

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

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

BACKGROUND PAPER

Rhagfyr 2018 | December 2018



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are of local, but not necessarily national, importance and are declared and managed by local authorities, following consultation with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are a non-statutory designation that may be given protection through the Local Development Plan (LDP) as set out under section 6.4.20 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10).
- 1.2 The purpose of LNR designations are to protect sites which are of *local* natural scientific interest, which could be used, for example, to improve access by schools for teaching children about nature or to develop local knowledge and understanding of natural history or nature conservation. Such areas can improve access and enable the peaceful contemplation of nature, which has impacts on health and wellbeing. LNRs are often therefore situated in or near urban areas with good public access and facilities.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 For a site to be eligible for LNR status it must have natural features of *local interest*, such as ponds, rivers, rock outcrops, woodland, heathland, tips, and marshes. It may also have other designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) status but *cannot* also be a National Nature Reserve.
- 2.2 To establish an LNR the land must lie within the area which the 'declaring' authority controls. The authority must also either have a legal interest in the land concerned through ownership or lease.
- 2.3 The authority can also have an agreement with the owner to manage the land as a reserve. Otherwise there is no legal necessity to manage LNRs, however, management agreements often exist and the declaring authority can pass the management of an LNR onto Wildlife Trusts or other local environmental bodies who can not only help to protect habitats and wildlife but also increase people's awareness of their environment.

3. Protection

- 3.1 LNRs can be identified and protected against damaging operations and development on and around them, through the Local Development Plan process. They should have natural features or characteristics of local interest that would benefit from conservation and enhancement.
- 3.2 They should also bring benefits to local communities, be informed by community participation, reflect their values and encourage social and economic progress.

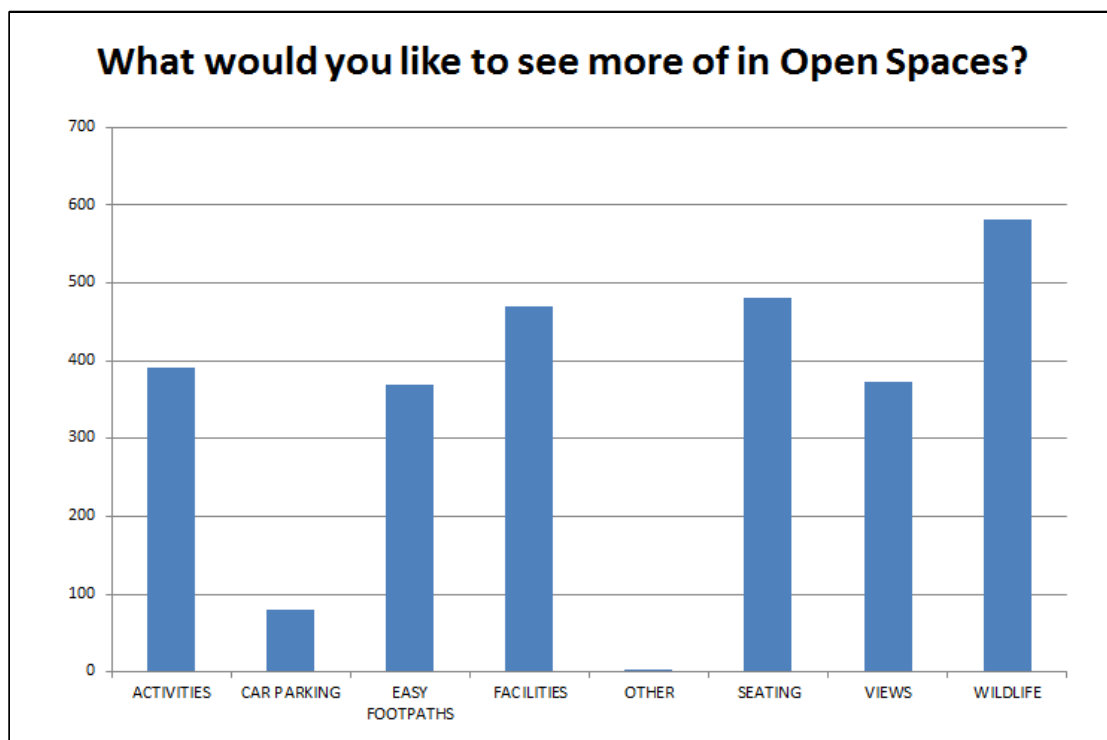
- 3.3 Paragraph 6.4.20 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), edition 10 states that:

“Although non-statutory designations carry less weight than statutory designations, they can make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given adequate protection in development plans and the development management process..... Where a Green Infrastructure Assessment has identified that certain features or characteristics of the sites need to be conserved or enhanced, planning authorities should state in their development plans what features or characteristics require this extra protection and why, and explain how the policies will achieve this protection. Assessments should similarly consider the presence of protected and priority species including those on the Section 7 list and appropriate weight attached to their protection. Policies for non-statutory sites should make it clear that such designations do not preclude appropriate developments, where there are no adverse impacts on the features for which a site is designated”.

- 3.4 Although the primary purpose of designation is to protect and manage LNRs for nature conservation ends, they are also for the enjoyment of people and provide opportunities to improve access to and education of nature. In this respect, national policy makes clear that such designations should not preclude appropriate socio-economic activities.

4. Participation

- 4.1 As can be seen in the graph below, during the *Merthyr Tydfil Open Spaces Strategy*¹ Consultation process² local residents of all ages identified a desire to see more 'wildlife' in open spaces above any other factors.



Graph 1: Call for more wildlife areas within open spaces by local residents.

- 4.2 This requirement has also been identified as an action point within the *draft Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan*³ prepared for compliance with the Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty: *Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016*⁴, which recognises the need to improve awareness and participation in the natural world (biodiversity and ecosystems) in order to make progress towards better understanding and appreciation of the value of the natural world.

¹ Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy & Action Plans, June 2016

² Open Space Strategy Consultation 'Your Space' Questionnaire (Question 3), May – September 2013

³ Draft Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan

⁴ Environment (Wales) Act 2016, section 6

- 4.3 The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Statement of Well-being 2018-19⁵ has also recognised this duty by including the following objective:

“People, proud of the area's outstanding landscape, regularly spend time outdoors in good quality, accessible greenspace. Communities help improve their local areas, learning new skills, building strong social bonds and helping wildlife flourish”.

- 4.4 Furthermore paragraph 6.2 states that:

“Research shows that a healthy natural environment and countryside provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife from improved air, water and land quality, habitat protection and enhanced biodiversity to beneficial implications for physical and mental health. Therefore, the focus of this wellbeing objective is the work we do with our communities to protect, enhance and promote the environment and countryside”.

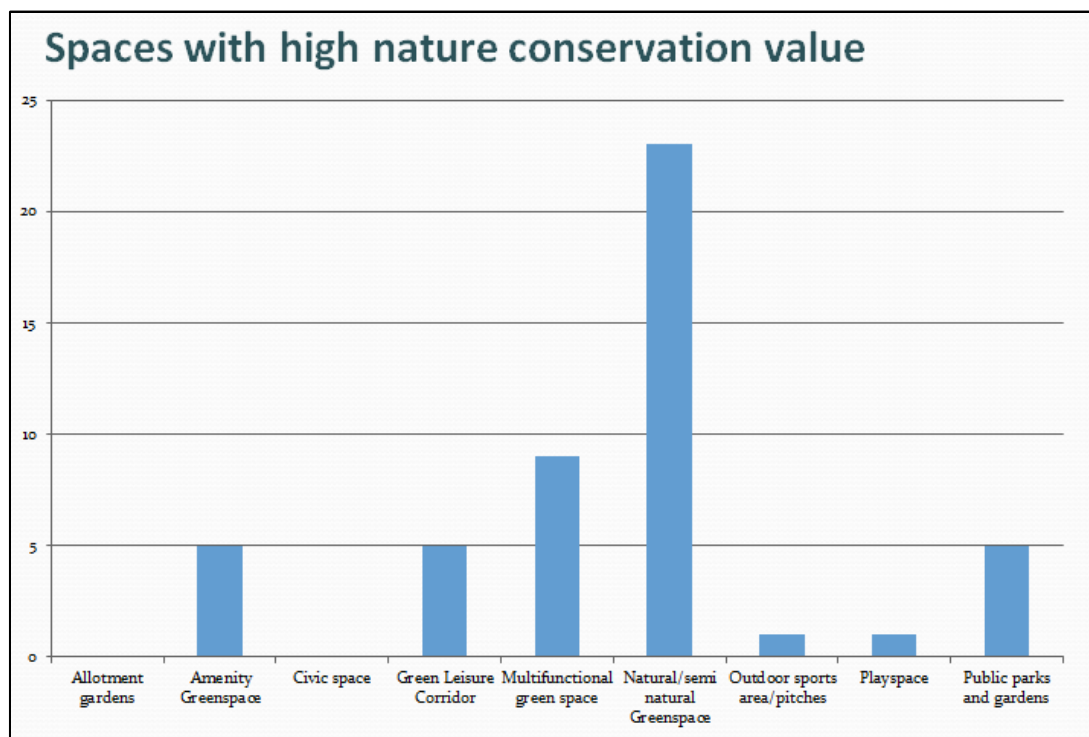
- 4.5 In this sense LNR designation could potentially significantly contribute to health and well-being goals as well as being of educational benefit to residents of the County Borough.

