

TORFAEN  
COUNTY  
BOROUGH



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TORFAEN

Torfaen Adopted Local Development Plan (to 2021)

# Supplementary Planning Guidance



# Site Design, Masterplanning and Development Brief

February 2023

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An Executive Summary of this document is available in Welsh and English versions  
Mae Crynodeb Gweithredol o'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose and Objectives	3
Status of Supplementary Planning Guidance	4
3. Placemaking and Policy Context	4
Placemaking Wales Charter (2020)	4
Future Wales: the National Plan (2040)	5
Planning Policy Wales Ed. 11 (2021)	6
Torfaen Adopted Local Development Plan (2013)	7
4. Distinctive Locations in Torfaen	8
North Torfaen	8
Pontypool and Surrounding Communities	9
Cwmbran New Town	9
5. Development Briefs	10
Vision Statement	11
Site Location Plan	11
Site Analysis and Context	11
Development Framework => Concept Masterplan	13
Movement	
Density	
Mix of Uses	
Mix of Residential Types	
Activity, Social and Community Assets	
Streets and Public Spaces	
Identity and Character	
Green Infrastructure	
Biodiversity	
Renewable Energy / Energy Efficiency Opportunities	
Infrastructure Study - Implementation and Delivery Plan	17
6. Further Information and Contact Details	17

## **Figures**

Figure 1: The Four Categories of Site Analysis, Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016)

Figure 2: Inclusive Design in the Built Environment (2016), Section 7

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Placemaking and the need for high quality design are the basis for the Council's approach to the development of sites within Torfaen. This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document sets out the Council's guidance to inform the design of development sites, the masterplanning process and production of Development Briefs for sites.
- 1.2 The concept and use of the term 'place making' has been gaining support within the built environment professions for some time and particularly within town planning. It is a broad concept that seeks to consider places as having their own unique identity and that new development should embrace individual character whilst seeking to create destinations where people can live their lives, access daily needs and experience community within their local area.
- 1.3 Good design means that all development should reflect or respect the setting and size of a site and also have regard to the features of the wider area. Good quality design should be an overriding consideration for all development regardless of how noticeable or open the site is. While site specific circumstances will need to be taken into consideration, the overall aim should be achieving good quality design.

## **2. Purpose and Objectives**

- 2.1 This SPG has two main purposes. Firstly, it has been produced to support and add detail to the policies within the Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan (December 2013). It is therefore relevant to developers looking to submit a planning application for major development on windfall (unallocated) or existing allocated sites. Major development is defined as 10 or more dwellings or the creation of a minimum of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> commercial floor space.
- 2.2 Secondly, this SPG has been produced to inform the Replacement Local Development Plan process. Welsh Government (WG) Development Plans Manual 3 (DPM3) (2020) and Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11) (2021) both require the deliverability of all potential allocations to be properly evidenced. Therefore, as part of the RLDP process, the Council requires landowners / site proposers to prepare and submit a range of information which demonstrates that a site could be successfully delivered within the life of the plan. Such information will include Development Briefs for each site. It should be noted that Development Briefs for all sites which are proposed as allocations within the RLDP will be used as examination evidence and adopted as SPG themselves on adoption of the new plan.
- 2.3 This SPG has therefore been prepared as a guide to help developers to design the best development for their site. It means a change from housing estate layouts dominated by highways infrastructure, featuring standard house types with few facilities, to site responsive design, based upon an understanding of place, existing green / natural features and walking / cycling opportunities and with a mix of services and facilities close to each other to create more complete and inclusive communities. It provides clear guidance on the form and content of Masterplans and Development Briefs and will ensure that a standardised approach is adopted.
- 2.4 The document is intended for use by prospective applicants, agents, architects, members of the public with an interest in an application, elected Members of the Council and other decision-making bodies.

### **Status of the Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- 2.5 The Welsh Government advises that adopted SPG may be a material consideration provided it is consistent with the development plan. The weight afforded to the SPG when making a

decision is increased if it has been prepared in consultation with the general public and interested parties, and if it has been the subject of a Council resolution.

2.6 A draft of this SPG was approved for public consultation by Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and the following consultation exercise ran from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 until 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. Comments received have been considered within a Report of Consultation and amendments incorporated within this final version. The SPG has been prepared in accordance with the policies contained within:

- Future Wales (February 2021),
- the Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan (December 2013)

and guidance set out in:

- Planning Policy Wales 11<sup>th</sup> Edition (February 2021)
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)

It also embraces the Placemaking Guide 2020 published by the Design Commission for Wales alongside the Placemaking Wales Charter.

### 3. Placemaking and Policy Context

3.1 Since Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (Dec 2018), placemaking has been at the heart of town planning alongside the sustainability and well-being goals required by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. PPW10 and subsequently PPW11 (Feb 2021), aim to ensure that planning policy and decisions consider all aspects of well-being and deliver high quality new development which is designed for sustainability and provides for the needs of all people. Welsh Government's Building Better Places (July 2020) reinforces this approach in light of Covid-19. Places and placemaking are identified as the core value in the work to bring about recovery following the pandemic in Wales.

