

Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd Cyngnor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful  
(2016-2031)  
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan  
(2016 – 2031)



PAPURAU CEFNDIR | BACKGROUND PAPER  
**REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES**

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**Miss J Jones**  
**Pennaeth Cynllunio a Chefn Gwlad/Head of Planning and Countryside**  
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council  
Uned 5 | Unit 5  
Parc Busnes Triongl | Triangle Business Park  
Pentrebach  
Merthyr Tudful | Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 4TQ

## Executive Summary

1. This report reviews the existing green wedge designations in the adopted Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021 and considers the need for their continuation in the emerging Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2016 – 2031.
2. There are four separate green wedges in the adopted LDP, shown on Plan 2. These were identified in order to prevent coalescence between settlements at the following locations:
  - Heolgerrig/Twyncarmel
  - Abercanaid/Pentrebach/Troedyrhiw
  - Troedyrhiw/Aberfan
  - Trelewis/Nelson
3. The conclusion is that the Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 need **not** rely on green wedges to prevent coalescence.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report forms part of a series of background papers prepared by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) to inform the Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031.
- 1.2 It reviews the role and effectiveness of green wedge designations made by Policy AS5 of the adopted *Merthyr Tydfil LDP 2006-2021* (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, 2011).
- 1.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government, 2016), states that green wedges can be designated by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in their LDPs as a way of protecting open land around towns and cities. They are **non-permanent**, non-statutory, local urban containment mechanisms intended to restrict the spread of built development beyond designated settlement boundaries and allocated sites.

## 2 National Policy context

- 2.1 Chapter 4 of *Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9* (Welsh Government, 2016), which relates to *Planning for Sustainability*, promotes sustainable development - the goal of which is to “enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations” and the meaning of which is defined as “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.”
- 2.2 For communities this means LDPs should “Contribute to the protection and, where possible, the improvement of people's health and well-being” (paragraph 4.4.3) and recognise the strengths of urban communities, as home to the majority of the population, by ensuring that they become more desirable places in which to live and work (paragraph 4.6.1).
- 2.3 For settlements this means that LDPs should not only consider the needs of existing urban and rural areas but also the future relationships between urban settlements and their rural hinterlands (paragraph 4.7.1). Additionally, LDPs should minimise land-take and urban sprawl, through preference for the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, avoiding development on greenfield sites wherever possible (paragraph 4.4.3).
- 2.4 PPW further emphasises the importance of protecting open land around towns and cities. It states that LPAs need to consider making non-permanent local designations such as green wedges in their LDPs.

2.5 Paragraph 4.8.2 of PPW states that green wedges can:

- Provide opportunities for access to the open countryside;
- Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
- Maintain landscape/wildlife interests;
- Retain land for agriculture, forestry, and related purposes;
- Improve derelict land; and
- Provide carbon sinks and help mitigate the effects of urban heat islands.

2.6 Paragraph 4.8.3 further states that green wedges **may** be justified where land is required to serve the same purpose as a more **permanent** Green Belt, which is to:

- Prevent the coalescence of **large towns and cities with other settlements**;
- Manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas;
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- Protect the setting of an urban area; and
- Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.7 PPW further states that green wedges should comprise **only land that is strictly necessary to fulfil the purposes of the green wedge policy, which requires that extra protection**. Factors such as openness, topography and the nature of urban edges should be taken into account and clearly identifiable physical features should be used to establish defensible boundaries (Paragraphs 4.8.11-12).

2.8 Additionally, green wedges should:

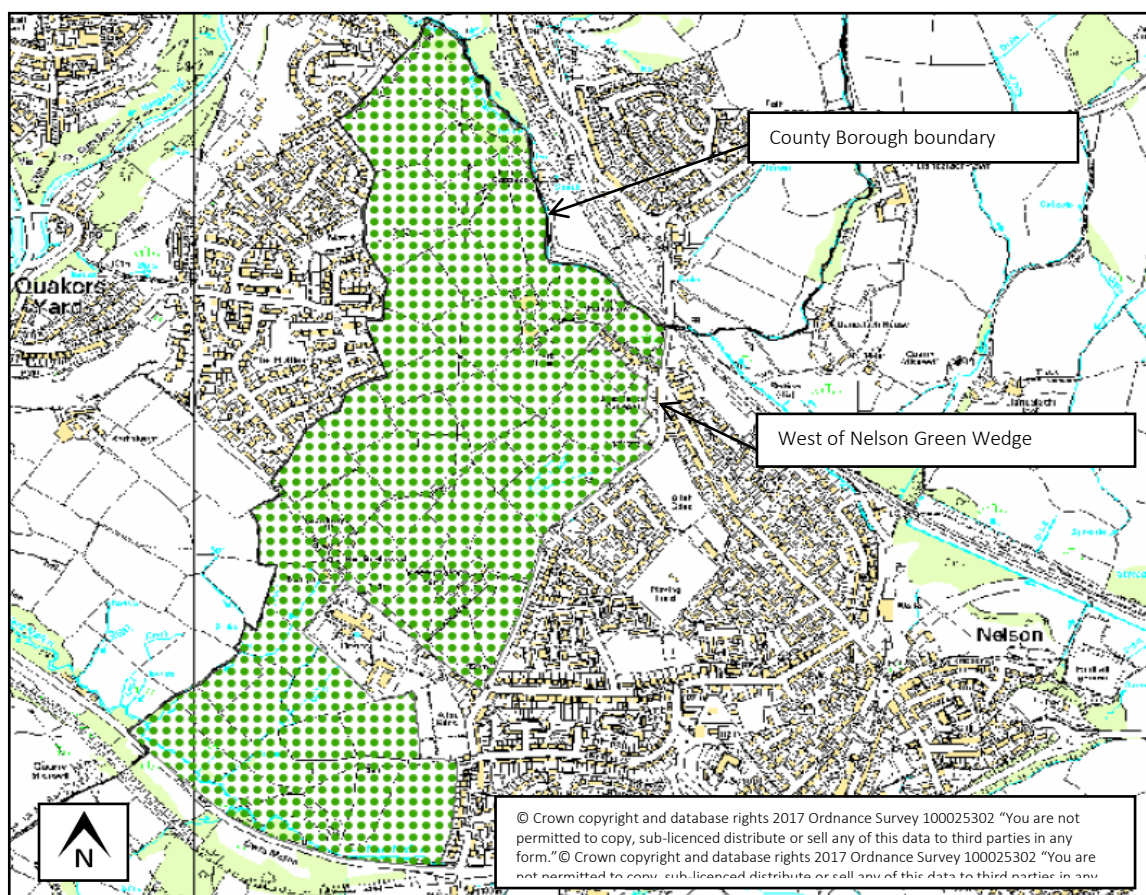
- Only be maintained where it can be demonstrated that normal planning and development management policies cannot provide the necessary protection (paragraph 4.8.11) and
- Be reviewed as part of the local development plan review process (paragraph 4.8.1).