5. Provision

- 5.1 As part of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan review process, in line with PPW requirements and in-addition to the one existing LNR, it was decided to take the opportunity to make appropriate provision for additional LNRs in the County Borough.
- 5.2 The Council's Open Space Strategy provides an extensive review of the County Borough's natural and semi-natural open spaces and this therefore forms the basis for considering potential Local Nature Reserve designations.
- 5.3 The “natural/semi-natural” open spaces identified in the Open Space Strategy were considered for potential local nature reserve designation as this open space typology provides the highest nature conservation value, as shown in graph 2 overleaf. These are also the areas where landscape scale ecological connectivity and functionality could best be improved.

⁵ The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Statement of Well-being 2018-19, Version 2

- 5.4 In order that the LNRs reflect their potential benefits for both nature and people in terms of access to nature, the spatial distribution across the County Borough was also considered with the aim of identifying eligible areas of natural or semi natural open spaces within each ward.



Graph 2: Conservation value in relation to Open Spaces typology⁶.

⁶ Open Space PowerPoint Presentation, September 2018, based on findings of Open Space Quality Background Paper

6. Selection criteria

- 6.1 In line with legislation, national planning policy and guidance and the above parameters, the LNRs were proposed following consideration of the following factors:
1. MTCBC Ownership;
 2. Spatial distribution;
 3. Priority Open Space: natural/semi-natural open space;
 4. Open Space: natural/semi-natural open space;
 5. Accessibility;
 6. Nature Conservation value;
 7. Nature conservation value: high potential;
 8. Landscape-scale ecological connectivity and ecosystem resilience; and
 9. Other features of interest including geological, archaeological/heritage, landscape and visual.
- 6.2 Wherever possible proposed LNRs were selected to match with the Priority Open Spaces sites (Council owned only) that are mainly identified as “multi-functional” open spaces that include significant areas of natural or semi-natural open spaces. These were chosen on a wide range of traits including accessibility and the potential capacity to meet specifically identified shortfalls within each ward.
- 6.3 In this case 25% - (4:12) are able to be managed for nature conservation purposes without conflicting with management for other identified shortfall in needs within the respective ward. This is mainly due to their multi - functional typology; i.e. they contain “natural/semi-natural” open space typology alongside, but distinctly physically separated from or non-conflicting with other space typology.
- 6.4 The remaining LNR locations were selected on the basis of extant nature conservation value, such as SINC, or high potential nature conservation value.⁷ The qualifying features of each proposed LNRs are set out in section 8 below.

⁷ N.B. high potential nature conservation value sites are historically and scientifically evidenced.

7. Management

7.1 All existing habitats on site, particularly UK/Wales BAP priority habitats, will all aim to be managed as detailed within the relevant Habitat Management Toolkits developed through the South East Wales Local Wildlife Sites Partnership Project⁸ through the exercise of the Council's duties and functions.

7.2 Open Spaces proposed as LNRs at Bryngolau, Scwrfa (Gellideg Fields), Coed-y-Hendre and Cwm Taf Fechan are currently being trialled with Rural Development Programme (RDP) LEADER 2014-2020 grant by Actif Woods/Small Woods Association and the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales in a 2 year project called "Connecting People and Nature". The project "will engage with local communities with the following aims:

- *Enhance and protect local biodiversity*
- *Increase local skills and capacity to care for nature reserves and create sense of ownership*
- *Improve community cohesion*
- *Improve health and wellbeing*

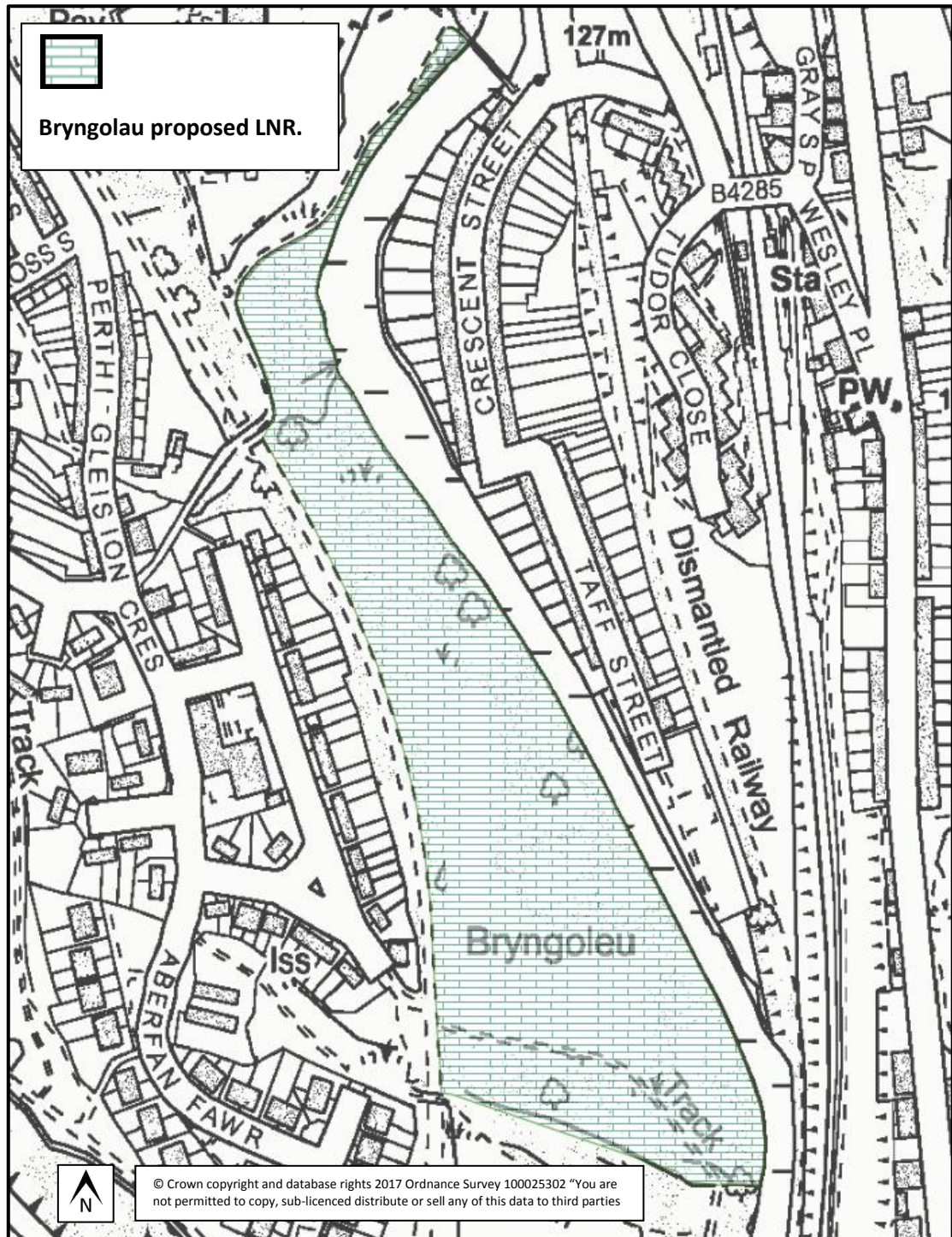
These aims will be achieved by carrying out surveys, habitat and access management, and offering activities and training."

7.3 The Council will continue to work with local groups and will consider future appropriate management regimes for designated LNRs.

⁸ <https://www.gwentwildlife.org/what-we-do/projects/lws-se-wales-project-completed>