#### Placemaking Wales Charter (2020)

3.2 The Placemaking Wales Charter was developed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership: a multidisciplinary group representing professions and organisations working within the built and natural environment. It recognises the range of factors that feed into good placemaking and focuses on six placemaking principles:

People and Community: The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and wellbeing of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

Location: Places 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.

- 3.3 Alongside the Charter itself, the Design Commission for Wales published an accompanying Placemaking Guide 2020 which goes into greater detail about how to consider and implement the placemaking principles and provides several case studies. The Placemaking Guide 2020 is available via the Design Commission for Wales website:  
<https://dcfw.org/wp-content/themes/dcfwchild/assets/PlacemakingGuideDigitalENG.pdf>

### **Future Wales: the National Plan (2040)**

- 3.4 Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 identifies placemaking as being essential to the delivery of sustainable development and achieving improvements in the well-being of communities. Policies 2 and 9 are particularly relevant:

#### **Policy 2 - Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration - Strategic Placemaking**

*The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.*

*Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:*

- *creating a rich mix of uses;*
- *providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- *building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- *increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities;*
- *establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;*
- *promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and*
- *integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.*

*Planning authorities should use development plans to establish a vision for each town and city. This should be supported by a spatial framework that guides growth and regeneration, and establishes a structure within which towns and cities can grow, evolve, diversify and flourish over time.*

#### **Policy 9 - Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure**

*To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:*

- *identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystem services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and*
- *identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.*

*Planning authorities should include these areas and/or opportunities in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide. In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and*

*green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.*

### **Planning Policy Wales Ed. 11 (2021)**

- 3.5 National planning policy document Planning Policy Wales Edition 10, published in December 2018 and subsequently Edition 11 published in Feb 2021, took the opportunity to establish placemaking at the heart of planning, alongside the sustainability and well-being goals required by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. PPW11 aims to ensure that planning policy and decisions consider all aspects of well-being and deliver high quality new development which is designed for sustainability and provides for the needs of all people. It defines placemaking as follows:

*“Placemaking is 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” (page 14, PPW11, 2021).*

- 3.6 PPW11 (2021) also provides a set of National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes which outline what a sustainable place will look like under five headings:

#### Creating and Sustaining Communities:

- Enables the Welsh language to thrive
- Appropriate development densities
- Homes and jobs to meet society’s needs
- A mix of uses
- Offers cultural experiences
- Community based facilities and services

#### Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner:

- Fosters economic activity
- Enables easy communication
- Generates its own renewable energy
- Vibrant and dynamic
- Adaptive to change
- Embraces smart and innovative technology

#### Making Best Use of Resources:

- Makes best use of natural resources
- Prevents waste
- Prioritises the use of previously developed land and existing buildings
- Unlocks potential and regenerates
- High quality and built to last

#### Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact:

- Resilient biodiversity and ecosystems
- Distinctive and special landscapes
- Integrated green infrastructure
- Appropriate soundscapes
- Reduces environmental risks



- Manages water resources naturally
- Clean air
- Reduces overall pollution
- Resilient to climate change
- Distinctive and special historic environments

Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments:

- Accessible and high quality green space
- Accessible by means of active travel and public transport
- Not car dependent
- Minimises the need to travel
- Provides equality of access
- Feels safe and inclusive
- Supports a diverse population
- Good connections
- Convenient access to goods and services
- Promotes physical and mental health and well-being

**Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan (2013)**

- 3.7 The Local Development Plan contains numerous relevant policies relating to the location and nature of development. The main policy that relates directly to placemaking and high quality design is as follows:

*Policy S4 Place Making / Good Design*

*Proposals for all new development must have full regard to the context of the local natural and built environment and its special features through:*

- a) Promotion of local distinctiveness by sympathetic design, material selection and layout including public art;*
- b) Delivering a mix of uses to complement existing facilities and aim to address local deficiencies; and*
- c) Ensuring that location and layout integrates and contributes to local accessibility.*

- 3.8 Other relevant policies are listed as follows and can be viewed in full via <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/Adopted-Torfaen-LDP-Written-Statement.pdf>

- S1 Urban Boundaries
- S2 Sustainable Development
- S3 Climate Change
- S5 Housing
- S6 Employment and Economy
- S9 Retailing / Town Centres
- BW1 General Policy - Development Proposals
- SAA2 Canalside Strategic Action Area, Cwmbran
- SAA5 The British Strategic Action Area, Talywain, Pontypool
- SAA7 Llanfrechfa Grange Strategic Action Area, Cwmbran
- H2 Housing Allocations within the Pontypool Housing Sub Market Area
- H3 Housing Allocations within the North Torfaen Housing Sub Market Area
- H5 Provision for Recreation, Open Space, Leisure Facilities and Allotments
- EET1 Employment Allocations in the Cwmbran Area
- EET2 Employment Allocations in the Pontypool Area
- EET3 Employment Allocations in the North Torfaen Area
- EET4 Regional Employment Allocations
- EET6 Leisure / Tourism Proposals
- RLT2 Town Centre Development in Cwmbran Town Centre
- RLT4 Provision of Small Scale Retail Uses
- RLT8 Local and Neighbourhood Shopping Centres

