



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

HEARING SESSIONS 2 AND 5
PLAN PREPARATION, VISION AND OBJECTIVES
COMMERCIAL, RETAIL, LEISURE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
ACTION POINT 2.1 AND 5.1 – COUNCIL RESPONSE

ACTION POINT 2.1 AND 5.1 RESPONSE

Action Point 2.1

Council to delete the reasoned justification at para 6.5.32 of the LDP (to align with proposed changes to policy SW4 (Settlement Boundaries) set out at page 9 of its written statement for hearing 2).

Action Point 5.1

Council to amend reasoned justification to policy SW4 (settlement boundaries), rather than policy EcW7, to clarify the approach to assessing tourism, leisure and recreation development (and complementary development) outside settlement boundaries.

Council's Response

This statement has been prepared by the Council in response to actions that arose at Hearing Sessions 2 and 5 regarding new leisure, tourism and recreational development in the countryside. Changes have been proposed in order to provide sufficient clarity to policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries and the reasoned justification of policy EcW7: Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Development. The changes seek to clarify the consideration of new leisure, tourism and recreational development in the countryside, including for complementary tourism, leisure and recreation developments. These changes will be included in the Council's Matters Arising Changes Schedule.

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Matters Arising Change

Amend the reasoned justification to policy SW4 as follows:

Settlement Boundaries

Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries

To encourage development within urban areas, support the re-use of previously developed land, and to protect and support the functioning of our rural economy and the countryside, settlement boundaries will be defined as follows:

Primary Growth Area:

- Merthyr Tydfil
- Trefechan

Other Growth Areas:

- Troedyrhiw
- Aberfan and Merthyr Vale
- Quakers Yard, Edwardsville, Treharris and Trelewis
- Bedlinog

Outside defined settlement boundaries, proposals will be regarded as 'countryside development' and will not be permitted unless the development:-

- is for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- is associated with rural enterprises or the winning and working of minerals;
- is for the re-use, adaptation, or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings;
- supports the expansion of an existing business in the countryside;
- is for low impact tourism, recreation, or leisure facilities **or complementary development where the need for a countryside location is fully justified** in accordance with Policy EcW7;
- is for the provision of public utilities, infrastructure or waste management facilities that cannot reasonably be located elsewhere;
- is required for the reclamation or treatment of unstable or contaminated land;
- is for renewable energy in accordance with Policy EcW8;
- is for affordable housing in accordance with Policy SW5;
- or is low impact One Planet Development.

Where 'countryside development' is acceptable in principle, the proposal must also satisfy other relevant plan policies.

6.5.28 Containing development within the urban area promotes sustainably located development which can assimilate with existing services and facilities and also encourages the re-use of previously developed land in accordance with

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Planning Policy Wales¹. To provide 'planning' certainty, the 'Countryside' needs to be clearly and precisely defined. Land values are generally lower in the Countryside which enables the proper functioning of our key rural sectors: agriculture and forestry and provides some protection for the character of our rural areas.

6.5.29 The Plan does not include 'Green Wedge' designations (unlike the 2006-2021 LDP). Strong settlement boundaries are considered a sufficient mechanism to avoid urban coalescence².

6.5.30 Settlement boundaries are generally based on the extent of the built area, apart from where formerly productive agricultural land is severed and made unviable by infrastructure development or where development is allocated as an urban extension. In these instances, the settlement boundary may be drawn beyond the existing extent of urban development.

Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

6.5.31 Whilst recognising the general presumption of protection of the Countryside, we also understand that a working countryside can provide a thriving and diverse local economy where agriculture-related activities are complemented by sustainable tourism and other forms of economic development. **This could include tourism, recreation, leisure facilities or complementary development where the need for the countryside location has been fully justified and it has been demonstrated that the proposal would satisfy all other policy requirements. Complementary tourism, leisure and recreation development could include, for example, visitor accommodation and new access.**

~~6.5.32 Details on what is considered 'low impact tourism' can be found in Policy EeW7.~~

6.5.33³² Proposals for One Planet Development must meet the essential characteristics set out in Technical Advice (TAN) Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, and the One Planet Development Practice Guidance.

6.5.34³³ For planning purposes, land outside any settlement boundary will be regarded as the 'countryside', where development will be carefully managed in accordance with other relevant policies of the LDP and National

¹ Planning Policy Wales Section 4.9 (Edition 9, 2016) **Edition 10, paragraphs 3.37 – 3.44**

² Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Green wedge review background paper 2017

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Development Management Policy and advice supporting sustainable rural communities³.

³ Technical Advice Note 6 – planning for sustainable rural communities.

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Amend paragraph 6.8.54 under LDP policy EcW7 to read as follows:

6.8.54 Tourism, leisure and recreation is vitally important to the economy of Merthyr Tydfil contributing to making it both productive and enterprising. Our location, its environment and distinctive natural and built heritage assets, together with the development of our activity tourism offer and traditional day visits, provide opportunities to build our reputation as a welcoming 365⁴ day visitor destination. The strategy Plan supports the delivery of the Council's 'Destination Management Plan'⁵ by supporting a variety of high quality tourist, leisure and recreation facilities and **complementary leisure, tourism and recreation uses, such as** visitor accommodation **and access where these satisfy the Plan's other policies.**

⁴ "365 tourism" and "365 visitor designations" are terms used to describe attractions and activities for everyday of the year.

⁵ Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Destination Management Plan (2015 - 2018).