### 3 Sub – Regional (Cross Border) Policy context

3.1 The *Caerphilly County Borough LDP up to 2021* (Caerphilly County Borough Council, 2010) includes Area Specific Policies. Policies *SI1.1 – SI1.24* which relate to *Settlement Identity*, designates 24 green wedges throughout three Strategy Areas, included to maintain open spaces between and within urban areas and settlements, in order to prevent coalescence. Within designated green wedges the intention is to seek to resist any development proposal that would not maintain the open character, is not considered conducive to the existing character or does not enhance the character of the green wedge. Within Strategy Area 2: Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) Policy *SL1.11 West of Nelson* is designated to prevent the coalescence between Nelson in the CCBC area and Quakers Yard in the MTCBC area, as shown on Plan 1. At the time of designation the area was under considerable residential and employment pressure, so that the green wedge was

considered important not only as an open area of land to retain anti-coalescence purposes, but also for its landscape quality.

**Plan 1: SL1.11 West of Nelson –** (Caerphilly County Borough Council, 2008)



- 3.2 The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP up to 2021 (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, 2011) considered it necessary to provide additional protection to areas of important and vulnerable open land by restricting development on the urban fringe and between settlements. It includes Strategy Area Policies, *Policies NSA 24 and Policy SSA 22– Green Wedges*, which designate 15 green wedges to prevent coalescence between and within settlements, protect vulnerable land at the urban fringe from speculative development proposals, resist encroachment into the countryside and the incremental loss of important green spaces and avoid the detrimental effect upon agriculture, the landscape and the amenity value of land. No designated green wedges border the MTCBC area.
- 3.3. The BBNP was designated as a protected landscape in 1957 on the grounds of its natural beauty and the opportunities it offers for open air recreation. *The BBNP LDP 2007-2022* (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, 2013) therefore does not include any green wedge policies but instead controls development through a spatial distribution of growth, set out through a strong **Settlement Hierarchy**.

- 3.4 This comprises *Level 1 – Primary Key Settlements, Level 2 Key Settlements, level 3 Settlements, Level 4 Limited Growth Settlements and Level 5 Countryside*. The first two levels comprise settlements acting as strategic centres as set by the Wales Spatial Plan and as identified by the National Park Authority (NPA) (Welsh Government, 2008) in keeping with the environmental capacity of the town.

Within Levels 3 and 4, development is limited to that which is proven essential in accordance with national planning policy. Level 5 areas designated as *Countryside Settlements* are assessed to be unsustainable locations for development, without capacity to accommodate growth, where there is a general presumption against development. Within each settlement level development is controlled through specific appropriate development and mitigation impact policies, underpinned by *Strategic Policies 1: Appropriate Development in the National Park, SP3 Environmental Protection* and through application of *SP10: Sustainable Distribution of Development*.

#### 4 Local Policy context: Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006 - 2021

- 4.1 In order to prevent the coalescence between communities and settlements identified as being under development pressure *Policy AS5: Green wedges*, was included in the adopted LDP, as shown below:

***Policy AS5: Green wedges***

***In order to prevent coalescence between settlements, Green Wedges have been identified at the following locations:-***

***Heolgerrig/Twyncarmel  
Abercanaid/Pentrebach/Troedyrhiw  
Troedyrhiw/Aberfan  
Trelewis/Nelson***

***The extent of these is shown on the LDP Proposals Map and development that prejudices the open nature of the land will not be permitted except in very exceptional circumstances.***

