure on surrounding communities and the environment will be considered in accordance with Planning Policy Wales. For Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) developments, they will be assessed as part of Environmental Impact Assessment Schedule 2 and 1 criteria. This will also apply to re-commissioning applications. **Environmental and amenity impacts** can relate to a variety of considerations including nature, biodiversity, landscape, peat, highways, historic environment, noise and air pollution and grid connection issues.

8.3.4 SP13 Minerals

SP13 Minerals

A proportionate contribution to meeting national, regional and local demand for a continuous supply of minerals will be achieved by:

1. **Maintaining an appropriate supply of aggregates throughout the Plan period;**
2. **Safeguarding identified resources of aggregate;**
3. **Minimising the conflict between sensitive land uses and mineral operations by identifying buffer zones around mineral sites;**
4. **Promoting the efficient use of aggregates and encouraging the maximum use of alternative materials before the use of raw aggregate;**
5. **Ensuring that mineral development will not have an unacceptable impact on the environment and amenity of local residents.**

RLDP Objective: NO12

Reasoned Justification

8.3.4.1 Minerals are a natural and finite resource and are fundamental to ensuring the nation's prosperity and quality of life. Sands, gravels and crushed rocks provide the construction industry with the raw materials to build and maintain buildings, transport and other infrastructure.

8.3.4.2 In line with national and regional policy and guidance, the strategy seeks to regulate the exploitation of mineral resources in order to make a proportionate contribution to meeting the national, regional and local demand for minerals while achieving an acceptable and sustainable balance with protecting the environment and local communities.

8.3.4.3 In regard to maintaining a supply of crushed rock throughout the Plan period, this is met through the two existing quarries at Gilfach (Neath) and Cwm Nant Lleici (Pontardawe). Another existing quarry, Gwrhyd Uchaf is identified for its supply of High Polished Stone Value (PSV) stone during the plan period.

8.3.4.4 At present, the total landbank figure for Neath Port Talbot is more than sufficient to satisfy the Authority's own requirements in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement (RTS). Neath Port Talbot will seek to maintain it's share of the regional apportionment as agreed in the Regional Technical Statement.

8.3.4.5 The efficient use of aggregates is promoted and where applicable the maximum use of alternative materials from commercial and demolition sources is encouraged in preference to the extraction of raw aggregate. Mineral resources are also safeguarded from other types of permanent development which would either sterilise them or hinder their extraction.

8.3.4.6 Minerals can only be worked where they occur, a fact which often leads to conflict with other land uses and with environmental considerations. In regard to balancing the exploitation of minerals with the need to protect the environment and the amenity of local residents, the Deposit Plan will identify Buffer zones on the Proposals Map in order to establish a separation distance between potentially conflicting land uses.

8.3.4.7 In order to promote the efficient use of minerals resources and minimise waste, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales, development proposals will be expected to be supported by a Natural Material Management Plan.

8.3.4.8 Development proposal impacts on the environment and amenity will be considered. Assessments relating to issues associated with minerals development such as noise, dust, vibration, land stability, transport movements, the impact on the landscape, natural and historic assets and resources will be required.

8.3.4.9 In relation to Energy Minerals, climate change targets and a move away from the use of fossil fuels means that coal, onshore oil and gas extraction including fracking is not supported in Wales. Further guidance on dealing with planning applications relating to Energy Minerals is provided in section 5.10 of Planning Policy Wales.

8.3.4.10 As an exception, Aberpergwm mine is the only remaining active operational coal site within Neath Port Talbot. There are several other coal sites which are inactive and have either been restored or are in the process of restoration.

8.3.5 SP14 Sustainable Waste Management

SP14 Sustainable Waste Management

The sustainable management of waste will be facilitated by:

1. Promoting and supporting additional sustainable waste management facilities, measures, and strategies in accordance with the waste hierarchy and the principles of nearest appropriate installation and self-sufficiency.

2. Supporting the circular economy by encouraging the minimisation of the production of waste and the use of reused and recycled materials in the design, construction, and demolition stages of development.

3. Ensuring that provision is made for the sustainable management, sorting, storage and collection of waste in all new developments.

RLDP Objective: NO12

Reasoned Justification

8.3.5.1 Waste management has changed significantly over the last few decades with a major decrease in waste being disposed of to landfill and an increase in recycling.

8.3.5.2 In line with the national waste strategy *Towards Zero Waste*, the Council will consider proposals in accordance with the **waste hierarchy**, which ranks waste prevention and management options based on what is best for the environment. The highest priority in the hierarchy is the prevention of waste. Following this, if waste is created, priority should be given first to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then other recovery (e.g. energy), and last of all disposal (e.g. landfill or incineration without energy recovery).

8.3.5.3 As noted in Planning Policy Wales, the '**Nearest Appropriate Installation' concept and the principle of self-sufficiency** will only be applicable to wastes covered by Article 16 of the revised Waste Framework Directive. This approach requires waste to be disposed of or recovered in appropriate facilities close to where it arises to reduce the detrimental environmental impacts associated with the transportation of waste. The provision of an **integrated and adequate network of waste management facilities** across the authority and the wider region is critical to this and to ensuring self-sufficiency. This could include the provision of new household amenity sites, where evidence is provided detailing that any existing sites are now no longer fit for purpose.

8.3.5.4 Consideration must also be given to the **circular economy** within the context of new development, which aims to keep materials, products and components in use for as long as possible. This approach facilitates cost savings and accords with the waste hierarchy by reusing, repairing and recycling materials.

8.3.5.5 In relation to **waste management facilities within developments**, adequate facilities and space for the collection, composting and recycling of waste materials should be incorporated into the design and, where appropriate, layout of any development as well as waste prevention measures at the design, construction and demolition stage.

8.3.5.6 With regards to waste treatment capacity, the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) will continue to treat a significant proportion of the county borough's waste arisings.

8.4 Distinctive and Natural Places

Special Characteristics of Places

8.4.1 SP15 Historic Environment

SP15 Historic Environment

The historic environment including townscapes, important buildings and heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced through the following measures:

1. Ensuring proposals promote high quality design and placemaking that respects local character, cultural and historic qualities of the area, taking into account heritage assets.;

2. Safeguarding features of historic, architectural and cultural importance;

3. The identification of the following designated sites and areas to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:

- **Historic assets of special local interest (Buildings of Local Importance);**
- **Conservation Areas; and**
- **The canal network and structures.**

RLDP Objective: NO13

Reasoned Justification

8.4.1.1 The built environment and urban form of Neath Port Talbot is varied and distinctive, with important remaining features from all periods from prehistory onwards, including standing stones and monuments, burial mounds, Iron Age hill forts, Roman military infrastructure and medieval ecclesiastical buildings and farmsteads.

8.4.1.2 The town of Neath retains the character of a traditional market town, while the key character of most of the County Borough's towns and villages derives from the area's industrial heritage, from the mining and metal working of the early industrial revolution through to the large scale steel and petro-chemical industries of the 20th Century. The historic heritage of the area is recognised through a range of designations, mostly protected by national legislation and policies.

8.4.1.3 The county borough plays host to the following Heritage Assets:

- 2 designated Landscapes of Historic Interest (Registered Historic Landscapes),
- 6 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens,
- 6 Conservation Areas,
- 96 Scheduled Monuments;
- 399 Listed Buildings;
- 264 Buildings of Local Importance (BLIs) including Canal Structures
- 4 safeguarded lengths of the canal network.

8.4.1.4 In 2024, Neath Port Talbot adopted a Heritage Strategy for the period 2024-2039 which emphasises the strategic importance of our heritage assets. The Heritage Strategy sets out actions to ensure the sustainable conservation and management of our historic environment. Key areas of focus identified within the action plan include Neath Heritage Valley/Corridor, Neath Abbey Iron Works, Gnoll Park, Margam Park and the Canal network

and structures. Many of these already have associated projects in the development or implementation phases which the Replacement Local Development Plan will also seek to facilitate and support.

8.4.1.5 **Within conservation areas**, development proposals will be dealt with in accordance with national policy and guidance, which includes additional controls on demolition and the removal of trees set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The council will be preparing a conservation area character appraisal for each conservation area which will outline the elements that contribute to the special character or historic interest of the area and will provide a robust framework for its future management and enhancement. In dealing with applications, full regard will be paid to the effects of proposals on the character of the conservation area as set out in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal, with the objective of ensuring that all proposals accord with the need to preserve or enhance the area's identified character, appearance and setting.

8.4.1.6 Over time, the role and function of settlements has been changing with the loss of many established industries, and there has been a consequent loss of character and distinctive buildings including shops, chapels and churches that played important roles functionally, as well as visually.

8.4.1.7 In recent years, the county borough has attracted a new range of industry and employment opportunities including tourism and service industries, leading to new patterns of development such as industrial estates and business parks, especially along the coastal corridor. The natural environment also remains an important source of employment with minerals and renewable energy developments such as wind farms introducing new types of built environment altering the landscape.

8.4.1.8 Development proposals should preserve or enhance the built and historic environment of the county borough, its cultural, townscape and landscape assets, and, where appropriate, their setting. Proposals will be expected to **promote high quality design that reinforces local character and respects and enhances the cultural and historic qualities** of the Plan area.

8.4.1.9 Alongside the preparation of development management policies in the Deposit Plan, the inventory of Buildings of Local Importance will be reviewed and the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance updated.

8.4.2 SP16 Green Infrastructure

SP16 Green Infrastructure

Development proposals will be required to create, safeguard and enhance green infrastructure provision and maximise its functionality. Development proposals must:

1. Incorporate existing areas of significant green infrastructure into the overall design of the development, taking advantage of opportunities that are presented by existing and potential assets, following the principles of placemaking;

2. Maximise connectivity between and to green infrastructure assets; and

3. Create new green infrastructure and employ nature-based solutions wherever possible.

RLDP Objective: NO3; NO13

Reasoned Justification

8.4.2.1 *Green infrastructure (GI) is defined as the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places (PPW 12 6.2.1)*. Networks of natural habitats and green infrastructure provide a valuable ecological resource. They can connect sites of biodiversity importance and provide stepping stones for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species within the wider environment. Such networks must be safeguarded from inappropriate development and enhanced to avoid any fragmentation or isolation of natural habitats.

8.4.2.2 In addition to biodiversity and ecological benefits, green infrastructure can have a significant role in mitigating climate change impacts, including extreme weather, while supporting biodiversity and making an important contribution to the environment's quality. At the same time, it can provide important infrastructure services, for example drainage, flood alleviation, shading and air quality benefits. Access to all types of green spaces can help support both physical and mental health and well-being through linking dwellings, workplaces and community facilities and providing high quality, accessible green spaces.

8.4.2.3 **Existing significant green infrastructure within development sites** will need to be identified, protected and enhanced wherever possible and existing green infrastructure should be incorporated into the design of sites as a fundamental requirement of placemaking. The significance and functions of green infrastructure will vary widely and will need to be judged taking into account the size, context, character and features of the site and development proposed.

8.4.2.4 The design of developments should also aim to **maintain and enhance linkages and continuity between areas of green infrastructure** and to **create new green infrastructure** for its own sake, for the health and well-being of users and occupiers and to **provide nature-based services** and facilities for people. Enhancement of walking and cycling routes (including the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)) can help improve connectivity to our green spaces by creating accessible, safe and

sustainable routes that encourage people to engage with nature while reducing environmental impacts. Such improvements can contribute to reducing socio-economic disparities, enabling more communities to benefit from nature and outdoor recreational activities.

8.4.2.5 A **Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA)** is being undertaken drawing on current available information to map existing significant green infrastructure across the county borough and identify key strategic opportunities where the restoration, maintenance, creation and connection of green infrastructure features and functions could deliver the most significant benefits. All developments will be required to address and take into consideration the need for green infrastructure and the need to **maintain and enhance green infrastructure connectivity**. The Green Infrastructure Assessment will inform the master planning of sites allocated in the Replacement Local Development Plan, as part of the placemaking of these sites.

8.4.3 SP17 Countryside, Landscapes and Undeveloped Coast

SP17 Countryside, Landscapes and Undeveloped Coast

The countryside and undeveloped coast, including landscapes, seascapes and geodiversity, will be safeguarded and where feasible enhanced through the following measures:

1. The protection of the open countryside outside settlement limits through the control of inappropriate development that would adversely affect its rural character, ecological, landscape, cultural or agricultural value or natural resources;

2. The protection of the undeveloped coast and seascapes through the control of inappropriate coastal development;

3. The protection of important landscape and seascape features, characteristics and qualities;

4. The designation and protection of Special Landscape Areas; and

5. The identification and safeguarding of areas of geodiversity importance.

RLDP Objective: NO3; NO13

Reasoned Justification

8.4.3.1 Neath Port Talbot's countryside, coast and landscapes are very varied in character, form, use and purpose, from upland open moors and forestry areas, to steep sided valleys, gently undulating farmland and the coastal plain with extensive sandy beaches backed by dune systems.

8.4.3.2 The countryside is a dynamic ever-changing resource which provides a wide range of benefits, such as opportunities to maintain and improve physical and mental health and well-being. National planning policy requires it to be conserved for its own sake and, where possible, to be enhanced to safeguard these significant characteristics and qualities.