- T3 Walking and Cycling Routes
- CF3 Community Facilities
- CF4 Protection of Important Urban Open Space (IUOS)
- CF5 Protection of Allotments and Recreation & Amenity Open Space
- HE2 Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS)

## 4. Distinctive Locations in Torfaen

- 4.1 This section of the SPG recognises the unique settlements and townscapes within Torfaen. It seeks to identify the opportunities for positively contributing to existing and future communities by ensuring that features of 'place' are incorporated into development proposals. This approach goes to the heart of placemaking.
- 4.2 Torfaen County Borough benefits from three sustainable settlements with distinct characteristics. Where development sites fall within such areas, these characteristics must form the focus and context for proposed development schemes. Urban areas which do not clearly fall within the three sustainable settlements identified will still be subject to this SPG but further contextual work will have to be done to establish the characteristics of the surrounding area.
- 4.3 Each geographical area identified presents a different design context and response acknowledging the historic legacy of industrial activity, the evolution of settlement form and social structures / networks that resulted. Development proposals will be assessed for their compliance with a placemaking approach which should be referenced in supporting documentation and evidenced in the proposal itself. All development shall evidence the highest standards of sustainable placemaking, taking into account local distinctiveness and landscape character, the highest possible quality of design based upon an upfront assessment of key green and blue infrastructure features, minimising the need for energy by way of site / building layout, prioritising active travel modes and connections, and ensuring the provision of appropriate green / blue infrastructure including the retention of key ecological / biodiversity features, and provision of open space, recreation facilities and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- 4.4 Strategic development sites and Strategic Action Areas identified within the LDP and RLDP will be developed in accordance with Concept Masterplans produced in partnership with the developer and published by the Council to ensure that the key sites within Torfaen address the highest standards of placemaking possible.

### North Torfaen

- 4.5 The town of Blaenavon and its environs are located at the head of the Afon Llwyd valley. The historic context provided by the coal, iron and steel making industries has resulted in the international designation of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site that seeks to preserve the character of the landscape and its key industrial heritage features. Blaenavon is unusual within the Welsh valleys as being a single definable settlement as opposed to linear development spreading along the valley bottom. Historic landscape characterisation work has been undertaken including the designation of two Conservation Areas in Blaenavon Town Centre and Cwmavon. The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Design Guide (2011) published by the Council provides a good source of information regarding the locality.
- 4.6 Much of the town itself is characterised by high density residential terraces, the early occupiers of which supported the former heavy industries. The social and physical legacy of the intense industrial activity of the locality should be reflected in any design response to a site. Key views are also an important aspect and should be protected / respected where they add to the heritage environment e.g. the long distance views down Broad Street (in



Blaenavon Town Centre), High Street, from Blaenavon to Forgeside and across Coity Mountain which also identifies the importance of the green space along the Afon Lwyd River.

- 4.7 Any site design should recognise, support and sustain local distinctiveness, and specifically, the distinctive character of individual areas within the World Heritage Site. The subtle differences that give blocks of streets and settlements their own identity and character need to be reflected in the design of new development. The Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Blaenavon and Cwmavon provide further detail, description and character analysis in this regard.

### **Pontypool and Surrounding Communities**

- 4.8 The linear section of North to Mid Torfaen includes the settlements of Abersychan and Pontypool and their surrounding neighbourhoods. The plentiful natural resources in the locality (woodland, charcoal, coal and iron ore plus the river for water) enabled the development of numerous furnaces across the valley that supported the specialist development of tinsplate by means of japanning and established the area as a key player in the industrial revolution.
- 4.9 Pontypool itself and its surrounding settlements reflect the historic pattern of land use, with the valley floor being used for specialist manufacturing / iron production practices and clusters of dwellings located around farmsteads in the countryside. Pontymoile and Trosnant were likely to be amongst the early residential cluster points.
- 4.10 Significant investment by the prevailing landowners encouraged the development of the town at the river crossing point, with its associated facilities and services including Saturday market and annual fairs. As the town developed, the settlement pattern extended along the valley, focusing on key transport routes in all directions and including suburbs that connected the previously distinct hamlets on the valley sides. The growth of the suburbs to the west clearly shows how development was accommodated to the earlier field pattern.
- 4.11 Natural constraints of landform combined with restrictions imposed by dominant landowners have heavily influenced the distribution of land use with development in relatively piecemeal fashion, plot-by-plot or field-by-field, however the most significant development that defines modern Pontypool is the separation within and to the town centre caused by the linear structures of the canal, the rail line and later the roads.
- 4.12 Residential areas in this part of Torfaen are strongly connected to the industrial heritage of the locality with an ingrained association of neighbourhood and community that must be addressed in development proposals. The concept of the 20 minute neighbourhood is especially relevant here.