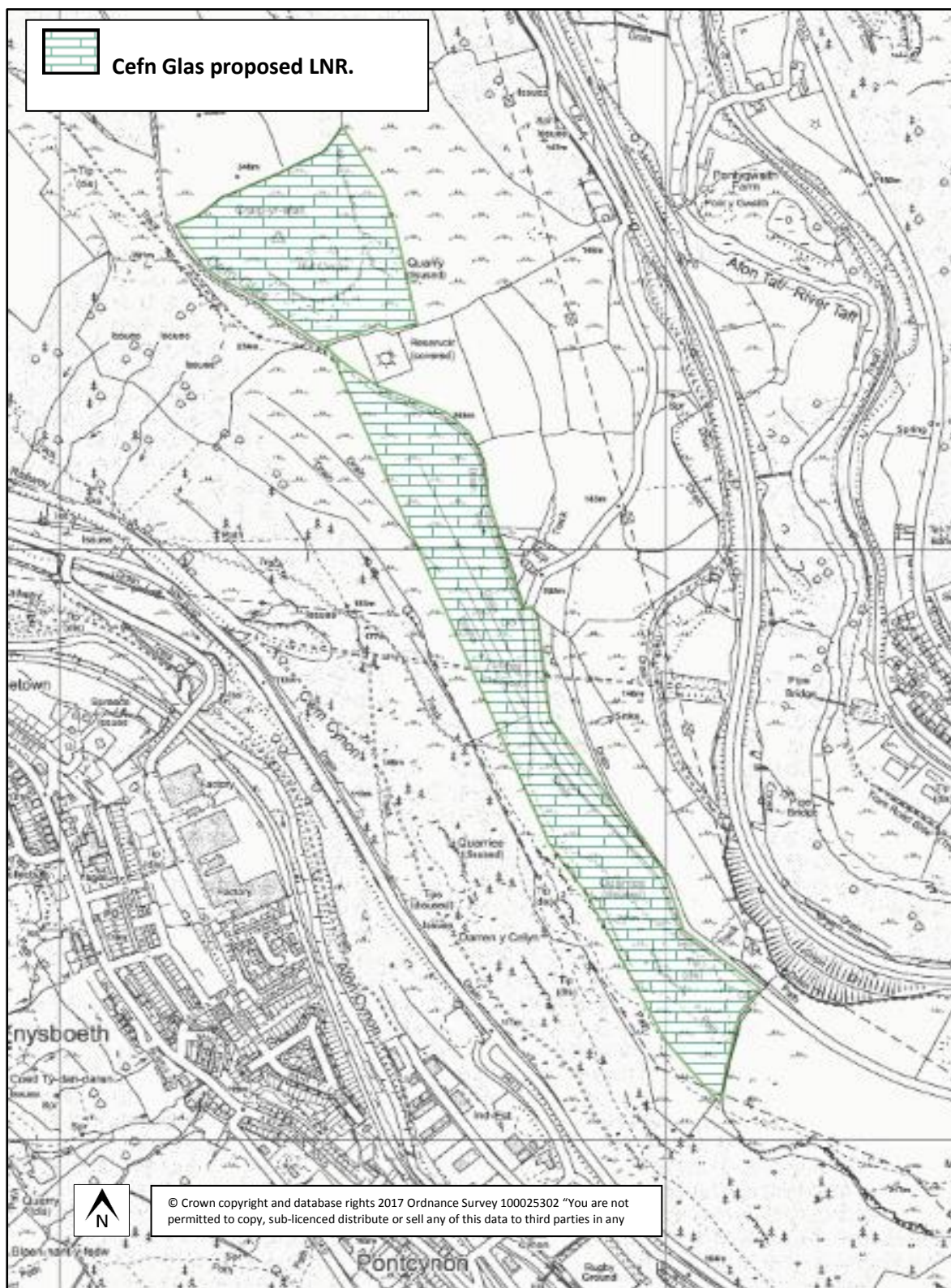
8. Qualifying Features

8.1 Bryngolau proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Merthyr Vale



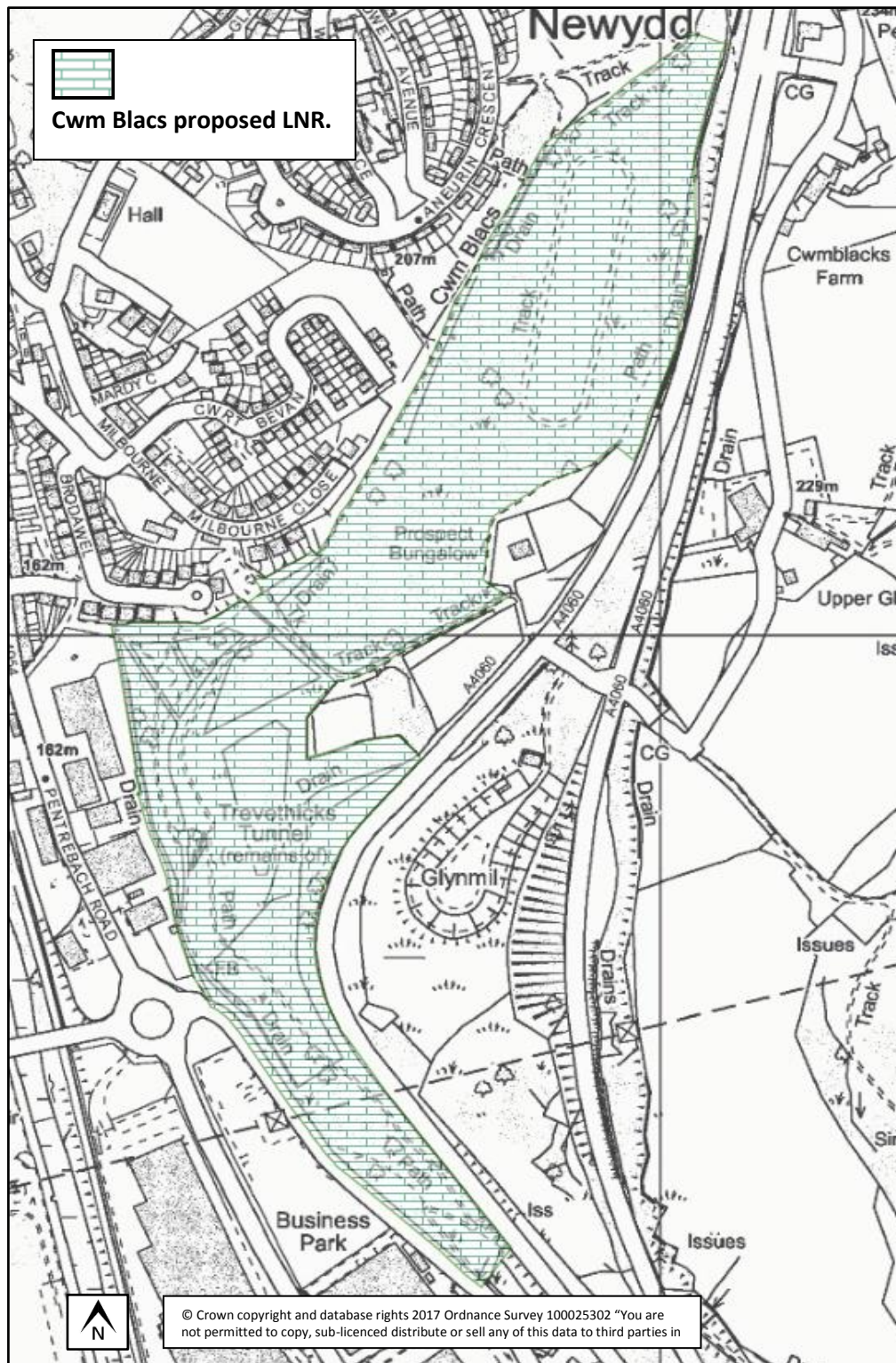
| 8.1: Bryngolau proposed LNR, Merthyr Vale – Qualifying Features | |
|--|--|
| Open Space Strategy | Riverside Aberfan Bryngolau Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SINC: part of No.58 Afon Taf TPO: part of 1954 (No.6) Pontygwaith/Treharris Proposed SLA: within Pontygwaith and Taf Valley |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | River, Wet Woodland, Neutral Lowland Meadow |
| Species of Principal Importance | West European Hedgehog |
| Summary site description | Important landscape-scale connective woodland (north-south), well-used informal walking trails, riverside seating, current Wildlife Trust/Actif Woods Rural Development Fund Project Site. |
| Management priorities | Expand potential for biodiversity management; Control invasive species (Himalayan Balsam); Control fly-tipping in stream leading to Taff at northern end of site and Expand for play opportunities where appropriate. |

8.2 Cefn Glas proposed Local Nature Reserve LNR, Treharris



| 8.2: Cefn Glas proposed LNR, Treharris – Qualifying Features | |
|---|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Cefn Glas Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SINC: part of No.49 Mynydd Goetre-coed |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Upland Heathland, Inland Rock Outcrop & Scree, Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land |
| Species of Principal Importance | Natterer's Bat, Linnet, Skylark, Kestrel, Grayling Butterfly, Wood Bitter-vetch |
| Summary site description | Unique neutral grassland flora in upland location due to tipped material, industrial heritage (tip and quarry), local cultural site (known as Giant's Bite), car parking, well-used informal trails, simultaneous views of Merthyr and Cynon Valleys. |
| Management priorities | Control use of 4x4 and scramblers to reduce erosion and Management plan required. |