8.4.3.3 At the same time, the need to conserve its attributes must be balanced against the economic, social and recreational needs of both the local communities and visitors. The Plan will aim to **protect the countryside** (using defined settlement limits and detailed policy) from inappropriate development and to identify the features, characteristics and qualities that require extra protection.

8.4.3.4 Notable landscape features and wider important landscape areas will be identified and safeguarded through **designation of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)**. The Special Landscape Areas identified in the existing Local Development Plan will be re-evaluated and additional landscape areas with features, characteristics or qualities that require extra protection will be identified where justified. **Areas of the coast which have remained undeveloped** will be identified and protected from inappropriate development that is not strictly necessary in a natural undeveloped coastal location.

8.4.3.5 **Significant areas of geological interest** designated as Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) will be identified and protected as appropriate.

8.4.4 SP18 Environmental Protection

SP18 Environmental Protection

The quality of the environment will be safeguarded and enhanced and potential adverse impacts of existing or anticipated environmental problems will be addressed (including through de-risking approaches) in relation to the following:

1. **Air quality;**
2. **Land contamination, land instability and invasive non-native species;**
3. **Flood risk and coastal erosion;**
4. **Lighting;**
5. **Soundscapes;**
6. **Water quality; and**
7. **Water resource availability.**

RLDP Objective: NO14

Reasoned Justification

8.4.4.1 The quality of the environment and the basic natural needs that it provides for are of great importance for human health and well-being, with the potential to affect quality of life in fundamental ways. The legacy of past activities in the area, mainly relating to heavy industry, coupled with present day industry, transport and development pressures all have impacts on the environment which need to be taken into account and addressed where possible.

8.4.4.2 A **de-risking approach** involves the consideration of natural and human-made surface and subsurface hazards and environmental risks and ensuring that they are factored in as an integral part of a better understanding of the characteristics of sites and places. This approach will be adopted and required as part of development proposals where appropriate.

8.4.4.3 **Air quality, ground contamination and stability and the quality and availability of water resources** can all affect and be affected by development proposals, while **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)** (e.g. Japanese Knotweed) can have significant detrimental impacts not only on local biodiversity but on the development itself and its occupiers.

8.4.4.4 **Air, noise and light pollution** often affects more deprived communities and therefore raise issues of equality and inclusivity. Development proposals should not contribute towards pollution at a level detrimental to our communities and should seek to help reduce pollution in existing areas of concern. In this respect, the **compatibility of neighbouring uses** is therefore a key consideration for development proposals.

8.4.4.5 Any development which generates emissions that would result in an adverse impact on the air quality within the **Taibach/Margam Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** will be directed away from the area. Further details will be provided in the detailed policies within the Deposit Plan.

8.4.4.6 **Flood risk and coastal erosion** are an increasing concern, exacerbated by climate change and inappropriate developments. The significance of **light pollution** and the importance of appropriate **soundscapes** is becoming better understood and further emphasised.

8.4.4.7 Many of these issues are addressed by specific separate legislation and controls or by detailed national planning policy, but the Plan's strategy is to protect and improve environmental quality as far as possible, and appropriate detailed Plan provisions will be specified where required.

Chapter 9
Key Sites



9.1 Key Sites

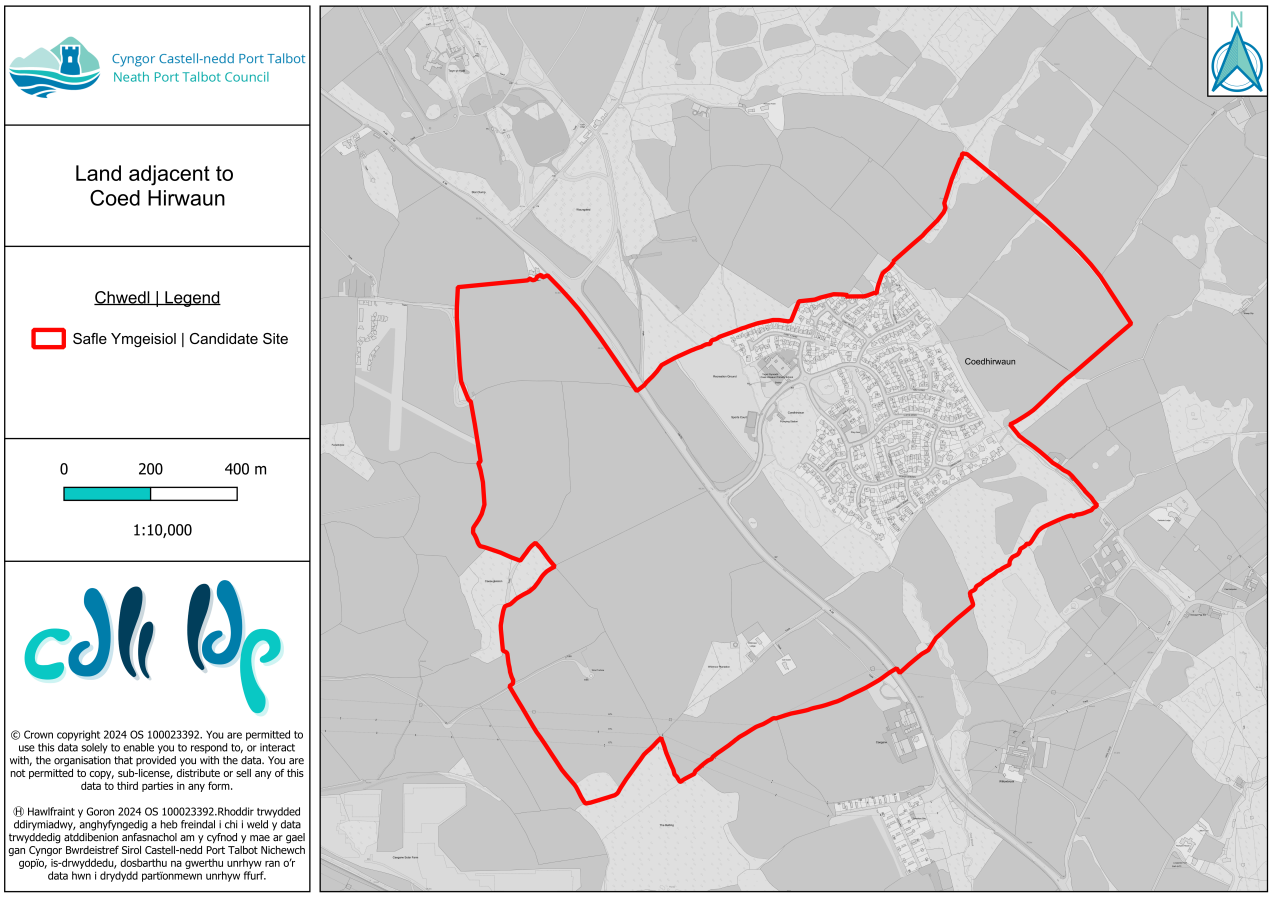
9.1.1 The following potential key sites have been identified. They will make a very good contribution towards placemaking objectives, are in line with the Replacement Local Development Plan's vision, and help to achieve the spatial strategy detailed in the previous Chapters. More information is provided within the Key Sites Background Paper.

9.1.2 The boundaries detailed below are the boundaries that have been submitted as part of the Candidate Site/Urban Capacity Call for Sites. It is not intended that the entirety of these areas are allocated for development and there are constraints within these areas. The site boundaries will be refined ahead of Deposit Consultation.

9.1.3 For each site information has been provided with regards to identified constraints, infrastructure requirements, placemaking principles required for development, and potential delivery mechanisms. These have been provided to aid the development of the site and highlight issues that will need to be resolved prior to the Deposit Plan/ ahead of a planning permission.

9.1.4 Other sites, of less strategic importance, will be allocated for development at the Deposit Plan stage.

9.2 Coed Hirwaun, Margam



- **Site Area**: 128.1ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Residential and agricultural
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/PT/0042, Candidate Site 2023 RLDP/PT/2015, and Urban Capacity Site 2023 RLDP/PT/UC024
- **Proposed Development**: Indicative 900 dwellings (400 within the Replacement Local Development Plan period) and new Welsh medium primary school.

9.2.1 Coed Hirwaun is an existing settlement located in the south east of the Authority within close proximity to the Steelworks and Freeport.

9.2.2 The existing settlement includes approximately 500 homes, a school, playing fields and convenience store. There is a bus stop on the entrance to the site which offers hourly services to Bridgend and Swansea. There are footways and cycleways to Margam and Bridgend.

9.2.3 The settlement is approximately 1 mile from Pyle which has a wide range of facilities including doctor's surgery, pharmacy, primary school, secondary school, leisure centre, supermarket, petrol stations, restaurants, take-aways, public houses, churches, and a railway station offering regular services to Bridgend, Swansea, Cardiff and Carmarthen.

9.2.4 It is proposed that Coed Hirwaun is identified as a key site in the Port Talbot spatial planning area. The site will help to provide co-location opportunities for homes and jobs associated with the Freeport and Tata transition.

9.2.5 The development of the site will also help to enhance the sustainability of the existing community. Whilst there are a number of facilities in the existing development, and the site has very good pedestrian and cycle linkages to the existing facilities in Pyle, the development of additional homes in this location will ensure the critical density to support additional small scale retail, community and employment provision, provide a Welsh medium primary school, and enhance existing linkages to employment, retail and community facilities in Margam and Pyle.

9.2.6 The site will need to be developed to enhance the existing community and create a single sense of place.

9.2.7 The master planning approach taken to bring the site forward will need to address the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints:

- A48 passes through the site separating the eastern and western parcels.
- Major Pipeline and Major Hazard Pipeline Buffer traverses the northern parts of the east and west parcels.
- Minor watercourse west of site hydrologically connected to Kenfig Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Special Area of Conservation (SAC) approx. 950m away.
- The site includes an important hedgerow network, protected species, S7 habitat, irreplaceable trees, and European Protected Species.
- Dense woodland to the east and south east of the existing residential development.
- Parts of the parcel to the west of the A48 are classified as Grade 2 agricultural land classification.
- Part of the parcel to the east of the A48 is located within a Special Landscape Area.
- Main river (Cole Brook) traverses the site. Number of ordinary watercourses running throughout the site. Flood Map for Planning identifies small central part of the eastern parcel as Flood Zone 3 (Rivers).

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Provision of new Welsh Medium Primary School on western parcel.
- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- Improvements and extensions to existing and proposed footways and active travel including the provision of a new/ enhanced existing footway/ combined footway along the site frontage.
- Measures to encourage pedestrian crossings from the eastern to western parcel such as pedestrian crossings and measures to reduce the speed along this section of the A48.
- An additional vehicular point of entry to the eastern parcel.
- Dependent on the scale of development and the outcome of a Transport Assessment, a new right turn lane within the carriageway of the A48 to facilitate access to the western parcel and at least one new access point to the western parcel.
- Improved active travel route along the A48 connecting the site to Pyle and Margam.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Any necessary site specific measures to improve water and sewerage infrastructure, to be informed by a Hydraulic Modelling Assessment.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity through the site through the retention of hedgerows and trees.
- Explore the potential for a District Heat Network in accordance with national policy.

Placemaking Principles:

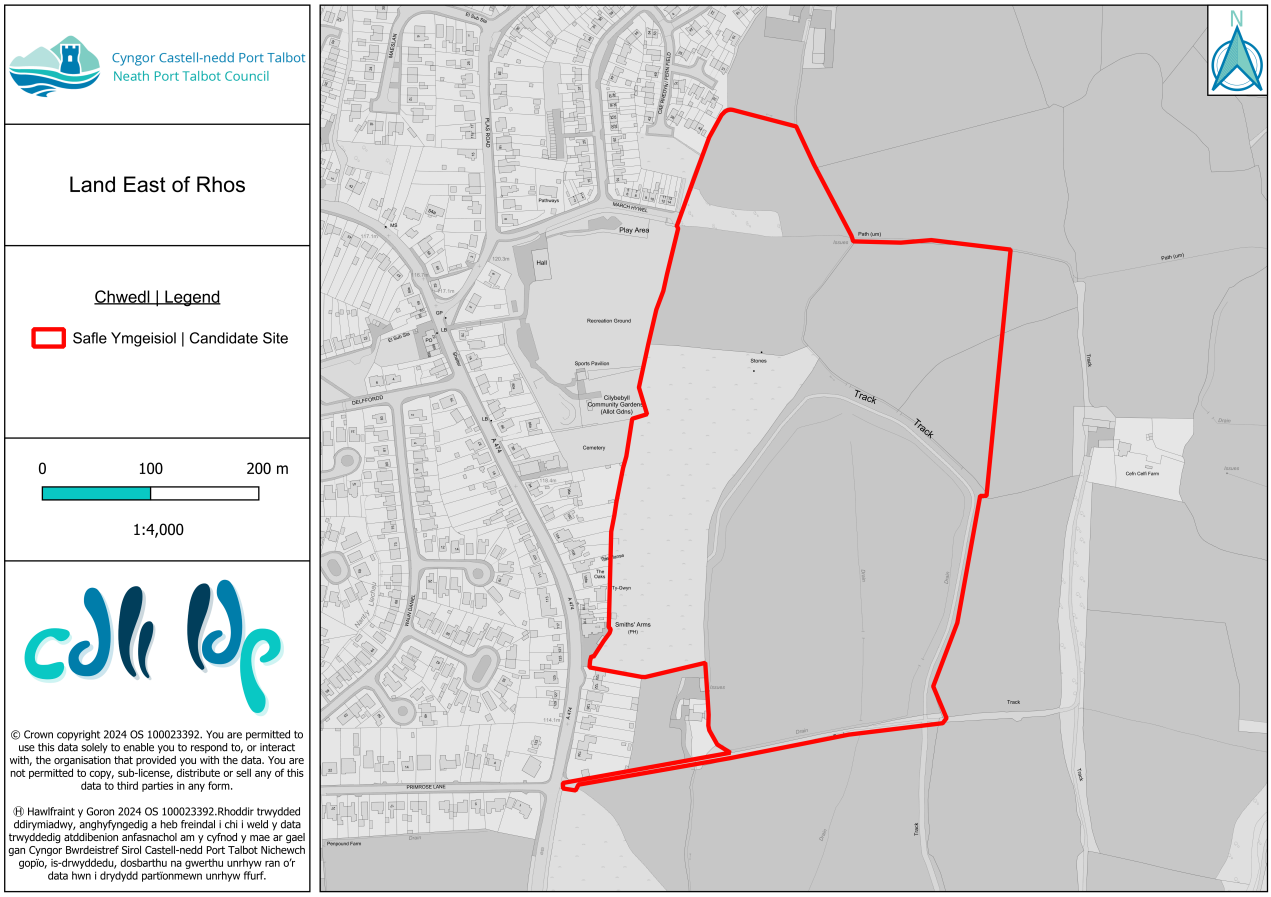
- Strategy to tie the parcels together, enhance the sustainability of the existing development, and create a single sense of place.
- A mix of house types and sizes to be developed at an appropriate density.
- The provision of affordable housing in accordance with emerging targets, affordable housing comprising a suitable mix of types and tenures to meet local needs and to be delivered throughout the development.
- The provision of recreational space in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- Flood risk assessment required and incorporated into the site layout and design.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Measures to enhance the sustainability of Coed Hirwaun through the provision of small scale complementary retail, community and employment facilities.
- Design measures to ensure the retention of the important hedgerow network and important trees.
- Design measures to ensure the protection of the Major Pipeline and Major Hazard Pipeline Buffer which traverses the northern parts of the east and west parcels.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7 / SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Landscape and Visual Assessment required in order to assess the potential landscape impact with an appropriate response incorporated into the site layout and design.
- Design measures to protect and enhance landscape quality (including long range views) taking into consideration the Special Landscape Area designation, proximity of Margam Historic Park and Garden, Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest, and Cae Garw Milepost Listed Building.
- Strategy to encourage modal shift among future residents and users of the site.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required.
- The development of the site will be in accordance with an agreed masterplan produced by the council in consultation with the site promoter ahead of the Deposit Plan.

9.3 Land East of Rhos

Land east of Rhos



- **Site Area**: 15.7ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Agricultural land
- **Source**: Candidate Sites 2022 RLDP/P/0027, RLDP/P/0029, and RLDP/P/0030
- **Proposed Development**: Indicative Residential (400 homes) and a new Welsh medium primary school.

9.3.1 The site adjoins the settlement and community facilities within Rhos which forms part of the Pontardawe Hub in the Valleys Opportunity Area. The site therefore provides the opportunity to provide affordable housing within the Valleys Opportunity Area.

9.3.2 Within the site there are biodiversity constraints which will require further investigation, in particular in relation to possible access points into the site. This will need to be undertaken prior to the Deposit Plan.

9.3.3 The master planning approach taken to bring the site forward will address the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints:

- There is a Scheduled Monument within the site.
- The site is located approx. 75m from the Frondeg Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with potential linkages between sites. Full appraisal of the potential impacts on Frondeg SSSI required.
- There are a number of watercourses on site.
- The site is comprised of large fields separated by hedgerow network. Access to the north west parcel is limited due to dense tree network. Western and southern fields contain marshy grassland with ant hills.
- A Public Right of Way runs through the site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Provision of new primary school.
- Any necessary site specific measures to improve water and sewerage infrastructure, to be informed by a Hydraulic Modelling Assessment.
- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- Two points of access will be required. Initial biodiversity appraisal suggests that it is not possible to obtain road access from March Hywel. The potential for a road access in this location should be explored. If possible, off-site improvements to March Hywel would be required.
- Access opposite Primrose Lane junction has been identified as being potentially problematic and will need to be addressed as part of the Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit due to possible conflict and junction design with two access points being directly opposite one another without being able to achieve junction spacing criteria.
- The existing access opposite Primrose Lane would need to be widened.
- Widening and the provision of new footways/ combined footway cycle way along March Hywel.
- Active travel improvements needed to link into NCN43 from Rhos and link Rhos with Neath.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity through the site through the retention of hedgerows and trees.

Placemaking Principles:

- A mix of house types and sizes to be developed at an appropriate density.
- The provision of affordable housing in accordance with emerging targets, affordable housing comprising a suitable mix of types and tenures to meet local needs and to be delivered throughout the development.
- The provision of recreational space in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- Design measures sensitive to the Scheduled Ancient Monument within the site.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Design measures to protect, and where possible enhance, access to the Public Right of Way passing through the site and the Public Right of Way adjacent to the site.
- Design measures to be sensitive to the existing residential accommodation, countryside and community sports facilities.
- Strategy to encourage modal shift among future residents and users of the site.

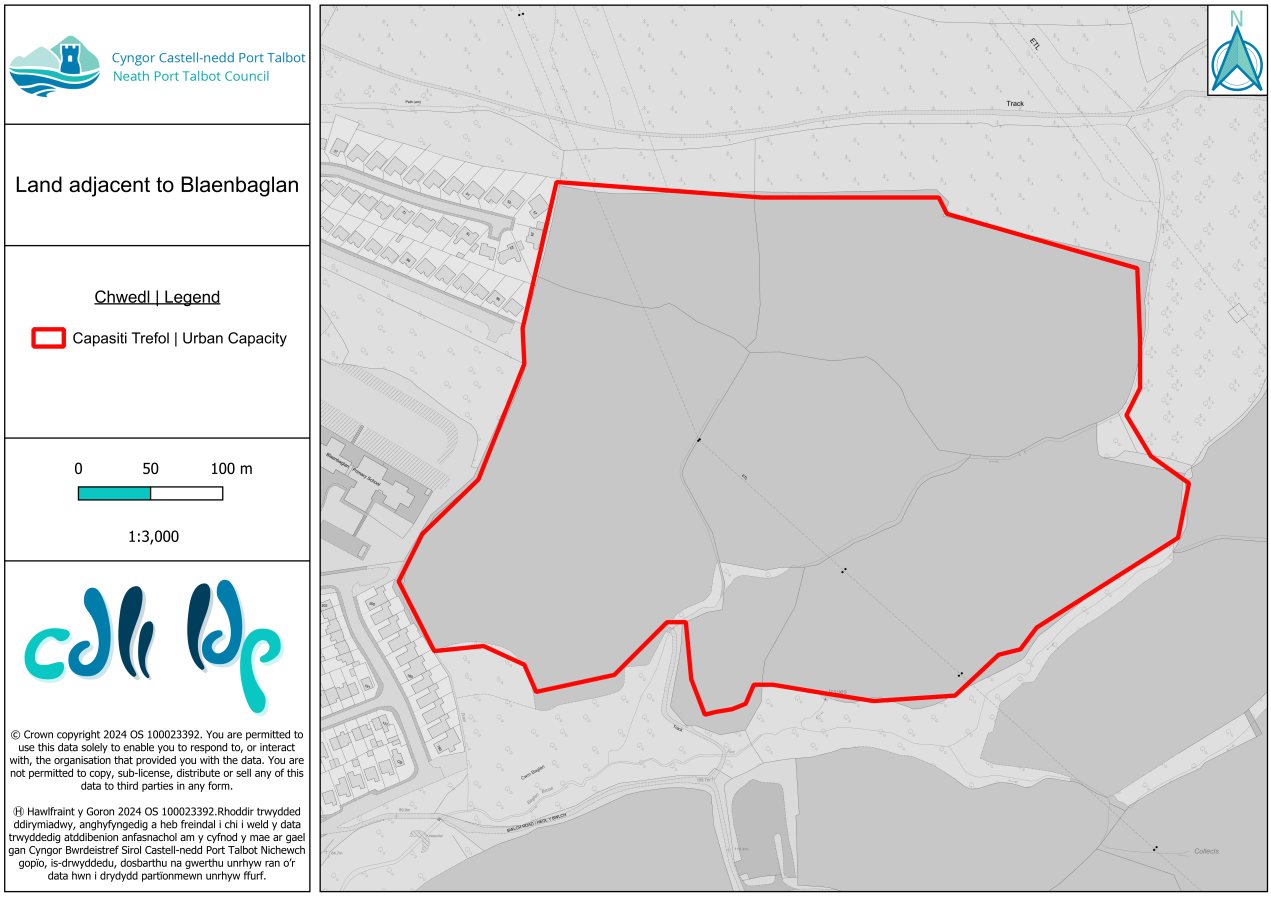
Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required.

The development of the site will be in accordance with an agreed masterplan produced by the Council in consultation with the site promoter ahead of the Deposit Plan.

9.4 Land adjacent to Blaenbaglan, Baglan

Land adjacent to Blaenbaglan



- **Site Area**: 14.5ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Agricultural land
- **Source**: Urban Capacity Site 2023 RLDP/PT/UC0003
- **Proposed Development**: Indicative Residential - 341 dwellings including 141 existing allocation.

9.4.1 The site is located partly within, and adjoins, the settlement of Baglan.

9.4.2 The site includes the existing site location in the current LDP for 141 homes.

9.4.3 The current LDP also includes an allocation to the south of this site (Land at Blaenbaglan Farm) which has an extant full planning permission for 219 homes dating back to 1992 (92/8571). This is no longer considered to be deliverable. The allocation is therefore not proposed to be rolled over.

9.4.4 The master planning approach taken to bring the site forward will address the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints

- Minor watercourse through the centre of the site.
- Two fields containing semi-improved grassland bordered by hedgerows and ancient woodland. Areas of biodiversity constraint include woodland, hedgerow, watercourse, S7 habitat, connectivity.
- Watercourse Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Public Right of Way to the north and south of the site.
- Blaenbaglan Farmhouse Listed Building to the south of the site.
- Craig Isaf Tump Scheduled Monument to the north of the site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Any necessary site specific measures to improve water and sewerage infrastructure, to be informed by a Hydraulic Modelling Assessment.
- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- Principal points of access into the site will need to be continuous of the existing highway at Darren Wen and Maes Ty Canol.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Potential for a District Heat Network to be explored in accordance with national policy.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity through the site through the retention of hedgerows and trees.

Placemaking Principles:

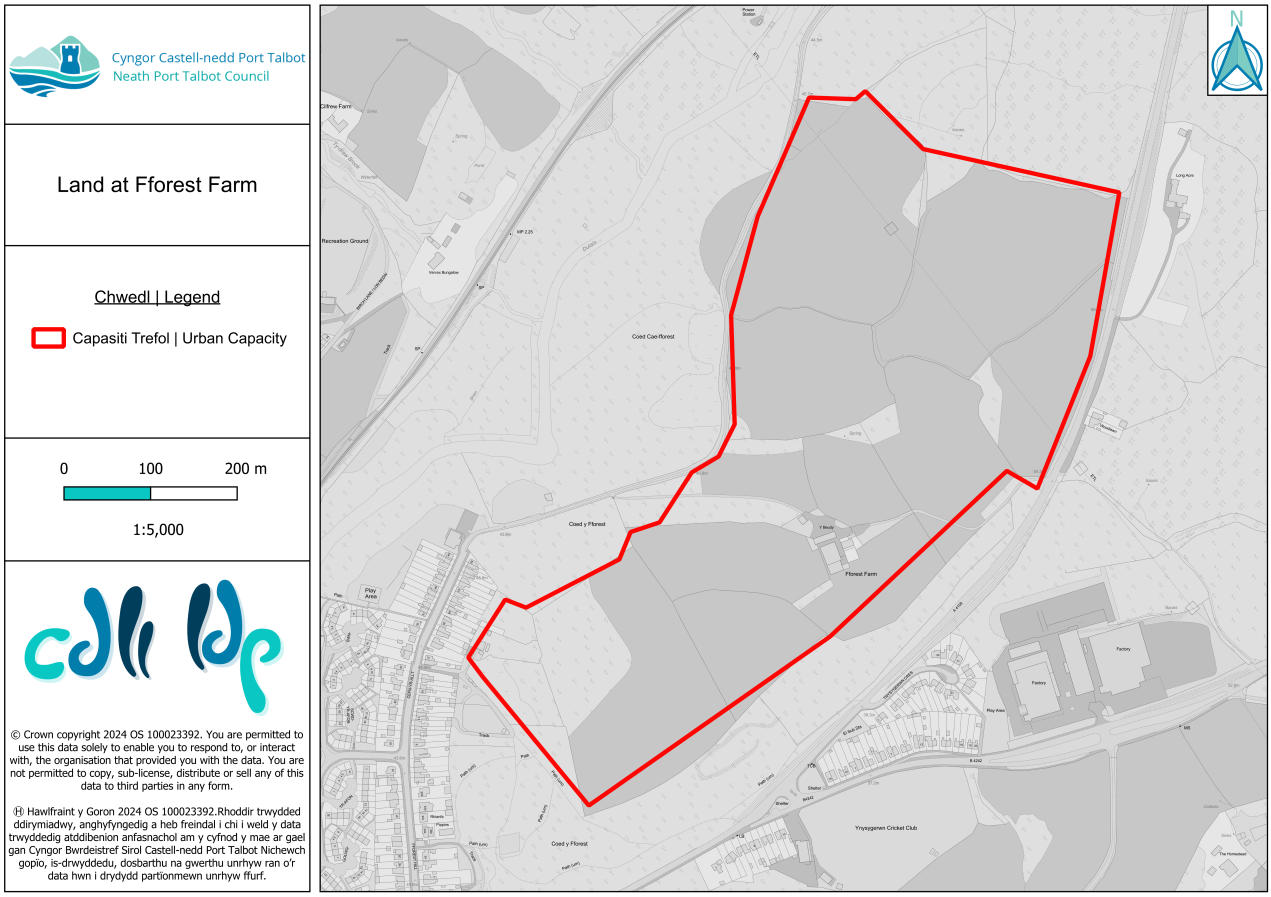
- A mix of house types and sizes to be developed at an appropriate density.
- The provision of affordable housing in accordance with emerging targets, affordable housing comprising a suitable mix of types and tenures to meet local needs and to be delivered throughout the development.
- The provision of recreational space in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Design measures to ensure protection of the Public Rights of Way to the north and south of the site, and where possible improved access to the Public Rights of Way.
- Design measures to protect the Watercourse Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) on site.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Incorporate a layout and design which respects and complements the surrounding landscape, including the protection of adjoining ancient woodland and the setting of the nearby listed building and scheduled ancient monument.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required.
- The development of the site will be in accordance with an agreed masterplan produced by the Council in consultation with the site promoter ahead of the Deposit Plan.

