

SECTION 9 SITE ASSESSMENT PROFORMAS

INITIAL PLANNING ASSESSMENT

General Information

Date of Assessment Officer Initials

Grid Reference:

1. Site Name:

2. Site Location:

3. Site Reference No:

4. Site Area (Hectares):

5. Landowner's suggested use:

.....

6. If residential, approximate number of units (density of 35 units/ha)

7. General site description:

UDP Assessment

8. Current UDP policy assessment

.....

Relationship to existing settlement

9a. How does the site relate to the existing settlement?

Location	Y/N	Comments
Within existing settlement		
Rounding off settlement		
Edge of settlement		
Out of settlement		

9b. Would this location be acceptable in these terms?

Yes
 No

Sites of National Importance for Biodiversity

10a. Is this site located within or within close proximity to an area of international/national importance for biodiversity?

	No	Close Proximity	Partial Coverage	Whole Coverage
Special Areas of Conservation				
Site of Special Scientific Interest				

Comments:

.....

10b. Is the site acceptable in relation to these designations?

Yes
 No
 Unknown – need further information

Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

11. Is the proposed land use compatible with neighbouring uses?

Yes
 No

Comment on any potential conflicts:

.....

Flood Risk

12a. Is the site located within a Flood Risk area as defined by TAN 15?

Flood Zone	Y/N	Partial	Complete	Predominant Zoning
Zone A				
Zone B				
Zone C1				
Zone C2				

Comments:

.....

12b. Would the proposed development be acceptable in relation to flood risk? (see guidance notes)

Yes
 No

Planning History

13. Does the site or part of the site have any valid planning permissions (please state application number and details)?

App. No	App. Type	Decision	Details

14. Is the applicant's proposed use acceptable?

Yes
 No

Justification:

.....

15. Would the site be suitable for the following uses from a planning perspective? (identify most appropriate)

Use	Y/N	Justification
Residential		
General Industrial (B2/B8)		

Retail		
Mixed Use		
Commercial Leisure		
Community Facilities		
Sport/Leisure		
Office		

Overall Conclusion

16. Is the site acceptable for further consideration as part of the LDP process?

Yes

No

If yes, officer's preferred use

.....

<p>Justification for decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • •
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Explanation Note for Initial Planning Assessment Proforma

General Information

In order to maintain an accurate record of the site assessment process, general information on the date of assessment, the initials of the officer undertaking the assessment and the grid reference (8 number) for the site in order to identify the site on the map.

1. Site Name

This is the name that was given to the site upon submission of the site for assessment, based on its location.

2. Site Location

The nearest settlement to the site

3. Site Area

Total site area in hectares

4. Site Reference No.

Reference number and letter allocated to the site

5. Landowners Suggested Use

As part of the landowners consultation, landowners were asked to identify their preferred use for the site. Where sites have been included from other sources residential will be assumed for the land use unless it is specified otherwise.

6. If residential, approximate number of units

Using the density of 35 units per hectare, which has been identified as the average density for development in the County Borough on the basis of applications approved for sites of 10 or more units as recorded in the Joint Housing Land Availability Study, the number of dwellings for the site can be calculated.

7. General site description

This description should include considerations such as whether the site is brownfield or greenfield (if known), whether it is well related to an existing settlement in terms of proximity to services, if it contains any form of development at present (farmhouse, industrial unit, listed building etc), and if it is steeply sloping or flat.

8. Current UDP Policy Assessment

Please indicate the current designation of the site as illustrated in the UDP ie Green Wedge, Housing site, SINC etc. It will also be important to specify whether the site is

within or in close proximity to a conservation area or Scheduled Ancient Monument or any other UDP policy allocation. Comment should also be made on whether the site is inside or outside of the existing settlement boundary. Where existing policy designations are identified, comments should be made as to the efficacy of the policy.

9a and b. Relationship to existing settlements

This question refers specifically to how the site relates to the existing settlement. Rather than using the current settlement boundaries as defined in the UDP, asking for a common sense approach should be applied and where a development does abut an existing settlement, even though it might be outside our current settlement boundaries that we consider the site as 'edge of settlement'. In addition where a proposed site appears to logically 'round-off' a settlement, 'rounding-off' should be identified as opposed to 'edge of settlement'. 'Out of settlement' and 'within existing settlement' are self-explanatory.

This assessment should be supported by comments and a decision made on whether this location would be acceptable as a Yes or No answer.

10a and b. Sites of national importance for biodiversity that would prohibit development.

There are a number of sites that have been recognised as being nationally important in terms of biodiversity within Caerphilly County Borough, and as a result there will be a strong presumption against development. The County Borough has one Special Area of Conservation and 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It should be noted that there are other levels of national protection such as Special Protection Areas/RAMSAR and National Nature Reserves but there are none of these sites present in the County Borough.

Even if the site is not located within an SSSI or SAC, it may be the case that sites that are directly adjacent to these designations may have an unacceptable impact.

In responding to this question, the amount of land that may impact on the SSSI or SAC should be identified (none, partial or whole) and any additional comment in relation to this assessment should be made.

The Countryside section will provide comments on those environmental designations that are of regional or local importance such as SINCs, sites supporting LBAP Species etc.

A decision needs to be made on whether development would be acceptable in this locality or whether this may be harmful on the SSSIs/SACs. It may be the case that further information needs to be collected on possible impacts.

11. Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

Environmental Health will be carrying out an in-depth analysis of noise exposure levels / air pollution / contaminated land etc. The general planning assessment does not need to provide a detailed assessment on potential conflict but identify where

conflicts may occur, such as residential proposed next to an existing employment site or proximity to a major road. A common-sense approach needs to be adopted based upon professional judgement.

12a and b. Flood Risk

Please indicate where a site falls into a flood risk zone. Where a site is indicated as both C1 and C2 the Environment Agency have confirmed that it should be treated as a C1 Zone. The amount of the site that is located in each of the flood risk zones should be identified if appropriate.

The Figure below gives a description of zones:

Figure 1

Description of Zone		Use within the precautionary framework
Considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding.	A	Used to indicate that justification test is not applicable and no need to consider flood risk further.
Areas known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits.	B	Used as part of a precautionary approach to indicate where site levels should be checked against the extreme (0.1%) flood level. If site levels are greater than the flood levels used to define adjacent extreme flood outline there is no need to consider flood risk further.
Based on Environment Agency extreme flood outline, equal to or greater than 0.1% (river, tidal or coastal)	C	Used to indicate that flooding issues should be considered as an integral part of decision making by the application of the justification test including assessment of consequences.
Areas of the floodplain which are developed and served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences.	C1	Used to indicate that development can take place subject to application of justification test, including acceptability of consequences.
Areas of the floodplain without significant flood defence infrastructure.	C2	Used to indicate that only less vulnerable development should be considered subject to application of justification test, including acceptability of consequences. Emergency services and highly vulnerable development should not be considered.