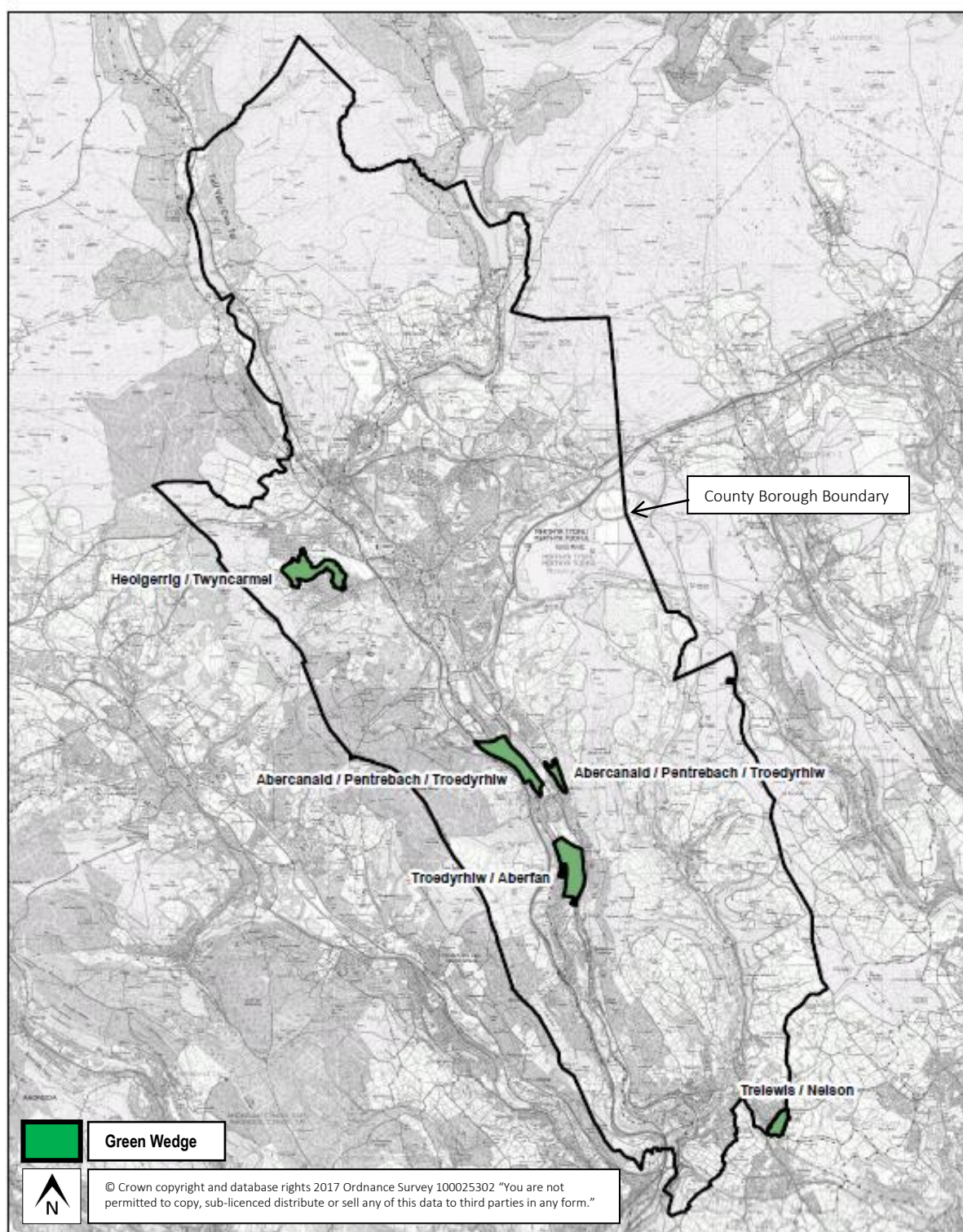
- 4.2 Plan 2 illustrates the distribution of these existing green wedges within the MTCBC area, as shown on the adopted LDP proposals map. Plans 3 – 6 show more detail of each area.
- 4.3 The policy justification provided is:
- To maintain the distinct identities of the separate communities;
  - To maintain valuable open space between settlements and
  - To complement the function provided by settlement boundaries.

# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES

Explanation of, and further justification for inclusion of the policy was provided by the *Background Paper - Green Wedges* (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, 2009) prepared in support of the adopted LDP.

### Plan 2: Policy AS5 – Existing Green Wedges – Merthyr Tydfil LDP 2006-2021



## 5. LDP Review Process

- 5.1 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (UK Government, 2004), all Councils have a duty to produce an LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The primary function of the AMR is to consider whether the policies identified in the monitoring framework are being implemented. In order to monitor performance consistently, the plan is considered against a set of monitoring targets and indicators. The last five AMRs consider whether Strategic Objectives are being achieved. Strategic Objective 3 is of relevance here, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Policy Monitoring within LDP AMRs**

SO3. To promote regeneration through the use of suitable and appropriate brownfield land rather than greenfield sites.								
Core and Local Indicators	Policy Targets	Policy Achievement						Trigger Level
Amount of development permitted on previously developed land as a percentage of all development permitted.	Maintain a % of at least 80% over the plan period.	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Less than 80% for 2 consecutive years.
		82%	94%	88%	92%	26%	73%	
		Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Target was not being achieved but there were no concerns over the implementation of policy / objective.	Target was not being achieved and it will therefore be important to continue monitoring this indicator closely.	
Core Amount of greenfield land lost as a result of inappropriate development on sites not allocated in the LDP.	No land lost.	No greenfield land lost.	No greenfield land lost	1 development permitted.	No greenfield land lost	No greenfield land lost.	No greenfield land lost	1 or 2 developments permitted for 2 consecutive years, or, 3 or more developments permitted in 1 year.
		Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Target was not being achieved but there were no concerns over the implementation of policy / objective.	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	Targets / objectives were being achieved	

- Between April 2011 and March 2012, 0.98 ha of development was permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 18% of total area of development permitted. 100% of this was deemed appropriate, so that in that year no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development;
- Between April 2012 and March 2013, 0.35 ha of development was permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 6% of all permissions. 100% of this was deemed appropriate, so that in that year no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development;

- Between April 2013 and March 2014, 0.24 ha of development was permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 12% of all permissions. 1 development permitted was situated outside settlement limits and within a green wedge and thereby deemed inappropriate. Although, this permission was granted due to the site benefitting from previous outline permission, it was still recorded as loss of greenfield land. The AMR therefore recommended that settlement limit and green wedge policies be closely monitored in the future;
- Between April 2014 and March 2015, 1.51 ha of development was permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 8% of all permissions, 100% of which was deemed appropriate, so that in that year no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development;
- Between April 2015 and March 2016, 19.33 ha of development were permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 74% of all permissions. A large proportion of this, 15 ha was for a solar farm, and together with the remaining permissions were all deemed 100% appropriate development. In this case in that year no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development; and
- Between April 2016 and March 2017, 5.18 ha of development were permitted on previously undeveloped land equating to 27% of all permissions. 100% of this was deemed appropriate, so that in that year no greenfield land was lost to inappropriate development.

5.2 The Review Report of the adopted LDP (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, 2016) concluded that a full revision procedure should be followed in preparing a replacement LDP. It was considered that the development strategy, which underpins the LDP, is not currently being delivered and that both the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered in order to ascertain the most appropriate strategy for delivering growth up to 2031. Whilst, according to the Review Report, Policy AS5 Green wedges is *"functioning effectively - minor amendments required,"* the Green Wedges' policy is being reviewed as part of preparation of the replacement local development plan, in accordance with PPW paragraph 4.8.1 which states, *"green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process."*

## 6 Green Wedge Assessment Methodology

6.1 PPW (Welsh Government, 2016) contains no specific assessment methodology for identifying, defining or reviewing green wedge designations. Therefore MTCBC LPA must assess whether the adopted LDP designations remain relevant and accord with the purposes of green wedges as defined in PPW. This section examines whether such designations are still required and, if so, whether the existing boundaries are appropriate, one or more wedges should be removed or additional green wedges designated.