9.5 Fforest Farm, Aberdulais

Fforest Farm



- **Site Area**: 26.4ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Agricultural land
- **Source**: Candidate Sites 2022 RLDP/N/0005 and RLDP/N/0006, and Urban Capacity Site 2023 RLDP/N/UC007
- **Proposed Development**: Indicative residential (250 homes) and land for special school

9.5.1 The site has been identified as a potential key site for housing development and the provision of a special school within the Neath Spatial Area. The site adjoins the existing settlement of Aberdulais and will need to be developed to create linkages with the existing settlement.

9.5.2 The Council's Education Team have identified the need to develop a special school. Having undertaken a detailed search for sites to meet their size requirements (approx. 2-3ha) with good road access, this site has been identified as the only option in NPT to develop a special school. Ahead of the Deposit Plan further discussions will take place and a masterplan will be developed to incorporate residential and educational provision.

9.5.3 The master planning approach taken to bring the site forward will address the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints:

- The site is predominantly green farmland. Areas in the north east and south west have been identified as having biodiversity constraint. These include areas of lowland meadow, S7 habitat, Watercourse Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), woodland, and irreplaceable habitat.
- Network of established hedgerows and trees throughout the site.
- Between the existing urban area and the site there is an area of dense woodland.
- Overhead cables across the central/ northern part of the site.
- Part of the site has been identified as Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3a.
- Minor watercourse through north of the site.
- Public Right of Way to the west/ south west of the site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Provision of new special school (approx. 2-3ha of land required for the provision of a new special school).
- Any necessary site specific measures to improve water and sewerage infrastructure, to be informed by a Hydraulic Modelling Assessment.
- Access to the site should be made from the A4019.
- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- Dependent on the outcome of the the Transport Assessment off-site works such as possible speed reduction measures of the A4109 and possible implementation of a right turn lane may be required.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Improvements to proposed active travel route along A4109.
- Improved footway and cycle access to the existing settlement via Cefn yr Allt and A4109.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity through the site through the retention of hedgerows and trees.
- Potential for a District Heat Network to be explored in accordance with national policy.

Placemaking Principles:

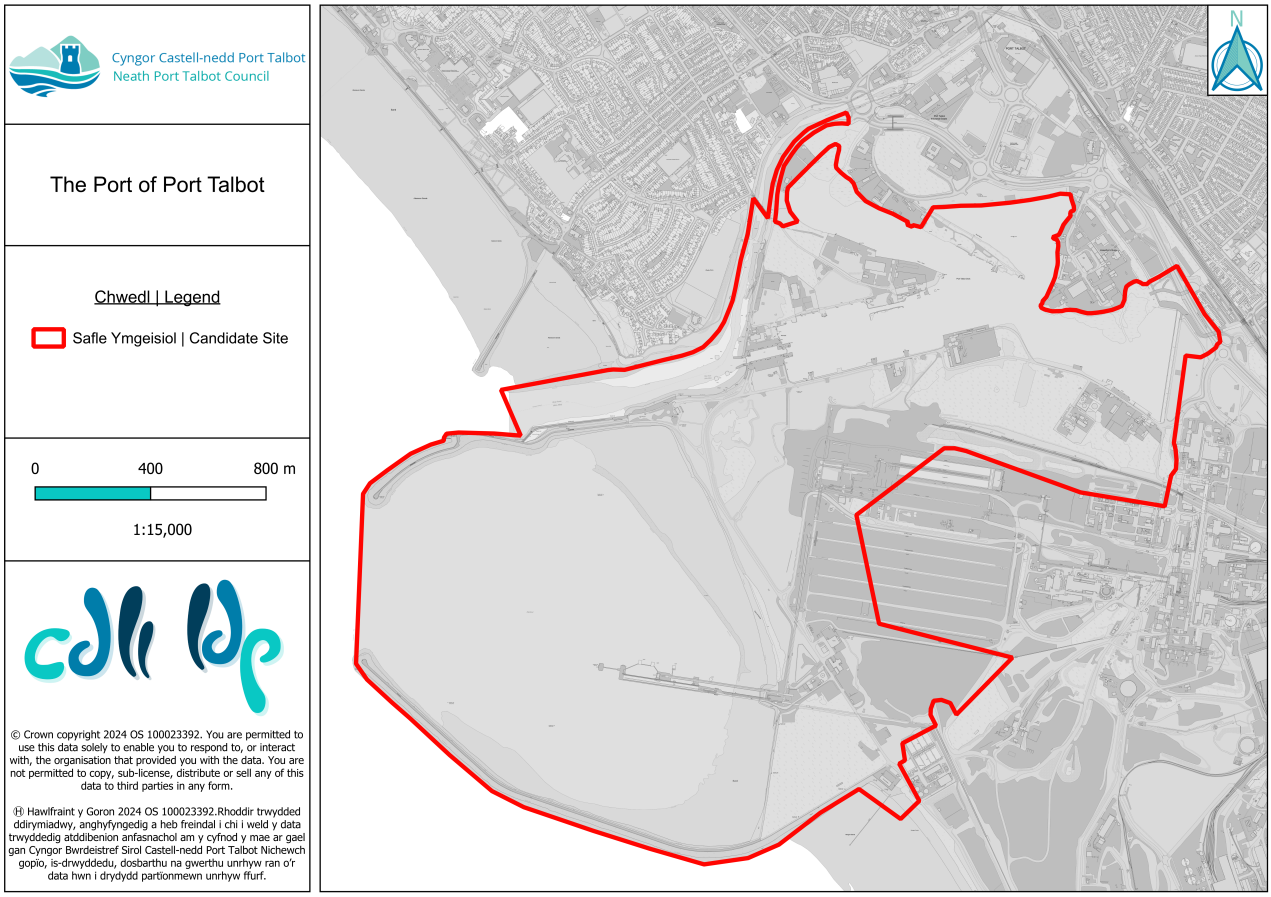
- A mix of house types and sizes to be developed at an appropriate density.
- The provision of affordable housing in accordance with emerging targets, affordable housing comprising a suitable mix of types and tenures to meet local needs and to be delivered throughout the development.
- The provision of recreational space in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Design considerations to enhance the connectivity to the site and the existing settlement. Take into account the overhead cables, watercourse, watercourse Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), biodiversity constraints, and ensure the retention of the important hedgerow network and important trees across the site and the protection of the adjoining woodland.
- Design measures to ensure protection of the Public Rights of Way to the west/ south west of the site, and where possible improved access to the Public Rights of Way.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Incorporate a layout and design which respects and complements the surrounding landscape.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required.
- The development of the site will be in accordance with an agreed masterplan produced by the Council in consultation with the site promoter ahead of the Deposit Plan.

9.6 Port of Port Talbot

Port Talbot Port



- **Site Area**: 389.6ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Employment and transportation
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/PT/0048 and Candidate Site 2023 RLDP/PT/2009
- **Proposed Development**: Employment, transportation infrastructure and renewable energy

9.6.1 The Port is a large previously developed brownfield site within the National Growth Area as identified in Future Wales, within close proximity to the M4 and Port Talbot town centre. The site will form part of the UK Government and Welsh Government designated Freeport. The site has been identified as a potential key site to be developed to recognise its key national, regional and local role at the forefront of floating offshore wind and green energy development.

9.6.2 It is envisaged that the site will be brought forward for employment and renewable energy development with supporting complementary facilities to serve and facilitate these uses.

9.6.3 Whilst the site is 389.6ha, this includes an area of the sea. It is proposed that the site is allocated for 30ha of employment use. This is reflective of the nature of the employment and renewable energy development proposed, including the large space requirements for lay down facilities and storage of wind turbine blades.

9.6.4 A comprehensive masterplan will be prepared taking into consideration the following constraints, infrastructure requirements and placemaking principles:

Constraints:

- There are a number of listed buildings within the site including Former Harbour House, plate-grinder bridge, and harbour watch tower. Magistrates Court Listed Building is within close proximity.
- The site has complex biodiversity including open mosaic, sand dune, shoreline and marine habitats.
- Japanese Knotweed coverage across the site.
- SINC 0009 Lower River Afan Estuary, Watercourse
- Flood Map for Planning identifies parts of the site as Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment. Dependent on the outcome of the Transport Assessment, it is likely that improvements would be required to Heilbron Way Junctions.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Improvements and extensions to existing and proposed active travel routes.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Engagement with the Council's Environmental Health Department regarding potential odour issues for occupiers of future development.
- Land contamination survey and land remediation measures as appropriate.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity.

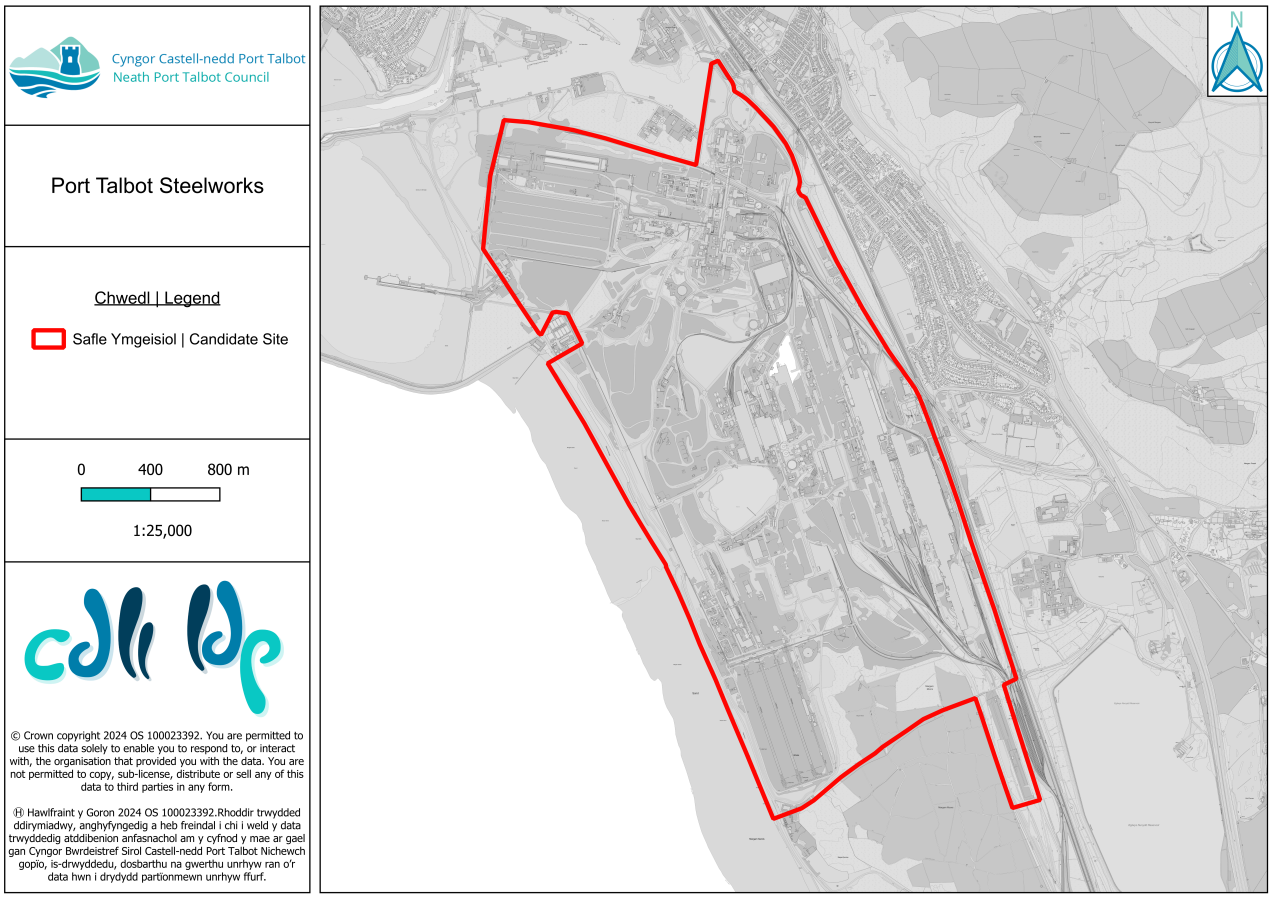
Placemaking Principles:

- The existing freight facilities will be safeguarded in recognition of the important role they play in supporting the local economy and allowing goods to be transported by means other than road, reducing congestion and emissions.
- Complementary facilities will need to be provided to serve and facilitate the main employment use of the site. These will need to be at a scale not likely to significantly divert trade from the wider area (including Port Talbot Town Centre or Commercial Road District Centre) or to detract from the prime focus of the site for employment and renewable energy development.
- Site will be designed to be pedestrian friendly and incorporate linkages to the town centre, bus and railway station.
- Recreational space will be provided in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- Development will incorporate a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Flood risk assessment required and incorporated into the site layout and design.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Design measures will be sensitive to the listed buildings both on site and within close proximity to the site.
- Design measures to be sensitive to the complex biodiversity across the site.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development, the use of the site and appropriate off-site considerations will be required.
- A detailed masterplan will be prepared to assist with the delivery of the site and ensure comprehensive development.