### **Cwmbran New Town**

- 4.13 Cwmbran is the only Mark I New Town to be designated in Wales and the only one meeting the full criteria of a New Town. Prior to the establishment of the new town, the locality had been settled to varying degrees with residential communities clustered within woodland clearings. After the industrial slump of the 1930s, government intervention enabled the establishment of numerous metal and engineering industries however the employment opportunities weren't matched by available homes resulting in a high degree of inward commuting. This led to the proposal for a New Town at Cwmbran which was considered under the New Towns Act of 1946. The proposal covered the existing villages of Pontnewydd, Cwmbran, Croesyceiliog, Oakfield and Coed Eva with a comprehensive plan to provide a New Town with good quality housing, schools and a well-designed town centre. The settlement would serve the enlarged population of the area, employed for the most part in existing local industries and businesses that at the time were considered to have a long-term future.

- 4.14 The Cwmbran Plan featured a comprehensively planned network of seven neighbourhoods based upon the existing settlements - Pontnewydd (including Northville), Croesyceiliog North, Croesyceiliog South (later renamed Llanyravon), Oakfield, St Dials, Coed Eva and Greenmeadow - around a central employment, civic and retail core. Topography influenced the layout with the central flat valley bottom containing the town centre, industry and recreational areas, and housing located on the valley sides. Cwmbran is located north of Newport and south of Pontypool at the mouth of the Afon Lwyd Valley where the River Lwyd enters the River Usk. These geographical constraints have prevented linear growth along the valley floor and instead expansion by the Cwmbran Development Corporation has been primarily up the valley sides to the west.
- 4.15 One of the primary considerations in the design of Cwmbran was matching housing to employment opportunities and reducing the distances and time spent commuting. This approach fully corresponds with addressing the current climate emergency and reducing travel emissions as set out in national planning policy and guidance today.
- 4.16 The neighbourhood approach based upon the existing settlements maintained and consolidated those communities to enable provision of local services in a neighbourhood centre (shops, bank, libraries and schools) that could be accessed without use of a car thereby managing traffic and road hierarchies to favour pedestrians and pedestrian safety. Primary schools were located as close as possible to each neighbourhood centre to ensure easy accessibility, school drop -offs / pick-ups being combined with shopping and encouraging the use of school buildings as community centres in evenings and weekends. Pantry shops were provided to supplement the neighbourhood centres and located to ensure residents had a maximum walking distance of ten minutes.
- 4.17 The new town features a high proportion of open space which serves as a green infrastructure and active movement network. Over 10% of land in the original design was set aside for the creation of four new public parks and designated public open space throughout the town to be supplemented by greenways, cycle tracks, a riverside park and canal-side gardens.
- 4.18 At the time of its construction, Cwmbran, particularly Fairwater, Greenmeadow, St Dials and Coedeva neighbourhoods, promoted innovative and forward looking architecture and construction methods. At Thornhill, a new split-level design incorporating a first-floor living room was introduced to address the increasingly steep topography. This forward thinking approach should be developed and adapted to reflect current innovation in building form and construction of the highest design and environmental standards.

## **5. Development Briefs**

- 5.1 Any Development Brief for a proposed site should include the following sections, based upon the placemaking approach, as described below:
- A vision statement
  - Site location plan
  - An analysis of the site and its context
  - A development framework resulting in a summary Concept Masterplan
  - An Infrastructure Study (Implementation and Delivery Plan)
- 5.2 The Development Brief itself should be an A4 portrait or A3 landscape document. The main body text should use font type Arial and be size 12 point. Site plans, illustrations and photographs will be useful in explaining the site and aspects of the Brief. The Brief is expected to include constraints, opportunities and a final Concept Masterplan for the site. The size of this document will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the development and any site specific constraints or issues. For example, one or two sides may be acceptable

for a smaller site, but we'd expect to see a much more comprehensive document in respect of a Strategic Action Area.

### **Vision Statement**

- 5.3 A clear vision for the proposed development is critical. It should set out what the development aims to achieve, taking into account the characteristics of place and locality. What sort of place do you want to create? For whom? How will the proposed occupiers / the natural environment benefit from the key design principles and objectives? Can you live your whole life in this place? Will the occupiers need to travel by car on a daily basis? The vision statement will need to be informed to a large extent by the initial site analysis and context work so should be developed in tandem. Opportunities for innovation in the concept or delivery of a site should be explored where possible.

### **Site Location Plan**

- 5.4 Each Development Brief must include a scaled site location plan with the site edged in red for consistent and easy identification. The Site Location Plan should be on an OS base plan at a scale 1:500. Additional location plans may be provided at alternative scales for the purposes of illustrating different features as required.

### **Site Analysis and Context**

- 5.5 PPW11 (2021) states, *“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”* (p14).
- 5.6 Any masterplanning process should start with a consideration of ‘place’ which could mean a defined area / locality / neighbourhood, a landscape, or anywhere with a distinct purpose, meaning or character. There are three specific aspects of ‘place’ that should be thought about to establish the placemaking context of a potential development site:
- **Activity:** the activities that occur in the place supported by land uses, pedestrian and cycle movement, play and social life within the public realm and events.
  - **Physical Form:** the physical setting that makes up the place including the townscape, built form, heritage assets (including archaeological remains), ground conditions, landscape, topography, ecology, microclimate and public realm
  - **Meaning:** the unique features of a place including the context, identity of existing places, unique sense of place, significant built and natural features, cultural associations, history, sensory experiences, safety and inclusiveness and sense of belonging.