8.3 Cwm Blacs proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Town



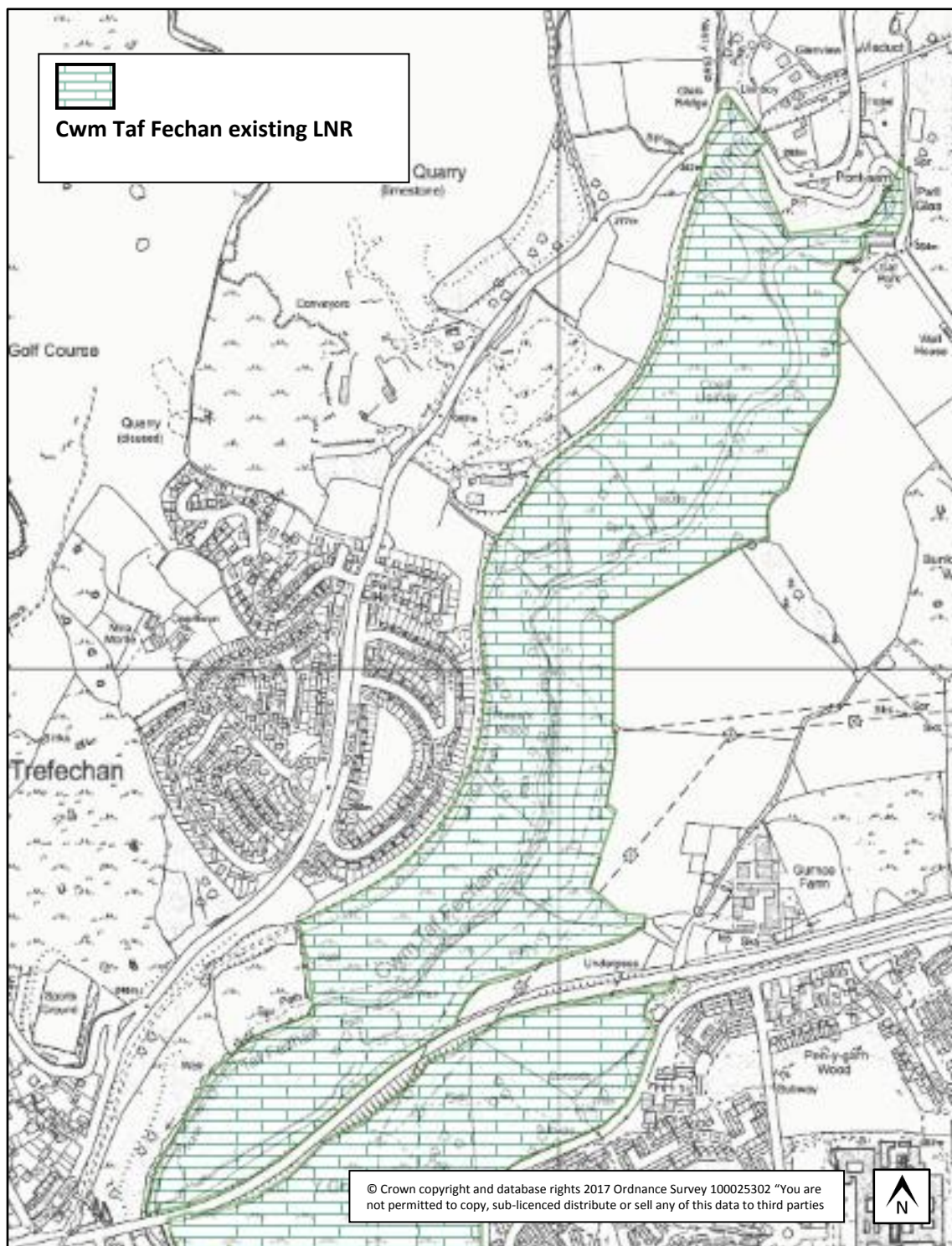
| 8.3: Cwm Blacs proposed LNR, Town - Qualifying Features | |
|---|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Cwm Blacs Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales: part of Merthyr Tydfil Proposed Urban Character Area: part of Twynirodyn Proposed Archaeological Sensitive Area: part of Plymouth Ironworks Trevithick's Tunnel |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | N/A |
| Species of Principal Importance | Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Lowland Heathland, Lowland Acid Grassland, Hedgerows |
| Summary site description | Very important large site and landscape scale ecological connectivity (north-south on Merthyr east flank) historically managed with "Better Woodlands for Wales" grant, Industrial heritage (first phase of East Merthyr Reclamation; coal mining on-going), network of Public Rights of Way and informal trails. |
| Management Priorities | Management plan required; Continue to improve biodiversity; Control invasive species ; Improve access and signage and Eradicate fly tipping. |

8.4 Cwm Taf and Cefn Coed Tip proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Park



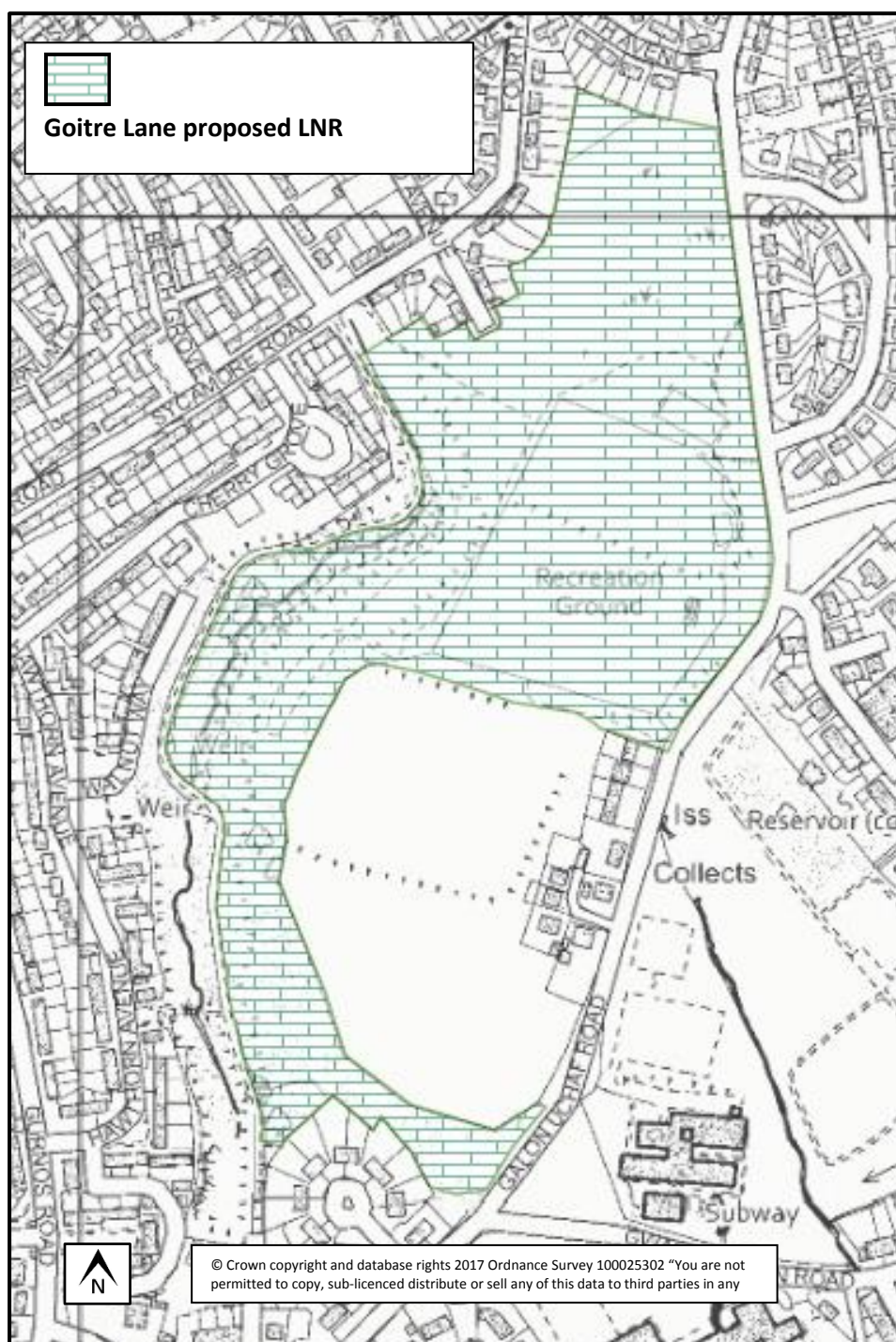
| 8.4: Cwm Taf and Cefn Coed Tip proposed LNR, Park - Qualifying Features | |
|--|--|
| Open Space Strategy | Pontycafnau & Cyfarthfa Furnaces Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SINC: part of No.13 Cwm Taf Fields & Cefn Coed Tip Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales: part of Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Conservation Area: Cyfarthfa Proposed Urban Character Area: part of Cyfarthfa Park and ironworks Proposed Archaeological Sensitive Area: part of Cyfarthfa Ironworks Proposed SLA: within of Nant Morlais and Cwm Taf Fechan |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Wet Woodland, Lowland Calcareous Grassland, Lowland Meadows, Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Lowland Heathland, Lowland Acid Grassland, Rivers |
| Species of Principal Importance | Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Small Heath Butterfly, Atlantic Salmon, Sea Trout, European Otter, Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Pipistrelle Bat, Slow-worm. |
| Summary site description | Unique calcareous "iron tip" flora, important large site and landscape scale ecological connectivity at the confluence of Afon Taf Fawr and Afon Taf Fechan; Cyfarthfa Ironworks and Pont-y-Cafnau Scheduled Ancient Monuments on site; the former containing one of the largest colonies of Sand Martins in South Wales, Taff Trail (National Cycle Route 8) passes through the site, many informal trails across the site. |
| Management priorities | Address the issues of damaged seating, arson and off road vehicles and Engagement with the community. |