6.2 Accordingly, the green wedge concept will be assessed as to whether:

- The additional layer of protection is justified and, or
- It is the most appropriate means of preventing coalescence.

6.3 The extant MTCB LDP policy framework followed the principles of a brownfield strategy putting the emphasis on the development of previously developed land rather than greenfield sites, with over 75% of land allocated for development being categorised as brownfield. Clear locational preferences were determined on a number of physical factors including the possibility of integrating new development, comprising mainly housing and employment, successfully with existing settlements. Interactions between communities and their environments were also considered.

6.4 Strictly defined settlement boundaries (limits) were also imposed. *Policy BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints* was included in order to define the areas within which there is a presumption in favour of development, subject to compatibility with other relevant policies and material planning considerations. Outside these areas proposals are regarded as 'countryside development' where there is a presumption against development unless:

- *The development is associated with rural enterprises or the winning and working of minerals;*
- *The development is for the re-use, adaption, or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings;*
- *The development supports the expansion of an existing business in the countryside;*
- *The development is for tourism, recreation or leisure facilities where the need for a countryside location is fully justified;*
- *The development is for the provision of public utilities, infrastructure or waste management facilities that cannot reasonably be located elsewhere;*
- *The development is required for the reclamation or treatment of unstable or contaminated land; or*
- *The development is for renewable energy.*

6.5 Whilst a general 'countryside protection policy' can, amongst other things, guard against coalescence, this is only achievable if there is a sufficient range of land available for development. If not certain areas may become vulnerable to development pressure. This may include land around existing settlements where services and facilities already exist. In areas considered more vulnerable than others, for example where space between settlements is small or where particular areas were deemed to be under pressure for development, it was considered necessary to include the additional layer of protection established under Policy AS5: Green wedges.

6.6 Each existing green wedge has been assessed against how it has succeeded against policy objectives, as shown in Figure 2, and/or whether other policies were utilised to serve the same purpose. This review considers LDP monitoring data and planning application decisions to consider the use of existing LDP policies.

**Figure 2: The objectives of green wedge policy**

<b>PPW Green Wedge Policy Primary Functions</b>	<b>LDP Green Wedge Policy Primary Functions</b>
■ Prevent urban coalescence of settlements with other settlements.	■ Prevent coalescence between settlements.
■ Manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas.	■ Prevent coalescence between communities within the main settlement of Merthyr.
■ Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	■ Maintain the distinct identities of separate communities.
■ Protect the setting of urban areas.	■ Maintain valuable open space between settlements
■ Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	■ Complement the function provided by settlement boundaries
<b>PPW Green Wedge designation Secondary Functions</b>	<b>LDP Background Paper Green Wedge Secondary Functions</b>
■ Provide opportunities for access to the open countryside	■ Maintain the distinctiveness and integrity of communities.
■ Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.	■ Open up opportunities for outdoor recreation.
■ Maintain landscape/wildlife interests	■ Protect the landscape setting of settlements.
■ Retain land for agriculture, forestry, and related purposes.	■ Maintaining the integrity of the landscape.
■ Improve derelict land.	■ Direct development towards previously developed land and thereby assist in regeneration.
■ Provide carbon sinks and help mitigate the effects of urban heat islands.	■ Help to protect biodiversity interests.

- 6.7 The Council has also considered the impact from potential future development sites. In total 10 candidate sites, listed below, were submitted in existing green wedge areas as part of the LDP review process. Whilst this indicates development pressure in these areas the Council has considered the impact on preventing coalescence if such sites were considered necessary to meet future development needs. This is set out in the area assessments contained in this paper. None of the candidate sites have been proposed in the replacement Deposit Plan as alternative provision has been made and their allocation is either not considered necessary or there are other constraints that mean the sites are not recommended for allocation. Further details of the site assessments can be found in the Council's Site Assessment background paper. Logical settlement boundary amendments

have also been made to take account of existing built development or other factors and this is explained below.

Heolgerrig / Twyncarmel green wedge: –

- Site 13: Trago Mills (Site 1) – Residential
- Site 102: Six Bells, Heolgerrig - Residential

Abercanaid / Pentrebach / Troedyrhiw green wedge: –

- Site 30: South Merthyr Tydfil Regeneration Area (in part)

Troedyrhiw / Aberfan green wedge: –

- Site 103: Land at Oakfield Street, Aberfan – Residential
- Site 63: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 1 - Option 1 – Residential
- Site 64: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 1 - Option 2 – Mixed Employment / Residential
- Site 65: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 2 - Option 1 – Residential
- Site 66: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 2 - Option 2 – Mixed Employment / Residential

Trelewis/Nelson green wedge: –

- Site 6: Land to the East of Trelewis – Residential
- Site 100: Land adjacent to 24 Gelligaer Road – Residential

#### Review of Settlement Boundaries

6.8 As part of the Plan preparation process the Council has reviewed and updated the settlement boundaries identified in the Replacement LDP. In doing so the following factors were considered:

- The appropriateness of the settlement boundaries identified in the existing Adopted Merthyr Tydfil LDP 2006-2021.
- Existing built development and planning history to confirm any approved curtilages / development boundaries.
- The use of physical features in forming logical and defensible settlement boundaries (such as field boundaries, roads, railway lines and garden curtilages where appropriate).
- The need for new allocations.
- The proposed designation of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) in the Replacement LDP that has identified undeveloped areas and parts of the landscape that should be located outside the settlement boundary.

6.9 This approach to the review of settlement boundaries ensures that they provide a co-ordinated approach to defining the area within which development would normally be permitted subject to material planning considerations. It also provides a robust approach to identifying the extent of the countryside that should be protected from inappropriate development.