(adapted from Figure 1: Examples of different aspects of a place at different scale, page 7 of the DCfW Placemaking Guide 2020).

- 5.7 Involving the local community at this early stage can provide valuable contributions in this respect and can also help to inform the vision statement, taking into account ideas and aspirations of the local community that also generates support for the development, local ownership and community belonging. This approach is consistent with both the Placemaking Wales Charter and Well Being of Future Generations Ways of Working. There is significant advantage in being able to acknowledge / address any local issues with the additional benefit of preventing avoidable objections at a later stage. Any engagement process should seek to reach a broad and representative mix of people including children and young people. Advice on community engagement options can be accessed from Planning Aid Wales <http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/community-engagement/>
- 5.8 Whilst early community engagement is advised and strongly encouraged, it is not mandatory. There are statutory public consultation exercises built into the planning

application and Candidate Sites assessment processes (including Pre-Application Consultation) so that local communities will be able to make comments on a proposal / site, however these later stage consultations lose the benefit of local input into the nature and form of a scheme from the beginning.

- 5.9 Consideration of the form and functions of a place lead into a comprehensive analysis of the site and its physical, social, environmental and cultural (including historical) context. This is critical to inform the design and rationale behind the development proposals and will involve research, observation and surveys. Whilst it is important to record site constraints, the identification of assets and opportunities will help bring character and identity to any future development. The wider locality should also be noted especially where constraints or design factors may need to be accommodated, for example any potential impact on Brecon Beacons National Park and its dark skies designation.
- 5.10 The site and context analysis should be undertaken in accordance with the Welsh Government’s Guidance document ‘Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site’ (2016). <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/site-context-analysis-guide.pdf> Whilst the analysis undertaken will be unique to each site and circumstance, the table below is a useful basis for identifying topics to be examined:

<b>1 Culture &amp; Community</b>	<b>2 Landscape</b>	<b>3 Movement &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<b>4 Built Form</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site location</li> <li>- Planning context</li> <li>- Surrounding land &amp; building use</li> <li>- Neighbourhood structure</li> <li>- Consultation &amp; engagement</li> <li>- Socio-economics</li> <li>- Market analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Topography</li> <li>- Green &amp; blue infrastructure</li> <li>- Ecology</li> <li>- Ground conditions</li> <li>- Microclimate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Road hierarchy &amp; access</li> <li>- Public transport</li> <li>- Utilities &amp; infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urban form</li> <li>- History &amp; archaeology</li> <li>- Building scale, height &amp; density</li> <li>- Building character &amp; building traditions</li> </ul>

Figure 1: The Four Categories of Site Analysis, Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016)

- 5.11 A review of existing information is important in the site analysis process. On-site observations and surveys are also critical. A good starting point for mapped constraints and other information will be the Council’s OpusMap system available on the Council’s website. This includes details of some site constraints and other assessments which may be required to feed into this analysis e.g. Contaminated Land Assessments, Transport Assessments and Agricultural Land Classification Surveys.
- 5.12 Green Infrastructure (GI) information is also being produced that will be available via OpusMap in the near future and will help identify what GI assets currently exist, and those that should be retained in the first instance, to inform the definition of the developable area. Similarly, the Council’s Green Infrastructure Assessment suite of documents will be useful, as a comprehensive survey of existing green and blue assets (quantitative and qualitative), in and around each site will be essential to this analysis. The biodiversity value of existing mature trees / vegetation should make them a priority for retention over clearance of a site to maximise developable area.
- 5.13 All developments will require a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS), which will inevitably influence the design and layout of the development. Requirements, design specifications and good practice guidance are available from [SuDS resources](#)

[susdrain.org](http://susdrain.org)). Pre-application discussions with the local Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) should therefore be undertaken at this point (contact: SAB@Caerphilly.gov.uk)

- 5.14 Community facilities play an important role in the health and wellbeing of communities. PPW11 advises they are “*often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places*” (section 4.4). Your context analysis should include consideration of the level of existing community infrastructure in the vicinity and, in the case of strategic sites, identify any facilities which would be required as part of the development. This should include facilities such as schools, shops, bus stops, health services, cultural facilities, places of worship and allotments. Accessibility to such facilities is critical to the sustainability of residential schemes to prevent car dependant developments. Ideally, such facilities should be within 10-15 minutes walking distance of new homes, reducing the need to travel by car.
- 5.15 TAN18: Transport (2007) requires Transport Assessments (TA) to be produced for developments that generate significant levels of movement or are likely to have significant effects on existing patterns of movement. All Strategic sites and other sites which meet the thresholds set out in TAN18 (page 50) will require a TA. This includes sites of 100 or more dwellings and industrial developments with gross floor areas of over 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This study will play an important part in your Site Context and Analysis exercise.
- 5.16 Your Development Brief should include a summary of findings, including site assets/opportunities and constraints. This should include plans, drawings and, where appropriate, photographs. The level of information provided will be relative to the scale of the proposed development and / or the nature of the site.