8.5 Cwm Taf Fechan existing Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Vaynor



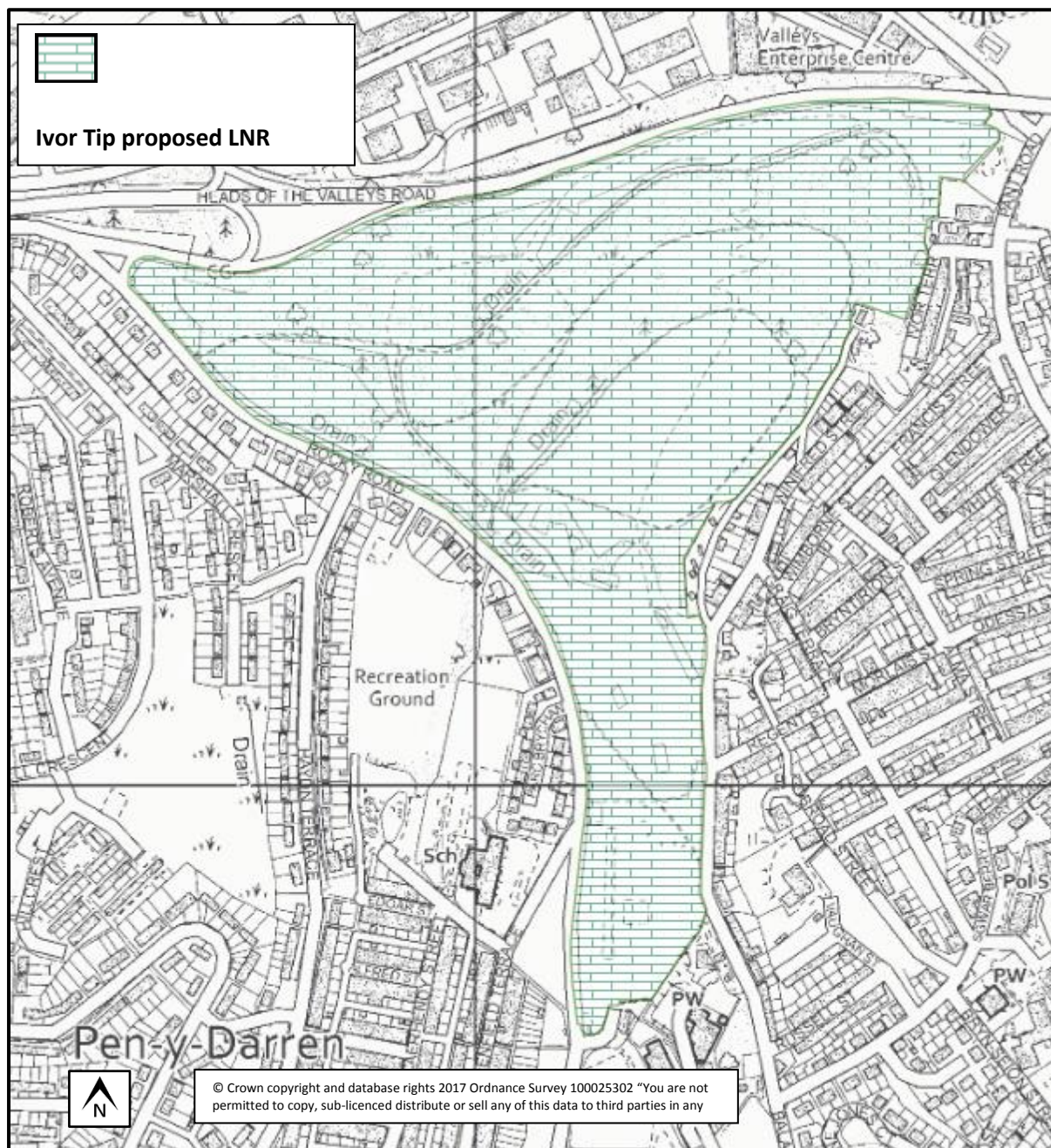
| 8.5: Cwm Taf Fechan (existing) LNR, Vaynor - Qualifying Features | |
|---|--|
| Open Space Strategy | Taf Fechan Nature Reserve Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SSSI: Cwm Taf Fechan Woodlands: notified in 1972; re-notified in 1985 LNR: Taf Fechan LNR; Declared 16 th May 1975 SINC: part of No.16 Taf Fechan TPO: 1951 (No.2) Lower Taf Fechan; (No.3) Upper Taf Fechan Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales - Cyfarthfa Castle Grade II* Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales -Merthyr Tydfil SAM: Gurnos Tramroad and Leat Scheduled Ancient Monument is on site. Listed Buildings: Three, including two Grade I Heritage Conservation Area - Cyfarthfa Proposed Archaeologically Sensitive Area: part of Cyfarthfa Castle and Park |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | River, Wet Woodland, Upland Mixed Ashwoods, Calcareous Grassland, Neutral Grassland, Heathland, Rocks, Cliffs and Quarries. |
| Species of Principal Importance | European Otter, Atlantic Salmon, West European Hedgehog, Cuckoo, Kestrel, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Bullfinch, Starling, Song Thrush, Several bat species, Common Lizard, Common toad, Slow-worm. |
| Summary site description | Taf Fechan Nature Reserve Management Plans have been created and implemented since 2004. Taf Fechan Local Nature Reserve Joint Management Committee is responsible for overseeing the reserve. |
| Management priorities | Continue to manage as existing following Cwm Taf Fechan SSSI Management Plans, especially clearance after fires and camping and control invasive species (Bracken, Rhododendron, Cotoneaster and Signal Crayfish). |

8.6 Goitre Lane proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Penydarren



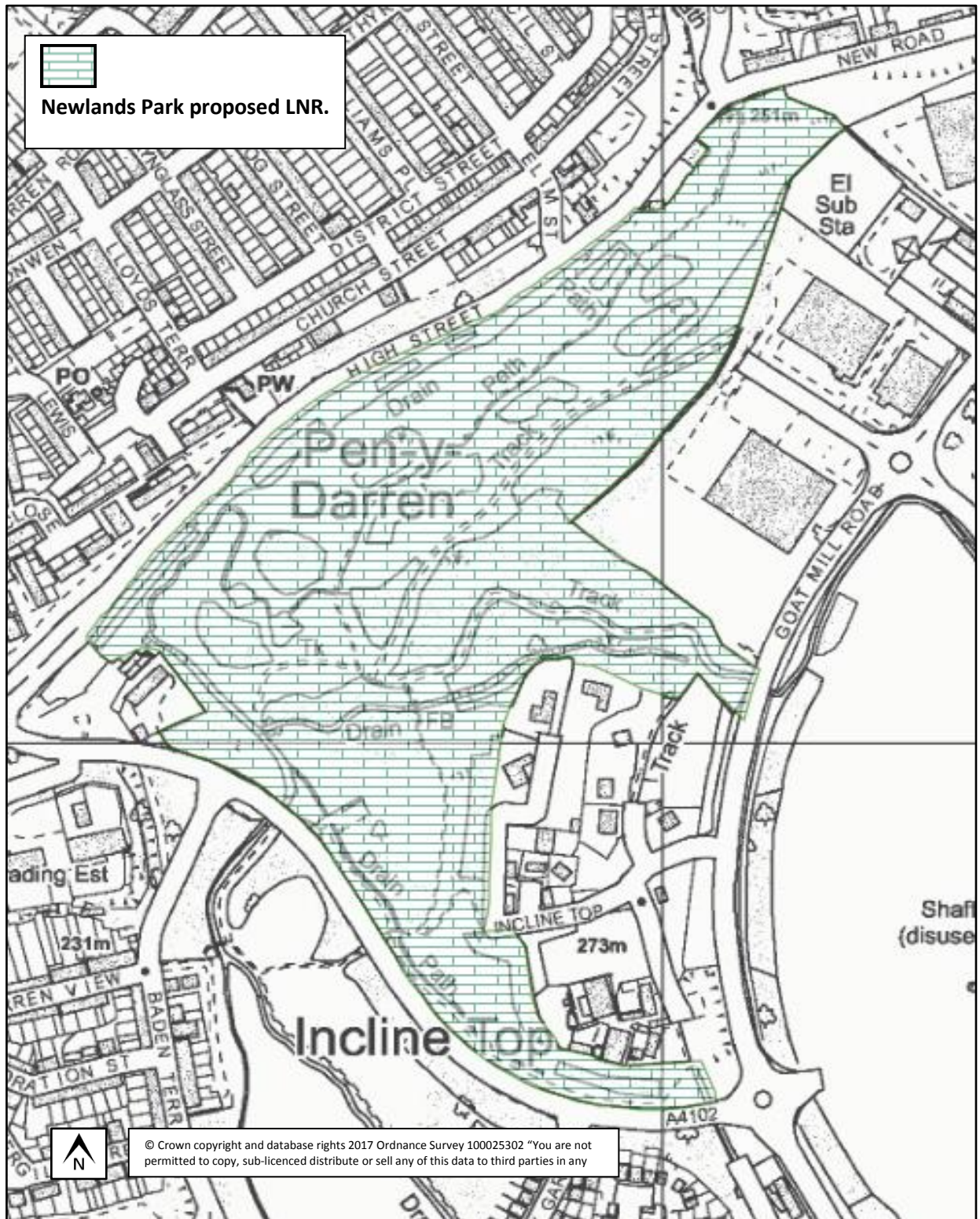
| 8.6:Goitre Lane proposed LNR, Penydarren - Qualifying Features | |
|---|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Greenie Galon Uchaf Road Priority: Multi-functional green space |
| Other designations | Within proposed District Heat Network Area |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Wet Woodland, Lowland Meadows, River |
| Species of Principal Importance | Serotine Bat, House Sparrow |
| Summary site description | A very important landscape scale ecological connective habitat and greenspace oasis entirely surrounded by dense residential housing, a critical 'greenspace' access link between residential housing and Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. |
| Management priorities | A Welcoming Place, Healthy Safe and Secure, Management and Achievements and Engagement with the Community The main part of the site has received its first attention comprising: Litter clearance from the entrance at Fifth Avenue; Assessment of the senile Scots Pine trees and replacement planting with young Scots Pine; Planting of semi mature oak trees at the entrance at Fifth Avenue and Sycamore Road / Fourth Avenue and Planting of whips and transplants to increase tree cover. |