9.7 Port Talbot Steelworks



- **Site Area**: 671.9ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Employment
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/PT/0041
- **Proposed Development**: Employment; renewable energy

9.7.1 Following the announcement in September 2023 to decommission the existing two blast furnaces and replace them with a single standalone electric arc furnace, Port Talbot Steelworks has been identified as a potential key site in the Preferred Strategy to reflect its key local, regional and national importance and reflect the significant economic restructuring taking place.

9.7.2 It is envisaged that the site is brought forward for employment and renewable energy development with supporting complementary facilities to serve and facilitate these uses.

9.7.3 The site is designated in the current Local Development Plan as an existing employment area. Within these areas employment uses within B1, B2 and B8 Use Class, ancillary facilities or services which support and complement the wider role and function of the primary employment use, and commercial services unrelated to the B Use Class are supported providing that they demonstrate that they do not cause any adverse impacts on

the overall function of the employment area and neighbouring commercial and residential properties, and the proposal can be sustainably justified in this location and is appropriate in scale and form to the role and function of the employment area.

9.7.4 Given this, it is not proposed that the site will be allocated for employment and renewable uses. Instead it is proposed that the site will remain a designated employment area.

9.7.5 Subsequent planning applications for the site will need to take into consideration the following constraints, infrastructure requirements and placemaking principles:

Constraints:

- Flood Map for Planning identifies part of the site as Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Ditches on site providing direct hydrological link to the Margam Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) immediately adjacent to the site. Full appraisal of the potential impact on Margam Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be required.
- Great Crested Newt record on site.
- The site has complex biodiversity including open mosaic, marsh, sand dune and shoreline habitats.
- Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) Watercourse.
- The site includes previously developed land with land contamination.
- Parts of the site are identified as Agricultural Land Classification Grade 2.
- The site is an established Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Improvements and extensions to existing and proposed active travel routes.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Land contamination survey and land remediation measures as appropriate.
- Engagement with the Council's Environmental Health Department regarding potential odour issues for occupiers of future development.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity.

Placemaking Principles:

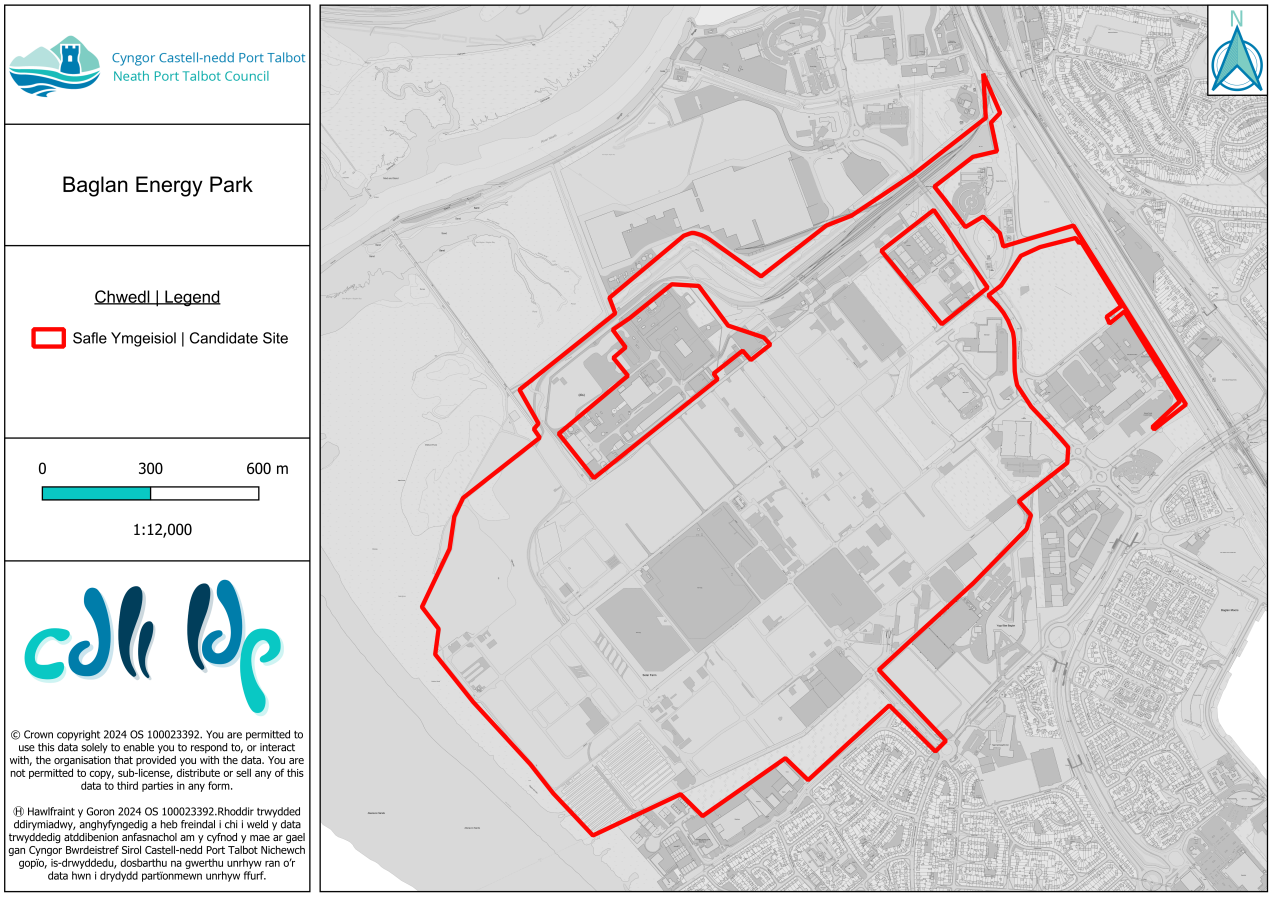
- Take into consideration the findings of the flood risk assessment as part of the design and site layout.
- Take into consideration the findings of the Agricultural Land Survey.
- Complementary facilities will need not to be at a scale likely to significantly divert trade from the wider area (including Port Talbot Town Centre or Commercial Road District Centre) or to detract from the prime focus of the site for employment and renewable energy development.
- Designed to be pedestrian friendly and incorporate linkages to the town centre, bus and railway station.
- Recreational space will be provided in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey will be required, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Design measures to be sensitive to the complex biodiversity across the site, including the Margam Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) Watercourse.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development, the use of the site and appropriate off-site considerations will be required.

9.8 Baglan Energy Park

Baglan Energy Park



- **Site Area**: 187.8ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Former employment
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/PT/0008
- **Proposed Development**: Employment

9.8.1 Following the acquisition of the site by Welsh Government, the site has been identified as a potential key site to be developed to reflect its key role as a large previously developed brownfield site located within the National Growth Area as identified in Future Wales adjacent to the M4 and within close proximity of the ongoing improvement works to the A465. The site is also located within close proximity to the Freeport.

9.8.2 It is envisaged that the site will be brought forward for employment development with supporting complementary facilities to serve and facilitate this use. Given the existing contamination on the site and the long term redevelopment of the site it is envisaged that only 20ha of employment development will be developed within the Replacement Local Development Plan period.

9.8.3 Nonetheless the site will be required to be brought forward comprehensively and a comprehensive masterplan will be prepared taking into consideration the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints:

- The site is a large complex site containing diverse open mosaic and sand dune habitats.
- Lapwing, rare invertebrates, protected plants, lower plants, highly specialised habitat.
- Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC 130) Marden Park Baglan.
- Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC 132) Baglan Brownfield Slack.
- Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC 006) Baglan Bay.
- Given the previous use of the site the site is heavily contaminated. Historic landfill within the site.
- Small part in the south west of the site identified as undeveloped coast.
- Flood Map for Planning identifies parts of the site falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- There is a substation adjacent to the north of the Candidate Site parcel (in the area cut out of the parcel).
- Major pipeline and major pipeline buffer covers part of the north of the site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- A number of existing and future active travel routes pass through the site. Improvements and extensions to existing and proposed active travel routes will be required. Linkages to the seafront, Quays and NCN4 will also be required.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.
- Land contamination survey and land remediation measures as appropriate.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity.

Placemaking Principles:

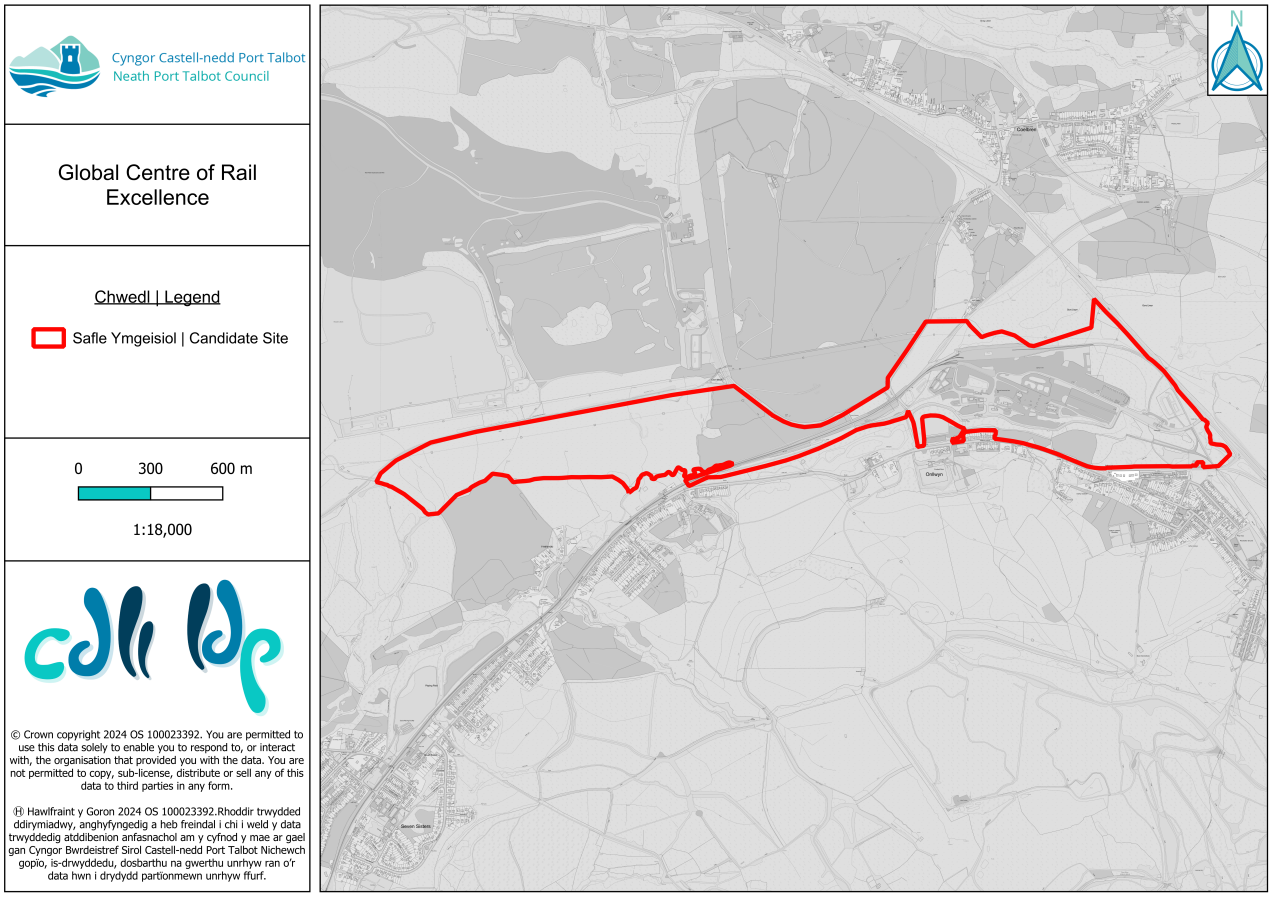
- Complementary facilities will need to be provided to serve and facilitate the main employment use of the site. These will need to be at a scale not likely to significantly divert trade from the wider area (including Neath Road District Centre, Fairway Local Centre, and/or Pentwyn Local Centre, Fairwood Drive/ Lodge Drive Local Centre) or to detract from the prime focus of the site for employment development.
- Flood risk assessment required and incorporated into the site layout and design.
- Design measures to take into consideration the proximity of Bay Baglan School, existing residential and employment development, the former power station, the complex biodiversity across the site including Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), the part of the site in the south west identified as undeveloped coast, contamination, substation adjacent to the site, and the major pipeline and pipeline buffer.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Recreational space will be provided in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- Site will be designed to be pedestrian friendly and incorporate linkages to the existing residential development.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required, the use of the site and appropriate off-site considerations will be required.
- A detailed masterplan will be prepared to assist with the delivery of the site and ensure comprehensive development.