### **Development Framework => Concept Masterplan**

- 5.17 The conclusions of the site analysis and local context study should inform a development framework which, when combined with key urban design and architectural principles, will establish the structure and parameters for future development. Future Wales and PPW11’s requirement for placemaking and the sustainable development objectives which underpin it must be central to this.
- 5.18 This part of the Development Brief will need to demonstrate how an integrated placemaking approach will be taken. Each place and set of circumstances are different and must be approached individually but all aspects of a development should be integrated including urban design, landscape, ecology, green / blue infrastructure, mobility, highways, utilities, architecture and public art.
- 5.19 The Development Brief should clearly set out the development principles for the site and include a complementary concept layout plan. This should set out the key vision and high level design principles of a site and how it should be developed. A key element of placemaking is the experience of the place, not just how it looks. Places should embed the well-being of residents at the heart of the development, with a strong individual identity and good connections to local services or new services on site. Building for Life 12 (2015) should be a key design tool in this process. Your proposals should achieve the 12 design criteria which this document promotes for successful development. The non-exhaustive list below also identifies matters which should be considered when developing these placemaking principles.

### **Movement**

- 5.20 Places should provide for realistic opportunities for walking and cycling, to connect with services and communities, and for safe and accessible areas for recreation for all ages. A movement strategy is required to support any proposed development in accordance with the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy set out in PPW11 as follows:



5.21 The promotion of active travel is critical, therefore the creation and enhancement of Active Travel opportunities and encouragement of greater use of public transport should be prioritised. Possible pedestrian routes through the site to promote ‘active and social streets’ (as detailed in Manual for Streets 2), including the incorporation of existing public rights of way, and how these would knit into the wider network should be considered. Similarly, the provision of safe cycle routes within the site and connectivity to the wider National Cycle Route network is important. Secure cycle storage should be included throughout a development. Public transport services and links to transport hubs should also be maximised.

#### Density

5.22 An appropriate level of residential densities should facilitate your vision of the site and efficient use of land. The densities may vary across larger sites, in order to respond to context and/or create different character areas. For example, higher density residential and mixed uses could be located along public transport corridors and in focal areas, with lower densities on rural/sensitive edges, and a range of densities elsewhere to meet different needs and create distinct character areas. Standard house types and layouts will not be acceptable; sites must demonstrate how they will achieve distinctive developments which fulfil placemaking goals.

#### Mix of Uses

5.23 Where a mixed-use scheme is proposed, a viable mix of uses should be specified. Developments which include a large number of homes should demonstrate that the development will be supported by all the facilities, jobs and services that people need in order to live sustainably and minimise travel.

#### Mix of Residential Types

5.24 A mix of tenure, housing type and house size should be promoted to address local specific needs as well as support a diverse community. Live / work premises and affordable housing can contribute to this as well as provision for self-build plots. A mix of residents can help to support a range of community activities and encourage informal community interactions and relationships that foster personal well-being. Consideration should be given to setting aside an area designated for community led housing which could be delivered by range of different development agents, including but not limited to Registered Social Landlords.

#### Activity, Social and Community Assets

5.25 These facilities should be provided in accordance with the Council’s most recent Planning Obligations SPG which sets out the Authority’s requirements for social infrastructure

provision as part of development. This should include facilities such as schools, shops, bus stops, health services, community halls. Please note that this SPG is under review so some standards may be subject to change to address requirements specified in PPW11, such as Green Infrastructure and Placemaking.

### Streets and Public Spaces

- 5.26 Any new development should provide for a hierarchy of interconnected streets and spaces (including typical street sections) which create walkable neighbourhoods, are not dominated by vehicles and are designed for low vehicle speeds. In order to achieve this, you are advised to consider the 'Building For Life 12 Wales Standard' and the Inclusive Design in the Built Environment Training Handbook (2016) principles as follows:

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Information</b>
Places people at the heart of the design process.	Inclusive design seen as an essential component of sustainable communities.
Acknowledges diversity and difference.	Recognises the wide diversity of different needs including wheelchair users, but also sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental ill health, hidden impairments and the needs of children and parents.
Offers choice for users in acknowledgement that a single solution that fits all users is not possible.	Accommodating for all people regardless of their age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances.
Flexibility in use.	Link to sustainable principles by acknowledgement of the need for adaptability in design to meet different needs at different stages.
Convenient and enjoyable places for everyone.	Well-connected buildings and streets. Understandable so that everyone knows where they are and can locate their destination.

Figure 2: Inclusive Design in the Built Environment (2016), Section 7

### Identity and Character

- 5.27 Standard layouts and designs will not be acceptable. Development needs to produce a unique product, which reflects context, rather than 'copy and paste architecture'. Where there are listed buildings, conservation areas and / or other heritage assets within the site or the immediate locality, these should be acknowledged appropriately in the design response. Streets and spaces should ensure active frontages to provide natural surveillance and character. The provision of shared footways / cycleways on both sides of the street, with verges and appropriate street trees should be promoted on primary streets. The approach of Manual for Streets 2 for active and social streets should be adopted. The mixture of uses within a development, scale and massing and the way in which buildings relate to one another and surrounding streets, are also key elements of creating safe and attractive places. Good quality public realm will help to create a sense of place. Public art specific to the history or physical features at a place should be incorporated within key buildings, structures and / or public realm finishes. Careful consideration should be given to an appropriate palette of colours, which would help the development blend and sit more comfortably within the wider landscape. Larger schemes should consider the provision of character areas, which would add to the sense of place and avoid amorphous development. For example, more central areas could include higher density development and more peripheral areas could include lower densities, with higher levels of green / blue space. The selected approach and rationale should be based on thorough testing of site-specific circumstances and clearly demonstrated in the material presented.



## Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 5.28 PPW11 states that *'Green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in'*. The Council is anticipating the forthcoming publication of the Green Infrastructure Assessment suite of documents which will provide an audit of the quantity and quality of various types of green and blue spaces and set out standards of provision for new development. In addition, the Greenspace Toolkit allows developers to establish the extent, characteristics and location of the accessible natural green space required to make a development liveable. Complying with the standards in the toolkit will greatly help developers meet the requirements for biodiversity and surface water management required by other planning guidance and Welsh legislation. Further guidance can also be found in the Building with Nature Standards Framework (Building with Nature).
- 5.29 The Council expects all developments to maintain and conserve existing green and blue assets in and around the site not only for their amenity benefit but for biodiversity, flood attenuation and climate change mitigation services. As such, a site specific Green Infrastructure Assessment should be undertaken in all cases as the starting point for site design. Opportunities for retention and enhancement of existing mature green infrastructure (including water) should be maximised including connectivity with the surrounding GI network. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should form a key part of green and blue infrastructure within your proposed development.
- 5.30 Typical green and / or blue infrastructure features that should be retained, improved or sought as part of a new development (subject to quantity and quality of existing local provision) should include:
- Mature trees / street trees
  - Community gardens / allotments / orchards
  - Children's play facilities
  - Natural / semi natural space
  - Amenity greenspace
  - Sports pitches
  - Outdoor recreation space
  - Green corridors
  - Civic spaces within neighbourhoods
  - Manmade and natural watercourses / waterways including the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal.

## Biodiversity

- 5.31 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Section 6) and PPW11 (2021) require development to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of a site. Ecological assets, including legally protected habitats and species and those listed on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, should be retained and opportunities for on-site enhancement and connectivity to corridors and wider networks should be identified. The forthcoming Green Infrastructure Assessment produced by the Council will provide a source of information in this respect. Where an impact on biodiversity / natural resources results from a proposal, Development Briefs must clearly demonstrate the application of the step-wise approach as detailed in para. 6.4.21 (Maintaining and Enhancing Biodiversity) of PPW11. The resilience of ecological networks is a key consideration. NRW Terrestrial and Freshwater Resilient Ecological Networks Guidance can provide advice in this respect. Ancient Woodland should benefit from minimum buffers of 15 metres between the edge of the tree canopy and the curtilage of any development. Concept lighting strategies should take into account the potential impact on ecological patterns of movement.

## Renewable Energy /Resource Efficiency Opportunities

- 5.32 Resource efficiency and related opportunities should be considered throughout the site design and masterplanning process. This can include water efficiency, grey water recycling systems, green roofs, micro-renewable energy installations and use of low carbon materials. An energy strategy to support a proposed development, should be based upon the Energy Hierarchy set out on p90 of PPW11 as follows:
1. Reduce energy demand
  2. Use energy efficiently
  3. Renewable energy generation
  4. Minimise carbon impact of other energy generation
  5. Minimise extraction of carbon intensive energy materials
- 5.33 The Councils' aim is that developments should achieve net-zero carbon energy systems and practice guidance for sustainable buildings was published by the Welsh Government in July 2014 towards this aim. Appropriate orientation of buildings and harnessing the potential of any on-site microclimates will help reduce the on-site demand for energy. The energy efficiency of new buildings should be improved through introducing measures that limit heat loss and therefore reduce the demand for heat, such as triple glazing and higher standard fabrics for walls, roofs, floors and windows. The production and use of sustainable forms of energy on site, including the potential for wind, solar and heat network development should be explored. Electric Vehicle Charging points should be provided. Strategic sites in particular need to incorporate District Heat Networks where technically viable. Integrating energy generation technology into the built form of the development is strongly encouraged.

## **Infrastructure Study - Implementation and Delivery Plan**

- 5.34 Your Brief should include an Implementation and Delivery Appendix which should set out the key issues, constraints, phasing and mitigation measures which are required to deliver your site (as per Table 26 of Development Plans Manual Edition 3). It should include a brief description of the site, together with an overview of site specific delivery and implementation issues, including site constraints, necessary mitigation / compensation measures and policy / s106 obligations/ infrastructure requirements. Please refer to the Development Plans Manual Edition 3 for further explanation of what is expected in this respect.