Figure 2 needs to be given consideration in relation to the proposed use suggested for the site. For instance, residential development is considered 'highly vulnerable' therefore it should not be considered in a C2 Flood risk zone. A decision in relation to this should be made to identify whether the proposed development would be acceptable in relation to these designations.

Welsh Assembly Government (2004) **Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk**

13. Planning History

If the site has been subject to a recent relevant planning application, recent consultations would have been undertaken and can be used in identifying possible constraints. For the purposes of this field, the application number, date of application and brief details should be noted on all applications submitted on a site since 1996. Where part of the identified site only has been subject to this application, this should be specified.

14. Suitability of the applicants preferred use

As a result of the answers to the previous questions, a recommendation should be made on whether the applicant's proposed use is acceptable and the justification for why this decision has been made.

15. Preferred Uses

It may be the case that sites are not suitable for the use proposed by the landowner but may be suitable for another use. This question aims to identify all possible land uses that the site may be suitable for and justification for this decision.

16. Overall Conclusion

This is intended to raise the most pertinent points in relation to rejecting / recommending a site for its suggested use. Where an officer feels that the suggested use of the site is inappropriate, the officer should recommend an appropriate use as identified in the preferred uses appraisal. A decision should be made on the basis of this information to identify whether the site is acceptable for further consideration as part of the LDP process and justification for this.

If the site is considered acceptable, it will be subject to further consideration in relation to Countryside, Environmental Health and Highways. However, if no uses are identified as appropriate, the site will be ruled out as unsuitable in planning terms and no further assessment will be made.

TOURISM PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Where sites have been proposed for a tourism use, these have been assessed against specific tourism criteria as different factors must be considered.

General Information

Date of Assessment Officer Initials

Grid Reference

1. Site Name:

2. Site Location:

3. Site Reference No.

4. Site Area (Hectares):

5. Landowner's suggested use:

5a New?

Relating to existing tourist/historic attraction?

6. General site description:

Sites of National Importance for Biodiversity

7a. Is this site located within or within close proximity to an area of international/national importance for biodiversity?

Designated Area	Affected
National Parks	
Special Landscape Areas	
Special Areas of Conservation	
Site of Special Scientific Interest	
Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation	
Conservation Area	
Listed Building	
Scheduled Ancient Monument	
Historic Park/Garden/Landscape	
Green Wedge	

Comments:

7b. Is the site acceptable in relation to these designations?

UDP Assessment

8. Current UDP policy assessment

Relationship to existing settlement

9a. How does the site relate to the existing settlement?

Location	Y/N	Comments
Within town centre		
Edge of centre		
Suburban		
Village		
Brownfield		
Greenfield		

9b. Does the proposal relate to rural diversification?

9c. Would this location be acceptable in these terms?

Is the proposed facility:

9c. Seasonal

Year round

9d What type of development is involved?

Development	Y/N
Hotel	
Self-catering	
Caravans & camping	
Waterways	
Golf courses	
Other sports eg off-road vehicles	

Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

10. Is the proposed land use compatible with neighbouring uses?

Comment on any potential conflicts:

11a. Are there other tourist facilities nearby – please note nearest:

11b. Is the proposed development sympathetic to the surrounding area in terms of scale, character and appearance?

11c. Is further tourism investment expected in area?

11d. Will proposal involve any leisure facility/ green space?

11e. Will the proposal involve reuse of existing buildings?

Flood Risk

12a. Is the site located within a Flood Risk area as defined by TAN 15?

Flood Zone	Y/N	Coverage	Main Zoning
Zone A			
Zone B			
Zone C1			
Zone C2			

Comments:

12b. Would the proposed development be acceptable in relation to flood risk?

13. Is the applicant's proposed use acceptable?

Justification:

14. How accessible is site?

Mode	Y/N	Comments
Walking		
Cycling		
Car		

15. Is site served by public transport?

Mode	Y/N	Comments
Bus		
Train		

16. If so where is the nearest access point?

Overall Conclusion

17. Is the site acceptable for further consideration as part of the LDP process?

If yes, officer's preferred use

Justification for decision

Highways Assessment Proforma

General site information

Site Name:

Site Location:

Site Reference No. _____

Site Area: _____

Type of development proposed: _____

General site description:

Potential impact on existing highway network resulting from the proposed development

1. Estimated Trip generation as result of development:
 - a. Estimated number of units on site (residential use only): _____
 - b. Estimated trip generation (if residential – per unit/24hr): _____
 - c. Estimated Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) generated by the development:
_____ Trips/24hr.
 - d. Estimated hours of peak flow: _____ AM _____ PM

2. Observations of existing Highway infrastructure to which new access / egress will adjoin:
 - a. Estimated current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT):
_____ Trips/24hr.

- b. Provide detailed description of existing highway conditions: (e.g. Evidence of operational, topographical, environmental and safety issues that exist on both the local and wider road network).

<p>Observations</p>

3. To what extent would the use of this land for the stated purpose impact on the existing highway network in terms of traffic generation?

Estimated increase in vehicular trips on existing network as a result of the development:

- a. Estimated increase in total number of trips made: (Use estimated AADT in Q.1c)

- b. What is the estimated percentage increase of vehicular trips on the existing highway network as a result of the traffic generated by the development?

$$\frac{\text{Estimated increase in total number of trips}}{\text{Estimated current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)}} \times 100 = \text{_____} \%$$

- c. Does traffic to and from the development exceed 10% of the two way flow on the adjoining highway?

YES –Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) recommended

NO

- d. Does the traffic flow to and from the development exceed 5% of the two-way flow on the adjoining highway where congestion exists?

YES – Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) recommended

NO

4. What implications would this increase in vehicular traffic have on the existing highway network in terms of both creating and or exacerbating existing network problems? (As listed in Q.2b)

Please list all operational, topographical and safety issues:

5. Are there any other candidate LDP development sites in the area that may in conjunction with this one, have a collective negative impact on the surrounding highway network?