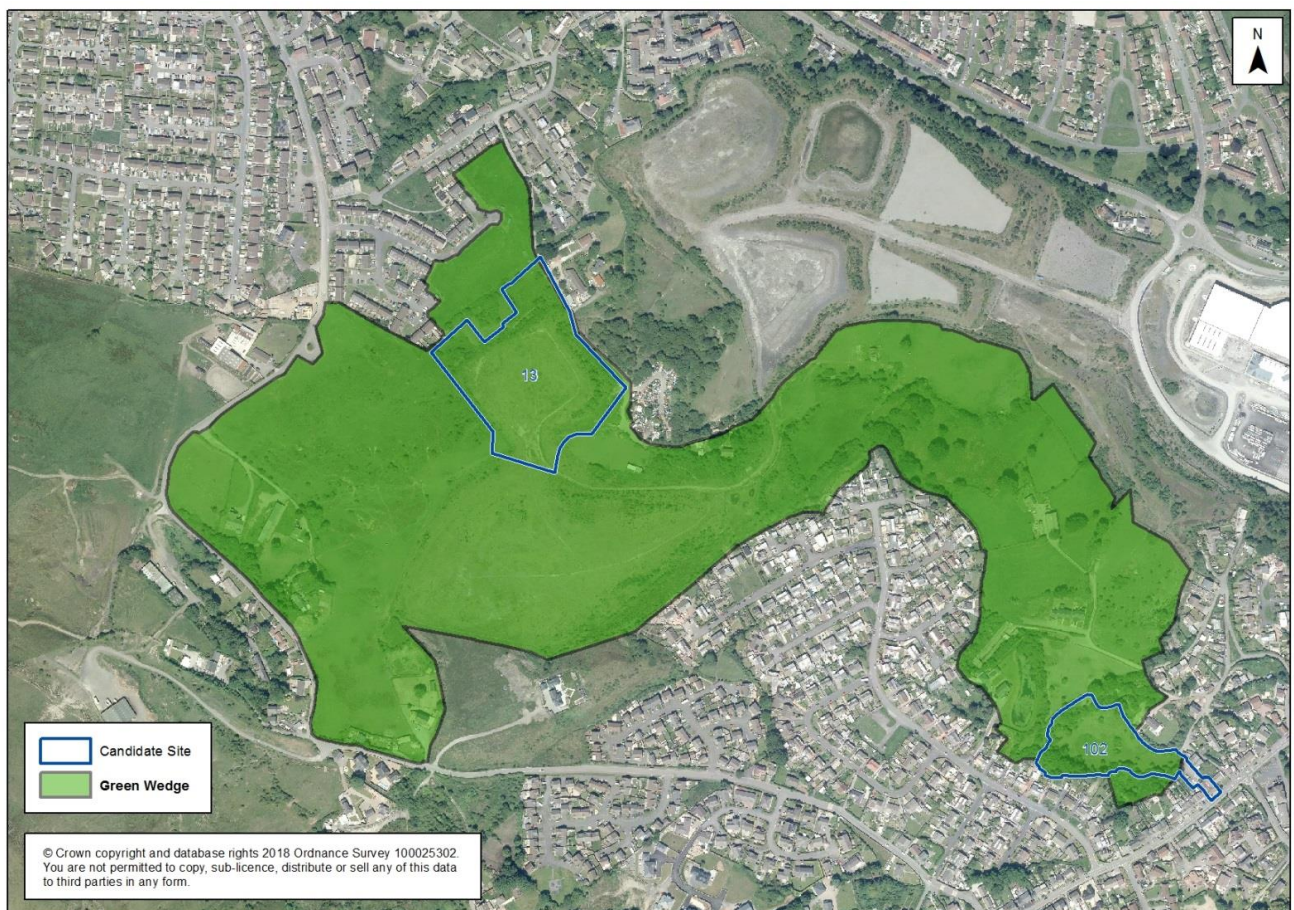
## 7 Green Wedge Policy Assessment

### 7.1 Heolgerrig / Twyncarmel

7.1.1. This green wedge (see Plan 3) was drawn to prevent the coalescence, protect the landscape setting and maintain the distinctiveness of the settlements of Twyncarmel and Heolgerrig. Twyncarmel is located in the north and Heolgerrig to the south of the Primary Growth Area of the development strategy. At the time of adoption the communities had experienced considerable development pressure from housing, retail and leisure proposals.

7.1.2 The main characteristics of the areas stem from their historic links to Cyfarthfa Ironworks through its association with coal and iron workings, together with transport infrastructure. A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) namely, the Mynydd Aberdare – Cyfarthfa Tramroad section at Heolgerrig is located within the green wedge. It was further anticipated that the designation would open up opportunities for outdoor recreation; and help to protect biodiversity interests including Winchfawr East & Clwydyfagwr Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and European Protected Species.

#### **Plan 3: Heolgerrig / Twyncarmel green wedge**



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES

7.1.3 Since plan adoption a number of applications for development have been submitted within the green wedge, as follows:

Application Number	Proposed Development	Decision	Reason for Decision/ LDP Policy/Policies cited.
P/12/0166	Prior Approval for erection of agricultural building.	Prior Approval Not required	N/A
P/12/0238	Prior Approval for demolition of agricultural building.	Prior Approval Not required	N/A
P/12/0330	Two-story detached dwelling	Refused	By virtue of its location outside the settlement boundary ( <b>Policy BW4</b> ), an unjustified development in the open countryside unsympathetic to the environs of the site ( <b>Policy BW5</b> ). As a designated green wedge it would have an unacceptable effect on the character of the existing landscape and wider visual amenities ( <b>Policy AS5</b> ).
P/13/0080	Resubmission of Refused Planning Permission	Refused	By virtue of its location outside the settlement boundary ( <b>Policy BW4</b> ), an unjustified development in the open countryside unsympathetic to the environs of the site ( <b>Policy BW5</b> ). As a designated green wedge it would have an unacceptable effect on the character of the existing landscape and wider visual amenities ( <b>Policy AS5</b> ).
P/13/0205	Erection of garage and dwelling	Refused	By virtue of its location outside the settlement boundary ( <b>Policy BW4</b> ), an unjustified development in the open countryside unsympathetic to the environs of the site ( <b>Policy BW5</b> ). As a designated green wedge it would have an unacceptable effect on the character of the existing landscape and wider visual amenities ( <b>Policy AS5</b> ).
P/14/0192	10 affordable housing units	Approved	It accorded with <b>Policy TB13: Exception sites for affordable housing</b> (proposed on land previously developed for housing (demolished in 1986) so although situated on the edge of the green wedge <b>Policy TB13 outweighed Policy AS5</b> .
P/15/0057	Non-material amendment	Approved	Complies with <b>Policy BW7</b> , are non- material in nature and would not adversely impact on the original
P/15/0253	Erection of a detached dwelling with garage	Approved	Notwithstanding policies <b>BW4 Settlement boundaries</b> and <b>AS5 Green wedges</b> the site benefited from extant outline planning permission.
P/16/0288	Non-material amendment	Approved	Complies with <b>Policy BW7</b> , are non- material in nature and would not adversely impact on the original
P/17/0013	Discharge of condition	Condition discharged	N/A
P/17/0036	House and garage	Withdrawn	N/A
P/17/0078	House and garage	Approved	Notwithstanding policies <b>BW4 Settlement boundaries</b> and <b>AS5 Green wedges</b> the site benefited from extant outline planning permission.
P/18/0100	House and garage	Approved	Notwithstanding policies <b>BW4 Settlement boundaries</b> and <b>AS5 Green wedges</b> the site benefited from extant outline planning permission.