9.9 Global Centre of Rail Excellence, Onllwyn

GCRE



- **Site Area**: 107.8ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Former employment, minerals, other
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/DV/0022
- **Proposed Development**: Transport infrastructure

9.9.1 The proposed Global Centre of Rail Excellence has been identified in the Preferred Strategy as a potential key site to be maximised and act as a catalyst for long term improvements in the Valleys Opportunity Area.

9.9.2 The site is a former open cast mine, washery and distribution centre. It is therefore a large brownfield previously developed site. The site is at the top of the Dulais Valley in Neath Port Talbot and stretches into Powys.

9.9.3 A cross boundary outline planning consent (P2021/0327) was granted in July 2021 to enable the development of two test tracks of loop configuration, operations and control offices, shunter cabins, research and development, education and training, rolling stock storage sidings and maintenance/cleaning/decommissioning facilities; and associated development including branch line rail connection. There have been a number of conditions discharged and non-material amendments. A reserved matters application is currently awaiting determination.

9.9.4 The site promoters have produced a subsequent masterplan for the site which expands upon the existing planning permission to include 20,000sqm of research and development in a washery campus, 10-20,000sqm of research and development accommodation on Cwm Mawr Campus, solar farm, hospitality and tourism uses. Planning permission has not been granted for these uses.

9.9.5 It is envisaged that the Global Centre for Rail Excellence will become a purpose built site for world class research, testing and certification of rolling stock, infrastructure and innovative new rail technologies, filling a gap not just in UK rail but across Europe. The Council will work with Powys to enable the development of the site.

9.9.6 Development at the site will need to take into consideration the following constraints, placemaking principles and infrastructure requirements:

Constraints:

- The entirety of the site has been identified as having biodiversity constraints. The site contains purple moor grass and rush pasture, open mosaic habitat and qualifies as a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) for invertebrates and birds. There are some areas of deep peat and notable plants.
- The site is located approximately 900m from the Brecon Beacons National Park and dark skies area.
- Site is adjacent to Gorsllwyn, Onllwyn Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Potential linages between the site and SSSI.
- Ordinary watercourses and ditches on site.
- Site within surface mining (risk plan) area.
- There are a number of Public Rights of Way within the site and within close proximity of the site.
- Given the former coal mining use of the site, potential land instability, mine entries and shallow coal mine workings.
- Given the former use of the site there is contamination on site.

Infrastructure Requirements:

- Measures to reduce impacts on roads, safety, operation or capacity of the highway network to be informed by a Transport Assessment.
- An internal road network built to highways standard and conform with Manual for Streets.
- Active travel linkages will need to be made to encourage active travel to/ from the site.
- Cycle ways and shared use routes to be incorporated on site.

- Limited capacity identified within Crynant Waste Water Treatment Works. Further assessment work will be required in order to understand the extent to which this is a constraint to development and what infrastructure requirements may be required.
- Investigations carried out on site in order to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity. This should include findings from site investigations to locate the mine entries and shallow coal mine workings and details of any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy.
- Investigations carried our on site in order to understand the extent of land contamination, and subsequent land remediation as appropriate.
- Creation of a Green Infrastructure network across the site which maintains the existing ecosystem connectivity.

Placemaking Principles:

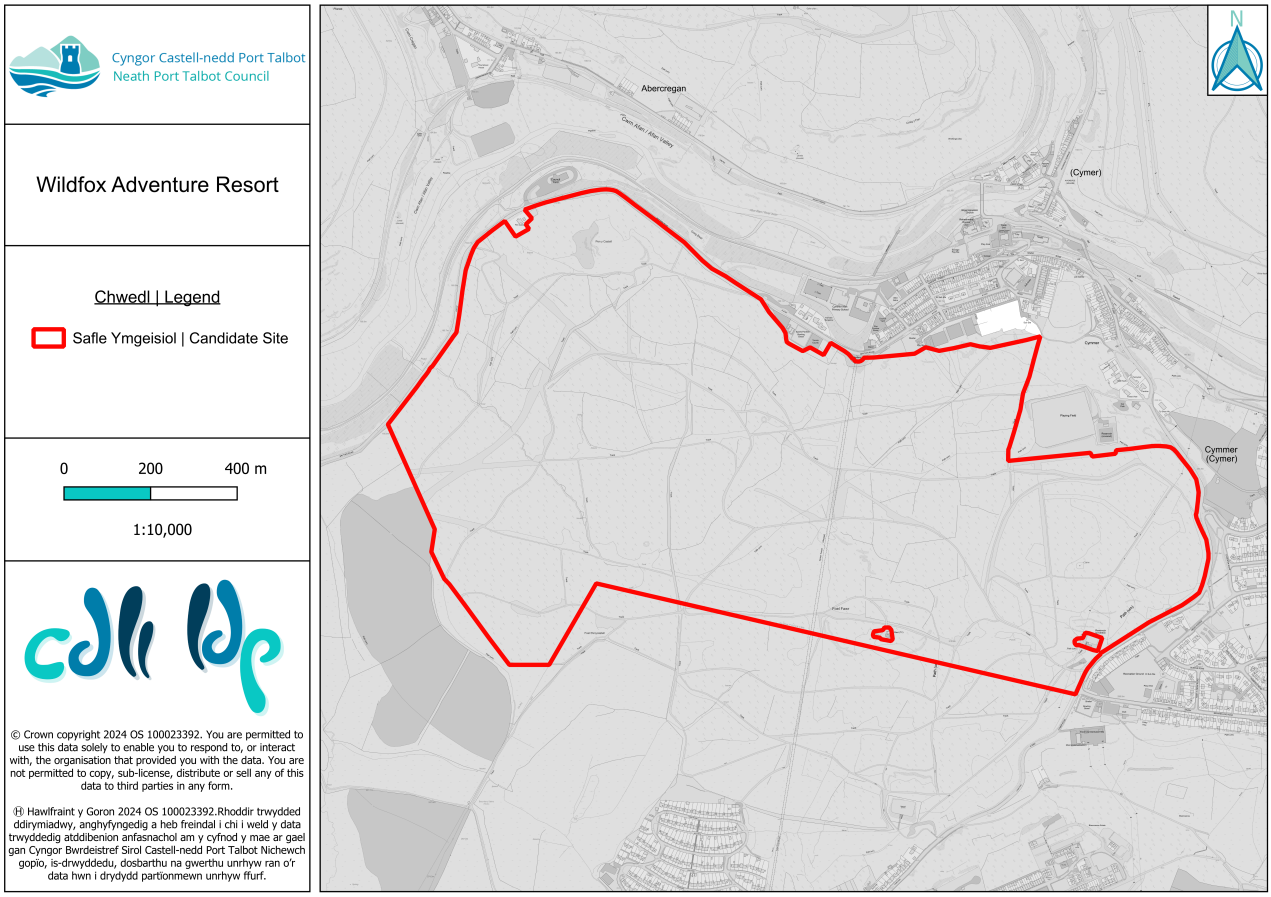
- Design measures to take into consideration the previous use of the site, including any land contamination, land instability, mine entries and shallow coal mine workings.
- Design measures to take into consideration biodiversity constraints across the site.
- The incorporation of a network of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure on site.
- Recreational space will be provided in accordance with policies and targets when identified.
- Site will be designed to be pedestrian friendly and incorporate linkages to the existing residential development.
- Design measures to take into consideration the proximity of existing residential development.
- An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, this should include the identification of the presence of S7 Environment (Wales) Act habitats and species, sites that meet Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria, in addition to protected species. A balance of S7/SINC habitat loss/gain to the scheme should be included. The results of this survey should inform the requirement for further more specific surveys, such as bird, bat and reptile surveys.
- Complementary facilities should be provided to serve the site. These should not be at a scale likely to significantly divert trade from the wider area (including facilities within Onllwyn/ Dyffryn Celwen) or detract from the prime focus of the site as a railway testing facility.
- Design measures to take into consideration landscape and visual impact arising from the proposed development including changes to the landscape character and changes to features/ composition of views.
- Design measures to take into consideration potential noise impacts on the surrounding communities.

Delivery:

- Planning conditions and obligations to control delivery of the development will be required, the use of the site and appropriate off-site considerations will be required.

9.10 Wildfox Adventure Resort, Afan Valley

Wildfox Adventure Resort



- **Site Area**: 128.4ha
- **Existing/ Previous Use**: Greenfield
- **Source**: Candidate Site 2022 RLDP/AV/0001
- **Proposed Development**: Tourism and recreation

9.10.1 The Wildfox Adventure Resort has been identified in the Preferred Strategy as a potential key site to be maximised and act as a catalyst for long term improvements in the Valleys Opportunity Area.

9.10.2 Outline planning permission P2018/0493 was granted in January 2022 for the development of 600 lodges/ apartments, 100-bed hotel with associated spa, restaurant, leisure activities and shops, adventure activities and associated buildings and associated development. Subsequent non-material amendments and conditions have been discharged. Reserved matters application P2022/0776 approved November 2022.

9.10.3 As part of the outline planning application the following concept masterplan was submitted and approved:

Concept Masterplan



Figure 2: Concept Masterplan

9.10.4 Given that a masterplan has already been submitted and outline and reserved matters approved, there is no need to develop a masterplan for the site. Instead, it is proposed that the site is brought forward as a key site in line with the planning application and approved masterplan.

9.10.5 Constraints and mitigation methods have been taken into consideration as part of the planning application and a s.106 agreement has been signed.



Appendix A

List of Supplementary Planning Guidance

Appendix A: List of Supplementary Planning Guidance

Table A.0.1 Supplementary Planning Guidance

RLDP SP	Policy Name	RLDP SPG Title	Timescale
SP1 / SP5	Strategic Placemaking / Placemaking in Action	Planning Obligations	Revised draft with RLDP Deposit Plan
SP3	Nature Emergency, Biodiversity and the Natural Environment	Biodiversity	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP5	Placemaking in Action	Key Site Placemaking Plans	At RLDP adoption
SP5	Placemaking in Action	Placemaking and Design	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP5	Placemaking in Action	The Welsh Language	Revised draft with RLDP Deposit Plan
SP6	Sustainable Transport	Placemaking and Design (including parking standards)	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP7	Housing	Housing (including Affordable Housing and Housing types) (including space standards)	Revised draft with RLDP Deposit Plan
SP10	Economic Recovery	Placemaking Plans	Post RLDP adoption
SP11	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP14	Historic Environment	The Historic Environment	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP14	Historic Environment	Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP14	Historic Environment	Schedule of Designated Canal Structures	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP15	Green Infrastructure	GI and Recreation Space (including GIA and GI Strategy)	Initial GIA with RLDP Preferred Strategy; GI and Recreation Space SPG to be published post RLDP adoption
SP16	Countryside, Landscapes and Undeveloped Coast	Countryside, Landscapes and Undeveloped Coast	Revised and published post RLDP adoption
SP17	Environmental Protection	Environmental Quality and De-risking	Revised and published post RLDP adoption



Appendix B

Review of Development Management Policies

Review of Development Management Policies

B.1 An assessment of existing LDP Development Management Policies has been undertaken. This exercise seeks to build upon the Review Report to provide an indication of whether these policies are functioning effectively and whether they will be carried forward as new policies in the RLDP.

B.2 Where policies are carried forward, they may be subject to minor changes to reflect changes to national requirements, to the local context and based on new, up to date evidence.

B.3 In some cases policies may have been found to have limited efficacy during the implementation and monitoring of the LDP, or in some cases, may be replaced by a different policy approach.

B.4 The outcome of further work to review these policies will be presented in the Deposit RLDP, where policies may be regrouped or reordered to reflect their links to the Objectives of the RLDP.