YES

NO

If yes, please specify site name and implications:

6. Having considered the aforementioned, would you consider the negative impact on the existing network as a result of this development, to be at a level that will require major capacity improvement works in the short to medium future through a Section 106 Planning Agreement.

YES NO

Accessibility onto existing highway network

7. Is there an existing access to the site: YES NO

8. Is the existing access(s) and road it adjoins (i.e. if private drive, farm lane etc) adequate to facilitate the movement of traffic generated by the development? (Refer to Q.1c&e for projected trip generation).

YES NO

9. Provide general description of existing access point(s) and road? (Mark on plan).

10. Considering the area of the development and the proposed use, how many access points would be recommended? (Mark preferred access point(s) on plan provided).

Number of access points recommended =

11. If a new access or accesses were required to the site, onto what hierarchy of road would it/they have to adjoin?

Core network County route

Distributor route Access road

Other: (Please specify) _____

12. What is the potential of physically providing a new access point(s) onto the existing highway network: (Please 'X' appropriate box for each access point).

Easy access obtainable to existing Highway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relatively easy access obtainable, although some constraints present	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficult to provide access to site due to numerous constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access cannot be provided due to severity of constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Provide a general description of each potential access point and 'X' appropriate box to indicate severity of existing constraints: (Please clearly reference each proposed point of access with plan).

Access (a):

Minor Intermediate Major

Access (b):

Minor Intermediate Major

Access (c):

Minor Intermediate Major

14. Would a Section 278 Highway Agreement be required to help facilitate access to the site?

YES

NO

Recommendation:

Please 'X' appropriate box and provide a summary explanation for recommendation:

Site **IS** suitable to be developed for its intended purpose.

Brief reason for recommendation:

Site is **NOT** suitable to be developed for its intended purpose.

Brief reason for recommendation:

Explanation Note for Highways Assessment Proforma

General site information

This section is to be completed by using the information provided by the Planning Division and is located at the front of their assessment proforma that is attached to each site plan. The information provides a general overview of the site including its location, size, number of proposed units (residential), reference number, existing and proposed usage (note: highway assessment to consider Planning Officers recommendation for development type and NOT landowners recommendation) as well as a general description of site conditions.

Potential impact on existing highway infrastructure resulting from the proposed development

The allocation of land for development will, depending on its proposed use, have a varying level of impact on the surrounding highway infrastructure. It is therefore important to try and foresee what the potential impact each type and size of development may have on the existing network hierarchy.

Using a trip generation database (TRICS) to provide traffic flow data for varying types and sizes of development it is possible to estimate the level of traffic likely to be generated as a result of a proposed development.

Q. 1a – The number of units is dependant on the site area, using the known site area the Planning Division will provide the estimated number of units to be built on the site. The number of units will only be given when considering residential developments.

Q. 2b – This is again dependent on the proposed development type. When considering residential developments you can expect the following number of trips per unit:

Residential use – **8** trips per unit/24hr period

However, to determine the number of trips generated as a result of the following development types you must consider the land area and proposed use of the site and not number of units as per residential sites. The Consultant is required to consult with Highways Planning and the TRICS database when considering trips levels for the following development types:

- Sports/Leisure use
- Mixed use
- Office use
- Industrial use
- Retail use

Q. 1c – To determine the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) generated by a residential development, the following calculation can be performed. However to

establish the AADT of other development types (such as above) you are required to consult the TRICS database.

Estimated No. of trips per unit x No. of proposed units on site = AADT

Q. 1 d&e – The estimated hours of peak flow will be provided by the TRIC'S database (see Highways Planning).

Q. 2a – This will give an idea of the existing two-way flow on the adjoining highway. To calculate the estimated traffic flow on the existing highway the consultant is required to:

Conduct an off peak (after 9.00am and before 4.00pm) 10 minute two way count of the traffic flow on the highway. Then carry out the following calculation:

Total vehicles counted x 100 = AADT (Vehicular trips per 24hr period)

Q. 2b – The consultant is required to observe and record site observations in relation to operational, topographical, and environmental issues as well as any safety hazards that might exist on the existing road network.

Q. 3a – Use figure determined in question Q. 1c.

Q. 3b – This calculation will be used to determine the percentage increase of vehicular trips on the existing network as a direct result of the development. This is determined by using the following calculation:

Estimated increase in total number of trips x 100 = % increase in vehicular trips
Estimated current Annual Average
Daily Traffic (AADT)

The 'Estimated increase in total number of trips' is determined from Q. 3a and the 'Estimated current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is taken from Q. 2a.

Q. 3 c&d – Will be determined by the percentage given in Q. 3b. The percentage increase in traffic flow on the existing network will establish whether it may be advisable to request a Traffic Impact Assessment prior to the development of the site or not. The determination levels are in accordance with IHT guidance.

Q. 4 – Is the potential increase in traffic generated by the development likely to impact on existing or create new operational or topographical problems on the highway. Capacity and highway safety issues to be considered.

Q. 5 – The consultant will be required to observe the spatial plan indicating the location of all the candidate LDP development sites in the Borough. The consultant is required to assess whether there will be a collective impact on the network as a result of several developments accessing the same distributor route, access road, roundabout etc.

Sites of concern to be listed and potential implications to highway network stated, for example potential capacity, road safety problems etc.

Q. 6 – This question considers the impact of the proposed increase in traffic generated by the proposed development and whether any works to the existing network carried out via a Section 106 Planning Agreement would be required to allow for the expected increase in traffic levels on the surrounding network.

Accessibility onto the existing highway network

An assessment of existing and potential access points to the development site is required. Whilst it is accepted that most sites may be made physically accessible at a cost, it is important to recognise what constraints may inhibit this and the potential difficulties that must be overcome.

Q. 7 – Asks whether the site can be accessed by vehicles from the existing highway.

Q. 8 – A site may currently be accessible from the highway, however the current access may not be suitable for the proposed development use. The current access may be narrow, un-surfaced etc and form part of a private drive or access lane before joining with the public highway some distance away. It is therefore necessary to consider the existing access and whether it is suitable to handle the volume of traffic generated by the development (use trip generation figures from Q. 1 c&e). Factors to be considered are access visibility, width, alignments, type of road, lane the access exits onto and its width, class, usage, purpose etc.

Q. 9 – The consultant is required to provide a general description of the existing access point(s) to the site, considering the above factors. Existing access points are to be referenced on a plan and accompanied by photographs.

Q. 10 – The number of access/egress points required to the site is dependant on the size of the development and when considering residential developments the number of units present.