8.7. Ifor Tip proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Dowlais



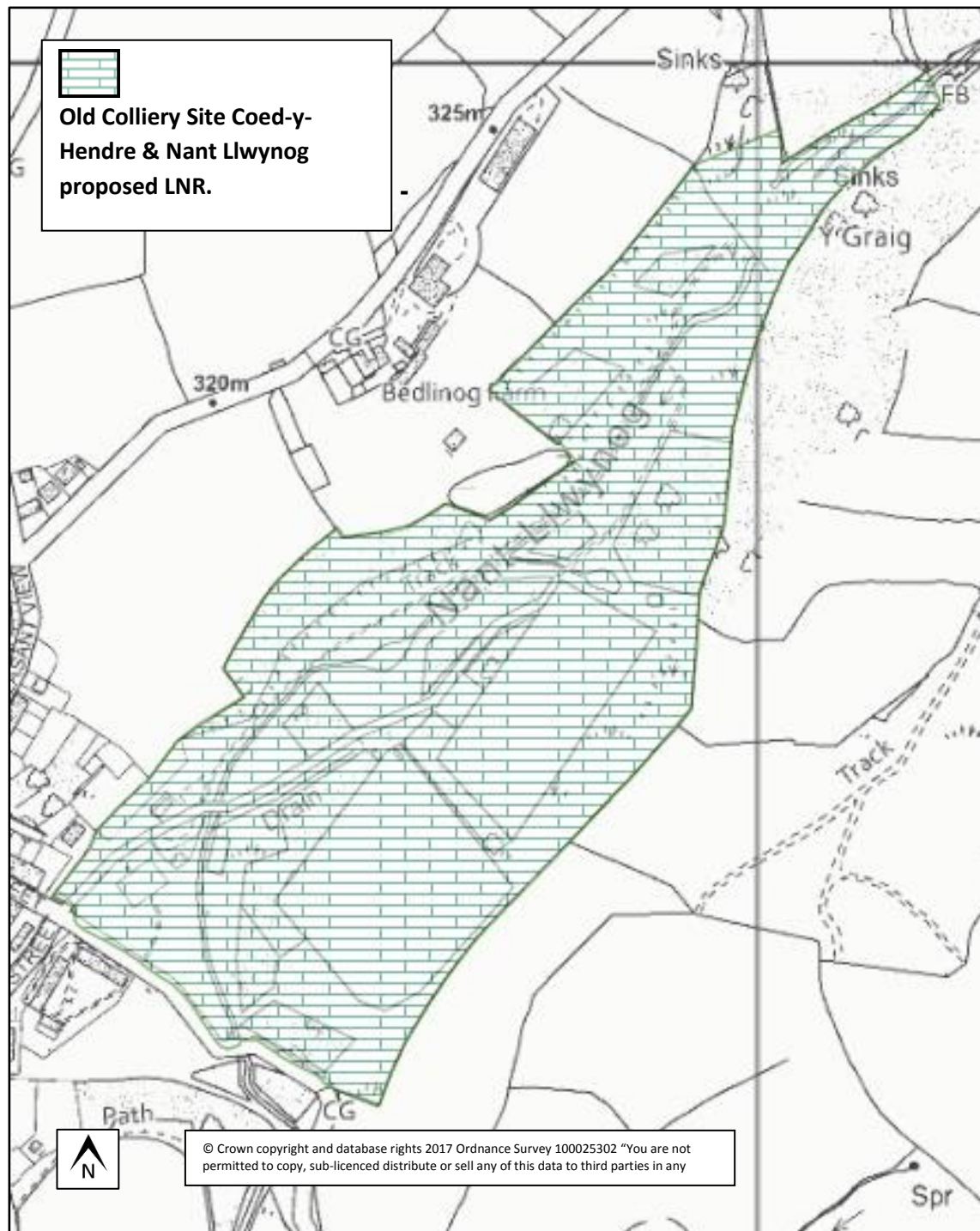
| 8.7: Ifor Tip proposed LNR, Dowlais - Qualifying Features | |
|--|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Ifor Tip and Pant Hollow Priority: Multi-functional green space |
| Other designations | Within proposed District Heat Network Area |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Lowland Heathland |
| Species of Principal Importance | House Sparrow, European Hedgehog |
| Summary site description | Important semi- natural 'oasis' surrounded by dense residential housing and 'Heads of the Valleys' carriageway/industrial estate, historic tip site associated with the nearby Dowlais Ironworks, network of metalled and informal routes across the site, planted woodland belts maturing. |
| Management priorities | A Welcoming Place, Healthy Safe and Secure, Clean and Well Maintained, Engagement with the Community and Marketing. Resources available to improve this space were to be allocated towards the planting of street side trees and hedge although existing services have precluded this. |

8.8. Newlands Park proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Penydarren, Dowlais and Town



| 8.8: Newlands Par proposed LNR, Penydarren, Dowlais and Town - Qualifying Features | |
|---|--|
| Open Space Strategy | Incline Top/Newlands Park Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | Within proposed District Heat Network Area |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Lowland Meadows, Hedgerows, Ponds |
| Species of Principal Importance | Common toad, Common Pipistrelle Bat |
| Summary site description | Historic tip site associated with the nearby Penydarren Ironworks, network of metalled Public Rights of Way, benches and informal routes across the site, planted woodland belts maturing. |
| Management priorities | Management plan required; Facilities limited to seating but also fishing and car park; Fires /burnt out litter bins / trail bikes off road scrambling; Improve community engagement over the manner in which the space is managed; Invasive species control, extensive litter control and further information required on the site on what it can be used for. |

8.9. Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Bedlinog



| 8.9: Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog proposed LNR, Bedlinog - Qualifying Features | |
|---|--|
| Open Space Strategy | Nant Llwynog Priority: Multi-functional green space |
| Other designations | Adjacent to SINC 41 Coed Nant Llwynog Proposed SLA: within Gelligaer & Taf Bargoed Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales: Gelli-gaer Common Proposed Archaeologically Sensitive Area: within Gelligaer Common Proposed SLA: within Gelligaer & Taf Bargoed |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Ponds, Rivers, Hedgerows |
| Species of Principal Importance | Song Thrush, Kestrel |
| Summary site description | Historic tip site associated with Bedlinog Colliery, Public Rights of Way and informal routes across the site with benches, planted woodland belts maturing, current Wildlife Trust/Actif Woods Rural Development Fund Project Site, community group recently set up with specific interest in the site. |
| Management priorities | A Welcoming Place, Healthy Safe and Secure, Clean and Well Maintained, Management and Achievements and Engagement with the Community. A management plan for the site is being developed by the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust using Rural Development Fund funding. The organisation Actif Woods, have commenced a series of events to engage with local people using the site as a resource for environmental activities. The first of such events took place in February 2018 and included den making, tree identification, tree thinning, tree guard removal and fence removal. Friends of Nant Llwynog Park volunteered towards some of these activities and raised money to improve the park. The removal of tree guards and old fencing has transformed the look of the site. |