7.1.4 It is considered that this green wedge has been successful in complimenting the settlement boundary Policy BW4: *Settlement boundary/location constraints*. However, it has not been used to implement the objectives of the policy, the primary purpose being to prevent coalescence. Other LDP policies used here include policies BW5: *Natural environment* and TB13: *Exception sites for affordable*

*housing*. It is concluded that these policies, would have resulted in the same outcome **without** the Green wedges policy.

7.1.5 In terms of future development pressure, 2 candidate sites have been submitted in this area and are considered in turn below.

7.1.6 Candidate site 13: Trago Mills (Site 1) lies to the south east of the Twyncarmel estate and to the west of the Trago Mills site. Whilst development of the site would encroach into the countryside at this location it would retain approximately 200 metres at its narrowest point to Heolgerrig to the south. Development of the site would also retain the undeveloped green corridor to the east that provides a buffer between the Trago Mills site and Heolgerrig. The candidate site has not been allocated in the replacement Deposit Plan however the site could represent the logical extension of existing residential development here. Even if the site were allocated, it is considered that the proposed settlement boundary policy would be sufficient to control inappropriate development proposals here.

7.1.7 With regards to candidate site 102: Six Bells, Heolgerrig, this is now located within the revised settlement boundary in the replacement LDP. This has been amended to take account of built development on the edge of the settlement that forms a logical and defensible boundary for this part of Heolgerrig. Again this amendment retains a sufficient undeveloped green corridor with the Trago Mills site and the remaining areas of Heolgerrig to the east.

## 7.2 Abercanaid / Pentrebach / Troedyrhiw

7.2.1 This green wedge (see Plan 4) was drawn to prevent coalescence, protect the landscape setting and maintain the distinctiveness and integrity of the settlements and communities of Abercanaid, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw. Abercanaid and Pentrebach are located in the Primary Growth Area and Troedyrhiw in Other Growth Areas of the development strategy. At the time of adoption they were experiencing development pressure, in particular, for housing.

7.2.2 The main characteristics of Abercanaid stem from its origins being initially developed during the 1830's and 40's following the sinking of the Graig and Gethin pits, and the associated upsurge in production at the Plymouth iron works. Similarly, Pentrebach is strongly associated with the Plymouth, Pentrebach and Duffryn Ironworks and surrounding Plymouth Company pits (Graig and Duffryn). Both settlements fall within the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. Troedyrhiw is an example of a later industrial settlement associated with coal extraction and transportation. It was further anticipated that the designation would open up opportunities for outdoor recreation; and help to protect biodiversity interests including Afon Taf SINC and historic interests such as the Gethin Tramway Bridge.

Plan 4: Abercanaid / Pentrebach / Troedyrhiw green wedge



7.2.3 Since plan adoption a number of applications for development have been submitted within the green wedge, as follows:

Application Number	Proposed Development	Decision	Reason for Decision – LDP Policy/Policies cited.
P/12/0060	Creation of a footpath – and associated stepped access to the river.	Approved	In accordance with <b>Policy BW11</b> : Transport, cycling and pedestrian proposals seeking to improve access to the countryside.
P/12/0303	Lopping and removal of trees (within falling distance of overhead 33kv power lines).	TPO Permission not required.	Works required in the interests of safety.
P/15/0130  P/15/0347, P/15/0368, P/16/0046, P/16/0047, P/17/0068 & P/17/0229	Creation of a bund to screen a vehicular test site.  Discharge of conditions.  Non-material amendment	Approved	The development was deemed to result in only a small encroachment into the edge of the green wedge ( <b>AS5</b> ), as it is situated on an adjacent industrial park, which is located in an Employment Protection Site subject to <b>Policy AS24</b> . Environmental protection was assured through <b>Policies BW5 and BW7</b> .

7.2.4 As can be seen from the above table no applications for inappropriate development have been submitted within the green wedge since plan adoption. Given this it is considered that the area is not vulnerable to development pressure and the extra layer of protection afforded by a green wedge designation is therefore **not required**.

7.2.5 With regards to candidate sites located within this area, only one submission was received. A part of candidate site 30: South Merthyr Tydfil Regeneration Area is located to the south of Abercanaid within the existing green wedge area. This area forms a substantial area of undeveloped land and provides a buffer of approximately 200 meters from Abercanaid to the A4060. No specific development is proposed here and a refined boundary for the Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area has been identified which excludes this area. In addition only minor amendments to the settlement boundary have been made here in order to follow physical features such as existing footpaths and field boundaries. This area therefore remains outside the settlement boundary and in the countryside which is considered sufficient in controlling inappropriate development in the countryside.

### 7.3 Troedyrhiw / Aberfan

7.3.1 This green wedge (see Plan 5) was drawn to prevent the coalescence, preserve the landscape settings, and prevent a reduction in the distinctiveness of the individual communities of Troedyrhiw and Aberfan. Troedyrhiw is located to the north and Aberfan to the south in Other Growth Areas of the development strategy. At the time of adoption the green wedge was the only piece of land on the valley floor separating Troedyrhiw and Aberfan.

7.3.2 The urban form of these valley floor settlements is characterised by ribbon development associated largely with coal extraction and transport, forming a very important semi-rural break between them. It was further anticipated that the designation would direct development to the former Merthyr Vale colliery site and thereby assist in its regeneration. Further benefits of the designation were deemed to be the opening up of opportunities for outdoor recreation; and helping to protect biodiversity interests including Aberbargoed Taf SINC.