For example under most circumstances, good practice states that a residential development will have one access/egress point for every 300 units on site.

Q. 11 – An important factor that must be considered when assessing potential new access points is Caerphilly C. B. C's road hierarchy. The road hierarchy (as set out in the Local Transport Plan) is defined as consisting of a Core Network, County Routes, Distributor Routes and Access roads.

Mark the appropriate box(s) for each potential access/egress point required.

The purpose of this hierarchy is to facilitate the efficient use of the highway network and control what transport and development access arrangements may be permitted at what point on the highway. (These controls are defined in the Unitary Development Plan 2003).

Using these controls may determine the suitability of a development. For example direct access from a site onto the Core Network is not considered acceptable under the terms set out in the UDP, therefore where you have a site that's only potential access point is onto the Core Network the current guidance will not allow the development to proceed unless under exceptional circumstances.

Q. 12 - The potential to access a site has been graded into four categories of difficulty depending on existing constraints. The consultant must use his/her judgement to assess the potential of providing a suitable access while considering the severity of constraint that may influence access to the site:

1. Easy access obtainable to existing highway
2. Relatively easy access obtainable, although some constraints present
3. Difficult to provide access to site due to numerous constraints
4. Access cannot be provided due to severity of constraints

Q. 13 – The consultant is required to provide a written description of each potential access point to the site, listing observations regarding topography, alignments, visibility, land ownership issues (site landlocked, ransom strips etc) and layout. The consultant is also asked to 'X' the appropriate box to indicate level of severity of constraints effecting potential access to the site. For example the site may be bound on 3 sides by a river and the Core Network on the other, therefore access to the site would be severely restricted.

Each access point is to be clearly crossed referenced between the proforma and the provided plan. Photographs are also to be provided.

Q. 14 – A developer and Highway Authority may, if required, enter into a Section 278 Highway Agreement to allow for the execution of works to the highway to allow access to a development site.

The consultant must envisage whether alterations to the existing highway (i.e. widening of existing junction, layout changes, provision of a roundabout, left/right turning lanes, footway changes etc) may be necessary to allow access to the site and therefore whether a Section 278 Highway Agreement will be required to facilitate these works.

Recommendation

The consultant is required to use the evidence that has been collected for the completion of the proforma to determine whether a site 'is' or 'is not' suitable for the proposed development.

The consultant is required to mark an 'X' in the appropriate box and provide a brief summary referencing evidence in the proforma that supports the final decision.

Environmental Health Proforma

Environmental Health - Local Development Plan Site Assessments

General

Officer's Name

Date of Assessment

General site information

Site Name

Site Location

Site Reference No

Site Area (Ha)

Type of development proposed

Are there any neighbouring LDP development sites that may, in conjunction with this one, have a negative impact? (Y/N)

Is Yes, please specify site reference(s)

Criteria

1. Odour

None
Potential Odour Nuisance

Officer's Comments

2. Light

None
Potential Light Nuisance

Officer's Comments

3. Noise

Commercial/Industrial

Traffic

Mixed

Other

None

Officer's Comments

None

BS4142 Type Assessment Required

TAN 11 Assessment Required

Both Assessments Required

Noise Assessment Required

4. Waste

None

Potential Waste Nuisance

Officer's Comments

5. Contamination

None

Ground investigation and risk assessment required in accordance with current DEFRA guidance (using CLEA Model) and having regard to CLR 7 TO 11

Officer's Comments

SUMMARY

Site is suitable for intended purpose

Further information is required prior to a decision
on whether site is suitable for its intended purpose

Details of Further Information Required to be Submitted

Site is not suitable for intended purpose

Brief reason for recommendation

Consideration of Alternative Proposed Use

Residential

General Industrial B2 General Industry (not offices)

B8 Warehousing/Storage

Offices

Mixed Use

Retail

Commercial Leisure eg cinemas

Sport and Recreation eg playing pitches

Approved By

Explanation Note for Environmental Health Proforma

In assessing the sites for the Local Development Plan, the Environmental Health department has given consideration to the potential future use of each site in terms of their impact on neighbouring developments. The possible impacts of odour nuisance, light nuisance, noise nuisance, the impact of waste and the possible effects of contaminated land have been considered. The following notes expand on the potential aforementioned effects and aim to put into context the reasoning for the selection of the preferred end use of the sites under consideration.

1. Odour Nuisance

Complaints to the environmental health department about odour constitutes a significant proportion of the total complaints received each year. Odour complaints arise from a variety of sources ranging from cooking smells, the keeping of livestock, animal by-products and meat processing operations and chemical plants to name just a few. Most complaints about odour relate to the annoyance about the smells affecting the enjoyment of homes and gardens, or making working conditions unpleasant. Odour intensity or strength can be difficult to measure and can also be subjective in nature, offending some people more than others. The frequency of the odour occurring can also affect the way in which it is perceived by the recipient, as can the duration and the time of day it occurs. Offensive odours are not necessarily unpleasant in nature; the smell of perfume or other fragrance can become offensive if its frequency and duration is such that it is persistent in nature in a residential area.

The importance of the consideration of odour for the purpose of the local development plan site assessment should not be underestimated because it can be difficult to control after the odorous process, plant or activity has been granted permission to operate. Whilst legislative controls are effective, the process of gathering sufficient evidence to begin legal proceedings can be lengthy and the costs to the operator in remedial measures can be onerous. To reduce the impact of odour on residential properties, the siting of commercial or industrial premises must be carefully considered and avoided wherever possible. The assessment proforma requires that the assessor gives consideration to whether the LDP site could cause an odour nuisance, in which case, the planning process would at the least require it to be conditioned before beneficial use.

2. Light nuisance

The sites under consideration for the LDP and the future use of the sites have to be considered for the potential for nuisance from artificial light. Lighting systems from security perimeter units to those used for recreation and leisure pitches have the potential to be intrusive to residential accommodation if not correctly positioned. There are currently no legislative controls in place for the Authority to use to require that lights are removed or the nuisance abated. In this regard, the consideration for the type of development proposed and its proximity to residential accommodation must be taken into account. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 will amend section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to create the category of artificial light as a statutory nuisance; however that legislation has yet to be enacted in Wales. In the interim period and for the purposes of LDP site

assessment, the potential for light nuisance must be noted and regard given to the possible end use of each site in relation to the proximity to existing residential developments.