**Pentrebach/Nant-yr-Odin Tip
proposed LNR.**

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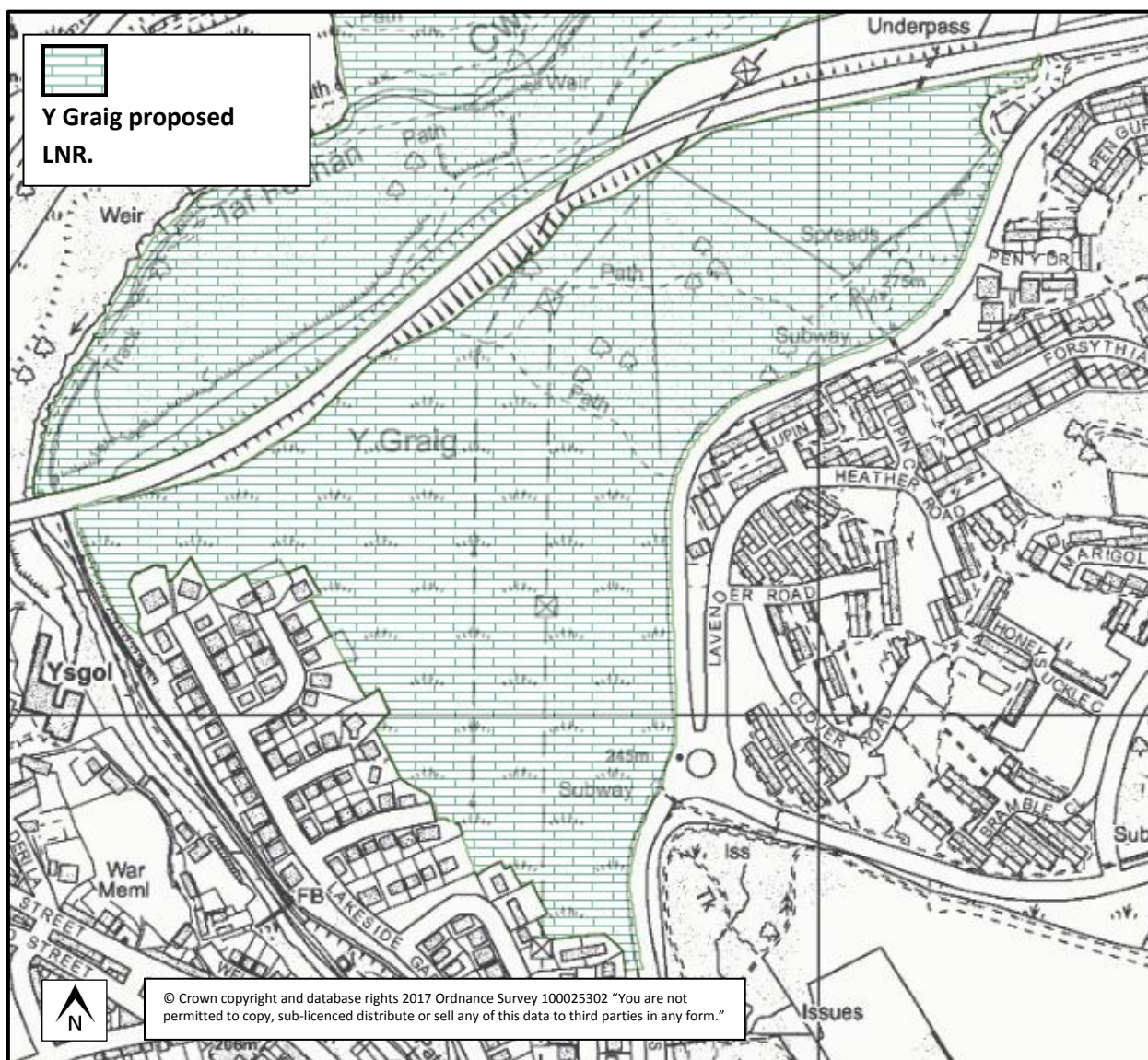
| 8.10: Pentrebach/Nant-yr-Odyn Tip proposed LNR, Plymouth – Qualifying Features | |
|--|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Duffryn/Nant-yr-Odyn Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SINC: No.22 Nant-yr-Odyn/Pentrebach Tip Within Mineral safe guarding area: coal & sandstone |
| Habitats of Principal Importance | Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, Upland Heathland, Purple Moor-grass & Rush Pasture, Wet Woodlands, Upland Oak Woodlands |
| Species of Principal Importance | Brown Hare, Bullfinch, Olive Earth-tongue fungus, |
| Summary site description | Historic drift mine tip site, visually prominent cultural landscape feature, with informal routes across the site, current British Institute for Geological Conservation Rural Development Fund Project Site. |
| Management priorities | Improve access, litter / broken gates / graffiti / Fires / stolen gates and control ragwort. Management plan required; Capitalise on good view, access arrangements etc. |

8.11 Scwrfu (Gellideg Fields) & Cwm Ffrwd Woodland proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Cyfarthfa



| 8.11: Scwrfa (Gellideg Fields) & Cwm Ffrwd Woodland proposed LNR, Cyfarthfa - Qualifying Features | |
|--|---|
| Open Space Strategy | Gellideg Fields Priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| Other designations | SINC: No.10 Scwrfa/Gellideg North Fields & No.7 Cwm Ffrwd RIGS: Nant Ffrwdd Proposed SLA: Winchfawr Proposed Urban Charter Area: West Merthyr |
| Habitats of Principal Importance for the Purpose | Wet Woodland, Lowland Acid Grassland, Lowland Meadows, Lowland Heathland, Purple Moor-grass & Rush Pasture, Rocks, Cliff, Quarries and Scree, Upland Flushes, Fens & Swamp, Rivers |
| Species of Principal Importance | Bullfinch, Dunnock, Otter, Song Thrush, Hedgehog, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary |
| Summary site description | Border to Brecon Beacons National Park to the north, one of the few remaining mediaeval agricultural field farm boundaries left in the County Borough with an unusual mixture of acidic, neutral and calcareous grassland species in a small area due to unusual boundary geology, network of informal paths and benches across the site, current Wildlife Trust/Actif Woods Rural Development Fund Project Site, community group recently awarded Green Flag status for the site. |
| Management priorities | A Welcoming Place, Healthy Safe and Secure, Management and Achievements and Engagement with the Community. Rails have been removed from the footbridge and there have been several fires within the open areas and some vandalism. The Wildlife Trust will be producing a management plan for this site. To date the Wildlife Trust and Actif Woods have run community days at Gellideg Fields, with some willow weaving and traditional woodworking skills with a shave horse, and litter picking with volunteers on the site. |

8.12 Y Graig proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Gurnos.



| 8.12 | Y Graig proposed LNR, Gurnos - Qualifying Features | |
|-------------|---|--|
| | Open Space Strategy | Y Graig Gurnos Non-priority: Natural/ semi-natural green space |
| | Other designations | SINC: No.17 Y Graig |
| | S7 Habitats of Principal | Wet Woodland, Lowland Meadows, Lowland Heathland, Purple Moor-grass & Rush Pasture, Rocks, Cliff, Quarries and Scree. |
| | Species of Principal Importance | Daubenton's Bat, Common Lizard, Dunnock, Small Heath Butterfly, Shaded Broad-bar Moth, Cinnabar Moth |
| | Summary site description | Important landscape scale ecological connective corridor (east-west) between dense residential housing and 'Heads of the Valleys' carriageway, network of informal paths across the site, current Healthy Hillside Partnership Project Site with South Wales Fire Service. |
| | Management priorities | Bracken management; Reduce fires; Manage waterbody and Improve pedestrian access. |

9. Local Development Plan

- 9.1 In order to designate the above additional LNRs the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Deposit Local Development Plan 2016-2031 includes the following Policy:

Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces

Development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact or result in an unjustified loss of open space will not be permitted unless:

- It would not cause or exacerbate a deficiency of open space in accordance with the Council's open space standards or;
- The majority of the open space can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site or;
- Satisfactory equivalent community benefit or enhanced compensatory provision can be provided in accordance with the Council's open space standards and
- In all cases, the open space has no significant nature or historic conservation importance.

To enable access to nature, the following Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are proposed:

1. Bryngolau LNR, Merthyr Vale
2. Cefn Glas LNR, Treharris
3. Cwm Blacs LNR, Town
4. Cwm Taf and Cefn Coed Tip LNR, Park
5. Cwm Taf Fechan (existing) LNR, Vaynor
6. Goitre Lane LNR, Penydarren
7. Ifor Tip LNR, Dowlais
8. Newlands Park LNR, Penydarren, Dowlais and Town
9. Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog LNR, Bedlinog
10. Pentrebach/Nant-yr-Odin Tip LNR, Plymouth
11. Scwrfa (Gellideg Fields) & Cwm Ffrwd Woodland LNR, Cyfarthfa
12. Graig LNR, Gurnos.

10. Deposit Plan Consultation

- 10.1 Natural Resources Wales (Rep No. 103.D8/SW103) response to the Deposit Plan consultation in relation to Policy SW10 reads as follows:

"We recommend that the wording of this policy is amended in order to provide a clear explanation of how the policy will achieve its purpose of 'Improving' Open Spaces. As currently drafted, the policy is limited to protection of open spaces only".

- 10.2 The Deposit Plan response from the Friends of Nant Llwynog Park (Rep No. 288.D2/SW101) is generally supportive and commended Policy SW10. In relation to the Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog proposed LNR they consider that:

"It is important that the policy is clear and well set out. This is for the benefit of all parties, visitors and local residents alike. It is partly to ensure a good understanding of the aims of the plan and also to avoid possible conflicts and uncertainties as to the practical application of policy".

- 10.3 The Friends carried out an opinion survey in 2017 and found significant support for a nature reserve on the site and consider it will greatly assist in the understanding of the value of the natural world and its significance for the public. However, they consider that although the site includes long-standing children's playgrounds and two sports pitches the LNR designation should only include areas classified as semi-natural and should be confined to the more natural northern parts of the site omitting the sports fields.
- 10.4 The matters raised in these representations have been considered and changes to the Deposit Plan have been proposed as set out in the recommendations in Section 11.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 Firstly, it is agreed the policy should include reference to improvement of open spaces. It is therefore recommended that Policy SW10 be amended as follows:

Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces

Development proposals that improve the quality, quantity or access to open space will generally be supported.

