
CANDIDATE SITE METHODOLOGY



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
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County Borough Council

This document is available in Welsh/Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Contents Page

Section		Page
Section 1	Introduction	1
Section 2	The Call for Candidate Sites	2
Section 3	Candidate Site Submission	6
Section 4	The Candidate Site Assessment Process	10
Section 5	Additional Sites Submitted Following Publication of the Draft Preferred Strategy	14
Section 6	Candidate Site Assessment Criteria	15
Section 7	ISA Methodology	36

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents the procedure and methodology for the evaluation of Candidate Sites, to ascertain their suitability for potential inclusion in the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan (2026-2041)* (LDP). The methodology is reflective of relevant national planning policy, guidance and legislative requirements, inclusive of *Planning Policy Wales (edition 12)* (PPW 12) and the *Development Plans Manual (edition 3)*, the latter of which provides detailed guidance on the Candidate Site process.
- 1.2 Following the approval of the Delivery Agreement by Council on the 15th July 2026 and the Welsh Government on the 21st July 2026, the next key stage of plan preparation is the submission and assessment of Candidate Sites for a variety of development typologies.
- 1.3 For clarification, all sites proposed for residential uses over 0.3ha/10+ dwellings or those proposed for non-residential uses of over 1ha/1,000m², which have been submitted to the Council during the Call for Candidate Site process, will be referred to as '**Candidate Sites**'. Please note that there are **no minimum site thresholds** for Gypsy and Traveller sites, nor for infrastructure, green space or community uses.
- 1.4 The individuals and/or organisations who submit Candidate Sites are known as '**Site Promoters**'. The Candidate Site process of the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan (2026-2041)* involves an assessment of all sites submitted, alongside a review of existing undeveloped LDP allocations, which will also be subject to this methodology.
- 1.5 The Candidate Site assessment process is a fundamental aspect of the Council's Evidence Base. Suitable sites identified through this process will help to deliver the spatial growth options and the Preferred Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil. The approach outlined will ensure that future allocations are founded on robust, credible evidence, in relation to their suitability and the availability of land.
- 1.6 The site assessment process will utilise a range of existing data, information and supporting evidence to undertake a transparent evaluation of sites. Furthermore, consultation will be undertaken with Specific Consultees to ensure that there are no unexpected, external impediments to the potential development of suitable Candidate Sites. Moreover, viability and deliverability are integral components of the methodology. To be considered as potential allocations, all Candidate Sites must prove that they are both viable and deliverable.
- 1.7 The Candidate Site procedure is a multi-phase assessment process, which falls into various stages that will be examined in further detail in the subsequent chapters of this report.

2.0 The Call for Candidate Sites

- 2.1 Following the approval and publication of the Delivery Agreement, the Call for Candidate Sites marks the first formal stage of the plan-making process for the Second Replacement LDP. The process permits landowners (individual or organisations) to submit sites to the Council for potential inclusion in the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan 2026-2041*. Sites can be proposed for a range of uses, prior to an assessment being undertaken to determine their suitability. The sites that go on to become allocations will be the cornerstone of meeting the needs identified in the LDP and its associated Evidence Base.
- 2.2 The guiding principle of the Candidate Site process is to compile appropriate evidence from Site Promoters to categorically demonstrate the sustainability, deliverability and financial viability of sites, for inclusion within the LDP. The *Development Plan Manual* states that the process should enable the following questions to be answered:
- Is the site in a **sustainable** location and can it be freed from all constraints?
 - Is the site capable of being **delivered**?
 - Is the site **viable**?
- (Welsh Government, 2020, p33)
- 2.3 To address the questions above, a site should be in a sustainable location, in accordance with the search sequence presented in PPW 12. It should also be available and generally free from physical constraints. Such constraints could include land ownership issues, flood risk, biodiversity, access, heritage, ground conditions, infrastructure and pollution. Where appropriate, Site Promoters should provide reasoned justification and a clear explanation of how and when any barriers to delivery can be overcome.
- 2.4 Furthermore, the site should have clear development potential and be attractive to the market. It should also be able to accommodate a broad level of obligations, inclusive of S106 and CIL contributions. Moreover, where financial shortfalls exist, Site Promoters should evidence that funding mechanisms are in place to address the gap.
- 2.5 To be financially viable, a site must be able to provide planning contributions, whilst achieving an adequate profit margin for the developer and a meaningful uplift value for the landowner (Welsh Government, 2020, p36-37). The *Development Plans Manual (edition 3)* encourages all Candidate Sites to be accompanied by a viability appraisal; however, given that evidence should be reasonable and proportionate, a full viability study will not be a requirement unless the site reaches Stage 3 of the process, at the Deposit stage of plan-preparation. High-level, baseline viability information will however be required upon submission of the Candidate Site.

2.6 The high-level, baseline viability appraisals should include the following:

- Existing use value and landowner expectations
- Estimated gross development value (GDV)
- Build costs
- Abnormal costs
- Infrastructure costs
- Professional fees
- Statutory/regulatory fees
- Finance costs
- Marketing/disposal costs
- Known viability constraints
- Assumed developer return
- Ability to accommodate LDP policy requirements
- Key infrastructure requirements
- Anticipated phasing and delivery programme
- Identification of principal viability risks
- Sensitivity testing.

2.7 Estimates for the information above may be indicative and proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. As outlined in paragraph 2.5, detailed viability appraisals will only be required where sites progress through subsequent stages of the Candidate Site assessment or to allocation.

2.8 To ensure that sites are genuinely deliverable, a *Candidate Site Submission Form* has been devised, which contains a variety of questions. A form must be completed, in its entirety, for each Candidate Site submitted or for each new use proposed on the same site. The content of the form has been specifically created to allow the Council to undertake an initial filter of sites, removing those deemed unsuitable from further consideration. Reasons for removal may include (but are not limited to) flood risk, topographical constraints, being within a countryside location unrelated to existing settlements and non-compliance with national planning policy.

2.9 Site selection will also be guided by the *Settlement Assessment and Hierarchy* and any emerging revisions to the adopted LDP Strategy. Consequently, the role and function of settlements and the proximity of sites to defined settlement boundaries will be a factor in gauging suitability. Sites deemed to be suitable will be subject to additional scrutiny, including consultation with external consultees (including service providers) and other Council departments. Council departments will also ascertain the scope and degree of any necessary amendments to planning obligations.

2.10 Furthermore, the Candidate Site process will include criteria, based on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (including Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment) and Habitats Regulations Assessment, inclusive of impact assessments on health, equality and the Welsh language. As part of the process, the Council must ensure that the *Second Replacement Local*

Development Plan 2026-2041 has no significant effects or impacts (alone or in combination) on the National Site Network during the Plan's implementation.

- 2.11 All evolving proposals will be subject to an iterative assessment against key issues and criteria, throughout the plan making process and the associated consultation phases.

What Types of Sites can be Submitted?

- 2.12 The following land uses can be submitted as Candidate Sites however this list is not exhaustive.

Residential
Retail
Employment
Community Facilities (no minimum threshold)
Transport Infrastructure (no minimum threshold)
Leisure
Tourism
Gypsy and Traveller Sites (no minimum threshold)
Green Infrastructure (no minimum threshold)
Biodiversity (no minimum threshold)
Open Space (no minimum threshold)
Renewable Energy
Education/Social Care
Health
Minerals
Waste

- 2.13 Any parcel of land compliant with the site size thresholds set out in Stage 1 (for residential development: sites over 0.3ha or proposed for 10 or more dwellings and for non-residential development: sites of at least one hectare or greater than 1,000m²) will be accepted as a Candidate Site. Sites should be undeveloped or offer opportunities for redevelopment, where applicable, with a preference for previously developed (brownfield) land.
- 2.14 It is noted that only a limited number of sites will be suitable for allocation, with the methodology providing guidance to prospective Site Promoters of the types of sites likely to pass the various stages of the Candidate Site process.

Submission of 'Settlement Boundary Review' Sites

- 2.15 Sites of less than 0.3ha and proposed for residential development can also be submitted to the Council for consideration. These will be entered into a separate process, known as the 'Settlement Boundary Review'. This process allows landowners to submit sites that are currently outside the defined Settlement Boundary but lie **immediately adjacent to it, (and are less than 0.3ha in size)**

for review and potential inclusion within the Settlement Boundary of the Second Replacement LDP.