3. Noise

Noise potential from development is a material planning consideration and guidance has been in use for a number of years to inform the planning process of the suitability of a proposed development. In terms of the assessment for the potential end use of the LDP sites, the assessor will need to consider the impact of noise using two main guidance tools: Planning Guidance (Wales), Technical Advice Note (Wales) 11, Noise (October 1997) and British Standard 4142 (1997).

TAN 11 is used to assess the suitability of residential development near transport related noise sources such as road, rail, and airports as well as noise from industrial and commercial operations. The TAN document provides four noise exposure categories that local authorities are required to have regard to in the determination of planning for residential development protection. For each of the categories the TAN document recommends limits for both day and night time exposure for new dwellings. If a development falls within noise exposure categories A or B, noise need not be considered or could be controlled by conditioning the planning permission. Noise exposure category C would not normally be considered suitable for residential development but it may in certain circumstances be granted. Where new dwellings are proposed in an area where the noise exposure that falls within category D, the planning permission would be refused.

British Standard 4142 is used to assess the likelihood of a noise complaint from an industrial source under normal operating conditions using a mixture of calculations and measurements. It can be used to assess noise levels from both existing and new or modified premises in the vicinity of existing housing and other noise sensitive uses.

4. Waste

The correct handling, storage and disposal of waste from a commercial or industrial process is controlled by a variety of legislative tools, depending on the nature of the originating premises and the nature of the waste. As a material planning condition, the control of waste from a relevant process would need to be considered and the appropriate scheme of waste control conditioned into the planning permission. Commercial waste from premises such as takeaways and restaurants could give rise to pest control and insect infestation problems and would be of major concern in relation to food hygiene. The planning controls under circumstances such as these would need to reflect the requirements of the Food Safety Act and its subordinate regulations. If the proposed land use were for a process that required an operating permit issued by either the Environment Agency or the local authority, the handling storage and disposal would be a condition of the permit, however, the planning process would need to reflect this through conditions relating to planning approval.

5. Contamination

Land contaminated from human activities can remain in a contaminated state for centuries. Processes such as mineral extraction, metalworking, petroleum and oil refining leave their legacy in the form of heavy metals and chemical compounds in the soil. Some of the contaminated materials can be toxic to humans through ingestion, inhalation and through physical contact. Other forms of contamination such as the depositing of waste in landfills has created pockets of landfill gas that can be explosive if it builds up underneath buildings. The impact of contamination is not restricted to the soil but can contaminate watercourses and groundwater via underground fissures in base rock and gravels. The results can create contaminated drinking water and spring water, dangerous not only to humans but to livestock and other animals.

The total restoration of land to its original condition is rarely achievable, however, where a development is proposed on land suspected to be contaminated through its previous use, the planning process can ensure that the land be remediated to a suitable level. The standard of site remediation is assessed in accordance with the guidance issued by DEFRA known as the Contaminated Land Exposure Assessment model (CLEA). Where a development is proposed, the planning process will condition that the site be investigated in accordance with the CLEA model, remediated, monitored and the standard of site clean up verified by follow up testing prior to the development taking place. Many local authorities have historical mapping systems to inform of the locations of potentially contaminated sites within their areas which when combined with more recent land use history, a reasonably accurate assessment can be made of the likely contaminants present on site. The developer will be responsible for supplying the planning authority with sufficient information to discharge the planning conditions relating to contamination. In order to consider the potential end use of an LDP site, the assessor will need to refer to the information held on the current mapping system to assess whether the site in question is on or in close proximity to a potentially contaminated land site. Should this be the case, the future end use of the site would be subject to the conditions of a site investigation and remediation strategy as outlined above.

Summary

The assessor is required to give an overall comment on the suitability of the site and its proposed use along with a summary of further detailed assessments that are recommended.

Consideration for alternative uses

The assessor is required to give consideration for potentially alternative uses of the LDP site under consideration.

Countryside and Landscape Assessment Proforma and Explanatory Note

General site information

1. Site Name:

.....
.....

2. Site Location:

.....
.....

3. Grid Reference

4. Site Reference No.

5. Site Area:

6. Type of development proposed:

7. General site description:

Landscape Assessment

8. Is the site on the register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historical Interest in Wales?

YES NO

(Mark extent of site on the plan provided)

9a) Is the site listed on the register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

YES NO

9b) Does the Site lie within the Essential Setting of a site of Special Historic Interest?

YES NO

(Mark extent of site on the plan provided)

10. What Grade has the site been designated in Landscape Value on Land Map?

Low Moderate High Outstanding

11. Does the site lie within a Special Landscape Area on the Unitary Development Plan

YES NO

12. Does the site lie within a Green Wedge on the Unitary Development Plan

YES NO

13. Does the site contain woodland?

YES NO

14. Is the site listed on the Register of Ancient Woodland?

YES NO

Ancient Semi natural

Ancient Replanted

(Mark extent on plan provided)

15. Does the site contain trees?

YES NO

16. Does the site contain trees with Tree Preservation Orders?

YES NO

(Mark TPO trees on plan provided)

17. Are there existing trees and woodlands worthy of retention and protection by a Tree Preservation Order?

YES NO

18. Does the site contain Ancient /Veteran Trees?

YES NO

(Mark Ancient/Veteran Trees on plan provided)

19. Does the site contain hedgerows?

YES NO

Have any been identified as Important under the Hedgerow Regs?

YES NO

(Mark hedgerows and Important hedgerows on plan provided)

20. Summary of Landscape Constraints

21. Are Landscape constraints significant enough to prevent development of:

The whole site? YES NO

Part of the site? YES NO

(Identify parts of the site that should be excluded from development)

22. What additional landscape surveys/ assessments will be required for this site?

Biodiversity Assessment

23. Is the site within or adjacent to an International or European Designated Site?
(Special Protection Area, RAMSAR Site or Special Area of Conservation)

(Underline the relevant designation)

Within YES NO

Adjacent to YES NO

(Mark extent of site on plan provided)

24. Is the site within or adjacent to a Nationally Designated Site?
(National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest)

(Underline the relevant designation)

Within YES NO

Adjacent to YES NO

(Mark extent of site on plan provided)

25. Is the site within a Locally Designated Site?
(Local Nature Reserve or Site of Importance for Nature Conservation)

(Underline the relevant designation)

YES NO

(Mark extent of site on plan provided)