Plan 5: Troedyrhiw / Aberfan green wedge



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES

7.3.3 Since plan adoption the following applications have been submitted for development in the green wedge:

Application Number	Proposed Development	Decision	Reason LDP Policy/Policies cited.
P/12/0060	Creation of a footpath –and associated steeped access to the river.	Approved	In accordance with <b>Policy BW11:</b> Transport, cycling and pedestrian proposals seeking to improve access to the countryside.
P/12/0303	Lopping and removal of trees (within falling distance of overhead 33kv power lines).	TPO Permission not required.	Works required in the interests of safety.
P/15/0184	Revised scheme (P/09/0287) for construction of a new highway including roundabout, road bridge, footpaths, cycle paths, lighting, earth bunds and disposal of Japanese Knotweed.	Approved	Principle established through previous permission P/09/0287 and majority of the scheme being within settlement boundary ( <b>Policy BW4</b> ). Environmental protection was safeguarded through policies <b>BW5 and BW7</b> .
P/17/0152	CoU of land for the keeping of horses inc. erection of stables & barns	Approved	In accordance with <b>Policy BW4 &amp;</b> would not compromise the openness of the green wedge ( <b>Policy AS5</b> )
P/18/0034	Siting of caravan to provide site security office & welfare facility	Refused	Fails to comply with <b>Policy BW7</b> (unwarranted intrusion into the open countryside, adversely impacting upon the character & appearance of the area) & <b>Policy AS5</b> (inappropriate development in the green wedge, adversely impacting on its openness)
P/18/0162	CoU for temporary siting of caravan in connection with P/17/0152	TBC	N/A

7.3.4 As can be seen from the above table only one application for inappropriate development was submitted in the green wedge since plan adoption and although this application was refused and the green wedge policy sited the proposal was also contrary to policy BW7 and situated outside the settlement boundary. In addition, the application was for a non-permanent structure meaning that it is not considered that the area is vulnerable to development pressure and the extra layer of protection afforded by a green wedge designation is therefore **not required**.

7.3.5 With regards to candidate sites submitted in this area, 5 sites were received however 2 of these provided the same site boundary but proposed alternative uses. This includes the following sites:

Site 103: Land at Oakfield Street, Aberfan – Residential

Site 63: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 1 - Option 1 – Residential

Site 64: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 1 - Option 2 – Mixed Employment / Residential

Site 65: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 2 - Option 1 – Residential

Site 66: Land off Aberfan Road, Site 2 - Option 2 – Mixed Employment / Residential

- 7.3.6 With regards to site 103: Land at Oakfield Street, Aberfan, development of the site would follow the extent of existing residential development along the B4285 Aberfan Road and would retain approximately 420 metres to the nearest build development in Troedyrhiw. Whilst development of the site would continue the linear development of the settlement this would not result in the coalescence of settlements. This site has not been allocated for development in the replacement Deposit Plan and it is considered that the proposed settlement boundary would be adequate in preventing the coalescence of settlements at this location.
- 7.3.7 With regards to sites 63 and 64: Land off Aberfan Road (Site 1) development of the site would extend the developed area of Aberfan to the east of the B4285 Aberfan Road and further northwards than the existing built up area. Development here would be detached from the existing settlement and while it would not directly lead to the coalescences of settlements it would represent an inappropriate encroachment into the countryside and further linear extension to the settlement. The site is not allocated in the replacement Deposit Plan and the settlement boundary policies are considered sufficient to control inappropriate development at this location. Similarly, sites 65 and 66 Land off Aberfan Road, Site 2, would represent an inappropriate extension of the settlement to the east of Aberfan Road approximately half way between the existing built up areas of Troedyrhiw / Aberfan. Again, the proposed LDP settlement boundary policies would be sufficient in preventing this development.
- 7.4 Trelewis/Nelson
- 7.4.1 This green wedge (see Plan 6) was drawn to prevent the coalescence, protect the landscape setting and integrity of the communities within the settlements of Trelewis and Nelson. Trelewis is located east of the Secondary Growth Area of the development strategy and Nelson is located across the County Borough boundary in the CCBC area. At the time of adoption the Trelewis area had experienced a relatively high level of housing development over the previous two decades.

Plan 6: Trelewis/Nelson green wedge



7.4.2 The green wedge is a river corridor comprising a narrow strip of land on a prominent wooded valley-side with a high scenic quality. At the time of designation it formed the only remaining area free from existing residential development approvals. Additional benefits of the designation included, maintaining the integrity of this distinctive and rare landscape and helping to protect biodiversity interests, such as the Nant Caeach SINC.

7.4.3 Since plan adoption two applications have been approved within the green wedge, as follows:

Application Number	Proposed Development	Decision	Reason LDP Policy/Policies cited.
P/11/0124 P/11/0033	Installation herringbone drainage systems and hardcore tracks to enable fields keeping livestock.	Approved	Any works would be covered in clean soil and thereby deemed appropriate countryside development ( <b>Policy BW4</b> ).
P/12/0163	Erection of a single storey extension.	Approved	Accords with Policy <b>BW4</b> as it is adaption of an existing rural building used as a farm shop and would not prejudice the open nature of land ( <b>Policy AS5</b> ).