Development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on or result in an unjustified a loss of open space will not be permitted unless:

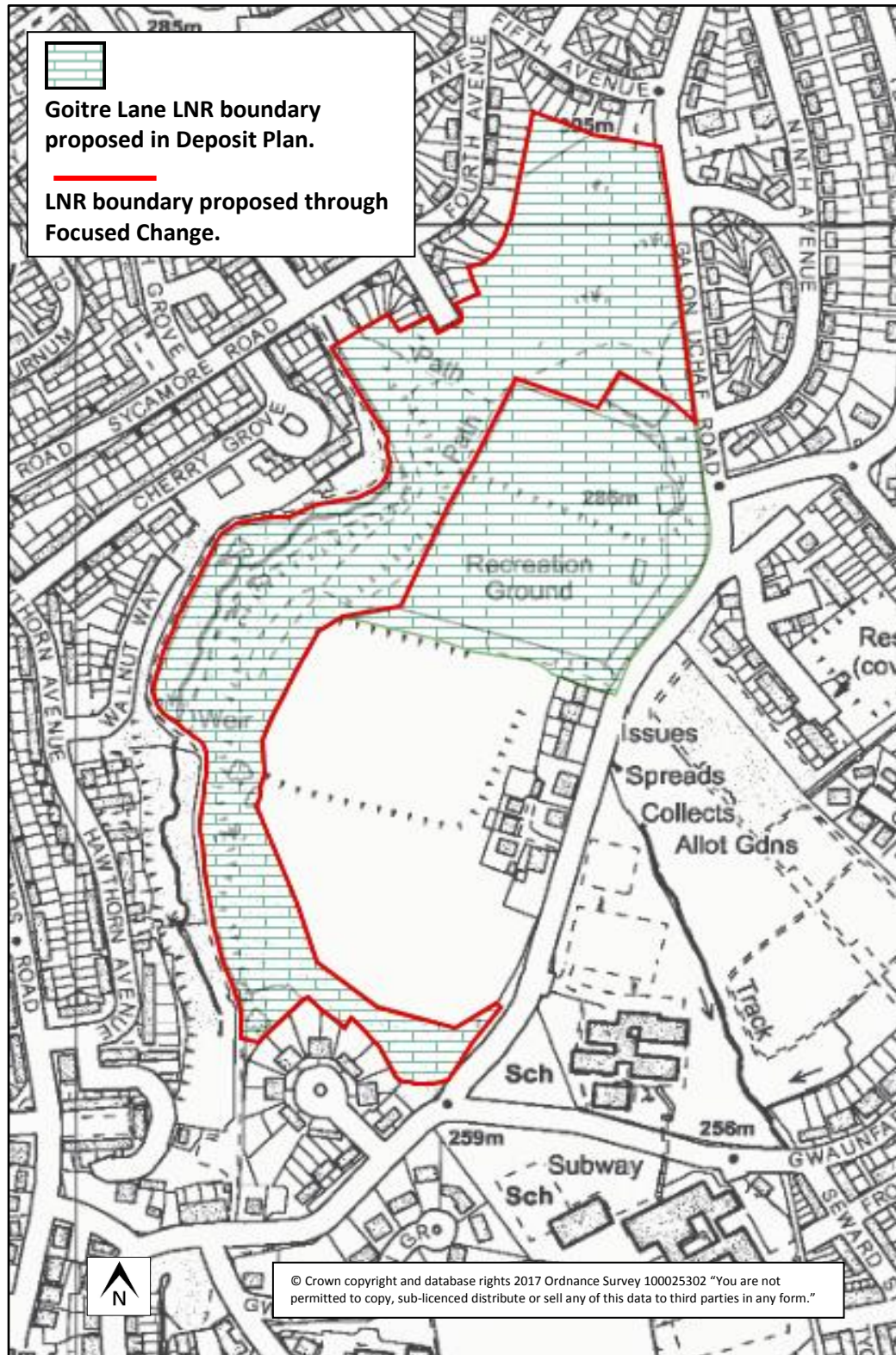
- It would not cause or exacerbate a deficiency of open space in accordance with the Council's open space standards or;
- The majority of the open space can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site or;
- Satisfactory equivalent community benefit or enhanced compensatory provision can be provided in accordance with the Council's open space standards; and
- In all cases, the open space has no significant nature or historic conservation importance.

To **conserve and enhance biodiversity and improve** ~~enable~~ access to nature, the following Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are proposed:

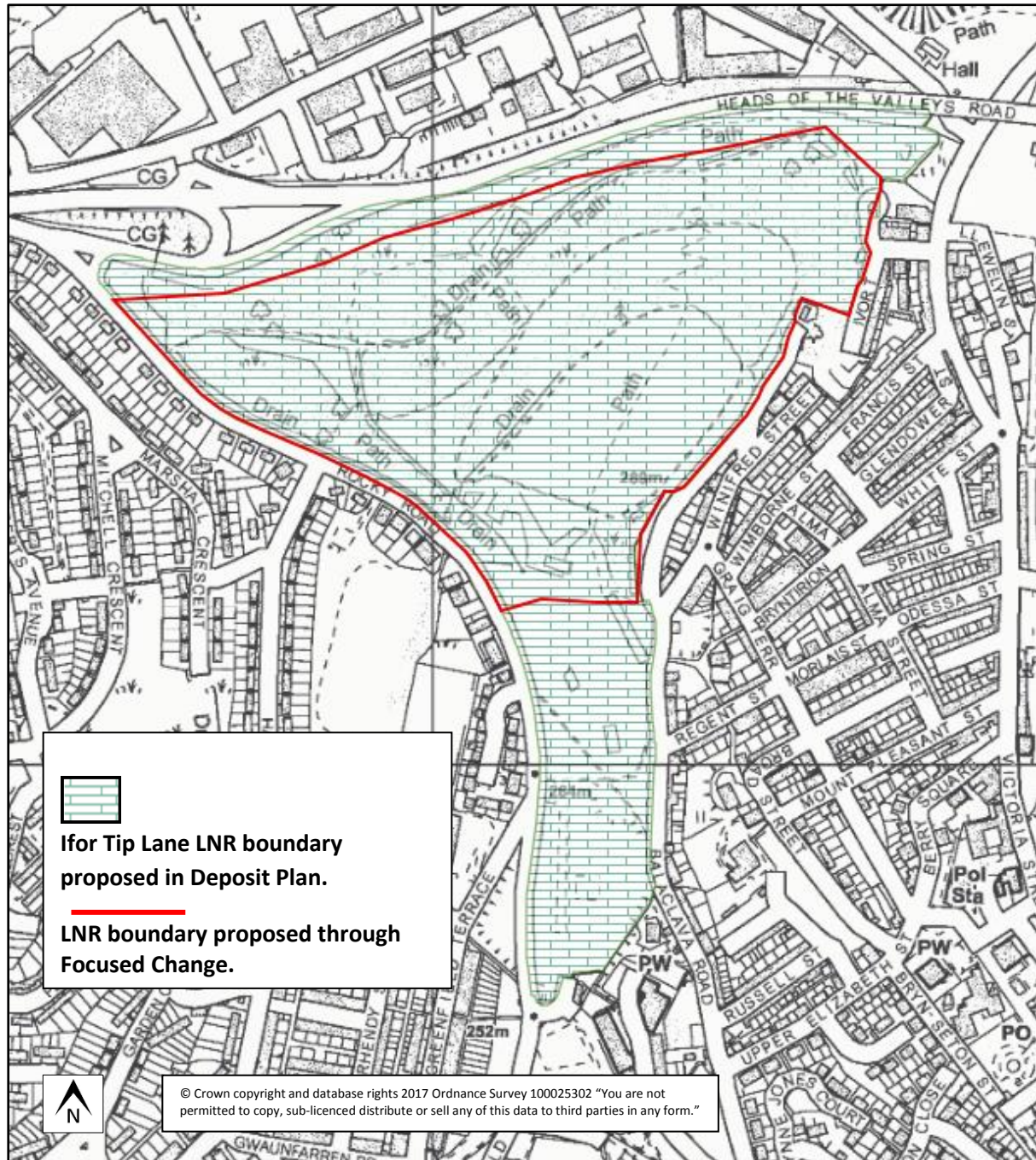
1. Bryngolau LNR, Merthyr Vale
2. Cefn Glas LNR, Treharris
3. Cwm Blacs LNR, Town
4. Cwm Taf and Cefn Coed Tip LNR, Park
5. Cwm Taf Fechan (~~existing~~) LNR, Vaynor
6. Goitre Lane LNR, Penydarren
7. Ifor Tip LNR, Dowlais
8. Newlands Park LNR, Penydarren, Dowlais and Town
9. Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog LNR, Bedlinog
10. Pentrebach/Nant-yr-Odin Tip LNR, Plymouth
11. Scwrfa (Gellideg Fields) & Cwm Ffrwd Woodland LNR, Cyfarthfa
12. Graig LNR, Gurnos.

- 11.2 Secondly, it is recommended that the boundary of the Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog proposed LNR should be amended to exclude the sports pitches in order to avoid any potential future conflicts in uses (see Plan 11.6 overleaf).
- 11.3 For consistency and to avoid any potential future conflicts sports pitches, amenity greenspace and play areas are also recommended to be excluded from the Goitre Lane and Ifor Tip proposed LNRs. This will ensure greater land management clarity and reduce confusion (see Plans 11.7 and 11.9).

11.6 Goitre Lane proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Penydarren



11.7. Ifor Tip proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Dowlais



11.9. Old Colliery Site Coed-y-Hendre & Nant Llwynog proposed Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Bedlinog