26. Are there records of European Protected Species for this site?
(Bats, Otters, Dormice and Great Crested Newts)

YES NO

List Species

27. Are there records for species protected under UK legislation (not included above)?

YES NO

List Species

28. Are there records for UK or Wales Priority Species or Habitats (not included above)?

YES NO

List Species
and/or Habitats

--

29. Are there records for Caerphilly LBAP Species or Habitats (not included above)?

YES NO

List Species
and/or Habitats

--

30. With regard to questions 25 to 28, does the site support habitat suitable for supporting protected species?

YES NO

List the habitat and potential species below:

Habitat	Potential Species

31. Does the site contain “stepping stones” or wildlife corridors (not included above)

YES NO

32. Summary of Biodiversity Constraints

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33. Are Biodiversity constraints significant enough to prevent development of:

The whole site?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part of the site?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Identify parts of the site that should be excluded from development)

34. What additional ecological surveys/ assessments will be required for this site?

Additional comments / observations:

Countryside and Landscape Summary:

Explanatory Note for Countryside and Landscape Assessment

Landscape Assessment

Landscape encompasses a variety of settings and backdrops within the County Borough including land between villages and towns, urban fringe, steep sided valleys, mountain top plateaus and the more traditional areas of agricultural fields. Whilst these are landscapes associated with the rural environment, it is important to remember that landscape also applies to the urban environment where amenity interests, and green spaces within settlement limits are a significant resource.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows make a positive and beneficial contribution to both the natural and built environment. They provide visual screening, noise barriers, separation, human scale to development and a setting within the wider environment. They are also extremely important for biodiversity and the benefits to human health of trees woodlands and accessible green space being increasingly recognised. The retention of trees, woodlands and hedgerows is therefore vital. Development and land use changes should, wherever possible not adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the integrity or continuity of hedgerows, linear tree belts or woodland.

8. *Is the site on the register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historical Interest in Wales?*

The Register of Historic Landscapes of Wales refers to landscapes, which carry physical evidence of past ages from the agricultural landscapes of the prehistoric period to the industrial landscapes of the 19th century, and even the technological landscapes of the 20th century.

Development within or affecting Landscapes of Outstanding Historical Interest should not have a harmful impact upon the character, historical or aesthetic value of the landscape. Where development does take place, provision should be made for the continued protection of the historical interest of the landscape.

9a) *Is the site listed on the register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*

b) *Does the Site lie within the Essential Setting of a site of Special Historic Interest?*

The register of Landscapes, Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, include landscapes in towns and cities, which became so important as urban populations swelled in the 19th century, to those of the rural estate. All of the landscapes within the register of Landscapes, Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest have borrowed the scenery of Wales to create an aesthetically satisfying sense of place.

Development within or affecting Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest or the essential setting of a site of Special Historic Interest should not have a harmful impact upon the character, historical or aesthetic value of the landscape. Where development does take place, provision should be made for the continued protection of the historical interest of the landscape.

10. What Grade has the site been designated in Landscape Value on Land Map?

LANDMAP is produced by the Countryside Council for Wales and strongly endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government. It was first published in 2001 and has now been implemented by all Local Authorities in Wales. LANDMAP is a specially devised national landscape information system. It gathers, organises and evaluates information about landscape into a nationally consistent data set. LANDMAP records the nature, condition and importance of particular qualities.

The 2001 information divided the information between 5 aspects layers;

- *Geological Landscape*: The study of the geology, geomorphology and hydrology of the area
- *Landscape Habitats*: Looks at the distribution of vegetation and habitats and the basis for landscape ecology
- *Visual & Sensory*: Identifies the landscape qualities that are perceived through the senses, visual patterns for example
- *Historic Landscape*: Focuses on how archaeological and historical sites relate to each other and to the surrounding landscape
- *Cultural Landscape*: Considers the relationship that exists between people and places and how this has shaped the landscape.

Each aspect layer has been awarded a grade based on the importance of the qualities within the area. They are assessed as follows;

- *Outstanding*: of international or national importance to the aspect
- *High*: of regional or county importance to the aspect
- *Moderate*: of local importance to the Aspect
- *Low*: of little or no importance to the Aspect

Please note that the 2001 layers were updated in 2004, however due to technical difficulties accessing the information and incomplete data sets we have decided to continue to use the 2001 data.

11. Does the site lie within a Special Landscape Area on the Unitary Development Plan?

Special Landscape Areas (SLA) are designated to protect those areas which are considered to be important to the overall landscape of Caerphilly CBC, in terms of their intrinsic value and by virtue of the contribution the landscape makes in terms of the visual setting of towns, villages and the historic environment. Whilst SLA's are not designated to preclude development, development that would harm the historic or rural setting of the County Borough is not permitted, including the landscape setting in relation to the significant views in relation to the rural backdrop of an area and on the skyline.

12. Does the site lie within a Green Wedge on the Unitary Development Plan?

The council consider there is a need to define and maintain open spaces within urban areas and gaps of open countryside between settlements. Within green wedges, it is

intended that an open nature should be maintained by permitting development that is associated with agriculture, forestry, recreation or other uses that involve no substantial new buildings.

Any proposal for development that would erode or destroy the open nature of the green wedge should be resisted. Measures that encourage, sustain and improve the contribution to the environment of the urban fringe will be encouraged.

13. Does the site contain woodland?

Woodlands are of great importance both as wildlife habitats and in terms of their contribution to landscape character and beauty. Local Authorities have a legal duty to preserve trees and woodlands under Section 197 (General duties of Local Planning Authorities in respect of Trees) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990. As such, LPA's should seek to protect areas of woodland, both in the built and natural environment, where they have natural heritage value, biodiversity or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular location.

Any development that would require the removal of whole or part of a woodland and would result, therefore in the visual or amenity harm to the woodland, wildlife habitat or visual and amenity value of the immediate or surrounding area should be resisted.

14. Is the site listed on the Register of Ancient Woodland?

Ancient woodlands are those occupying sites, which have been wooded continuously for at least 400 hundred years. They are irreplaceable, our richest habitats for wildlife and reservoirs of historical information. Ancient woodland is not a statutory designation and the wood does not have any legal protection. In Britain, ancient woods over two hectares in size are mostly recorded on ancient woodland inventories, or a register.

Whilst ancient woodlands may not have the benefit of legal protection, they are increasingly enjoying recognition and protection through national, regional and local planning policies. Any development that could damage the fragile woodland ecosystem or threaten the long-term survival or conservation value of an ancient wood should be resisted.