Overarching Policies

Table B.0.1 Overarching LDP Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
SC 1 - Settlement Limits	Past AMR's indicate that the policy appears to be working as intended, however there may be a requirement to update criteria in accordance with the updated Strategic Policies, as well as the findings from the background studies into the RLDP, such as the Employment Land Review.	The policy will be reviewed in respect of the wording of the criteria, to ensure that it considers changes made by the Preferred Strategy's Strategic Policies (such as Placemaking), as well as updated RLDP evidence. An amended policy will therefore be included within the Deposit RLDP.
SC 2 - Protection of Existing Community Facilities	Past AMR's indicate that the policy appears to be working as intended. However, consideration needs to be given to providing additional clarification about the definition / scope of the term Community Facilities.	The policy will be reviewed in respect of the wording of 'Community facility' and the policy in its entirety to ensure that it considers changes made by the Preferred Strategy's Strategic Policies (such as Placemaking), as well as updated RLDP evidence. It is likely that an amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
I 1 - Infrastructure Requirements	This policy was not always fully complied with for a variety of reasons. However, the Policy is essential in ensuring that there	As Infrastructure has been incorporated within other policies (such as Strategic Placemaking), it is important that this is reflected

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
	is sufficient infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of new development and should be carried forward in the new plan. The strategic policy has been re-written and incorporated within the Strategic Placemaking, Placemaking in Action and Sustainable Transport policies. Green and transport infrastructure requirements may need to be incorporated into this policy.	within the updated policy. Additionally, further clarify on the requirements for planning obligations is needed. Viability testing will determine the scope for developer contributions in new developments and an assessment of the key issues will determine if the list of potential requirements are still appropriate. An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Area Based Policies

Table B.0.2 LDP Area Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
SRA 1 Coed Darcy Strategic Regeneration Area	The AMR shows that the policy has not delivered as anticipated. The site has been submitted as a Candidate Site for the RLDP.	Details of this policy will be considered at the Deposit Stage, if relevant. If it is included, it will need to ensure that it takes into account the key strategic policies outlined in the Preferred Strategy.
SRA 2 Harbourside Strategic Regeneration Area	The AMR shows that the policy has not delivered as anticipated and only part of the housing and employment developments have occurred. However, the site is within the NGA so closer consideration of this policy will need to be undertaken once the results of the Preferred Strategy consultation are known.	Details of this policy will be considered at the Deposit Stage, if relevant. If it is included, it will need to ensure that it takes into account the key strategic policies outlined in the Preferred Strategy.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
CCRS 1 Coastal Corridor Regeneration Schemes	This policy sought to bring forward the Neath Town Centre redevelopment, Glanafan Comprehensive School and Afan Lido sites. These have all come forward, albeit the Neath Town Centre scheme has not delivered the level of housing development originally anticipated.	Revise policy to reflect reconsideration of spatial and growth strategy.
CCRS 2 Coastal Corridor University Campus	The site is predominantly built out. Consideration needs to be given as to whether a specific area policy is required for the Deposit Plan, given its location in the NGA. Consideration needs to be made as to whether overriding policies on Strategic Placemaking in Action provide sufficient information to finalise the development at the University Campus, or if a specific policy is required.	Details of this policy will be considered at the Deposit Stage, if relevant. If it is included, it will need to ensure that it takes into account the key strategic policies outlined in the Preferred Strategy.
VRS 1 Valleys Strategy Regeneration Scheme	Revise policy to reflect reconsideration of spatial and growth strategy.	Revise policy to reflect reconsideration of spatial and growth strategy.

Communities and Housing Topic Based Policies

Table B.0.3 LDP Communities and Housing Topic Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
H 1 Housing Sites	This policy will need updating to include any Candidate Sites that have been submitted as part of the RLDP that are deemed viable and deliverable.	Revise housing allocations to reflect the spatial and growth strategies and the spatial distribution of housing over the plan. An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
AH 1 Affordable Housing	The policy will require amending to reflect updated viability work.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
AH 2 Affordable Housing Exception Sites	Past AMR's indicate that there has not been any relevant applications regarding exception sites since the LDP Adoption. Further investigation and discussion with RSL partners will need to take place before a decision can be made as to the thresholds and targets.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
GT 1 Gypsy and Traveller Site	This policy will need to be updated to consider the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs study.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
GT 2 Proposals for New Gypsy and Traveller Sites	Past AMR's indicate that this policy is functioning effectively. This policy will need to be updated to align with the updated national policy and guidance, as well as the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs study.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
OS 1 Open Space Provision	Past AMR's indicate that this policy is working well. However, the policy requires updating as there has been changes to the Fields In Trust (FIT) standards since the LDP adoption. Furthermore, the introduction of Green Infrastructure requirements in FW and PPW may alter how this policy is worded / structured. There may also be some amendments required in response to the Officer Working Group comments to improve clarity.	The policy will be amended to ensure that it takes into account of the FIT changes, as well as the changes made by the Preferred Strategy's Strategic Policies (namely Placemaking in Action, and Green Infrastructure). An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
OS 2 Protection of Existing Open Space	The policy seems to be working relatively well, although it may need some revision to add further clarity (in response to Working Group comments) but should be carried forward.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Economy Topic Based Policies

Table B.0.4 LDP Economy Topic Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
EC 1 Employment Allocations	This policy will need updating to consider sites that have been submitted as part of the RLDP. This policy will need to take into account the expected demand for employment floorspace highlighted in the EHGA and Employment Land Review (ELR). The policy will also include any Candidate Sites that have been submitted as part of the RLDP that are deemed viable and deliverable.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EC 2 Existing Employment Areas	This policy will be reviewed in line with the findings of the ELR, and the EHGA. The policy will need to consider whether the protection of all employment areas listed are required, as well as any new sites identified in the ELR.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EC 3 Employment Area Uses	Past AMR's indicate that this policy functioning effectively. There could be minor amendments that could be made to this policy, including whether policies EC3 and EC4 can be combined.	An amended policy, potentially incorporating existing policies EC 3 and EC 4, will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
EC 4 Protection of Existing Employment Uses	Past AMR's indicate that this policy functioning effectively. Following comments from the Officer Working Group, this policy may need tweaking to improve clarity, in addition to whether policies EC3 and EC4 can be combined.	An amended policy, improving clarity and potentially incorporating existing policies EC 3 and EC 4, will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EC 5 Employment Uses in the Valleys	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Following comments from the Officer Working Group, this policy may need tweaking to improve clarity.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EC 6 Live work Units	As no applications have been received in relation to this policy since LDP adoption, there is a need to consider whether this policy is still relevant or needed. This will need to be informed by the ELR and Employment Background Paper.	The Employment Background Paper will need to assess whether this policy is still required in the RLDP, and whether other policies could satisfy any identified need. If it is included, it will need to ensure that it considers the key strategic policies outlined in the Preferred Strategy.
R 1 Retail Allocations	Additional studies are required to ascertain whether there is need for new retail allocations within the RLDP. This information, along with the Retail Background Paper, will highlight if there is an identified need.	The Retail Background Paper will need to assess whether this policy is still required in the RLDP. If it is included, it will need to ensure that it considers the key strategic policies outlined in the Preferred Strategy.
R 2 Proposals within Retail Centres	The policy appears to be functioning correctly, however there may be some minor revisions required to consider the changes in national retail policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
R 3 Out of Centre Retail Proposals	The policy appears to be functioning effectively.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
	Where necessary, there may be some minor revisions to the policy required to reflect changes to national retail policy.	
TO 1 Tourism Development in the Countryside	The policy is functioning effectively. There may be a requirement for minor amendments to improve clarity, in response to Officer Working Group comments.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TO 2 Protection of Existing Tourism Facilities	Past AMR's indicate that this policy is functioning effectively. Following comments from Officer Working Group, consideration needed as to whether the policy should be expanded to cover the conversion to other uses, not just residential. This will be explored in the Tourism Background Paper.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TO 3 Tourism Led Regeneration Scheme	This allocation has not been delivered; however, the site has been re-submitted to the Council as a tourism proposed candidate site. The Tourism background paper will need to assess the potential viability and deliverability of this scheme, as well as any other Tourism sites submitted as Candidate Sites or Planning Applications.	If the background paper concludes that these developments are deliverable and viable, an amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TO 4 Walking and Cycling Routes	The routes identified have been delivered. Additional studies need to be undertaken to consider whether additional alternative walking and cycling routes are required to deliver the strategy.	If the background paper concludes that these are needed to deliver the strategy, an amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
	This will be assessed through the Transport Background Paper.	

Environment and Resources Topic Based Policies

Table B.0.5 LDP Environment and Resources Topic Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
EN 1 - The Undeveloped Coast	The policy appears to be functioning effectively however amendments may be required considering the changes to national policy.	To continue protecting the Undeveloped Coast, an updated policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 2 - Special Landscape Areas (SLA)	Past AMR's indicate that this policy may need to be reviewed in light of the changes to national policy. There may be amendments needed to the boundary of the SLA's.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 3 - Green Wedges	Past AMR's indicate that this policy may need to be reviewed in the light of application decisions.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 4 - Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. There may be minor amendments required to the policy following consultations with Development Management Officers.	An updated policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 5 - Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. There may be minor amendments required to the policy following consultations with Development Management Officers.	An updated policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
EN 6 - Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Amendments will be required to the policy to update it to reflect national policy (such as incorporating biodiversity net benefit).	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 7 - Important Natural Features	The policy appears to be functioning effectively, however amendments are required so that it reflects changes to national policy (such as incorporating biodiversity net benefit).	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP. It may be required to include an additional policies on Green Infrastructure, and Biodiversity Net Benefit.
EN 8 - Pollution and Land Stability	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Following comments from the Officer Working Group, consider splitting the policy to have separate policies for Pollution and Land Stability to improve clarity.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP. It may be prudent to have separate policies for Pollution and Land Stability, which will be further considered in the preparation of the Deposit Plan.
EN 9 - Developments in the Central Port Talbot Area	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Following comments from the Officer Working Group, there may be some minor amendments required in order to provide clarity.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
EN 10 - Quiet Areas	Past AMR's indicate that the policy appears to be functioning effectively. The policy may need some amendments to bring into line new legislation.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
M 1 - Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas	Past AMR's indicate that the policy appears to be functioning effectively however amendments are required to reflect changes to national minerals policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
M 2 - Surface Coal Operations	The policy is no longer required due to changes to national minerals policy, and the resources available in the County Borough.	Remove policy.
M 3 - Development in Mineral Buffer Zones	Past AMR's indicate that the policy is functioning effectively. There may be a requirement for minor updates to be made due to changes in the national minerals policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
M 4 - Criteria for the Assessment of Mineral Development	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. There may be a requirement for minor updates to be made due to changes in the national minerals policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
RE 1 - Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Amendments are required to reflect changes to national renewable energy policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
RE 2 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Amendments may be required to the threshold for submitting assessments in response to Office Working Group comments as well as amendments to reflect the changes to national renewable energy policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
W 1 - In-Building Waste Treatment Facilities	The policy appears to be functioning effectively however amendments are needed in order to bring the policy into line with national and regional policy and guidance.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
W 2 - Deposit of Inert Waste on Agricultural Land	The policy appears to be functioning effectively however amendments are needed to bring the policy into line with national and regional policy and guidance.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
W 3 – Waste Management in New Development	The policy appears to be functioning effectively however amendments are needed in order to bring the policy into line with national and regional policy and guidance.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Transport and Access Topic Based Policies

Table B.0.6 LDP Transport and Access Topic Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
TR 1 – Transport Proposals	Amendments are required to reflect the fact that schemes have relatively been completed, and new schemes may be required to bring forward the new strategy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TR 2 – Design and Access of New Development	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Amendments may be required to bring forward changes in national policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TR 3 – Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure	The policy appears to be functioning effectively. Amendments may be required to bring forward changes in national policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
TR 4 – Safeguarding Freight Facilities	Past AMR's indicate that the policy is functioning effectively. Amendments may be required to bring forward changes in national policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.

Culture and Heritage Topic Based Policies

Table B.0.7 LDP Culture and Heritage Topic Based Policies

Development Management LDP Policies	Commentary	Recommendation
BE 1 - Design	This policy will need to be reviewed to consider the amendments made by the change in strategic policies (as highlighted in Strategic Placemaking and Placemaking in Action), as well as to incorporate amendments made in response to the officer working group comments.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
BE 2 – Buildings of Local Importance	This policy will be reviewed to consider the amendments made by the changes in national policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
BE 3 – The Canal Network	The policy appears to be functioning effectively; however it may be necessary to update it following the change in national policy.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.
WL 1 – Development in Language Sensitive Areas	The policy may need updating to bring forward amendments made in response to the Officer working group (for example, thresholds, or the inclusion of an Advertisement / Signage Policy). These options will be discussed further in the Welsh Language Background Paper.	An amended policy will be included within the Deposit RLDP.



Appendix C
Glossary of Terms

C.1 This Glossary provides terms and references which will be of use whilst reading this document.

2004 Act / The Act	The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Active Travel	Walking, wheeling or cycling for purposeful journeys to a destination, or in combination with public transport.
Adoption	The point at which the final agreed version of a document formally comes into use by the Council for planning purposes.
Affordable Housing	Housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers. This definition is set out by Welsh Government under Paragraph 5.1 of TAN 2.
Aggregates	A material or rock which is mined or processed to be used for construction purposes, for example crushed rock, sand and gravel.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	The Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities to review and assess the quality of air in the areas against national air quality standards and objectives. Where the UK air quality objectives are not being met and members of the public are affected, Local Authorities are required to declare an AQMA.
Allocation	Land identified in the Plan for a specific land use purpose.
Amenity	The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contribute to its overall character and its enjoyment by residents or visitors.
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	Following formal adoption of the LDP, this is a report submitted to the Welsh Government which assesses the effectiveness of the LDP against a set of indicators and targets.
Appraised	A judgement based on the most up to date assessment.
Baseline	A description of the present state of an area against which to measure change.

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Biodiversity	The whole variety of life on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals and the ecosystems and habitats they are part of.
Brownfield Sites (brownfield and/or previously developed land)	Brownfield land, or previously developed land, is defined in Planning Policy Wales 2024 as that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage of the development is included, as are defence buildings, and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures. Exclusions and detailed notes are fully described on page 37 of Planning Policy Wales.
Buffer	An area of land which separates or screens potentially incompatible uses, usually an area of landscaping or open space.
Buildings of Local Importance (BLIs)	Buildings that are historic and are of local importance. They set the context of our towns, cities, villages and rural areas.
Call for Candidate Sites and Urban Capacity Sites	In the preparation of the Plan, landowners, developers and others with an interest in land were invited to submit sites they wish to be considered for development or other uses through the RLDP.
Candidate Site Register	Register of candidate sites prepared following two calls for sites and one urban capacity call by the Local Planning Authority.
Candidate Sites and Urban Capacity Sites	Are sites which have been submitted for consideration for development or other uses through the RLDP.
Circular Economy	A circular economy is one which aims to keep materials, products, and components in use for as long as possible.
Climate Change	Long-term fluctuations in temperature, precipitation, wind, and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. Often regarded as a result of human activity and fossil fuel consumption.
Climate Emergency	Neath Port Talbot Council declared a climate emergency in September 2022. This commits the council to publicising the climate emergency; ensuring Neath Port Talbot

	becomes carbon neutral by 2030; working with relevant experts in research and development in reviewing its current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change; identifying any further necessary policy changes or actions, seeking help from local partners and other research bodies to explain local what local work is already underway, achievements already made and setting targets for the future; and updating on further work undertaken by the council in this area on an annual basis.
Coastal Corridor and National Growth Area	The narrow coastal strip extending around Swansea Bay where the main centres of population exist which has been identified in Future Wales as a National Growth Area.
Conservation Areas	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Constraints	Any factor that can affect where, how, or if development takes place.
Delivery Agreement (DA)	An agreement between the Local Planning Authority and the Welsh Government containing a timetable for Plan preparation and a Community Involvement Scheme setting out how the Authority intends to engage with the public and stakeholder organisations.
Density	In the case of residential development, a measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare.
Deposit Plan	The version of the RLDP which will be submitted to the Welsh Government for public examination.
Development	The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or land.
Development Management	The process a Local Planning Authority uses to determine a planning application.
Development Plans Manual (DPM)	Planning policy guidance document from the Welsh Government on the preparation of Local Development Plans.

Digital infrastructure	Digital Infrastructure is the digital and physical technologies that allow communities the opportunity to remotely connect with each other and access a range of goods and services.
District Heat Network Priority Area	These are areas which are considered to have greatest possibility for the development of district heat networks and areas in which the potential should be explored.
Ecology	The study of how plants and animals relate to one another and their surroundings.
Employment Land	Land used for the purposes of employment by one or more of the following: offices, manufacturing, research and development, storage and distribution.
Engagement	A process which encourages substantive deliberation in a community. Proactive attempt to involve any given group of people or section of the community.
Evidence Base	The information and data gathered by the Local Planning Authority to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in the RLDP, including physical, economic, and social characteristics of an area.
Flexibility Allowance	A locally appropriate additional allowance for sites not coming forward during the plan period. The ability to deliver requirements must be demonstrated through a housing trajectory.
Flood Zone	Area of low-lying land alongside watercourses or in coastal areas that are liable to flooding.
Future Wales (FW) 2040 / National Development Framework (NDF)	The National Development Plan prepared by Welsh Government which sets out the spatial development framework for Wales. This forms part of the spatial development plan for NPT.
General Conformity	The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 requires the RLDP to be in general conformity (support and uphold) the general principles of Future Wales.
Geodiversity	The variety of earth materials, forms and process that constitute and shape the earth including minerals, rocks, sediments, fossils, soils and water.

Green growth	The green growth approach seeks to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.
Green Wedge	A landscape designation used by Local Planning Authorities to (1) prevent the coalescence (or joining together) of settlements; and (2) protect the setting of urban areas.
Greenfield Sites	Land upon which no previous development has taken place. Usually grassland, farmland or heath.
Gypsies and Travellers	Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or family's or dependants' education or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.
Habitats Regulations Appraisal	An assessment of the impacts of development proposals / policies on the integrity of any European designated site (these are Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, European Offshore Marine Sites, and any potential Special Protection Areas and Candidate Special Areas of Conservation) and Ramsar (wetland) sites.
Health Impact Assessment	An assessment of the impacts of policies / proposals on health.
Historic Environment	The historic environment comprises all the surviving physical elements of previous human activity and illustrates how past generations have shaped the world around us.
Independent Examination	A process by which the soundness of the RLDP is tested in public.
Infrastructure	In planning terms, the physical structures that are required for a community to operate and be sustainable in the long term. Infrastructure typically refers to matters such as roads, water supply, sewers, electricity, and other social elements such as education, recreation and health facilities.

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA)	A systematic and iterative process undertaken during the preparation (and review) of a plan which identifies and reports on the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve on environmental, social, and economic objectives incorporating the Well Being for Future Generations 2015 Act requirements, Equalities Act, Welsh Language, Health Impact Assessment, and the Environment Act (Section 6) (where relevant).
Key Diagram	The diagrammatic interpretation of the RLDP's spatial strategy.
Landfill	Sites where household, commercial and industrial waste are disposed of in the ground.
Language Sensitive Area	An area where the Welsh Language is an important part of the social fabric of the community.
Listed Building	A building with special legal protection which is on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest complied by Cadw.
Local Biodiversity Action Plan	This aims to ensure that species and their habitats of national, regional, and local importance are protected from inappropriate development.
Local Development Plan (LDP)	The required statutory development plan for each Local Planning Authority area in Wales under Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The current LDP is the adopted LDP for NPT. This was adopted in 2016 and covers the period of 2011 to 2026. The Replacement LDP it currently being prepared and covers the period of 2023 to 2038.
Local Housing Market Assessment	A study intended to review the existing housing market in an area, consider the nature of future need for market and affordable housing and to inform policy development.
Market Housing	Private housing for rent or sale where the price is set in the open market.

Material Considerations	Is a factor relevant to the development and use of land which the decision-maker should consider when assessing and deciding the outcome of a planning application.
Mineral Buffer Zone	A zone around permitted or proposed mineral workings in order to establish a separation distance between potentially conflicting land uses.
Mitigation	Measures to avoid, reduce or offset significant adverse effects.
Mixed Use	Developments or proposals comprising more than one land use type on a single site.
National Sites Networks	The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 have created a national site network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The national site network includes existing SACs and SPAs and new SACs and SPAs designated under these Regulations. There were previously referred to as Natura 2000 sites.
Natural Material Management Plan	A requirement in Planning Policy Wales to promote the efficient use of minerals resources and minimise waste.
Nature Emergency	Wales first declared a Nature Emergency in 2019 and under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the council has a statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions.
Objective	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of the change in trends.
Open Countryside	Land outside the (development) boundaries of defined settlements.
Placemaking	A holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense. Placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings. This will be true for major developments creating new places as well as

	small developments created within a wider place. Placemaking should not add additional cost to a development, but will require smart, multi dimensional and innovative thinking to implement and should be considered at the earliest possible stage. Placemaking adds social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.
Placemaking Principles	As identified in the Placemaking Wales Charter. These include: 1. People and the Community 2. Location 3. Movement 4. Mix of uses 5. Public realm 6. Identity
Plan Period	The period of time a plan covers. The Neath Port Talbot RLDP covers the period 2023 to 2038.
Planning Application	An application to the Local Planning Authority for permission to carry out development of a specified nature or a particular site/building, usually requiring the payment of a specified fee.
Planning Condition	Planning permission can be granted subject to planning conditions to ensure that development is or is not carried out in a certain way.
Planning Obligation	This can be a legal undertaking by a developer only, or a legally binding agreement with the Local Planning Authority. Planning obligations are finalised before planning permission is granted. They are used to ensure a development is carried out in a certain way.
Planning Permission	Permission granted for the carrying out of specified development on a particular site. Permission can be given either conditionally or unconditionally.
Planning Policy Wales (PPW)	This is the primary planning policy document produced by the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice

	Notes (TANs) and together with other guidance in form of circulars etc, provides a comprehensive context for sustainable land use planning policy in Wales. In sum or in part they may be material considerations in planning decisions and appeals, and local planning authorities must have appropriate regard to national policy when formulating their Plans and Policies.
Policies	Can generally operate in three ways: (1) guiding the direction and nature of future growth; (2) promoting particular parcels of land in order to stimulate or bring forward development by making clear allocations; (3) ensuring that proposals brought forward by developers conform to national policies, regional guidance and the adopted strategy of the Plan.
Pre-Assessed Area for Wind Energy	'Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy' are identified in Future Wales. These are areas where Welsh Government has concluded that developments would be acceptable.
Pre-Deposit / Preferred Strategy	The first formal stage of Plan preparation in which individuals and organisations can make representations to the RLDP.
Proposals Map	A component of the RLDP showing the geographical distribution of proposals on an Ordnance Survey base map.
Recreational Space	Refers to publicly accessible recreational space and includes playing fields, sports pitches and courts, children's play areas, facilities for older children, informal open space, greenspace, parks and allotments.
Registered Social Landlords (RSL) / Registered Provider (RP)	Non-profit making organisations that provide low cost "social housing". They provide housing for rent as well as shared ownership schemes to help those who cannot afford to buy a home outright.
Renewable Energy	Energy which occurs naturally and repeatedly in the environment, for example from the sun, the wind and the fall of water.
Representation	Comments in support of, or in opposition to, the RLDP.

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Review Report	The required statutory report under S69 of the 2004 Act and/or Reg41; to conclude on the LDP revision procedure to be followed based on a clear assessment of what has been considered and what needs to change and why, based on evidence.
Scheduled Monuments	Scheduling is the selection of nationally important archaeological sites. These sites can include standing stones and burial mounds.
Section 106 Agreement	A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town & County Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a Planning Authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer which ensures that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.
Settlement Limit	Settlement Limits defined in the current LDP beyond which lies countryside.
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) / Potential Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (pSINC)	Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted / identified by Local Authorities for planning purposes.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	These are sites which have been recognised for the importance either for their biological, geological or landscape value.
Soundness	The concept against which an RLDP is examined by the Inspector at Independent Examination, irrespective of whether or not representations have been received, under the general headings of procedure, consistency and coherence and effectiveness. A Framework for assessing the soundness of LDPs has been developed by the Planning Inspectorate.
Spatial Planning	A modern approach to land use planning looking beyond immediate effects upon a locality to consider the wider implications of development including how proposals integrate with and deliver wide strategies and objectives.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	A site designated under the European Community Habitats Directive to protect internationally important natural habitats and species.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	A landscape designation used by Local Planning Authorities to protect areas of high landscape value, such areas have additional protection over and above 'normal planning policies' for the protection of the countryside.
Stakeholders	Groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the view of many people.
Statutory	Required by law e.g. Act of Parliament.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a system of including environmental considerations into certain plans and programmes at an early stage of the programme or plan development.
Submission	Formal stage when the RLDP is submitted to the Welsh Government for independent examination by a government-appointed planning inspector.
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	A means of setting out more detailed topic or site specific guidance on the way in which the policies of the LDP will be applied in particular circumstances or areas. Current Supplementary Planning Guidance refers to adopted guidance for the current LDP. Emerging refers to guidance which will be prepared for the RLDP.
Sustainable Development	In broad terms this means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Tourism	Balancing tourism ambitions against economic, social, and environmental issues as well as paying attention to improving tourists' experiences and addressing the needs of host communities.
Technical Advice Notes (TANs)	Documents produced by the Welsh Government giving detailed technical guidance to Local Planning Authorities on

	particular planning issues. TANs should be read in conjunction with Planning Policy (Wales) and taken into account by Local Planning Authorities in the preparation of development plans. They may also be material planning considerations in the determination of individual planning applications.
The Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMV)	Agricultural land of grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification system (ALC) is the best and most versatile and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future.
Topography	The arrangement of the physical features of the landscape.
Town Centre First	It is a policy in Future Wales which directs significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities to town and city centres.
Transport Corridors	These are the main routes identified in the County Borough for the movement of people or goods.
Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)	Vehicles which use a range of technologies including battery and hydrogen power and produce low emissions.
Use Class	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes', relating to the type of activity taking place on property or land.
Valley Hub	A valley is a location that has been identified in recognition of their important function in providing a range of services and facilities and with the geographical location providing important transport links to the wider area.
Valleys Opportunity Area	Encompasses the spatial areas of the Afan Valley, Neath Valley, Dulais Valley, Swansea Valley, Amman Valley and Pontardawe.
Vision	How Neath Port Talbot is envisaged to change over the Plan period.
Well Being for Future Generations Act (WBFGA) 2015	The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each

	other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
Windfall Sites	A site for new housing development which is currently unallocated but has the potential to come forward for development during the Plan period.

Scan the QR code below for further information