## **6. Further Information and Contact Details**

- 6.1 The Development Brief will be a living document and must demonstrate compliance with national planning policy, including Planning Policy Wales 11 (2021) (PPW11), Planning Policy Wales: Building Better Places (July 2020) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) (TAN12).
- 6.2 If you are proposing your site for allocation within the RLDP, you will be expected to submit a draft of your Development Brief to the Council for comment. This will allow any necessary discussion or amendments to be made before the commencement of the formal consultation period at the Deposit Plan Stage of the RLDP. Further amendments may be required to the Brief following the consultation on the wider Deposit Plan. The Council will also liaise with the Design Commission for Wales regarding Development Briefs for the strategic sites. The final version of the Development Brief will be formally adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance when the RLDP is adopted.
- 6.3 Once a draft of the Development Brief is agreed for a candidate site, a 'Concept Master Plan' summary will need to be produced for inclusion within the Deposit RLDP Written Statement. This should include the following sections:
- 1) Vision Statement incorporating description of development

- 2) Summary of Constraints with Diagram / Plan
  - 3) Key Development / Placemaking Principles
  - 4) Annotated Concept Diagram setting out the key elements of a site (access, physical infrastructure, green / blue infrastructure networks, development areas/uses, landscape, key features, key opportunities and constraints)
  - 5) Infrastructure Requirements (within and external to the site)
- 6.4 Please note that if a proposed candidate site is taken forward by the Council, a Welsh language version of the Concept Masterplan will be required to support both the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan public consultation exercises. This requirement is in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Document Scoring Sheet 1 (2017).
- 6.5 If you are submitting a planning application, a draft Development Brief should accompany your submission to inform consideration of the proposal. Amendments may be negotiated during the course of the application. Any consent granted will require compliance with the final agreed version of the Development Brief by way of a planning condition.
- 6.6 It is recommended that, where relevant, you consider the following documents / sources of information as part of your site design, masterplanning and development brief work:
- Cwmavon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (April 2011) - <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/Cwmavon-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-and-Management-Plan.pdf>
- Blaenavon Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan 2017-2022 - <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/Blaenavon-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-and-Management-Plan.pdf>
- Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Design Guide (2011) - <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/SD68-BlaenavonIndustrialLandscapeWorldHeritageSiteDesignGuideSupplementaryPlanningGuidance.pdf>
- Cadw: 'Pontypool: Understanding Urban Character' (2012) - [https://cadw.gov.wales/sites/default/files/2019-05/Pontypool-%20Understanding%20Urban%20Character\\_0.pdf](https://cadw.gov.wales/sites/default/files/2019-05/Pontypool-%20Understanding%20Urban%20Character_0.pdf)
- Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales: Cwmbran Study (2021) - <https://rcahmw.gov.uk/cwmbran-where-the-future-is-happening-now-2/>
- Placemaking Guide 2020 (Design Commission for Wales) - <https://dcfw.org/wp-content/themes/dcfwchild/assets/PlacemakingGuideDigitalENG.pdf>
- Torfaen Local Development Plan (to 2021) (2013) Written Statement - <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/Adopted-Torfaen-LDP-Written-Statement.pdf>
- Planning Aid Wales - <http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/community-engagement/>
- Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016) - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/site-context-analysis-guide.pdf>
- Welsh Government Development Plans Manual Version 3 (2020) - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/development-plans-manual-edition-3-march-2020.pdf>
- Planning Policy Wales 11 (2021) - [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf)
- Planning Policy Wales: Building Better Places (July 2020) - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/building-better-places-the-planning-system-delivering-resilient-and-brighter-futures.pdf>

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) (TAN12) -

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan12-design.pdf>

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007) (TAN18) - <https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-18-transport>

WG: 'Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings' (2014) -

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/planning-sustainable-buildings.pdf>

Design Commission for Wales: 'Inclusive Design in the Built Environment' (2016) -

<http://dcfw.org/inclusive-design-in-the-built-environment/>

Design Commission for Wales / Building for Life Partnership: 'Building for Life 12 Wales' (2016) -

[https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Building%2520for%2520Life%252012_0.pdf)

Design Commission for Wales: Places for Life (2016) - <https://dcfw.org/places-for-life/>

Manual for Streets 2 (2019)

Torfaen CBC: Revised Planning Obligations SPG (2023) -

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planningpolicy/Supplementaryplanningguidance/Supplementary-Planning-Guidance.aspx>

Natural Resources Wales: LANDMAP - <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/planning-and-development/evidence-to-inform-development-planning/landmap-the-welsh-landscape-baseline/?lang=en>

Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (Schedule 3)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/schedule/3>

Susdrain (Independent platform that provides a range of resources for those involved in delivering sustainable drainage systems) - <https://www.susdrain.org/>

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust - <https://www.ggat.org.uk>

Please note that all historic environment and archaeological work, including that undertaken to assess change in sensitive areas and which may impact the historic environment, should be undertaken to the Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Cwmpas - <https://cwmpas.coop/>

NRW Terrestrial and Freshwater Resilient Ecological Networks Guidance -

<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/land-management/practitioners-guide-to-resilient-ecological-networks/?lang=en>

Greenspace Toolkit - <https://greenflagaward.org/resources-research/greenspace-toolkit/>

Building with Nature Standards Framework - <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/>

## Contact Details

- 6.7 If you have any queries regarding the production of your Development Brief, please feel free to contact us. We will be happy to look at information, such as the issues you propose to look at as part of the site analysis or draft structures for your study.

For a Candidate Site as part of the RLDP process please contact us at [LDP@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:LDP@torfaen.gov.uk)

For a planning application submission, please use [planning@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:planning@torfaen.gov.uk)