15. Does the site contain trees?

As with woodlands, trees form a significant and vital component of the environment that we live in. Local Authorities have a legal duty to preserve trees and woodlands under Section 197 (General duties of Local Planning Authorities in respect of Trees) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990. As such, LPA's should seek to protect trees. As such, the retention of quality trees both in the urban and rural fabric is sought by the LPA.

16. Does the site contain trees with Tree Preservation Orders?

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 empowers the Council to protect trees in the interest of public amenity by making Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's), which

bring under the control of the LPA the damage, felling, lopping etc of specified trees and woodlands. The Council will also seek to make TPO's to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant impact on the environment and its enjoyment by the public.

Development would be resisted where there would be a significant impact upon a Tree Preservation Order in order to protect the tree/s or woodlands and the integrity of the environment.

17. *Are there existing trees and woodlands worthy of retention and protection by a Tree Preservation Order?*

The Local Planning Authority will continue to make Tree Preservation Orders under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 where appropriate to protect trees and woodlands that are under threat and where the amenity value is high. Any development that could potentially cause harm to or threaten the future of any tree/s or woodland that are considered worthy of retention or protection under a Tree preservation Order will be resisted. This is to try and protect sound existing trees, which contribute positively to the immediate and surrounding environment.

18. *Does the site contain Ancient /Veteran Trees?*

An ancient or veteran tree is difficult to define precisely and will vary dramatically between species. However, they are broadly defined as "Trees that are of interest biologically, aesthetically, or culturally because of their age". Generally they will also have passed any commercial life-span and maybe in decline. However, it is important to note that a declining tree does not mean that a tree is dangerous or is has no environmental benefit. Ancient trees have no legal protection unless a Tree Preservation Order covers them.

Due care and consideration should be awarded to the continued conservation and protection of ancient trees. The retention of ancient trees would be sought on any development site. The removal of ancient trees would be resisted in the interest of biodiversity, cultural, historical or aesthetic values.

19. *Does the site contain hedgerows?*

Have any been identified as Important under the Hedgerow Regs?

Hedgerows are important for wildlife and the landscape. They help to prevent soil erosion and water run-off, they shelter and control livestock and protect crops from wind. Hedgerows have been a significant feature of the British landscape for centuries, but recent trends have seen the removal and dereliction of hedgerows increasing at an alarming rate.

In order to protect hedgerows, The Hedgerow Regulations, 1997 were implemented under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995. The regulations state that the removal of hedgerows requires the submission of a hedgerow removal notice to the Local Planning Authorities. There is also a list of criteria that determines which hedgerows are 'important'. The LPA has the authority to order the retention of any hedgerow identified as 'important' under the Regulations. Hedgerows qualifying as "important"

are material considerations in the development control process. The presumption of the Regulations is in favour of protecting and retaining all “important” hedgerows, and only to allow their removal in certain exceptional circumstances. The LPA therefore has to be able to justify the loss of important hedgerows against the list of “exceptional circumstances” within the Regulations.

Where hedgerows have been surveyed under the Regulations, through notification by a landowner or as part of a planning application, this information remains on a register. Information on hedgerows qualifying as “important” as a result of previous surveys will be accessible and applied to the LDP site assessment process.

20. Summary of Landscape Constraints

21. Are Landscape constraints significant enough to prevent development.

Having taken into consideration the presence of Landscapes of Outstanding Historical Interest in Wales, Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, LANDMAP values, Special Landscape Areas, Green Wedges, Woodlands, Trees, Hedgerows, Ancient woodlands and trees and Tree Preservation Orders an assessment will then be made on the impact development could potentially have upon the landscape value of part or the whole site. If it is considered that the potential impacts would endanger or threaten the landscape value or amenity and there is no potential for mitigation, then it is likely that the landscape constraints will be considered significant enough to prevent development of the site.

Please note that development will not be refused purely on the basis of either the Special Landscape Area or the Green Wedge due to their background as a Unitary Development Plan.

22. What additional landscape surveys/ assessments will be required for this site?

Depending upon the results of the site assessments, further additional information maybe required. This information may take the form of the following surveys for example;

(a) Tree Survey including;

- A detailed site survey at 1:200.
- An arboricultural report in accordance with BS 5837.

(b) Hedgerow Survey

(c) Landscape Assessment – This would be particularly important when the LANDMAP value identifies a low value, but a site visit by the landscape architect identifies a potentially important landscape value.

Biodiversity Assessment

Caerphilly County Borough Council is rich in wildlife and this is reflected by the range of designated sites within the County Borough that are recognised to be of European, UK and local importance. In order to assess the suitability of land for development, the relative value of the biodiversity of each site needs to be given full consideration. Information used for assessment will be gathered from existing knowledge, CCBC held data and information held by the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre.

23. *Is the site within or adjacent to an International or European Designated Site? (Special Protection Area [SPA], RAMSAR Site or Special Area of Conservation [SAC])*

Special Protection Areas are classified under Article 4 of the EC Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (The Birds Directive), RAMSAR sites are listed under the convention on wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR Convention, 1971) and Special Areas of Conservation are designated under the EC Directive on the conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora & Fauna (92/43/EEC) (The Habitats Directive). There is a strong presumption against developments within or in the immediate vicinity of the above designations. Where development is within or in the immediate vicinity of a SAC, SPA or a RAMSAR site, the local planning authority (LPA) are required to undertake an appropriate assessment, which includes the cumulative affects of a proposal, together with other developments in the area on the protected area.

Caerphilly County Borough Council currently has one Special Area of Conservation (Aberbargoed Grasslands) and no Special Protection Areas or RAMSAR sites.

24. *Is the site within or adjacent to a Nationally Designated Site? (National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest)*

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are declared under Section 35 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and Sites of Special of Scientific Interest are notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

NNRs are managed solely for their nature conservation value and represent the highest quality Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are currently no National Nature reserves within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated to identify and give protection to areas, which are considered to be of national importance in terms of biodiversity and geological features. Caerphilly County Borough Council has 10 SSSIs, and there is a presumption against development within a SSSI unless the primary purpose of the development is to benefit the nature conservation interest of the site.

25. *Is the site within a Locally Designated Site? (Local Nature Reserve or Site of Importance for Nature Conservation)*

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are declared under Section 21 of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) identify areas that are of local nature conservation interest. These include a wide variety of habitats and seek to ensure that local natural heritage remains as large and as diverse as possible. The local authority designates both LNRs and SINC.

Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation should be retained where possible unless the proposed allocation can demonstrate no suitable alternative and no overriding public need for the development. Where overriding need is demonstrated, measures to mitigate for the loss of habitat and/or species will always be required.