- 2.16 As part of the plan-making process, the Council will review the placement of all Settlement Boundaries. Therefore, any sites with the potential to facilitate small-scale residential development (of nine dwellings or less), can be entered into the Settlement Boundary Review process for consideration.
- 2.17 Please note that the Council **will not consider specific proposals**, simply whether (or not) the site submitted should be included within the defined Settlement Boundary for the Second Replacement LDP.
- 2.18 **Submitting a site into the separate Settlement Boundary Review process should not in any way be construed as a commitment to amend the boundary in that location.**

Consideration of Existing Allocations

- 2.19 As part of the Candidate Site process, the Council will require all existing, undeveloped LDP allocations, which do not benefit from a 'live' or extant planning permission, to be reassessed. Sites will not automatically be 'rolled forward' to the Second Replacement LDP, consequently, landowners will be required to submit the allocated site into the Call for Candidate Site process, should they still wish to see the site considered for potential inclusion within the Plan. The submission must include the requisite OS plan and viability information, alongside evidence that the site is deliverable and suitable for reallocation. Furthermore, an explanation must be provided as to why the site has not secured planning permission to date. Should the landowner fail to provide up-to-date evidence, it will be unlikely that the site will be considered suitable for reallocation in the Second Replacement LDP.
- 2.20 The definition of 'deliverable' sites is set forth in the *Development Plans Manual* (ed. 3) and will be utilised for this purpose.
[development-plans-manual-edition-3-march-2020.pdf](#)

Stages of the Second Replacement LDP

- 2.21 Details of the Candidate Site (CS) assessment process are presented in Chapter 6 of this methodology. The CS process commences with the Call for Candidate Sites, which will be open for submission between the 23rd September 2026 and 16th December 2026.
- 2.22 Following the completion of Stage 1 and 2 of the process, an official indication will be provided at Preferred Strategy stage, of whether the site has passed these initial stages. The suitability of the site will not however be determined until the Deposit stage of plan preparation, with final allocations being confirmed following the Examination stage.

- 2.23 The table below provides a summary of the proposed timetable for the Second Replacement LDP.

Key Stage	Timescale	
Delivery Agreement	May 2026	August 2026
	Welsh Government to respond within four weeks.	
Preparation of the Pre-Deposit Stage	September 2026	October 2027
Preferred Strategy Consultation (Six-week consultation)	November 2027	December 2027
Preparation of the Draft Deposit LDP	January 2028	October 2028
Consultation on the Deposit LDP (Six-week consultation)	November 2028	December 2028
Submission to the Welsh Government	May 2029	
Independent Examination	June 2029	September 2029
Adoption of the Second Replacement LDP	March 2030	

Settlement Boundary Review, Assessment Process

- 2.24 The 'Settlement Boundary Review' assessment process will proceed alongside the Candidate Site process.
- 2.25 The site's suitability for inclusion will not be determined until the Deposit stage of plan preparation, with definitive boundaries confirmed following the Examination stage.

3.0 Candidate Site Submission

- 3.1 The Council will engage Site Promoters in a positive, transparent and open manner, to maximise cooperation. The Council respectfully highlights that Site Promoters equally have a duty to engage with the Council and other individuals or bodies, when required, in the same manner.
- 3.2 To provide sufficient time for the submission of Candidate Sites, inclusive of supporting information and requisite studies (where appropriate), the Council will allow for the submission of sites between 23rd September 2026 and the 16th December 2026. The Call for Candidate Sites is the appropriate time to submit sites for consideration and potential inclusion within the Plan. Site Promoters should be aware that sites submitted after the Preferred Strategy stage are unlikely to be considered.

The Candidate Site Submission and Settlement Boundary Review Form

- 3.3 The submission of Candidate Sites and Settlement Boundary Review sites should utilise the same form, known as the *Candidate Site Submission Form*.

Settlement Boundary Review Sites

- 3.4 Sites for inclusion in the Settlement Boundary Review will need to be submitted via the *Candidate Site Submission Form*. Settlement Boundary Review submissions will only need to complete Sections 1 and 2 and 6 to 8 of the form, as fully as possible. It should be noted that Settlement Boundary Review sites will **not** be required to submit information pertaining to the site's viability or deliverability.
- 3.5 Settlement Boundary Review sites will also need to be accompanied by an OS plan (at scale 1:1250 or 1:2500) with the site boundary outlined in red and any other adjacent land within the same ownership indicated in blue. Submissions should be returned in accordance with the procedures outlined in paragraph 3.10 below.
- 3.6 Settlement Boundary Review sites will not be acknowledged via email however their success will be indicated at Deposit stage, via the Settlement Boundaries indicated on the proposals map.

Candidate Sites

- 3.7 The *Candidate Site Submission Form* is integral to the submission of all Candidate Sites and must be **fully complete** by the Site Promoter and/or their agent. **Please note that if agent details are provided, the agent will be the primary contact for the site.**

- 3.8 The form requests an array of information that will allow the Council and other professional consultees to make a judgement on the site's suitability for inclusion in the LDP. Failure to fully complete the *Candidate Site Submission Form* will result in the form being rejected and the site failing to appear on the Candidate Site Register.
- 3.9 Site Promoters are advised to ensure accuracy when completing the *Candidate Site Submission Form*, to avoid unnecessary delays.
- 3.10 The submission of Candidate Sites and supporting documentation should be undertaken electronically, via email to development.planning@merthyr.gov.uk. Should paper forms be required, please contact the Council to arrange collection. Where individuals do not have access to email, completed forms can be returned to The Planning Policy Section at Unit 5, Triangle Business Park, Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TQ.
- 3.11 **The Council strongly advises that proof of submission or delivery is retained by the Site Promoter.**
- 3.12 In line with the 'frontloading' principle of *the Development Plans Manual (ed. 3)*, the Council will require as much evidence as possible to be submitted during the Call for Candidate Sites stage. This will include submission of an OS basemap plan (at a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500, with the site boundary outlined in red and any other adjacent land within the same ownership indicated in blue), alongside viability information, as outlined in paragraph 2.6 of this methodology.
- 3.13 Whilst the *Development Plans Manual* advocates frontloading, it nonetheless acknowledges that information should be proportionate to the size and use of the site. Therefore, should a Site Promoter not include the requisite studies and information at the submission stage, the Council may request these later in the process, as the site progresses. The *Development Plans Manual* does however acknowledge that inadequate evidence upfront will inevitably incur time delays and can be a reason for discounting a site.
- 3.14 Nevertheless, it is appreciated that definitive detail may be unavailable or impractical at submission stage, and it is acknowledged that absolute viability parameters will remain uncertain until the latter stages of the process. As sites progress, Site Promoters will be provided with the opportunity to submit or revise information accordingly. To reiterate however, high-level baseline **viability information must be submitted alongside the *Candidate Site Submission Form*.**
- 3.15 **The responsibility of undertaking any technical work or studies for a site's potential inclusion in the Plan, rests solely with the Site Promoter(s). Any investment made in the promotion of Candidate Sites is entirely at the discretion of the Site Promoter.** Failure to provide information when requested may result in a site being discounted and removed from the process, on grounds of insufficient evidence.

- 3.16 To support Site Promoters with submissions, the Council has prepared a *Candidate Sites Constraints Plan* to assist in identifying potential issues with the site. The map of constraints is not an exhaustive list of all constraints and designations however the Council provide additional signposting to third-party data and websites within the associated *Candidate Site Guidance Notes* document.

Acceptance of Candidate Site and Issuing of Candidate Site Reference

- 3.17 Where a *Candidate Site Submission Form* has been fully completed and received by the Council, an email notification will be sent to Site Promoters or their agents (where applicable) to confirm receipt. The email notification will contain a unique site reference, which will be used to identify the site throughout the process and within the *Candidate Site Register*. Where a Site Promoter does not have an email address, the site reference will be provided via telephone or letter. Where a Site Promoter has provided details of an agent, the agent will be the primary contact for the site.

The Candidate Site Register

- 3.18 At the conclusion of the Call for Candidate Sites process, the Council will compile the *Candidate Site Register* (CSR). The CSR consists of a list of all Candidate Sites submitted and accepted into the process. The CSR may be published in advance of the Preferred Strategy stage, if necessary, otherwise it will form part of the pre-deposit public consultation process.
- 3.19 **The submission of a Candidate Site should be in no way construed as a commitment for its inclusion within the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan, 2026-2041*.**

Results of the Settlement Boundary Review

- 3.20 The results of the Settlement Boundary Review will be evident on the proposals map, as part of the Deposit Draft Local Development Plan, known as the 'Deposit' stage.
- 3.21 Sites will continue to be reviewed throughout the plan-making process, when drawing up Settlement Boundaries for the Deposit Draft LDP. Final boundaries will not however be confirmed until the conclusion of the Examination stage and receipt of the Inspector's Report.

Notifications and Publicity

- 3.22 All information pertaining to the Candidate Site and Settlement Boundary Review processes, in addition to the wider plan-making process, will be available to view on the Council's website. All relevant pages will be kept up to

date, thus ensuring that all stakeholders and interested parties are kept informed of the latest developments concerning the Second Replacement LDP.

4.0 The Candidate Site Assessment Process

- 4.1 Potential allocations of the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan (2026-2041)* must meet the relevant objectives and be capable of being developed within the plan period. Consequently, the Council will undertake a four-stage Candidate Site assessment process to determine a site's suitability. The process will be open and transparent, charting a site's progress through the various stages.
- 4.2 The site assessment process will utilise data collated, inclusive of:
- Site specific information provided by the Site Promoter on the *Candidate Site Submission Form*.
 - A desktop analysis of all sites using various GIS layers, inclusive of open-source data, as well as any other pertinent information held by the Council.
 - Consultation with service providers and public bodies concerning technical information, relevant to a site's potential development.
 - Site visits to be undertaken by staff, to understand the context and features of the site.
- 4.3 The Council appreciates that deliverability may not be clear or absolute at the commencement of the Candidate Site process. Nonetheless, as the process progresses, a more detailed degree of information will be necessary to appraise a site's suitability. As such, it is anticipated that this level of detail will be a requirement in the latter stages of the Candidate Site process. At this stage however it will need to be demonstrated that the site can be delivered, inclusive of any requisite CIL or Section 106 contributions.
- 4.4 The Candidate Site assessment process will also take account of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, inclusive of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, which will be compiled throughout the entirety of the Second Replacement LDP process. This assessment will measure the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of potentially developing the Candidate Site, noting whether they will have positive, negative or neutral effects (on a graduated scale).
- 4.5 To assist with the Candidate Site submissions, the Council has produced *Candidate Site Guidance Notes* and the *Candidate Sites Constraints Plan*. These will allow Site Promoters to identify any significant constraints associated with their site(s) and the types of information required to prove that such constraints can be overcome.

Stages of the Candidate Site Assessment

- 4.6 The information below sets out the four stages of the Candidate Site assessment process.

Stage 1

- 4.7 Stage 1 of the process is a high-level, initial filter of information, which aims to dismiss unsuitable sites at an early stage.

- 4.8 The initial filter of sites will be judged against the following:

- Site Threshold: For Candidate Sites, there will be a minimum threshold of 0.3 hectares (ha) or 10+ dwellings for residential sites. Other uses (non-residential) should have a minimum floorspace of 1,000m² or a gross area of 1ha. There is no minimum threshold for Gypsy and Traveller sites, nor for infrastructure, green space or community uses.
- Countryside Locations: Residential proposals must not be located within the open countryside but instead within or adjacent to existing settlement boundaries. Those sites that offer logical extensions to existing settlements may be considered, providing that they are within a sustainable location and would not result in isolated development.

Land uses including retail, employment, education, social care, health and community facilities must also be within or immediately adjacent to existing settlements boundaries.

Provision for Gypsies and Travellers must first look at sustainable sites, followed by edge of settlement sites. Only where these are unavailable should countryside locations be considered, in line with Welsh Government *Circular 005/2018 – Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites*.

- New Settlements: Proposals for entirely new settlements will not be considered, as the *Strategic Development Plan* (SDP) will be the most appropriate mechanism for this form of development.
- Planning History: Sites that have previously been refused planning permission under the adopted LDP, due to highway safety, amenity, visual impact, ecological considerations or any other issue whereby the situation remains unchanged, will be excluded from consideration.
- Flood Risk: Any site for built, vulnerable development, located in an existing Zone 3 (high) (rivers and seas) designation, as defined by Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15, will not pass the initial filter.
- Ecological Considerations: Any sites submitted that impact upon or are located within a national ecological designation, such as a Site of Special

Scientific Interest (SSSI), will be removed from the initial filter. Sites within or impacting upon ancient woodlands will also be removed.

- **Historically Important Sites:** Proposals that are submitted directly on sites of historic significance (including historic parks and gardens and scheduled ancient monuments), whereby development would have an obvious unacceptable or detrimental impact, will be removed from the initial filter.
- **Major Constraints:** Sites that have been identified as having major physical constraints, which clearly cannot be overcome and will prevent the site from being developed within the plan period, will be removed from the initial filter.

- 4.9 The results of the Stage 1 assessment (initial filter) will be published alongside the *Candidate Site Register*, in line with LDP Regulation 15 (Preferred Strategy). Those that pass Stage 1 will progress to Stage 2, with the final selection of sites forming part of the Deposit Draft LDP. Sites will not however be formalised until the conclusion of the Examination phase and the issuing of the Inspector's Report.

Stage 2

- 4.10 Stage 2 of the Candidate Site process will involve a further detailed assessment for the sites that passed Stage 1. The full assessment criteria are detailed in Chapter 6 of this methodology.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 4.11 Stage 2 will also involve assessing all sites against the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal. Those that perform poorly against the SA criteria will be removed from the process. This approach will eliminate those sites that cannot be delivered or are not appropriate in the context of the emerging Plan. It will also mean a shorter list of sites for external consultees to appraise. Furthermore, this stage will provide a clearer idea of the sites likely to be suitable for the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan 2026-2041*.
- 4.12 The Sustainability Appraisal aims to demonstrate how sites contribute towards achieving the overall objectives of the LDP. The process will ascertain whether the sites will have varying degrees of positive, negative or neutral impacts, in relation to the ISA Objectives, in the context of its environment. The SA element of the ISA assesses all 'reasonable' options for a site's inclusion within the Plan.
- 4.13 The Council has prepared a Draft ISA Scoping Report, which identifies various SA Objectives, against which all sites will be assessed. These are available to view in Chapter 7 of this report.

Consultation with Internal Council Departments

- 4.14 Consultation with internal Council departments will be undertaken on all sites that pass the Stage 1 assessment, to further refine site suitability.

Consultation with External Statutory Consultees

- 4.15 Following the conclusion of the Council's internal departments' assessment, inclusive of the assessment against the SA Objectives, the Council will consult with external consultees. This will help to determine whether additional information is required, the amount and type of mitigation and enhancement required and any infrastructure needs or requirements on the site.
- 4.16 External consultees will include, but are not limited to, Natural Resources Wales, Cadw, Heneb, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, National Grid, Wales and West Utilities, Western Power Distribution and the Local Health Board.
- 4.17 Sites that pass both elements within the Stage 2 process will progress to Stage 3 of the Candidate Site process.
- 4.18 Should the Stage 2 process identify the need for any works or infrastructure requirements, Site Promoters will be informed prior to the commencement of Stage 3.

Stage 3

- 4.19 The Stage 3 process is concerned with testing a site's viability and deliverability. Site Promoters, by this stage, will have been informed if their site requires further information, studies or specific infrastructure. This will allow Site Promoters to incorporate such factors into their site's viability appraisal.

Viability and Deliverability Testing

- 4.20 Following the conclusion of Stage 2, the Council will require an assessment of the viability of all remaining sites. This is to ensure that the site is viable and can provide planning contributions, developer profit and a meaningful uplift for the Site Promoter(s). The Council will request a detailed viability assessment from the Site Promoters at this stage however, sites will also be subject to the Council's own viability testing.
- 4.21 Stage 3 will also provide the Site Promoter with the opportunity to address any issues raised that could potentially prevent the site from being allocated. Where the opportunity for mitigation and/or additional works exist, Site Promoters should ascertain realistic costs and provide, update and/or resubmit their viability information accordingly.

- 4.22 Those sites that have proven to be both viable and deliverable will progress to Stage 4 of the Candidate Site process.

Stage 4

- 4.23 Sites being considered for potential allocation in the Deposit Draft LDP will undergo a master planning exercise as part of the Stage 4 process. Additionally, master planned sites must evidence compliance with the well-being goals, the five ways of working and the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes.
- 4.24 The selection of sites for the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan* will involve a variety of considerations, including:
- The professional judgement of officers in relation to the emerging LDP and its associated Evidence Base.
 - The spatial appropriateness of the site set against Growth Options, the Strategy, the *Settlement Assessment and Hierarchy*, as well as other appropriate evidence (e.g. housing, employment and retail 'need', flooding and viability).
 - Sufficient evidence to prove that the site is viable, deliverable and can be realised during the plan period.
 - The sustainability of a site, based on the ISA assessment.
 - The overall findings of the Candidate Site process.
- 4.25 Sites that generally perform best will be considered as potential allocations for inclusion in the Deposit Draft LDP.
- 4.26 Final allocations will be determined at the conclusion of the Examination process, when the independent Inspector's Report is published.

5.0 Additional Sites Submitted Following Publication of the Draft Preferred Strategy

- 5.1 The publication of the *Draft Preferred Strategy* will be followed by a six-week public consultation. During the consultation period, additional Settlement Boundary Review and Candidate Sites may be submitted into the process, via Representation.
- 5.2 Sites submitted at the Preferred Strategy consultation stage, will be required to present a completed *Candidate Site Submission Form*, alongside relevant evidence to support the site. This will include high-level viability information (in accordance with paragraph 2.6 of this methodology), an OS basemap plan (at a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500, with the site boundary outlined in red and any other adjacent land ownership indicated in blue) and an ISA of the site, based on the Council's Candidate Site SA Objectives presented in Chapter 7 of this methodology.
- 5.3 A site submitted at this stage, which is not supported by the requisite information, will not be considered suitable for allocation within the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan, 2026-2041*.
- 5.4 It should be noted that whilst the assessment process may result in a Candidate Site performing well against all criteria, it by no means guarantees its inclusion as an allocation, nor indeed would a favourable outcome of a future planning application be assured.
- 5.5 Sites that perform well but are not proposed as draft allocations, will be held on a Reserve List. This will ensure that sites are available in case a particular site is removed at the Deposit or Examination stages of plan preparation.

6.0 Candidate Site Assessment Criteria

- 6.1 The assessment criteria reflect and complement the information required by the *Candidate Site Submission Form*. The form, alongside the constraints map, will provide Site Promoters with an overview of the types of constraints and/or designations that affect their sites.
- 6.2 Site Promoters, at various stages of the process, may be asked to provide additional or supporting information, to prove that any constraints or issues identified can be overcome. This will ensure that the site is deliverable and can be considered as a potential allocation.
- 6.3 The assessment criteria below have been devised to address national guidance, legislation and planning policy requirements, in addition to a variety of factors, relevant to assessing the potential suitability of a site.

Stage 1 Criteria

- 6.4 The Stage 1 assessment criteria are set out below.

Site Threshold

CS	The site is a Candidate Site. A site submitted for residential purposes will be greater than 0.3ha and/or for 10+ dwellings. A site for non-residential development will be greater than 1ha and/or for 1,000m² of development. There are no minimum site thresholds for Gypsy and Traveller sites, nor for infrastructure, green space or community uses.
SBR	The site is a Settlement Boundary Review site. A site of less than 0.3ha, which may be considered suitable for small-scale (9 dwellings or less) residential development. Specific proposals will not be considered.

Outcome: This will allow for the consideration of all land submitted into the process. Settlement Boundary Review Sites will provide a way of boosting housing delivery via small-scale windfall or self-build sites.

Note: Where a form states that the site is above the stipulated 0.3ha threshold but the Council measures it below, the Council may remove the site from the process, or where

residential uses are proposed, may enter the site into the Settlement Boundary Review process.

Location

Green	The site is located within the defined Settlement Boundary.
Yellow	The site is located adjacent to or forms a logical extension to the defined Settlement Boundary.
Red	The site is detached from the defined Settlement Boundary and would result in unsustainable, isolated development.

Outcome: This criterion provides a high-level assessment of the site's sustainability credentials.

New Settlement

Green	The site does not constitute a New Settlement.
Yellow	The site is a large-scale development and requires further assessment to ascertain the most appropriate level for the site to be considered (SDP/LDP).
Red	The site is a proposed New Settlement, which is not appropriate for consideration through the Local Development Plan process.

Outcome: The criterion establishes whether the site is a proposed New Settlement. New Settlements should form part of the Strategic Development Plan process, as they are not appropriate at the local level.

Planning History

Green	The site has not previously been considered against the adopted LDP by the Local Planning Authority and consequently, has not been refused planning permission.
Yellow	

	The site was refused planning permission under the adopted Local Development Plan (2016-2031) however there have been material changes in circumstances since the application was submitted.
Red	The site has previously been refused planning permission against the adopted LDP (2016-2031) and there has been no material change since.

Outcome: No proposal that has previously been refused planning permission against the adopted LDP will be considered further without a material change in circumstance.

Flood Risk

Green	The site is not within a designated flood risk zone.
Yellow	The site is located within a designated flood risk zone but may be able to prove that it meets the acceptability of consequences and justification test set out in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15.
Red	The site is within a Zone 3 (high) flood risk area and is proposed for a highly vulnerable use.

Outcome: This is a high-level assessment to ascertain whether the flood risk on the site is too great for development to occur, in line with national policy.

Ecological Considerations

Green	The site is not affected by an ecological designation.
Yellow	The site is affected by a local ecological designation however mitigation and enhancement may be possible.
Red	The site would impact upon a national ecological designation or ancient woodland.

Outcome: This high-level assessment would remove any site affecting a national ecological designation or ancient woodland, in line with national planning policy.

Historically Important Sites

Green	The site does not affect a historic site or designation.
Yellow	The site has the potential to affect a historic site or designation, but further information is required.
Red	The site has been submitted on a historically important site and will have an obvious unacceptable or detrimental impact upon the designation.

Outcome: Sites that would detrimentally impact upon historic sites or designations will be removed from the initial filter.

Major Constraints

Green	The site is free from major constraints.
Yellow	The site has the potential to be affected by, or is near a known major constraint, but further information is required.
Red	The site contains at least one major constraint that cannot be overcome.

Outcome: Sites with major constraints that would prevent the site from coming forward for development, will be removed from the process.

Stage 2

- 6.5 The Stage 2 assessment of Candidate Sites will involve a more detailed consideration of those sites that passed Stage 1, followed by consultation with internal Council departments and external consultees. For Stage 2, Candidate Sites will be assessed against the criteria within Sections 6-9 of the *Candidate Site Submission Form*, as set out below.
- 6.6 Stage 2 will also involve assessing sites against the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal. Sites that perform poorly against the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will be removed at this stage, as they will not be appropriate for the context of the

emerging plan. Furthermore, it will reduce the number of sites that external consultees will need to consider. The SA criteria can be found at Chapter 7 of this methodology.

- 6.7 At this stage (Stage 2), the Council may seek further information, clarification or evidence to support a site's assessment. Furthermore, it should be noted that not all questions within this section carry equal weight.

Section 6 – Sustainability and Location

Sustainability

The first question asks the Site Promoter to specify walking distances to a variety of services and facilities (inclusive of active travel routes, public transport, shops, open/play space, health, education and community facilities, as well as retail centres and existing employment sites). Sites will be judged as follows:

Green	There are services and facilities located under 800m walking distance of the site.
Yellow	There are services and facilities located within 801m-1200m walking distance of the site.
Red	Services and facilities are located more than 1200m (walking distance) from the site. (This will not necessarily preclude development).

Note: Whilst there are four categories of distance on the *Candidate Site Submission Form*, the first two (under 400m and 401-800m) are considered 'reasonable walking distance' and will therefore achieve a 'green' score. They have, however, been subcategorised to indicate the upper and lower limits of what people generally find acceptable distances to walk. (Under 800m is deemed to be a ten-minute walk for most, at an average pace). Additionally, distances to certain services form part of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal methodology and framework.

Outcome: This criterion provides a detailed assessment of the site's sustainability credentials to ensure that it complies with the national sustainable place-making outcomes.

Location

Q: Is the site accessible to existing services and facilities on foot, via a series of interconnected pavements that are free from obstruction?

“Interconnected pavements” should be taken to mean a series of pavements providing a safe, legible walking route that can cross a bridge or road/public highway. The pavement should be free from obstruction or constraint (such as, for example, extreme narrowing that would preventing a person, wheelchair or pushchair from remaining safely on the pavement to reach their destination).

Green	The site is accessible to nearby services and facilities, on foot, via a series of interconnected pavements that are free from obstruction.
Yellow	The site is accessible to nearby services and facilities on foot however, the pavements are only partially connected and/or partially free from obstruction.
Red	The site is inaccessible to services and facilities on foot, as pavements are not interconnected, are entirely absent and/or are not free from obstruction.

Outcome: To establish the suitability of the site's location and the condition of existing pavement infrastructure for individuals on foot, ensuring compliance with the Transport Hierarchy, as set out in national planning policy.

Q: Does the site have suitable vehicular access to the existing highway network?

Green	There is suitable vehicular access to the existing highway network from the site.
Yellow	The site does not presently have suitable vehicular access to the existing highway network but there is scope to provide sufficient access and/or the proposal includes the introduction of a viable new access point.
Red	The site does not possess a suitable access solution.

Outcome: To ascertain whether sites have sufficient access to existing infrastructure on the strategic highway network.

Q: Do adjacent land uses have the potential to conflict in terms of amenity, noise, odour or light pollution?

Green	There are no potentially conflicting land uses.
Yellow	There are adjacent land uses that warrant further investigation.
Red	There are conflicting land uses adjacent to the site, and these cannot be ameliorated by the proposal's design.

Outcome: To ascertain whether there are any potential adverse or conflicting land uses that would prevent the site from being developed.

Section 7 – Site Conditions and Safeguards

Flood Risk

Q: Is any part of the site, including the potential access points, located within a TAN 15 Flood Zone 2 (medium) or 3 (high) area?

Green	The site and its associated access points are not within a TAN 15 flood zone 2 (medium) or 3 (high).
Yellow	The site is within a flood zone however the proposed use is a water compatible development and/or the site meets the justification test (section 10) and the acceptability of consequences element (section 11) of TAN 15.
Red	The site is within a Flood Zone 2 (medium) or Zone 3 (high) and does not meet the justification test (section 10) and the acceptability of consequences element (section 11) of TAN 15.

Outcome: To ensure the safety of development by assessing the potential risk of flooding and directing development away from vulnerable areas, in line with national planning policy.

Q: Is any part of the site subject to surface water flooding, as set out in TAN 15?

Green	The site is not subject to surface water flooding (zones 2 or 3).
Yellow	The site is within a surface water flood zone however development may be possible dependent upon the outcomes of a Flood Consequences Assessment.
Red	The site is within a zone 3 for surface water flooding and evidence suggests that development would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Outcome: To encourage development in resilient areas with low levels of surface water flood risk, to ensure that the potential for flooding is not increased elsewhere, in line with TAN 15 and national planning policy.

Existing Infrastructure

Q: Does the site contain any of the following: existing gas pipelines, existing sewer systems, overhead cables, railway lines or other infrastructure that could affect the site's development. The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	There is no existing infrastructure on site.
Yellow	There is existing infrastructure on site, and it is unclear how the Site Promoter intends to address the issue. Further information is required.
Red	The existing infrastructure would present an impediment to development, and the issue cannot be overcome.

Outcome: This criterion seeks to ascertain whether any existing infrastructure is present on the site, which would prevent the site from being developed.

Where issues have been identified, it is recommended that the Site Promoter liaises with infrastructure providers to ascertain whether a solution can be devised to overcome the constraint. This evidence should then be submitted to the Council for consideration.

If it cannot be demonstrated that the constraint can be overcome or no evidence is presented by the Site Promoter when requested, the site will be removed from the process.

Minerals

Q: Is the site within an area of known mineral resource?

Green	The site is not within an area of known mineral resource.
Yellow	The site is within an area of known mineral resource however the minerals have already been sterilised by neighbouring development and/or further information is required.
Red	The site is within an area of known mineral resource and would potentially sterilise the mineral reserve.

Outcome: This criterion has been devised to ensure that the County Borough can provide a continuous supply of minerals to meet society's needs, in accordance with national planning policy, as contained in MTAN 1.

Ground Conditions

Q: Is there a possibility that the site contains potentially contaminated land? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site is not within an area of potentially contaminated land.
Yellow	The site is within an area of potentially contaminated land however, subject to advice from Public Health and Protection, development may be permitted.
Red	The site is within an area of potentially contaminated land and cannot be developed, in line with advice from Public Health and Protection.

Outcome: This question seeks to establish whether a site is within an area of potentially contaminated land and the likelihood of it being able to be developed, in line with advice from the Council's Public Health and Protection department.

The Council's Public Health and Protection team will assess all sites at Stage 2 to ascertain whether potentially contaminated land will detrimentally impact development proposals submitted.

Q: Is the site identified as being within a coal mining risk area?

Green	The site is not identified as being within a coal mining risk area.
Yellow	The site is within a low coal mining risk area, or the site is within a high-risk coal mining area however evidence has been submitted to indicate that the land is safe to develop. Further information may also be required.
Red	The site is within a high-risk coal mining area, and the constraint is insurmountable to development.

Outcome: This criterion is concerned with understanding the risks of encountering potential ground collapse or instability, in addition to the potential for lethal gas emissions.

Q: Are there likely to be any issues in terms of ground stability on the site?

Green	There are no issues in terms of ground stability.
Yellow	There is potential for ground instability and further evidence may be required.
Red	There is significant potential for ground instability, which would prevent the development of the site.

Outcome: This question aims to assess the structural risks posed by potential issues such as underground mining works, clay shrinkage or soluble bedrock.

Q: Does the site's topography present a constraint to development?

Green	The site's topography would not present a constraint to development.
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Yellow	The site's topography has the potential to present a constraint to development however further information is required.
Red	The site's topography presents an insurmountable constraint to development.

Outcome: This criterion aims to establish whether there are any physical natural or man-made topographical issues, such as tips, slopes or changes in elevation that would prevent a site from being developed.

Q: Is the site:

Green	Brownfield.
Yellow	Mixed.
Red	Greenfield. (This will not preclude development).

Outcome: To ensure that previously developed land (brownfield land) is used wherever possible in preference to greenfield, in line with national planning policy.

Section 8 – Historic and Natural Environment

Historic Environment

Q: Is the site within or affected by a cultural and/or historic environment designation? The site lists several designations including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, urban character areas and any 'other'. Site Promoters are invited to provide details.

Green	The site will not detrimentally affect the historic environment and/or a cultural designation.
Yellow	The site will affect the historic environment and/or a cultural designation, but further assessment/studies are required in relation to the scale of the impact.

Red	The site will affect the historic environment and/or a cultural designation, which will have a detrimental and/or undermining effect.
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Outcome: This criterion seeks to establish whether development would have a detrimental impact on the historic environment or a cultural designation.

Natural Environment

Q: Is the site within or affected by any of the following national, regional or local designations? Such designations include SSSIs, SINCs, RIGS and Local Nature Reserves. The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site would not affect a designation, nor is there a designation on the site.
Yellow	The site may affect a designation and/or there is a designation on the site however mitigation may be possible (subject to consultation with the Council's Ecologist); further information is required.
Red	The site is within a designation and/or development would cause unacceptable harm to the features of the designation; mitigation is not possible in either instance.

Outcome: This criterion assesses the effect that a development is likely to have on protected national, regional or local environmental or ecological designations, so that they may be protected in line with the biodiversity duty, as contained within national planning policy.

Q: Is there a tree preservation order (TPO) on site? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	There is no tree preservation order on the site.
Yellow	There is a tree preservation order on site however the development will not directly affect the TPO. Further information may be required.

Red	There is a tree preservation order on site, and the development will affect and/or involve the removal of a TPO.
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Outcome: To ascertain whether there is a tree preservation order on the site and whether the development will have a detrimental impact on the TPO.

Q: Will the development of the site involve the removal of trees? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site will not involve the removal of trees.
Yellow	The site will involve the removal of trees however mitigation and enhancement can be provided, in line with national planning policy. Further information may be required.
Red	The site will involve the removal of trees and cannot facilitate the requisite mitigation and enhancement, inclusive of the 1:3 ratio of planting, as set out in national planning policy.

Outcome: The criterion seeks to ensure that the requisite mitigation and enhancement measures can be fulfilled should trees need to be removed from the site. National planning policy requires that for each tree removed, another three (of suitable/compatible genus and location) should be planted to compensate for the loss.

Q: Is the site wholly or partially within, or will it affect an ancient woodland? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site is not wholly or partially within, nor will it affect an ancient woodland.
Yellow	The site is partially within an ancient woodland but would not directly impact upon the designation. Further information/evidence will be required.
Red	The site is within an ancient woodland and would have a detrimental impact upon the designation.

Outcome: This criterion seeks to ensure that areas of ancient woodland, as well as semi-natural woodlands, and ancient, veteran and heritage trees and ancient hedgerow are protected from potentially damaging development or operations. National policy stipulates that these areas must be protected, as they are an irreplaceable natural resource and possess significant biodiversity, landscape and cultural value. Natural Resources Wales will be consulted on any such proposal submitted.

Q: Is the site located on Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3A agricultural land (Agricultural Land Classification – Best and most versatile agricultural land)? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site is not identified as high-grade agricultural land.
Yellow	The site is identified as low quality agricultural land (Grade 3b, Grade 4 and Grade 5) and is considered acceptable for development in line with <i>Planning Policy Wales (ed. 12)</i> (PPW 12).
Red	The site is identified as high-grade agricultural land. Guidance, as contained within <i>Planning Policy Wales, (ed. 12)</i> (page 37) should be followed. This does not necessarily preclude development.

Outcome: To ensure that the highest-grade agricultural land is protected in line with national policy, development will be steered towards lower grade classes. The best and most versatile agricultural land is a finite resource and should be conserved accordingly.

Q: Is the site within a Special Landscape Area (SLA)? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site is not within a Special Landscape Area.
Yellow	The site is within a designated Special Landscape Area, however further information/evidence is required to assess the impact of the proposal on the SLA.
Red	The site is within a Special Landscape Area whereby the proposal would undermine the designation.

Outcome: This criterion aims to ensure that Special Landscape Areas are protected for their visual landscape value. Evidence, including a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment may be required to ensure that a proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the landscape.

Q: Are there any important features associated with the site (hedgerow, boundary walls etc.)? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The site does not contain any important features within or on the boundary of the site.
Yellow	The site does contain important features within or on the site boundary however the features are to be retained, and the proposal seeks to mitigate against the effects of the development and enhance these features on site. Further information may be required.
Red	The site contains important features within or on the site boundary however development would undermine the well-being of native hedge species and local ecosystems or undermine the identified features of import.

Outcome: This question seeks to protect important features associated with the site inclusive of hedgerow. Development should not undermine identified features of import, and should protect native hedgerow species, as these are fundamental to strong, resilient ecosystems, in line with national planning policy (PPW 12).

Q: Will the site's development provide Green or Blue Infrastructure/habitat connectivity? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	The Site Promoter intends to provide Green and/or Blue Infrastructure/habitat connectivity.
Yellow	The Site Promoter has not provided information in relation to Green and/or Blue Infrastructure/habitat connectivity and further evidence is required.
Red	The Site Promoter states that the site will not contribute towards Green and/or Blue Infrastructure/habitat connectivity.

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Outcome: The criterion seeks to ascertain whether the Site Promoter intends for the development to contribute towards Green and/or Blue Infrastructure/habitat connectivity. In line with *Planning Policy Wales* (ed. 12), Local Planning Authorities should aim to increase opportunities for Green Infrastructure, mitigate against habitat fragmentation and secure wider Green Infrastructure benefits, particularly along transport corridors. This is integral for species health and migration.

Section 9 – Wider Benefits, Climate Change and Place-making

Wider Benefits

Q: Are there any other potential benefits associated with the site? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	Yes, the Site Promoter has detailed clear benefits associated the proposal for the site.
Yellow	The Site Promoter has indicated that there are potential benefits however further details are required.
Red	No, the Site Promoter has indicated that there are no other potential benefits associated with the site. (This will not necessarily preclude development).

Outcome: This criterion seeks to establish whether additional benefits/ community benefits are associated with the site's proposal.

Climate Change

Q: Will the site contribute to national climate change targets by including low or zero carbon technologies? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	Yes, the Site Promoter has provided clear detail regarding the proposal's contribution to national climate change targets and/or proposes the use of low or zero carbon technologies.
Yellow	

	The Site Promoter has indicated that the proposal will contribute to climate change targets and/or low/zero carbon technologies however further information is required.
Red	The Site Promoter has indicated that the proposal will not meet the climate change targets or provide low/zero carbon technologies.

Outcome: This question aims to ascertain whether proposals contribute to national climate change targets and/or plan to incorporate low or zero carbon technologies, as advocated by national planning policy (PPW 12).

Q: Has the proposed development been designed to reduce exposure to pollution? (Inclusive of encouraging the use of public transport and contributing to the decarbonisation agenda). (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	Yes, the Site Promoter has provided a clear indication that the proposal's design and layout will seek to reduce pollution, encourage the use of public transport and contribute to the decarbonisation targets, as presented in PPW 12.
Yellow	The Site Promoter has indicated that the development will be designed to reduce exposure to pollutants however further information is required.
Red	The Site Promoter has indicated that the site will not be designed to reduce exposure to pollution, encourage the use of public transport or contribute to the decarbonisation targets.

Outcome: This criterion seeks to establish whether the proposed design would reduce exposure to pollutants (this could include encouraging the use of public transport and other approaches that would contribute to the decarbonisation agenda, in line with national planning policy).

Q: Will the proposed development provide and/or link with existing active travel routes to promote walking and cycling and access to existing public transport options? (Yes/No). The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Green	
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	The proposal includes and/or links with active travel routes and promotes walking, cycling and access to existing public transport options.
Yellow	The proposal doesn't link to existing active travel however it does promote walking, cycling and access to public transport. Further information/evidence may be required.
Red	The proposal does not include active travel/active travel links and does not provide evidence of promoting walking, cycling or access to public transport.

Outcome: The criterion aims to ensure that proposals provide and/or promote active travel, walking, cycling and the use of public transport, in line with national planning policy. PPW 12 promotes the inclusion of infrastructure, such as secure cycle parking (particularly around transport interchanges), in addition to changing facilities.

Place-making

Q: How will the development contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015, inclusive of the seven Well-being Goals, as well as the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes in *Planning Policy Wales (ed. 12)* and the Council's *Corporate Wellbeing Plan (2023-2028)*? Please provide details.

Green	The Site Promoter has provided a clear explanation of how the proposal will contribute to the seven Well-being Goals, the Council's Well-being Plan and the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes.
Yellow	Information is insufficient and further information is required.
Red	The Site Promoter does not indicate how the proposal would contribute to the seven Well-being Goals, the Council's Well-being Plan and the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes.

Outcome: This criterion seeks to ensure that proposals contribute to the seven-Well-being Goals, the Council's Well-being Plan and the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes, in line with national planning policy, as detailed in PPW 12. These goals and outcomes are considered the optimal outcome for all

development and should underpin both development plans and development proposals.

Stage 3

- 6.8 Following the conclusion of Stage 2, the Council will assess the viability and deliverability of all sites that remain in the process. To do so, the information provided on sections 4 and 5 of the *Candidate Site Submission Form* will be utilised to assess sites, although there will be a greater emphasis on section 5, alongside any viability information submitted in support of the Candidate Site.
- 6.9 The questions contained within section 5 of the *Candidate Site Submission Form* have been derived to ascertain whether the site can be delivered over the plan period and provide a sufficient return for all involved.
- 6.10 Please note that additional viability information may be asked for at this stage of the process. Failure to provide information when requested may result in the site being removed from the process.

Section 4 – Site Availability Details

Availability

Q: Are there any legal restrictions, covenants or claw back values on the land? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to establish whether there are any legal restrictions, claw backs or covenants on a Candidate Site, as such issues can often be costly and cause time delays.

Q: Has the land been marketed for development? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To ascertain whether the site has been marketed for development and the details pertaining to this.

Q: Have any discussions taken place with developers regarding the site's development? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To establish the details of any discussions that have taken place between the landowner/Site Promoter and house builders.

Q: Is there an options agreement on the site? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to ascertain the details of any options agreement entered into by the Site Promoter, inclusive of whether the developer is a public or private developer and the nature of the agreement.

Delivery Timescales

Q: Please provide an indication of the likely timescales for the site's delivery. (For residential development, please provide an anticipated level of dwelling delivery per annum)

Outcome: To provide the Council with a good indication of when the site is likely to come forward for development, ensuring that the site can be delivered during the Plan period, in line with the *Development Plans Manual*. The Plan period is split into short-term, medium-term and long-term for this purpose.

Section 5 – Viability and Deliverability

Viability

Q: Is the site accompanied by an initial viability assessment? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To ascertain whether a viability assessment accompanies the proposal. Requests for viability assessments will be made at this point in the Candidate Site process, where only the baseline viability information has been provided previously. Where a full viability assessment was submitted with the site, the Site Promoter may be asked to update it at this point. Failure to provide any information requested will result in the site being removed from the process.

Q: Is there a meaningful uplift value that would encourage the Site Promoter and/or landowners to sell the site? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to ensure that there is a sufficient uplift value that would encourage the landowner to sell the land, whilst still allowing the developer to make a profit and provide the requisite policy contributions, in line with the *Development Plans Manual* (ed. 3).

Q: Do you intend to develop the site personally? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To ascertain whether the Site Promoter intends to develop the site or whether they are looking to sell to a developer.

Q: Do you have sufficient funds in place to cover the cost of the development? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To ensure that the Site Promoter has sufficient finance available to fund the development, should they intend to develop the site themselves. This forms part of proving that the site is both viable and deliverable, in line with national planning policy.

Q: Is the site able to accommodate current policy obligation (S106) and CIL requirements? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to ensure that the Site Promoter and/or the developer can achieve a profit whilst still complying with policy obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy requirements, where applicable, in line with the *Development Plans Manual*.

Deliverability

Q: Can the site provide and comply with the requisite statutory Sustainable Drainage System requirements? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to ensure that proposals can comply with the statutory Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) requirements. SuDs are approved via a separate body, known as the SuDs Approval Body or SAB. National standards stipulate that drainage design must mimic natural drainage.

Q: With all known factors considered, is the site financially viable and deliverable? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: To ascertain whether the site is considered financially viable and deliverable by the Site Promoter. The *Development Plans Manual* states that sites should be tested to ensure that they are viable and deliverable during the Plan period. Only sites that evidence viability and deliverability will progress.

Q: With all known factors considered, can the site be delivered during the plan period? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: Linked to the question above, it seeks to establish whether the Site Promoter believes that the site can be delivered within the Plan period. Only those sites that can be delivered in the LDP plan period will be considered as potential allocations.

Q: Subject to planning permission, is the site immediately available for development? The Site Promoter is invited to provide details.

Outcome: This question aims to establish whether the site is considered 'ready' for development, subject to obtaining planning permission. It aims to allow the Council to understand whether the site is free from constraints to the point where development would be possible without significant preparation works.

- 6.11 The sites that pass the Stage 3 assessment will be subject to a master-planning exercise, as part of Stage 4.

Stage 4

- 6.12 Those sites that pass the Stage 3 assessment will move on to Stage 4. This stage will involve a master-planning exercise of the site, where the Site Promoter will be expected to provide an overview of their proposal. This should include any open, green or community space proposed, the location of any renewable energy proposed, the total floorspace and location of the proposed use, the location and indicative number of dwellings proposed, alongside any SuDs proposed.
- 6.13 This exercise will provide much needed certainty at the Examination stage of plan preparation.

7.0 ISA Methodology

- 7.1 The ISA process for the consideration of Candidate Sites will form part of the overall Candidate Site assessment. The ISA methodology and framework have been utilised in compiling the *Candidate Site Submission Form* to ensure that the ISA objectives form the foundation of site assessments. The Candidate Site assessment criteria contained in the table overleaf will be utilised and applied consistently to ascertain the overall impact, on a graduating scale.
- 7.2 The ISA will assess 'reasonable' alternative options for a submitted Candidate Site's inclusion within the Plan, against the ISA framework to ensure that they meet the overall objectives of the LDP. The following symbols will be utilised to indicate the likely effects of each site, as follows:

Categories of Significance	
Symbol	Meaning
++	Major Positive Effect Likely
+	Minor Positive Effect Likely
0	Neutral Effect Likely
?	Uncertain Effect
-	Minor Negative Effect Likely
--	Major Negative Effect Likely

- 7.3 The *Draft Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Initial Scoping Report, 2026* provides sixteen draft ISA Objectives, against which all sites will be assessed.
- 7.4 Should sites be assessed and prove contrary to the ISA framework and thus the objectives of the LDP and the associated Preferred Strategy, they will be removed from the Candidate Site process at this stage (Stage 2).

ISA Methodology and Framework for the assessment of Candidate Sites

	ISA Topic	ISA Objective	Constituent Elements	Symbol	ISA Candidate Site Assessment
1	Communities (including population and deprivation factors)	To support sustainable communities by improving access to social infrastructure, promoting and enhancing settlement identities, and addressing issues that contribute to deprivation.	Improve access to social infrastructure.	++	The site is located within reasonable walking distance (800m or less) of key services and facilities.
				+	The site is located within reasonable walking distance (800m or less) of most key services and facilities.
				0	N/A
				?	N/A
				-	The site is located beyond reasonable walking distance (more than 800m) of most key services and facilities.
				--	The site is located beyond reasonable walking distance (more than 800m) of key services and facilities.
			Promote and enhance settlement identities.	++	The site supports the identity of the local settlement by reinforcing its distinct local historic, architectural or landscape quality, or creates a strong sense of place, where identity has previously been eroded or degraded.
				+	The site supports the identity of the local settlement through small, localised improvements that do not harm the settlement's distinctiveness. (This could include sensitive infill development that respects the scale, height, mass design, materials and detailing of existing development.)
				0	The site has no impact upon the identity of the local settlement or the separation of distinct local communities.

	ISA Topic	ISA Objective	Constituent Elements	Symbol	ISA Candidate Site Assessment
				?	The proposal currently lacks sufficient detail to draw conclusions on settlement identity. (Further information will be required.)
				-	The site has a minor or mitigable adverse impact on the identity of the local settlement and its distinctiveness.
				--	The site causes permanent, unmitigable damage to the identity of the local settlement, eroding its local historic, architectural or landscape quality, or creating visual or physical coalescence.
			Address issues that contribute to deprivation.	++	The site will make substantial contributions towards improvements in socio-economic conditions. (This will include providing skilled jobs or affordable housing in areas of high deprivation. Alongside removing barriers to education and public transport in deprived communities.)
				+	The site will make small or indirect improvements to socio-economic conditions. (This could include enhancing economic growth, regeneration or community facilities without explicitly targeting deprived communities.)
				0	The site has no clear link to or does not address issues that contribute towards deprivation.
				?	The impact on deprivation and socio-economic conditions cannot be predicted based on present information.
				-	The development of the site could potentially cause a small disadvantage to deprived communities.
				--	The development of the site will directly increase inequalities in and/or worsen socio-economic conditions within deprived communities.

	ISA Topic	ISA Objective	Constituent Elements	Symbol	ISA Candidate Site Assessment
2	Health and Equalities	To support physical and mental well-being, encourage active communities and healthy lifestyles and ensure a more equal Merthyr Tydfil.	Support physical and mental well-being.	++	The development of the site will result in significant, permanent improvements in community health and well-being. (This can include the provision of infrastructure, inclusive of but not limited to green/blue infrastructure, active travel, healthcare provision or a reduction in noise, pollution or congestion.)
				+	The development of the site will result in very localised or indirect improvements to community health and well-being. (This may include but is not limited to minor improvements to existing pavements or active travel routes, minor improvements to the public realm that promote social interaction and protecting recreational land from loss or damage.)
				0	There is a negligible connection to supporting physical/mental health and well-being.
				?	The net impact on health and well-being cannot be reliably predicted at present (further information is required).
				-	The development of the site would cause a minor or mitigable detriment to health and well-being. (This could include but is not limited to small losses of informal green or recreational space where nearby provision is sufficient, or generating short-term noise, pollution or disruption to residential areas or schools.)
				--	The development of the site would cause permanent, widespread degradation to the determinants of health and well-being. (This could include but is not limited to the removal/loss of formal open space or sports facilities, significantly

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			Encourage active communities and healthy lifestyles and a more equal Merthyr Tydfil.		increasing pollution and negatively affecting air quality, or isolating new development away from active travel, key services/facilities and public transport, thereby increasing the use of private vehicles.)
				++	The site is located within a 400m walk of sufficient levels of open/green/recreational space, or designated sports pitches/leisure facilities and will deliver development in areas of high deprivation.
				+	The site is located within a 400m walk of some open/green/recreational space, or designated sports pitches/leisure facilities or will deliver development in areas of high deprivation.
				0	N/A
				?	N/A
				-	The site is located beyond a 400m walk of open/green/recreational space, designated sports pitches/leisure facilities or is in an area already deficient in open/green/recreational space and/or low deprivation.
				--	The site is located beyond a 400m walk of open/green/recreational space, designated sports pitches/leisure facilities and is in an area already deficient in open/green/recreational space and/or low deprivation.
3	Education	To support residents' access to Welsh and English medium education and lifelong learning to improve educational attainment.		++	The site will provide educational facilities or expand Welsh-medium or bilingual education provision in areas of high demand or linguistic growth.
				+	The site will make a financial contribution towards improving or facilitating educational provision or facilities.

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				0	N/A
				?	The number of individuals requiring educational provision is not yet known (further information will be required).
				-	Development of the site will result in current educational capacity being exceeded.
				--	Development of the site will result in the loss of an educational facility or community learning hub and/or fails to provide Welsh or bilingual provision to meet demand, forcing reliance solely on English medium education.
4	Housing	To provide a mix of appropriate, energy-efficient housing types and tenures to meet residents' needs.		++	The site offers a fully evidenced mix of energy-efficient housing types and tenures (inclusive of market, social rent and intermediate of 1-4 bedrooms), in line with the Council's Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA).
				+	The site generally supports an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures, aligning with some basic targets of the LHMA (although there may be gaps in bedroom numbers or specialist dwellings).
				0	N/A
				?	The Local Housing Market Assessment requires revision, which will impact upon requirements.
				-	The site is skewed towards a dominant house type without due regard to the LHMA or residents' needs.
				--	The site offers only market housing ignoring demographic requirements and the affordable housing need set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment.

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5	Economy and Employment	To promote and support a sustainable economy that encourages inward investment and that promotes a range of employment opportunities.		++	The development of the site will contribute towards a sustainable economy by creating employment opportunities or community hubs/business spaces and/or encouraging inward investment in sustainable locations, well connected with existing housing, active travel and public transport.
				+	The development of the site will contribute towards a sustainable economy by providing a small number of employment opportunities or small-scale employment space for local businesses or increasing opportunities for home working.
				0	The site has no clear impact upon the local economy or investment opportunities.
				?	Investment is largely contingent on favourable, unknown future market conditions and 'need' will need to be established by way of an employment survey.
				-	The development of the site will provide a small number of employment opportunities in unsustainable locations, likely to encourage additional journeys by private vehicle.
				--	The site proposes large-scale employment development in an unsustainable location that does not support a sustainable economy and does not align with the national sustainable transport hierarchy.
6	Connections (including transport and movement)	To reduce the need to travel by private vehicle and encourage the use of active travel and other sustainable forms of transportation,		++	The site is within reasonable walking distance to a train station (800m or less) and/or a bus stop (400m or less), with a frequent service (running every half an hour throughout the day) and/or is

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		alongside ensuring that essential infrastructure is available to all residents.			within a reasonable distance (400m or less) to an active travel route or key pedestrian/cycling route, offering the potential to connect with and enhance the sustainable travel network.
				+	The site is within walking distance to a train station (1200m or less) and/or a bus stop (800m or less), with at least hourly services running for most of the day, and/or the site is within walking distance to an active travel route, pedestrian or cycle route (800m or less).
				0	N/A
				?	Elements of uncertainty may remain in relation to connectivity or topography until detailed assessments have been undertaken (further information will be required).
				-	The site is not within walking distance to a train station (1200m or less) or a bus stop (800m or less), and services do not run at least hourly throughout the day. Or the site is within walking distance to an active travel route, pedestrian or cycle route (400m or less) however there are existing barriers or impediments (such as topography).
				--	The site is not within reasonable walking distance to a train station (800m or less) or bus stop (400m or less), and services are not frequent (i.e. running every half an hour throughout the day). The site is not within a reasonable walking distance (400m or less) to an active travel route or key pedestrian/cycling routes and cannot facilitate connections to the existing sustainable travel network.

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7	Energy	To promote opportunities for increased renewable energy generation throughout the County Borough.		++	The site is promoted for the generation of renewable and/or low carbon technologies, in line with national targets for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions.
				+	The site is not promoted for the generation of renewable and/or low carbon technologies however there is clear potential and/or intention to incorporate these technologies.
				0	N/A
				?	The site is not promoted for the generation of renewable and/or low carbon technologies, and it remains unclear at present whether there is potential to support such technologies.
				-	The site is not promoted for the generation of renewable and/or low carbon technologies and there are potential practical and/or physical constraints to implementing these technologies.
				--	The site is not promoted for the generation of renewable and/or low carbon technologies and would hamper future opportunities for renewable or low carbon energy generation.
8	Climate Change	To promote climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience to combat the impacts of climate change. Note: Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage will be dealt with under ISA Objective 10 (Water).		++	The site will utilise brownfield land and the development will not result in the loss of greenfield or high quality agricultural land. And/or the development plans to incorporate robust practices that will promote climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation. (This could include but is not limited to the introduction of green roofs/walls and appropriate planting to combat the 'heat island effect' and promote 'cooling', preserving peatland, peatbogs and

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					ancient woodlands, and presenting a plan that utilises sustainable/recycled materials, contributing to the circular economy and a reduction in waste.)
				+	Most of the site is brownfield land and development will not result in the loss of high quality agricultural land.
				0	N/A
				?	N/A
				-	Most of the site is greenfield land but would not result in the loss of high quality agricultural land.
				--	The site is entirely greenfield land and/or would result in the loss of high quality agricultural land (Grade 1, 2 or 3a – Best and most versatile agricultural land).
9	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To protect and enhance biodiversity, promote ecosystems resilience and improve habitat connectivity.		++	Development of the site will deliver significant gains for biodiversity (inclusive of but not limited to habitat restoration, expanding ecological networks or creating new wildlife corridors, particularly to SSSI or LNR designations), or the site will address a significant sustainability issue in relation to biodiversity.
				+	Development of the site will not lead to the loss of important habitats, species, trees and hedgerows and will facilitate localised enhancements for biodiversity, in line with national planning policy.
				0	N/A.
				?	Site proposals are yet unknown, consequently the impact cannot be measured at present.
				-	Development of the site would result in the loss of low-value scrubland, temporarily interrupt

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					migratory routes or temporarily disturb species during construction.
				--	The development of the site would result in the loss of, or significant damage to high-value biodiversity sites inclusive of protected habitats (such as ancient woodlands and wetlands) or would cause habitat fragmentation and/or the severance of migratory routes.
10	Water (inc. flooding)	To minimise the risk of flooding, alongside reducing demand for water and improving water environments.	To minimise the risk of flooding.	++	The site is within Zone 1 (lowest risk) for flood risk with no surface water hazards present and the design and development of the site would not exacerbate or increase the risk of flooding downstream or elsewhere.
				+	There is a very low risk of flooding on the site, and the design of the development ensures that run-off rates can be safely managed on the site without creating vulnerabilities elsewhere.
				0	The site has negligible vulnerability to flooding
				?	There may be a lack of flood risk modelling for a proposed site at present (further detail would be required).
				-	The site lies within an area identified as at risk from surface water flooding, which could marginally increase run-off and the risk of flooding elsewhere.
					The site is within a high-risk flood zone, exposing property or people to significant risk and/or development of the site would significantly increase flood risk downstream or elsewhere.
			To reduce demand for	++	The development proposes harvesting water for reuse and can be designed to integrate multi-

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			water and improving water environments.		functional above-ground SuDS (e.g. swales, detention basins, wetlands).
				+	The development includes compliant basic or below-ground SuDS.
				0	N/A
				?	There is uncertainty over design which could lead to hydrological changes that may be rejected by the SAB.
				-	The site is subject to constraints (including but not limited to steep topography, contaminated land or poor soil permeability) that would make SuDS difficult to implement without engineering works and environmental impact.
				--	The site is not suitable for SuDS (due to issues including but not limited to severe contamination, high flood zone placement or sole reliance on sewers for discharge due to zero infiltration capacity).
11	Air Quality	To protect and enhance air quality.		++	The site actively improves air quality (inclusive of but not limited to a reduction in construction dust, a reduction in emissions, major investment in active travel infrastructure and the introduction significant green buffering.)
				+	The site introduces some measures to improve air quality (such as planting and buffering and providing links to existing active travel routes).
				0	The development of the site causes no deterioration or improvement to air quality.
				?	The situation cannot be fully assessed as design and details surrounding future traffic generation are not yet known.

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				-	The site is likely to lead to minor increases in local traffic-related emissions.
				--	The site is likely to increase congestion and lead to the long-term deterioration of air quality.
12	Noise	To minimise noise pollution for local communities and promote positive soundscapes.		++	The site proposes to significantly improve soundscapes/the acoustic environment. (This could include but is not limited to creating 'tranquil areas', introducing greenspace and nature based noise mitigation and providing buffering from existing 'noisy' uses to improve residential amenity.)
				+	The site's design will result in a small reduction in noise and prevent new disturbances.
				0	The site has no discernible impact on soundscapes or noise pollution.
				?	The effects cannot be determined at this time as site design is unknown and technical data on noise is absent.
				-	The site will cause a small, localised increase in ambient noise levels.
				--	The site will have a significant impact upon community soundscapes (impacting upon amenity) or plans to locate development in noisy environments.
13	Minerals, Land and Soil	To protect and promote the efficient use of land and soil and to safeguard mineral resources.		++	The site promotes the reuse of brownfield land and/or proposes the remediation of contaminated land and/or will not hinder the future extraction of safeguarded mineral resources.
				+	The site promotes the reuse of brownfield land but is contingent upon the prior extraction of mineral resources (for which there is no impediment) prior to development occurring.

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				0	The site does not have a direct or indirect bearing on soil quality or safeguarded mineral resources.
				?	There may be uncertainty until further detailed assessments are undertaken.
				-	The development would result in the loss of moderate soil quality and/or encroach upon a safeguarded mineral resource and/or would be contingent on prior extraction (for which there is a clear impediment).
				--	The site is predominantly greenfield and would destroy high quality soil and/or sterilise important mineral resources.
14	Waste	To minimise waste generation, promote sustainable waste management and maximise the recovery of resources from waste.		++	The site directly facilitates waste reduction in accordance with the principles of the circular economy.
				+	The site incorporates some sustainable construction practices and indirectly supports resource efficiency.
				0	No bearing or measurable impact on waste generation or sustainable practises.
				?	Unknown long-term resource impact of the site.
				-	The site's development or proposed use causes challenges for sustainable waste management
				--	The site's development does not employ sustainable construction practices or reuse materials, and/or the proposed use raises significant concerns in relation to waste disposal.
15	Cultural Heritage (including the Welsh	To protect and enhance the historic environment, cultural assets and local heritage, alongside promoting	To protect and enhance the historic environment,	++	The site has clear, positive proposals for protecting the historic environment, cultural asserts and local heritage. (This could include but is not limited to restoring cultural or heritage

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	language) and the Historic Environment	and protecting the use of the Welsh language.	cultural assets and local heritage.		assets, removing eyesores within the historic environment, bringing important buildings or structures within the historic environment back into beneficial use and improving the setting of conservation areas, urban character areas or other assets/monuments).
				+	The proposal has been sensitively designed to complement and not detract from the historic environment, local heritage or surrounding cultural assets.
				0	The proposal is not within the vicinity of any heritage or cultural designation, or sufficient mitigation measures have been proposed to negate any negative impact resulting in a residual neutral effect.
				?	The impact cannot be measured as the precise design of the scheme is unknown at present.
				-	The proposal will have minor negative impacts upon the historic environment, local heritage or cultural assets.
				--	The proposal will detract from or have significant negative impacts upon the historic environment, local heritage or cultural assets and mitigation is not possible or cost prohibitive.
				++	The proposal provides clear evidence of direct benefits and support for Welsh as a community language (including but not limited to the provision of Welsh medium facilities and the provision of affordable housing schemes specifically designed to retain local populations).
		Protecting the use of the Welsh language.		+	The proposal provides evidence of small benefits and support for Welsh as a community language

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					(this could include facilitating social infrastructure and networks where Welsh can be used).
				0	The proposal has no discernible impact upon the Welsh language.
				?	Uncertainties at this stage due to factors such as the scale of the development and/or future occupancy and changes in demographics.
				-	The development has the potential to fragment local populations where Welsh is used in the community.
				--	The development poses a long-term threat to the cultural heritage and viability of the Welsh language within local communities.
16	Landscape and Townscape (including the Built Environment)	To protect and enhance areas of visual landscape quality and promote quality townscapes (including the design and character of the built environment).		++	The proposal directly restores, protects or enhances the character of the landscape or townscape.
				+	The proposal integrates sensitively into the existing landscape of townscape.
				0	There is no discernible impact upon the landscape or townscape.
				?	Uncertainties requiring landscape visual impact assessments.
				-	The proposal causes minor visual intrusion on the landscape or townscape.
				--	The proposal would cause severe or unmitigable impacts upon the landscape or townscape.