- 7.4.4 As can be seen from the above table no applications for inappropriate development have been submitted within the green wedge since plan adoption. Given this it is considered that the area is not vulnerable to development pressure and the extra layer of protection afforded by a green wedge designation is therefore **not required**.
- 7.4.5 With regards to candidate sites submitted in this area, 2 sites were received: candidate site 6: Land to the East of Trelewis and candidate site 100: Land adjacent to 24 Gelligaer Road.
- 7.4.6 Development of candidate site 6: Land to the East of Trelewis would extend the settlement of Trelewis further eastwards along Gelligaer Road towards the listed Llancaiach Fawr Manor, although the site would be separated by the Nant Caeach and mature trees and vegetation that run along the County Borough boundary. To the east of Llancaiach Fawr there is no further development for some distance (approximately 1.5km). The built up areas of Trelewis and Nelson are closely related with development extending along the B4255 Shingrig Road (consisting of existing residential development and stable buildings) and are separated by the Cwm Bargoed railway line that runs north-south. Development of the site would extend the built up area of Trelewis further south of Gelligaer Road but would maintain approximately 300 metres distance between the edge of the development and Shingrig Road to the south west. Therefore, development of the site would not lead to the coalescence of Trelewis with Nelson. If the site were to be developed it is considered that the replacement LDPs settlement boundary policy would be sufficient to control inappropriate development in the countryside here.
- 7.4.7 Candidate site 100: Land adjacent to 24 Gelligaer Road forms a small parcel of land (0.2 hectares) to the between 24 Gelligaer Road to the west of the site and the Farm Shop to the east of the site. It extends 50 metres south east from Gelligaer road, broadly in line with existing development. Development of the site would not lead to the coalescence of settlements but could provide a logical rounding off of the settlement boundary at this location. Consequently, the proposed settlement boundary policy at this location would be sufficient in preventing the coalescence of settlements.

## 8. Conclusion

### 8.1 Figure 3: Success of use of LDP Green wedges policy vs. other LDP policies.

LDP Green Wedge Policy Primary Functions	Use of other LDP Policies to achieve the same outcome
■ Prevent coalescence between settlements.	■ BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints
■ Prevent coalescence between communities within the main settlement of Merthyr.	■ BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints
■ Maintain the distinct identities of separate communities.	■ BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints
■ Maintain valuable open space between settlements	■ BW5: Natural heritage
■ Complement the function provided by settlement boundaries.	■ N/A

LDP Green Wedge Background Paper Secondary Function	Use of other LDP Policies to achieve the same outcome
■ Maintain the distinctiveness and integrity of communities.	■ BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints
■ Protect the landscape setting of settlements.	■ BW4: Settlement boundaries/ locational constraints ■ BW5: Natural heritage
■ Open up opportunities for outdoor recreation.	■ BW11: Transport, cycling and pedestrian proposals
■ Maintaining the integrity of the landscape.	■ BW5: Natural heritage
■ Help to protect biodiversity interests	■ BW5: Natural heritage
■ Direct development towards previously developed land and thereby assist in regeneration.	■ N/A

- 8.2 It is concluded that the Green wedge policy has not been used for its primary objective of preventing coalescence. In addition, the other objectives of the policy as shown in Figure 3, have been successfully achieved through implementation of other policies in the LDP including BW4: Settlement boundaries /locational constraints, BW5: *Natural heritage*, BW7 *Sustainable design and placemaking*, BW8: *Development in the water environment*, BW11 *Transport, cycling and pedestrian proposals* and TB13: *Exception sites for affordable housing*.

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**Figure 4: Alternative mechanisms to fulfil PPW Green wedges policy objectives.**

PPW - Green wedge policy objectives	Other possible LDP policy mechanisms that could achieve the same objective	LDP Policies included in Deposit Plan 2016-31
Prevent urban coalescence of settlements with other settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define robust settlement boundaries around vulnerable settlements/communities;</li> <li>Ensure there is sufficient land for development and</li> <li>Protect existing green spaces.</li> </ul>	SW4:Settlement Boundaries SW3:Sustianably Distributing New Homes SW6: Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces EnW3 Landscape Protection
Manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define robust settlement limits and</li> <li>Protect existing green space around settlements and communities</li> </ul>	SW4:Settlement Boundaries EnW2:Nationally Protected Sites and Species EnW3: Regionally Important Sites EnW3 Landscape Protection
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define robust settlement boundaries and</li> <li>Presume against inappropriate development in the countryside.</li> </ul>	SW4:Settlement Boundaries EnW3 Landscape Protection
Protect the setting of urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define robust settlement boundaries;</li> <li>Allocate sufficient land for a range of development.</li> <li>Designate landscape protection areas e.g. Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) and</li> <li>Protect existing green spaces.</li> </ul>	SW4:Settlement Boundaries SW3:Sustianably Distributing New Homes SW6: Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area EcW1: Provision of Employment Land SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces EnW5 Landscape Protection
Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Favour a previously developed / brownfield land development strategy and</li> <li>Allocate sufficient land for a range of development on brownfield land or sites.</li> </ul>	SW4:Settlement Boundaries SW6: Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area SW7: The Former Steel Works Regeneration Site

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PPW Green Wedge designation potential outcomes	Other possible LDP policy mechanisms that could achieve the same outcome	LDP Policies included in Deposit Plan 2016-31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide opportunities for access to the open countryside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include policies to protect and enable the creation of additional recreational routes;</li> <li>■ Include policies that enable enhancement or creation of appropriate tourism and recreational facilities in the countryside.</li> </ul>	EcW7: Tourism, Leisure and recreation Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Protect existing open and green space and within settlements.</li> </ul>	SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintain landscape/wildlife interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include policies to protect and connect existing biodiversity assets;</li> <li>■ Require compensation and or mitigation measures for loss of landscape and or biodiversity;</li> <li>■ Review and designate additional local designations e.g. Sites of Nature Conservation (SINCs) and SLAs.</li> </ul>	EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience EnW2: Nationally Protected Sites and Species EnW3: Regionally Important Sites 95 additional SINCs designated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retain land for agriculture, forestry, and related purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include appropriate policies to protect agricultural/forestry/ woodland / common land areas;</li> <li>■ Consider designating potential sites for food growing.</li> </ul>	SW4: Settlement Boundaries SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking EnW5 Landscape Protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve derelict land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consider allocating land reclamation sites.</li> </ul>	SW3: Sustainably Distributing New Homes SW7: The Former Steel Works Regeneration Site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide carbon sinks and help mitigate the effects of urban heat islands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include specific climate change resilient policies.</li> </ul>	EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience EnW4: Environmental Protection

## 9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Given that the mechanisms outlined in Figure 4, in particular inclusion of a strong settlement boundary, the allocation of sufficient land for housing and employment and open space, biodiversity, landscape and environmental protection policies are incorporated within the replacement LDP - Deposit Plan, it is considered that the green wedge policy need **not** be taken forward in the replacement LDP, as it will **not** be necessary.

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## BACKGROUND PAPER: REVIEW OF GREEN WEDGES

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