There are currently 188 SINC and 4 LNRs within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

**26. Are there records of European Protected Species for this site?
(Bats, Otters, Dormice and Great Crested Newts)**

Under the EEC Habitats Directive 79/409/EEC (Conservation of wild birds) and 92/43/EEC (Conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna), which have been translated into UK legislation by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994, a number of species have been identified for protection due to their rarity. Caerphilly county borough is known to support bats (all species), European otter, dormouse and great crested newt, which are all protected under the habitats directive and are known as European Protected Species (EPS).

Any site allocation known to support one or more of these European Protected Species will need to apply the three tests outlined in the Habitats Directive. The three tests are as follows;

- 1). that there is no satisfactory alternative;
- 2). It will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations if the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in the natural range;
- 3). It is in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Where development is likely to have an adverse impact upon European Protected Species there will be a strong presumption against development. In all other cases mitigation will have to be approved by the County Ecologist. Any site identified that has or is in close proximity to European Protected Species will need to be accompanied by the relevant ecological survey, which should contain details of mitigation proposals.

27. Are there records for species protected under UK legislation (not included above)?

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (and subsequent amendments) 1981, a number of species are protected in addition to those protected under the EEC Habitats Directive. UK protected species are a material consideration in reference to the Town

and Country Planning Act, 1990. As such, the presence of a UK protected species may be constraint to development. Any development taking place on a site on a site with known UK protected species present should always aim to accommodate the requirements of the protected species.

28. *Are there records for UK or Wales Priority Species or Habitats (not included above)?*

Biodiversity – The UK Action Plan (1994) was one of the UK's responses to the Rio Earth Summit (1992) and set out the broad strategy for conserving and enhancing wild species and habitats in the UK. A steering group was set up and a report published in 1995 which identified 431 species action plans and 45 habitat action plans, these are referred to as UK Priority Species or Habitats.

All species and habitats identified as a UK or Wales Priority should be protected from development where possible and alternative sites sought inline with national targets set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Where development does take place, it should always aim to accommodate the identified priority species or habitats within the site.

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act became law in England and Wales. This was a significant piece of legislation and part of the Act, Section 74, placed a duty upon the National Assembly for Wales to have regard, in exercising its functions, to conserve biological diversity in accordance with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. In addition, Section 74(2) required the publication of a list of species and habitats that the Assembly considers to be of principal importance for that purpose. During the passage of the CROW Act through Parliament, the UK Environment Minister made it clear that this was to provide statutory underpinning to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Section 74(3) places a responsibility on the Assembly to take, or to promote the taking of others of, such steps as appears to the Assembly to be reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of the species and habitats included in the published list. This list comprises the Wales priority species and habitats referred to in this section of the proforma.**29.** *Are there records for Caerphilly Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) Species or Habitats (not included above)?*

Whilst the CROW Act 2000 duty remains on the National Assembly for Wales, the Assembly expects that the focus of action for the listed species and habitats will be through the preparation and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) in partnerships. Local Planning Authorities in developing their Unitary Development Plans should be adopting LBAPs as Supplementary Planning Guidance (paragraph 5.4.2 "Planning Policy Wales" March 2002) and they must take account of biodiversity considerations in determining individual planning applications.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans are the principle mechanism by which the UK Biodiversity Action Plan can be translated into effective action at the local level. The Biodiversity Action Plan for Caerphilly County Borough was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in January 2005. LBAP's are intended to focus resources to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the local area by setting targets and actions for characteristic species and habitats.

Habitats and species in this category are of local distinctiveness to Caerphilly county borough and valued by the residents of the area. Any allocations that impact on these species or habitats should ensure that mitigation measures are put in place to ensure there is no net biodiversity loss in the local area.

30. With regard to questions 25 to 28, does the site support habitat suitable for supporting protected species?

List the habitat and potential species below:

Habitat	Potential Species

This section has been included to highlight where there is the potential for protected species, even though there no current records are held for them at the Biodiversity Records Centre. This is important to ensure that all protected species are considered at an early stage of the development plan process to inform future ecological surveys and mitigation, as necessary, particularly in relation to habitat likely to support European Protected Species.

31. Does the site contain “stepping stones” or wildlife corridors (not included above)

Stepping-stones or wildlife corridors are usually linear habitats comprising of trees and shrubs, grasslands and other semi-natural habitats for example. They often occur on agricultural land (e.g. hedgerows and woodlands), along disused railway lines or rivers. They are very important for the movement of species through what would otherwise be open terrain and can also act in the interests of plant dispersal.

Some land allocations may include key stepping-stones or corridors for movements of species. Whilst this should not preclude the allocation of the land, the stepping-stones and corridors should be clearly identified and if necessary excluded from overall area calculations for available site usage within the land allocation. If existing wildlife corridors or stepping-stones cannot be retained, alternatives should be provided.

Where there are large areas of habitat affected by a site proposal, which connects up other habitats in the landscape, then this may be considered to be a significant impact on the movement of species, for example, as flight lines for bats (European Protected Species). The retention of such wildlife corridors should be a priority, particularly if protected species are on or near the site in question, and possible enhancement should be considered. Or, where alternative/replacement habitats are put in place by way of mitigation, these should also seek to improve the current situation.

32. Summary of Biodiversity Constraints

33. Are Biodiversity constraints significant enough to prevent development of:

Having taken into consideration the presence of EEC protected species, UK protected species, UK, Wales or Caerphilly LBAP priority species or habitats, sites containing EEC designated sites, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation or Local Nature Reserves, an assessment will then be made on the impact the development could potentially have upon the site and its biodiversity value. If the biodiversity value of the whole or part of the site is endangered or threatened as a result of development, and there is no potential for mitigation, then it is likely that the biodiversity constraints will be considered significant enough to prevent development.

34. What additional ecological surveys/ assessments will be required for this site?

Where there is inadequate information on a site and there is the potential for any of the biodiversity factors raised to be present or affected by the allocation of a site for development, the additional information may be requested;

(a) Ecological Surveys to include European Protected Species (Bat, Barn Owl, Great Crested Newts or Otter surveys), which would be required as part of any future planning application, or other protected species that should also be considered, for example reptiles and breeding birds, etc.

(b) Mitigation Reports where protected species are discovered to mitigate for the loss of habitat within the development of the site or off site compensation, etc.

Additional comments / observations:

Countryside and Landscape Summary: