



**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough
Council**

**Integrated Sustainability
Appraisal for the Revised
Local Development Plan
Preferred Strategy**

Final report

Prepared by LUC

January 2024

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal for the Revised Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy

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Contents

Chapter 1		Potential Key Sites	70
Introduction	1	Strategic Policies	72
The Plan Area	1	Recommendations	80
The Revised Local Development Plan	2		
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment	2	Chapter 6	82
Habitats Regulations Assessment	4	Monitoring	
Structure of this ISA Report	5		
		Chapter 7	86
Chapter 2		Conclusions	
Methodology	7	Effects expected in relation to the ISA objectives	86
SA Stage A: Scoping	9	Equalities Impact Assessment	87
SA Stage B: Developing and Refining Options and Assessing Effects	14	Effects relating to Welsh language	87
SA Stage C: Preparing the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report	15	Effects relating to WBFGA	87
SA Stage D: Consultation on the Revised LDP and the ISA Report	15	Next Steps	88
SA Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the Revised LDP	15		
Appraisal Methodology	15	Appendix A	A-1
Difficulties and Data Limitations	17	ISA Screening	
		SA/SEA	A-1
Chapter 3		Health Impact Assessment	A-1
Sustainability Context	18	Equalities Impact Assessment	A-2
Relationship with Other Relevant Plans or Programmes	18	The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WBFGA) 2015	A-3
Baseline Information	24	Welsh Language Impact Assessment	A-4
Key Sustainability Issues	25	Environment (Wales) Act	A-4
Chapter 4		Appendix B	B-1
ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options	29	Summary of ISA Scoping Consultation Responses	
ISA of the growth options	29		
Likely sustainability effects of the spatial options	42	Appendix C	C-1
		Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes	
Chapter 5			
ISA Findings for the Preferred Strategy	67	Appendix D	D-1
Vision	67	Baseline Information	
The Revised LDP Preferred Strategy	68	Environmental Baseline Information	D-1
		Social Baseline Information	D-11
		Economic Baseline Information	D-16

Contents

Appendix E	
Candidate Site Assessment Criteria	E-1

Appendix F	
Equalities Impact Assessment	F-1

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) commissioned LUC in May 2022 to carry out Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Revised Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Local Development Plan (LDP) 2022-2037. As recommended in the Development Plans Manual¹, the SA/SEA also incorporates other assessments such as Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Welsh language assessment, as well as addressing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Section 6). The process is therefore referred to as an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

1.2 The adopted RCT LDP (March 2011) was subject to SA/SEA throughout its preparation and that work is being drawn on where appropriate during the ISA of the Revised LDP.

1.3 This report relates to the ISA of the Preferred Strategy (January 2024).

The Plan Area

1.4 RCT is the third most populous unitary authority in Wales after Cardiff and Swansea, with a population of approximately 237,700 people². It covers 424km² in the centre of the South Wales coalfield, between the fringes of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to the south and the Brecon Beacons to the north, as shown in **Figure 1.1** at the end of this chapter.

1.5 The northern part of RCT lies within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (formerly known as the Brecon Beacons National Park), with planning in that area falling within the remit of the National Park Authority. There are seven other neighbouring local authorities: Powys to the north, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend to the west, The Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff to the south and Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil to the east. The adopted LDP identified that the Principal Settlements within RCT are Aberdare, Llantrisant/Talbot Green and Pontypridd.

1.6 Key strategic routes within RCT include the M4 in the south, the A470 running from south to north in the east of the County Borough, the A465 which crosses the north of the County Borough between Neath Port Talbot to the west and

¹ Welsh Government (March 2020) Development Plans Manual (Edition 3).

² Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021.

Merthyr Tydfil to the east, and the A4119 which runs north to Tonypany from the M4 in the south.

The Revised Local Development Plan

1.7 RCTCBC adopted its current LDP in March 2011, which set out the planning strategy for the County Borough (excluding the National Park) up to 2021. The Council is now working on the revision of the LDP, following the preparation of a Review Report on the adopted LDP in November 2019. The Council is following the full revision procedure as set out in the LDP Regulations³ and the Development Plan Manual.

1.8 In September 2020, the Council began to prepare an initial Revision of the LDP which would have been for the Plan Period 2020 – 2030. It was decided in March 2022 to cease all work on this Revised LDP and to begin work on a new Revised LDP for the Plan Period 2022 – 2037. The Delivery Agreement for the Revised LDP 2022-2037 was formally approved by Welsh Government in April 2022.

1.9 The Revised LDP will include a Vision and Objectives for the plan area, an overall strategy for development within RCT, site allocations for different types of development including housing and employment, and development-management style policies for managing applications that come forward. As with the adopted LDP, the Revised LDP will not cover the parts of RCT that lie within the National Park.

Outline of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy

1.10 The Preferred Strategy consultation document (January 2024) introduces the preparation of the Revised LDP and presents background information about the policy context and evidence base and trends and issues affecting the plan area. It then presents an overall Vision for RCT, which is supported by 18 objectives. These broadly align with the ISA objectives (explained further in **Chapter 2**).

1.11 Section 5 of the Preferred Strategy document presents the settlement hierarchy, while Section 6 presents the growth options and Section 7 presents the spatial options that have been considered for RCT. The Preferred Strategy is then presented in Section 8, supported by the key diagram. The final part of the Preferred Strategy document presents the following nine strategic policies for RCT:

- SP1: Climate Change and Carbon
- SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- SP3: Flood Risk Management
- SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

- SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space
- SP6: Housing
- SP7: Employment Land and the Economy
- SP8: Settlement Centres
- SP9: Tourism

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.12 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 62(6)), SA is mandatory for LDPs. It is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), transposed into Welsh law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Revised RCT LDP to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

1.13 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as recommended in the Development Plans Manual) whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken in RCT. From here on, the term ‘SA’ (or ISA, as an integrated process is being undertaken in this case) should therefore be taken to mean ‘SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Regulations’.

1.14 The SA process comprises a number of stages, as shown in **Figure 1.2** below.

Figure 1.2: Main stages of Sustainability Appraisal

- Stage A:** Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
- Stage B:** Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
- Stage C:** Preparing the SA Report.
- Stage D:** Consulting on the Plan and the SA report.
- Stage E:** Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan.

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.15 The SEA Directive was transposed into Welsh law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and

³ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005.

Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the 'SEA Regulations'). The SEA Regulations remain in force post-Brexit and it is a legal requirement for the Revised LDP to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

1.16 Table 1.1 below signposts the relevant sections of this report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements. This table will be included in the ISA Report at each stage of plan making to show how the SEA Regulations requirements have been met through the ISA process.

Table 1.1: Requirements of the SEA Regulations (Wales) and where these have been met

SEA Regulations (Wales) requirements	Where covered in this report
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated (Reg. 12). The information to be given is (Schedule 2):	
a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship (if any) with other relevant plans and programmes.	Chapters 1 and 3 and Appendix C.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	Chapter 3 and Appendix D.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Chapter 3 and Appendix D.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.	Chapter 3 and Appendix D.
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	Chapter 3 and Appendix C.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues including - biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Chapter 5.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Chapter 5.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information.	Chapter 2.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Regulation 17.	Chapter 6.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the ISA process.
The report must include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 as may reasonably be required, taking account of - current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, the status of the plan or programme in the decision-making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment (Reg. 12(3)).	The Environmental Reports prepared at each stage of plan making will adhere to this requirement.
Consultation requirements	

SEA Regulations (Wales) requirements	Where covered in this report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority must consult the consultation bodies (Reg. 12(5)). 	<p>Consultation with the statutory bodies on the ISA Scoping Report took place between July and September 2022. The final version of the Scoping Report (December 2022) incorporates changes arising from the consultation (see Appendix B).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Reg. 13). 	<p>This ISA report is being published alongside the Preferred Strategy for consultation between January and March 2024.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Reg. 14). 	<p>N/A</p>
Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Reg. 16)	
<p>Provision of information on the decision:</p> <p>When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Reg. 14 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the plan or programme as adopted; a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report, the opinions expressed and the results of consultations entered into have been taken into account, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and the measures decided concerning monitoring. 	<p>Requirement will be met at a later stage in the ISA process.</p>
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Reg. 17).</p>	<p>Requirement will be met at a later stage in the ISA process. Chapter 6 sets out proposed monitoring indicators.</p>
<p>Quality assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.</p>	<p>The Environmental Reports prepared at each stage of plan making will adhere to this requirement.</p>

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.17 Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land-use plans, including LDPs, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in 2007⁴. The currently applicable version is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017⁵ (as amended). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of the plan against the conservation

objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.

1.18 The HRA for the Revised RCT LDP is being undertaken and reported on separately to the ISA, as recommended by the Development Plans Manual. However, the findings will be taken into account in the ISA where relevant (for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of the Revised LDP on biodiversity).

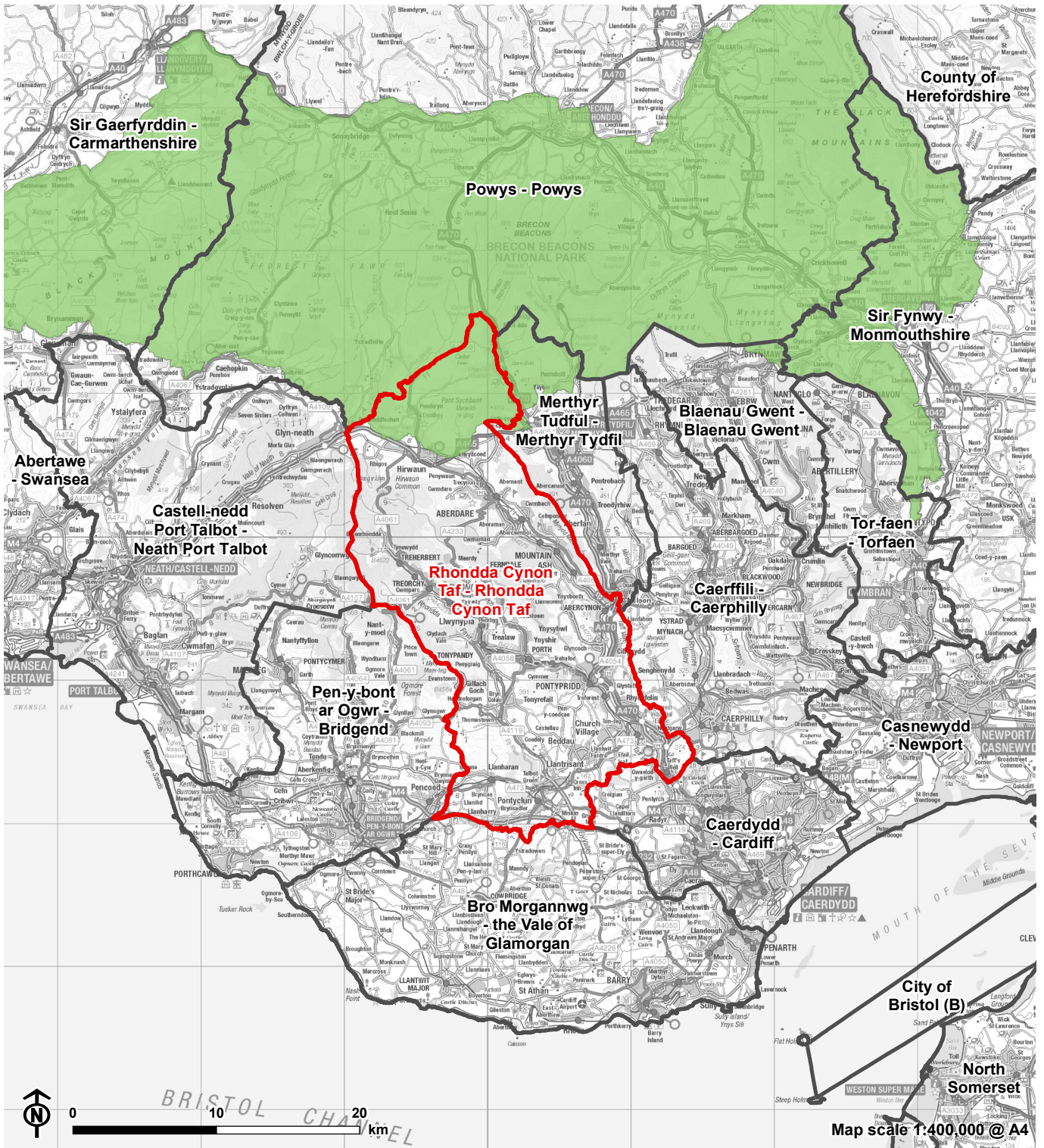
⁴ The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (2007) SI No. 2007/1843. TSO (The Stationery Office), London.

⁵ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (2017) SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London.

Structure of this ISA Report

1.19 This chapter has described the background to the revision of the RCT LDP and the requirement to undertake ISA. The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Methodology** describes the approach that is being taken to the ISA of the Revised LDP.
- **Chapter 3: Sustainability Context** describes the relationship between the Revised LDP and other relevant plans, policies and programmes; summarises the social, economic and environmental characteristics of RCT, and identifies the key sustainability issues it faces.
- **Chapter 4: ISA Findings for the Strategic Options** presents the ISA findings for the strategic options that have been considered for the Revised LDP to date.
- **Chapter 5: ISA Findings for the Preferred Strategy** presents the ISA findings for the current consultation document.
- **Chapter 6: Monitoring** describes suggested indicators for monitoring the potential sustainability effects of the Revised LDP.
- **Chapter 7: Conclusions** summarises the conclusions of the ISA of the Preferred Strategy and describes the next steps to be undertaken in the ISA of the Revised LDP.
- **Appendix A: Screening** describes how the Revised LDP has been screened against the requirements for SEA and other assessment processes.
- **Appendix B: Consultation Comments** presents a record of the consultation comments received in relation to the ISA Scoping Report and explains how they have been addressed.
- **Appendix C: Review of Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes** presents a review of international, national and local plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the ISA.
- **Appendix D: Baseline Information** presents the baseline information about RCT which is informing the ISA.
- **Appendix E: Site Assessment Criteria** presents the criteria that will be used to ensure consistency in the ISA of the Candidate Site options.
- **Appendix F: Equalities Impact Assessment** presents the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the Preferred Strategy.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020

CB:JH EB:Harbich_J LUC Fig1_1_11226_r0_Location_of_RCT_A4P 11/11/2020
Source: OS data

Figure 1.1: Location of Rhondda Cynon Taf

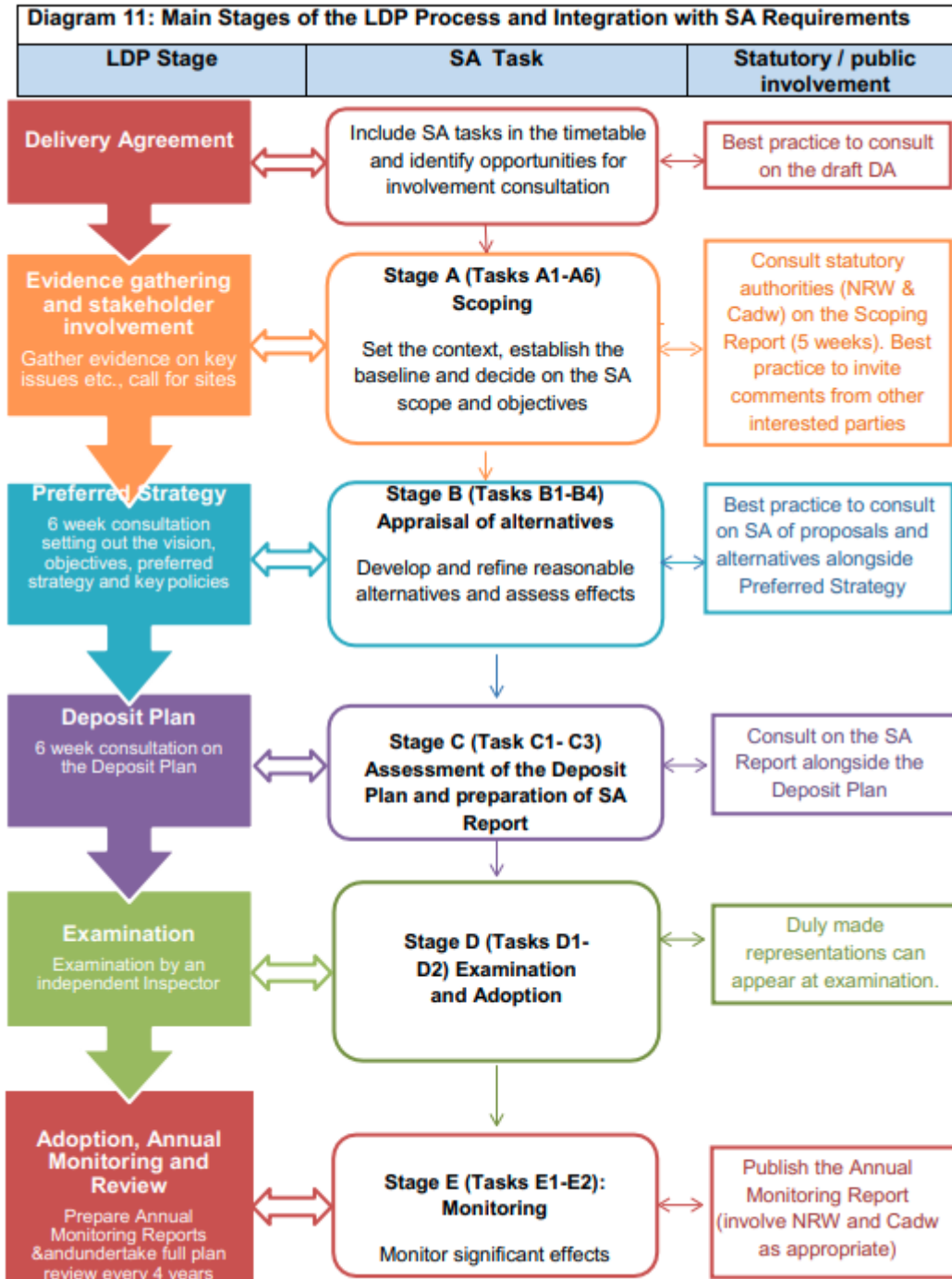
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Neighbouring local authority
- Brecon Beacons National Park

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 In addition to complying with legal requirements, the approach being taken to the ISA of the Revised LDP is based on current good practice and the guidance on ISA set out in the Development Plans Manual. This calls for ISA to be carried out as an integral part of the plan-making process. **Figure 2.1** overleaf is taken from the Development Plans Manual, setting out the main stages of the plan-making process and showing how these correspond to the ISA process.

Figure 2.1: Corresponding stages in plan-making and SA



2.2 The sections below describe the approach that has been taken to the ISA of the Revised LDP to date and provide information on the subsequent stages of the process.

SA Stage A: Scoping

2.3 The Scoping stage of ISA involves understanding the social, economic and environmental baseline for the plan area as well as the sustainability policy context and key sustainability issues and using these to inform the appraisal framework as follows.

Review other relevant Policies, Plans and Programmes to establish policy context

2.4 A LDP is not prepared in isolation; rather it is prepared within the context of other policies, plans and programmes. The SEA Regulations require the Environmental Report to describe the relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes. It should also be consistent with environmental protection legislation and support the attainment of sustainability objectives that have been established at the international, national, and regional/sub-regional levels.

2.5 A review was therefore undertaken of other policies, plans, and programmes at the international, national, regional and sub-regional levels that were considered to be relevant to the scope of the Revised LDP. This review was originally presented in the ISA Scoping Report and was amended as appropriate in response to the consultation comments received. The version that was published in the final ISA Scoping Report (December 2022) has now been updated again as part of the preparation of this ISA Report and the current version of the review is presented in full in **Appendix C** and is summarised in **Chapter 3**.

Collect Baseline Information to establish sustainability context

2.6 Information on existing environmental, social and economic conditions in the plan area provides the baseline against which the plan's effects can be assessed in the SA and monitored during the plan's implementation.

2.7 Baseline information can also be combined with an understanding of drivers of change that are likely to persist regardless of the plan to understand the likely future sustainability conditions in the absence of the plan.

2.8 The SEA Regulations require the Environmental Report to describe relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and how they are likely to evolve without the plan. An understanding of this likely future, together with the assessed effects of the plan itself, allows the ISA to report on

the likely cumulative effects of the plan, which is another requirement of the SEA Regulations.

2.9 The SEA Regulations require an assessment of effects in relation to the following 'SEA topics': biodiversity, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), landscape, and the inter-relationship between these. Baseline information was therefore collected in relation to these SEA topics as well as additional sustainability topics covering broader socio-economic issues such as housing, access to services, crime and safety, education and employment. This reflects the integrated approach that is being taken to the SA and SEA processes and the wider assessment processes that form part of the ISA. The baseline information for RCT, which was originally presented in the ISA Scoping Report for consultation, was amended and expanded where appropriate in response to the consultation comments received. The version published in the final ISA Scoping Report (December 2022) has now been updated as part of the preparation of this ISA Report and the current version of the baseline information is presented in **Appendix D** and is summarised in **Chapter 3**.

Identify Key Sustainability Issues

2.10 The review of baseline information allows for the identification of existing sustainability issues, including problems as required by the SEA Regulations.

2.11 Key sustainability issues facing RCT and an analysis of their likely evolution without the Revised LDP are detailed in **Chapter 3**. The key sustainability issues were originally identified in the ISA Scoping Report and a small number of amendments were made to these in response to consultation comments received.

2.12 The key sustainability issues were reviewed again as part of the preparation of this ISA Report given the evidence base that is emerging as part of the preparation of the Revised LDP. The Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy consultation document identifies key issues, challenges and drivers facing RCT. The review of the key sustainability issues undertaken as part of the preparation of this report ensured that these broadly aligned with what is reported in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy.

Develop the ISA Framework

2.13 The relevant sustainability objectives identified by the review of other policies, plans, and programmes, together with the key sustainability issues facing RCT identified by the collection and review of baseline information, helped to inform the development of a set of sustainability objectives (the 'ISA framework') against which the effects of the Revised LDP would be assessed.

2.14 Development of the ISA framework is not a requirement of the SEA Regulations but is a recognised way in which the likely sustainability effects of a plan can be transparently and consistently described, analysed and compared. The ISA framework comprises a series of sustainability objectives and supporting criteria that are used to guide the appraisal of options and policies within a plan.

2.15 The ISA framework for the Revised LDP is presented below. The ISA objectives reflect the analysis of international, national and local policy objectives, the baseline information and the key sustainability issues identified for RCT. The ISA framework was originally presented in the Scoping Report and a small number of amendments were made to the framework as a result of consultation comments received.

2.16 The LDP objectives, presented in Section 4 of the Preferred Strategy consultation document, are almost entirely

Table 2.1: ISA Framework for the Revised LDP

the same as the ISA objectives, reflecting the relationship between the ISA and plan preparation. However, three additional objectives are included in the LDP, relating to town centres, addressing the impacts of the mining legacy in RCT, and tourism and leisure. In the context of the ISA these issues are considered to be addressed within the scope of other ISA objectives relating to the economy.

2.17 LDP objective 11 also varies slightly from the corresponding ISA objective. The LDP objective has been expanded to address the improvement of soundscapes across RCT. The ISA instead considers potential impacts on soundscapes in RCT through ISA objective 4 as part of the overall consideration of health of the local population. This incorporates a consideration of the potential for noise pollution.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the policy/option/site...?
1. Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk	<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>Contribute to a carbon-neutral community?</p> <p>Reduce flood risk to people, property and maintain integrity of floodplain?</p> <p>Promote the use of SuDS and other flood resilient design?</p> <p>Consider the likely impacts of climate change on all types of infrastructure?</p> <p>Encourage the development of renewables, including micro-generation?</p> <p>Encourage high standards of energy efficiency in all new developments?</p> <p>Promote design which will help to mitigate the effects of climate change (for example through appropriate building orientation)?</p> <p>Steer development away from the floodplain where possible, and prevent increased flood risk elsewhere?</p> <p>Promote design which will support green infrastructure?</p> <p>Help to conserve important carbon stores/sinks in the County Borough to minimise the release of soil carbons (including from undisturbed soils, semi-natural vegetation and peat bogs)?</p>
2. Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs	<p>Deliver good quality housing?</p> <p>Promote a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures?</p> <p>Promote housing that meets the requirements of those with particular needs including older people and people with disabilities?</p> <p>Help meet affordable housing needs to allow local people to remain within their communities?</p> <p>Protect and enhance the existing housing stock including the characteristic terraces?</p>
3. Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living,	<p>Encourage provision of community facilities in accessible locations?</p> <p>Promote access to education for all?</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the policy/option/site...?
working and socialising for all	<p>Consider the needs of specific groups including those with protected characteristics?</p> <p>Plan places with opportunities for active citizenship to promote community engagement?</p> <p>Accommodate meeting places for different cultures?</p> <p>Promote mixed development?</p> <p>Provide equality of access for all?</p> <p>Help to promote design solutions that will help protect communities from crime and reduce the fear of crime?</p>
<p>4. Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.</p>	<p>Promote provision of and access to healthcare facilities?</p> <p>Prevent unacceptable impacts on amenity (such as noise and light pollution)?</p> <p>Provide spaces such as allotments and community gardens which will promote healthy eating?</p> <p>Protect existing open spaces?</p> <p>Promote provision of facilities for physical recreational activities and play (including for walking and cycling)?</p> <p>Promote the importance of protecting natural play spaces?</p> <p>Improve public access to natural greenspace and/or the countryside?</p> <p>Make provision for personal private outdoor space within new developments?</p> <p>Protect and improve people's mental health?</p> <p>Help to improve overall health levels and reduce health inequalities in RCT?</p> <p>Promote the importance of protecting natural play spaces?</p> <p><i>Please note that the extent to which site options will promote the use of active modes of transport is addressed under SA objective 5 below.</i></p>
<p>5. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport</p>	<p>Provide for alternatives to the private car and improve public transport links?</p> <p>Improve the rail network?</p> <p>Provide for safe and attractive walking and cycling routes?</p> <p>Reduce the need to travel in new developments?</p> <p>Ensure connectivity to high speed broadband?</p> <p>Reduce the need for out commuting for work?</p> <p>Promote the provision of supporting infrastructure for and the use of electric vehicles?</p>
<p>6. Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment</p>	<p>Protect and enhance areas and buildings of historical or cultural importance?</p> <p>Protect and enhance archaeology?</p> <p>Protect and enhance industrial heritage?</p> <p>Promote sustainable access to cultural sites?</p> <p>Ensure high standards of design in all new development?</p> <p>Protect and enhance local character and distinctiveness, while recognising the role of innovation?</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the policy/option/site...?
<p>7. Promote the use of the Welsh language</p>	<p>Promote the use of the Welsh language amongst different groups of people, including in the workplace and in education?</p> <p>Promote the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities?</p> <p>Promote the status of the Welsh language?</p>
<p>8. Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape</p>	<p>Promote the improvement of the landscape where it has been degraded as a legacy of previous industrial use?</p> <p>Protect and enhance designated areas, including the National Park as well as its setting within the plan area and Special Landscape Areas?</p> <p>Protect and enhance historic landscapes?</p> <p>Protect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness?</p> <p>Protect and enhance tranquillity and dark skies?</p> <p>Enhance, protect, or manage the benefits of the valleys' industrial heritage?</p>
<p>9. Protect and enhance biodiversity</p>	<p>Improve the diversity of habitats and species and maintain and enhance populations of species?</p> <p>Enhance the extent of habitats and populations of protected and priority species by seeking the creation, restoration and appropriate management of green networks and linkages?</p> <p>Improve and protect the condition of ecosystems and support the long term management of habitats?</p> <p>Enhance connectivity by maximising opportunities for the creation of functional habitat and ecological networks?</p> <p>Achieve adaptability to change, in particular the effects of climate change?</p> <p>Limit the potential for disruption of natural processes or connectivity?</p> <p>Support the restoration of natural processes which could mitigate or remove other impacts?</p> <p>Enhance and protect connections between people and nature?</p>
<p>10. Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources</p>	<p>Reduce and/or avoid pollution to water environment?</p> <p>Support efficient use of water, including greywater recycling in new developments?</p> <p>Protect quality and quantity of groundwater sources?</p> <p>Prevent new development that will cause drainage problems (including in relation to the proliferation of soil sealing)?</p> <p>Protect the quality and quantity of surface water?</p> <p>Help to ensure adequate levels of sewerage infrastructure and capacity to treat wastewater at sewage treatment works?</p>
<p>11. Protect and enhance air quality</p>	<p>Avoid increasing air pollution and achieve improvements in air quality?</p> <p>Reduce emissions, particularly in and around Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)?</p> <p>Promote policy and development that enables and supports communities in adopting lifestyles and actions that can protect or enhance local air quality?</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the policy/option/site...?
12. Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals	<p>Encourage the re-use of previously developed land and buildings as a priority, where appropriate?</p> <p>Prevent and control pollution to land?</p> <p>Promote the remediation of land contamination?</p> <p>Safeguard mineral resources?</p> <p>Reuse and recycle aggregates on site?</p> <p>Promote higher densities of development (where considered appropriate) to support more efficient use of land resources?</p>
13. Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management	<p>Reduce waste generation?</p> <p>Avoid, reduce, re-use, recycle and recover before disposal to landfill?</p> <p>Further improve on good recycling performance including provision of facilities (domestic and commercial)?</p> <p>Support development of alternatives to landfill, including composting facilities and energy from waste?</p> <p>Promote self-sufficiency in terms of waste management where appropriate?</p>
14. Provide for a sustainable economy	<p>Encourage economic growth, especially in areas of high unemployment and economic inactivity?</p> <p>Encourage appropriate inward and indigenous investment?</p> <p>Support the rural economy?</p> <p>Promote sustainable tourism?</p> <p>Ensure the allocation of land to accommodate the economic needs of the population?</p> <p>Maintain an appropriate land bank of employment sites?</p> <p>Promote the vitality and viability of town centres?</p> <p>Support the achievement of a greener lower carbon economy which can benefit all members of the community?</p>
15. Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities	<p>Maximise employment opportunities within the County Borough?</p> <p>Provide opportunities for a range of skills levels?</p> <p>Provide jobs in accessible locations?</p> <p>Accommodate training facilities to help develop a flexible skills base?</p>

Consult on the Scope and Level of Detail of the ISA

2.18 Public and stakeholder participation is an important element of the ISA and wider plan-making processes. It helps to ensure that the ISA Report is robust and has due regard for all appropriate information that will support the plan in making a contribution to sustainable development.

2.19 The SEA Regulations require the statutory consultation bodies (Natural Resources Wales and Cadw) to be consulted *“when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included”* in the ISA Report. The scope and level of detail of the ISA is governed by the ISA framework. The consultation undertaken on the Scoping Report therefore incorporated consultation with the statutory consultees on the ISA framework. This consultation on the ISA

Scoping Report was undertaken between July and September 2022.

2.20 Appendix B lists the comments that were received on the scope of the ISA during this period of consultation and describes how each one was addressed in the final Scoping Report (December 2022). Those amendments are carried through into the relevant parts of this report.

SA Stage B: Developing and Refining Options and Assessing Effects

2.21 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the ISA can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options being considered for a plan.

2.22 In relation to the ISA report, Part 3 of the SEA Regulations (Wales) 12 (2) requires that:

"The report must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of—

(a) implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme."

2.23 Schedule 2 (8) of the SEA Regulations (Wales) requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of:

"(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with."

2.24 The SEA Regulations (Wales) require that the alternative policies considered for inclusion in a plan that must be subject to ISA are 'reasonable', therefore alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Examples of unreasonable alternatives could include policy options that do not meet the objectives of the plan or national policy.

2.25 The ISA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified by the ISA for each option, such that it is not possible to rank them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national policy will also be taken into account by plan-makers when selecting preferred options for their plan. The following sections outline how the reasonable alternative options for the Revised LDP, which are appraised in this report, have been identified.

Growth Options

2.26 A key part of preparing the Revised LDP is establishing the most suitable level of growth to be delivered. Drawing on a range of evidence sources, RCTCBC has identified four alternative sets of growth scenarios:

- Mid-ranged growth scenarios
- Higher growth scenarios
- Lower growth scenarios
- Employment-led scenarios

2.27 These scenarios have been subject to ISA and the findings are presented in **Chapter 4** of this report.

Spatial Options

2.28 RCTCBC has identified and considered eight alternative spatial approaches for the Revised LDP. These were developed taking into account a range of factors such as national policy including the 'gateway test', local policy within RCT, the performance of the current LDP, the outcomes of the visioning and engagement processes and a wide range of evidence studies and reports. The eight options are:

- Option 1: Continuation of the Current LDP Strategy
- Option 2: Strategic Highway Network considering the Principal Settlements
- Option 3: Town Centre First
- Option 4: Southern Growth Strategy
- Option 5: Metro and Public Transport Nodes
- Option 6: Key Strategic Site in the South
- Option 7: Urban Containment
- Option 8: Local Needs Strategy

2.29 These options were originally appraised by LUC in early 2023 and the findings were provided to RCTCBC in the form of an internal summary note, which was not made publicly available at the time but which is now repeated in **Chapter 4** of this report. This provided the Council with the opportunity to take into account the ISA findings, along with other relevant factors, when developing the Preferred Strategy.

Candidate Site Options

2.30 RCTCBC is in the process of working up its list of Candidate Site options. The list will identify site options for a variety of uses including housing, commercial, tourism etc, with potential for these to be allocated in the Revised LDP. Sites are identified through a range of methods, including:

- Call for Candidate Sites – sites submitted by private landowners and other external agencies.
- RCT land review sites - RCTCBC owned sites.
- Undeveloped existing LDP allocations.
- Sites identified by RCTCBC, including through an overarching Urban Capacity Study.

2.31 These sites will be assessed in line with RCTCBC's Candidate Site Methodology⁶. Stage 1 considers whether sites have fundamental constraints to development/allocation. Sites that progress through Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the assessment will be considered through the ISA. The ISA findings for the Candidate Site options will be presented in the ISA Report for the Deposit LDP.

SA Stage C: Preparing the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report

2.32 This ISA Report describes the process that has been undertaken to date in carrying out the ISA of the Revised LDP. It sets out the ISA findings for the growth options, the strategic options and the Candidate Site options as well as the Preferred Strategy, including the strategic policies. Likely significant effects, both positive and negative, have been presented, taking into account the likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term and permanent and temporary effects where relevant.

2.33 The ISA findings are set out in **Chapters 4 and 5** of this ISA Report, along with recommendations for improvements and clarifications that may help to mitigate negative effects and maximise the benefits of the Revised LDP.

SA Stage D: Consultation on the Revised LDP and the ISA Report

2.34 Information about consultation that has already taken place at earlier stages of plan-making has been provided above. RCTCBC is now inviting comments on the Preferred Strategy. This ISA Report is being published on the Council's website at the same time as the consultation on the Preferred Strategy, so that the two documents can be read in parallel. Consultation comments received on this ISA Report will be taken into account at the next stage of the ISA.

SA Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the Revised LDP

2.35 Draft indicators for monitoring the likely significant social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the Revised LDP are included in **Chapter 6** of this ISA Report and

these will be updated as appropriate during later stages of the ISA.

Appraisal Methodology

2.36 Reasonable alternative options for the Revised LDP have been appraised against the ISA objectives in the ISA framework, with symbols being attributed to each option to indicate its likely effect on each ISA objective as shown in **Figure 2.2**. Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark was added to the relevant symbol (e.g. +? or -?) and the symbol was colour coded in line with the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g. green, yellow, orange, etc.).

2.37 The likely effects of options need to be determined and their significance assessed, which inevitably requires a series of judgments to be made. The appraisal has attempted to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols shown in **Figure 2.2**. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either (++) or (--) has been used to distinguish significant effects from more minor effects (+ or -) this is because the effect of an option or policy on the ISA objective in question is considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

2.38 Mixed effects are only presented where directly opposing effects (i.e. positive and negative) have been identified through the appraisal (e.g. +/-, ++/-, --/+ and ++/--). For some ISA objectives, it is possible that a policy might have a minor positive effect in relation to one aspect of the policy and a significant positive effect in relation to another aspect (giving a score of +/++). However, in these instances, only the most significant score is shown in the appraisal tables. Similarly, if a policy or site option could have a minor and significant negative effect (-/--) for the same ISA objective, only the significant negative score is shown in the appraisal findings. The justification text relating to the appraisal describes where the various elements of the policy being appraised might have potential to result in effects of differing magnitude.

Figure 2.2: Key to symbols and colour coding used in the ISA of the Revised RCT LDP

++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely

⁶ RCTCBC (2022) Revised LDP 2022-2037, Candidate Site Methodology

+/-	Mixed minor or significant effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
?	Likely effect uncertain

Candidate Site Assessment Methodology

2.39 The ISA process for Candidate Sites is being integrated within the wider Candidate Site Assessment process. The ISA framework is being incorporated within the Candidate Site Assessment form and sites have been assessed in relation to each of the ISA objectives. In order to ensure consistency in the appraisal, and to ensure that the Candidate Site Assessment process meets the requirements of the SEA Regulations (Wales), the criteria set out in **Appendix E** will be applied to determine the circumstances under which minor and significant effects, both positive and negative, have been identified. Please note that this iteration of the ISA does not present the findings for the Candidate Sites. As described in **Chapter 2** of this report, sites that progress through Stage 1 to Stage 2 of RCTCBC's Candidate Site Assessment will be considered through the ISA and the ISA findings for the Candidate Sites will be presented in the ISA Report for the Deposit LDP. For transparency, the criteria that will be applied for the Candidate Site Assessment have been included in **Appendix E**.

2.40 The appraisal of the Potential Key Sites set out in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy is presented in **Chapter 5** of this report. This appraisal work takes as its starting point GIS analysis based on the criteria set out in **Appendix E**. This allows for the identification of the proximity of each site to sensitive receptors, as well as existing services and facilities. The appraisal also reflects the components of development (including any enhancements to local service provision, transport, renewable energy generation, etc.) that would be delivered at each location, as set out in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy document.

2.41 The criteria in **Appendix E** relate to sites proposed for range of use types⁷. Where distance-based criteria relating to access to services and facilities and infrastructure (e.g. facilities that would benefit health and sustainable transport nodes) are to be used, these are applied based on 'easy

walking distance'. There are a number of pieces of research that give a variety of recommended guidance distances for walking. For example, the Institute of Highways and Transportation found that the average length of a walk journey is one kilometre. The distances used in **Appendix E** also take into account the aim to be consistent with other work carried out by RCTCBC in relation to walking distances.

2.42 The decision aiding questions have been included in **Appendix E** as well as in **Table 2.1** earlier in this chapter, which sets out the ISA framework. The decision aiding questions are of most importance for the appraisal of the policy and spatial strategy options considered for inclusion in the LDP. While the assessment criteria included in the final column of the table in **Appendix E** will be used to ensure consistency for the appraisal of site options, the decision aiding questions have also been included in this table to demonstrate how the site assessment criteria flow from and are in line with these questions. In effect, the site assessment criteria presented in **Appendix E** allow for a consistent appraisal of the site options against the overarching ISA framework (**Table 2.1**) which is to be used to 'test' all elements (policy, site and spatial strategy options) considered for inclusion in the LDP.

⁷ The site assessment criteria include criteria for the assessment of residential, employment, mixed use, retail, tourism and open space sites.

Difficulties and Data Limitations

2.43 The SEA Regulations (Wales), Schedule 2(8) require the Environmental Report to include:

“...a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information.”

2.44 A number of difficulties and limitations arose in the course of the ISA, as follows:

- The site assessment criteria presented in **Appendix E** of this ISA Report include a number of distance-based criteria used to estimate likely effects of the Key Potential Sites appraised in this report. Research by the Institute of Highways and Transportation was used to identify desirable, acceptable and preferred maximum walking distances to various services and facilities. Distances in the appraisal were measured as a straight line distance from the edge of the site option to the features in question – examination of actual distances via the rights of way network was not possible since digital data were not available to indicate the access points of services and facilities or the likely entry and exit points from the site options. In addition, straight line distances do not allow for the consideration of physical barriers that may restrict access to features. Physical barriers could include rivers or motorways/larger A-roads such as the Rhondda River and River Taff and the A465, A470 and M4. Therefore, actual walking distances could be greater.
- Similarly, straight line distances were used to define areas within which varying levels of harm to environmental receptors were assumed to exist. In reality, the risk of harmful effects will sometimes depend on non-linear pathways (such as watercourses for water pollution effects) and will depend on the particular vulnerabilities of specific receptors. Nevertheless, the assumptions used were judged proportionate to the level of detail of a LDP and were considered to provide a consistent basis for assessing then Potential Key Sites.
- Where Potential Key Sites are close to the RCT boundary, the spatial analysis was potentially affected by the fact that some spatial data required for proximity-based assessments were not available for neighbouring districts, or for part of them.
- The level of detail of the appraisal work for the Potential Key Sites was commensurate with the level of detail of the Revised LDP. As such, not every local characteristic could be investigated for each site. For example, in relation to potential effects of the sites on biodiversity assets, it was necessary to base the identified effect on proximity to designated biodiversity sites only. While it is recognised that in some cases sites might be close to high value non-designated assets, the strategic nature of the ISA meant that it was not possible to investigate this potential for each site and the likely effect was based on designated sites only. This approach was considered to be the best way of ensuring consistency and a comparable level of detail in each site appraisal.
- The rate at which emissions from private vehicles will change over the course of the plan period as a result of technological improvements cannot be predicted or realistically factored into judgements about air quality and carbon emissions.
- Some of the data available at the national and county levels are based on the reporting of the 2011 Census. This data allows for comparisons to be made between the County Borough and national performance in relation to number of indicators; however it recognised that data is now relatively old considering the timings of the census. Some initial 2021 Census data has been released recently and reflected in this report, and if more becomes available later in the ISA process it will be used to inform the ISA as appropriate.
- There is a significant data gap in regard to green spaces, especially concerning accessibility. This is in part due to the most recent open space provision assessment data for ‘accessible natural greenspace standards by local authority’, was for the period 2007-2010⁸. To address this gap in data for the appraisal of the Potential Key Sites, the following data sources have been made use of:
 - OS Open Greenspace dataset⁹.
 - NRW datasets relating to open country and common land^{10, 11}.
 - RCTCBC play areas dataset.

⁸ StatsWales (2010) Accessible natural greenspace standards by local authority [online] Available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/State-of-the-Environment/Our-Local-Environment/AccessibleNaturalGreenspaceStandards-by-LocalAuthority>
⁹ Ordnance Survey (2022) OS Open Greenspace [online] Available at: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/products/open-map-greenspace>

¹⁰ Natural Resources Wales (2016) Open Access – Open Country. Available at: https://datamap.gov.wales/layers/inspire-nrw:NRW_OPEN_COUNTRY_2014
¹¹ Natural Resources Wales (2016) Open Access – Registered Common Land. Available at: https://datamap.gov.wales/layers/inspire-nrw:NRW_COMMON_LAND_2014

Chapter 3

Sustainability Context

3.1 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations (Wales) requires that the Environmental Report includes:

- (1) “an outline of the...relationship (if any) with other relevant plans or programmes”; and
- (5) “the environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”

3.2 A description of the Preferred Strategy consultation document was provided in **Chapter 1**. The other reporting requirements are met in this chapter.

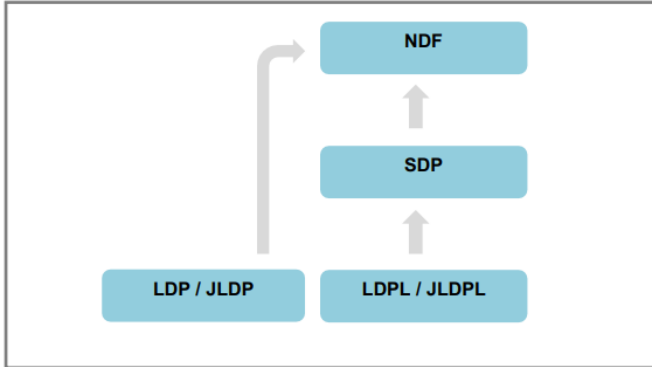
Relationship with Other Relevant Plans or Programmes

3.3 In order to establish a clear scope for the ISA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the Revised RCT LDP 2022-2037. Given the requirements of the SEA Regulations (Wales) set out above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Revised LDP and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.

3.4 This chapter presents the relevant national plans, policies and programmes which sit above the LDP and need to be taken into consideration during preparation of the Revised LDP and the ISA, as well as those plans and programmes which are of relevance to the LDP at the local level. A detailed review of the relevant documents is provided by topic in **Appendix C**. The objectives of these documents have been taken into account when preparing the ISA framework.

3.5 **Figure 3.1** below is taken from the Development Plans Manual and illustrates the hierarchy of conformity of development plans.

Figure 3.1: Hierarchy of General Conformity and Development Plans



3.6 It should be noted that the policy context for the Revised LDP is inherently uncertain as the current situation outlined here is likely to change in response to a number of key factors:

- Brexit - Following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union (EU) on 31st January 2020, it entered a transition period which ended on 31st December 2020. Directly applicable EU law now no longer applies to the UK and the UK is free to repeal EU law that has been transposed into national law; however at present the SEA Regulations remain in force in Wales.
- COVID-19 – The COVID-19 pandemic has led to far-reaching changes to society in Wales and around the world. Which of these changes will continue in the long term is unknown and will depend on a variety of factors. Potential implications for planning and development include Government measures to re-start the economy via support for housebuilding and infrastructure development; changes to permitted development rights; increased remote working and reduced commuting and related congestion and air pollution; increased prioritisation of walking and cycling over public transport; and increasing pressure to ensure satisfactory living standards, including access to green space, are set, and enforced.

3.7 It is also possible that UK and sub-national climate change policy may change as public awareness and prioritisation of the threat of climate change grows. This is illustrated by the increasing number of local authorities that have declared a climate emergency. RCTCBC has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030. This follows the declaration of a climate emergency by Welsh Government in April 2019.

3.8 A nature emergency has also been declared at the national level.

International policy context

3.9 At the international level, there is a wide range of plans and programmes which act to inform and shape national level legislation. Planning policy in Wales at a national and local level (i.e. Planning Policy Wales (PPW)¹² and the Revised LDP) should take account of and be in conformity with the relevant legislation. The sustainability objectives of international plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the Revised LDP and the ISA are set out in **Appendix C**.

National policy context

3.10 There is an extensive range of national policies, plans and programmes that are of relevance to the Revised LDP and the ISA process. A pragmatic and proportionate approach has been taken with regards to identifying key national policies, plans and programmes, focusing on those that are of most relevance. A summary of the main objectives of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) of relevance to the Revised LDP and the ISA is provided below.

3.11 In addition, the main sustainability objectives of other national plans and programmes which are of most relevance to the Revised LDP and the ISA are provided in **Appendix C**. This includes Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 and the emerging Cardiff City Region (South East Wales) Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

Planning Policy Wales

3.12 PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Alongside a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars and policy clarification letters it provides the national planning policy framework for Wales. PPW is underpinned by the concept of 'placemaking', which it defines as a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes and adding social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.

3.13 RCT's Revised LDP should be consistent with the requirements of PPW which states that:

“Up-to-date development plans are the basis of the planning system and set the context for rational and consistent decision making. Plans at all levels of the

¹² Welsh Government (2021) Planning Policy Wales Edition 11.

development plan hierarchy must be prepared in accordance with national planning policies ... Development plans must show how places are expected to change to accommodate development needs over the plan period”

3.14 The overarching nature of PPW means that its implications for the ISA relate to multiple topics which this report seeks to address. The relevance of this policy and its implications for the plan making process and the ISA is summarised in more detail below.

3.15 PPW presents five Key Principles as a guiding vision for the preparation of all development plans. These relate to topics of importance to the ISA as highlighted below:

3.16 The **growth of the economy** in a sustainable manner making use of existing infrastructure and planning for new supporting infrastructure and services is supported through PPW. The document also seeks to ensure the benefits of economic growth can be felt by all.

3.17 Efficient use of resources is also promoted to underpin sustainable development. This is to include the **efficient use of land and other natural resources**. PPW recognises the role the planning system has to play in making development resilient to climate change. It also highlights its role in terms of decarbonising society and developing a circular economy. These principles set out the approach development plans should take in relation to **climate change mitigation** as well as **climate change adaptation**.

3.18 PPW highlights the role that planning has to play in the creation of places that are accessible for all and that support **health and wellbeing**. It is stated that the creation of high-quality places can allow for people to live, work, travel and play in a way that supports good **physical and mental health**. From this, built and natural environments should be planned to promote mental and physical well-being. It should also consider the potential implications of development in terms of **transport**.

3.19 The creation of sustainable communities is to involve the appropriate balance of uses and density, making places where people want to be and interact with others. This will involve the **delivery of good quality/well designed homes, jobs, services, infrastructure and facilities**.

3.20 PPW sets out the need to ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural, historic and cultural assets. This sets out the approach that development plans should take in terms of development and potential impacts in relation to **biodiversity, the historic environment** and

landscape. This includes areas on the register of historic landscapes in Wales.

3.21 Furthermore, negative environmental impacts should be avoided in the wider public interest. This will include the protection of **air quality** and **water quality** as well as limiting the potential for the adverse impacts of **noise pollution**. Development should be delivered in an integrated way so that resources and/or assets are not irreversibly damaged or depleted. PPW also adopts a ‘polluter pays principle’ where pollution cannot be prevented and applies the precautionary principle to ensure cost effective measures to prevent environmental damage.

3.22 From the Key Principles, PPW has developed national sustainable placemaking outcomes which development plans should take forward. These build on the Key Principles to help ensure the planning system can support the delivery of sustainable places.

Other national policies, plans and programmes

3.23 In July 2020, Welsh Government published Building Better Places¹³, which sets out the Government’s planning policy priorities to assist in taking action in the recovery period after the Covid-19 pandemic. It recognises the importance of the planning system in addressing the built and natural environment issues that have arisen from the pandemic. In relation to LDPs, it recognises the importance of having an up-to-date plan in place in order to address current priorities and the role that plans can play in improving health and well-being more generally.

3.24 Future Wales – the National Plan 2040¹⁴ was published in February 2021 by Welsh Government as the national development framework for Wales, replacing the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP). The document is informed by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA) by attempting to meet the demands that development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It recognises the importance of PPW as the principal statement of national planning policy and all policies set out in Future Wales have been cross-referenced against relevant parts of PPW. It includes 11 Outcomes as overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes to set out a statement of where the country is expected to be at the end of the 20 year plan period. Once adopted, SDPs and LDPs will be required to be in conformity with Future Wales.

¹³ Welsh Government (July 2020) Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures – Placemaking and the Covid 19 Recovery.

¹⁴ Welsh Government (2021) Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

3.25 Future Wales sets out the spatial strategy for the country. The plan identifies and connects key national and regional centres, provides a basis for long term infrastructure investment, identifies priorities for the planning system and a framework for the management of natural resources. Included in the spatial strategy are three National Growth Areas (Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys; Swansea Bay and Llanelli; and Wrexham and Deeside) the continued growth and regeneration of which is supported as internationally and nationally significant places. These are complemented by three Regional Growth Areas (The South West, Mid Wales and The North) which are to grow and develop in line with the spatial strategy and offer a variety of public and commercial services at regional scale.

3.26 Future Wales identifies four regions of Wales: The North, Mid Wales, The South West and The South East. This emphasises the important role regional planning is to play in the future of the country. The regional approach is set out as a way to ensure the successful co-ordination and management of strategic development across the regions and to ensure that wider than local issues are tackled collaboratively.

3.27 Numerous other policies, plans and programmes at a national level are relevant to the Revised LDP and the ISA. Unlike PPW and Future Wales, most of the documents address a specific topic area relevant to the ISA. There will be some overlap between ISA topics covered by these plans and programmes, particularly where those documents contain high level or cross cutting objectives. With that in mind, the plans and programmes considered to be of most relevance to the ISA have been grouped by the topics they most directly seek to address, and green boxes below each topic heading summarise the implications of the national PPPs (including the PPW) for the Revised LDP and the ISA.

Climate change adaption and mitigation, energy efficiency and waste minimisation

3.28 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (2021)¹⁵
- Towards Zero Waste – Waste Strategy for Wales (2010)
- Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (2012)
- TAN 21: Waste (2017)
- Welsh Government Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Statutory Guidance (2019)
- Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (2019)
- Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25) (2021)

- Energy Efficiency in Wales: A Strategy for the Next 10 Years 2016-2026 (2017)
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (2021)
- The State of Natural Resources Report (2020)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment 2022
- The South Central Wales Area Statement

Implications for the LDP and ISA: The LDP should consider setting out policies to achieve climate change and adaptation while also encouraging development which would help to minimise carbon emissions. This can be done through siting development allocations in areas where sustainable transport patterns can be best achieved and encouraging development to make use of more sustainable construction methods and sources of energy such as through the pre-assessed areas for wind energy in Future Wales – The National Plan 2040. The role of green infrastructure in adapting to and mitigating climate change should be thoroughly considered during policy development. This includes the drafting of the LDP to contain policies to encourage the incorporation of SuDS as part of this type of provision. Policies should also support the handling of waste in line with the waste hierarchy.

The ISA can test policy options in relation to the contributions they make towards these aims and identify national growth zones. It should also appraise the contribution that individual site options can make to limiting carbon emissions (including through the uptake of more sustainable sources of energy). Sites should also be considered in terms of the impact they will have in terms of promoting climate change adaptation as well as reducing flood risk and the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

Health and well-being

3.29 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- TAN 11: Noise (1997)
- Improving Health and Reducing Inequalities: A Practical Guide to HIA (2004)
- TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)
- Health Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide (2012)
- Well-Being Future Generations Act (2015)

¹⁵ Please note that the revised TAN 15 document, proposes changes the flood zones to 1, 2, 3a and 3b. The coming into force of the new TAN 15 and the associated Flood Map for Planning has been suspended due to a further

consultation on the TAN. The consultation period ran from January 2023 to April 2023. The Flood Map for Planning has no official status until the Welsh Government implements the revised TAN 15.

- Public Health (Wales) Act (2017)
- Independent Review of Affordable Housing (2019)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well being Plan 2023-2028
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment 2022
- The South Central Wales Area Statement

Implications for the LDP and ISA: The LDP needs to consider the need for infrastructure as this has a significant impact on the environment, and it should be prepared to ensure that the population has access to sustainable low carbon infrastructure and services and facilities and that there is sufficient capacity within them to serve the increased population. Where infrastructure is to be delivered, consideration should be given to reducing inequality in the County Borough. This should include healthcare, education and open space with potential for positive implications relating to mental health as well as physical health given the potential to limit social isolation. Development allocations should be located in areas where facilities are most accessible, where issues of overcapacity would be less likely to result. Consideration should be given to the potential for using active modes of travel and the implications that flood risk may have in relation to health and well-being.

The provision of an appropriate level of housing over the plan period will help address issues of disparity in terms of access to decent housing in the plan area. The provision of new housing should be considerate of local needs with regards to housing size, tenure and type, including the needs of Travellers.

Policy options considered for the Revised LDP can be tested through the ISA in relation to the contributions they make towards these aims. The ISA should also appraise the contribution individual site options can make to health and wellbeing. This should be considered through the site's ability to support the delivery of new infrastructure and facilities which might benefit public health, as well as accessibility to existing infrastructure and facilities of this nature. It may be necessary to consider the capacity of existing facilities when considering individual site options. Consideration should also be given to the capacity of sites to deliver new homes, including affordable homes. Policy options should also seek to support the improvement of air quality which can have both direct and indirect impacts on physical and mental health, as well as life expectancy. There is potential for policies in the LDP to help facilitate the supply of healthy local food.

The health impact assessment and equalities impact assessment components of the ISA will be of particular importance to ensuring these issues are thoroughly considered.

Environment (biodiversity/geodiversity, landscape, soils, and green infrastructure)

3.30 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
- The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 – 21 (2020)
- Environment (Wales) Act (2016)
- Natural Resources Policy (2017)
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (2021)
- The State of Natural Resources Report (2020)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment 2022
- The South Central Wales Area Statement

Implications for the LDP and SA: The LDP should limit the potential for adverse impacts on biodiversity sites. As part of this consideration, decision making should reflect on potential impacts on the wider ecological network and the contribution sites make to the resilience of ecosystems. Planning Policy Wales 11 states that *“development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity”*.

Important landscapes, including the setting for the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park should be protected. The plan should protect high value agricultural soils from development and encourage the re-use of brownfield land where appropriate. Policies and site allocations can be used to direct development to less sensitive locations and promote green/blue infrastructure to support habitat connectivity.

The plan should also take into account non-designated landscapes which are particularly sensitive to development and non-designated habitats which form part of wider ecological network. The plan also presents opportunities to promote the achievement of biodiversity gains.

It will be role of the ISA to test the policy options in terms of the effect they will have on green infrastructure (including biodiversity/geodiversity sites), habitats, species, and on valued landscapes. The effects of these options in relation to promoting the development of brownfield land and limiting the loss of valuable agricultural soils should also be appraised. Site options should be considered in these terms also, making use of the findings of the HRA and green infrastructure assessment work where appropriate.

Historic environment and culture

3.31 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011)
- Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers (2017)
- TAN 24: The Historic Environment (2017)
- TAN 20: Planning and The Welsh Language (2017)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment 2022
- The South Central Wales Area Statement

Implications for the LDP and SA: The potential impact of new development on the historic environment, including local character as well as designated and non-designated heritage assets and their respective settings should inform the preparation of the LDP. Particular regard may be given to protecting heritage assets which have been identified as being 'at risk' (both at the national and local level). Policies should be included to address these issues and site options should be considered with regard to the potential for related issues. The preparation of the LDP should also have regard to Welsh language and consider the areas in which it is more widely spoken, also seeking to increase its use.

The ISA should appraise both policy and site options in terms of the potential for effects on the historic environment. It should identify those locations at which development would have the greatest potential to adversely impact the historic environment, as informed by any heritage impact assessment work that is undertaken to inform the LDP.

The ISA, through the objective addressing Welsh language impact assessment, should also appraise all elements of the LDP in terms of the potential impacts on Welsh language. This should consider the support of the plan for existing and new speakers of the language as well associated cultural impacts the plan may have.

Natural Resources including air quality and water quality

3.32 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- MTAN 1: Aggregates (2004)
- MTAN 2: Coal (2009)
- Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations (2010)
- Air Quality (Wales) Regulations (2000)
- Water Strategy for Wales (2015)
- Natural Resources Policy (2017)
- Clean Air Strategy 2019

- Clean Air Plan for Wales (2020)
- Clean Air (Wales) Bill (2021)
- FGW National Indicator No.4 (levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air)
- Tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Wales: Welsh Government supplemental plan to the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations 2017 (2018)
- The State of Natural Resources Report (2020)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment 2022
- The South Central Wales Area Statement

Implications for the LDP and ISA: The LDP should consider setting out policies to promote the efficient use of water and limit all types of pollution including water and air pollution. It should also seek to limit pressure on the wastewater treatment (WwT) infrastructure and water supply where it is established that this is an issue. The allocation of sites for development should take account of areas which have highest sensitivity in relation to these issues, including Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and AQMAs. To limit the potential for air quality issues to be intensified as development is delivered over the plan period, the LDP should also factor in the contribution specific site options can make to achieving modal shift and limiting the need for residents to travel. Air quality can have both direct and indirect effects on physical and mental health, and healthy life expectancy.

The contribution that policy options can make to achieving these aims can be tested through the ISA. Individual site options can be considered in relation to particular sensitivities of the WwT infrastructure and other identified areas (such as SPZs and AQMAs).

Economic growth

3.33 The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- TAN 19: Telecommunications (2002)
- Wales Rural Development Plan (2014-2020)
- TAN 23: Economic Development (2014)
- TAN 4: Retailing and Commercial Development (2016)
- Build Back Better: our plan for growth (2021)
-

Implications for the LDP and SA: The LDP should allocate land to support the projected level of economic growth required over the plan period. LDP policies

should be included to help promote sustainable economic and employment growth to benefit all members of the community and reduce disparity within the plan area. This should include support for the infrastructure (including that which supports digital connectivity) required for the economy to function successfully. Local economic growth should be considered in the light of wider economic growth of that promoted in the Valleys area, with Pontypridd/Treforest being identified as a strategic hub for development. Employment sites should be located to enable local people to be able to access the new employment opportunities. Policies may also seek to promote the viability of town centre areas in RCT.

The ISA should test individual site and policy options in relation to the contribution they can make to achieving these aims. Employment site options should be appraised in terms of the contribution they can make to meeting the employment land requirements of the County Borough as well as the access that residents would have to the employment opportunities delivered.

Transport

- TAN 18: Transport (2007)
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)
- Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021
- Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)

Implications for the LDP and SA: The potential for reducing the need to travel, limiting congestion and associated benefits for air quality and climate change as well as public health should inform the preparation of the policies for the LDP and its site allocations. The LDP can also be supportive of more sustainable modes of transport including active travel. This may include support for the infrastructure necessary for cycling and electric vehicles/e-bikes. Furthermore, the selection of site options for development should be informed by issues such as the potential for access to new and existing public transport nodes and active transport routes and specific highways capacity issues. The selection of individual site options should also be informed by their proximity to essential services and facilities which is likely to reduce the need for residents to regularly travel long distances.

The ISA should be used to test policy and site options in terms of the contribution they can make to making transport choices more sustainable in the County Borough. As well as testing site options in terms of limiting the need to travel within RCT, policy options should be tested with regard the contribution they make

to the uptake of more sustainable transport options, such as walking and cycling and public transport.

Sub-national policy context

3.34 Below the national level there are further plans and programmes which are of relevance for the Revised LDP and the ISA process.

3.35 This includes the emerging Cardiff City Region (South East Wales) SDP and the South Central Area Statement. In addition to covering RCT, the SDP will cover the council areas of Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan. This will exclude any areas within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Work on the SDP has not formally started yet, however, PPW clarifies that LDPs must be in general conformity with Future Wales and relevant SDPs.

3.36 Most plans and programmes which sit below the national level are at the County Borough level. Details of those plans and programmes are provided in **Appendix C**.

Baseline Information

3.37 Baseline information provides the context for assessing the sustainability of proposals in the Revised LDP and it provides the basis for identifying trends, predicting the likely effects of the plan and monitoring its outcomes. The requirements for baseline data vary widely, but it must be relevant to environmental, social and economic issues, be sensitive to change and should ideally relate to records which are sufficient to identify trends.

3.38 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations (Wales) requires data to be gathered on biodiversity, population, human health, flora, fauna, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors. As an integrated SA and SEA is being carried out as part of a wider ISA process, baseline information relating to other sustainability topics has also been included; for example information about housing, education, deprivation, Welsh language, transport, energy, waste and economic growth.

3.39 The collection and interpretation of baseline information is a valuable way in which we can gain an understanding and strategic overview of what kind of place RCT is. Given the breadth of topics covered, it reflects on the current state of the environment, the economy, societal issues and those characteristics which are most likely to be affected by the plan. This understanding allows us to not only consider the likely effects and impacts of the Revised LDP but also how it can make a positive contribution towards the overall quality of human life and social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

3.40 Baseline information for RCT is presented in **Appendix D**. The data referred to have been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, in order to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects. The baseline information will be reviewed and updated at each stage of the ISA for the Revised LDP in order to reflect the most up-to-date evidence available.

3.41 A number of maps have been prepared to illustrate the baseline information, as referenced throughout **Appendix D**. The maps can be found at the end of **Appendix D**.

Key Sustainability Issues

3.42 Analysis of the baseline information has enabled a set of key sustainability issues facing RCT to be identified. Identification of the key sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the Revised LDP is not implemented helps to meet the requirements of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations (Wales) to provide information on:

“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme; and any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme.”

3.43 The key sustainability issues that were identified in the SA for the adopted LDP have been reviewed and revised in light of the updated baseline information. Revisions were also made to ensure that the key issues are in fact key sustainability issues or problems, and not observations of positive sustainability trends, and to reflect the consultation responses received in relation to the ISA Scoping Report. The updated set of key sustainability issues for RCT is presented in **Table 4.1** overleaf.

3.44 It is also a requirement of the SEA Regulations (Wales) that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area (in this case RCT) if the Revised LDP was not to be implemented. This analysis is also presented in **Table 3.1** in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

3.45 The information in **Table 3.1** shows that, in general, the current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting RCT would be less well addressed without the implementation of the Revised LDP, although the policies in the adopted LDP (2011) as well as national policy set out in PPW and Future Wales (as detailed

earlier in this chapter) would still go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the Revised LDP offers opportunities to directly affect existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects national policy.

3.46 There has been some uncertainty amongst Welsh LPAs about the weight that policies in an adopted LDP carry once the end date of the plan is reached (in RCT this was in 2021). Welsh Government clarified in September 2020¹⁶ that plans adopted prior to January 2016 will remain the LDP for determining planning applications until replaced by a further LDP. Therefore, **Table 3.1** reflects an assumption that the policies in the adopted LDP remain applicable beyond 2021 in the absence of the Revised LDP.

¹⁶ Letter from Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government to local authorities, dated 24th September 2020.

Table 3.1: Key Sustainability Issues for RCT and their likely evolution without the Revised LDP

Key Sustainability Issues	Likely Evolution without the Revised LDP
High levels of carbon dioxide emissions from transport.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy CS8 – Transportation, which promotes improvements to walking and cycling provision, and policy AW2 – Sustainable Locations, which requires development proposals to be located in areas which have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options. These adopted policies may address the issue to some extent although they have been in place since 2011, since which time the levels of CO2 emissions have continued to increase. In addition, improving vehicle technology (as well as policies in PPW and other national policy and legislation) may also contribute to reducing emissions, even in the absence of the Revised LDP. However, the Revised LDP offers an opportunity to develop up-to-date locally specific policies to address the issue and to allocate sites for new development in RCT that are located in proximity of sustainable transport links, or that can incorporate the provision of new sustainable transport infrastructure.
The need to protect and enhance designated and undesignated biodiversity features, particularly in light of the nature emergency that has been declared at the national level.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy AW8 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, which seeks to preserve and enhance RCT’s distinctive natural heritage including ecological networks and designated sites. This, and other relevant policies (including in PPW and other national policy and legislation), would continue to apply in the absence of the Revised LDP; however the revision offers the chance to develop up-to-date locally specific policies addressing environmental protection and to direct development in RCT (through appropriate site allocations) to locations where harm to biodiversity will be avoided.
The need to protect and enhance the sensitive landscape, particularly around Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy AW6 – Design and Placemaking, which requires development proposals to protect and enhance the landscape. This, and other relevant policies (including in PPW and other national policy and legislation), would continue to apply in the absence of the Revised LDP; however the revision offers the chance to develop up-to-date locally specific policies addressing landscape protection and to direct development in RCT (through appropriate site allocations) to locations where harm to sensitive landscapes will be avoided. Design policies can also be developed to ensure that new development is appropriately designed to further minimise impacts. Therefore, the issue would not be as well addressed in the absence of the Revised LDP.
Pockets of poor air quality, in particular where numerous AQMAs have been declared, which can have adverse effects on the natural environment and human health. These areas of poor air quality reflect the high volume of traffic that regularly passes through the County Borough.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy CS8 – Transportation, which promotes improvements to walking and cycling provision, and policy AW2 – Sustainable Locations, which requires development proposals to be located in areas which have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options. Policy AW10 - Environmental Protection and Public Health would continue to help limit the potential for harm to health or amenity as a result of developments that might otherwise result in air pollution. These adopted policies may address air quality to some extent by encouraging modal shift and mitigating the potential for air pollution from other sources, although they have been in place since 2011, since which time the trend has continued. In addition, improving vehicle technology and a move away from wood and coal as fuel sources (as well as policies in PPW and other national policy and legislation) may also contribute to reducing emissions from vehicles and other sources, and therefore improving air quality, even in the absence of the Revised LDP. The requirement for the Council to designate AQMAs and to prepare Air Quality Action Plans to help reduce air pollution is also likely to contribute to improved air quality in RCT. However, a ‘business-as-usual’ approach is unlikely to greatly expediate a reduction in air pollution in RCT. It is notable that many of the more deprived areas of the County Borough contain areas of poor air quality. The Revised LDP presents an opportunity to develop up-to-date policies to address the issue and to allocate sites that will direct the associated vehicle movements away from the areas of poor air quality. Policies included in the Revised LDP should be drafted to help reduce air pollution with particular regard for those areas which are most adversely affected.
Recent increases in drug-related crime.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy AW5 – New Development, which requires development proposals to design out the opportunity for crime and anti social behaviour. However, there are no policies in the adopted LDP addressing drug crime specifically and the identified increase in drug-related crime has been experienced since 2018, i.e. within the period of the adopted LDP. Therefore, in the absence of the Revised LDP the trend may be expected to continue although it is difficult to pin point factors outside of the planning system which may also be influencing this trend. The Revised LDP offers an opportunity to include specific and up-to-date policies seeking to address the issue.
Relatively high levels of health-related deprivation in relation to the national average, with more people experiencing bad or very bad health	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy AW2 – Sustainable Locations, which requires development proposals to have good access to key services (which includes GPs) and policy AW10 – Environmental Protection and Public Health, which seeks to prevent development proposals from harming public health e.g. through emissions or amenity

Key Sustainability Issues	Likely Evolution without the Revised LDP
and a smaller proportion experiencing good or very good health.	impacts. However, those policies have been in place since 2011 and public health remains a key issue for the County Borough. Current and future health trends within RCT are expected to be influenced to some degree by the after effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Revised LDP offers an opportunity to develop up-to-date policies relating to public health (including addressing the impacts of the pandemic) and for those policies to be subject to Health Impact Assessment as part of the wider ISA. Therefore, in the absence of the Revised LDP, health deprivation would not be as well addressed.
Poor levels of educational attainment.	Relevant policies from the adopted LDP (2011) would still apply including policy AW4 – Community Infrastructure and Planning Obligations, which states that contributions may be sought via planning obligations for infrastructure including educational facilities. However, the adopted LDP has been in place since 2011 and education remains a key issue for the County Borough. The Revised LDP offers an opportunity to address educational attainment through up-to-date policies and by directing development (through site allocations) to locations that are well-served by educational facilities or where new provision could be made.
A high proportion of terraced housing and the need to achieve a better mix of housing types within new developments, including adaptable homes to meet the needs of older people and people with reduced mobility.	The adopted LDP does not include policies directly seeking to achieve a wider mix of housing types within the County Borough, although PPW does state that new development should include a mix of housing types. While new developments may be more likely to include a range of housing types, in particular detached and semi-detached homes and flats) compared to the characteristic terraces, the Revised LDP offers a chance to develop up-to-date local policies setting out specific requirements relating to the type and mix of housing in RCT including measures for affordable housing. Therefore, in the absence of the Revised LDP, housing mix would not be as well addressed.
Relatively high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity compared to Wales and the rest of the UK, combined with the current cost of living crisis and the likely entry of the UK economy into formal recession.	Economic trends and levels of unemployment are likely to be affected significantly by the expected recession following the coronavirus pandemic with more people likely to become unemployed or economically inactive, and the Revised LDP will only be able to address this to a limited extent. Given the expected recession, it is particularly important that RCT has up-to-date locally specific policies and site allocations relating to the economy and employment development.
Lower levels of Welsh language speaking than the national average.	The adopted LDP does not include a specific policy relating to the Welsh language, which it is stated in the LDP was not considered to be necessary at the time. The preparation of the Revised LDP, which will itself be assessed for its implications on the Welsh language through the ISA, offers an opportunity to revisit this issue and develop local-level policy specifically seeking to protect and encourage the use of the Welsh language.
Decline in manufacturing sector and the need to diversify into other areas including tourism.	As noted above, economic trends are likely to be affected significantly by the recession following the coronavirus pandemic, and the Revised LDP will only be able to address this to a limited extent. Given the expected recession, it is particularly important that RCT has up-to-date policies and relating to the economy, in particular supporting tourism-related development. Therefore, in the absence of the Revised LDP, this issue would not be as well addressed.
There are areas of higher flood risk generally located around the main watercourses in the plan area. This includes areas within some of the main settlements. Climate change is likely to have an adverse effect in relation to the frequency and severity of flooding events, such as those from recent high magnitude storms Ciara and Denis, which significantly impacted RCT. Climate change will also likely have an adverse effect in relation to flooding events from sources of local flooding, such as flooding from surface water, ground water and small rivers, ditches and streams.	Policy AW10 - Environmental Protection and Public Health in the adopted LDP requires development to consider the potential for harm to health and amenity in relation to flood risk in the plan area. The Revised LDP presents an opportunity for new development required over the plan period to be minimised within areas of higher flood risk (with regard for updates to areas of most risk as a result of climate change). Revised policy included should incorporate the requirement for mitigation where areas of flood risk cannot be avoided, such as through the delivery of sustainable urban drainage (as is presently supported through Policy AW6 – Design and Placemaking).
There are a number of waterbodies in the plan that are in poor ecological condition and some that are failing in relation to their chemical status.	Policy AW 8 - Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment in the adopted LDP addresses the protection of ecological networks, the quality of natural resources such as air, water and soil, and the natural drainage of surface water. The Revised LDP presents an opportunity to direct development away from areas within which there is potential to contribute to failure of the

Key Sustainability Issues	Likely Evolution without the Revised LDP
	Water Framework Directive at an identified waterbody. Decisions relating to the locating of new development should be made in light of updated baseline evidence on water quality in RCT.
<p>Limited capacity at some WwTWs in RCT to accommodate new development. New consumptive abstraction regarding the River Taff, from its flow into Cardiff Bay, and tributary river catchments Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach, will only be available at medium to high river flows.</p>	<p>Policy AW 4 – Community Infrastructure and Planning Obligations in the adopted LDP makes provisions for planning obligations to be sought where new infrastructure is required to make proposals acceptable in planning terms. Furthermore, the infrastructure requirements set out for strategic site allocations in the adopted LDP identify the requirement for the sites 'Land at Nant y Wenallt', 'Land East of Trenant' and 'the old Brickworks, old dairy and tipped land rear of Birchwood' to fund necessary upgrades to Cynon WwTW. The Revised LDP presents an opportunity to ensure that new developments support the delivery of required new infrastructure in a timely manner. The plan preparation will take account of the most recent information in terms of the capacity of WwTWs in RCT, including where new development since the adoption of the LDP has resulted in capacity changes.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

4.1 This chapter sets out the findings of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) for the reasonable alternative growth options and spatial strategy options. The development of these options is explained in **Chapter 2**.

ISA of the growth options

4.2 This section presents an appraisal of the reasonable alternative growth options in the order they are included in the Preferred Strategy consultation document.

4.3 The options are grouped as follows.

Mid-ranged growth options

- **Option A:** Welsh Government's 2018 Principal Population Projections scenario – This option is based on the Welsh Government 2018 Principal Population Projections with total housing development of **8,450 dwellings** over the plan period and employment growth of **266 jobs** per year.
- **Option B:** Dwelling-led 5 year scenario – This option is based on RCT's average annual housing completion from 2016/17 to 2020/21 with total housing development of **7,635 dwellings** over the plan period and employment growth of **187 jobs** per year.

Higher growth

- **Option C:** Welsh Government's 2018 High Population Projections scenario – This option is based on the Welsh Government's 2018 High Population Projection with total housing development of **10,815 dwellings** over the plan period and employment growth of **343 jobs** per year.
- **Option D: Population/household projections based on migration patterns of last 5 years** – This option calibrates population/household projections based on migration patterns from 2015/16 to 2019/20¹⁷ with total housing development of **10,230 dwellings** over the plan

¹⁷ Using ONS data for Mid-year Population Estimates.

period and employment growth of **355 jobs** per year.

Low growth

- **Option E: Welsh Government's 2018 Low Population Projections scenario** – This option is based on low assumptions of fertility, mortality and migration, compared to the Welsh Government's 2018 Principal Population Projections with total housing development of **5,295 dwellings** over the plan period and employment growth of **182 jobs** per year.
- **Option F:** Population/household projections based on migration patterns of last 19 years – This option is based on migration assumptions from 2001 to 2020¹⁸ with total housing development of **5,730 dwellings** over the plan period and **92 jobs** per year.

Employment-led scenarios

- **Option G:** Employment-led Oxford Economics scenario – This option is based on a 'policy-off' approach, where population growth is driven by the forecast employment growth trends, without any policy intervention total housing development of **6,705 dwellings** over the plan period and **32 jobs** per year.
- **Option H:** Employment-led policy-on scenario – This option is based on population growth reflecting the adjusted average annual employment growth of an additional 168 jobs per year for RCT, assuming growth primarily in the industrial land use classes. The expected level of growth for this option is total housing development of **8,820 dwellings** over the plan period and **168 jobs** per year.

Approach to the ISA

4.4 Due to the similarities between the housing and jobs figures included in the options within each grouping above, the ISA is unlikely to identify any meaningful differences in the likely effects of those options. Therefore, the ISA includes an appraisal of the high, medium and low growth options collectively.

4.5 Given the approach of grouping the individual options that comprise similar levels of growth, Option G: Employment-led Oxford Economics scenario is considered as part of the low growth grouped option and Option H: Employment-led

policy-on scenario is considered as part of the mid-ranged growth grouped option. Where differences can be drawn out about the likely effects of options that sit within each of the grouped growth options, the ISA describes these.

4.6 **Table 4.1** at the end of this section presents the likely effects of the three groups of growth options on each of the ISA objectives.

4.7 It should be noted that the growth options are considered separately to options for the spatial distribution of development for RCT. Therefore, uncertainty is attached to many of the effects recorded as many effects will depend largely on the location of the development, rather than the overall scale of growth.

4.8 The higher growth option is expected to have more significant effects (both positive and negative) on the ISA objectives, given the larger scale of growth that would occur in RCT. This option is expected to result in significant negative effects in relation to the environmental objectives - **ISA objectives 6: heritage, 8: landscape, 9: biodiversity, 10: water and 12: land resources**. This reflects the likelihood of increased demands for land and other resources to support a higher level of growth and the potential for a wider distribution of development being needed with more development occurring in potential sensitive and presently undisturbed locations. While this option may result in a level of growth that could deliver the critical mass to support new service provision and sustainable transport infrastructure, these types of benefits will be most dependent upon the distribution of development and site selection. As such, delivering high levels of growth is considered likely to increase the number of trips being made regularly in RCT with significant negative effects also recorded in relation to **ISA objectives 1: climate change, 5: transport and 11: air quality**.

4.9 This higher growth option would deliver the highest number of market and affordable homes, thereby contributing greatly to local need as well as increasing the working age population with benefits in relation to local job growth. Therefore, significant positive effects are likely in relation to **ISA objectives 2: housing, 14: economy and 15: employment**. However, some degree of uncertainty is attached to the positive effects recorded in relation to these ISA objectives given that the amount of development required would need far greater delivery than past build rates and expected market demand.

4.10 The low growth option is likely to reduce the potential for significant negative effects relating to the environmental ISA objectives, particularly compared to the higher growth option. This is because the lower growth option will require less land uptake and other resources for development. It also reflects

¹⁸ Ibid.

the more limited increase in homes and businesses in RCT that might otherwise lead to substantial growth in trip numbers, recreation pressures and pollution as well as other human activities. Conversely while this option would be more easily achieved, given the lower expected level of development, it would likely perform less favourably than the high growth option in terms of meeting the housing requirement and supporting job creation in the County Borough.

4.11 Through the mid-ranged growth option an achievable but still ambitious level of housing and job growth could be achieved. While the level of growth set out is lower than the higher growth option, the achievement of the mid-ranged growth option is backed by the most substantial evidence and is considered more realistic and achievable. This option has the potential to achieve many of the benefits of an ambitious, relatively high level of growth and importantly the positive effects identified are considered to be more certain. Furthermore, this option is also likely to avoid as many significant negative effects as the high growth option.

4.12 The potential to balance an achievable level of growth that contributes positively to the local housing need and economic growth, against more modest adverse environmental effects sets the grouped mid-ranged growth option out as the strongest performing option.

Table 4.1: SA Findings for the Growth Options

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
ISA objective 1: Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk				<p>The extent to which the grouped options would result in increased car use, with the associated emissions, is considered separately under ISA objective 5. Therefore, the appraisal against this ISA objective focuses mostly on the effects that each grouped option would have in terms of greenhouse gases associated with construction and once homes and businesses are occupied, as well as flood risk.</p> <p>The areas of highest flood risk in RCT are associated with the Cynon and Taff Rivers, which run north to south through the County Borough. Therefore, development within the floodplains of those rivers, as well as other watercourses, is likely to expose more people and assets to the risk of flooding. Areas of high flood risk have been identified in some of the main settlements including Aberdare and Pontypridd. The grouped options considered through this part of the ISA do not set out a spatial distribution for development and it is noted that avoidance of these areas could be achieved through site selection and there is potential for mitigation through design measures.</p> <p>Grouped options that would result in higher levels of development on greenfield land could have negative effects on flood risk as a result of reducing the extent of permeable surfaces and increasing runoff.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>The level of housing and employment growth to be delivered under this grouped option would result in increased greenhouse gas emissions as new homes and businesses are developed and occupied. There is potential for energy efficiencies to be incorporated, however, this will be most dependent on the design of new development and not the overall level of development. Some greenfield land take is also likely to be required to achieve this mid-ranged option. A minor negative effect is expected for this option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>The increased level of housing and employment growth to be delivered through this grouped option is likely to result in a level of greenhouse gas emissions that is over and above what is expected for the low and mid-ranged scenarios. While the distribution of development is not assumed for any of the grouped options, the higher level of development that would occur through this option is likely to result in higher levels of greenfield land being developed and an increase in impermeable surfaces which is likely to increase the potential for surface water flooding. The higher level of development could also mean more development sites may be required in areas of higher flood risk. A significant negative effect is expected for this option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
				<p>This option would result in the lowest level of development with more modest levels of greenhouse gas emissions expected in association with the growth that would occur. The lower level of development is also likely to reduce the amount of greenfield land take required with less impermeable surfaces being created in the plan area. A minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
<p>ISA objective 2: Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs</p>	++	++?	+/-	<p>The majority of the individual options considered have been devised to deliver a level of housing that would at least match the expected number of households created under each of the options in question. As such, it is expected that most options would deliver the number of homes required to meet the expected demand over the plan period.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>The options in the mid-ranged group would deliver a relatively high number of new homes to meet local needs. The level of housing growth over the plan period for this grouped option is expected to include a proportion of affordable homes in line with planning policy. However, how this is unlikely to achieve the identified need of affordable housing for RCT, as set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment (2022). The level of growth set out through this grouped option is supported by the most substantial evidence and is considered to be the most realistically achievable of the grouped options considered. A significant positive effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>The higher growth grouped option would deliver a higher number of new homes to accord with aspirations of the national growth areas. While this grouped option is set out to increase the working age population and deliver greater numbers of affordable housing and jobs there is uncertainty about whether the number of dwellings required could realistically be delivered over the plan period. The significant positive effect recorded for this grouped option is therefore uncertain.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>As with the mid-ranged and higher grouped option, the low grouped option would meet the expected number of household created for the scenario. This grouped option would be the easiest achievable of the options considered mainly, with potential for growth to be delivered mainly at existing landbank sites and windfall sites and fewer allocations needed. However, this grouped option would be much less ambitious than the other options considered and would be less likely in the longer term to deliver of level of housing that would meet local need for affordable and market housing. A mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
<p>ISA objective 3: Promote vibrant communities, with</p>	+?	+?	+/-?	<p>Many of the aspects of encouraging community engagement and ensuring the needs of a wider range of residents are met falls outside of the influence of the level of growth that is delivered over the plan period. The spatial distribution of development, the specific types of development delivered and the design of these developments have more scope to influence this objective. Therefore, the effects recorded for each grouped growth option are to some extent uncertain.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
opportunities for living, working and socialising for all				<p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>It is expected that the level of growth set out through this grouped option would help to support the viability of existing and the delivery of new services and facilities in RCT. A minor positive effect is therefore expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>Providing for an increased level of housing and employment growth through this grouped option could have greater potential to support new and existing services and facilities in RCT. However, these benefits would be most influenced by the distribution of development and whether it is provided at locations where there are existing services and facilities that would benefit from increased footfall, or it is provided in a manner that would achieve critical mass to support new service provision. There is also some potential for this grouped option to result in some services and facilities in RCT becoming overburdened given the higher level of growth expected. Overall, a potential minor positive effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>The low growth grouped option would provide the lowest level of development and is therefore considered least likely to support existing services and facilities in RCT. Through this less ambitious option, the lower level of growth provided is unlikely to support high levels of new service provision to benefit the community. While this option is considered least likely to result in the overburdening of existing services and facilities, there is potential for adverse effects of this type depending on the exact spatial distribution of development. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 4: Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.	+?	+?	+/-?	<p>RCT performs less favourably than Wales as a whole in terms of health, with a larger proportion of the population experiencing bad or very bad health in addition to a smaller proportion experiencing good or very good health. Within RCT, 22.5% of residents describe their general health as 'not good'. The distribution of development within the County Borough can affect health in a number of ways.</p> <p>The extent to which the various grouped options will support the provision of new and the protection of existing open spaces at which residents can partake in physical activity will be most influenced by the selection of specific sites for development as well as their design. Furthermore, the potential to provide residents with good access to healthcare facilities and to support travel by active modes will be most influenced by the spatial distribution of development over the plan period. The different levels of development provided for over the plan period by the grouped options will support the viability of existing and the delivery of new healthcare facilities to varying degrees and has the potential to lead to overburdening of existing healthcare facilities in some instances. The effects expected for ISA objective 4 are the same as those recorded for ISA objective 3.</p>
ISA objective 5: Reduce the need to	+/-?	-/+?	+/-?	<p>Public transport provision in RCT is provided by a combination of bus and rail services. The bus is the dominant mode of public transport in the County Borough. The area is served by more than 80 operational routes, which include regular cross boundary services to adjacent towns and cities. There is also an extensive rail network with the County Borough being served by 22 stations, although provision is more extensive in the north compared to the south. Train services operate to Cardiff from</p>

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport				<p>Pontypridd, Treherbert and Aberdare and to Cardiff from Bridgend with trains calling at Pontyclun. The forthcoming South Wales Metro will significantly enhance links with Cardiff City. The project includes a new Metro Control Centre in Taff's Well and the relocation of the existing Treforest Estate station.</p> <p>The potential to reduce the need to travel regularly and encourage travel by more sustainable modes will be most influenced by the spatial distribution of development rather than the overall scale of growth. Where residents are close to services and facilities and jobs and sustainable transport nodes, they will be more likely to travel by sustainable modes. The distribution of development also has the potential to result in the creation of critical mass where new sustainable transport services may be supported. None of the grouped options considered address the distribution of development and therefore the effects recorded are partly uncertain.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>The level of growth set out through the mid-ranged grouped option would result increased numbers of journeys being made by car as homes and businesses are occupied. However, the matched level of housing and job growth achieved is likely to support a level of self-containment in RCT, reducing the need for out commuting. This level of growth would also support the viability of sustainable transport in RCT. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>It is likely that as the level of housing and employment development is increased in the plan area the number of journeys made by private vehicle will also increase. This grouped option could support an increase in population that would support the viability of sustainable transport services. The higher number of jobs created would also support an element of self-containment. However, the larger increase in population would result in an overall increase in trip generation, with a proportion of residents still likely to be required to commute outside of RCT for certain job types. Overall, a mixed minor positive and significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>Through the low grouped option, the relatively low level of development would help to limit the number of regular journeys that would result in RCT over the plan period. However, the level of growth is considered less likely to support the long term viability of sustainable transport in RCT, although this would also be influenced by any spatial distribution that would be achieved. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 6: Promote, protect and enhance cultural	-?	--?	-?	<p>RCT has a rich cultural heritage and a wealth of heritage assets across the County Borough, throughout the towns and the more rural areas. These vary in scale from single buildings and monuments to areas of historic parks and gardens. There are 369 listed buildings across RCT, with three being Grade I. Thirty-six are Grade II* listed and 330 are Grade II.</p> <p>All new development has potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly affecting assets and indirectly affecting their setting. The potential for impacts does not correlate with the proximity of development to a heritage asset, however, impacts will be influenced in part by the spatial distribution of development</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
heritage and the built environment				<p>which is not addressed through any of the grouped growth options considered. Furthermore, specific impacts, including the extent to which new development enhances the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of specific proposals. Therefore, there is particular uncertainty attached to the effects identified for each of the grouped growth options in relation to this ISA objective.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>The relatively high level of development set out through the mid-ranged grouped option has the potential to affect the character of RCT as well as the setting of heritage assets in the plan area. There is potential for mitigation to be achieved through the selection of sites where enhancement or the avoidance of harm is possible and also through the design of proposals. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>Delivering a higher number of homes and development to support more jobs over the plan period will require more or larger sites to be developed in RCT. The development of more sites in RCT is likely to increase the potential for development within the more sensitivity areas in terms of heritage assets. Furthermore, where larger sites are developed there is potential for impacts on the setting of heritage assets to be of a greater magnitude. Overall, a significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>By limiting the amount of growth in RCT, it is expected that this grouped option could help reduce the potential for adverse impacts on heritage assets in RCT. This grouped option could reduce the need for development in more sensitive locations. Where development is required to come forward in more sensitive locations, there is greater potential to reduce the site size or development density and achieve more appropriate mitigation measures. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 7: Promote the use of the Welsh language	0	0	0	<p><u>All Options</u></p> <p>Within the South Wales context, RCT generally performs well in terms of Welsh language use. The Census 2021 reported that 12.4% of people aged three years and over in RCT can speak Welsh. This was a small increase on the 12.3% of the population who were reported as being able to speak Welsh in the 2011 Census. It is unclear whether new development in areas with a higher proportion of Welsh language speakers would stimulate higher levels of Welsh language use, or whether the impact of new development in those areas may be to dilute the use of Welsh language. Therefore, it is not possible to draw conclusions about or differentiate between the likely effects of the grouped growth options on this ISA objective. All options are considered to have negligible effects.</p>
ISA objective 8: Protect and enhance	-?	-?	-?	<p>RCT extends from the uplands of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park in the north to the edge of the Vale of Glamorgan. The central feature is the coalfield plateau, which is cut by the Rhondda, Cynon and parts of the Taff and Ely river valleys. The Cynon and Rhondda valleys are generally steep-sided with narrow and mostly built</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
the quality and character of the landscape				<p>up valley floors, and bracken covered, farmed or wooded slopes. South of Pontypridd, the Taff Valley is wider but heavily developed. The southern part of the County Borough has a softer, more lowland landscape of farms, woods, commons, towns and villages. All effects on this ISA objective are considered to be uncertain given that effects will be very strongly influenced by the spatial distribution of development, the specific location of development sites and their design.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p> <p>The relatively high level of development set out through the mid-ranged grouped option has the potential to affect the character of RCT, included its landscape character. Without being provided with the expected spatial distribution of development, it is assumed that some greenfield sites and sites at more sensitive locations in terms of landscape character may need to be developed. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Higher growth options</u></p> <p>Delivering a higher number of homes and development to support more jobs over the plan period will require more or larger sites to be developed in RCT. The development of more sites in RCT is likely to increase the potential for development within the more sensitive areas in terms of landscape character. This may include areas within the National Park or those areas which form part of its setting. Furthermore, where larger sites are developed there is potential for impacts on the landscape character to be of a greater magnitude. Overall, a significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>By delivering a lower amount of growth in RCT, it is expected that this grouped option could help reduce the potential for adverse impacts on sensitive landscapes in RCT. This grouped option could reduce the need for development in more sensitive locations. Where development is required to come forward in more sensitive locations, there is potential to reduce the amount of development or development density so that appropriate mitigation might be incorporated. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 9: Protect and enhance biodiversity	-?	--?	-?	<p>Biodiversity assets are fairly broadly distributed across the County Borough, with Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) covering extensive areas particularly in the north, and a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the south and west in particular. There is a concentration of Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) in the north and very south of RCT, and areas of Ancient Woodland throughout the south, east and west. There are three Special Area of Conservation (SACs) in the north of the County Borough as well as one in the south. Given that effects will depend largely on the location and design of development rather than the overall scale of growth, the effect recorded for all grouped options is uncertain.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
				<p>By providing for a relatively high level of development through this grouped option there is potential for a range of impacts on biodiversity assets. Impacts may result from the development of land associated with designated sites, that which is important for habitat connectivity as well as increased recreational pressures and pollution associated with the occupation of homes and the operation of businesses. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Higher growth options</p> <p>Providing a higher number of new homes and more development to support increased job growth in RCT is likely to increase a range of pressures on biodiversity in the plan area. The increased growth is likely to result in increased amounts of greenfield land take with detrimental impacts on habitat connectivity, as well as increases in pollution associated with development and trips made in RCT. Furthermore, the higher level of development to be achieved is likely to increase the need for development in more sensitive locations. Overall, a significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Low growth options</p> <p>Limiting growth in RCT is likely to reduce the amount of greenfield land take as well as the potential for pollution in the plan area. This grouped option could also reduce the need for development in more sensitive locations. The level of development to be achieved is likely to result in some unavoidable impacts on important biodiversity assets in RCT although there is potential for mitigation which would be supported by policies in the Revised LDP. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
<p>ISA objective 10: Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources</p>	-	--	-	<p>There is one Source Protection Zone (SPZ) within the north of RCT, and another which lies slightly within the RCT boundary in the south west. Wastewater in RCT is presently handled by seven wastewater treatment works (WwTW). The majority of these have capacity to accommodate additional wastewater from new development. The notable exception to this is the Cynon WwTW, which serves the Cynon valley, including Abercynon, Aberdare, Hirwaun and Mountain Ash. Where development occurs within or close to these locations there is potential for drinking water to be contaminated or a need for new wastewater infrastructure or improvements to what currently exists.</p> <p>Mid-ranged growth options</p> <p>The mid-ranged grouped option would result in a relatively high level of development in RCT, resulting increased water consumption. As with all options it is expected that new development would achieve a high standard of water efficiency which would help to mitigate the level of demand. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Higher growth options</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
				<p>Providing additional growth in RCT will result in higher water consumption given the larger increase in local population as well as the increase in local businesses. The higher level of development is likely to increase the potential need to distribute development to areas within or close to the SPZs in RCT as well as areas where capacity issues relating to WwTW have been identified. Overall, a significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p><u>Low growth options</u></p> <p>Limiting the level of development delivered in RCT over the plan period will help to limit any increase in water consumption. This option will also help to limit the need for development in areas where there is increased potential for contamination of drinking water sources (i.e. within SPZs) or in areas within which wastewater treatment infrastructure is already at or close to capacity. Overall, a minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 11: Protect and enhance air quality	+/-?	-/+?	+/-?	<p>The magnitude of effects relating to this ISA objective are expected to be most influenced by the extent to which the grouped options would result in car use, as well as the extent to which they may result in development in or near to one of the AQMAs that have been declared in RCT. AQMAs. RCT presently has sixteen AQMAs which are distributed across the County Borough.</p> <p>As with ISA objective 5: transport, the potential to reduce the need to travel regularly and encourage travel by more sustainable modes will be most influenced by the spatial distribution of development. Where residents are close to services and facilities and jobs and sustainable transport nodes, they will be more likely to travel by sustainable modes. The distribution of development also has the potential to result in the creation of critical mass where new sustainable transport services may be supported. The spatial distribution of development will also influence the potential for development and travel within the AQMAs in RCT. None of the grouped options considered address the distribution of development and therefore the effects recorded are to some extent uncertain.</p> <p>The effects recorded for ISA objective 5: transport are also applicable for ISA objective 11: air quality. All three grouped options would result in increased numbers of journeys within RCT. While a proportion of journeys will be made by sustainable modes and there is noted trend towards electric and less polluting vehicles, this increase will contribute to air pollution in the County Borough. A negative effect is expected for all three options. The greatest increase in emissions is expected for the higher growth grouped option and therefore the negative effect recorded is significant. This option is also expected to result in the greatest potential for development and increased traffic within the AQMAs in RCT, which would likely result in some new residents being subject to particularly poor air quality as well as the intensification of existing air quality issues. Through all three grouped options the matched level of housing delivery and job creation will help to promote self-containment and limit the need to travel and associated air pollution. Therefore, a minor positive effect is recorded for all three options as part of a mixed effect overall.</p>
ISA objective 12: Promote the efficient	+/-?	-/+?	+/-?	<p>The potential to promote the re-use of brownfield land for development over greenfield land will be most influenced by the spatial distribution of development and the selection of specific sites for allocation. Therefore, all effects recorded in relation to this ISA objective are partly uncertain.</p> <p><u>Mid-ranged growth options</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
use of land, soils and minerals				<p>Providing new development to support housing and employment growth and associated infrastructure in the plan area will likely require substantial greenfield land take. As with the other options considered, there will be opportunities to deliver development at brownfield sites, however, the level of development required will mean some greenfield sites will need to be allocated, particularly given that these types of sites are often more viable than brownfield sites in terms of their delivery. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Higher growth options</p> <p>The higher level of development set out through this grouped option is likely to require larger areas of greenfield land to be developed. There is also increased potential for development on higher value agricultural soils in RCT through this option given the larger area that is likely to be developed. Overall, a mixed minor positive and significant negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Low growth options</p> <p>This grouped option is likely to result in less land take to deliver the level of development set out. There is also likely to be reduced potential for loss of higher value agricultural soils. However, the low grouped option is still expected to result in some greenfield land being developed with the number of viable brownfield sites in RCT unlikely to have capacity to deliver the expected level of growth. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
ISA objective 13: Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management	0	0	0	<p>New development as part of all grouped options considered will result in the use raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation. The higher grouped growth option will require the greater use of materials and is likely to result in the generation of more waste than the other options considered. However, the potential to promote the re-use of materials, recycling and improved waste management practices will depend largely on peoples' behaviour and the design of development. This is outside the scope of the three grouped growth options considered and therefore a negligible effect is expected in relation to this ISA objective for all options.</p>
ISA objective 14: Provide for a sustainable economy	+	++?	+/-	<p>Mid-ranged growth options</p> <p>The mid-ranged grouped option would deliver a relatively high level of housing and matched job growth. The level of job growth projected is likely to directly support economic stability in the area. Furthermore, the level of housing growth would support the economic growth in the building sector and associated industries. The level of growth is also likely to support the viability of town centres in RCT, although this is partly dependent upon the specific location of new development. It is noted that Option H: Employment-led policy-on scenario considered under this grouped option, is projected to lead to a decrease in working age population which could have</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Mid-ranged growth options	Higher growth options	Low growth options	Justification
				<p>adverse impacts on local economic growth as a result of a smaller labour force and reduced competitiveness, etc. Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>High growth options</p> <p>Delivering increased levels of housing and job growth in RCT through the high grouped option would result in benefits over and above those described for the mid-ranged grouped option. This grouped option would also do the most to increase the working age population in RCT which will contribute to increased labour force participation and potential for higher levels of productivity. However, there is limited evidence that the high level of development required for this grouped option could be achieved. The benefits for this grouped option therefore have the greatest level of uncertainty attached. Overall, an uncertain significant positive effect is expected for this grouped option.</p> <p>Low growth options</p> <p>Limiting housing and job growth in RCT through this grouped option would do little to support economic growth, including in areas which presently face issues of economic deprivation. While the levels of development set out through this grouped option are likely to be more easily achievable, they would be less likely to support the viability of town centres in RCT and are expected to result in a further decline in the working age population. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for this grouped option.</p>
<p>ISA objective 15: Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities</p>	<p>+?</p>	<p>++?</p>	<p>+/-?</p>	<p>The effects of the growth options on ISA objective 15: employment will depend in part on the extent to which options would provide jobs in accessible locations and deliver residential development close to existing and new job opportunities. The options considered do not address the spatial distribution of development in RCT. Therefore, the effects identified relate to the potential for the grouped options to support economic growth in RCT. The effects recorded mirror those for ISA objective 14: economy. However, the effects for all grouped options are uncertain given that they do not influence the spatial distribution of employment development in RCT.</p>

Likely sustainability effects of the spatial options

4.13 The eight spatial options considered for the Revised LDP are as follows.

- Option 1: Continuation of the current LDP Strategy
- Option 2: Strategic Highway Network considering the Principal Settlements
- Option 3: Town Centre First
- Option 4: Southern Growth Strategy
- Option 5: Metro and Public Transport Nodes
- Option 6: Key Strategic site in the South
- Option 7: Urban Containment
- Option 8: Local Needs Strategy

4.14 Further detail about the options is provided in the Council's Spatial Options Paper (2023), information from which has been used to inform this appraisal.

4.15 **Table 4.2** overleaf presents the likely effects of the eight spatial options on each of the ISA objectives.

4.16 A wide range of positive and negative effects are identified across the ISA objectives. Given the overall scale of development that would be associated with the options (depending to some extent on which growth option is taken forward), it is unsurprising that a number of negative effects, some of which are likely to be significant, are identified in relation to the environmental ISA objectives in particular. However, there is significant uncertainty attached to the likely effects on **ISA objectives 6: heritage, 8: landscape, 9: biodiversity** and **10: water**, given that effects on these objectives will be largely determined by the specific development sites selected and the nature and design of new development. It is also recognised that other policies in the Revised LDP may provide mitigation for the adverse environmental impacts of development.

4.17 Overall, the option which performs most positively against the ISA objectives is Option 5 which seeks to focus development around metro and public transport nodes. This would have significant positive effects associated with facilitating more use of sustainable and active modes of travel and providing access to jobs without being reliant on car use. The reasonably dispersed development that would occur under this option would also have positive effects in terms of stimulating regeneration in different parts of the County Borough.

4.18 Conversely, the options which would focus development more narrowly in the south (Options 4 and 6) perform

relatively poorly, particularly Option 4 which has the most likely significant negative effects of all of the options. Opportunities to stimulate growth and regeneration in other parts of the County Borough would be lost and the poor sustainable transport offer and heavy reliance on car use in the south means that new development in this area may exacerbate issues to do with car use and air pollution. Option 6 performs slightly better than Option 4 as this option provides opportunities to achieve some of the potential cumulative benefits of very concentrated development, in relation to infrastructure delivery and the creation of a more sustainable and self-contained new community.

4.19 The options that focus most development in town centres and urban areas (Options 3 and 7) offer good opportunities for using brownfield land and delivering development close to existing services, facilities and transport links. While those options would fail to support growth and regeneration in more rural areas, they do perform reasonably well overall.

4.20 A key determining factor in which option(s) are taken forward is likely to be the deliverability of each option, particularly in terms of land availability. While brownfield-only development in existing urban areas may perform well in sustainability terms, if the approach cannot deliver the required amount of housing and commercial land, it may not be realistic. Failing to deliver the required jobs and homes would also negatively impact upon peoples' health and wellbeing and may result in higher levels of trip generation as people are forced to live and work further apart. Therefore, a key challenge for the Council will be to balance sustainability aspirations with the realistic deliverability of development under each option, bearing in mind particularly the attractiveness of the southern area to developers compared with the north.

Table 4.2: ISA Findings for the Spatial Strategy Options

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
ISA objective 1: Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk	--	-	+/-	--	--/+	+/-	+	-	<p>New development in any location will generate new demands for energy and, consequently, this will lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions. However, the extent of this is dependent on the proposed overall scale of growth and the design of individual developments and is unlikely to be significantly affected by the overall spatial strategy. The extent to which the options would result in increased car use, with the associated emissions, is considered separately under ISA objective 5. Therefore, the appraisal against this ISA objective focuses primarily on the effects that each option would have on flood risk,</p> <p>The areas of highest flood risk in RCT are associated with the Cynon and Taff Rivers, which run north to south through the County Borough. Therefore, development within the floodplains of those rivers, as well as other watercourses, is likely to expose more people and assets to the risk of flooding, although effects will depend to a large degree on the specific location of development within those broad areas as well as the design. Areas of high flood risk have been identified in some of the main settlements including Aberdare and Pontypridd. In addition, strategy options that would result in higher levels of development on greenfield land could have negative effects on flood risk as a result of reducing the extent of permeable surfaces and increasing runoff.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>This option involves development in both the north and south of the County Borough, primarily focused in the larger settlements where some areas of high flood risk exist. While development in the south is more contained due to the fixed settlement boundaries, and so should involve less greenfield land loss, there may be more greenfield land loss in the north where settlement boundaries are flexible. The allocation of strategic sites could also result in large areas of greenfield land loss. A significant negative effect is therefore likely overall for this option.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>This option would direct development to the corridors of the M4, A470 and A465, which correlate in some places with the areas of highest flood risk in the County Borough, including at Pontypridd, Abercynon and Pontyclun in particular. However, much of the areas around these highways, particularly in the north of RCT, are outside the areas of highest flood risk. A minor negative effect is therefore identified overall.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>This option directs new development to the town centres where possible. Areas of high flood risk have been identified in some of the main settlements and towns in RCT, including Aberdare, Pontypridd and Abercynon, and it is expected that urban intensification in those areas could result in increases flood risk due to surface water run-off, particularly if development resulted in significantly lower areas of greenspace which would otherwise allow for surface water retention. However, focussing development in town centres should maximise opportunities for using brownfield sites and minimise the loss of greenfield land. Overall, a mixed (significant negative and minor positive) effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 4</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>This option focuses most growth in the south of RCT, where there are some notable areas of higher flood risk. The option will mainly involve greenfield land being developed, which will result in the loss of permeable surfaces. A significant negative effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to Option 3 in that the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the areas around the town centres. As such, this option will also result in development where areas of high flood risk have been identified in some of the main settlements and towns in RCT. It is also expected that further urban intensification could result in increases in flood risk in those locations due to higher surface water run-off, particularly if development resulted in significantly lower areas of greenspace which would otherwise allow for surface water retention. Whilst there are some flood defences in some key settlements including Ferndale and Porth, by focussing development around the town centres of RCT, this option runs the risk of constraining development opportunities in these higher risk areas. However, opportunities to develop brownfield land (and therefore minimise the loss of greenfield land) may be higher where more development is focused in the town centres. A mixed (significant negative and minor positive) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>Option 6 would see the allocation of a large key site in the south of the County Borough to accommodate a significant majority of the new development over the plan period. Given the wider flexibility of site choice for development that this option could allow for, there is potential to focus new development at a strategic site with a lower risk of flooding. However, development would involve a single large loss of greenfield land, which could reduce runoff and increase flood risk in the area. A single large site may, however, offer good opportunities for the incorporation of strategic flood risk solutions within the development, including SuDS. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u></p> <p>Option 7 seeks to promote the best use of land in urban areas by minimising the development of environmentally and ecologically sensitive land, and instead bringing vacant buildings back into use, or focussing new development on brownfield land. By reducing the need for new development, particularly on greenfield land, this option may reduce flood risk by preserving permeable land. A minor positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 8</u></p> <p>Given the wider distribution of development that this option would involve, there is potential to distribute new development amongst a wider range of settlements, allowing selection from a wider range of sites, which may help to avoid the development of sites at high risk of flooding. However, it is likely that a larger proportion of development would take place at the larger settlements, some of which are at high risk from flooding (e.g. Aberdare, Pontypridd and Pontyclun). A minor negative effect is therefore likely overall.</p>

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
ISA objective 2: Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs	--	+/-	--	+ +/-	--	+/-	+/-	+/-	<p>Option 1</p> <p>Under Option 1, both strategy areas (north and south) should continue to grow with a reasonably balanced split of development of housing between the north and the south. However, the current approach has to date delivered only half the amount of housing required, with less than half of the overall delivery on allocated housing sites. This demonstrates an unsustainable reliance on windfall sites under the current strategy, which could be expected to continue if this option is taken forward. There has also been significant under delivery of strategic sites. If this strategy were to be continued with, under delivery of housing could continue to be expected and a significant negative effect is likely.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>This option would involve focussing development along the corridors of the M4, A465 and A470, where there is a proven track record of delivery and high levels of demand (particularly around the M4 corridor). The Candidate Sites process has seen the greatest number of sites being promoted in the M4 corridor. It is therefore likely that this option would enable the delivery of sites, including affordable housing in the areas of most need. However, there is also a significant risk that the housing need would not be met as there is a lack of land in some areas. A mixed (minor positive and significant negative) effect is therefore identified overall.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>Option 3 presents fundamental issues with the delivery of the housing required. The Candidate Sites process has shown a distinct lack of sites submitted in Town Centre areas or on the periphery of them. An urban capacity study also demonstrates a lack of large-scale sites available. During the Candidate Sites process the Council looked at its own land available which is also very limited. Therefore, there is a real risk that there would be a lack of land available to deliver this option and a significant negative effect is identified.</p> <p>Option 4</p> <p>This option focuses most growth in the south of the plan area, where there is likely to be a higher chance of delivering housing at the level needed. This is because experiences over the current plan period have demonstrated that the south of RCT is more viable, deliverable and realistic than the north. The south of RCT has the highest market demand, land values, developable and less constrained land and the highest level of viability. There is a proven record of delivery and pressure from the housing industry. This is demonstrated by the number of Candidate Sites that have been put forward in this area in comparison to the north. However, focussing development heavily in the south could mean that housing needs in the north of the County Borough are not met, including the need for affordable housing. A mixed (significant positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p>Option 5</p> <p>This option is similar Option 3, as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the areas around the town centres. As such, the same issues are pertinent including the lack of available sites and the resultant risk to being able to deliver growth. A significant negative effect is again identified.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Option 6</p> <p>As noted above, the southern area of RCT has been proven to be both viable and deliverable with genuine market demand. Delivering one large strategic site would, however, not necessarily achieve the necessary housing over the plan period due to the rate of delivery, although it may offer good opportunities for incorporating affordable housing through planning obligations. It would also deliver housing only in one location and would not meet the specific needs of the northern part of the County Borough. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>There are a high number of empty properties in RCT especially in the north. Due to the empty homes scheme which is run by RCT's housing department there are a number of these being brought back into beneficial use each year, although these cannot be counted towards the housing figure for the County Borough. This option would deliver much needed homes in the northern part of the County Borough, something which it is acknowledged as difficult to do. It would also prioritise the redevelopment of brownfield land for housing and employment. However, by relying on this approach to housing delivery, there is a significant risk that the housing need for RCT would not be met. Many brownfield sites in north of RCT are known to lack viability. This option relies on strong intervention and public sector funding to deliver, which may not be practically achievable. There is also a lack of land within urban areas which means there would be limitations in terms of allowing a higher level of growth. A mixed (minor positive and significant negative) effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>By providing a wider distribution of development across more of the settlements in RCT this option will help to meet the housing needs of different parts of the County Borough and would avoid overburdening particular areas. However, it does not respond to market forces and there is a lack of interest in some settlements; therefore there is uncertainty over how deliverable the option is and whether it would result in the delivery of the required amount of housing. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p>
ISA objective 3: Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all	+	+	++	-	++	+/-?	+/-	++	<p>The effects on some elements of this ISA objective will depend on the exact nature of the development provided and effects are unlikely to be significantly affected by the overall spatial strategy – for example the provision of meeting places, mixed development and accessible and safe design solutions will depend on factors other than the broad distribution of development.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>The split strategy under Option 1 focuses growth around the key settlements, supporting access to and sustaining the viability of services and facilities in those areas. Continuing to promote development in the north of the County Borough as well as the south will support efforts to regenerate the north and provide greater access to services. A minor positive effect is likely overall.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p><u>Option 2</u></p> <p>Option 2 focuses on locating growth around the Strategic Highway Networks of the M4, A470 and A465. These corridors correlate with some of the more built-up areas of the County Borough, where access to existing services and facilities is likely to be reasonably good. New residential development in these locations will also be well-connected to services and facilities in other locations, although connections via the highways network would exclude those without access to a car, as well as being less sustainable. The highways network extends across the south, east and north of the Borough, so new development with associated services and facilities would be quite broadly distributed within RCT. A minor positive effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Option 3 focuses on locating development in and around the Principal Settlements and town centres. New development in these areas would have a good level of access to existing services, facilities, and public transport in close proximity, and any new services and facilities are likely to be accessible for more people. This option may limit the access of people in smaller, more rural settlements throughout the County Borough to services and facilities; however distributing growth across the Principal Settlements should mean that it is reasonably widespread overall. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Focussing growth in the south of RCT would mean that people in that area would benefit from the new services and facilities that may be provided as part of new development; however the north would see only smaller development to meet local needs, which is unlikely to be accompanied by new services and facilities. This could result in existing services coming under increased pressure. The south of the County Borough may see an increase in population such that supporting services and facilities are delivered; however this would be at the detriment to the regeneration of the north and would result in uneven distribution of services and facilities within the County Borough. A minor negative effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to Option 3, as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be areas around the town centres. However, there are additional areas in RCT with good public transport links which are outside of the main towns. This option would accord with national policy and specifically policies in the NDF which seek to locate development in sustainable locations in and around the existing settlements. With this option, there would be a greater level of access to services, facilities, and public transport in close proximity, as well as access for people without a car. While this option will benefit these areas, it may somewhat neglect growth in smaller, more rural settlements throughout the County Borough with limited access to settlements served by public transport. However, overall this strategy would result in relatively evenly spread access to services and facilities and a significant positive effect is likely.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>Establishing a new Key Strategic Site in the south of RCT has the potential for positive effects in the area by increasing the viability of new services and facilities – especially if this results in a new functional cluster. Establishing a large new site in one location would provide opportunities to establish a vibrant and relatively self-contained new community. Whilst having one large site would</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>allow for maximum benefits in terms of planning obligations and would allow for the delivery of necessary infrastructure in that area, a strong reliance on one site would result in a lack of investment and growth in the rest of RCT. As this objective seeks to promote vibrant communities across the entire plan area, this option could have negative effects regarding a lack of development in the north. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u> This option seeks to deliver growth within the current urban area without the need to release new land for development. Focussing new development within existing urban areas would mean that new residents should have good access to existing services and facilities, and any new facilities should be accessible for a large number of existing residents. However, under this option development may be relatively piecemeal and could result in the under delivery of housing. This could mean that the necessary increase in population to justify the provision of new services is not reached in certain places, and existing services and facilities could face additional pressure. There would also not be the same opportunities for establishing vibrant new communities that sometimes occur with the development of larger strategic sites. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified overall.</p> <p><u>Option 8</u> Option 8 would involve proportionate growth at settlements dispersed across the County Borough. While this would result in some development at smaller settlements where access to existing services is less good, it would also increase the population in those areas which may support the viability of new service provision. In addition, there would be proportional development in larger settlements where access to existing services and facilities is good. A significant positive effect is likely overall.</p>
<p>ISA objective 4: Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.</p>	+	+/-	++/-	+/-	++	++/-	+/-	+/-	<p>RCT performs less favourably than Wales as a whole in terms of health, with a larger proportion of the population experiencing bad health. The distribution of development within the County Borough can affect health in a number of ways. The extent to which the options would preserve and deliver open space and other green infrastructure (which can benefit health) would be determined by the specific sites selected for development and their design; therefore the effects of the broad spatial options on this ISA objective will depend largely on the extent they provide access to healthcare facilities and facilitate the use of active modes of travel day to day.</p> <p><u>Option 1</u> The split strategy associated with this option focuses growth around the Principle Settlements and Key Settlements, supporting access to and sustaining the viability of services and facilities including healthcare facilities such as GP surgeries. Locating growth at the key settlements should also maximise opportunities to walk and cycle day to day. Continuing to promote development in the north of the County Borough as well as the south will support efforts to regenerate the north and provide greater access to healthcare and services. A minor positive effect is likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Focusing development along the highways network has the potential to support access to existing healthcare facilities, as the highways corridors correlate with some of the larger settlements in RCT. However, focussing development near to the highways network may encourage and facilitate car use in place of more sustainable and active modes of transport. While walking and cycling may not be a viable alternative to longer journeys on motorways and 'A' roads, using sustainable transport such as buses and trains (which may be less likely under this option) would help to preserve air quality which can benefit health. It is, however, noted that this pattern of development would accord with access to the Metro. Development under this option may result in the loss of greenfield land; however at this strategic level it cannot be known whether there would be any loss of, or provision of new, green infrastructure and open space.</p> <p>Due to the nature of this option, it will be important to carefully consider the proximity of new residential development to the M4, A470 and A465, as residential areas are among the most sensitive to the effects of reduced air quality and noise that is associated with high volumes of road traffic. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Focusing most new development in existing town centres would likely achieve good levels of access for new residents to existing healthcare facilities. Any improvements delivered as part of new development or as a result of an increase in the local population would also be accessible to more existing residents. Opportunities for walking and cycling day to day are likely to be greater where new development is focused centrally, and levels of sustainable transport use may be higher for longer journeys, benefitting levels of noise and air pollution. However, noise levels and access to the countryside and open space may be less good under this option. A mixed (significant positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Focusing new development in the south, particularly around the M4 corridor, should help ensure that most new development has good access to existing healthcare facilities in that area. Any improvements delivered as part of new development or as a result of an increase in the local population would also be accessible to more existing residents in the south. However, opportunities to stimulate the provision of new healthcare facilities in the north would be lost. Immediate proximity to the M4 will be a consideration as exposure to noise and air pollution would be detrimental to the health of new residents. It is also possible that easy access to the M4 could encourage car use, although development in this area would also be accessible to the Metro and use of that in place of car travel would benefit air quality and so public health. Overall, a mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is likely.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to Option 3, as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be areas around the town centres. However, there are additional areas in RCT with good public transport links which are outside of the town centres. Good access to public transport will benefit health by facilitating access to healthcare facilities for all, and by reducing car use which can otherwise have adverse impacts on public health through noise and air pollution as well as reduced levels of activity. Journeys undertaken by public transport may also incorporate some walking or cycling as well as use of a train/bus. A significant positive effect is likely overall.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Option 6</p> <p>Delivering one large site would allow for maximum benefits in terms of planning obligations and would allow for the delivery of necessary infrastructure such as healthcare facilities. This may help to avoid existing facilities becoming overloaded by new development. There may also be good opportunities to masterplan a single large site and achieve good opportunities for walking and cycling, as well as delivering open space and green infrastructure appropriate for active outdoor recreation. However, focusing new development in one area would mean that opportunities to stimulate and regenerate service provision (including healthcare facilities) in other areas are lost. A mixed (significant positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Focusing new development within existing settlements could mean that development is delivered near to existing healthcare facilities, although there is a risk that small-scale and relatively piecemeal development within existing urban areas could increase pressure on existing facilities without delivering new supporting infrastructure such as GP surgeries. Development within the existing urban area may provide good opportunities for walking and cycling day to day as development is likely to be closely located to jobs, services and facilities. It is also possible that urban areas have higher levels of noise and air pollution and offer less good access to the countryside, which could be detrimental to the health of new residents. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified overall.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option would deliver proportional growth at settlements across RCT. This more dispersed development may mean that existing services and facilities, including healthcare facilities, are less likely to become hugely overloaded although there would not be the same critical mass resulting from cumulative development in one area, which could otherwise stimulate the delivery of new facilities so some overloading may occur. However, more dispersed development could also mean that existing healthcare facilities in smaller and more rural settlements continue to be supported. While some development would take place at larger settlements where opportunities for walking and cycling day to day are more likely, there would also be some development in smaller settlements where levels of car use are likely to be high, to the detriment of physical activity. A mixed effect is therefore likely overall.</p>
ISA objective 5: Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport	+	-/+	++	--	++	-/+	++	+/-	<p>Public transport provision in RCT is provided by a combination of bus and rail services. The bus is the dominant mode of public transport in the County Borough. The area is served by more than 80 operational routes, which include regular cross boundary services to adjacent towns and cities. There is also an extensive rail network with the County Borough being served by 22 stations, although provision is more extensive in the north compared to the south. Train services operate to Cardiff from Pontypridd, Treherbert and Aberdare and to Cardiff from Bridgend with trains calling at Pontyclun. The forthcoming South Wales Metro will significantly enhance links with Cardiff City. The project includes a new Metro Control Centre in Taff's Well and the relocation of the existing Treforest Estate station.</p> <p>Option 1</p>

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Concentrating growth at the settlements in the settlement hierarchy has the potential to deliver most housing and employment development in close proximity to the areas with best public transport provision, thereby giving residents greater choice of transport modes and reducing reliance on private vehicles. However, it is still likely that even limited new development in smaller settlements will increase the number of trips made by private vehicle. Dispersed development in the north and south of the County Borough will help to meet the housing needs of both areas, enabling more people to live closer to their workplaces and undertake fewer journeys by car. Overall a minor positive effect is likely.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u></p> <p>This option focuses growth around the strategic networks of the M4, A470 and A465. This correlates to some extent with the three Principal Settlements of Llantrisant/Talbot Green, Pontypridd, and Aberdare where public transport links are generally good, although it may also encourage car use due to the convenient access to the highways network. Development close to the A470 and A465 corridors should align with the development of the Metro. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Option 3 concentrates new development at sites which are in close proximity to the centres of the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements of the County. This approach has the potential to reduce trip generation, due to jobs, services and facilities being generally more closely located. It may also reduce reliance on private vehicles, by giving residents greater choice of differing modes of transport. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Focussing most development in the south, particularly around the M4 corridor, may encourage high levels of car use as a result of easy access to the highways network. This is particularly the case because much of the area is heavily car dependant with a lack of public transport. A significant negative effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option directly seeks to focus development where sustainable transport links are best, so should provide people will good opportunities to make use of non-car based modes of transport day to day. In particular, this approach would support the growth of the South Wales Metro. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>Option 6 would see the allocation of a large key site in the south of the County Borough which would accommodate a significant majority of the new housing development over the plan period. Focussing development mainly in a single place may reduce out migration and some out commuting to travel for services, but some areas in the south are lacking in existing public transport provision, so it will be essential that any new strategic site is adequately supported by sustainable transport infrastructure, phased</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>appropriately. The development of a large-scale strategic site should offer good opportunities to incorporate such new services. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Option 7 seeks to deliver growth within the existing urban area without the need to release new land for development. Concentrating most development in urban areas has the potential to reduce reliance on private vehicles, by giving residents greater choice of differing modes of transport as there is a greater level of access to employment, services, facilities, and public transport in close proximity. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option would provide for relatively even distribution of growth throughout the County Borough. While this approach would result in a proportionately higher level of growth at the larger settlements where access to public transport is generally good and the need to travel may be reduced, some development would also be provided at smaller settlements, which would increase the number and distance of trips made by private vehicle. It may also, however, support public transport services at smaller and more rural settlements as a result of higher levels of use. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely.</p>
<p>ISA objective 6: Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment</p>	-?	-?	--?	--?	--?	-?	+/-?	-?	<p>RCT has a rich cultural heritage and a wealth of heritage assets across the County Borough, throughout the towns and the more rural areas. These vary in scale from single buildings and monuments to areas of historic parks and gardens. There are 369 listed buildings across RCT, with three being Grade I. Thirty six are Grade II* listed and 330 are Grade II.</p> <p>All new development has potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly affecting assets and indirectly affecting their setting. However specific impacts, including the extent to which new development enhances the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of specific proposals. Therefore, there is particular uncertainty attached to the effects identified in relation to this ISA objective.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>Focussing most development at the settlements in the settlement hierarchy may bring new development into closer proximity of the existing heritage assets which tend to be mainly focused in built up areas. However, relatively dispersed development in both the north and south of the County Borough could mean that heritage assets in both areas have the potential to be affected by new built development; however more evenly dispersed development may reduce the concentration of effects in particular areas. A minor negative effect is likely overall.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Option 2 focuses new development along the highway network, which could include a number of settlements that contain concentrations of heritage assets such as Conservation Areas (notably in the south surrounding Pontypridd and Llantrisant) and listed buildings. However, some of these highway corridors are outside of the most concentrated areas of heritage assets. A</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>potential minor negative effect is therefore identified, which will be largely uncertain depending on the specific sites that are allocated and the design of development.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>This option focuses development within the centres of the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements of RCT in which the highest concentration of heritage assets is found, notably Pontypridd, Llantrisant and Aberdare. A potential significant negative effect is therefore identified, which is again uncertain.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>By focussing on development in the south, this option could lead to development in areas with a concentration of designated heritage features, notably Conservation Areas near Llanhary, Pontyclun, Llanharan and Pontypridd. There are also concentrations of listed buildings in the south of RCT, particularly near Pontypridd. The south of RCT is also home to one of the two historic parks and gardens in the County Borough, which is in proximity to Pontyclun. Concentrating growth only in the south of the County Borough could also mean that it is more challenging to avoid impacts on heritage assets in that area. A potential significant negative effect is therefore identified, which is again uncertain.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to Option 3, as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the urban areas where heritage assets are also most densely concentrated. However, there are additional areas in RCT with good public transport links which are outside of the main urban areas. Of significance to this ISA objective this includes the public transport hubs from Porth north to Treherbert, which is a special registered historic landscape. A potential significant negative effect is therefore identified, which is again uncertain.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>The effects of this option on cultural heritage will again largely depend on its specific location; however, in general, concentrating most development on a single strategic site may offer more opportunities to avoid impacts on heritage assets, which tend to be mostly located within the existing urban areas. However, as discussed under Option 4, there are a variety of designated heritage features in the south of RCT that the site selection should be mindful of, notably Conservation Areas near Llanhary, Pontyclun, Llanharan and Pontypridd. There are also a number of listed buildings in the south of RCT, particularly near Pontypridd. The south of RCT is also home to one of the two historic parks and gardens in the County Borough, which is in proximity to Pontyclun. Overall, a potential minor negative effect is identified, which is again uncertain.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u></p> <p>The support this option provides for delivering new development on brownfield land and reusing vacant buildings may result in positive effects in terms of preserving and improving the character of urban areas and the setting of existing heritage assets. It may also be possible to bring about improvements through the restoration of existing historic buildings. However, this option would also focus new development in urban areas where it is likely to be in closer proximity to heritage assets which could be adversely</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>affected, depending on the design of the new development. A potential mixed (minor positive and minor negative) but uncertain effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>By distributing development more evenly through RCT, this option could lead to impacts on a higher number of historic assets. However, more widespread development is less likely to result in cumulative adverse effects in one area. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is therefore identified.</p>
ISA objective 7: Promote the use of the Welsh language	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>All Options</p> <p>Within the South Wales context, RCT generally performs well in terms of Welsh language use. The Census 2021 reported that 12.4% of people aged three years and over in RCT can speak Welsh. This was a small increase on the 12.3% of the population who were reported as being able to speak Welsh in the 2011 Census. According to StatsWales, it is unclear whether new development in areas with a higher proportion of Welsh language speakers would stimulate higher levels of Welsh language use, or whether the impact of new development in those areas may be to dilute the use of Welsh language. Therefore, it is not possible to draw conclusions about or differentiate between the likely effects of the spatial options on this ISA objective and all eight options are considered to have negligible effects.</p>
ISA objective 8: Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape	-?	--?	+	-?	+	--?	+	+/-?	<p>RCT extends from the uplands of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park in the north to the edge of the Vale of Glamorgan. The central feature is the coalfield plateau, which is cut by the Rhondda, Cynon and parts of the Taff and Ely river valleys. The Cynon and Rhondda valleys are generally steep-sided with narrow and mostly built up valley floors, and bracken covered, farmed or wooded slopes. South of Pontypridd, the Taff Valley is wider but heavily developed. The southern part of the County Borough has a softer, more lowland landscape of farms, woods, commons, towns and villages. All effects on this ISA objective are considered to be uncertain given that effects will be very strongly influenced by the specific location of development sites and their design.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>Under the split strategy, the distribution of development in both the north and south of the County Borough provides more scope to select sites that avoid the most sensitive landscapes. However, development in the north may affect the setting of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, depending on its specific location. While the fixed settlement boundaries applied in the south should avoid the loss of greenfield land and the sprawling of settlements, settlement boundaries in the north are more flexible meaning that negative effects on the landscape from edge of settlement development may be more likely. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified overall.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Option 2 is a highway network-based strategy, focussing on locating growth around the strategic networks of the M4, A470 and A465. The highways network abuts a number of Special Landscape Areas and development along the A465 corridor has the</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>potential to affect the setting of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. A potential but uncertain significant negative effect is therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Focussing development primarily in the town centres should steer new development away from sensitive greenfield sites in more rural areas and should also steer development away from the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. While some of the main towns are within close proximity of Special Landscape Areas, focussing built development centrally within those towns should help to avoid adverse landscape impacts. A potential but uncertain minor positive effect is therefore identified under this option.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Locating most development in the south of the County Borough would mean new development is steered away from the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park in the north. However, there are a number of Special Landscape Areas in the south which could be affected, and it is noted that this option would comprise development mainly on greenfield land. Therefore, a potential minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option focusses most development in close proximity to existing public transport hubs and railway stations; therefore is likely to steer most development towards more urban areas where landscape impacts may be less likely. A potential minor positive effect is therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>The allocation of a new Key Strategic site is likely to have an adverse impact on the landscape in the south of RCT where there are a number of Special Landscape Areas. While the development of a new strategic site may offer good opportunities to masterplan and incorporate high quality design and landscape mitigation from the outset, it is unlikely that significant landscape effects could be avoided from development of this scale. A potential significant negative effect is therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u></p> <p>Delivering growth in existing urban areas will result in minimal release of new land for development and will therefore reduce the potential for adverse impacts on sensitive landscapes. Under this option there would be no greenfield land releases and development would take place on brownfield sites within current settlement limits. A potential minor positive effect is therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Option 8</u></p> <p>By distributing development more evenly throughout the County Borough this option provides scope to select sites that avoid the most sensitive landscapes. Without focussing large amounts of development in a small number of locations, this option may reduce the potential for cumulative adverse landscape impacts. It may, however, mean that it is harder to avoid development in the</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									areas of highest landscape sensitivity, due to the dispersed and fairly prescriptive pattern of development. A potential mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified, which is again uncertain.
ISA objective 9: Protect and enhance biodiversity	-?	-?	0?	--?	-?	-?	0?	-?	<p>Biodiversity assets are fairly broadly distributed across the County Borough, with Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) covering extensive areas particularly in the north, and a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the south and west in particular. There is a concentration of Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) in the north and very south of RCT, and areas of Ancient Woodland throughout the south, east and west. There are three Special Area of Conservation (SACs) in the north of the County Borough as well as one in the south.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>Under this option, the fixed settlement boundary applied in the south should help to avoid new development encroaching on sensitive biodiversity sites and features, although more flexible boundaries would apply in the north which could mean such impacts are more likely to occur. This option has the potential to distribute new development to a wider range of locations, potentially making it more difficult to avoid sensitive areas; however prioritising larger settlements for development should mean that impacts on biodiversity are less likely. It is however noted that the allocation of strategic sites could result in adverse impacts depending on their location and design. Overall, a minor negative effect is identified, although this is uncertain.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>The M4 concerns a small cluster of SINCs that are scattered around Llanharan and Llantrisant. There is also a large site of Ancient Woodland located just outside of Pontyclun that fit within a range of Priority Areas for Conservation, including Lowland Grassland Level 2, Lowland Heath Level 2, and a Woodland Level 2 network. The M4 corridor is home to nine RIGS. The A470 corridor running north towards Aberdare is also home to a large network of Ancient Woodland and a Woodland Level 2 network and is close to a number of SINCs. There is also a small cluster of RIGS surrounding Pontypridd that may be of concern under this option. Towards the very north of the County Borough along the A465 corridor there is a small number of SSSIs and SACs, as well as a cluster of RIGS and a number of Priority Areas for Conservation, including Lowland Grassland Level 2, Lowland Heath Level 2, and a Woodland Level 2 network. Therefore under this option it may be difficult for development to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and a potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>This option encourages development centrally at Principal Settlements and Key Settlements which should mean that development is more likely to be on brownfield sites and avoid the most sensitive areas of biodiversity interest. A potential but uncertain negligible effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 4</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Under this option the southern area of RCT could suffer overdevelopment and ecological damage due to the majority of growth being in one area. There is a cluster of RIGS located along the M4 corridor near Llanharan and Llantrisant. Of further national importance, there is a SSSI (Llantrisant Common and Pasture) and multiple areas of Ancient Woodland amongst a number of SINCs that may be at risk from further overdevelopment under this option. Area potential but uncertain significant negative effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 5</p> <p>This option is similar to Option 3, in that the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be areas around the town centres. However, there are additional areas in RCT with good public transport links which are outside of these. This option should give good opportunities to focus development on brownfield sites where impacts on biodiversity are less likely. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 6</p> <p>The allocation of a large key site in the south of the County Borough would help to avoid impacts on biodiversity in other parts of RCT but may mean that particular adverse effects are experienced in the south due to large-scale greenfield development in a part of the County Borough which is relatively constrained by biodiversity features. Locating development of a large number of houses on one site rather than a number of small and medium sites may offer good opportunities for incorporating mitigation and avoid impacts in other parts of RCT; however any effects in the area of the strategic allocation would be greater. Overall a potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Option 7 would deliver growth within the current urban area without the need to release new land for development. This is achieved by re-using existing and underused land and property for growth instead of allocating new land. This should mean that impacts on biodiversity in areas of potential development will be minimal and a potential but uncertain negligible effect is identified.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option has the potential to distribute new development amongst a wider range of settlements, particularly leading to a more dispersed pattern of development across the County Borough and reducing the potential for cumulative adverse impacts on biodiversity, although potentially meaning more areas are affected. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified overall.</p>
ISA objective 10: Protect the quality and quantity of	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?	+/-?	-?	-?	The scale of development that would come forward under any of the spatial options would result in an increased demand for water consumption; however it is assumed that new development would be designed and built to high standards of efficiency. The broad location of development will not have significant impacts on water availability although more concentrated patterns of development may focus increased demand in smaller areas, exacerbating the effects of increased demand. In terms of water quality, there is

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
RCT's water resources									<p>one Source Protection Zone (SPZ) within the north of RCT, and another which lies slightly within the RCT boundary in the south west. Wastewater in RCT is presently handled by seven wastewater treatment works (WwTW). The majority of these have capacity to accommodate additional wastewater from new development. The notable exception to this is the Cynon WwTW, which serves the Cynon valley, including Abercynon, Aberdare, Hirwaun and Mountain Ash.</p> <p><u>Option 1</u></p> <p>The split strategy would distribute development in the north and south of RCT so may help to avoid concentrated areas of demand for increased water supply, although depending on the location of any strategic site allocations this may need consideration. Similarly, it is possible that development could occur in both the north near to the SPZ and/or in the Cynon valley where there are potential issues with wastewater treatment capacity. Overall a minor negative effect is likely, although this is uncertain depending on the specific location of development.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u></p> <p>Focussing growth along the Strategic Highways network may mean that increased demand for water treatment and sewage treatment infrastructure is more dispersed than under some of the other options. The area known to be under most pressure in terms of WWTW capacity is outside the main highways network, further to the west of the A470. However, development along the A465 corridor may be in close proximity of the SPZ in the north. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified overall.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Focussing development in the town centres of RCT should mean that it is reasonably dispersed which may reduce the cumulative effects of demand for water abstraction and treatment in small areas. This approach should also divert development away from the Source Protection Zones; however some towns lie within the Cynon valley where there is a shortage of WWTW capacity. Overall, a potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Focussing most development in the south of RCT could mean that increased demand for water abstraction and treatment is more concentrated in that area and effects are more significant. While this approach would avoid the SPZ in the north and the area of known constraint regarding WWTW capacity, there is an SPZ partially within the south of RCT. An overall potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to the town centre first approach (Option 3) as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the area around the town centres. More dispersed development throughout RCT may reduce the potential for cumulative effects in one area; however some public transport hubs are located in towns in the Cynon Valley where there is known pressure on WWTW capacity. An overall potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>By focussing development on a new Key site in the south of RCT, the effects of increased demand for water supply and treatment would be more concentrated; however a new strategic site should offer good opportunities for delivering the required infrastructure through planning obligations. The strategic site would also avoid the Cynon valley where there is known to be a WWTW capacity issue, as well as the SPZ in the north of RCT. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified, although this is uncertain depending on the specific location and design of the site.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Option 7 focuses growth within the existing urban areas throughout RCT. This more dispersed development may mean that cumulative effects in terms of increased demand for water supply and treatment in one area are less likely to occur. However, there are urban areas within the Cynon valley where there is a shortage of WWTW capacity. Overall a potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option again has the potential to distribute new development amongst a wider range of settlements, and therefore more dispersed demand for water supply and treatment. As with Option 7, however, there would be development (proportionate in this case) within settlements in the Cynon valley. A potential but uncertain minor negative effect is again identified.</p>
ISA objective 11: Protect and enhance air quality	-	--	++/-	--	++	+/-	+/-	+/-	<p>The spatial options could affect this ISA objective by the extent to which they would result in car use, as well as the extent to which they may result in development in or near to one of the AQMAs that have been declared in RCT.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>The split strategy associated with Option 1 focuses growth at key settlements, in both the north and south of RCT. This should mean that impacts in terms of additional emissions from car use are more limited, as development will be closer to existing services and facilities and employment opportunities. However, the more dispersed pattern of development means that development may be in close proximity of one or more of the AQMAs that have been declared. Any strategic site allocations may result in particular increases in traffic emissions in those areas, although strategic sites should offer good opportunities to incorporate sustainable transport infrastructure. Overall a minor negative effect is likely.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Option 2 is a highway network-based strategy focussing on locating growth around the strategic networks of the M4, A470 and A465. Locating development in close proximity to the highways network may facilitate high levels of car use and discourage modal shift. In addition, there are AQMAs that have been declared in the vicinity of the A470 in particular and so new growth near to those areas could compound existing air pollution. A significant negative effect is therefore likely.</p> <p>Option 3</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Option 3 concentrates new development at town centre sites. Urban intensification has potential to exacerbate existing congestion problems should residents choose to use private vehicles. It is noted that a number of AQMAs are grouped around Pontypridd, which would be a Principal Settlement for development under this option. However, concentrating most development in central parts of the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements has the potential to reduce reliance on private vehicles, by giving residents greater choice of differing modes of transport. Settlement centres offer a greater level of access to employment, services, facilities, and public transport in close proximity which reduces the need to travel by private vehicle. Overall, a mixed (significant positive and minor negative) effect is likely.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>Option 4 would focus most development in the south of RCT, including in the M4 corridor. Much of this area is already very car dependent and lacks public transport provision. This option may result in the overdevelopment of the south, with the potential to increase traffic emissions on a cumulative basis, with a detrimental impact on air quality. There are also a number of existing AQMAs in the south where existing issues could be compounded. A significant negative effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>Option 5 focuses most development near to sustainable transport hubs which should help to facilitate modal shift and reduce the additional traffic generated by new development. While the areas with public transport nodes are often central and so may correlate with the AQMAs that have been declared in Pontypridd in particular, development would be distributed across other parts of the County Borough and in particular near to the Metro, so additional traffic generation in those AQMAs is likely to be negligible. A significant positive effect is likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u></p> <p>Option 6 would see the allocation of a large strategic site in the south of the County Borough which would accommodate a significant majority of the new housing development over the plan period. Having one large site would allow for maximum benefits in terms of planning obligations and would allow for the delivery of necessary infrastructure including public transport links and sustainable transport infrastructure such as walking and cycle paths. However, much of the south of the County Borough is heavily car dependent and proximity to the M4 may exacerbate car use amongst new residents. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u></p> <p>Option 7 seeks to deliver growth within the existing urban area without the need to release new land for development. This option concentrates new development in areas of RCT that are already more densely populated, with the potential to increase traffic emissions on a cumulative basis, with a detrimental impact on air quality. However, concentrating most development in urban areas has the potential to reduce reliance on private vehicles, by giving residents greater choice of differing modes of transport and better access to the main sustainable transport nodes. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 8</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Option 8 involves a dispersed form of growth across RCT. This option would see the level of growth shared around the County Borough meeting local needs without putting undue pressure on particular areas. By allowing for a wider and more even distribution of development across RCT this option has the potential to distribute new development amongst a wider range of settlements and sites of differing scales, leading to greater dispersal of road traffic, and reducing the cumulative impact on air quality in any one location.</p> <p>This considered, allowing for a higher level of growth at more rural settlements, including those which are amongst the smallest and most rural in RCT, is likely to result in a proportion of new residents relying on private vehicle use on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>It is expected that larger settlements will accommodate higher levels of new growth under this option. Concentrating large scale development at the Principal Settlements has the potential to reduce reliance on private vehicles, as these larger urban areas are likely to have greater choice of sustainable modes of transport. These locations are, however, also those which currently experience greatest levels of road congestion. Mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effects are therefore likely overall.</p>
ISA objective 12: Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals	+/-	--	++	--	+/-	--?	++	+/-	<p>Option 1</p> <p>This option would involve some greenfield land development, where settlement boundaries are flexible in the north of the County Borough; however in the south, fixed settlement boundaries would mean that brownfield sites may be more likely to be used. The option could involve the allocation of some strategic sites in any part of the County Borough, and so the effects would depend on location but are likely to involve the loss of greenfield land. Overall, a mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is likely.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>This option would see the concentration of growth in several areas that contain Grade 3 and some Grade 2 agricultural land, particularly to the south of the County Borough and around the M4 corridor. This would likely lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, particularly because the option could rely heavily on greenfield land use. Furthermore, while only limited, the highest quality agricultural land in the north of RCT is focused along the A470 corridor towards Aberdare in the north. This is a particular concern due to the already limited extent of high quality land in the area. A significant negative effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>This option encourages the efficient use of land by locating development at the centre of Principal Settlements and Key Settlements. This option gives good opportunities to utilise brownfield sites and an overall significant positive effect is likely in relation to avoiding the loss of high quality agricultural land.</p> <p>Option 4</p> <p>The south of RCT has the highest quality agricultural land, and development under this option would be located mainly on greenfield land. A significant negative effect is therefore likely.</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Option 5</p> <p>This option is similar to the town centre first approach (Option 3) in that the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the area around the town centres. As such, this option encourages the efficient use of land by locating development near Principal Settlements and Key Settlements where the loss of high quality agricultural land is less likely. However, there are areas around some of the best connected towns and the transport hubs where land quality is high, including near Aberdare in the north, a Principle Settlement and key area of development proposed within this strategy. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p>Option 6</p> <p>The allocation of a large key site in the south of the County Borough would result in a large area of greenfield land being developed at a single location. The south of RCT also contains the highest value agricultural land. A significant negative effect is therefore likely. The effect is recorded as uncertain given that the precise location of the site for development is unknown.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Option 7 directly promotes the efficient use of land by delivering growth within the current urban area without the need to release new land for development. This is to be achieved by re-using existing and underused land and property for growth instead of allocating new land. This will avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land and a significant positive effect is likely.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option would distribute development more evenly throughout the County Borough and therefore could help to avoid the loss of large areas of greenfield land in one part of the County Borough. However, effects may be more widespread although effects will largely depend on the specific sites allocated. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is likely overall.</p>
ISA objective 13: Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>All Options</p> <p>New development as part of all spatial options considered will result in the use raw materials and the generation of waste, both in construction and operation; however this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices further largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development and as such, all spatial options would have a negligible effect on the achievement of this ISA objective.</p>
ISA objective 14: Provide for a	+	++	+	+/-	++	+/-	+/-	++/-	It is assumed that the same overall scale of growth would be targeted under any of the options. Access to employment opportunities is considered separately under ISA objective 15.

Chapter 4
 ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
 January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
sustainable economy									<p><u>Option 1</u></p> <p>The split strategy under Option 1 provides a flexible approach to economic development. It recognises the roles of the Principal Settlements as the main centres of employment in the County Borough and continues to support the economic regeneration of the north proportionally. Focusing largely on employment growth around existing population concentrations facilitates access to new and existing employment, education and training opportunities. A minor positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u></p> <p>This option aims to locate economic growth to maximise potential benefits associated with ease of access to the strategic road network. The M4 is in demand and there are competitive land values. This option offers the opportunity to build on this. The A465 corridor is undergoing considerable change at present with the dualling of the A465. This means that the area may be well placed to see further investment. The new focus on tourism in the area which has been supported by Zipworld, the continuing success of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the Valleys National Park would provide further opportunities. The A470 corridor provides access to and from Cardiff, Caerphilly, and Merthyr. The area is home to the Principle Settlement of Pontypridd which has begun a transformation over recent years seeing such developments as Llys Cadwyn, the national Lido of Wales and the redevelopment of the YMCA to generate strong economic gain. Further developments are planned for this area. The corridor also has Treforest industrial estate, the Council's prime employment site which offers a vast array of employment opportunities. Alongside this is the University of South Wales which also supports employment and skills. This option therefore offers very good opportunities to build on the economic potential of these highways corridors, and would result in development being fairly broadly distributed throughout the north and south of RCT. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Focussing new development in the town centres should offer excellent opportunities to regenerate those areas, promoting their vitality and viability. This option should offer good opportunities to also draw development into some of the more deprived areas of RCT and to distribute the benefits of development throughout different parts of the County Borough. However, opportunities to deliver development to support the economy in rural areas would be more limited. Overall a minor positive effect is likely.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u></p> <p>This strategy focuses on growth in the southern strategy area (Taff Ely area) of the County Borough with a particular focus on the M4 corridor. The M4 corridor is the most marketable and in demand area in RCT and development here has the opportunity to build on the convenient location and attract inward investment. However, this option would focus the benefits of development only in the south and would not offer opportunities to regenerate the north. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u></p> <p>This option is similar to the town centre first approach (Option 3) in as much as the areas which are public transport hubs or have good access to public transport tend to be the area around the town centres. As such, the likely effect of this approach would be to focus new development mainly in the urban areas to may help to regenerate the town centres and improve their vitality and</p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>viability. Focussing new development near to public transport nodes should mean that access to employment is easier, helping to attract investors and facilitating a more sustainable economy. Development would also be dispersed throughout the County Borough and not focused only in the south. Overall a significant positive effect is likely.</p> <p>Option 6</p> <p>Locating a large amount of development on one strategic site could ease pressure on other areas of the south which are under huge demand for development, whilst a large site will allow for necessary infrastructure and facilities to be delivered within the site, supporting sustainable economic development in that location. Locating the site in the south would also deliver commercial land in an area of high demand and desirability. However, this option would not support the continued economic development of other areas of the County Borough or support the regeneration of the north. It would also result in the benefits of development being focused in a very narrow area, which could be positive for the area around the strategic site but negative for other parts of the County Borough. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 7</p> <p>Option 7 directly promotes a sustainable economy by seeking to deliver growth within the existing urban area. The option may support the regeneration of town centres throughout the County Borough and would result in the economic benefits of new development being fairly widely distributed. It would not, however, support the growth of the rural economy and there are some question marks over the availability of land needed to deliver the scale of growth required. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified.</p> <p>Option 8</p> <p>This option would provide for a more even distribution of development across the Council Borough over the plan period with the larger settlements delivering proportionally higher levels of growth. As such, it would support economic growth and regeneration in both larger areas and smaller rural settlements. The benefits of growth would also be experienced across different parts of the County Borough. However, there are likely issues with the viability and deliverability of this approach and there is a lack of land in some settlements. There would also be reduced opportunities to achieve the cumulative benefits of more concentrated development in terms of inward investment. A mixed (significant positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely.</p>
ISA objective 15: Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities	+	+/-	+	-	++	-	+	+/-	<p>It is again assumed that all of the spatial options would be targeting the same overall level of growth; therefore the effects of this option on this ISA objective depend largely on the extent to which they would provide jobs in accessible locations or deliver residential development close to existing job opportunities.</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>This option would deliver development in both the north and south of the County Borough, so should provide new jobs that are accessible to existing residents in both parts of RCT. New residential development will also be broadly dispersed, providing better opportunities to live and work in close proximity. A minor positive effect is therefore likely.</p>

Chapter 4
 ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
 January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p><u>Option 2</u> Focusing new development near to the strategic road network would mean that it is reasonably broadly dispersed throughout different parts of the County Borough, offering access to jobs for more people; however there is a risk that transport to and from sites for work could be more car dependent which would reduce access for those without a car as well as being less sustainable. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore identified.</p> <p><u>Option 3</u> Sustainable urban development focused in the Town Centres would mean that more people are able to access jobs in those areas, including via sustainable modes of transport. New residents may also have access to sustainable transport links in other locations to access employment opportunities elsewhere. However, this approach would limit job creation in rural areas. Overall the effect is likely to be minor positive.</p> <p><u>Option 4</u> This strategy focuses on growth in the southern strategy area (Taff Ely area) of the County Borough with a particular focus on the M4 corridor. While there is a strong base of population in the south that would benefit from access to the jobs created, there is a risk of high levels of car dependency which could reduce access to jobs for those reliant on public transport. This approach would offer good access to jobs in the south but would not deliver the same benefits in other parts of the County Borough. A minor negative effect is therefore likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 5</u> Focusing development at sustainable transport hubs will ensure that there is good access to jobs, including for those without a car. This approach should also mean that the new jobs created are distributed fairly broadly throughout RCT, in line with the sustainable transport network. A significant positive effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 6</u> A new strategic site may offer good opportunities to incorporate sustainable transport links, providing access to jobs for those without a car. However, under this option any job creation would be narrowly focused in the south, where existing sustainable transport provision is poor. A minor negative effect is therefore likely.</p> <p><u>Option 7</u> Option 7 would deliver growth within the existing urban area where sustainable transport links are likely to be best, therefore providing access to jobs including for those without access to a car. However, job creation in more rural areas would be limited. A minor positive effect is likely overall.</p> <p><u>Option 8</u></p>

Chapter 4

ISA Findings for the Strategic Options and Candidate Site Options

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

January 2024

ISA objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Justification
									<p>Under this option the greatest amount of development would be delivered at the larger settlements, where access to sustainable transport links is likely to be good. Some development would be focused at smaller settlements which may offer good opportunities for people in those locations to access jobs in close proximity; however where people need to travel further to and from those sites for work, journeys are more likely to be car dependent and access less straightforward. A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is therefore likely overall.</p>

Chapter 5

ISA Findings for the Preferred Strategy

5.1 This chapter presents the ISA findings for the components of the Preferred Strategy consultation document, including the Vision, the Preferred Strategy for the County Borough (i.e. the amount and spatial distribution of development), the Strategic Policies and the Potential Key Sites.

5.2 The report includes recommendations where it has been identified that changes to change text could potentially strengthen positive effects or mitigate adverse effects identified. These recommendations will be considered by RCTCBC as part of the preparation of the Deposit LDP document.

5.3 The description of effects focuses on explaining the positive or negative effects identified. Where negligible effects are expected this is not explained each time; however it should be noted this symbol is used where there is considered to be no tangible link between the policy or site and the achievement of the ISA objective in question. The exception to this is where the ISA objective for which a negligible effect is identified could be seen to overlap with the theme of the policy and therefore explanation of the negligible effect is considered helpful.

Vision

5.4 A Vision and a set of supporting Objectives have been drafted for the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy to ensure that the plan addresses the key issues facing RCT. The Vision sets out the purpose of the plan and how it is intended that RCT will change and develop over the plan period to 2037. The Preferred Strategy consultation document makes clear that the Vision and Objectives are interlinked and should be considered together.

5.5 Given that almost all of the Plan Objectives are the same as the ISA objectives, there is no need to carry out an appraisal of them and there is generally complete compatibility between the both sets of objectives. The three additional Objectives included in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy which are not included in the ISA framework support the enhancement of RCT's town centres, premeditation and appropriate reclamation of mining legacy sites and tourism (including eco/green tourism) that will promote sustainable economic growth. It considered that there is also general compatibility between those three additional Objectives and the ISA objectives.

5.6 The LDP Vision has been drafted to accord with relevant national, regional and local strategies and policies. The Council’s Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan have directly informed the Vision for the Revised LDP, alongside the issues identified for RCT.

5.7 The overarching theme for the Vision is for the County Borough to be developed to be more resilient and sustainable by 2037. The Vision sets out a high level and aspiration image of RCT at the end of the plan period and has been drafted to cover a range of sustainability issues. These mostly accord with the ISA objectives. While the Vision is an important element of the Revised LDP in terms of setting the context for the policies included as well as what these policies should be set out to achieve, planning decisions in RCT will be made in accordance with the policies themselves and the more detailed appraisal work is reserved for these elements of the plan. Given the high level and aspirational nature of the Vision it is expected to have minor positive or negligible effects across the ISA objectives.

The Revised LDP Preferred Strategy

5.8 Chapter 4 presented an appraisal of the eight spatial options considered by RCTCBC for the Revised LDP. As set out in the Preferred Strategy consultation document, analysis of the spatial options indicates that none of the options considered would be appropriate in its entirety. The Council considers that the fundamental elements of the current LDP Spatial Strategy remain appropriate. However, there is a need to distinguish between the northern and southern parts of the County Borough which exhibit very different characteristics. The Revised LDP Preferred Strategy is therefore defined as a combined ‘Northern Sustainable Communities and Southern Sustainable Growth Strategy’ with additional elements taken forward for inclusion from the other spatial options considered. The Preferred Strategy includes four Potential Key Sites that will be fundamental to its delivery.

5.9 The likely sustainability effects of the Preferred Strategy are set out in the table below. The effects reflect the distribution of development set out in Section 9 of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy including the four Potential Key Sites identified.

Table 5.1: Likely sustainability effects of the Preferred Strategy

ISA objectives	Preferred Strategy
1: Climate change	+/-
2: Housing	++
3: Community	+

ISA objectives	Preferred Strategy
4: Health and wellbeing	+
5: Transport	++
6: Heritage	-?
7: Welsh language	0
8: Landscape	+/-?
9: Biodiversity	-?
10: Water	-?
11: Air quality	++/-
12: Land resources	+/-
13: Waste	0
14: Economy	++
15: Employment	++

5.10 The Preferred Strategy involves development in the Northern Strategy Area (NSA) and the Southern Strategy Area (SSA) of the County Borough, primarily focused in the larger settlements where some areas of high flood risk exist. While development in the south is more contained due to the fixed settlement boundaries, and so should involve less greenfield land loss, there may be more greenfield land loss in the north where settlement boundaries will be flexible. The allocation of Key Sites could also result in large areas of greenfield land loss, particularly the land at Llanilid (Potential Key Site 3) and Llanilltud Faerdref (Potential Key Site 4) in the SSA. The latter of these sites totals 50 hectares of greenfield land and contains areas with risk of flooding from surface water and small watercourses. Some of these areas are high and medium risk flood areas although it is noted that the areas in question make up a relatively small proportion of the overall land within the site and the development might be designed to avoid these areas. . While the overall scale of growth proposed will inevitably result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the focus of new development in areas accessible via public transport should minimise increases in emissions from transport (discussed further in relation to ISA objective 5 below). Overall a mixed minor positive and significant negative effect is likely in relation to **ISA objective 1: climate change**.

5.11 This option sets a housing requirement of 8,450 dwellings (with an additional 10% buffer to set the housing provision) which is considered to be realistically achievable. The level of housing delivery will be higher in the SSA

compared to the NSA, reflecting the availability of sites. As such, a significant positive effect is expected in relation to **ISA objective 2: housing**.

5.12 The Preferred Strategy focuses growth in accordance with the identified Revised LDP Settlement Hierarchy. This prioritises the Principle Settlements and Key Settlements for new development, supporting access to and sustaining the viability of services and facilities in those areas and promoting opportunities to walk and cycle day to day. The Preferred Strategy (including both the NSA and SSA) further aligns with the Sustainable Communities Strategy by seeking a Town Centre First approach to ensure access to services and facilities by strengthening communities in the north and encouraging development in the south. The Proposed Key Sites will further contribute towards improved access throughout the County Borough, by providing community services and opportunities for sustainable development to link them to existing communities. A minor positive effect is likely overall in relation to **ISA objective 3: communities** and **ISA objective 4: health and wellbeing**.

5.13 Concentrating growth at larger settlements in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy will deliver most housing and employment development in close proximity to transport nodes and areas with higher public transport provision, thereby giving residents greater choice of transport modes and reducing reliance on private vehicles. It is further noted that development in smaller settlements will be encouraged to have sustainable transport link to the higher order settlements. The development of Key Sites will also provide this opportunity, particularly due to the location of some sites along key railway corridors. Development in both the north and south of the County Borough will also help to meet the housing needs of both areas, enabling more people to live closer to their workplaces and undertake fewer journeys by car. The distribution of development will allow for links to be made with the South East Wales Metro. Overall, a significant positive effect is likely in relation to **ISA objective 5: transport**.

5.14 All new development has the potential to have an impact on the historic environment, both directly affecting assets and indirectly affecting their setting. However specific impacts, including the extent to which new development enhances the historic environment, will be dependent on the design and layout of development proposals as well as their specific location (sites will be allocated at the Deposit stage). Therefore, there is particular uncertainty attached to the effects identified in relation to **ISA objective 6: heritage**.

5.15 Focussing most development at the settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy may bring new development into closer proximity of the existing heritage assets which tend to be mainly focused in built up areas. While relatively dispersed

development in both the north and south of the County Borough could mean that heritage assets in both areas have the potential to be affected by new built development; however more evenly dispersed development may reduce the concentration of effects in particular areas. An uncertain minor negative effect is likely overall and this will be assessed with more certainty at the next stage of plan-making when specific sites are allocated.

5.16 Within the South Wales context, RCT generally performs well in terms of Welsh language use. The Census 2021 reported that 12.4% of people aged three years and over in RCT can speak Welsh. This was a small increase on the 12.3% of the population who were reported as being able to speak Welsh in the 2011 Census. It is unclear whether new development in areas with a higher proportion of Welsh language speakers would stimulate higher levels of Welsh language use, or whether the impact of new development in those areas may be to dilute the use of Welsh language. Therefore, it is not possible to draw conclusions about or differentiate between the likely effects of the spatial options on **ISA objective 7: Welsh language** and the Preferred Strategy is considered to have a negligible effect.

5.17 Under the Preferred Strategy, the distribution of development across both the NSA and SSA provides the greatest scope to select sites that avoid the most sensitive landscapes and biodiversity features. However, development and the required supporting infrastructure in the north, including in relation to the Land South of Hirwaun Key Site may affect the setting of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park given its close proximity. Any impacts will depend on the final nature and design of development, however, the relatively close proximity of this part of the County Borough and Key Site means the potential for adverse impacts on the setting of the National Park should be noted at the strategic scale of the ISA. While the more rigidly defined settlement boundaries applied in the south should avoid the loss of greenfield land and the sprawling of settlements, settlement boundaries in the north are more flexible meaning that negative effects on the landscape and sensitive biodiversity sites and features from edge of settlement development may be more likely. Focussing development in line with Settlement Hierarchy may mitigate this, however, by focussing the majority of growth in the larger settlements. Overall, a potential but uncertain mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is identified in relation to **ISA objective 8: landscape** and an uncertain minor negative effect is identified in relation to **ISA objective 9: biodiversity**. These effects are uncertain given that effects will be very strongly influenced by the specific location of development sites and their design and so will be able to be assessed in more detail at the Deposit stage when site allocations are made.

5.18 The Preferred Strategy may help to avoid concentrated areas of demand for increased water supply by distributing development in both the north and south of the County Borough. However, the development of the Key Sites may place pressure on water supply in those areas. Similarly, it is possible that development could occur in both the north near to the SPZ and/or in the Cynon Valley where there are potential issues with wastewater treatment capacity. Overall, a potential minor negative effect is identified in relation to **ISA objective 10: water**, although this is uncertain depending on the specific location of development.

5.19 The scale of new development to be delivered will inevitably result in an increase in emissions from built development and vehicle traffic, although the proximity of new development to the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the County Borough is not known until site allocations are made at the next stage of Plan-making. It is notable that the plan area contains numerous AQMAs with each of the Principal Settlements containing of these areas. The Preferred Strategy will focus growth at key settlements, in line with the Settlement Hierarchy in both the north and south of RCT. Although this approach could lead to intensification of air pollution within some AQMAs, it is expected that impacts in terms of additional emissions from car use are more limited, as development will be closer to existing services and facilities and employment opportunities in line with the Town Centre First approach. Concentrating more development in urban areas has the potential to reduce reliance on private vehicles, by giving residents greater choice of differing modes of transport and better access to the main sustainable transport nodes. It is also noted that allocations in the SSA will be chosen to allow for the development of sustainable transport infrastructure and to capitalise on the existing network and similarly new development in areas of the NSA near to the stations will be supported. Key Sites are also likely to be able to incorporate opportunities for sustainable travel given their larger size, particularly due to the location of some sites along key railway corridors. Overall, a mixed significant positive and minor negative effect is expected in relation to **ISA objective 11: air quality**.

5.20 It is noted that it is inevitable that many of the site allocations made to deliver the Preferred Strategy will need to be greenfield releases due to the distinct lack of brownfield land available in RCT, particularly in the SSA. The Preferred Strategy will involve particular greenfield land development where settlement boundaries are flexible in the north of the County Borough; however in the south, fixed settlement boundaries may contribute to the use of brownfield sites where possible. The Preferred Strategy also incorporates a Town Centre First approach, which will encourage the efficient use of land by locating more sustainable development in line with the Settlement Hierarchy. This may provide further

opportunity for brownfield development. Conversely, the allocation of Key Sites may result in large areas of greenfield land loss, particularly the land at Llanilid (Potential Key Site 3) and Llanilltud Faerdref (Potential Key Site 4) in the SSA, the latter of which totals 50 hectares of greenfield land. Overall, a mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected in relation to **ISA objective 12: land resources**.

5.21 The scale of new development to be delivered will result in the use raw materials and the generation of waste, both during construction and operation; however this will not be influenced by the broad spatial distribution of development. Waste management practices further largely dependent on peoples' behaviour and the design of development and as such, the Preferred Strategy would have a negligible effect on the achievement of **ISA objective 13: waste**.

5.22 The Preferred Strategy will provide a flexible approach to economic development by facilitating economic opportunities throughout the north and south of the County Borough. The Settlement Hierarchy recognises the roles of the Principal Settlements as the main centres of development in the County Borough where the associated Settlement Centres can provide access to jobs for many residents. The Preferred Strategy will also continue to support new commercial development and redevelopment schemes that have come forward throughout the current plan period and will expand on opportunities for further development on known employment landbank sites and windfall redevelopment on the employment estates in both the NSA and SSA (including the regionally important Treforest Industrial Estate, Llantrisant Business Park and wider Talbot Green Industrial Estate). Employment in the tourism sector is to be built upon in both the NSA and SSA. The Preferred Strategy seeks to build upon the tourism offer in the north in relation to the attractiveness of the open countryside and its proximity to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Focusing largely on employment growth around existing population concentrations will also facilitate access to new and existing employment, education and training opportunities, and the delivery of development in both the north and south of the County Borough will provide new jobs that are accessible to existing residents in both parts of RCT. The dispersed nature of the Key Sites will also provide greater access to economic opportunities across RCT. Overall, significant positive effects are expected in relation to **ISA objectives 14: economy** and **15: employment**.

Potential Key Sites

5.23 The Preferred Strategy identifies four Potential Key Sites:

- Potential Key Site 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown
- Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun

- Potential Key Site 3 – Land at Llanilid
- Potential Key Site 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf

5.24 The likely sustainability effects of the Potential Key Sites are set out in the table below. The summary effects are described below the table. Given the early stage of the appraisal, the summary of the effects focuses on those that are expected to be significant. The starting point for the appraisal of these Potential Key Sites reflects GIS analysis undertaken to determine each site’s proximity to a range of constraints, sensitive receptors as well as services and facilities. The analysis undertaken for each site is based on the Candidate Site Assessment criteria presented in **Appendix E**. The findings for the Potential Key sites also reflect the specific proposals in the Preferred Strategy.

Table 5.2: Likely sustainability effects of the Potential Key Sites

ISA objectives	Potential Key Site 1 - Penrhys Village	Potential Key Site 2 - Land South of Hirwaun	Potential Key Site 3 - Land at Llanilid	Potential Key Site 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf
1: Climate change	++/--	--/+	--/+	--/+
2: Housing	++	0	++	++
3: Community	++/-	+	+	++/-
4: Health and wellbeing	++/--?	++/--?	++/--?	++/--?
5: Transport	++	++?	++/-	++/-
6: Heritage	--?	--?	--?	-->?
7: Welsh language	0	0	0	0
8: Landscape	--	--	--	--
9: Biodiversity	-	--/+	-	-
10: Water	0	0	0	0
11: Air quality	-?	-?	-?	-?
12: Land resources	++	++	++	--
13: Waste	+?	+?	+?	0
14: Economy	0	++	++	+
15: Employment	0	++	++	+

5.25 Each of the Potential Key Sites contains areas of land which are identified as being at high risk of flooding (i.e. within Flood Zone 3) from surface water and small watercourses. However, it is noted that through an appropriate layout of

development, these areas might be avoided. For Potential Key Site 1 – Penrhys Village, the significant negative effect recorded for **ISA objective 1: climate change** is expected in combination with a significant positive effect given that this site is to be developed to incorporate renewable energy generation. For Potential Key Sites 2 – Land South of Hirwaun, 3 – Land at Llanilid and 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf, the positive effect expected in combination is minor. These sites are not expected to deliver infrastructure for renewable energy but would incorporate elements of green infrastructure that would help to support climate change adaptation within the sites and the surroundings.

5.26 A significant positive effect is expected in relation to **ISA objective 2: housing** for Potential Key Sites 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown, 3 – Land at Llanilid and 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf. This reflects the potential for these sites to deliver a particularly large number of new homes (between 500 and 1,500 over the plan period). Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun will not deliver any new housing and therefore a negligible effect is recorded for ISA objective 2.

5.27 Potential Key Sites 2 – Land South of Hirwaun and 3 – Land at Llanilid are relatively well-related to the larger settlements in RCT where new residents might be able to access existing community facilities. Potential Key Sites 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown and 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf, Church Village are expected to incorporate new community facilities as part of their development. Therefore, the minor negative effect expected for these two sites in relation to **ISA objective 3: community** are combined with a significant positive effect.

5.28 All of the Key Sites are relatively well related to existing healthcare facilities. However, there are parts of each site at their peripheries that are affected by higher levels of noise pollution which might be detrimental to new residents and site users. Each of the Potential Key Sites is located close to a PRoW and open space, however, they also contain part of or all of at least one of these types of feature which might be lost as new development occurs. It is acknowledged that Potential Key Sites 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown, 3 – Land at Llanilid and 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf are set out to be developed to incorporate new open space, leisure facilities and/or green infrastructure which is likely to help mitigate the loss of existing features of this type. Furthermore, at Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun there is potential for the green spaces incorporated for biodiversity restoration to be made publicly accessible. A mixed significant negative and significant negative effect is therefore expected for each site in relation to **ISA objective 4: health**.

5.29 Given that all four Key Sites are relatively well-related to large employment sites in RCT, there is potential for some residents commuting from these locations to make use of

sustainable modes of transport (including active and public modes). Potential Key Site 3 – Land at Llanilid and the eastern parcel of Potential Key Site 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf are less well related to existing public transport links meaning a minor negative effect is expected in combination for **ISA objective 5: transport**. It is expected that the mixed uses to be delivered at each site could help to promote a level of self-containment and reduce the numbers of car trips from each location. The potential for development at Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun to benefit from access to new stations proposed at Hirwaun and Hirwaun Industrial Estate would further strengthen any positive effects, however, this is uncertain given these new facilities are yet to be delivered and are beyond the scope of the plan.

5.30 All four Potential Key Sites have been identified as having potential to have adverse impacts on designated heritage assets. Therefore, a significant negative effect has been recorded in relation to **ISA objective 6: heritage**. A significant negative effect is also recorded for all four sites in relation to **SA objective 8: landscape** given that they contain land within Special Landscape Areas. Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun also lies within 1km of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, meaning there is potential for adverse impacts on its setting as a result of development.

5.31 Only Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun is expected to result in a significant negative effect in relation to **ISA objective 9: biodiversity**. This site is located within 200m of Blaen Cynon SAC and contains land designated as a SINC. There is potential for the development of site to result in disturbance to or increased recreational pressures on this internationally designated site. As much of this site is to be developed to allow for the re-establishment of biodiversity and natural habitats, the significant negative effect is expected in combination with a minor positive effect. The remaining sites contain or are adjacent to land that is designated as a SINC and therefore a minor negative effect is expected in relation to this ISA objective.

5.32 RCT contains several AQMAS. It is expected that the location of all Key Potential Sites on roads that lead to AQMAS within the County Borough could result in intensification of existing air quality issues and therefore a potential but uncertain minor negative effect is identified for each site in relation to **ISA objective 11: air quality**.

5.33 The development of Potential Key Sites 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown, 2 – Land South of Hirwaun and 3 – Land at Llanilid would result in the re-use of large areas of brownfield land. A significant positive effect is expected for these sites in relation to **ISA objective 12: land resources** given the potential to promote more efficient land use. Potential Key Site 4 – Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf is mostly greenfield land, some of which is classified as Grade 3a

agricultural land. Therefore, a significant negative effect is recorded for this site in relation to ISA objective 12. Given that three of the sites contain large areas of brownfield land, an uncertain minor positive effect is recorded in relation to **ISA objective 13: waste**. This reflects the potential to bring existing material already onsite back into use at each location. As Potential Key Site 4 – Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf comprises mostly greenfield land, there is likely to be limited potential to promote the re-use of existing materials already onsite and therefore the effect recorded for ISA objective 13 is negligible.

5.34 It is not expected that the development of any of the Key Potential Sites would result in loss of existing employment uses in RCT. Furthermore, Potential Key Sites 2 – Land South of Hirwaun and 3 – Land at Llanilid are to be developed to accommodate new employment uses and therefore a significant positive effect is expected in relation to **ISA objectives 14: economy** and **15: employment**. Potential Key Site 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf is to be developed to incorporate a shared working hub which is likely to support some level of economic growth and improved access to jobs in RCT, although any benefits that would result are likely to be more limited than those expected through the incorporation of new employment uses. Therefore, the positive effect expected for this site in relation to ISA objective 14 and 15 is minor.

Strategic Policies

5.35 The Preferred Strategy consultation document includes nine Strategic Policies seeking to address the key issues identified for the plan area and support the LDP Objectives. The likely sustainability effects of these policies are presented together in **Table 5.2** below with the effects summarised below the table.

Table 5.3: Likely sustainability effects of the Strategic Policies

ISA objectives	Policy SP1: Climate Change and Carbon	Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities	Policy SP3: Flood Risk Management	Policy SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment	Policy SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space	Policy SP6: Housing	Policy SP7: Employment Land and the Economy	Policy SP8: Settlement Centres	Policy SP9: Tourism
ISA objective 1: Climate change	++	++	+	+	+	-	-	0	0
ISA objective 2: Housing	+/-	+	+/-	-	-	++	-	+	0
ISA objective 3: Community	+	++	+	0	+	+	0	+	+
ISA objective 4: Health and wellbeing	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
ISA objective 5: Transport	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	-
ISA objective 6: Heritage	+	+?	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
ISA objective 7: Welsh language	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
ISA objective 8: Landscape	+	+?	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
ISA objective 9: Biodiversity	+	+	+	++	+	-	-	+	+
ISA objective 10: Water	+	+	++	+	+	0	0	0	0
ISA objective 11: Air quality	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-

Chapter 5
 ISA Findings for the Preferred Strategy
 Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
 January 2024

ISA objectives	Policy SP1: Climate Change and Carbon	Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities	Policy SP3: Flood Risk Management	Policy SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment	Policy SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space	Policy SP6: Housing	Policy SP7: Employment Land and the Economy	Policy SP8: Settlement Centres	Policy SP9: Tourism
ISA objective 12: Land resources	+	+	+	0	0	-	+/-	+	0
ISA objective 13: Waste	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ISA objective 14: Economy	+/-	+	+/-	-	-	0	++	++	+
ISA objective 15: Employment	+/-	+	+/-	-	-	0	++	++	+?

ISA objective 1: Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk

5.36 Significant positive effects are expected for Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** given that these policies promote the incorporation of materials to support carbon neutral buildings as well as onsite renewable energy generation. Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure** are also expected to provide benefits in relation to this ISA objective. However, the effects of each policy are expected to be minor given any benefits experienced are likely to be indirect and not as a result of main policy direction. Each of these three policies is expected to increase resilience to the effects of climate change, such as flood risk, through the appropriate incorporation of green space.

5.37 Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** allow for the delivery of housing growth to accord with the Preferred Strategy and support a Town Centre First approach. Policy SP7 will also support a sustainable economy throughout RCT. While the strategic approach to housing and economic growth is likely to provide more residents with opportunities for work close to home and reduce the need to travel as well as associated carbon emissions, transport is addressed through ISA objective 5: transport. Furthermore, the housing provision (9,295 dwellings) and amount of employment land safeguarded (68.7 ha) under these policies will result in carbon emissions as development is delivered and homes and businesses occupied. Therefore, a minor negative effect is expected for this ISA objective for both policies.

ISA objective 2: Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs

5.38 Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** promote the delivery of homes that will better meet the needs of RCT's residents. This benefit will be achieved through the use of higher quality materials and the delivery of a diverse mix of housing types and sizes and a minor positive effect on ISA objective 2: housing is expected for both policies. However, the more onerous requirements relating to reduction of carbon emissions set out under Policy SP1 may affect the viability of some potential housing schemes and therefore a combined minor negative effect is also expected for this policy. Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** is also expected to have a minor positive effect given that it is supportive of residential development in settlement centres in certain circumstances.

5.39 Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment**, **SP5: Green**

Infrastructure and Open Space and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** are likely to contribute to certain parts of RCT being unsuitable in planning terms for accommodating housing growth, given issues of flood risk, sensitivity for nature or importance as open space or employment land. A minor negative effect is expected for these four policies in relation to ISA objective 2. For Policy SP3, the minor negative effect is recorded in combination with a minor positive effect given the requirement of the policy to reduce the potential scale and impact of flooding which will support the delivery of new housing and protect existing homes in RCT. Only **Policy SP6: Housing** is likely to have a significant positive effect in relation to this ISA objective given its direct support for meeting RCT's housing requirement including the incorporation of a 10% flexibility allowance.

ISA objective 3: Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all

5.40 It is expected that through Policy **SP1: Climate Change** the direction of much of the development over the plan period to the most sustainable locations will help create communities where many residents have good access to community facilities. Given that Policy **SP6: Housing** will result in housing growth in line with the Preferred Strategy and mostly towards the larger settlements in RCT, this will also provide many residents with good access to community facilities and therefore minor positive effects are expected for both policies. Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** directly addresses many of the issues relating to this ISA objective and is set out to create communities that are inclusive, cohesive, safe, supported and valued. The policy requires the development to be designed to be accessible, connected and safe for all users. A significant positive effect is therefore recorded for this policy in relation to ISA objective 3: communities. Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** will support the creation of new and the maintenance of existing areas of green infrastructure within which residents can meet and interact. A positive effect is therefore expected for these policies. While Policy **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** will also help protect elements of green infrastructure in RCT, these will be areas of importance for biodiversity and will not always be accessible to or appropriate for use by residents and therefore a positive effect is not recorded for this policy. Policies **SP8: Settlement Centres** and **SP9: Tourism** are also likely to have minor positive effects in relation to ISA objective 3. Policy SP8 is supportive of the provision of community uses within settlement centres while Policy SP9 requires tourism proposals to deliver adequate infrastructure so as not to have an unacceptable adverse impact on existing communities.

ISA objective 4: Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.

5.41 It is expected that by promoting a more sustainable distribution of growth in RCT, Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** would help to ensure residents have good access healthcare and community facilities and also encourage travel by more active modes which would have direct health benefits and also help to protect resident amenity for the County Borough's population. The positive effect recorded for Policy SP2 is likely to be significant given that it requires development to contribute to communities that are inclusive, cohesive, safe, supported and valued. Policies SP6: Housing, **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** and **SP8: Settlement Centres** are also likely to help encourage travel by active modes. These policies will provide residential and employment development in alignment with the Preferred Strategy thereby limiting the need for out commuting and will also support access to nearby services and facilities at RCT's settlement centres. In contrast, Policy **SP9: Tourism** is expected to have a minor negative effect for this ISA objective. While the policy is most supportive of tourism growth within the main settlements and within the SSA, tourism accommodation will only be supported within settlement boundaries, in the NSA tourism accommodation beyond these boundaries could be allowed in certain circumstances. As such the policy could promote development in locations where there is increased need to travel by private vehicle which would contribute to the carbon emissions in RCT.

5.42 Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** will ensure residents have access to elements of green infrastructure thereby supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing. While the green infrastructure protected through Policy **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** would be secured primarily to benefit biodiversity and may not support physical activity, it may allow some residents to come into contact with nature, which is shown to have benefits for mental wellbeing. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected for this policy in relation to ISA objective 4.

ISA objective 5: Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport

5.43 As discussed in relation to ISA objective 4, Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** would support a more sustainable distribution of development in RCT and encourage travel by more sustainable modes (including active travel). Similar support for travel by sustainable modes is also likely to be achieved through Policies **SP6: Housing**, **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** and **SP8: Settlement**

Centres. It is likely that achieving a distribution of development that aligns with the Preferred Strategy will help to support the achievement of critical mass at the County Borough's larger settlements which could promote the viability of sustainable transport infrastructure. Given that Policy **SP9: Tourism** could support the delivery of some tourism development in areas outside of settlement boundaries where there is likely to be increased need to travel by car, a minor negative effect is recorded in relation to ISA objective 5.

ISA objective 6: Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment

5.44 The delivery of new open spaces and elements of green infrastructure may not be appropriate when considering the enhancement of the setting of a heritage asset in all situations. However, the protection of existing areas of green space through Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon**, **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** is expected to help preserve the existing established character and the setting of heritage assets at many locations. A minor positive effect is therefore also expected for these three policies. Policy SP1 also supports appropriate renewable energy schemes, however, these are to be limited to NDF search areas which is likely to help reduce the potential impacts on the settings of heritage assets in RCT. Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** seeks to promote the concept of placemaking in RCT with development required to respond to local context and character and to respect and enhance the distinct natural, historic, cultural and built environments. These requirements are likely to help protect heritage assets and their respective settings in the County Borough and therefore a minor positive effect is recorded in relation to ISA objective 6: heritage. The effect is uncertain given that the policy also supports the incorporation of onsite renewable energy generation which could have implications for local character.

5.45 While the effects of the precise distribution of development that would be achieved through the Preferred Strategy which Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** align with are set out through the appraisal of that element of the plan, the level of growth that these policies would support is likely to result in substantial changes to local character in many locations. While mitigation may be achieved in some instances there are likely to be some impacts relating to the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, a minor negative effect is expected for Policies SP6 and SP7 in relation to ISA objective 6. Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** addresses development at locations where there is potential for numerous heritage assets to be present (i.e. the settlement centres within the larger settlements). The policy requires that new development

is designed to contribute positively to the overall built and natural environments and this is likely to ensure that the settings of heritage assets at these locations are conserved and enhanced where appropriate. A minor positive effect is recorded for Policy SP8 in relation to ISA objective 6. A minor positive effect is also expected for **Policy SP9: Tourism**. This policy requires that tourism proposals should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on designated features which would include designated heritage assets in RCT.

ISA objective 7: Promote the use of the Welsh language

5.46 It is expected that the majority of the Strategic Policies would have negligible effects in relation to ISA objective 7: Welsh language. While Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land** set the expected level of housing development and employment land to safeguarded which would have implications in terms of the number of residents and employees in the County Borough, it is unclear whether new development in areas with a higher proportion of Welsh language speakers would stimulate higher levels of Welsh language use, or whether the impact of new development in those areas may be to dilute the use of Welsh language. As such, it is not possible to draw conclusions about whether the majority of the Strategic Policies would have positive or negative effects in relation to this ISA objective.

5.47 The exception to this is Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities**. This policy requires that development promotes the prosperity, health, happiness and well-being of the community as set out in the principles of Welsh Government planning policy and the concept of 'Placemaking'. PPW 11 includes the Welsh language as a theme that should be considered as contributing to Placemaking as part of the planning process. Therefore, the policy may result in impacts on the Welsh language being considered as part of the decision making for development and a minor positive effect is recorded for ISA objective 7. Policy **SP9: Tourism** could also have a minor positive effect on ISA objective 7. The policy requires that tourism proposals provide adequate infrastructure so that unacceptable adverse impact on existing communities are avoided. This approach is likely to help ensure the vitality of existing communities in RCT, including those that support high numbers of Welsh language speakers.

ISA objective 8: Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape

5.48 The protection of existing areas of green space through Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon**, **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** is likely to help protect the existing landscape character of many parts of the County Borough. Minor positive effects

therefore expected for these three policies. While Policy SP1 supports appropriate renewable energy schemes, these are to be limited to NDF search areas which is likely to help reduce the potential impacts on landscape character in RCT. Through Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** the promotion of the concept of placemaking in RCT requires development to respond to local context and character and to respect and enhance the distinct natural, historic, cultural and built environments. A minor positive effect is therefore also recorded in relation to ISA objective 8: landscape for this policy. The policy also supports the incorporation of onsite renewables which could result in impacts on landscape character in RCT. As such, the positive effect recorded is uncertain.

5.49 As discussed in relation to ISA objective 6: heritage, the level of growth that Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** would support is likely to result in changes to local character in many locations. Given that this is expected to include impacts on landscape character, a minor negative effect is expected for both policies in relation to ISA objective 8.

5.50 Through Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** the vibrancy, vitality and viability of centres in RCT is to be supported by appropriate development. This is likely to help ensure the upkeep of these locations which is likely to benefit local character. The policy also requires that development is designed and contribute positively to the overall built and natural environment of the centre. A minor positive effect is therefore expected for Policy SP8 in relation to ISA objective 8. Tourism proposals are required by Policy **SP9: Tourism** to avoid unacceptable impacts upon landscape features. Furthermore, the policy specifically supports adventure, outdoor and 'eco' tourism proposals that integrate into the area's natural beauty. Therefore, Policy SP9 is expected to have a minor positive effect in relation to ISA objective 8.

ISA objective 9: Protect and enhance biodiversity

5.51 Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** recognise the importance of green infrastructure, with Policy SP2 specifically stating that the design of development should respect and enhance the distinct natural environment of RCT. Both policies are expected to have a minor positive effect in relation to ISA objective 9: biodiversity. Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** also support the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure that would promote habitat connectivity in the plan area. Minor positive effects are also expected for these policies. Through Policy **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** the protection of green spaces is supported in RCT. The policy also sets the framework for leaving the natural environment in RCT in a more biodiverse and resilient

condition and therefore the positive effect expected in relation to ISA objective 9 is significant.

5.52 Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** will support increased levels of housing and employment growth in RCT. This growth is likely to result in pressures on habitats and species in RCT through increased land take, recreation and pollution associated with travel and the occupation of homes and businesses. Therefore, a minor negative effect is expected for both policies in relation to ISA objective 8.

5.53 Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** addresses development within the centres of RCT which may have more limited value for biodiversity given their more developed nature. However, the policy is supportive of development that contributes positively to the natural environment of the centres. This could support habitat connectivity in areas where connectivity is presently relatively limited and therefore a minor positive effect is expected for the policy in relation to ISA objective 9. Tourism proposals at more rural locations in RCT have the potential to result in the disturbance of natural assets in presently less disturbed areas. Policy **SP9: Tourism** is set out to support proposals that would avoid these types of effects given that it specifically requires that developments do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected for the policy in relation to ISA objective 9.

ISA objective 10: Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources

5.54 Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon**, **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities**, **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** will all provide benefits for water quality in RCT through the protection of existing and incorporation of new green infrastructure. These features will support the natural infiltration of water in RCT with benefits for water quality and a minor positive effect is recorded in relation to ISA objective 10: water. For Policy SP3 the positive effect is expected to be significant given that the policy also sets out the approach to reducing flood risk which is likely to limit the potential for storm events to adversely affect the quality of water resources in RCT.

ISA objective 11: Protect and enhance air quality

5.55 Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** are likely to support a more sustainable distribution of development in RCT (as highlighted in relation to ISA objective 4) and may result in reduced numbers of trips being required to be taken on a regular basis. There is also increased potential to encourage

travel by more sustainable modes as residents and employers are closer to services and facilities. These policies may therefore help to reduce emissions of air pollution associated with transport and a minor positive effect is expected in relation to ISA objective 10: air quality.

5.56 Through Policies **SP6: Housing**, **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** and **SP8: Settlement Centres** it is also likely that travel by more sustainable modes may be achieved. Policies SP6 and SP7 will set out the distribution of development to align with the Preferred Strategy and are likely to help reduce travel distances for residents to employment opportunities. Furthermore, supporting the viability of the County Borough's centres (Policy SP8) is likely to support services in and facilities in areas where higher numbers of residents can easily access them. Minor positive effects are therefore expected for Policies SP6, SP7 and SP8 in relation to ISA objective 11. However, Policy **SP9: Tourism** would support some level of tourism development outside of settlement boundaries. Proposals at these locations are likely to encourage travel by private vehicles with associated emissions of air pollution. Therefore, a minor negative effect is expected in relation to ISA objective 11.

5.57 Green infrastructure in the County Borough can play an important role in terms of absorption of air pollutants. Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** are likely to achieve these types of benefits by protecting and enhancing existing and promoting the delivery of new elements of green infrastructure. As such, a minor positive effect is expected for these three policies in relation to ISA objective 11.

ISA objective 12: Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals

5.58 As part of the overarching approach to addressing climate change, Policy **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** promotes the development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield land. As such, a minor positive effect is expected for this policy in relation to ISA objective 12: land resources. Through Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** development is required to be of an appropriate density which may result in higher densities towards centre areas of larger settlements where constraints can be overcome. Given that this approach is likely to support a more efficient use of land in RCT, a minor positive effect is recorded for Policy SP2. A minor positive effect is also expected to result for Policy **SP3: Flood Risk Management** given that it seeks to protect the County Borough's soils as a means of mitigating flood risk.

5.59 Both Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** are likely to result in a relatively high

level of development on greenfield land to support the delivery the level of housing and employment growth required in RCT over the plan period. A minor negative effect is therefore expected for both policies. However, Policy SP7 supports the redevelopment of existing employment landbank sites which are derelict, vacant or no longer fit for purpose for new B1, B2 and B8 use classes and therefore a minor positive effect is expected in combination with the minor negative effect recorded. Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** is expected to have a minor positive effect in relation to ISA objective 12. The policy is supportive of proposals that would create opportunities to utilise vacant land or buildings in settlement centres and therefore may support development that makes use of brownfield land.

ISA objective 13: Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management

5.60 Policy **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** addresses waste generation and management in RCT, stating that the amount of waste will continue be reduced in the County Borough and that the use of innovative recycling solutions will be made use of. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected in relation to ISA objective 13: waste. This policy direction is continued through Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** which requires that development should sustainably manage water and waste. A minor positive effect is also expected for Policy SP2.

5.61 While it is expected that the level of housing and employment growth supported by Policies **SP6: Housing** and **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** could result increased levels of waste being processed in RCT, it is unlikely to affect the amount of waste generated per capita or the rate at which waste is recycled. It is anticipated that new development will be serviced in the required manner through the extension of the Council's waste collection service. Therefore, negligible effects are expected for Policies SP6 and SP7 in relation to this ISA objective.

ISA objective 14: Provide for a sustainable economy

5.62 Policies **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** and **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** may both help to support economic growth in the renewable energy sector. Furthermore, through Policy SP1 development should promote the circular economy which may provide opportunities for the diversification of the local economy. Policy SP2 recognises the role that developments can play for the existing communities of RCT, including in terms of employment. The policy states that developments should include a mix of uses to support these types of benefits. Therefore, Policies SP1 and SP2 are both expected to have a minor positive effect in relation to ISA objective 14: economy. For Policy SP1, the minor positive effect is combined with a

minor negative effect given the potential for the more onerous requirements of the policy in relation to more carbon considerate design to make some proposals relating to economic development unviable.

5.63 Policies **SP3: Flood Risk Management**, **SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment** and **SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space** could also have a minor negative effect in relation to this ISA objective. These policies will result in certain parts of RCT becoming less suitable for economic development in planning terms. For Policy SP3 a minor positive effect is recorded in combination given that the direct requirement of the policy to reduce the potential scale and impact of flooding will be essential to allow economic growth in RCT.

5.64 Policy **SP7: Employment Land and the Economy** directly supports a sustainable economy throughout RCT and opportunities for inward investment. Policy **SP8: Settlement Centres** also supports economic growth in RCT by promoting and encouraging invest in RCT's centres as a viable location for commercial uses and services and facilities. Given the more direct benefits of these policies in relation to ISA objective 14, the positive effects recorded are significant.

5.65 It is expected that allowing for sustainable tourism developments at appropriate locations in RCT will help supplement economic growth in other sectors in the County Borough. Policy **SP9: Tourism** is therefore recorded as having a minor positive effect in relation to ISA objective 14.

ISA objective 15: Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities

5.66 Given the direct link between economic growth in RCT and the ability to support local job creation which local people will have access to, the majority of the effects recorded in relation to ISA objective 14: economy are also applicable to ISA objective 15: employment. As such the following overview of effects for ISA objective 15 focusses on those that would differ for what is recorded for ISA objective 14.

5.67 For Policy **SP1: Climate Change and Carbon** the approach of making use of more sustainable locations for new development is likely to provide many residents with good access to employment opportunities. This benefit is expected alongside potential diversification benefits relating to supporting the circular economy in RCT. A mixed minor positive and minor negative effect is expected for Policy SP1. The minor negative effect reflects the potential for job creation to be more limited where more onerous construction requirements are applied for employment related proposals. For Policy **SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities** the requirement for developments to be accessible and connected is likely to improve residents access

to new and existing employment opportunities and therefore a minor positive effect is recorded for ISA objective 15.

5.68 Policy SP7: Employment Land and the Economy is likely to have a significant positive effect in relation to ISA objective 15. In addition to supporting economic growth over the plan period, the policy will provide some employment growth in line with the Town Centre First national policy principle. Town Centre locations are amongst the most accessible in the County Borough and employment opportunities at these locations are likely to be close to a relatively high numbers of residents. **Policy SP8: Settlement Centres** is also likely to result in a significant positive effect in relation to this ISA objective. This policy will help secure settlement centres as locations where economic growth can occur to drive employment opportunities and numerous residents are able to access them.

5.69 A minor positive effect is expected for **Policy SP9: Tourism**. The tourism industry is likely to provide employment opportunities that can supplement employment at the traditional employment sites in RCT. The accessibility of these jobs will be influenced by the precise location of developments and it is noted that the policy could allow for some development outside settlement boundaries in the NSA. The quality of employment opportunities in terms of seasonality will be influenced by the type of tourism development that comes forward which is presently partially unknown. Therefore, the minor positive effect recorded is uncertain.

Recommendations

5.70 From the appraisal of the Strategic Policies it has been possible to identify a number of recommendations where policy amendments could help to mitigate negative effects or strengthen positive effects recorded.

5.71 Given that the Deposit Plan will contain more detailed policies, it is recognised that improved benefits and/or mitigation of adverse effects might be achieved through these policies and this will be considered at the next stage of the ISA.

5.72 The recommendations made at this stage are listed below by ISA objective.

Table 5.4: Recommendations by ISA objective

ISA objective	Recommendation
ISA objective 1: Climate change	Policy SP1: Climate Change and Carbon could be written to be clear that development should be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change. At present the policy is written to be weighted heavily towards mitigating climate change. Where adaptation to climate change is included in the policy (e.g. in relation to protecting green

ISA objective	Recommendation
	infrastructure) this is framed as part of tackling climate change. It is recognised that Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities addresses adaptation to climate change as part of its approach to the design of development, however, it seems appropriate that Policy SP1 should address this issue more comprehensively given its overarching purpose of addressing climate change.
ISA objective 1: Climate change	Policy SP9: Tourism presently seeks to support developments that will attract visitors from across the UK and further afield. This approach could have impacts in terms of the carbon emissions associated with the tourism sector in RCT. The policy could be written to ensure that tourism development that is supported in the plan area is provided at the most sustainable locations in terms of the number of trips generated and impact on climate change. This approach could reflect the location of the main sustainable transport nodes in the County Borough as well as the differing character of the NSA and SSA. Presently, the criteria of the policy address unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity, landscape or other designated features, however, carbon emissions and climate impacts could also be addressed through an expanded policy.
ISA objective 2: Housing	Policy SP7: Employment Land and the Economy allows for the redevelopment of existing employment landbank sites and or/units which are derelict, vacant or no longer fit for purpose, for new B1, B2 and B8 use classes. The policy could allow for the redevelopment of these types of sites for mixed use development, including housing development where it can be demonstrated that a site is no longer viable and has remained unused for an appropriate time period. These types of developments would be required to address any amenity issues, for example relating to noise and access which might otherwise occur at sites of this nature. This could support housing delivery in the plan area. It would also help to provide houses at locations where there is good access to employment as well as potentially services and facilities, thereby supporting increased levels of journeys by sustainable transport, with benefits also likely in relation to ISA objective 5.
ISA objective 3: Community	Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities states that development in RCT should contribute to the Vision for the County Borough which is for 'communities that are inclusive,

ISA objective	Recommendation
	cohesive, safe, supported and valued'. The policy could be strengthened by requiring this inclusive approach to development to address the needs of all groups, including more deprived populations in the County Borough.
ISA objective 4: Health and wellbeing	In addition to requiring the protection and enhancement of the natural environment for its intrinsic value, Policy SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment could also be framed in terms of the value of nature for human health. Recognising this benefit would provide additional weight to the aim of promoting the resilience of ecosystems as required by PPW 11 ¹⁹ .
ISA objective 5: Transport	It is expected that the recommendations made earlier in this table for Policies SP7: Employment Land and the Economy and SP9: Tourism would help to reduce the need to travel longer distances by private vehicle in RCT. The recommendations suggested would help to promote mixed use development at underused employment sites and support tourism proposals in more sustainable locations.
ISA objectives 6: Heritage	Policies SP1: Climate Change and Carbon and SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities support the development of appropriate renewable energy schemes and the incorporation of renewable energy generation at new developments. The policies could be written to acknowledge the potential for renewable energy infrastructure to have particular adverse impacts on landscape setting and for unacceptable harm to be avoided. It is recognised that this might be achieved through more detailed policy at the Deposit Plan stage. There is also potential for the identification of areas suitable for wind and solar generation in the plan area which could also help to reduce the potential for these types of effects.
ISA objective 8: Landscape	Policies SP1: Climate Change and Carbon and SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities could also be written to acknowledge the potential for renewable energy infrastructure to have particular adverse impacts on heritage assets and for unacceptable harm to be avoided.
ISA objective 7: Welsh language	Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities could be written to directly safeguard, promote and enhance the interests of the Welsh language in RCT's communities. In this

ISA objective	Recommendation
	way the Welsh language could be embedded in the concept of placemaking for the County Borough. This approach would align with the themes identified as contributing to placemaking in PPW 11. It is recognised that the Deposit Plan might incorporate more detailed policies to address this issue.
ISA objective 11: Air quality	The Strategic Policies do not directly address the issue of pollution in RCT. Air pollution is a particular issue for the County Borough with a number of AQMAs designated. Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities addresses the sustainable management of water (and waste) under the 'resources' sub-heading and there is potential for this sub-section to also address air quality. It is recognised that the Deposit Plan LDP might incorporate more detailed policies to address this issue.
ISA objective 12: Land resources	The 'resources' sub-section included in Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities could also be used to address contaminated land.

¹⁹ Welsh Government (2021) Planning Policy Wales 11

Chapter 6

Monitoring

6.1 The SEA Regulations (Wales) require that *“the responsible authority must monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action” and that the environmental report should provide information on “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring”*. Monitoring proposals should be designed to provide information that can be used to highlight specific issues and significant effects, and which could help decision-making.

6.2 Monitoring should be focused on the significant sustainability effects that may give rise to irreversible damage (with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused) and the significant effects where there is uncertainty in the ISA and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken. Given the relatively early stage of the Revised LDP, indicators for all ISA objectives have been included. The monitoring framework will be updated at the next stage of the ISA (Deposit Plan) to focus on the ISA objectives against which significant (including uncertain) effects have been recorded.

6.3 **Table 6.1** overleaf sets out a number of suggested indicators for monitoring the potential sustainability effects of the Revised LDP. The indicators set out have been informed by those most recently monitored by RCTCBC as part of the LDP Annual Monitoring Report.

6.4 The data used for monitoring the Revised LDP in many cases may be provided by outside bodies (e.g. Natural Resources Wales). It is therefore recommended that the County Borough Council continues the dialogue with statutory environmental consultees and other stakeholders that have already commenced works with them to agree the relevant sustainability effects to be monitored and to obtain information that is appropriate, up to date and reliable.

Table 6.1: Proposed ISA monitoring framework for the Revised LDP

ISA Objectives	Indicators
<p>1. Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % (or number of as proportion of total) of new development of 5 dwellings or more with integrated sustainable drainage systems. ■ Amount of new development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. ■ % change in per capita carbon dioxide emissions across industry/commercial, domestic, road transport and total CO2. ■ The capacity of Renewable Energy developments (MW) installed inside Strategic Search Areas by type per annum.
<p>2. Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of net additional affordable and general market dwellings built in the Plan area per annum. ■ Average house price in RCT per annum.
<p>3. Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % (Number of enrolments on adult education courses per 1000 population. ■ % of 15/16 year olds achieving the 'core subject indicator' (grade C in GCSE). ■ Annual provision of local centres, primary schools, open space and biodiversity management schemes on Strategic Sites.
<p>4. Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of visits to indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities per 1,000 population.
<p>5. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proportion of new housing, employment and retail development accessible by a range of transport modes per annum. ■ Number of highway, roads, public transport and walking and cycling schemes implemented per annum. ■ % [or absolute number of] developments that deliver sustainable transport solutions. ■ The Census Travel to work data. A measure of the increase in services and patronage of local bus services.
<p>6. Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Buildings at Risk (absolute number). ■ Number of Designated Sites with Management Plans.

ISA Objectives	Indicators
7. Promote the use of the Welsh language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % of 15/16 year olds achieving the 'core subject indicator' (grade C in GCSE English or Welsh and Science in combination).
8. Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of Special Landscape Areas affected by development.
9. Protect and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of biological SSSI and SACs in County Borough with 1 or more qualifying features in an unfavourable condition status; the amount of SINCs lost to development; and the number of mitigation schemes secured annually.
10. Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % [or number of as proportion of total] of new development of 5 dwellings or more with integrated sustainable drainage systems.
11. Protect and enhance air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % decrease in pollutants monitored through Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) (NOx, NO2, PM10).
12. Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of new housing units provided during the year on previously developed land as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year. ■ Extent of primary land-won aggregates permitted in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement for Aggregates. ■ Amount of greenfield and open space lost to development (ha) which is not allocated in the development plan. ■ Amount of mineral deposits sterilised by new development annually.
13. Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Annual recycling/reuse/composting rates. ■ % of wastes sent to landfill. ■ Amount of waste management capacity permitted expressed as a percentage of the total capacity required, as identified in the Regional Waste Plan (TAN 21) per annum.
14. Provide for a sustainable economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Economic activity by sector. ■ Annual vacancy rates for each Principle Settlement and Key Settlement. ■ New business started in RCT per annum.

ISA Objectives	Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total convenience/ comparison retail floorspace developed per annum. ■ Amount of major retail, office and leisure development (sqm) permitted in town centres expressed as a % of all major retail, office and leisure development permitted. ■ Number of applications approved per annum for non-retail use in primary and secondary shopping frontages.
<p>15. Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Net employment land supply/development per annum. ■ % increase in local job growth by sector/ reduction in numbers of economically inactive. ■ % of resident working age population employed. ■ % of employment land lost to alternative uses per annum

Chapter 7

Conclusions

7.1 The policies in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy have been subject to appraisal against the ISA objectives that were set out at the Scoping stage. This includes an appraisal of the spatial distribution of development for RCT (i.e. the Preferred Strategy). RCTCBC has considered eight options for the level of development (i.e. the growth options) and eight options for the spatial distribution of development (i.e. the spatial options) appropriate for RCT as part of developing this element of the Revised LDP. These reasonable alternative options have also been tested through the ISA.

Effects expected in relation to the ISA objectives

7.2 In general, the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy has been found to have a wide range of positive effects on the ISA objectives. Benefits are broadly expected in relation to protecting biodiversity assets in the plan area and surroundings; addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation; promoting healthier and more inclusive communities; supporting modal shift and improved connectivity; and supporting sustainable and more diverse economic growth. A small number of adverse effects have been identified where the level and distribution of development required to meet RCT's need for housing, employment and other uses (as set out through the Preferred Strategy) would require greenfield land take and result increased emissions and other types of pollution as new developments are occupied. There is potential for associated detrimental effects for biodiversity to result given the pressures of new development. Adverse effects relating to local character and the historic environment may also result as new developments are delivered and occupied. The Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy includes Strategic Policies which will help to mitigate these types of adverse effect and there is potential to achieve further mitigation as detailed policies are drafted as part of the Deposit Plan.

7.3 Given that Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy includes a relatively small number of policies and only four Potential Key Sites are identified at this stage, the ISA Report does not yet assess the likely cumulative effects of the plan. As additional detailed policies and the wider suite of site allocations are worked up at the Deposit stage, the ISA will consider the total effects of the plan in relation to each ISA objective, as part of the assessment of cumulative effect.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.4 As part the ISA for the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy, the potential effects relating to the nine protected characteristic set out in the Equalities Act 2010 have also been considered.

7.5 It is expected that the Preferred Strategy document would have positive effects in relation to all of the protected characteristics. The positive effects identified reflect the policy approach in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy of supporting good access to housing, employment and services and facilities to meet the needs of all in RCT as well as supporting integration between different groups in the plan area. The distribution of development set out through the Preferred Strategy, particularly focussing growth towards the larger settlements, is likely to result in benefits in relation to improvements in air quality and supporting access to services and facilities that certain groups are likely to need access to on a more regular basis. The Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy also includes Strategic Policies to further promote good access to jobs and services and facilities within the plan area. This policy approach is likely to support the successful functioning of settlement centres in RCT which in turn is likely to benefit integration and social tolerance in the plan area by allowing for more regular interaction between groups who might otherwise not come into regular contact with each other.

7.6 Therefore, given the potential to provide access to more specialist facilities and to support social tolerance towards groups who might otherwise experience higher levels of intolerance or harassment, particular positive effects are likely in relation to gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

7.7 Improvements in air quality are likely to be of greatest benefit to groups who are particularly susceptible to air pollution. The EqIA has therefore identified positive effects in relation to age, disability pregnancy and maternity. However, these positive effects are recorded as part of an overall mixed effect. The negative effects recorded as part of the overall mixed effect reflect the spatial distribution of development set out through the Preferred Strategy. Some development is to be directed to settlements containing AQMAs where more vulnerable groups might be affected by poor air quality at these locations.

Effects relating to Welsh language

7.8 Within the South Wales context, RCT generally performs well in terms of Welsh language use with a small percentage increased reported between the two most recent census periods in relation to the proportion of the population who can speak the language.

7.9 The Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy has set out a Vision and supporting objectives for the plan area as well as the distribution of development to be achieved over the plan period. This is supported by a number of strategic policies for addressing the topic areas of climate change, place making, flood risk, biodiversity, green infrastructure, housing, employment and settlement centres. While the Vision and objectives included in the plan are broadly aligned with the ISA objectives, there is little relationship between ISA objective 7: Welsh language and the other elements of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy. Therefore, it is expected that the consultation document will have mostly negligible effects in relation to promoting the use of the Welsh language in RCT.

Effects relating to WBFGA

7.10 The WBFGA (2015) places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. It sets out seven well-being goals which all public bodies are required to achieve:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

7.11 It is expected that the broadly positive effects identified through the ISA for the policy approach set out in the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy in relation to protecting biodiversity assets in the plan area and surroundings; addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation; promoting healthier and more inclusive communities; supporting modal shift and improved connectivity; and supporting sustainable and more diverse economic growth will be reflected in positive effects in relation to the WBFGA goals.

7.12 The small number of adverse effects identified in relation to the ISA objectives is likely to result in some adverse effects on the WBFGA goals. This reflects the potential need for greenfield land take to accommodate new growth over the plan period in RCT, resultant increases in carbon emissions and other types of pollution as well as pressures on biodiversity, local character and the historic environment. The WBFGA goals in question are:

- A resilient Wales
 - With negative effects possible in relation to ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example, climate change) given the

effects of development and its proximity to sensitive receptors as well as increasing numbers of carbon emissions as developments are built and occupied and new residents need to travel to and from these locations.

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
 - With negative effects possible in relation to culture, and heritage mostly felt in terms of impacts on local character, landscape and the built historic environment as new development is delivered, some of which will be on potentially more sensitive greenfield land.

7.13 It should be noted that in all instances, these effects are expected in combination with positive effects, with mitigation and enhancement supported by the Strategic Policies of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy. Furthermore, the detailed policies to be included in the LDP at the Deposit Plan stage will provide a further opportunity to incorporate mitigation and enhancement in relation to the achievement of these goals.

7.14 As noted above, the Revised LDP is expected to have limited impacts in relation to the promotion of Welsh language. Furthermore, the Plan's scope is limited to the local level and therefore, there is limited potential for it to contribute to Wales' impact on global well-being. As such, impacts relating to the final two goals are likely to be more minimal. However, through the inclusion of Strategic Policies relating to placemaking and design, the plan incorporates some benefits in relation to the protection of the historic environment and landscape in RCT which contribute to the heritage and understanding of the area. Benefits relating to health and well-being are also likely to be promoted through the Strategic Policies, thereby supporting well-being in the County Borough and the South East Wales region and to a lesser extent at the national level.

Next Steps

7.15 This ISA Report will be available for consultation alongside the Preferred Strategy between January and March 2024. The consultation responses on the Preferred Strategy and this ISA Report will be taken into account in the preparation of the Deposit Plan.

LUC
January 2024

Appendix A

ISA Screening

A.1 As recommended by the Development Plans Manual²⁰, RCTCBC is taking an integrated approach to the SA/SEA and other assessment processes for the Revised LDP 2022-2037. This appendix, which was originally included as a chapter in the ISA Scoping Report, sets out the screening exercise that has been carried out in relation to these other assessments. For each one, consideration has been given to:

- The legislative requirements.
- Relevant guidance documents.
- Whether and how the assessment will be undertaken including whether it will be integrated within the SA/SEA or carried out separately.

A.2 Where it is concluded that the requirements of other assessments will be addressed through the ISA framework, more information about this can be found in **Chapter 2** which presents the ISA framework.

SA/SEA

A.3 As described in **Chapter 1**, it is a legal requirement for the Revised LDP to be subject to SA and SEA; therefore there is no requirement to carry out SEA Screening. The integrated SA/SEA will be the main component of the wider ISA process and it will be undertaken to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations (Wales) as detailed in **Table 1.1** in **Chapter 1**.

Health Impact Assessment

A.4 As set out in the Development Plans Manual, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to be carried out by public bodies. The circumstances in which a HIA must be undertaken and how this should be carried out will be set out in detail in statutory regulations as directed by the First Minister²¹. Consultation was launched in late 2023 on draft regulations. When the final regulations are published, they will be reviewed and their implications for the Revised RCT LDP will be considered.

A.5 HIA is defined in the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 as *“...an assessment of the likely effect, both in the short term and in the long term, of a proposed action or decision on the*

²⁰ Welsh Government (2020) Development Plans Manual (Edition 3).

²¹ Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (2021) Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Local Development Plans (LDPs): A Toolkit for Practice.

physical and mental health of the people of Wales or of some of the people of Wales.”

A.6 The importance of ensuring good health through planning is emphasised in Planning Policy Wales (PPW)²². PPW highlights the important contribution that HIA can make to plan-making. It also states that information to assess potential impacts on health can be required through various mechanisms, including SA, and that where relevant, health impacts should be incorporated into these assessments. A shared and integrated approach to evidence gathering and assessments is noted by PPW to generally offer the most effective and collaborative ways of working. While HIA can be undertaken as a separate standalone assessment, the Development Plans Manual notes that HIA can be integrated into the SA from the start. It is also noted that, because the SEA Regulations require human health to be considered as part of the assessment of environmental effects, the health component of an SEA can be broadened to include both physical and mental health objectives of an HIA.

A.7 The Welsh Government’s Practical Guide to HIA²³ and the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) guidance on HIA^{24,25} set out the steps required to undertake an HIA, with Screening being the first step. The guidance states that there is no fixed way of making a decision about whether to conduct HIA, but that the screening stage should set out a preliminary picture of the potential health impacts on the relevant population. This guidance also states that while HIAs can be carried out as part of a wider ISA process, the health and well-being and inequalities components of the assessment must be explicit.

A.8 In summary, screening should give consideration to the following:

- whether the proposal is likely to impact on health;
- which sections of the population, particularly vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected; and
- the potential scale of any positive or negative impacts.

A.9 As a strategic level plan, the Revised LDP can affect public health through the policies and site allocations included within it. As well as policies specifically relating to health and wellbeing, the location of development sites in relation to healthcare facilities and the allocation of sites for open space and other green infrastructure can influence health-related effects.

A.10 Baseline information relating to public health in RCT is presented in **Appendix D** and shows that the health profile of

RCT is relatively poor compared to the rest of Wales. The Revised LDP therefore offers opportunities to improve public health by including relevant policies and allocating development in the most sustainable locations (which will have associated health benefits).

A.11 The effects of the Revised LDP on health are expected to be largely limited to the plan area, i.e. RCT, and would mainly be long-term and permanent although any health-related effects from the construction process of new development (such as noise impacts) would be short term.

Given the strategic nature of the Revised LDP and the fact that ‘human health’ is one of the topics required to be addressed by the SEA Regulations, it is proposed that the HIA will be integrated within the ISA process for the Revised LDP, to be addressed via a relevant ISA objective (see **Chapter 2**). The ISA report at each stage of plan-making will include a section clearly summarising the health-related impacts of the Revised LDP in order to ensure that this element of the ISA is explicit.

Equalities Impact Assessment

A.12 The legal requirement for Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is set out through the Equality Act 2010. The Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Act) came into force in April 2011. It requires public bodies to assess the impact of policies on different population groups to ensure discrimination does not take place, and where possible, to promote equality of opportunity. Through the Equalities Act, having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

A.13 A plan-making authority should screen the nine protected characteristic groups in the Equalities Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) to identify and justify which characteristics the plan can influence. Those characteristics which can be influenced should be integrated into the

²² Welsh Government (2021) Planning Policy Wales Edition 11.

²³ Welsh Government (2004) ‘Improving Health and Reducing Inequalities: A Practical Guide to HIA.

²⁴ Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (2012) Health Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide.

²⁵ Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (2021) Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Local Development Plans (LDPs): A Toolkit for Practice.

assessment framework; those that cannot be influenced should be screened out and justified.

A.14 In March 2021 Welsh Government adopted the Socio-economic Duty to complement the Equality Act, 2010 with the aim of further contributing towards Wales' long term well-being goals, in particular "A more equal Wales" and "A Wales of cohesive communities". The Duty places a legal responsibility on bodies when they are taking strategic decisions to have due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage²⁶. In effect, the duty results in an extension of EqIA to considering the potentially effects relating to socio-economically affected groups.

A.15 It is possible that the Revised LDP could impact upon any of the protected characteristics as well as socio-economic disadvantaged groups to some degree, as part of the overall effects of the plan on the local population, although some groups may be more directly affected (i.e. older people could be directly affected by the provision or not of appropriate housing to meet their particular needs). It can be challenging to identify how individual policies would affect some of the characteristics – effects may be more easily identified when considering the plan as a whole.

It is proposed that an EqIA will be prepared in parallel to the ISA process for the Revised LDP and will be presented in an appendix to the ISA Report. An EqIA matrix will be prepared to assess the likely effects of the Revised LDP on each of the nine protected characteristics and other potentially affected groups when considering socio-economic factors, with reference being made to any particularly relevant policies. The main ISA Report will include a summary of the likely equalities effects of the Revised LDP and will make any necessary recommendations for avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. The findings of the equalities assessment will also be taken into account in relation to the relevant ISA objectives.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WBFGA) 2015

A.16 The WBFGA (2015) places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. It sets out seven well-being goals which all public bodies are required to achieve:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales

- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

A.17 More information about what these goals mean is provided in the Welsh Government's guide to the Act²⁷. The WBFGA signifies the dedication of Wales' contribution towards all of the UN's Sustainable Development goals, including Goal 3²⁸ which is to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'.

A.18 The WBFGA puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which identifies how organisations should go about meeting their duty under the Act. In applying the sustainable development principle, public bodies need to demonstrate that they have considered the following five issues:

- Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring or getting worse.
- Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.
- Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them.
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.

A.19 The Development Plans Manual states that:

'The LDP must demonstrate how it contributes to achieving the well-being goals. The approach taken to appraise the plan through the SA can enable LPAs to understand where the plan can maximise its contribution. The well-being goals should be integral to the preparation of the SA Scoping Report and used to inform the review of evidence, identify issues and structure the SA framework which will assess the plan's growth options, objectives, policies and proposals'.

A.20 It also states that 'the well-being goals, objectives and the five ways of working should be integral to the development of the SA framework'.

A.21 The publication 'Creating healthier places and spaces for our present and future generations' has been developed by

²⁶ Welsh Government (March 2021) A More Equal Wales: The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010 - Statutory Guidance

²⁷ Welsh Government (May 2015) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials.

²⁸ United Nations (2015) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Public Health Wales²⁹ in response to the Act. It sets out an approach which focuses on six priority areas³⁰ of the built and natural environment that can positively impact upon health and well-being, and support delivery of the well-being goals. These priority areas are highly relevant to the Revised LDP and the assessment of the policies and sites within the Revised LDP will therefore also help to assess how well those priorities are being addressed.

It is proposed that the requirements of the WBFGA will be integrated within the ISA process for the Revised LDP, through the inclusion of relevant ISA objectives (see Chapter 2). The ISA Report will also include a summary assessment (as part of the report conclusions) of the overall well-being impacts of the plan, with specific reference to the well-being goals set out in the WBFGA.

A.22 Consideration has been given to whether the ISA framework should be structured in line with the well-being goals, i.e. whether the objectives could be grouped according to which goal they relate to. However, many of the well-being goals are cross-cutting and would be influenced by more than one of the ISA objectives; therefore presenting the ISA framework in this way would be too simplistic. Instead, the ISA framework in Chapter 2 shows how each ISA objective helps to address the seven well-being goals.

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

A.23 PPW sets the policy requirements for Welsh language and makes it clear that the Welsh language is “part of the social and cultural fabric” (of Wales) and that “the land use planning system should take account of the conditions which are essential to the Welsh language and contribute to its use and thriving Welsh language goal”.

A.24 The Development Plans Manual specifies that the Welsh language must be considered from the outset of the development plan process. The requirement for the SA to include “an assessment of the likely impacts of the plan on the use of the Welsh Language in the plan area” is set out through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (section 11). The Act states that “*the purpose of this is to ensure that the scale and location of change set out in the plan supports the Welsh language and ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place, if required*”.

A.25 The overarching requirement to undertake SA is set out through section 62 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Welsh Language Commissioner’s Guidance on Policy Making Standards³¹ requires that Welsh language be considered from the outset of policy making and notes that: “*the Commissioner does not consider that the requirement under section 62 of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act means that the requirement to comply with Welsh language standards is removed. As they arise from two separate statutory requirements, it is entirely appropriate to expect bodies to ensure that they go beyond the requirements of section 62 in order to consider the wider effects on the Welsh language and to comply with the policy making standards under the Welsh Language Measure.*”

A.26 Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN 20): Planning and the Welsh Language³² provides guidance on the consideration of Welsh language as part of the development plan and SA processes. In summary, LPAs must consider the likely effects of their development plan on Welsh language as part of the SA process and include a statement within the deposit plan on how this has been considered and/or addressed within the development plan.

It is proposed that the ISA framework will include an objective specifically addressing the likely effects of the Revised LDP on the use of the Welsh language (see Chapter 2). The ISA Report will also include a summary conclusion about the overall effects of the Revised LDP on Welsh language, as part of the assessment of the likely cumulative effects of the plan.

Environment (Wales) Act

A.27 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 seeks to legislate for the planning and management of natural resources in Wales in a manner which is a proactive, sustainable and integrated. The Act also introduces guidance on the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR).

A.28 Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11) specifies that LDPs must have regard to the Natural Resources Policy and Area Statements that follow on from it. PPW11 therefore translates the principles of SNMR for the planning system.

A.29 As required by Section 6 of the Act, public authorities have responsibility to “maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent

²⁹ Public Health Wales (2018) Creating healthier places and spaces for our present and future generations.

³⁰ The walking and cycling infrastructure, open green /blue spaces and green infrastructure, the food growing and retail environment, community, health and social care services provided from local facilities, low levels of air pollution and building design.

³¹ Welsh Language Commissioner (2020) Policy Making Standards: Creating opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. Good practice advice document

³² Welsh Government (2017) Technical advice note (TAN) 20: planning and the Welsh language.

with the proper exercise of those functions.” There is a requirement for authorities to report on actions taken to promote ecosystem resilience as well as to improve biodiversity.

A.30 Section 7 of the Act requires that “Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in their opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales”.

A.31 Prior to publication, appropriate consultation regarding the list must be undertaken with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The list must be kept under review and all reasonable steps should be taken to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitats on the list without prejudice to Section 6.

A.32 PPW states that a proactive approach should be taken by all those engaged in the planning process to facilitate the delivery of biodiversity and resilience outcomes. To allow for the implementation of the Section 6 duties, PPW sets out a framework of considerations (DECCA), that should be addressed:

- Diversity – ensuring mechanisms are in place to minimise species loss given that more diverse ecosystems are more resilient to external influences;
- Extent – ensuring planning decisions support measures which seek the creation, restoration and appropriate management of green networks and linkages as well as other existing assets;
- Condition – ensuring planning decisions do not compromise the condition of ecosystems and support the long term management of retained habitats;
- Connectivity – ensuring opportunities for the creation of functional habitat and ecological networks;
- Adaptability to change – primarily ensuring that action is taken to protect the extent, condition and connectivity of habitats, features and ecological networks from climate change. The actions can also help to facilitate social and economic resilience aspirations of the WBFGA.

A.33 The Act (section 8) also states that NRW must prepare a report containing its assessment of the state of natural resources in relation to Wales (SoNaRR). The requirement for NRW to prepare and maintain Area Statements for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the national natural resources policy is set out through section 11 of the Act. RCT falls within the South Central Area Statement alongside Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil, and Cardiff.

A.34 The Development Plans Manual recommends that the requirements of the Act (Section 6) can be met through the ISA. The ISA provides a means to consider how the various elements of the PPW framework of considerations could be addressed by the Revised LDP.

It is proposed that the requirements of Environment (Wales) Act 2016 will be met through the ISA process for the Revised LDP, to be addressed within a relevant ISA objective relating to biodiversity (**see Chapter 2**).

Appendix B

Summary of ISA Scoping Consultation Responses

B.1 This appendix presents a summary of the responses received in relation to the ISA Scoping Report that was consulted upon with the statutory bodies between July and September 2022. The responses and actions taken in relation to each comment received are also shown in the table below.

Table B.1: Consultation responses received in relation to the ISA Scoping Report for the Revised LDP 2022-2037 and how they have been addressed

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Natural Resources Wales		
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	<p>There have been significant changes to the context within which the LDP is emerging and these should be reflected in the scoping report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A nature emergency has been declared at national level and there has been a pledge from the Council to carbon neutral by 2030 and for the County Borough to be as close as possible to be carbon neutral by this date. ■ The State of the Natural Environment Resources Report has been published. ■ Future Wales: the national plan 2040 and PPW 11 has been published. ■ The Corporate Joint Committees have been established. ■ Public Service Boards are progressing the second iteration of local wellbeing plans and assessments. 	<p>Noted. Reference to the nature emergency has been added to the Scoping Report, as has reference to the Council's carbon neutrality pledge.</p> <p>The State of Natural Resources Report is already referenced in Appendix A.</p> <p>Future Wales: The National Plan is already included in Chapter 3 and Appendix A.</p> <p>One reference to PPW10 was included in the Scoping Report in error; this (footnote 8) has now been updated to refer to PPW11.</p> <p>Reference is already included in Appendix A to the work of Public Service Boards and the forthcoming Well-being Plan for RCT.</p>
General	We are happy with the approach of integrating other assessment processes as part of the ISA and would welcome the findings of the HRA informing the process as well.	Noted, no action required.
Methodology	<p>Suggest an interlinked approach to the assessment of the climate and nature emergencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whether the cumulative development and land use proposals bring appropriate biodiversity benefits with no unacceptable impact or damage to species and habitats and whether the plan acts to enhance natural capital rather than deplete it? ■ Whether the development and land use proposals are individually or cumulatively compatible with the scale and pace of decarbonisation and sequestration needed to remain aligned with the Paris Agreement and Welsh carbon budgets (to 2030) and targets to the end of the plan period (near 2040)? 	<p>The ISA methodology will allow for a comprehensive assessment of the emerging LDP on all aspects of sustainability, including both climate and the natural environment. The ISA framework already addresses the points listed by the consultee, particularly through ISA objectives 1 and 9. While proposals in the emerging LDP will be appraised initially against each ISA objective in isolation, the likely cumulative effects of the Plan as a whole will also be considered. It should also be noted that the ISA is a high level, strategic assessment and it will not be possible for the ISA to reach very specific conclusions about the likely effects of individual development proposals on specific targets.</p>

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether proposals to adapt the built environment to the predicted effects of climate change and address other sustainability issues are comprehensive and the meet the needs of current generations, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs? 	
General	<p>We advise that detailing LDP objectives in the scoping report would enable a more specific focus on where, how, and when they might be achieved and, with reference to baseline data and trends, what the likely significant environmental effects could be. For example, the Regional Technical Statement (which forms part of the LDP evidence base) identifies a need for the plan to allocate to meet the regional aggregates apportionment, and thus provides the context for assessing options.</p>	<p>The LDP objectives have not yet been worked up and so cannot be included in the ISA Scoping Report. The next stage of the ISA will involve assessing the likely effects of the emerging LDP proposals on the ISA objectives and this work will be set out in the next iteration of the ISA Report.</p>
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	<p>We advise reviewing the scoping of relevant environmental issues (the green boxes throughout Chapter 3), with reference to Future Wales (which introduces pre-assessed areas for wind energy development and national growth zones to the development plan), The State of Natural Resources Report (2020), the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment and The South Central Wales Area Statement.</p>	<p>The information in Chapter 3 has been updated with reference to the documents listed.</p>
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	<p>When presenting baseline information, the use of maps, graphs, diagrams, and other visual forms of representation helps make the data easier to understand and we welcome their use in Chapter 4. Any issues with the quality of, or gaps in the baseline should be acknowledged.</p> <p>Chapter 4 identifies baseline for each of the required environmental topics, however, because the scoping report does not present LDP objectives, we question whether the information is appropriately focused on the likely significant effects that could influence or be influenced by the LDP.</p>	<p>The LDP objectives have not been worked up and so cannot be included in the ISA Scoping Report. They will be included in the full ISA Report at the next stage of the ISA process. The baseline information addresses the topics required by the SEA Regulations as well as other topics, reflecting the broader scope of the ISA, and the information presented is considered to be appropriate for informing the scope of an LDP.</p>
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	<p>We advise the baseline should be updated and reviewed to align with the recently published Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment, ecosystem profiles (Natural Resources Wales / Building resilient ecosystems), and the LDP's wider evidence base.</p>	<p>Chapter 3 has been updated to include reference to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment and ecosystem profiles. The baseline information will continue to be updated throughout the ISA process, to take into account other emerging evidence informing the LDP as it becomes available.</p>
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	<p>We consider the identified evidence gap on the accessibility of open space should be highlighted so it may be drawn into the assessment once addressed. This may helpfully also incorporate the consideration of Green Infrastructure.</p>	<p>The evidence gap on open space accessibility has been referenced in a new section at the end of Chapter 4 which highlights data gaps and limitations in accordance with the SEA Regulations (Wales). As new evidence emerges in this area it will be used to inform the findings of the ISA.</p>
Chapter 5: Key Sustainability Issues and likely	<p>We advise that a review of the key sustainability issues set out in table 5.1 of the report is conducted to ensure they align with the baseline, or else explain the decision-making process for their selection and prioritisation and where possible to express them with a greater focus on place.</p>	<p>Chapter 5 explains that analysis of the baseline information has informed the identification of the key sustainability issues facing RCT. It is considered that the key</p>

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Evolution without the Plan		sustainability issues as set out do reflect the baseline information. The key issues are not presented in any priority order, all have equal weight.
Chapter 5: Key Sustainability Issues and likely Evolution without the Plan	<p>We advise greater emphasis to be placed on:</p> <p>Demographics – The report should draw from LDP evidence relating on projected demographic change over the plan period.</p> <p>Decarbonisation – The report focuses on transport emissions, yet there is no discussion of pathways demonstrating the plan's contribution to meeting target emissions reduction by the end of the plan period or your Council's 2030 pledge.</p> <p>Nature Networks – The focus has moved from site-based conservation to safeguarding nature networks as a means of contributing to nature recovery and ecosystem resilience.</p> <p>Priority and protected species – The planning area includes Blaen Cynon Special Area of Conservation, where the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly is reported as being in an unfavourable condition. Cwn Cadlan SAC features grassland communities; Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey silt laden soils and Alkaline Fens.</p> <p>Landscape and land use change – Future Wales identifies the planning area within a national growth zone and has identified pre assessed areas for renewable energy where the decision has been made that landscape change is acceptable. Other drivers for change include woodland expansion and peatland restoration.</p>	Chapter 3 has been reviewed to ensure the topics identified are appropriately covered. Where appropriate, updates to the key sustainability issues have been made in Chapter 5.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	References to National Landscape Character Areas (NLCAs) would benefit from more detailed information on Special Landscape Areas (SLA) (including those in neighbouring local planning authority areas), Local Landscape Character Assessments, LANDMAP (a map showing the overall evaluation would be useful), and Landscape Visual Impact Assessments which have been prepared for recent significant projects in the planning area.	Chapter 4 has been updated to include further detail on SLAs in the County Borough. The level of detail included in the baseline is considered proportionate and appropriate to the ISA.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Land in the plan area is an important setting for the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park which includes a UNESCO Global Geopark and International Dark Sky Reserve. Rather than categorising the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 'by its vast swathes of unenclosed moorland across deep valleys', more detailed and locally relevant information provided in the Landscape Character Assessment of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority should be included.	Chapter 4 has been updated to include further information about the landscape character of the National Park.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information and Chapter 5: Key	Flood risk – suggest the baseline information is not communicated in the key sustainability issue. Historic events (including Storm Ciara and Dennis) demonstrate the significance of this issue and NRW has prepared a response to both of these events. Addressing flood risk, maintaining the resilience of engineered defences, and promoting all means of mitigation are significant issues in the	The baseline information in Chapter 4 includes information on recent flooding events and storms. The key sustainability issues presented in Chapter 5 have been revised to include reference to recent major flood events. The assessment of sites against ISA

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Sustainability Issues and likely Evolution without the Plan	planning area. It is vital that there is an openness about future flood risk amongst all audiences, and this should be encouraged so that everybody can understand the risks and work collectively to increase the resilience of residents and businesses, so they are better prepared to recover more quickly from flooding. Information from the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment and the emerging Water Framework Directive opportunity catchment area work should be drawn on for the assessment.	Objective 1 draws on the flood risk zones which are mapped in the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment and the Flood Map for Planning.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Evidence about the communities most at risk of flooding is available in the Communities at Risk Register. Figure 4.4.2 should now draw from the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) rather than the TAN 15 Development Advice Map and information is also available for surface water.	The baseline information has been updated to include more information about the communities most at risk of flooding in RCT. Figure 4.4.2 has been updated as suggested.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	We note the scoping report references UKCP09; however more recent UKCP (UK Climate Projections) 18 projections are now available and have started to inform our work UK Climate Projections (UKCP) – Met Office).	The baseline information has been updated to reflect updated evidence about climate change from the 2018 projections.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information and Chapter 5: Key Sustainability Issues and likely Evolution without the Plan	The baseline identifies, for some abstraction points, that new consumptive abstraction will only be available at medium to high river flows. We question why this is not presented as a key issue for the assessment of the Plan? We would also welcome consideration of food provisioning, as a significant system impacting across environmental topics. The potential for impacts on higher grade agricultural soils should be considered as part of the appraisal.	The ISA framework addresses impacts on agricultural land through ISA objective 12. The key sustainability issues in Chapter 5 have been updated to include reference to water availability.
Chapter 6: Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Framework and Methodology	Identifying where significant environmental effects are likely to arise helps focus the scale of assessment required. The report set out the proposed methods and their rationale in Chapter 6. NRW supports the embedding of Candidate Site assessments within the ISA. If it can be shown that significant environmental effects on specific elements of the environment are unlikely, these elements can be scoped out and removed from the assessment. A concise and reasoned justification is necessary, and provides a useful audit trail. The approach of using decision aiding questions and distance based criteria for Candidate Sites will require extensive reporting for the justification for each assessment. Where possible the decision aiding questions should be linked to evidence/information so that assessments may be repeatable. The terminology in ISA objective 1 needs to be adjusted to reflect the correct terminology on flood risk zones and to reflect new TAN15 advice which does not support development on greenfield land in areas of flood risk. The assessment might draw from the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment. Considerable evidence is available for some topics meaning assessment approaches that make use of more limited numbers of decision-making questions might be used. This could	The decision aiding question will be used to guide the appraisal of LDP options against each headline ISA objective – it is not intended that every option will be assessed in detail against each decision aiding questions. The terminology used under ISA objective 1: flooding reflects the update to TAN 15 (flood zones 2/3 instead of A/B/C). The assessment is based on the flood risk zones which are mapped in the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment as well as the Flood Map for Planning. The assessment criteria identify a significant negative effect where development would take place on greenfield land in areas of high flood risk, in line with the TAN 15 advice.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
	make use of modelling-led, environmental receptors and mapping and spatial analysis techniques such as those promoted for use in relation to air quality impacts on designated sites.	
Chapter 6: Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Framework and Methodology	<p>NRW would welcome the following matters being incorporated as a means of flagging potential adverse significant effects from Candidate Sites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within or likely to affect the national site network sites and Ramsar sites (aligned with the findings of the HRA) 2. Within or likely to affect a SSSI; or is within a consultation area around an SSSI notified to the LPA by NRW 3. Within or likely to affect National Nature Reserves [within 1,000m] 4. Likely to affect European Protected Species / nationally fully protected species protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 5. Likely to affect the purposes of National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 6. Flood Map for Planning (aligned with the findings of the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment) 7. Involving groundworks and/or non-mains foul or surface water disposal within Source Protection Zones, Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, or defined water protection zones 8. Involving groundworks upon historic closed landfills or within 250m of an active open landfill 9. Non-mains sewer proposed (for wastewater and sewage disposal) 	The matters listed have been incorporated where appropriate. Information from the HRA will be taken into account as part of the assessment of likely cumulative effects of the plan, later in the ISA process. Proximity to National Nature Reserves is already addressed within the site assessment criteria as it is a national designation, and proximity to National Parks is also considered (there are no AONBs in proximity of the County Borough). There are no Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in RCT and SPZs are already taken into consideration through the appraisal of ISA objective 10.
Cadw		
Appraisal methodology	The Council should the use expertise of their archaeological advisors and The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, in the preparation of the LDP and for assessing the impact of Candidate Sites on the historic environment in the ISA.	The appraisal of site options in relation to ISA objective 6: historic environment will draw on the historic environment assessment work that has been undertaken by the Council's officers. See Table 6.2 which sets out the assessment criteria for the Candidate Sites.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	There is a need to add to the Historic Environment and Cultural section (of the review of relevant plans and programmes in Chapter 3 of the ISA Scoping Report) included from paragraph 3.29. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 should be added to the list of policies and programmes of relevance, as the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 amends these Acts and is not a standalone Act.	The review of plans and programmes presented in Appendix A now includes reference to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	The section of the ISA Scoping Report that sets out baseline information for the historic environment (sections 4.74– 4.83) includes no mention of scheduled monuments. There should be a section identifying how many scheduled monuments there are in RCT.	Reference to scheduled monuments has been added to the baseline information in Chapter 4.
Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT)		

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	The ISA Scoping Report takes into account the strategic cascade of legislation and policy, and the inclusion of these into the LDP to ensure that the measures to protect and enhance the historic environment are undertaken. The assessment topic (f) references the historic environment; and 3.29 notes the historic environment and cultural heritage. Additional information regarding this can found be found in Planning Policy Wales 11 th Edition 2021, in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places, 6.1 the Historic Environment, and refer ^{en} ce to this should be included.	The consultee refers to the require ^{me} nts of the SEA Regulations 12(2)(f) which require reporting on the likely significant effects of the plan, including those relating to cultural heritage. Table 1.1 of this report notes how this requirement is being taken into account in the ISA. Planning Policy Wales (11 th Edition) has already been taken into account to inform the scope of the ISA, as detailed in Chapter 3 and Appendix A.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes and Chapter 4: Baseline Information	We note that reference to current legislation and policy relating to the Historic Environment: the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016; and TAN24: The Historic Environment, is included in the ISA Scoping Report, as well as to statutorily protected (Scheduled and Listed) designated historic assets. It should be noted that these are outnumbered by non-designated historic assets, detailed within the Historic Environment Record, and that these are more likely to be directly impacted by change or development.	Paragraph 4.83 in the baseline information already refers to the numerous non-designated heritage assets in RCT and the fact that these outnumber designated heritage assets.
Welsh Language Commissioner		
Appraisal methodology	It is proposed in the ISA Scoping Report that the ISA framework includes an objective relating to the likely effects of the revised LDP on the use of the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Commissioner agrees with this approach.	Noted, no action required.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Chapter 3 of the ISA Scoping Report which includes the review of relevant plans and programmes, states that the ISA should appraise all elements of the LDP in terms of potential impacts on the Welsh language, considering how the plan could support both existing and new speakers. The Welsh Language Commissioner agrees with this approach.	Noted, no action required.
Appraisal methodology	The ISA framework includes ISA objective 7 which seeks to promote the use of the Welsh language and will address the requirement for a Welsh language impact assessment. The Welsh Language Commissioner supports this objective.	Noted, no action required.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes and Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Sections of the baseline information and review of relevant plans and programmes in the ISA Scoping Report are highlighted in relation to the proportion of Welsh speakers in RCT and the WESP and its requirements, The inclusion of this information in the ISA is supported by the Welsh Commissioner. It is also stated that the LDP should further the objectives of the WESP, including : “Strengthening the use of Welsh beyond the school gates in social spaces, in the workplace and across our communities will also be an integral part of creating a thriving and growing Welsh language in Rhodda Cynon Taf.”	Noted. Recommendations relating to the LDP itself will be addressed by RCTCBC through the plan making process.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
General	It is noted that the LDP itself will be assessed in terms of its implications for the Welsh language through the ISA. We urge the Council to develop a policy within the LDP to protect and promote the Welsh language. The Council is required to produce a 5-year strategy for promoting the Welsh language in its area, in line with the promotion standards placed upon it. The Council should explain how the LDP will contribute to meeting the target set in the strategy for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area.	Noted. Recommendations relating to the LDP itself will be addressed by RCTCBC through the plan making process.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	In Chapter 3 reference is made to the Welsh Language Measure, Cymraeg 2050 and TAN 20. It is noted that, in preparing the LDP, consideration should be given to the Welsh language and the areas in which it is more widely spoken, while also seeking to increase its use. The Welsh Commissioner queries where this means increasing its use throughout the authority area? This type of approach would be supported.	Recommendations relating to the LDP itself will be addressed by RCTCBC through the plan making process. The ISA will consider whether the policies of LDP will support an increase in use of the Welsh language throughout RCT.
Chapter 6: ISA Framework and Methodology	The report notes that it is not possible to conclude that the location of Candidate Sites would directly affect the objective to promote the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore noted that all site options will have a negligible effect. It is unclear how the report reached this conclusion.	The text against ISA objective ISA 7 in Table 6.2 explains why it is not considered appropriate or justified to identify different effects for Candidate Site options based on their location.
Appendix A	What is the meaning of high Welsh language use or Welsh being more widely spoken, or spoken in the community? What are the social implications of development and the preservation of the cultural heritage – the Council should clarify the criteria for designating the areas or communities referred to.	Chapter 4 (section on Welsh Language) sets out baseline information about existing levels of Welsh language use within RCT. Any increase in Welsh speaking would be an increase on that baseline. It is recognised and accepted that an increase in Welsh language use would have benefits in terms of preserving cultural heritage.
Countryside Team		
Chapter 2: Screening	Paragraph 2.32— Typing error where 'extent' is missing from the definition of adaptability (as per Environment Act and PPW)	This is correct in this version of the report.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Paragraph 3.6 – includes no mention of the Nature Emergency declared by Welsh Government in summer 2021 (although it is referred to in one of the later tables).	Noted. The Nature Emergency has now been referenced in Appendix A of this report.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Paragraph 3.26— The net zero target needs more prominence. The Welsh policy and guidance is ramping up all the time (for example the requirements for Councils to look at landuse emissions in their own carbon returns to WG in 2022), the SuDS regulations in Wales are not referenced in 3.26 and the report by the Future Generations Commissioner on planning isn't referenced. NRW has published their updated peatland data portal in April 2022 which now includes carbon sequestration/emissions modelling.	Reference to the SuDS regulations for Wales has been updated in Chapter 3 of this report. Reference to the carbon sequestration and emissions modelling data from NRW is included in Appendix A: Relevant Plans and Programmes.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Paragraph 3.28 is the reference to Nature Recovery Plan for Wales correct? In the green box final para '...habitats, species, ecosystem resilience, on carbon stored in undisturbed soils, and on valued landscapes.' Should HRA be ISA?	The references included in relation to the HRA is correct. This report includes reference to the most recent Action Plan which has been refreshed for 2020-21 in Chapter 3.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	<p>Paragraph 4.9-- LULUCF the data is changing all the time, for example peatbogs were initially classified as sequestering but this has changed to emitting for most. Modelling and data collection is very complex, there is no detailed work for RCT specifically. There is a likely reduction in the extent of conifer in RCT due to windfarms, but here, it is likely that the removal of conifer on peat and the rewetting of the peat would reduce emissions (e.g. penycymoedd wind farm).</p> <p>Paragraph 4.10 is helpful as soil disturbance (especially in semi-natural habitat) is likely to be the biggest contributor to landuse emissions in RCT, but we have no data. We think woodland regeneration (without planting) is adding to woodland extent across RCT, we currently have no data but may get some this year for some larger Council owned sites.</p>	Chapter 4 already presents the most recent information available on LULUCF data for RCT.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Paragraph 4.19 and maps 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 assume SINC data relates to 2011 plan, not the revised layer produced in 2020? I think Candidate Sites are to be assessed against the new layer	The map shows the adopted SINCS and not proposed, reflecting the current baseline situation.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Paragraph 4.26 and appendix-- the revised Action for Nature was approved by the RCT Local Nature Partnership in July 2022 and will probably be going to the Council's Climate Change Sub Committee in October 2022. The new plan covers the habitats and species on the Wales s.7 list as well as those identified as locally important by the Partnership. Actions are grouped by habitat, but also cover general themes with a specific focus on actions that different groups (from novice naturalists to wildlife experts, landowners, families, public bodies etc.) can take forward.	The revised Action for Nature plan is not yet available but will be referred to at the next stage of the ISA.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Paragraph 4.38 Is the data correct? The 2022 round of meetings on the Ely catchment (as part of NRW's Area statement work) identified the Clun as the worst catchment in Wales re the WFD. The Ely meetings clearly identified planning and permitting (as well as investment) as key drivers of the WFD issues in the Ely catchment. Should we be using RCT not Severn basin data.	The data has been checked and updated where necessary in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Paragraph 4.73 Wales peatland data portal has been published by NRW April 2022.	Chapter 4 now includes reference to the updated data.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Paragraph 4.111/2 should the effects of Covid be referenced here; data is probably available now.	There is very limited data available which shows the effects of the Covid pandemic; however it has been referenced throughout the report where relevant and data is available.
Chapter 6	ISA objective 10: water-- Not sure of the relevance of source protection zones in RCT, the critical WFD indicator is the status of the waterbody and we have a lot of failures, as mentioned above the Ely catchment workshops identified planning as one of the mechanisms for addressing these issues. The assessment of Candidate Sites should reflect that?	It is not possible to assess this spatially-- we would need to have mapped data showing the areas that drain into waterbodies of various quality levels which is not available.
Chapter 6	ISA objective 12: land-- should this reflect the issues of soil carbon identified in ch3/4?	ISA objective 12 relates to the efficient use of land regarding the potential to promote the reuse of brownfield sites. Soil carbon relates mostly to climate change which is covered through ISA objective 1. In any case, given the complexities of considering soil carbon, it is considered to be beyond the scope of the ISA.
Energy and Carbon Reduction Team		
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	<p>The scoping report gives reference to Energy Efficiency Wales and that the ISA should include a promotion of energy efficient design. This could link to the proposed framework to improve implementation and enforcement of the EPC B target by 2030 which will impact RCTCB's leased assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Non-Domestic Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Implementation of the EPC B Future Target ■ The enforcement of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards are an enforced standard not optional so should be noted. 	The enforcement of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards is included in Appendix A of this report.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	<p>The scoping report needs to provide more information relating to Electric Vehicle charging policy/ documents. There is a transport section which references EV but the document is missing references to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Welsh Government – Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for Wales; ■ Electric vehicle charging strategy for Wales: action plan; and ■ RCT's EV Charging Strategy. 	References to EV policy is set out in Appendix A.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	<p>In relation to the data presented in the climate change baseline for the ISA, RC's Climate Change Strategy provides a comprehensive overview of RC's climate related performance. The Strategy has been structured around the Corporate Priorities of People, Places, and Prosperity as they feature in the Council's Corporate Plan. Cabinet also agreed that the delivery of the Strategy will be monitored as part of the quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet</p> <p>Furthermore, RCTBCB is working with the Carbon Trust to develop the Council's Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan due by the end of the year. This will provide a comprehensive baseline review of the Council's decarbonisation agenda.</p> <p>The Carbon Footprint work that was undertaken for the FY 19/20 and FY 20/21 which provides baseline data could also be referenced in the baseline information.</p>	Reference to the carbon footprint work has been included within the baseline in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	The scoping report identifies the importance of the LDP placing emphasis on climate change and the decarbonisation agenda where opportunities are available. However, there is no reference to RC's requirement to report back to WG on their Net Zero reporting commitment. There is a need to make reference to the following document: Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide.	Reference to the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide is included in Appendix A of this report.
Chapter 4	It is understood that 100% of RC's electricity is REGO procured as evidenced from RCTCBC Carbon Footprint Report September 2021.	Reference to the source of RCT's electricity has been provided within the baseline in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	RCTCBC will be working within the Welsh Government's Delivery Plan for a Low Carbon Wales, the Net Zero Wales Carbon Wales budget (2) and its 'Route Map' to decarbonise the public sector in Wales. The Plan is the start of the journey to net zero and a greener, stronger, fairer Wales and focuses on our second carbon budget (2021–2025). It also looks ahead to build the foundations for Carbon Budget 3 and our 2030 target, as well as net zero by 2050. The Plan commits all Public Sector bodies to report their emissions and publish their plans to achieve net zero by March 2023.	Reference to the Delivery Plan and Road Map is included in Appendix A of this report.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	According to the Department for Transport, RCT had 761 Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles licensed at the end of Q1 2022.	Reference to electric vehicle ownership in RCT is included in Chapter 4 of this report.
Housing team		
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Highlights paragraph 4.120 of the ISA Scoping Report – “The most recent Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) outlined that the average house price in RTC in 2016/17 was £114,000; ranging from £50,000 in Tylorstown to £210,000 in Pontyclun. The LMHA identified a shortfall of 737.51 affordable units per annum (comprising 467.47 social rented units and 270.04 intermediate units) from 2017/18 to 2021/22 based on the existing backlog of need. It is noted that smaller units (one	Chapter 4 presents the most recent information available on housing in RCT. This includes information from the LMHA and other relevant sources of information.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
	<p>and two bedrooms) need to be prioritised. Most of the housing shortfall is in South West Taf, Central Taf, Greater Pontypridd and Aberdare.”</p> <p>From the LHMA – “Real house prices in RCT, whilst somewhat higher, have historically mirrored those in Wales as a whole. Overall prices increased substantially in the period 2001-2008. Values then reduced from the beginning of 2008 and fell to their low point in late 2014, since when they have grown steadily. As of 2021, prices in RCT are still below their real peak price in 2008. The lower quartile average house price adjusted to November 2020 is around £80,000.00</p> <p>45.3% of the total need for 8,450 dwellings is for affordable housing, or a total of 255 affordable dwellings per annum. Most of the housing shortfall is in East of Pontypridd a need of 580 dwellings over the period 2022-37.”</p> <p>It is stated that the information in the LHMA is still accurate.</p>	
Diversity and Inclusion Team		
General	A summary providing the purpose of the document would be useful	The introduction of this report sets out the purpose of the ISA Scoping Report.
General	There are multiple instances of Rhondda Cynon Taf being referred to as RTC instead of RCT.	These typos have been located and amended in this report.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	The report should be informed by the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, updated census information and the Cwm Taf Population Assessment.	The baseline information in Chapter 4 is already informed by the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and the most recent available Census data. Data from the 2021 Census will be taken into account in the ISA as it becomes available. Information from the Cwm Taf Population Assessment has been added to the report.
Chapter 5: Key Sustainability Issues	<p>Key sustainability issues should include detail about adapted housing mentioned in section ‘a high proportion of terraced housing...’</p> <p>Need to recognise the Cost of Living crisis.</p>	The key sustainability issues in Chapter 5 now include reference to the need for a proportion of new homes to be adaptable to the needs of older people and people with reduced mobility. Reference has been added to the recent cost of living crisis.
Chapter 6: ISA Framework and Methodology	<p>While the initial social background/baseline information in the scoping report is good, not much of this seems to have made it into the objectives. There are good opportunities to strengthen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be interesting to see what impacts were identified in the EqIA reflected in the objectives. • Would like to see more information about protected characteristics in the objectives— <i>E.g. on housing being accessible, areas being accessible – what does this mean in practice?</i> • <i>Same with education for all – a big ask but might be lost in the objectives</i> 	The ISA objectives are relatively high level and cannot reflect the full detail of the baseline information although they are considered to be an appropriate set of objectives to capture the assessment of the emerging LDP against the existing baseline. The EqIA has not yet been carried out – this will be done as part of the ISA as the LDP emerges.

ISA Scoping Report Reference	Summary of consultee comment	Response/action taken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would like to have seen more about how to mitigate low socio-economic impacts and cost of living as some objectives clearly do have positive impact but the objective doesn't go that far</i> • <i>E.g. air pollution, water quality – why aren't specific areas named as having a ++ impact? The background info has spelt this out as needed so good opportunity to strengthen</i> 	
Transport Strategy Comments		
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	In terms of Active Travel, reference needs to be made to RCT's approved Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), which replaces the existing Integrated Network Maps and Welsh Governments Active Travel Guidance.	Appendix A has been updated to include reference to these documents.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Plans/Policies that need to be added are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCT's EV Charging Strategy • National Transport Delivery Plan 2022-27 (currently under consultation) • WelTAG 2022 (currently under consultation) 	Appendix A has been updated to include reference to these documents.
Chapter 3: Relevant Plans and Programmes	Reference needs to be made to Welsh Governments plan to introduce legislation to lower the default national speed limit on residential roads from 30mph to 20mph.	This information has been added to Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	There is a need to reflect the impact of more people working from home in the Borough. The report should present data on the percentage in traffic growth on strategic corridors. The report should present data on disparities in car ownership across RCT – e.g. lowest ownership in upper Rhondda Fach, which also has no rail service.	Chapter 4 has been updated to make clear that data on commuting is likely to have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic – although there is no very recent data available yet which will reflect these changes. Data on disparities between car ownership levels within the County Borough are not available.
General	The SE Wales LTP included a Competition Assessment and Children's Rights Assessment – are these needed for this document?	These assessments are considered to be outside the scope of the ISA.
Chapter 4: Baseline Information	Small typing error on page 34 – paragraph 4.138 – need to remove the word high before traffic where the sentence states 'high traffic counts are high.'	The error is corrected in Chapter 3 of this report.

Appendix C

Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

C.1 This appendix presents a review of international, national, sub-national and policies, plans and programmes that are relevant to the undertaking of the ISA and the preparation of the Revised LDP. These are outlined below, along with a summary of the implications for both the ISA and the Revised LDP.

Table C.1 Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
INTERNATIONAL		
<i>UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972)</i>	<p>Countries are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural heritage ■ Adopt a general policy that gives cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community ■ Integrate the protection of heritage into comprehensive planning programmes. <p>Sets out for the designation of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.</p>	The ISA should include an objective on heritage and archaeological issues.
<i>World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report)</i>	<p>The Brundtland Report is concerned with the world's economy and its environment. The objective is to provide an expanding and sustainable economy while protecting a sustainable environment. The Report was a call by the United Nations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond; ■ to recommend ways concern for the environment may be translated into greater co-operation among countries of the global South and between countries at different stages of economic and social development and lead to the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives that take account of the interrelationships between people, resources, environment, and development; ■ to consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environment concerns; and ■ to help define shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues and the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment, a long term agenda for action during the coming decades, and aspirational goals for the world community. 	<p>The Brundtland Report provided the original definition of sustainable development.</p> <p>The accumulated effects of the ISA objectives should seek to achieve sustainable development.</p>
<i>UNFCCC (1997) The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC</i>	The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC established the first policy that actively aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by industrialised countries.	The Kyoto Protocol is influential to achieving sustainable development as it encourages transition to a low carbon economy. Therefore it is an integral factor in planning documents.

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<p>Construction is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions due to the consumption of materials and use of energy. The Kyoto Protocol aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the UK by 12.5%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2008 – 2012.</p>	
<p><i>The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, September 2002</i></p>	<p>Commitments arising from Johannesburg Summit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustainable consumption and production patterns. ■ Accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production— 10-year framework of programmes of action; Reverse trend in loss of natural resources. ■ Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency. ■ Urgently and substantially increase [global] share of renewable energy ■ Significantly reduce rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. <p>No targets or indicators, however actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater resource efficiency; ■ Support business innovation and take-up of best practice in technology and management; ■ Waste reduction and producer responsibility; and ■ Sustainable consumer consumption and procurement. 	<p>The LDP can encourage greater efficiency of resources. Ensure policies cover the action areas.</p> <p>The LDP can encourage renewable energy. Ensure policies cover the action areas.</p> <p>The LDP can protect and enhance biodiversity. Ensure policies cover the action areas.</p>
<p><i>The Cancun Agreement- UNFCCC (2011)</i></p>	<p>Shared vision to keep global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius, with objectives to be reviewed as to whether it needs to be strengthened in future on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective on greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The LDP should aim to reduce emissions.</p>
<p><i>United Nations (2015) United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) Paris Agreement</i></p>	<p>The agreement's main aim is to keep a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.</p> <p>The 1.5 degree Celsius limit is a significantly safer defence line against the worst impacts of a changing climate.</p> <p>Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective on climatic factors.</p> <p>The LDP should positively contribute to a low carbon economy.</p>
<p><i>United Nations Sustainable</i></p>	<p>Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address interconnected global challenges including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation,</p>	<p>The ISA should consider the SDGs when developing objectives.</p>

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<i>Development Goals (UN, 2015)</i>	<p>prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals and targets aim to be achieved by 2030. In Wales the goals are translated into the WBFGA goals, with a target date of 2030.</p> <p>The UK Government has yet to localise the SDGs and determine a UK level plan for their implementation.</p>	The LDP should consider the SDGs when developing policies/proposals.
EUROPEAN		
<i>The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention 1985)</i>	The main purpose of the convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage and to foster closer European co-operation in defence of heritage. Recognition that conservation of heritage is a cultural purpose and integrated conservation of heritage is an important factor in the improvement of quality of life.	The ISA should include an objective on the conservation and enhancement of heritage and decision making criteria on architectural heritage.
<i>The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention 1992)</i>	Agreement that the conservation and enhancement of an archaeological heritage is one of the goals of urban and regional planning policy. It is concerned in particular with the need for co-operation between archaeologists and planners to ensure optimum conservation of archaeological heritage.	The ISA should include an objective on the conservation and enhancement of heritage and decision making criteria on architectural heritage.
<i>Council Directive 91/271/EEC for Urban Waste-Water Treatment</i>	<p>Its objective is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and discharges from certain industrial sectors and concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Domestic waste water ■ Mixture of waste water ■ Waste water from certain industrial sectors <p>The Directive includes requirement with specific:</p>	ISA Objectives should include priorities to minimise adverse effects on ground and/or surface water.

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collection and treatment of waste water standards for relevant population thresholds ■ Secondary treatment standards ■ A requirement for pre-authorisation of all discharges of urban wastewater <p>Monitoring of the performance of treatment plants and receiving waters and Controls of sewage sludge disposal and re-use, and treated waste water re-use.</p>	
<p><i>European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)</i></p>	<p>The aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. The ESPD aims to ensure that the three fundamental goals of European policy are achieved equally in all the regions of the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Economic and social cohesion; ■ Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; ■ More balanced competitiveness of the European territory. <p>European cultural landscapes, cities and towns, as well as a variety of natural and historic monuments are part of the European Heritage. Its fostering should be an important part of modern architecture, urban and landscape planning in all regions of the EU.</p> <p>A big challenge for spatial development policy is to contribute to the objectives, announced by the EU during international conferences concerning the environment and climate, of reducing emissions into the global ecological system.</p>	<p>The ISA should include objectives related to promoting economic and social cohesion, conserving natural resources, protecting historic heritage and reducing CO2 emissions. The contribution to the form and function of the rural and urban areas of the county should be viewed positively and the plan's objectives should reflect this.</p> <p>The LDP should consider an approach which promotes economic benefits for all and social cohesion as well as preserving and enhancing the historic environment. This could include policies related to impacts upon landscape, townscape, historic structures and features.</p>
<p><i>EU Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)</i></p>	<p>Provides for the quality of drinking water.</p> <p>The standards included are legally binding.</p>	<p>The ISA should consider objectives relating to water quality.</p> <p>The LDP should recognise that development can impact upon water quality and include policies to protect the resources.</p>
<p><i>EU Directive on the Landfill of Waste (99/31/EC)</i></p>	<p>Sets out requirements ensuring that where landfilling takes place the environmental impacts are understood and mitigated against.</p>	<p>The ISA should include objectives setting out priorities to minimise waste, increased recycling and re-use.</p> <p>The LDP should take into consideration landfilling with respect to environmental factors.</p>
<p><i>EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</i></p>	<p>Establishes a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prevents further deterioration and protects and enhances the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystems; 	<p>The ISA should consider effects upon water quality and resource.</p> <p>The LDP policies should consider how the water environment can be protected and enhanced. This will come about through reducing pollution and abstraction.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promotes sustainable water use based on a long-term protection of available water resources; ■ Aims at enhanced protection and improvement of the aquatic environment, inter alia, through specific measures for the progressive reduction of discharges, emissions and losses of priority substances and the cessation or phasing-out of discharges, emissions and losses of the priority hazardous substances; ■ Ensures the progressive reduction of pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution, and ■ Contributes to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts. 	<p>Protection and enhancement of water courses can be can also come about through physical modification. Spatial planning will need to consider whether watercourse enhancement can be achieved through working with developers.</p>
<p><i>Århus Convention (2001)</i></p>	<p>The Aarhus Convention is a multilateral environmental agreement through which the opportunities for citizens to access environmental information are increased and transparent and reliable regulation procedure is secured. It encourages access to information, public participation and access to justice.</p>	<p>The ISA will be consulted upon and open to scrutiny as per the requirement of the relevant regulations.</p> <p>Public consultation and access to information supporting the decision-making process must be introduced in the procedures for the drawing up of the LDP.</p>
<p><i>EU Environmental Noise Directive (Directive 2002/49/EC)</i></p>	<p>The underlying principles of the Directive are similar to those underpinning other overarching environment policies (such as air or waste), i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitoring the environmental problem; by requiring competent authorities in Member States to draw up "strategic noise maps" for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators Lden (day-evening-night equivalent level) and Lnight (night equivalent level). These maps will be used to assess the number of people annoyed and sleep-disturbed respectively throughout Europe; ■ Informing and consulting the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise, in line with the principles of the Aarhus Convention; ■ Addressing local noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good. The directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities; ■ Developing a long-term EU strategy, which includes objectives to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term, and provides a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source. With this respect, the Commission has made a declaration concerning the provisions laid down in Article 1.2 with regard to the preparation of legislation relating to sources of noise. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the minimisation of excessive noise.</p> <p>The LDP will need to have regard to the requirements of the Environmental Noise Directive.</p>

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<p><i>European Landscape Convention 2000 (became binding March 2007)</i></p>	<p>Convention outlined the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies.</p> <p>Specific measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ raising awareness of the value of landscapes among all sectors of society, and of society's role in shaping them; ■ promoting landscape training and education among landscape specialists, other related professions, and in school and university courses; ■ the identification and assessment of landscapes, and analysis of landscape change, with the active participation of stakeholders; ■ setting objectives for landscape quality, with the involvement of the public; and ■ the implementation of landscape policies, through the establishment of plans and practical programmes. 	<p>The ISA should consider how landscape will be integrated into all relevant areas of policy, considering how the outcomes of the European Landscape Convention feed into the LDP and its associated documents. The revised LDP should develop policies dedicated to the protection, management, and creation of landscapes.</p>
<p><i>EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC</i></p>	<p>Aims to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe.</p>	<p>The ISA should consider objectives relating to flood risk.</p> <p>The LDP should recognise that development can impact vulnerability to flooding and increase risk due to climate change.</p>
<p><i>EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) and previous directives (96/62/EC; 99/30/EC; 2000/69/EC & 2002/3/EC)</i></p>	<p>New Directive provided that most of existing legislation be merged into a single directive (except for the fourth daughter directive) with no change to existing air quality objectives.</p> <p>Relevant objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain ambient air quality where it is good and improve it in other cases; and ■ Maintain ambient-air quality where it is good and improve it in other cases with respect to sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead. 	<p>The ISA should include objectives relating to air quality.</p> <p>LDP policies should consider the maintenance of good air quality and the measures that can be taken to improve it through, for example, an encouragement to reduce vehicle movements.</p>
<p><i>European Union (EU) Nitrates</i></p>	<p>This Directive has the objective of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources; and ■ preventing further such pollution. 	<p>The LDP should consider impacts of development upon any identified nitrate sensitive areas where such development fails to be considered within its scope.</p> <p>Policies should consider objective to promote environmentally sensitive agricultural practices.</p>

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<i>Directive (91/676/EEC)</i>	Provides for the identification of vulnerable areas.	
<i>EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (09/147/EC) (codified version of Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)</i>	<p>Identifies 181 endangered species and sub-species for which the Member States are required to designate Special Protection Areas.</p> <p>Makes it a legal requirement that EU countries make provision for the protection of birds. This includes the selection and designation of Special Protection Areas.</p> <p>Target Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creation of protected areas; ■ Upkeep and management; and ■ Re-establishment of destroyed biotopes. 	<p>The ISA should consider objectives to protect and enhance biodiversity including wild birds.</p> <p>The LDP should include policies to protect and enhance wild bird populations, including the protection of SPAs.</p>
<i>EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) & Subsequent Amendments</i>	<p>Directive seeks to conserve natural habitats and species. Conservation of natural habitats requires member states to identify special areas of conservation and to maintain, where necessary, landscape features of importance to wildlife and flora.</p> <p>The amendments in 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ simplify the species protection regime to better reflect the Habitats Directive; ■ provide a clear legal basis for surveillance and monitoring of European protected species (EPS); ■ toughen the regime on trading EPS that are not native to the UK; and ■ ensure that the requirement to carry out appropriate assessments on water abstraction consents and land use plans is explicit. 	<p>The ISA should include priorities for the protection of landscape features for ecological benefit.</p> <p>LDP policies should seek to protect landscape features of habitat importance and ensure the protection of Natura 2000 sites and European Protected Species.</p>
<i>EU Directive on Waste (Directive 75/442/EEC, 2006/12/EC 2008/98/EC as amended)</i>	<p>Seeks to prevent and reduce the production of waste and its impacts. Where necessary waste should be disposed of without creating environmental problems</p> <p>Seeks to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving the efficiency of such use.</p> <p>Promotes the development of clean technology to process waste, promoting recycling and re-use.</p> <p>The Directive contains a range of provision including:</p>	<p>The ISA should include priorities to minimise waste, increased recycling and re-use.</p> <p>LDP policies should seek to minimise waste, and the environmental effects caused by it. Policies should promote recycling and re-use.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The setting up of separate collections of waste where technically, environmentally and economically practicable and appropriate to meet the necessary quality standards for the relevant recycling sectors – including by 2015 separate collection for at least paper, metal, plastic and glass. ■ Household waste recycling target – the preparing for re-use and the recycling of waste materials such as at least paper, metal, plastic and glass from households and possibly other origins as far as these waste streams are similar to waste from households, must be increased to a minimum of 50% by weight by 2020. ■ Construction and demolition waste recovery target – the preparing for re-use, recycling and other material recovery of non-hazardous construction and demolition waste must be increased to a minimum of 70% by weight by 2020. 	
<i>EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC)</i>	<p>This Directive establishes a common framework for the use of energy from renewable sources in order to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to promote cleaner transport. It encourages energy efficiency, energy consumption from renewable sources and the improvement of energy supply.</p> <p>Each Member State to achieve a 10% minimum target for the share of energy from renewable sources by 2020.</p>	<p>The ISA should include consideration of use of energy from renewable energy sources.</p> <p>The LDP should contribute towards increasing the proportion of energy from renewable energy sources where appropriate.</p>
<i>EU (2009) Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy</i>	<p>In June 2001, the first European sustainable development strategy was agreed by EU Heads of State. The Strategy sets out how the EU can meet the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The Strategy proposes headline objectives and lists seven key challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Climate change and clean energy; ■ Sustainable transport; ■ Sustainable consumption and production; ■ Conservation and management of natural resources; ■ Public health; ■ Social inclusion, demography and migration; and ■ Global poverty. 	<p>The LDP should aim to create a pattern of development consistent with the objectives of the Strategy and in turn promote sustainable development.</p>
<i>European Commission</i>	<p>This flagship initiative aims to create a framework for policies to support the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy which will help to:</p>	<p>The ISA assessment framework should include objectives, indicators and targets that relate to resource use.</p>

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<p><i>(EC) (2011) A Resource-Efficient Europe-Flagship Initiative Under the Europe 2020 Strategy, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM 2011/21)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Boost economic performance while reducing resource use; ■ Identify and create new opportunities for economic growth and greater innovation and boost the E's competitiveness; ■ Ensure security of supply of essential resources; and ■ Fight against climate change and limit the environmental impacts of resource use. <p>Each Member State has a target calculated according to the share of energy from renewable sources in its gross final consumption for 2020. The UK is required to source 15 per cent of energy needs from renewable sources, including biomass, hydro, wind and solar power by 2020.</p> <p>From 1 January 2017, biofuels and bioliquids share in emissions savings should be increased to 50 per cent.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into account the objectives of the Flagship Initiative.</p>
<p><i>Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) (Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, 2018)</i></p>	<p>Heating makes up 46% of the UK's total energy consumption and this is therefore a key initiative in reaching 2020 targets of 15% energy from renewable sources. The incentive is to give a household a fixed income to produce their own renewable heat energy from either solar or wind power.</p> <p>The RHI aims to increase the amount of renewable energy used for heating. Targets have been set for both the non-domestic and domestic sectors. This will increase the overall level of renewable energy used for heating to 12% from the 1.5% that it is now.</p>	<p>Include a sustainability objective relating to increasing energy provided from renewable sources.</p> <p>The LDP should support renewable energy provision.</p>
<p><i>Directive 2015/1513 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of</i></p>	<p>This Directive creates a common framework for the use of renewable energy in the EU so as to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and promote cleaner transport. To do so, Member states require suppliers of fuel or energy to reduce the life cycle GHG per unit of energy of fuels used by at least 6% by 31 December 2020. The blending of biofuels is one of the methods available for fossil fuel suppliers to reduce the greenhouse gas intensity of the fossil fuels supplied. Each Member State must also ensure that the share of energy from renewable sources in all forms of transport in 2020 is at least 10 % of the final consumption of energy in transport.</p>	<p>Include a sustainability objective relating to increasing energy provided from renewable sources.</p> <p>The LDP should support renewable energy provision including electricity, heat and transport.</p>

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<p><i>petrol and diesel fuels and amending Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources</i></p>	<p>Each EU country is to make a national action plan for 2020, setting a share for renewable energy sources in transport, heating and the production of electricity.</p>	
<p>Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, 2016)</p>	<p>In order to contribute to achieving the overall goals set at EU level, the Commission has set a number of General Objectives based on the priorities outlined by President Juncker. DG MOV's activities contribute actively to these and in particular the following 5 General Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commission General Objective 1: "A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment" ■ Commission General Objective 2: "A Connected Digital Single Marke" ■ Commission General Objective 3: "A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Polic" ■ Commission General Objective 4: "A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Bas" ■ Commission General Objective 5: "A Stronger Global Actor" <p>DG MOV's actions contributing to the General Objectives for the Commission fall under 3 Specific Objectives, which correspond to the main instruments available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DG MOVE Specific Objective 1: "An efficient, sustainable, safe and secure Single European Transport Area: Improve regulation, ensure a high degree of implementation of EU legislation in the transport area and open and fair competition both in the EU and in relations with key partner countries" ■ DG MOVE Specific Objective 2: "A modern European transport infrastructure: Ensure the effective implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network with the help of the Connecting Europe Facility and the innovative financial instruments (EFSI)" ■ DG MOVE Specific Objective 3: "An innovative transport sector: Ensure the effective implementation of funding for research and innovation activities in the transport area under Horizon 2020" 	<p>The ISA should consider the general and specific objectives when developing the sustainability framework.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the general and specific objectives of the Strategic Plan when developing policies/proposals</p>

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	<p>To measure the progress made by DG MOVE towards implementing its policies and attaining its specific objectives, a number of indicators are presented in annex to the Strategic Plan. The following three indicators will be given special attention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transposition rate in transport legislation (see specific objective 1) 2. Total amount of Connecting Europe Facility grants, delegations, contributions signed for transport projects and programmes (see specific objective 2) 3. Total amount of Horizon 2020 grants, delegations, contributions signed for transport projects and programmes (see specific objective 3) 	
<p><i>SEA Directive 2001 Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i></p>	<p>Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>Requirements of the Directive must be met in Sustainability Appraisal where an integrated SA/SEA is being undertaken (as is the case for the Revised RCT LDP).</p> <p><i>Relates to the overall ISA process.</i></p> <p>Allocate sites and develop policies that are selected based on the SEA findings (as well as other relevant factors).</p>
NATIONAL (UK and Wales)		
<p><i>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)</i></p>	<p>The Act provided reform to the handling of planning applications to ensure a quicker and more efficient process, as well as reform to the development plan system. Introduced local development orders and established sustainable development as a key objective of the planning system.</p>	<p>The LDP will have to be prepared in accordance with the legislation.</p>
<p><i>Equality Act (2010)</i></p>	<p>The Equality Act provides legal protection to people from discrimination in wider society and in the workplace.</p>	<p>The ISA (through the equalities impact assessment component) should consider the potential implications of the LDP in relation to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act.</p> <p>The Equality Act provides legal protection to people from discrimination in wider society and in the workplace.</p>
<p><i>European Union (Withdrawal)</i></p>	<p>The Act makes legal provision for withdrawing the United Kingdom from the European Union. The Act provides for a financial settlement and agreement on citizens' rights.</p>	<p>The implications for the LDP and ISA are not yet fully known, however, withdrawing from the EU may have implications in the future on plan preparation.</p>

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<i>Agreement) Act (2020)</i>		
<i>Planning (Wales) Act (2015)</i>	<p>The Act seeks to modernise and improve the Welsh planning system to facilitate in the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure. The Act promotes a cultural change in planning to help make planning more positive and support appropriate development.</p> <p>The requirements for the National Development Framework (NDF) and Strategic Development Plans (SDP) are set out in the legislation.</p>	<p>The revised LDP will need to have regard to the Act, and associated implications (draft NDF, SDPs etc)</p>
<i>Planning Policy Wales: Edition 11 (2021)</i>	<p>Key themes and well-being goals for Wales that are addressed in PPW are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact (including in relation to biodiversity, landscapes, green infrastructure, climate change and the historic environment). ■ Facilitating accessible and healthy environments (including in relation to high quality green space, the creation of safe and inclusive places, active travel and public transport and access to goods and services). ■ Making best use of resources (including in relation to making best use of natural resource limiting waste and promoting use of previously developed land). ■ Growing the economy in a sustainable manner (including in the area of renewable energy and smart and innovative technology). ■ Creating and sustaining communities (including support for the Welsh language, providing housing and jobs to meet society's needs, supporting cultural experiences and community based services and facilities). 	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating to climate change mitigation, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, preserving the historic environment, ensuring access to sufficient and high quality housing, promoting access to employment and other services, protecting and enhancing landscapes, promoting and providing green infrastructure, and ensuring public health and well-being.</p> <p>The LDP will need to include a wide range of measures identified by PPW in order to assist sustainable development and the place making agenda. Planning also has a direct role to play in relation to the effects of climate change, and the location and design of buildings.</p>
<i>Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021)</i>	<p>Future Wales sits as the highest tier development plan in Wales, and all other plans must be in compliance with the policies contained within that document. The plan sets out the direction for growth, development and infrastructure investment in Wales until 2040.</p>	<p>The LDP will have to be in compliance with Future Wales, policies have been cross referenced to a number of high level topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic and Spatial Choices ■ Active and Social Places ■ Productive & Enterprising Places ■ Distinctive and Natural Places <p>The issue of sustainability and placemaking should be integral to the policy making process.</p>

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<i>Building Better Places (2020)</i>	Sets out the Government's planning policy priorities to assist in taking action in the recovery period after the Covid-19 pandemic. It recognises the importance of the planning system in addressing the built and natural environment issues that have arisen from the pandemic. In relation to LDPs, it recognises the importance of having an up-to-date plan in place in order to address current priorities and the role that plans can play in improving health and well-being more generally.	The ISA should include an objective which addresses health and well-being. The LDP should seek to address the current priorities of the plan area and include policies that support the recovery of the area following the pandemic as well as health and well-being more generally.
<i>Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (2012)</i>	The Plan ensures Welsh Government works towards the aim of creating a sustainable, low carbon economy for Wales.	The ISA should include an objective which addresses the potential to provide renewable schemes and integrate new development into new and existing networks (such as CHP and heat networks). The LDP should encourage the use of renewable energy where appropriate, taking into account the potential environmental implications of such developments.
<i>Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (2019)</i>	The 'Prosperity of All' collection of strategies and policies includes plans for tackling climate change and reduction of carbon emissions. The Plan sets the foundations for Wales to transition to a low carbon nation. The Plan recognises the planning system has a role to play in facilitating decarbonisation. Key changes to PPW have been made that have been designed to help Wales lower carbon emissions, for example the promotion of Active Travel and promoting renewable energy development.	The ISA should include an objective which seeks to promote a reduced contribution to climate change through transport, energy requirements and other sources. The revised LDP should place emphasis on the climate change and de-carbonisation agenda where opportunities are available, particularly in relation to policy development.
<i>Energy Efficiency in Wales: A Strategy for the Next 10 Years 2016-2026 (2017)</i>	The Plan aims to ensure that Wales is in the best position for realise full energy efficiency potential. It identifies the planning system as a method to facilitate low carbon and renewable energy developments.	The ISA should include an objective which seeks to promote a reduced contribution to climate change through energy requirements, including a promotion of energy efficient design. The revised LDP should plan positively for renewable and low carbon development, through policy development.
<i>TAN 13: Tourism (1997)</i>	The TAN sets out how the planning system can encourage sustainable forms of tourism, maximising economic benefits while improving and safeguarding environmental interests.	The ISA should include objectives relating to ensuring sustainable economic growth as well as protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The LDP should provide strategic framework for tourism development opportunities, whilst limiting impacts on the environment and local communities.
<i>TAN 19: Telecommunications (2002)</i>	The TAN sets out the new social and economic demands for communications, in line with the planning system.	The ISA should consider the sustainability impacts of telecommunications development.

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		The LDP should consider the potential to strengthen digital connectivity when balancing the need for economic growth, with social and environmental impacts
<i>TAN 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)</i>	The TAN aims to ensure the provision of affordable housing.	The ISA should include an objective relating to the provision of affordable housing. LDPs should be informed by a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), and must set an affordable housing target based on the need identified in the LHMA. Local authorities must indicate how the target will be achieved through policy approaches. The LDP must consider how affordable housing is included in development.
<i>Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply (2019)</i>	Welsh Government published the Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply in April 2019. The document includes recommendations for changes designed to increase supply and improve delivery of affordable homes in Wales. This includes that local authorities should be required to provide Local Housing Market assessments (LHMAs) based on a consistent timetable, data and methodology across housing tenures. New consolidated and simplified standards for new build grant funded and S106 homes are also recommended in the review document.	The ISA should include an objective relating to the provision of affordable housing. LDPs should be informed by a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) and must set an affordable housing target based on the need identified in the LHMA. Housing policies in the LDP should also be considerate of the recommendations in the review document.
<i>Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)</i>	The plan sets out the UK Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the pathway to net zero transport in the UK. ■ the wider benefits net zero transport can deliver. ■ the principles that underpin our approach to delivering net zero transport. 	The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel and in particular the promotion of sustainable and active modes. The LDP should encourage sustainable transport methods, whilst reducing the need to travel. Transport is integral to most development, and is important consideration on sustainability issues.
<i>TAN 18: Transport (2007)</i>	The TAN sets out how planning can promote more sustainable methods of travel, and forms of transport.	The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel and in particular the promotion of sustainable and active modes. The LDP should encourage sustainable transport methods, whilst reducing the need to travel. Transport is integral to most development, and is important consideration on sustainability issues.
<i>Llwybr Newydd The Wales Transport Strategy 2021</i>	The 2021 strategy should be read alongside the sub-national planning policy guidance documents including regional guidance, regional transport plans, and national transport delivery plans. The strategy sets out three priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel. 	The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel including in relation to encouraging sustainable transport choices and limiting environmental impacts. The strategy will need to be incorporated as part of the LDP. There is potential to address transport and travel through the LDP.

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure. ■ Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport. 	
<p><i>National transport delivery plan: 2022 to 2027 (last updated August 2023)</i></p>	<p>The national transport delivery plan 2022 to 2027 is the first 5 year delivery plan for the Welsh Government to implement Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021. The plan sets out and aims to achieve the three priorities of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel. 2. Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure. 3. Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel including in relation to encouraging accessible and sustainable transport choices and limiting environmental impacts.</p> <p>The delivery plan will need to be incorporated as part of the LDP. There is potential to address transport and travel through the LDP.</p>
<p><i>Welsh transport appraisal guidance (WelTAG) 2022 (last updated November 2022)</i></p>	<p>The Welsh transport appraisal guidance (WelTAG) aids in the planning of transport programmes, policies and projects. The guidance is designed to help develop programmes and projects that address the nations transport priorities from the outset.</p> <p>WelTAG 2022 sets five criteria that will be used to decide whether to consider supporting a programme or project. These are based on ideals of strategic fit, wellbeing, affordability, deliverability and management. Unless a project, programme or policy meets the first two criteria, it will not be considered for further development, funding or support. In addition, all projects, policies and programmes must be supported by a business case that shows how they will deliver value-for-money against these criteria.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel, particularly incorporating the criteria set out in the guidance, including the need of developments to meet the priorities and wellbeing benefits set out in the Wales transport strategy.</p>
<p><i>Climate Change Act 2008</i></p>	<p>The Climate Change Act is the basis for the UK's approach to climate change. The Act requires the UK as a whole to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to pre-1990 levels by 2050. This refers to net UK emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective that seeks to reduce the contribution RCT makes to climate change.</p> <p>The strategy to achieve greenhouse gas levels below those seen in 1990 should be incorporated as part of the LDP and policy should be included to help limit the level of carbon emissions in the County Borough. This could include through support for more sustainable modes of transport and locating development in areas which will reduce the need for residents to have to travel long distances regularly.</p>
<p><i>Towards Zero Waste – Waste Strategy for Wales (2010)</i></p>	<p>This strategy is the Welsh Government's national waste strategy for Wales. It provides the high level, long-term framework for the sustainable use of resources and waste management in Wales up to 2050. The strategy ultimately aims to achieve 70% recycling rate for Municipal Solid Waste across all sectors by 2025, and by 2050 raise this to 100%.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating to waste and the promotion of its treatment in line with the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>This strategy will have to be incorporated as part of the LDP. The LDP should consider an approach which helps to ensure the treatment of waste in line with the waste hierarchy</p>

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TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)	<p>The TAN covers: sustainable rural communities and economics, rural affordable housing, rural enterprise dwellings, one planet development, sustainable rural services and agriculture.</p> <p>LDPs should facilitate diversification of rural economy by accommodating needs of traditional and new rural enterprises. Diverse range of sites should be identified and consider the need for exception site policies.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating access to services and facilities as well as impacts on character, including landscape and the historic environment. It should also include an objective relating to the promotion of sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Through the evidence base, local need will need to be defined and the provision of services facilitated where new developments are of a sufficient scale. A reduction of development in the countryside should be observed as impacts are difficult to reverse, and development policies included in the LDP must take into consideration cumulative effects.</p> <p>Department for Rural Affairs & WG to be consulted for information on quality of agricultural land.</p>
Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan (2017)	<p>Is drafted to support delivery of Prosperity for All – the national strategy for Wales. The Plan sets out a vision for inclusive growth, built on strong foundations, supercharged industries of the future and productive regions. The overarching goals of the Plan are to grow the economy and reduce inequality. The Economic Contract is set out as the centrepiece of the Plan's approach. This approach is to frame the reciprocal relationship between Government and business and drive public investment with a social purpose.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which is considerate of sustainable economic growth as well as reducing disparity in the County Borough.</p> <p>The LDP will have to have regard to this strategy and policies should support an appropriate level of economic growth that allows for employment in high value employment sectors that will support the narrowing of measurements of disparity in RCT.</p>
Economic Renewal: A New Direction (2010)	<p>The Welsh Government policy aims to facilitate a stronger and more sustainable economy through investing in infrastructure, skills, research and development.</p> <p>The five policy priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Investing in high quality and sustainable infrastructure; ■ Making Wales a more attractive place to do business; ■ Broadening and deepening the skills base; ■ Encouraging innovation; and ■ Targeting the business support we offer to help us gain competitive advantage. 	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address accessibility to services and facilities for residents as well as infrastructure which will support economic growth. It should also include an objective which considers the support for sustainable economic growth itself.</p> <p>The LDP will have to have regard to this strategy and should consider an approach which secures investment in infrastructure, residents' skills and the required development to support sustainable economic growth.</p>
Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills (2022)	<p>The Plan for Employability and Skills seeks to signal clear policy and investment priorities, sharpen delivery focus and the activity of the Welsh Government's partners, on actions over the Government term that will leave a positive legacy for future generations. The plan details how employability and skills offer will prioritise 5 key areas of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Young people realising their potential; ■ Tackling economic inequality; 	<p>The ISA should consider how the potential impacts of policies and development allocations set out through the LDP on employment opportunities in the plan area.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the identified employment need for the plan area as part of its preparation and aim to sufficiently meet that need.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Championing Fair Work for all; ■ Supporting people with a long term health condition to work; ■ Nurturing a learning for life culture. 	
<i>One Wales: One Planet: A New Sustainable Development Schemes for Wales (2012)</i>	One Planet Development is development that either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality. One Planet Developments can be located within or adjacent to existing settlements, or in the open countryside. In the open countryside, such developments should be evidenced by a management plan.	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address the protection of environmental qualities (including air, noise and water).</p> <p>Policies that seek to control development in the open countryside will need to be updated as part of the LDP.</p> <p>Sustainability issues should be integral to the policy making process.</p>
<i>Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)</i>	The Act makes provision for local authorities to deliver improvements to active travel routes and related facilities, producing maps for both existing and new/improved active travel routes.	<p>The ISA should include an objective relating to transport and travel and in particular the promotion of sustainable and active modes.</p> <p>The LDP will have to have regard to the Act, new and amended proposals for active travel and/or integrated maps. It presents an opportunity to adopt an approach which strengthens the potential for travel by active and sustainable modes.</p>
<i>Partnership for Growth: Strategy for Tourism (2013-2020)</i>	The strategy sets out the ambitions of Welsh Government for Tourism up to 2020, and details how this is to be achieved.	The strategy sets out that flexibility in the planning system can ensure that appropriate development can support future prosperity in the tourism sector. The LDP will have to have regard to this strategy in the consideration of tourism policies.
<i>The Housing (Wales) Act (2014)</i>	<p>The Act aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales and sets out a number of requirements on local authorities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment of needs for Gypsy and Travellers 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the provision of the required number of homes and a high quality of housing stock in the plan area. The ISA should also consider the potential to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers.</p> <p>The legislation requires an up to date Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) to be produced. The needs of affordable housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will need to be considered by the revised LDP.</p>
<i>TAN 23: Economic Development (2014)</i>	The TAN sets out that the planning system needs to recognise the economic aspects of all development, and that planning decisions are made in a sustainable way that balances social, economic and environmental considerations.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the maintenance of suitable levels of sustainable economic growth across the plan area.</p> <p>LDPs should use a sequential approach when identifying sites for economic uses.</p>

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		LDP vision should be consistent and coherent so that economic, environmental and social considerations support each other and point in the same direction.
TAN 12: Design (2016)	Provides detailed guidance on 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and how 'Planning for sustainable building' can be facilitated through the planning system. Design issues should be considered early on in the development process. The planning system needs to be pro-active in raising awareness about the importance of design issues.	The ISA should include objectives which address design in terms of promoting inclusivity of access, the natural environment, local character and safety. Local authorities have a dual role to ensure stakeholder involvement in developing design policies, and providing information on design issues. LDP policies on design should set out design expectations, and policies should address local issues and be based on evidence.
TAN 4: Retailing and Commercial Development (2016)	The TAN provides further advice in relation to retail strategies, tests of need, retail and commercial frontages, and indicators of vitality and viability.	The ISA should include an objective which considers the vitality and viability of town centre locations. LDPs should use a sequential approach when identifying sites for economic uses. LDP vision should be consistent and coherent so that economic, environmental and social considerations support each other and point in the same direction.
Prosperity for All: The National Strategy (2017)	This strategy sets out the aim of Welsh Government to 'build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active and ambitious and learning, and united and connected'.	The ISA should include an objective which considers health and well-being as well as the potential to address deprivation in the plan area. The aim of the strategy is to join up all the different elements that the Government influence which affect people's lives such as housing, education and employment. The revised LDP should have to have regard to this strategy.
Build Back Better: our plan for growth (2021)	Sets out a plan to 'build back better' tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.	The ISA should include an objective which considers stimulating short-term economic activity and driving long-term productivity improvements, with a focus on clean and inclusive growth. The LDP will need to consider policies which promote the achievement of sustainable economic growth in the Borough supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure.
TAN 21: Waste (2017)	Provides advice on how planning should contribute towards sustainable waste management and resource efficiency.	The ISA should include an objective relating to waste and the promotion of its treatment in line with the waste hierarchy. LDPs should identify suitable sites for the provision of all types of waste management. Strategies and policies should indicate that developers should reduce waste as part of the design and construction of new buildings. Consultation with relevant stakeholders when developing waste policies of the LDP will be necessary.

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<i>Circular 005/2018 (2018)</i>	The Circular is in relation to Gypsy and Travellers. It places an obligation on local authorities to discuss accommodation needs directly with Gypsies and Travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the provision of accommodation to meet all relevant needs, including those of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>The LDP will need to have regard to the specifics of the Circular in preparing the evidence base in relation to Gypsy and Travellers.</p> <p>The Circular specifies criteria based policies will be required, and they must be fair, reasonable, realistic and effective in delivering sites.</p>
<i>Clean Air Strategy 2019</i>	The Clean Air Strategy shows how the UK will tackle all sources of air pollution, making the air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy. It sets out comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of government and society to meet these goals.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to limit the potential for air pollution from all sources. The ISA should have regard for existing air quality issues in the plan area.</p> <p>The revised LDP should consider the air quality impacts of development, and the potential effects of traffic associated with that development.</p>
<i>Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy (2020-2025)</i>	The Welcome to Wales Plan outlines the vision of Welsh Government for the tourism economy over a five year period. The plan highlights the positive impact outdoor leisure and recreation can have on the tourist economy.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses sustainable economic growth in the plan area and this may include reference to the role tourism, outdoor leisure and recreation can play in this regard.</p> <p>The LDP will need to have regard to the plan, particularly in relation to any tourism/leisure proposals and policies.</p>
<i>Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations (as amended) (2018)</i>	<p>Under the Environmental Noise Regulations, the Welsh Ministers have an obligation to produce and keep updated noise maps for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ agglomerations (large urban areas with populations of over 100,000); ■ major roads (roads with over three million vehicles passing each year); and ■ major railways (railways with over 30,000 trains passing each year). <p>Under the Environmental Noise Regulations, the Welsh Ministers have an obligation to draw up action plans for places near major roads and major railways, and for agglomerations. The Regulations apply to environmental noise to which humans are exposed in particular in built-up areas, in public parks or other quiet areas in an agglomeration, and near schools, hospitals and other noise-sensitive buildings and areas.</p>	<p>Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider the potential for residents, employees and visitors in the plan area to be affected by noise pollution.</p> <p>The noise maps inform a range of activities carried out by public bodies in Wales, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ prioritised noise mitigation works, such as noise barriers and resurfacing; ■ the planning process; ■ air quality, green infrastructure and transport plans and strategies; ■ the assessments of local well-being produced by public services boards; ■ the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and area statements produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 <p>The revised LDP will have to have regard to the noise maps, and associated plans.</p>

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Noise and Soundscape Action Plan (2023/2028) (Currently under consultation)	Under the Environmental Noise Regulations, the Welsh Ministers have an obligation to draw up action plans for places near major roads and major railways, and for agglomerations. The Action Plan reflects the themes set out in PPW, and sets out the Government's focus on moving beyond managing noise primarily through sound level reduction to creating appropriate soundscapes. The Action Plan covers new topics that have come to the fore within the last five years, such as issues around remote working, aural diversity, air source heat pumps, changes in speed limits, and fireworks. It also sets out what has been delivered over the last five years, such as noise mitigation works completed on the trunk road network.	Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider the potential for residents, employees and visitors in the plan area to be affected by noise pollution. RCT lies between the Cardiff and Penarth and the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot agglomerations. The revised LDP will need to have regard to PPW, and updated policies that allow for the assessment of noise impacts.
TAN 11: Air Quality, Noise and Soundscape (draft currently under consultation) (2023)	The TAN provides policy guidance and technical advice to support planning policy in PPW relating to air quality, noise, and soundscape. In particular, the TAN supplements PPW with advice on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ augmenting wider policies and interventions necessary to improve air quality, including measures set out in the Clean Air Plan for Wales; and ■ creating appropriate soundscapes to promote health, well-being and sustainability. 	Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider the potential for residents, employees and visitors in the plan area to be affected by air quality, noise, and soundscape, particularly as the sources of pollution are often the same. The LDP should seek to minimise pollution impacts on people and the environment and ensure that benefits for air quality and soundscape should be captured through appropriate site location and design. The LDP should also seek to limit the delivery of noise sensitive uses in areas affected by noise. Area specific noise policies may be necessary for some areas.
TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)	The TAN provides guidance on planning for sport, open spaces and protecting existing facilities.	Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider the accessibility of open space and recreation facilities in the plan area, as well as the potential loss of these types of assets as new development is delivered. The LDP should set out a framework for sport and recreation, with a strategic approach to such development. It should also protect areas of open space that have recreation, amenity and/or conservation value.
'Climbing Higher': The Welsh Government Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity (2012)	The strategy sets out that by 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The percentage of people in Wales using the natural environment for outdoor activities will increase to 60% from 36% ■ 95% of people will have a foot or cycle path within a 10 minute walk ■ No one should like more than a 6 minute (300m) from their nearest natural green space 	Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider the accessibility of open space and recreation facilities in the plan area. The LDP should provide a framework for sport and recreation and set out a strategic approach to such development. The LDP should support the aims of the strategy.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public sector employees and 75% of all other employees will have access to sport facilities at, or within 10 minutes walk of the workplace 	
<i>Together for Mental Health: A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales (2012)</i>	The strategy sets out the goals of Welsh Government for improving mental health and mental health services in Wales. It covers all ages; children and young people, adults of working age and older people. It looks to promote the mental wellbeing of all people in Wales and to ensure that people with mental health problems and mental illness get the support they need.	<p>Through the inclusion of objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA), the ISA should consider potential impacts of development on mental health and issues of isolation. The EqIA component of the ISA should consider potential impacts on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including older people and younger people.</p> <p>The strategy sets out issues such as housing needs to be tackled in order to build resilience, protecting and promoting mental health. The LDP should have regard to this.</p>
<i>Well-Being Future Generations Act (2015)</i>	The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (the WCFG Act) requires public bodies (inclusive of local authorities) to think more about the long term; to work more effectively with people, communities and each other; to look at problem prevention and to take a more joined-up approach.	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA) to consider the effects of the LDP across range of issues which could affect this topic area. This includes access to healthcare facilities, access to open space and recreation facilities, noise pollution, air pollution and mental well-being (including social isolation).</p> <p>Importantly, the Act sets out a 'sustainable development principle', which must be considered by local authorities in the decision-making process. It requires decisions to be made that 'the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.</p> <p>The Act further required the Cwm Taf Public Service Board to prepare a well-being plan for RCT, entitled Our Cwm Taf (2018-2023). The revised LDP will have to consider the Well-being Plan as part of preparation.</p>
<i>Measuring the Health and Well-being of a Nation: Public Health Outcomes Framework for Wales (2016)</i>	The Framework will help organisations to work together to improve health now and in the future. Within the framework, each outcome as individual indicators. The framework was developed to underpin the national indicators of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA) to consider the effects of the LDP across range of issues which could affect this topic area. This includes access to healthcare facilities, access to open space and recreation facilities, noise pollution, air pollution and mental well-being (including social isolation). The ISA should also consider the impact access to a good quality of housing can have in terms of promoting health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Framework sets out 'good quality housing' is an indicator of good health. The revised LDP will have to accord with the local well-being plan, PPW and the Well-being and Future Generations Act 2015.</p>
<i>Public Health (Wales) Act (2017)</i>	The Public Health Act improves and protects the health and well-being of Wales. The Act responds to new and emerging health challenges.	The ISA should include objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA) to consider the effects of the LDP across range of issues which could affect this topic area. This includes access to healthcare facilities, access to open space and

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<i>(Amended 2018)</i>		<p>recreation facilities, noise pollution, air pollution and mental well-being (including social isolation).</p> <p>One of the provisions in the Act requires Welsh Ministers to make regulations that requires public bodies to carry out Health Impact Assessments in specific circumstances. In December 2023, consultation on the proposed health impact assessment regulations was launched.</p>
<i>Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for Our Present and Future Generations (2018)</i>	<p>The document identifies LDPs as a strategic level action through incorporating policies in relation to green infrastructure, active travel, retail environment, health services, air pollution and building design therefore can help shape and promote Health and Well-being. 'Planners' have been identified as influencers of these priority areas, and can also support delivery of the well-being goals.</p>	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA) to consider the effects of the LDP across range of issues which could affect this topic area. This includes access to healthcare facilities, access to open space and recreation facilities, noise pollution, air pollution and mental well-being (including social isolation).</p> <p>The document provides examples of how other LPAs have used LDPs to further the Health and Well-being agenda.</p>
<i>A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2019)</i>	<p>This plan sets out a long term future vision of a 'whole system approach to health and social care', which is focused on health and wellbeing, and on preventing illness. Various models and approaches are suggested as to how healthcare is provided in the future, and it is suggested that more healthcare will be community based.</p>	<p>The ISA should include objectives which address health and wellbeing (and the HIA component of the ISA) to consider the effects of the LDP across range of issues which could affect this topic area. This includes access to healthcare facilities, access to open space and recreation facilities, noise pollution, air pollution and mental well-being (including social isolation).</p> <p>Whilst the planning system is not specifically referenced as a tool for helping achieving the integration of health and social care in Wales, the implementation of future plans and policies may be helped by development plans.</p>
<i>TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)</i>	<p>The planning system should protect and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation. To ensure that development plans are based on adequate information about geology, landform, habitats and species, nature conservation issues should be included in surveys of local authority areas.</p> <p>Authorities must ensure that developments are not in breach of the habitats directive.</p>	<p>The ISA should be undertaken in a manner which accepts the primacy of nature conservation objectives, and should clearly take note of these designations in setting SA objectives and defining options.</p> <p>Local authorities should work in partnership with NRW and other key stakeholders to achieve nature conservation objectives. Links to national and local Biodiversity Action plans through habitat creation and management. Mitigation measure to be included where policies and proposals are taken forward in the LDP which are likely to have a negative impact.</p>
<i>The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020-21</i>	<p>This plan is a framework for Wales that identifies actions to deliver short term goals, and longer-term commitments post 2020 relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity's 'Strategic Plan to 2050'. The plan, originally published in December 2015 as the 'Nature Recovery Plan', addresses the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by putting nature at the heart of decision making and increasing the resilience of ecosystems by taking specific action focused around the six objectives for habitats and species. Part one of the plan sets out the</p>	<p>Similar to the biodiversity duty, the ISA and the LDP will both need to have regard to the recovery plan.</p>

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	<p>strategy for nature and commitments to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales. Part two sets out the action plan to meet the objectives and reverse the decline of biodiversity. Part three focuses on the Nature Recovery Framework, setting out the governance, partnerships, and relationships that will be integral to undertake the actions set out under part two.</p>	
<p><i>Environment (Wales) Act (2016)</i></p>	<p>The Act provides a new biodiversity duty, to manage the natural resources of Wales proactively and sustainably. The Act introduces an enhanced biodiversity duty for local authorities to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. This includes an approach that seeks to build resilience into ecosystems and recognise the benefits that they provide for the human population. It also introduces the sustainable management of natural resources as a new approach which ensures that the way in which the use of and the impacts on our natural resources do not result in their long term decline. The development of Area Statements is a further requirement of the Act to help deliver the Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy. The Act states that NRW must prepare a report containing its assessment of the state of natural resources in relation to Wales; State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR).</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which address the need to protect and enhance biodiversity assets as well as other natural resources.</p> <p>The revised LDP will have to have regard to the biodiversity duty, particularly in relation to policy development.</p>
<p><i>Natural Resources Policy (Wales) 2017 (updated 2018)</i></p>	<p>The statutory Natural Resources Policy was introduced as part of the implementation of the Environment (Wales) Act. It sets out policies to achieve the sustainable management of natural resources and sets out three national priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Delivering nature-based solutions; ■ Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; and, ■ Taking a place-based approach. 	<p>The ISA should include objectives relating to the sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p>The revised LDP should have regard to the aims of the Natural Resources Policy when developing relevant policies.</p>
<p><i>Woodlands for Wales Strategy (2018)</i></p>	<p>The strategy sets out the strategic direction for Welsh forestry. The strategy aims to achieve a minimum planting rate of 2,000ha each year from 2020, in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.</p> <p>The vision of the strategy is as follows:</p> <p>Wales will be known for its high-quality woodlands that enhance the landscape, are appropriate to local conditions and have a diverse mixture of species and habitats. These will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provide real social and community benefits, both locally and nationally; ■ support thriving woodland-based industries; and ■ contribute to a better quality environment throughout Wales 	<p>The ISA should consider impacts on woodland (including ancient woodland and other mature trees where appropriate) as part of its biodiversity objective.</p> <p>The strategy sets out that woodlands and trees can play a role as a component in green infrastructure, which will be considered as part of the revised LDP process. It also sets out that local authorities should further programmes of tree planting and woodland management, and this should be promoted through elements of land use planning.</p> <p>The strategy also sets out 'we want to find ways to ensure that planning policy reflects the need for compensatory planting, when permanent removal of woodland is permitted for development.' The LDP present an opportunity to incorporate policies which would move towards supporting these aims.</p>

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<i>State of Nature (2023)</i>	State of Nature reports are published every 3 years (previously in 2016 and 2019), written by leading professionals from over 70 wildlife organisations and government agencies. The 2023 report has revealed that of the 3,897 species that have been assessed using Red List criteria, 18% (663 species) are threatened with extinction from Wales. Furthermore, the number of monitored sites where species are present in Wales has fallen by 20% since 1994.	The ISA should include an objective which secures to ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets and wider ecological networks. The LDP presents an opportunity to adopt a policy approach which would help to enhance the state of nature through policy development.
<i>The Second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020)</i>	Sets out the objective of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) as to build resilient ecosystems which supply ecosystem services and help Wales meet its well-being goals for a sustainable future. To do this there is a need to transform socio-economic systems so that they are working more like natural regenerative systems, responding to feedback about environmental capacity and social needs. Four aims of SMNR are presented: Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced. Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change. Wales has healthy places for people, protected from environmental risks. Contributing to a regenerative economy, achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption.	The ISA should include an objective which secures to ensure the resilience and enhancement of ecosystems noting the benefits for the human population. The LDP should include a strategy and relevant policies that support the protection and enhancement of the wider network of biodiversity in the County Borough. This approach should be part of the approach to help support higher levels of health and wellbeing for the local population.
<i>Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011)</i>	The Measure provides the Welsh Language with official status and treats Welsh as equal status to English. This equal status for English and Welsh extends to the delivery of services and policy making. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When creating policy the policy maker must consider what effects if any (positive and negative) the policy decision would have on: ■ Opportunities for other persons to use the Welsh language; or ■ Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. 	The ISA should consider the impact of the LDP on Welsh language. The LDP will have to have regard to the Welsh Language, particularly in relation to policy development.
<i>Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers (2017)</i>	The Welsh Governments, Welsh language strategy sets out a vision that by the year 2050: 'The Welsh language is thriving, the number of speakers has reached a million, and it is used in every aspect of life. Among those who do not speak Welsh there is goodwill and a sense of ownership towards the language and a recognition by all of its contribution to the culture, society and economy of Wales.'	The ISA should consider the impact of the LDP on Welsh language. As a local authority, education need for Welsh Medium Schools will need to be identified in the LDP.

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	<p>In order to do this three strategic themes are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increasing the number of Welsh Speakers ■ Increasing use of Welsh ■ Creating favourable infrastructure 	
<i>The Historic Environment (Wales) Act (2023)</i>	<p>The Act provides the legislative framework for the protection and management of the historic environment in Wales. The legislation was prepared with three main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To give more effective protection to Wales's scheduled monuments and listed buildings. ■ To enhance existing mechanisms for the sustainable management of the historic environment. ■ To introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment. <p>The Act has undergone a reorganisation and restatement in clear, everyday language since its 2016 version, making it more accessible and easier to use and understand.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to protecting and enhance the historic environment including the settings of heritage assets.</p> <p>The LDP should take account of the provisions of the Act and should include locally specific policies for the conservation and enhancement of historic assets.</p>
<i>TAN 24: The Historic Environment (2017)</i>	<p>The TAN provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment, and provides specific guidance on certain aspects of the historic environment.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to protecting and enhance the historic environment including the settings of heritage assets.</p> <p>LDPs must include locally specific policies for the conservation and enhancement of historic assets, if appropriate.</p>
<i>TAN 20: Planning and The Welsh Language (2017)</i>	<p>The TAN provides guidance on how the Welsh language should be considered in planning, and on compliance with the requirements of planning and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>The TAN also sets out a 'step by step' of how and when the Welsh language might be considered in the preparation of an LDP.</p>	<p>The ISA should consider the impact of the LDP on Welsh language.</p> <p>Where Welsh is spoken in the community, the LDP presents an opportunity to include policy which will have regard for social implications of development and the preservation of the cultural heritage.</p>
<i>Flood Risk Regulations (2009)</i>	<p>The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 implement the EU Flood Directive in Wales. The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 set out the duties regarding producing preliminary flood risk assessments, flood hazard maps and flood risk maps and flood risk management plans.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses flood risk in the light of climate change.</p> <p>The LDP should include policies that are considerate of areas in RCT that of highest flood risk.</p>

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<p>TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004, Revised 2021)</p>	<p>The TAN sets guidance on flood risk, and how any risk should be managed and addressed. Sets out a precautionary framework to reduce the risk to people and development from flooding.</p> <p>The overarching aim of the precautionary framework is, in order of preference, to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direct new development away from those areas which are at high risk of flooding. ■ Where development has to be considered in high risk areas (zone C) only those developments which can be justified on the basis of the tests outlined in section 6 and section 7 are located within such areas. <p>The revised TAN 15 document, proposes changes to the flood zones to 1, 2, 3a and 3b. The coming into force of the new TAN 15 and the associated Flood Map for Planning has been suspended due to a further consultation on the TAN.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses flood risk in the light of climate change.</p> <p>LDPs should take a precautionary approach to flood risk, the potential consequences of flooding and ensure that the location of development has regard to the potential risk, causes and consequences of flooding.</p>
<p>MTAN 1: Aggregates (2004)</p>	<p>The Minerals TAN provides guidance ensuring that mineral extraction is managed in a sustainable way. To ensure supply is managed in a sustainable way so that the best balance between environmental, economic and social considerations is struck, while making sure that the environmental and amenity impacts of any necessary extraction are kept to a level that avoids causing demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the preservation and appropriate use of natural resources including the extraction of minerals.</p> <p>There are specific policies in relation to designated areas and specific issues, such as groundwater, and how they should be managed. This guidance should be taken into account while formulating the LDP in order to ensure that effects of mineral extraction are minimised and mitigated.</p>
<p>MTAN 2: Coal (2009)</p>	<p>The Minerals TAN provides best practice guidance ensuring that mineral extraction is managed in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the preservation and appropriate use of natural resources.</p> <p>This guidance should be taken into account while formulating the LDP in order to ensure that effects of mineral extraction are minimised and mitigated. Coal working should be directed away from sensitive locations and ensuring environmental and community impacts can be mitigated. The PPW makes clear that safeguarding of coal is not required but individual LPAs may wish to do so depending on their circumstances. This should be considered as part of drafting the policies for the LDP.</p>
<p>Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations (2010)</p>	<p>The Regulations sets out measures in relation to the assessment and management of air quality and compliance with air quality limit values, target values and objectives.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to limit the potential for air pollution from all sources. The ISA should have regard for existing air quality issues in the plan area.</p> <p>The revised LDP should consider the air quality impacts of development, and the potential effects of traffic associated with that development.</p>

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<i>Water Strategy for Wales (2015)</i>	The strategy sets out how Welsh Government will make best use of water resources, and how it will deliver sustainable integrated water management.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to ensure the protection of water quality and promote its use in an efficient manner. The ISA should have regard for areas which are currently experiencing stresses in terms of quantity or quality.</p> <p>The revised LDP should consider the impact of development on water. Sustainable management of natural resources will also be considered as part of the LDP.</p>
<i>Natural Resources Policy (2017)</i>	<p>The policy sets out the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales, building on the framework of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.</p> <p>The policy sets out three national priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ delivering nature-based solutions; ■ increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; and ■ taking a place-based approach. These approaches aim to support the development of resilient ecological networks, improve biological diversity, support climate change mitigation and flood risk management, and improve green infrastructure. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to ensure the appropriate management of natural resources in the plan area.</p> <p>Area Statements, and the Natural Resources Policy, will provide a baseline for the sustainable management of natural resources which will be considered as part of the revised LDP.</p>
<i>Clean Air Plan for Wales 2020 (updated 2023)</i>	<p>This plan sets out the Welsh Government's commitment to improve air quality and reduce the burden of poor air quality on human health, biodiversity and the natural environment. It sets out a range of policies and actions which will make a positive differences to health and well-being, natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity and sustainable communities. The plan states the potential of a Clean Air Act for Wales.</p> <p>The Plan uses themes to address areas of impact, complementing each other to create a sustainable approach to improving air quality. The themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting the health and well-being of current and future generations. ■ Taking action to support our natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity. ■ Working with industry to reduce emissions, supporting a cleaner and more prosperous Wales. ■ Creating sustainable places through better planning, infrastructure and transport. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to limit the potential for air pollution from all sources. The ISA should have regard for existing air quality issues in the plan area.</p> <p>The LDP should protect and enhance the environment, of which air quality is a key component.</p>
<i>The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal</i>	The FCERm lays out national objectives and targets for flood risk management in Wales and the approach that local planning authorities and county boroughs should follow, and the measures that should be taken, over the course of the next 10 years. The main focus is for an improvement in communication between all stakeholders and authorities to improve	The ISA should include an objective which seeks to limit flood risk in the County Borough, with consideration for the effects of climate change. The ISA will need to consider how flood risk management policies will effectively target the objectives laid out within the FCERM.

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<i>Erosion Risk Management in Wales (2020)</i>	responses and preparation for future flood events. Furthermore, 'place-based' decisions should be implemented, meaning there is an understanding that flood prevention measures that work in one county borough, may not be as effective in another. The FCERM was produced in line with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.	The LDP should take a place-based approach to flood risk management. Policies should seek to limit the potential for increased flood risk in the plan area and where appropriate seek to provide solutions for existing issues of flood risk. This may include through policies which directly address design measures to alleviate issues of flood risk and the directing of development at areas at which flood risk is less likely to result.
<i>Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 as amended by the Air Quality (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2002</i>	Sets out national air quality objectives for Wales as pragmatic thresholds above which Welsh Government considers the health risks associated with air pollution to be unacceptable.	The ISA should include an objective that addresses air quality and air pollution. The LDP should include policies to help address air quality in relation to amenity and human health as well as the natural environment.
<i>Clean Air (Wales) Bill 2023</i>	The Bill sets out a 10-year pathway to achieving cleaner air in Wales. Four core themes provide structure for the approach: people, environment, prosperity, and place. These themes are set out to help achieve different aspects of better air quality: protecting the health and well-being of current and future generations; support natural environment, ecosystems, and biodiversity; reducing emissions in industry; and, creating sustainable places through better planning, infrastructure, and transport. The Bill is a step on the path to put in place a Clean Air Act for Wales.	The ISA should include an objective to achieve cleaner air in the County Borough. The LDP should include policies that look to place limits and targets on all forthcoming development to ensure the air quality impacts of such developments meet the standards set by the Clean Air Bill.
<i>Wellbeing of Wales National Indicator No.4</i>	The indicator assists in calculating average annual nitrogen dioxide levels of residential buildings against the national monitoring data. This helps to maintain a record of annual NO2 pollution levels in Wales and inform policy objectives based on the severity of pollution. A target of steady reduction of pollution levels has been set.	The ISA should include an objective related to air pollution. The LDP should include policies to address air pollution and its impacts in the locality. Policies should have regard for the levels noted in the indicator.
<i>Tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Wales: Welsh Government supplemental plan to the UK</i>	Notes that the only statutory air quality limit that Wales, and the rest of the UK, is currently failing to meet is on NO2 concentrations. The report states that action is necessary to reduce concentrations around roads. It provides support to ensuring necessary actions are taken to meet the legal obligations and improve health, regardless of the cost or unpopularity of decisions.	The ISA should include an objective related to air pollution and reducing the need to travel by car in the County Borough. The LDP should include policies to address air pollution and its impacts in the locality. Policies should also be included to help support modal shift in the County Borough.

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<i>plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations 2017 (2018)</i>		
<i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</i>	The Act legislates to protect the archaeological heritage of England, Wales and Scotland provides specific protection for monuments of national interest. It relates to the ancient monuments, and matters of archaeological or historical interest, this includes provision for the investigation, preservation and recording, and regulation of such matters. The Act addresses the recovery and provision of grants. The Act defines 'scheduled monuments' (sites that warrant protection) and makes damage to and metal detecting on scheduled monuments a criminal offence.	The ISA should include an objective related to the protection of monuments of national interest. The LDP should include policies that protect, and mitigate harm to the setting of, monuments of national interest, including ancient monuments.
<i>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990</i>	the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. It altered laws regarding the granting of planning permission for building works, notably including those of the listed building system in England and Wales.	The ISA should include an objective related to the protection of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. The LDP should include policies that protect, and mitigate harm to, the setting of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest, including listed buildings.
<i>Nature Emergency declared by the Welsh Government June 2021</i>	The Senedd declared a 'nature emergency' on 30 th June 2021. The Welsh Government acknowledged the significant loss of biodiversity caused by humans and set out its expectations for action to restore it. It agreed there should be parity between actions taken by the Welsh Government to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. It called on the Welsh Government to introduce a legally binding requirement to reverse biodiversity loss through statutory targets, as well as legislate to establish an independent environmental governance body for Wales.	The ISA should include an objective related to the biodiversity crisis. The LDP should include policies that aim to reverse biodiversity loss.
<i>The Non-Domestic Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards: Implementation</i>	The UK government is planning to enact a framework to improve implementation and enforcement of the EPC B target by 2030. This requirement would mean that subject to exceptions, a landlord must not let a building that does not comply with the minimum required energy efficiency standard, set at an 'B' rating on a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). These would be nonoptional and enforced. The proposed standards include a phased implementation of the EPC B by 2030 requirement, with this phased implementation based on two-year compliance windows.	The ISA should include an objective related to sufficient energy efficiency of buildings.

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<i>of the EPC B Future Target</i>		
<i>Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for Wales</i>	The strategy sets out our vision for electric vehicle charging in Wales. The vision included is that by 2025, all users of electric cars and vans in Wales are confident that they can access electric vehicle charging infrastructure when and where they need it.	The ISA should include an objective related to promoting more sustainable modes of transport. The LDP should include policies that aim to increase the number of charging points in RCT.
<i>Electric vehicle charging strategy for Wales: action plan</i>	The action plan explains how the government plans to continue growing its electric charging infrastructure in line with the increased demand that will come as fossil fuel vehicles are phased out. It envisions infrastructure investments, including the private sector, to install charging points every 20 miles at trunks crisscrossing Wales by 2025. The plan sets out an approach to ensure that the number of charging points continue to grow to meet increasing demand as fossil fuel vehicles are phased out.	The ISA should include an objective related to promoting more sustainable modes of transport. The LDP should include policies that aim to increase the number of charging points in RCT.
<i>Public sector net zero reporting guide</i>	A guide for the public sector in Wales to estimate net carbon footprint, including direct and indirect emissions, also allowing the Welsh government to produce a baseline for the whole public sector in Wales. The advice intends to create a comprehensive set of guidelines for Welsh Public Bodies to assist them in becoming carbon neutral. Specific reporting requirements include a carbon baseline, Identifying Mitigation Potential, and Monitoring Progress. Along with outlining suggested best practises, the guide clarifies what GHG emissions data must be reported as well as how the reporting scope and organisational boundary should be defined.	The ISA should include an objective relating to addressing climate change and reducing the emissions of the County Borough. The LDP should include policies which seek to address the County Borough's contribution to climate change and reduce levels of emissions, including through supporting improved energy efficiency at new developments and the promotion of more sustainable modes of transport and energy from renewable sources.
<i>Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales</i>	The low carbon delivery plan outlines actions the Welsh government aims to take to cut emissions, increase efficiency and support the growth of a low carbon economy. It sets out how Wales aims to meet the first carbon budget (2016-2020) and consequently the 2020 interim target through 100 policies and proposals that directly reduce emissions and support the growth of the low carbon economy.	The ISA should include an objective relating to addressing climate change and reducing the emissions of the County Borough. The LDP should consider policies to contribute positively to reducing carbon emissions and supporting a low carbon economy.
<i>Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25)</i>	The Net Zero Wales Plan represents a new phase in the Welsh Government's progress towards decarbonisation with a new net zero target. The plan sets out 123 policies and proposals, alongside commitments and action to bring Wales onto a net zero by 2050 trajectory. It builds on the publication the previous plan, Prosperity for all: a low carbon Wales.	The ISA should include an objective relating to addressing climate change and reducing the emissions of the County Borough. The LDP should consider policies to contribute positively to reducing carbon emissions.
<i>Net zero carbon status by 2030: public</i>	The route map provides a strategic overview of the key priority areas for action and milestones needed for the Welsh public sector to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It is a strategic framework to aid in assessing what is in place and what is needed,	The ISA should include an objective regarding mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change.

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<i>sector route map</i>	and to monitor progress over time. The documents focus is the Public Sector's own footprint, and aims to guide the development of its contribution to future all Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plans.	The LDP should consider policies to contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
REGIONAL (SOUTH EAST WALES)		
<i>Natural Resources Wales South Central Wales Area Statement</i>	<p>Natural Resources Wales has produced Area Statements for each area of Wales – the South Central Area Statement covers RCT as well as Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff. Each Area Statement outlines the key challenges facing that particular locality, what we can all do to meet those challenges, and how we can better manage our natural resources for the benefit of future generations. They will be updated regularly. Viewed together, the seven Area Statements can be seen as a collaborative response to what is known as the Natural Resources Policy, published by the Welsh Government in 2017, which sets out the key challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources into the future. The South Central Area Statement addresses the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building resilient ecosystems. ■ Connecting people with nature. ■ Working with water. ■ Improving our health. ■ Improving our air quality. 	The ISA will need to consider the objectives of the Area Statement and should seek opportunities to contribute to those objectives.
<i>Emerging Cardiff City Region (South East Wales) Strategic Development Plan</i>	The Cardiff Capital Region is committed to regional working and work is underway to set out and agree the key preparatory matters between all 10 member authorities, including boundaries, governance and content. To date, both RCT and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils have signed up to the proposed details of the SDP preparation.	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP will need to consider any further developments in relation to the SDP.</p>
<i>Cardiff Capital Region Regional Economic Industrial Plan 2023-2028</i>	<p>The purpose of the plan is to guide the deployment of funding, policy decisions, and targeted effort to ensure the future productivity and prosperity of the region. The plan aims to create a region that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More Competitive – Enabling businesses within priority sectors and public services to achieve higher levels of productivity through innovation-led growth. 	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP will need to have regard for the approach of the Economic Industrial Plan.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More Connected – Investing in cutting-edge digital and physical infrastructure and growing the green economy to support the decarbonisation of SE Wales by 2050. ■ More Resilient – Maximising ‘good growth’ by taking direct steps to reduce inequality, ensuring prosperity is shared and spread across the region. 	
<p><i>South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan 2015-2030</i></p>	<p>A joint local transport plan known as South East Wales Valley Local Transport Plan (LTP) includes Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, RCT and Torfaen local authorities. The five authorities have jointly prepared the plan to identify issues and opportunities for transport in the plan area.</p> <p>Many of the issues identified are common to the five authorities, and transport has a role to play in reducing disparity across the South East Valleys area and connecting to the wider Cardiff region.</p>	<p>The LDP will need to have regard to the local transport plan, in the creation of transport policies and route safeguarding. Opportunities for sustainable travel should also be considered.</p>
<p><i>Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2010-2021 (Adopted 2010)</i></p>	<p>There are a number of key concepts in the vision that guide the Plan’s aims and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “The strategic location of Caerphilly County Borough” - exploiting the proximity of the County Borough to the major economic hubs of Cardiff and Newport is one of the central aims of the Council’s regeneration strategy while the mid valleys and the Heads of the Valleys corridors both pass through the County Borough offering opportunities further north. ■ “Regeneration ... delivered in a well-balanced and sustainable manner” – the Plan seeks to balance environmental, economic and community interests and needs, to create a sustainable future for all of the County Borough’s residents. ■ Reflecting “the specific role and function of individual settlements” - the Plan identifies a sustainable role for all the towns and villages in the County Borough and promotes appropriate development or restraint in each so that all <p>The objectives of the Plan have been derived from land-use issues emanating from the four themes of the Community Strategy (Living Environment, Regeneration, Education for Life and Health, Social Care and Well-Being).</p> <p>Caerphilly is preparing a Replacement LDP up to 2035, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate.</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p>

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<p><i>Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (Adopted 2011)</i></p>	<p>Four strategic LDP objectives are set out which seek to address the national, regional and local issues facing the County Borough. These four strategic objectives are at the centre of the LDP and form the basis for its policy development. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To produce high quality sustainable Places. 2. To protect and enhance the Environment. 3. To spread prosperity and opportunity through Regeneration. 4. To create safe, healthy and inclusive Communities. <p>A Revised LDP is currently being prepared, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate.</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP and the emerging Revised LDP.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the implications of its policies on surrounding areas, and how surrounding areas may affect RCT.</p>
<p><i>Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (Adopted 2013)</i></p>	<p>The overarching Vision of the LDP is: The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park will continue to be a living working landscape with many uses, where development will be sustainable and compatible with the statutory National Park purposes. This LDP will guide development in a way which will ensure that within the lifetime of the plan, the Bannau Brycheiniog will be a place which:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continues to be recognised internationally for its value as a protected area, whose character continues to be shaped by the long-standing interactions between people and the processes of nature. ■ Continues to be widely acclaimed for its natural beauty, geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural heritage which are being conserved and enhanced by its stakeholders through traditional and innovative means. ■ Continues to be a sought-after destination providing an outstanding variety of sustainable opportunities for all to understand and enjoy its tranquillity, rural character, Welsh way of life, sense of remoteness, and other special qualities. ■ Promotes an approach to development which ensure that the National Park of the future is able to be resilient, open and responsive to change – particularly climate change – and can be proactive in mitigating and adapting to the effects of undesirable change. ■ Promotes an approach to development which enables our communities to be less dependent upon external supply chains leading to increased food and energy security locally, improved quality of life, community cohesion and conservation of natural capital. 	<p>The ISA (through the inclusion of appropriate objectives) and LDP should seek to enhance the policies and vision of the National Park. The purposes and special qualities of the National Park should be taken into account, particularly when considering potential development sites within its setting.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continues to be a living landscape where innovative approaches to sustainable development and renewable energy are encouraged and tested for the benefit of the environment, the economy and local communities. ■ Managed sustainably through active partnerships among the Park's stakeholders so that it continues to be a source of inspiration and enjoyment for future generations. ■ Has appropriate monitoring systems in place to ensure that development and plan policies are monitored over the long term to improve future policy development. <p>A Revised LDP is currently being prepared, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate.</p>	
<p>Cardiff Local Development Plan 2006-2026 (Adopted 2016)</p>	<p>The objectives of the Cardiff LDP are set out under four main headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To respond to evidenced economic needs and provide the necessary Infrastructure to deliver development; ■ To respond to evidenced social needs; ■ To deliver economic and social needs in a co-ordinated way that respects and enhances Cardiff's environment; and ■ To create sustainable neighbourhoods that form part of a sustainable city. <p>The main elements of Strategy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making provision for new homes and jobs. 2. Putting in place a framework to manage future growth and encourage high quality, sustainable design. 3. Bringing forward new infrastructure. 4. Delivering sustainable transportation solutions. 5. Responding to evidenced economic needs. 6. Responding to evidenced social needs. 7. Respecting Cardiff's environment and responding to climate change. <p>A Replacement LDP is currently being prepared for Cardiff, to cover the period up to 2036, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate. Consultation</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP may be affected by some of the development schemes planned for Cardiff. The LDP should ensure that the influence from Cardiff is beneficial, and take advantage of the potential increase in development. However, this should not be to the detriment development in the north and, wherever possible, inequalities between the north and south of the County should be addressed.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<p>was mostly recently undertaken with regards to the Preferred Strategy document from July to October 2023.</p>	
<p><i>Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (Adopted 2016)</i></p>	<p>The LDP Vision for 2026 sets out how Neath Port Talbot is envisaged to change over the Plan period, is set out below.</p> <p>Vision: The natural beauty and environmental importance of Neath Port Talbot's waterfront and coastal corridor area will be protected and conserved while previously developed, underused and unsightly former industrial and commercial areas are redeveloped, transforming the function and appearance of the whole coastal belt. Key sites at central Port Talbot, Baglan Bay, Coed Darcy and the Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, coupled with the area's good and improving transport and communication links will help deliver a competitive, knowledge-based economy. New and expanded settlements will provide sustainable housing and employment to meet the needs of local communities and the wider area.</p> <p>The County Borough's rural areas and valley communities will be supported and revitalised through encouragement of new and expanded economic activity through provision for sustainable small scale employment, including tourism initiatives capitalising on existing successes such as the strategic tourism destinations at Margam Park and the Afan Valley. Benefits from natural resources will be maximised and the cultural, historic and natural heritage will be supported and enhanced. Economic growth and community cohesion will be promoted by concentrating development in key areas to provide benefits to a wider hinterland.</p> <p>A Replacement LDP is currently being prepared to cover the period 2023 to 2038, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate.</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP and the emerging Revised LDP.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the implications of its policies on surrounding areas, and how surrounding areas may affect RCT.</p>
<p><i>Vale of Glamorgan Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (Adopted 2017)</i></p>	<p>A number of key strategic objectives have been developed that set the context of the LDP Strategy:</p> <p>Objective 1: To sustain and further the development of sustainable communities within the Vale of Glamorgan, providing opportunities for living, learning, working and socialising for all.</p> <p>Objective 2: To ensure that development within the Vale of Glamorgan makes a positive contribution towards reducing the impact of and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.</p> <p>Objective 3: To reduce the need for Vale of Glamorgan residents to travel to meet their daily needs and enabling them greater access to sustainable forms of transport.</p> <p>Objective 4: To protect and enhance the Vale of Glamorgan's historic, built, and natural environment.</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the implications of its policies on surrounding areas, and how surrounding areas may affect RCT.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<p>Objective 5: To maintain, enhance and promote community facilities and services in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p> <p>Objective 6: To reinforce the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the Vale of Glamorgan's town, district, local and neighbourhood shopping centres.</p> <p>Objective 7: To provide the opportunity for people in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet their housing needs.</p> <p>Objective 8: To foster the development of a diverse and sustainable local economy that meets the needs of the Vale of Glamorgan and that of the wider South East Wales Region.</p> <p>Objective 9: To create an attractive tourism destination with a positive image for the Vale of Glamorgan, encouraging sustainable development and quality facilities to enrich the experience for visitors and residents.</p> <p>A Replacement LDP is currently being prepared for the period 2021 to 2036, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate. Consultation is currently being undertaken up to February 2024 with regards to the Preferred Strategy document.</p>	
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (2017)	<p>The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal was agreed for £1.2 billion in 2017. The aim is to create jobs and boost economic prosperity by improving productivity, tackling worklessness, building innovation, investing in physical and digital infrastructure, providing support for business and ensuring any economic benefits are shared across the region.</p> <p>In 2018, ten local authority leaders making up the Regional Cabinet for the City Deal approved the strategic business plan. The plan specifies the regional strategic objectives of the CCR City Deal, which are: prosperity and opportunity; inclusion and equality; identity, culture, and community and sustainability. The overarching economic objectives of the City Deal are to create 25,000 new jobs and leverage £4billion in private sector investment.</p>	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP will have regard to the proposals put forward as part of the City Deal, particularly in relation to the South Wales Metro and safeguarding.</p>
Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2016-2031 (Adopted 2020)	<p>The vision of the LDP is to strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys within the Cardiff Capital Region, to encourage a sustainable level of population growth and be a place to be proud of where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions; ■ People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life; and ■ People visit, enjoy and return. 	<p>The ISA will need consider any potential in-combination effects of the development proposed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the implications of its policies on surrounding areas, and how surrounding areas may affect RCT.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
	<p>The LDP objectives address various social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being outcomes and provide a framework for the detailed planning policies and proposals to deliver the Plan's Vision for Merthyr Tydfil.</p>	
<p><i>Cwm Taf Local Well-being Plan 2018-2023 (2018)</i></p>	<p>The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan is a statutory plan developed by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board, and includes a number of Well-being Objectives that the plan will help deliver.</p> <p>The Plan identifies four objectives that are related to the communities within the Cwm Taf Public Service Board area and the revised LDP could help achieve. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cross-Cutting Objective: Tackling Loneliness & Isolation ■ Objective 1: Thriving Communities ■ Objective 2: Healthy People ■ Objective 3: Strong Economy 	<p>The ISA objectives (and the HIA component of the ISA) should also have regard to local health and well-being.</p> <p>Well-being Plans form part of the 'planning framework' and so the LDP will need to consider and be in accord with the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan.</p>
<p><i>Cwm Taf Ageing Well in Wales Plan (2018)</i></p>	<p>The Plan sets out our vision for Cwm Taf to be a good place to grow older for everyone, where older people can continue to do the things that are important to them. This plan outlines a range of existing services, opportunities and support available for older people in Cwm Taf, and sets out objectives to drive forward the work of Ageing Well in Cwm Taf so that improvements are seen in terms of the health, well-being and lives of people as they age.</p>	<p>The ISA objectives (and the HIA component of the ISA) should also have regard to local health and well-being. This should be supplemented by the findings of the EqIA which will consider the effects of the LDP in relation to the protected characteristics (including older people and younger people) set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The LDP will need to consider the health needs of all members of the community when policies are being developed.</p>
<p><i>Regional Technical Statement 2nd Review (2020)</i></p>	<p>The Regional Technical Statement (RTS) sets out the requirements of each Local Planning Authority (LPA) with regards to the quantities of construction aggregate which need to be supplied from their area (apportionments) over a given time. If the RTS identifies shortfalls, it also sets out the scale of necessary new allocations in an LDP to ensure that adequate supply is maintained throughout the plan period.</p> <p>The document sets out detailed calculations to determine a projected demand of aggregates in the South Wales region covering the 25 year period up to 2041, although further reviews will still be initiated every 5 years, in accordance with MTAN1, to ensure that the RTS can react to any significant change in circumstances. It subsequently apportions a tonnage of aggregates that each of the 18 local authorities in the region need to provide in the form of land-banks of permission.</p>	<p>The outcomes of the RTS 2nd Review will require consideration in the preparation of LDP policies during the course of revision.</p>
<p><i>South East Valleys Abstraction</i></p>	<p>The Licensing Strategy sets out how water resources are to be managed in the South East Valleys. The strategy provides information regarding where water is available for abstraction whilst also providing an indication of the reliability of proposed new abstraction licenses.</p>	<p>The ISA and LDP will need to consider the sustainability management of water resources in the plan area.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<i>Licensing Strategy (2017)</i>	Water resources are assessed on a sub-catchment scale known as 'water bodies' in line with the Water Framework Directive. This allows for increasingly detailed information regarding the availability of water resources, compared to the scale used in previous licensing strategies.	
<i>Our Valleys, Our Future (2019-2021)</i>	<p>A ministerial taskforce was set up by the Welsh Government in 2016 on a new approach to investing in the future of the Valleys area. The priorities of the plan are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create good quality jobs and provide skills to do them ■ Improving public services <p>Helping local communities</p>	<p>The ISA should include objectives which consider access to employment and services and facilities as well as the potential to address issues of deprivation.</p> <p>The document identifies Pontypridd/Treforest as a strategic hub, focusing on residential, office, industrial and retail development.</p> <p>The 2019-2021 delivery plan aims to launch targeted support for small scale infrastructure projects, and continue to take forward private sector led developments in the Valleys. The implications of the plan will need to be incorporated into the LDP.</p>
LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES		
<i>RCT Council Corporate Plan: 'Making a Difference' (2020)</i>	<p>The plan establishes priorities for the County Borough. The vision of the plan is to provide strong community leadership that enables RCT 'to be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous'. The plan contains the following three priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful 2. Creating places where people are proud to live, work and play 3. Enabling prosperity, creating the opportunity for people and business to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper 	The LDP will have to have regard to the priorities of the Corporate Plan.
<i>Employment and Skills SPG (2015)</i>	Sets out the Council's approach to working with applicants and developers to ensure that local people have the skills and opportunity to access employment generated from new large residential and commercial developments. This includes the approach to secure employment and training opportunities through the planning process as well as the requirement for Employment and Skills Plans to support new schemes.	<p>The ISA should consider how the potential impacts of policies and development allocations set out through the LDP on employment opportunities in the plan area.</p> <p>The LDP should consider the identified employment need for the plan area as part of its preparation and aim to sufficiently meet that need.</p>
<i>My Own Front Door: A Plan for Housing Later in Life (2016)</i>	This plan was developed in recognition of the aging population in RCT and the need to increase the range of housing options available to people in later life. The overall aim is to enable older people to live independently in their home of choice for as long as possible.	<p>The ISA should consider how the needs of older people are addressed through the LDP.</p> <p>The LDP will have to plan accordingly and use the aims of the plan to inform policy making.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<p><i>Rhondda Cynon Taf Strategic Equality Plan (2019)</i></p>	<p>The Plan sets out how the Council aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The Equality Objectives for 2019-2022 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive. ■ To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities. ■ To promote safe communities. ■ To reduce the gender pay gap. ■ To create an inclusive workforce. 	<p>The ISA objectives should also have regard to the needs of all sections of the community. This should be supplemented by the findings of the EqlA which will consider the effects of the LDP in relation to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>The LDP will need to consider the needs of all members of the community when policies are being developed.</p>
<p><i>Rhondda Cynon Taf Draft Tourism Strategy 2020</i></p>	<p>The RCT Tourism Strategy is to be the overarching plan to enhance, increase and sustain the visitor economy with a view to establishing RCT as a premier destination for 'experience' based visits and holidays in the UK.</p> <p>The strategy sets out Tourism Action Plans will need to be developed to identify areas where new attractions can be developed. The document also identifies that accommodation will also need to be developed, ranging from hotels to camping facilities, as well as transport infrastructure to improve user access. Indeed, the strategy identifies the need for new car parking provisions.</p> <p>Visitor use of the natural environment will also be important, and work will be needed to improve access onto land, with the help of stakeholders.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to ensure sustainable economic growth of which tourism is likely to play an important role. It should also include an objective which seeks to ensure the protection of the natural environment including important biodiversity assets, wider ecological networks and the natural landscape.</p> <p>The LDP will have to plan accordingly for Tourism within RCT.</p>
<p><i>Action for Nature: A Local Biodiversity Action Plan for RCT (2008)</i></p>	<p>The Biodiversity Action Plan was initially produced in 2000 before being updated in 2009 and is now currently under review to be updated again to reflect the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This plan is currently undergoing a review and drafting an updated version. The emerging draft recently completed its consultation period in March 2022.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity assets and wider ecological networks.</p> <p>The LDP will have regard to the plan and presents an opportunity to include policies which will ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and other elements of the natural environment.</p>
<p><i>The Historic Built Environment SPG (2011)</i></p>	<p>The SPG gives detailed guidance to owners and occupiers of land and buildings within the historic built environment, and anyone wishing to develop within it or make alterations to it.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses the potential impacts on the historic environment and promotes its protection and enhancement. It may also consider the potential to bring disused heritage assets back into use where appropriate as well as the potential to preserve assets which are identified as being at risk.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
		The LDP should include policies which protect and enhance the historic environment.
<i>Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Action Plan (2023 - 2028)</i>	<p>The strategy has six aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to encourage and support the use of the Welsh language within families; ■ to increase the provision of Welsh-medium activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language; ■ to strengthen the position of the Welsh language in the community; ■ to increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace; ■ to improve Welsh language services to citizens; and ■ to strengthen the infrastructure for the language, including digital technology. 	<p>The ISA should consider the impact of the LDP on Welsh language.</p> <p>Where Welsh is spoken in the community, the LDP presents an opportunity to include policy which will have regard for social implications of development and the preservation of the cultural heritage.</p>
<i>Design and Placemaking SPG (2011)</i>	<p>The SPG seeks to clarify the fundamental design issues and how they should be addressed. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring that all development is sustainable ■ Respecting the traditional local character ■ Ensuring that the topography of RCT is respected and that the best use of slopes is achieved ■ Providing a choice of housing types with access to open space and quality living environments ■ Accommodating parking and highways appropriately and sensitively ■ Creating walkable neighbourhoods with links to existing centres and an emphasis on sustainable modes of transport ■ Respecting Natural Heritage 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks address design issues (including impacts on the historic environment and landscape as well as wider sustainability issues).</p> <p>The LDP should promote high quality and sustainable design.</p>
<i>Rhonda Cynon Taf Air Quality Action Plan (2013)</i>	Sets out objectives for air quality in the plan area including within areas which have been declared AQMAs. Highlights that compliance within these specific areas will guarantee a reduced risk of ongoing public health issues.	<p>The ISA should include an objective which seeks to limit the potential for air pollution from all sources. The ISA should have regard for existing air quality issues in the plan area.</p> <p>The LDP should protect and enhance the environment, which air quality is a key component of.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<p><i>Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2013)</i></p>	<p>The LFRMS adopts a holistic approach to flood risk management, taking into account the geographical, socio-economic and political factors in RCT. It is set out to enable effective management of local flooding by improving collaboration and co-operation between key stakeholders. It aims to improve communication and present information to the public with regard to the risk of flooding and what can be done, regardless of its cause (from main rivers or local flooding). The aim is to allow communities to have a greater say in flood management decisions.</p> <p>A Revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan is currently being developed, which will be taken into account during later stages of the ISA as appropriate. A second phase of consultation was undertaken up to October 2023 with regards to the Strategy and Action Plan. The final Strategy, is to be presented to Cabinet for approval before submission of the final documents to Welsh Government for Ministerial approval.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses flood risk in the light of climate change.</p> <p>LDPs should take a precautionary approach to flood risk, the potential consequences of flooding and ensure that the location of development has regard to the potential risk, causes and consequences of flooding.</p>
<p><i>Rhondda Cynon Taf Flood Risk Management Plan (2015)</i></p>	<p>The FRMP has been developed to better understand risk from all sources of flooding and agree priorities to manage that risk and how RCTCBC will manage flooding, so that the communities and environment at highest risk benefit the most. It includes four overarching objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reducing the consequences for individuals, communities, businesses and the environment from flooding and coastal erosion; ■ Raising awareness of and engaging people in the response to flood and coastal erosion risk; ■ Providing an effective and sustained response to flood and coastal erosion events; and ■ Prioritising investment in the most at risk communities 	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses flood risk in the light of climate change.</p> <p>The LDP should include policies that are considerate of the areas in the County Borough that area at highest risk of flooding.</p>
<p><i>Rhondda Cynon Taf Flood Report (2020)</i></p>	<p>The RCT Flood Report (February 2020) provides a wide assortment of recommendations to improve the county borough and local authority's flood response, as well as responses to other similar major events. There are several areas for improvement identified including, the flood warning system, rainfall forecasts, and post-event mental health support. The leading recommendation is for the creation of a 'multi-agency' flood support team, comprising the authority and Dwr Cymru. The report concludes that the local authority's response to extreme weather events, namely flooding, is good but could be improved by the recommendations.</p>	<p>The ISA should take into account the recommendations of the Flood Report in light of flood risk and should locate future development sites in accordance with their relative flood risk or provide sufficient anti-flooding mitigations to raise the risk of flooding above 1:100.</p>
<p><i>Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</i></p>	<p>The WESP for RCT was produced in line with the Welsh Government target to reach one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. RCT aims to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% during the ten year lifespan of the WESP. The plan meet this aim by achieving a number of supportive outcomes:</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective which addresses Welsh language.</p> <p>The LDP should provide policy basis for increasing and protecting the use of Welsh in educational institutions.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<i>(WESP) 2022 - 2032</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh ■ Outcome 2: More reception / five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh ■ Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another ■ Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh. ■ Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school ■ Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) act 2018 ■ Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh 	
<i>Tackling Climate Change in Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022-2025)</i>	<p>The climate change strategy sets out the plan to meet RCT's commitment to reducing the carbon emissions in County Borough. The strategy identifies that by 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Council will be carbon neutral; ■ The whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral; and ■ The County Borough will have contributed to meeting the Welsh Government's ambition of a Net Zero public sector. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective that seeks to reduce the contribution RCT makes to climate change.</p> <p>The LDP should include policy with the aim of limiting carbon emissions in the County Borough. This could include through support for more sustainable modes of transport and locating development in areas which will reduce the need for residents to have to travel long distances regularly.</p>
<i>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Electric Vehicle Charging</i>	<p>The strategy outlines several key principles which aim to empower the Council to advise, help and support individuals, or parties, that wish to make the switch from conventional vehicles to EVs. As part of the Council's wider sustainable transportation objectives, it aims to outline the reasons why action is necessary, identify specific outcomes, coordinate a County Borough-wide approach, promote and encourage the development of a reliable and usable electric vehicle charging (EVC) network, and foster a shift from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles.</p>	<p>The ISA should include an objective that seeks to encourage the switch from conventional vehicles to EVs.</p> <p>The LDP should include policies addressing EV charging network provision.</p>

Title & Legislation	Summary, Objectives, Key Targets & Indicators	Implications for the ISA and Revised LDP
<i>Strategy 2021-2030</i>		
<i>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council Electric Vehicle Charging Implementation Plan (2023)</i>	<p>The Plan was produced following the publication of the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, and provides guidance and advice on best practice to develop a comprehensive EV charging network throughout RCT including in relation to schools, workplaces, and public and council-owned facilities. The plan aims to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify key themes to support the Council's delivery of charging infrastructure across the County Borough; ■ Provide guidance and advice on best practice to develop a comprehensive network of electric vehicle charge points that both responds to existing demand for EV infrastructure and provides for and accelerates the uptake of electric vehicles in the future , and; ■ Establish a clear set of actions to drive the delivery of the Council's EV Charging Ambitions. 	<p>The ISA should include an objective that seeks to encourage the switch from conventional vehicles to EVs.</p> <p>The LDP should include policies addressing EV charging network provision.</p>

Appendix D

Baseline Information

Environmental Baseline Information

Climate change

D.1 The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment^{33,34} found that average temperatures over land across Wales have increased, with the decade from 2005-2014 being 0.9°C warmer than the 1961-1990 average. In terms of future predicted changes, the latest set of projections for Wales comes from the 2018 UK Climate Projections (see **Table 4.1** and **Table 4.2**)³⁵.

Table D.1 UKCP18 2040-2059 Mean temperature - Summer changes compared to 1981-2000

	10 th percentile	50 th percentile	90 th percentile
RCP8.5	0 - 1°C	1 - 3°C	2 - 3°C
RCP6.0	0 - 1°C	1 - 2°C	2 - 4°C
RCP4.5	0 - 1°C	1 - 2°C	2 - 3°C
RCP2.6	0 - 1°C	1 - 2°C	2 - 4°C

Table D.2 UKCP18 2040-2059 Rainfall - Winter changes compared to 1981-2000

	10 th percentile	50 th percentile	90 th percentile
RCP8.5	-10 - 0%	0 - 20%	10 - 40%
RCP6.0	-10 - 0%	0 - 20%	0 - 30%
RCP4.5	-10 - 0%	0 - 20%	0 - 30%
RCP2.6	-10 - 0%	0 - 20%	0 - 30%

³³ ASC (2016) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report – Summary for Wales. Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change, London.

³⁴ HM Government (2022) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022

³⁵ Met Office (2018) Climate change projections over land [online] Available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/summaries/climate-change-projections-over-land>

D.2 Reducing CO₂ emissions is a key component of tackling climate change. In 2018, RCT signed up to the UK100 initiative as a commitment to be a carbon-free Council by 2050. The most recent available CO₂ emissions estimates (2021)³⁶ show that Wales has the highest CO₂ emissions per capita of any part of the UK. However, as shown in **Table 4.3**, in comparison to the rest of Wales, RCT has had consistently lower emissions per capita since 2005.

Table D.3 CO₂ Emissions per Capita in RCT and Wales 2005-2021

Year	CO ₂ Emissions per Capita (tCO ₂ e)	
	RCT	Wales
2005	6.8	11.1
2006	6.8	11.3
2007	6.6	11.0
2008	6.4	10.6
2009	5.8	9.2
2010	6.2	10.1
2011	5.6	9.1
2012	5.8	9.0
2013	6.0	9.8
2014	5.3	9.3
2015	5.1	8.8
2016	4.9	8.2
2017	4.7	8.0
2018	4.6	7.7
2019	4.4	7.6
2020	3.9	6.8
2021	4.2	7.3

D.3 Transport related CO₂ emissions have also fallen in RCT since 2005, although there was a year-on-year rise in emissions from this source between 2014 and 2016. CO₂

emissions from road transport on A-roads, motorways and minor roads all fell in RCT during this period.

D.4 The Government produces annual figures on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) which give an insight on the value of land in RCT as terrestrial sinks which can remove CO₂ from the air. These figures account for the net emissions in the County Borough from areas of forest, crops, grassland, wetlands and settlements. Between 2005 and 2021 there has been an increase in the net LULUCF emissions in RCT from -48.3 to -43.3kt³⁷.

D.5 These trends considered; it is notable that a large amount of land across RCT comprises semi-natural vegetation on undisturbed soils. Such landscapes are of significant importance for carbon storage. Approximately 94% of the UK's biocarbon is contained within existing soil stocks, and near 6% in vegetation stocks³⁸.

D.6 In 2021, the number of households in RCT who own a car or van declined by 16% (26,978 in 2011 to 22,958 in 2021). However, the number of households with 1-4 cars has increased by 11% from 72,685 to 80,380 in 2021^{39,40}.

D.7 Energy consumption and generation is also an important factor in reducing CO₂ emissions. In 2017, the Welsh Government announced a target of meeting 70% of its energy demand from Welsh renewable energy sources by 2030. The latest figures⁴¹ show that renewable energy sources contributed 28% of all electricity generated in Wales in 2021, which was an increase from 25% in 2018. The largest contribution was from onshore followed by offshore wind.

D.8 100% of electricity in RCT is purchased from renewable generated certified sources⁴². Following the introduction of three carbon emission reporting requirements (staff business travel, staff commuting and home working) RCT's carbon emissions increased when compared to the previous two years (116,543.20 tonnes in 2019/20, 106,007.60 tonnes in 2020/21 and 120,907.40 tonnes in 2021/22). A significant reduction in emissions was seen in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. This is mainly to the cessation of several activities across various emission sources due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the same three years, the production of renewable electricity generation increased from 1,119,617 kW in 2019/20, to 1,139,889 kW in 2020/21 and 1,163,788 kW in 2021/22.

³⁶GOV.UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Office for National Statistics (2016) UK environmental accounts: 2016. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/ukenvironmentalaccounts/2016#carbon-stock-account>

³⁹ ONS (2021) Census 2021: Car or Van Availability [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS045/editions/2021/versions/4?f=get-data>

⁴⁰ ONS (2012) 2011 Census: Key Statistics for Wales, March 2011.

⁴¹ Welsh Government (2021) Energy Generation in Wales 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/energy-generation-wales-2021>

⁴² Rhondda Cyon Taf County Borough Council (2022) Update report on the carbon footprint project and Welsh public sector net zero carbon report for 2021/22 [online] Available at: <https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s38627/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

D.9 In 2020/21 RCT ranked third of all Welsh local authorities in terms of the proportion of electricity consumption being met by renewable sources, at 74%. This means that the authority already meets the 2030 renewable energy consumption target set by the Welsh Government⁴³.

D.10 RCT has the second highest number of solar thermal installations of all Welsh authorities, with over 90% of these being related to social housing.

D.11 Early in 2021, RCTCBC commissioned the Carbon Trust to determine the Council's carbon footprint for the 2019–2020 financial year, accounting for the effects of direct operational activities and defining specific actions that must be made to achieve net zero goals.

D.12 RCTCBC's overall Net Emissions for RCT for the 2021/22 financial year totalled 120,907.4 tCO₂e. These emissions can be broken down into eight separate scores:

- Supply Chain - 81,676.97tCO₂e
- Natural Gas - 14,346.60tCO₂e
- Electricity - 8,271.97tCO₂e
- Waste - 4,842.35tCO₂e
- Fleet & Equipment - 6,007.51tCO₂e
- Water - 112.01tCO₂e
- Other fuels (LPG) - 87.68tCO₂e
- Staff Travel and Home Working 5,562.37tCO₂e

D.13 There are 114 public electric vehicle charging devices available in RCT, which equates to 48 devices per 100,000 people⁴⁴. There are only 9 public charging devices which capability of 50kW and above in RCT⁴⁵.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

D.14 Biodiversity is the term used to describe wildlife species, their habitats, and the relationships between ecosystems.

D.15 There are four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in RCT: Blaen Cynon, Coedydd Nedd a Mellt, Cwm Cadlan and Cardiff Beechwoods which are designated at the European level for specific habitats and species. The SACs are all located around Hirwaun in the north of the County Borough

and some of the sites fall within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park area with the exception of the Cardiff Beechwoods site, which is located to the south. There are no Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites within the County Borough, the closest being the Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar site approximately 10km to the south east and Crymlyn Bog SPA and Ramsar site approximately 18km to the west.

D.16 There are 18 nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) either entirely or partly within RCT (outside the National Park).

D.17 There are two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in RCT: Glyncomnel Ground and Woodlands, and Craig-yr-Hesg.

D.18 There are 183 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in RCT, as listed in the Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)⁴⁶. In the uplands, where there is less built development and extensive areas of semi natural habitat, the SINC sites are generally larger in size than in the lowlands.

D.19 There are areas of Ancient Woodland scattered throughout the County Borough, in particular the south and east. Around one third of the County Borough is wooded and the urban canopy covers approximately 18.5% of the land⁴⁷.

D.20 River corridors are an important component of the natural environment in RCT and all of the major rivers qualify as SINC habitat, with many supporting protected species. River corridors provide connectivity through urban and rural areas⁴⁸.

D.21 There are no RSPB reserves or Important Bird Areas within RCT. There are three South and West Wales Wildlife Trust Reserves within RCT: Brynna Woods, Y Gweira and Pwll Waun Cynon.

D.22 There are 44 Regionally Important Geological Sites spread across the County Borough, most of which (26) are located in the upper Rhondda and Cynon, with several others in the south (11) and central belt (7). RCT also contains important areas which form part of the wider lowland grassland, lowland and upland heath and woodland networks in Wales.

⁴³ Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (2021) Update report on the carbon footprint project [online] Available at: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CY/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/CiimateChangeCabinetSteeringGroup/2021/06/14/Reports/Item4TheCouncilsCarbonFootprintProjectUpdateReport.pdf>

⁴⁴ Department for Transport (2023) Electric vehicle charging devices by local authority [online] Available at: <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/index.html>

⁴⁵ Department for Transport (2022) Electric vehicle charging devices by local authority [online] Available at: <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/index.html>

⁴⁶ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2008) Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan 2006-2021 - Supplementary Planning Guidance - Nature Conservation - Appendix 3.

⁴⁷ Natural Resources Wales (2016) Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities

⁴⁸ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2008) Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan 2006-2021 - Supplementary Planning Guidance - Nature Conservation - Appendix 3.

D.23 Figure D.1.1 shows the distribution of designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within RCT. The distribution of SINC sites in RCT is shown in Figure D.1.2. Priority areas for conservation (comprising areas of lowland grassland, lowland and upland heath and woodland networks) are shown in Figure D.1.3.

Protected and priority species

D.24 The presence of protected species is a material planning consideration. Such species are detailed within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000⁴⁹.

D.25 'Action for Nature: The Local Biodiversity Action Plan' (2008) focuses on a programme for the conservation and enhancement of RCT's biodiversity, listing the habitats and species of particular importance to the locality. A replacement Action for Nature Plan concluded a consultation period in March 2022).

D.26 A list of locally important species to RCT is provided within the 2008 Action for Nature Plan. This includes several bird species and vascular plants. It is likely that following the publication of the forthcoming 2022 updated plan this list will have changed, however certain notable species include:

- Kingfisher
- Heron
- Monk's-hood
- Double-line moth
- Dragonflies
- All non-priority bats
- Badger

Landscape

D.27 RCT extends from the uplands of the Bannau Brycheiniog to the edge of the Vale of Glamorgan. The central feature is the coalfield plateau, which is cut by the Rhondda, Cynon and parts of the Taff and Ely river valleys⁵⁰. The Cynon and Rhondda valleys are generally steep-sided with narrow and mostly built up valley floors, and bracken covered, farmed or wooded slopes. South of Pontypridd, the Taff Valley is wider but heavily developed. The southern part of the County Borough has a softer, more lowland landscape of farms, woods, commons, towns and villages.

D.28 To the north of the coalfield plateau is the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, of which 5,626ha (4.2%) lies within RCT. The Bannau Brycheiniog was designated as a National Park in 1957 and its planning functions are administered by the National Park Authority. There are no AONBs in or close to RCT.

D.29 National Landscape Character Areas (NCLAs) are defined at a broad landscape scale throughout Wales and highlight what distinguishes one landscape from another, with reference to their regionally distinct natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics. They help to identify how the landscape is perceived and valued by people, providing integral information that can be used to inform plan-making that may impact the existing landscape.

D.30 Specific uses include:

- Planning policies and decisions
- Sensitivity and capacity studies
- Landscape and visual impact assessments
- Place making
- Forest and woodland strategies

D.31 RCT is located predominantly within NCLA37 South Wales Valleys⁵¹. It is an area characterised by urbanised valleys within an extensive upland area. There is a clear industrial heritage present within the area which contributes to the areas and the local's distinct identities. The northern most point of RCT is located within NCLA30 Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains⁵². This area contains the tallest mountain range in southern Britain and is categorised by vast swathes of unenclosed moorland between which run deeply cut valleys that terminate in high mountain passes. The Beacons themselves are weathered and sharpened by ice, creating consistent, simple, smooth-sided slopes falling abruptly and dramatically from ridges to create sharp outlines to the valley. These dramatic slopes juxtapose the lush enclosed farmed landscapes of the deeper valleys.

D.32 Landscape character assessment⁵³ work undertaken for the National Park identifies that five broad landscape character types lie within this area. These are:

- Mountains and valleys;
- Upland valleys;
- Uplands;
- Settled valleys; and

⁴⁹ UK Government (2000) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

⁵⁰ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2008) Action for Nature – A Local Biodiversity Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

⁵¹ Natural Resources Wales (2014) NLCA37 – South Wales Valleys.

⁵² Natural Resources Wales (2014) NLCA30 – Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains.

⁵³ Fiona Fyfe Associates on behalf of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (2012) Landscape Character Assessment

■ Lowlands.

D.33 The Cynon Valley River Park has been identified locally as an important landscape feature⁵⁴. The flood plain provides a natural space for the river Cynon to move across the valley floor and to flood. The undeveloped flood plain is recognised as an important asset for accommodating floodwater, for wildlife habitat and for public open space. The river park aims to encourage positive use and management of the floodplain to provide space for natural processes, for wildlife and for people.

D.34 LDPs include policies to protect Special Landscape Areas and the designation of these landscape areas has been undertaken at local level using a regionally agreed methodology. There are currently 20 SLAs in the adopted LDP in RCT⁵⁵. The location of the Special Landscape Areas is presented alongside the National Park in **Figure D.2**

Water quality

D.35 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides a major overarching framework for river basin management and sets out a strategic approach to flood risk management planning. The purpose of the Directive is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. Groundwater is an important natural resource that supports river flows as well as ecological diversity in rivers, lakes and wetlands. It is also available for use, across the United Kingdom, for water supply by abstraction from boreholes, wells and springs.

D.36 There is one Source Protection Zone within the north of RCT, and another which lies slightly within the RCT boundary in the south west.

D.37 The majority of RCT falls within the Severn River Basin District (RBD), although a narrow area to the west is within the Western Wales RBD. In line with the WFD, River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for each RBD are prepared for local governments involved in regulating, operating, influencing and undertaking projects in the RBD. According to the RBDMP for the Severn RBD⁵⁶, there are 750 water bodies within the river basin, of which 139 are in good ecological status, 458 are moderate, 137 are poor and 16 are bad. 257 are in good chemical status and 493 are failing in relation to their chemical status. The Western Wales RBD includes a total of 541 surface water bodies of which two are in high ecological status, 232 are good, 256 are moderate, 48 are

poor and 3 are bad⁵⁷. **Figure D.3** shows the Water Framework Directive water quality status for areas within RCT.

Water resources

D.38 The South East Valleys Abstraction Licensing Strategy (2017)⁵⁸ sets out how water resources are to be managed in the south east valley's river catchments, split into sub-catchment 'water bodies' in line with the Water Framework Directive.

D.39 The south east catchment encompasses an area of approximately 1,124km² characterised predominantly by managed grassland, forests, and a number of urban areas centred around Cardiff and into the South Wales Valleys.

D.40 Abstraction licenses within the catchment are in moderate to low demand with 53% of annual abstractions related directly to public water supply. The main pressures on water resources are identified as public water supply reservoirs, including within Rhondda.

D.41 Regarding the River Taff, from its flow into Cardiff Bay, and tributary river catchments Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach, there are concerns over the degree of existing licensed abstraction on low river flows and the effect of reservoirs in the headwater catchments on river flows. Therefore, new consumptive abstraction will only be available at medium to high river flows.

D.42 Any proposals for intensive water abstraction will be required to demonstrate acceptable working practices within these conditions.

D.43 Welsh Government is anticipated to introduce a reformed abstraction management system in Wales at over the next few years following consultation with DEFRA in 2014, and the publication of consultation responses. As such, any information regarding existing water abstraction could be subject to change.

D.44 Wastewater in RCT is presently handled by seven wastewater treatment works (WwTW). The majority of these have capacity to accommodate additional wastewater from new development. The notable exception to this is the Cynon WwTW. Further detail about WwTWs that serve RCT is provided in **Table D.4** below.

⁵⁴ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2007) Draft Cynon Valley River Park Strategy.

⁵⁵ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2007) Special Landscape Area Study.

⁵⁶ Severn River Basin Management Plan (October 2022) [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/severn-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022>

⁵⁷ Natural Resources Wales (2022) Consultation on updating the Western Wales River Basin Management Plan for the third cycle (2021-2027) [online] Available at: <https://naturalresources.wales/media/695227/western-wales-rbmp-2021-2027-summary.pdf>

⁵⁸ Natural Resources Wales (2017) South East Valleys Abstraction Licensing Strategy.

Table D.4 Wastewater Treatment Works Capacity (RCT)

Wastewater treatment works	Settlements served	Current capacity
Cardiff Bay	Rhondda valley, inc. Ferndale, Maerdy, Porth, Ton Pentre, Tonypandy, Treorchy, Pontypridd, Porth & Taffs Well	Capacity
Coslech	Inc. Miskin, Llantrisant, Pontyclun, Talbot Green	Capacity
Cynon	Cynon valley, inc. Abercynon, Aberdare, Hirwaun, Mountain Ash	Very limited – capacity - currently assessing planning consultations on a case by case basis.
Dyffryn Isaf	Inc. Brynsadler, Coedely, Edmondstown, Groesfaen, Tonyrefail, Thomastown	Capacity
Hirwaun	Inc. Hirwaun industrial estate, Rhigos.	Limited capacity
Penybont	Inc. Gilfach Goch, Hendreforgan	Capacity
Rhiwsaeson	Inc. Beddau, Church Village, Llantwit Fardre	Capacity

Open spaces

D.45 Up to date and comprehensive information about the nature, extent, and quality of open and green spaces within RCT has been identified as a current data gap. The most recent assessment of open space provision was undertaken in 2007⁵⁹. RCT intends to commission an open space study as part of the evidence base for the Revised LDP, and the findings of any such work will be taken into account and reflected in the ISA as they become available.

Flood risk

D.46 Climate change is predicted to increase the frequency and the intensity of flooding, increasing the risk in RCT and across the UK. Flooding can have serious consequences

including loss of life, damage to the economy, social implications and environmental damage.

D.47 Storm Dennis caused extensive flooding across South Wales in February 2020, with RCT particularly badly hit – RCTBC has confirmed internal flooding to a total of 1,476 properties, 1,070 of which were homes. A net total of 1,175 homes and 417 businesses were affected in the cumulative 2020 flooding events (including as a result of Storms Dennis, Ciara and Jorje, as well as the June thunderstorms).

D.48 The topography of the County Borough greatly influences the outcomes of weather events such as Storm Dennis. The rivers in RCT are relatively steep and flow through narrow valleys that are underlain by impermeable geology. As a consequence, runoff from headwaters rapidly reaches main rivers, and river levels respond quickly following intense rainfall. During Storm Dennis, river levels rose from normal river levels to some of the highest on record in a matter of hours. Due to this impermeable geology and the limited amount of groundwater, there is little in the way of base flow, which means when the rainfall ceases, river levels recede quickly⁶⁰.

D.49 Welsh Government has published the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (2020), replacing the 2011 strategy. The new strategy sets out how Welsh Government intends to manage the risks posed by flooding and coastal erosion across Wales and sets out five key objectives for all Risk Management Authorities to work towards. These objectives are as follows:

- Improving our understanding and communication of risk
- Preparedness and building resilience
- Prioritising investment to the most at risk communities
- Preventing more people becoming exposed to risk
- Providing an effective and sustained response to events

D.50 RCT includes the catchments of the Rivers Taff, Ely, Rhondda, Cynon and Clun.

D.51 TAN 15 previously identified flood zones A, B, C, C1 and C2 as follows:

- Zone A: Considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding. This zone encompasses all areas that are not recognised as Zone B/Zone C.
- Zone B: Areas known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits.

⁵⁹ ExeGenIS Spatial Data Management on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Merthyr County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County

Borough Council (September 2007) Heads of the Valleys Open space and Play/Sport area Provision Report

⁶⁰ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2020) Review of Council's Response to Storm Dennis

- Zone C: Based on NRW extreme flood outline, equal to or greater than 0.1% (river, tidal or coastal) (i.e.: greater than 1 in 1,000 chance of flooding in any one year). This zone is further subcategorised into zones C1 and C2.
- C1 is areas of the floodplain which are developed and served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences.
- C2 is Areas of the floodplain without significant flood defence infrastructure.

D.52 The revised TAN 15 document, proposes changes to the flood zones to 1, 2, 3a and 3b. The coming into force of the new TAN 15 and the associated Flood Map for Planning has been suspended due to a further consultation on the TAN. The Flood Map for Planning has no official status until the Welsh Government implements the revised TAN 15. However, it represents the best available information on flood risk and Natural Resources Wales presently uses this to inform its planning advice.

D.53 Flood Zone 2 is important from a planning context as it forms the basis of Zone C. Flood zone 3 refer to highly vulnerable development land where certain development will not be permitted unless an Exception Test is passed.

D.54 There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as areas of flood risk (ranging from high to low risk) associated with rivers, surface water and small watercourses across RCT, generally located around the main watercourses as shown in **Figures D.4.1** and **D.4.2**.

D.55 The Stage 1 Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment (SFCA) for South East Wales⁶¹ reviews flood risk across 11 authorities including RCT. It maps flood risk across the area from a range of sources including rivers and sea, surface water and small watercourses, groundwater and reservoirs. It maps Flood Zones 2 and 3, as described above.

D.56 Local flooding, defined as flooding from surface water, ground water and ordinary watercourses such as small rivers, ditches and streams, has become more frequent in recent years.

D.57 Areas of high flood risk have been identified in some of the main settlements in RCT. This includes at Aberdare where areas surrounding the Cynon fall within a Flood Warning Area and Flood Alert Area. Similarly, areas at Pontypridd fall within a Flood Warning Area and a Flood Alert Area associated with the River Taff and Rhondda Rivers. Settlements to the north west of Pontypridd which lie along the Rhondda Rivers also

contain areas of flood risk. Within Ferndale this area is more limited than the areas Tonypany and Rhondda, in particular. Land at Llantrisant contains land within a Flood Alert Area only, at the River Ely⁶².

D.58 It is identified that 25 communities in RCT fall within the High Risk category as per the Maximum Pluvial Flood Risk Ranking set out in the Communities at Risk Register. This accounts for 22.5% of areas identified to be at a High pluvial flood risk at the national level (a total of 111 communities fall within the High risk category across Wales)⁶³.

D.59 RCT has developed a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy⁶⁴ with 16 detailed objectives to reduce the consequences of flood risk. These feed into four core objectives which include the use of local planning policy to ensure that no new flood risk is created and that where possible, opportunities to reduce flood risk are taken.

D.60 There are currently nine flood defences in the local authority which provide areas of benefit from flooding caused by main river sources, such as NRW's flood defence assets. These are⁶⁵:

- Taffs Well
- Treforest Industrial Estate
- Hawthorn
- Trehafod and Hopkinstown
- Porth
- Ferndale
- Treherbert
- Gelli and Llwynypia
- Pontyclun

D.61 There are many other flood defence and alleviation assets which provide benefit from surface water and ordinary watercourse flooding.

D.62 Within the County Borough there is a legacy of Victorian culverts. There is also a significant amount of ordinary watercourse culvert infrastructure within RCT, which is estimated to cover approximately 700km. Presently there is a culverting policy in place⁶⁶ which effectively suggests that culverting is a last resort and where possible the culverts should be 'daylighted' and returned to an above ground flow. Given the widespread flooding experienced in the County

⁶¹ JBA Consulting (November 2022) South East Wales -Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment (Stage 1)

⁶² Natural Resources Wales (accessed 2022) Flood Risk Assessment Wales map

⁶³ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022) Communities at Risk Register analysis Flood Risk in Rhondda Cynon Taf

⁶⁴ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2013) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

⁶⁵ Lie (2019) Spatial Flood Defences without attributes.

⁶⁶ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2012) Policy Regarding Culverts

Borough in 2021, the policy is expected to be reviewed in the coming months.

Air quality

D.63 The Environment Act 1995 introduced the requirement for local authorities to determine if statutory air quality objectives (AQOs) are likely to be exceeded. All local authorities now report to Welsh Government on an annual basis and have the obligation to declare AQMAs and develop action plans for improvement of air quality if objectives are likely to be exceeded.

D.64 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires that the Welsh Ministers must publish national indicators to be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals. National indicator number 4 is the level of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution in the air. The National Indicator drives an alternative burden reduction approach aimed at achieving a reduction in the population weighted general level of NO₂ a population is exposed to. An approach for the achievement of cleaner air in Wales is set out in the Clean Air Plan for Wales which includes a number of actions to enable collaborative approaches to reducing air pollution⁶⁷.

D.65 There is a total of 16 AQMAs in RCT (mapped in **Figure D.5**) which were all declared in response to breaches of the AQOs for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)⁶⁸. They AQMAs cover the following locations:

- Aberdare Town Centre
- Broadway
- Church Village
- Clifonydd
- Cymmer
- Ferndale
- Llanharan
- Llwynypia
- Mountain Ash
- Mwndy
- Nantgarw
- Nightingales Bush
- Pontypridd Town Centre
- Tonyrefail

- Treforest
- Tylorstown

D.66 The majority of the AQMAs are of limited size and are distributed throughout the borough. RCT has adopted bespoke Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) for each of its sixteen AQMAs and has recognised a number of challenges to the delivery of good air quality⁶⁹. These are most notably;

- The likely persistence of an environment where currently allocated resources are significantly under pressure and will face continued competition from other priority agendas.
- Adaption to recent significant changes to grant funding frameworks which now require a focus on the wider environmental agenda and the potential for increased competition for resources from other important environmental projects.
- Continued urbanisation and the potential national and local obstacles faced with the rapid adoption of emergent cleaner transport solutions.

D.67 In recognising the importance of health inequality and local air quality, the Council has assisted its partners, Public Health Wales, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, Natural Resources Wales and Merthyr Tydfil CBC, with the development of the Health and Air Pollution Risk Assessment/Area Prioritisation (HAP-RAP) analytical tool. This has been used to identify those communities within RCT that may be most vulnerable to the effects of poor air quality and where measures focused to improve air quality may provide the greatest overall benefit. Priority clusters were associated with Ferndale/Tylorstown/Llwynypia, Cymmer and Enrhwiweiber/Miskin⁷⁰.

Noise

D.68 **Figures D.6.1** and **D.6.2** map noise levels across RCT during the day and at night. It can be seen that areas experiencing higher noise levels correspond with the main strategic roads in the County Borough, particularly the M4 in the south. However, noise pollution is not limited to the strategic road network and consideration should also be given to noise when considering development proposals near other noise sources. These may include, but are not limited to, industry and industrial estates, shopping centres/supermarkets and entertainment venues. Notably, noise can be amplified by the topography of an area.

D.69 Given the nature of many areas where noise pollution is prevalent (i.e. those affected by the strategic road network),

⁶⁷ Welsh Government (2020) The Clean Air Plan for Wales

⁶⁸ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2021) Air Quality Progress Report.

⁶⁹ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2019) Air Quality Progress Report.

⁷⁰ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2020) What action can be taken in the air quality management areas, to ensure air quality improves across the County Borough.

the potential for these areas to also be adversely affected by air pollution also needs to be considered.

Soil quality

D.70 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil. These factors, together with interactions between them, form the basis for classifying land into one of five grades, where Grade 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and Grade 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside of these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'land predominantly in urban use'⁷¹.

D.71 Planning policy defines grades 1 to 3a as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. This is about 7% of the land in Wales. Planning applications and LDPs should include survey evidence when they cover grade 1, 2 or 3a land. There is no Grade 1 land in RCT, with small areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3a land broadly located in the south of the district near and on the border of the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend, as shown in **Figure D.7**. The majority of RCT is either Grade 4 and 5 land, predominantly in urban use, or in non-agricultural use such as woodland cover.

Peatland

D.72 Peatland within Wales covers around 4.3% of the landmass, equating to circa 90,000 hectares. This acts as the largest terrestrial ecosystem store of carbon within Wales. However, owing to human activity it is now thought to be a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emitter.

D.73 Policy areas relating to maintenance of peatland in RCT and Wales more widely include, but are not limited to:

- Mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.
- Mitigating and reducing flood risk.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
- Protecting the quality and quantity of water resources.
- Promoting the efficient use of land, soils, and minerals.

D.74 The Glastir Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (GMEP) provides data on Welsh peatlands. However, information available about the programme indicates that it has not been actively maintained since 2016.

D.75 The Welsh Peatlands Data Portal launched in April 2022 and contains information on the extent and depth of peatlands in Wales, including how much carbon they store and an estimate of carbon released into the atmosphere when in a poor condition. The portal indicates that in the RCT, some areas of peatland can be up to 400cm thick and store up to the upper range of 1042.72 km/m² of carbon⁷².

Historic environment

D.76 The Register of Historic Landscapes in Wales (RHLW) is a non-statutory and advisory guide used to assist Local Authorities regarding how much weight to give to information in the historic register when determining planning applications. Rhondda is included as one of these Historic Landscape Character Areas⁷³.

D.77 The urbanised elements of the Historic Landscape Character Area are thought to have been created in the second half of the 19th century following the discovery of steam coal in 1855 and the resulting coal rush. Prior to this sudden and dynamic exploitation of the landscape's economic resources, it had been famous for natural beauty and solitude, referred to by B. H. Malkin in 1803 as the 'Alps of Glamorgan'. Today, it is considered the most important surviving industrial and cultural landscape in Wales, categorised within the RHLW as a "living, though perhaps economically pressured and threatened, historic landscape area".

D.78 The historic landscape area of the Rhondda comprises the modern communities of Cwm Clydach, Cymmer, Maerdy, Ferndale, Llwynypia, Pentre, Pen-y-graig, Porth, Tonypany, Trealaw, Trehafod, Treherbert, Treorchy, Tylorstown Ynys-hir, and Ystrad, all within the current the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough. This important South-Wales historic landscape represents one of the largest and best-known mining conurbations and coalfield communities in Britain. The wider landscape is rich in a diverse and thematic archaeological resource of many periods and types, showing a high degree of cultural interest and continuity.

D.79 The Taff Valley and its environs has a large number of prehistoric sites and was the main route of conquest by both the Romans and the Normans. However, the main significance of the Taff, Rhondda and tributary valleys lies in the wholesale development resulting from the Industrial Revolution. Much of this development was linked to canals and water, the remains of which are very important reminders of man's past industrial activities. Unfortunately, few of these sites are statutorily protected and are highly vulnerable to

⁷¹ Welsh Government (2020) Agricultural land classification: predictive map.
⁷² Natural Resources Wales (2022) Welsh Peatlands Data [online] Available at: <https://smnr-nrw.hub.arcgis.com/apps/d18ef8c74ecc4dc4a0cbf71ab6935ba0/explore>

⁷³ Welsh Government (2001) Full Reports of Registered Historic Landscape. The Rhondda. [online] Available at: [https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=en&id=HLW%20\(MGI\)%205](https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=en&id=HLW%20(MGI)%205)

development so need careful and proactive conservation and management.

D.80 The Rhondda Heritage Park is situated at the former Lewis Merthyr Colliery, Trehafod, once a thriving coal mine now preserved as a tourist attraction. The Park is one of the top heritage and cultural visitor attractions in South Wales.

D.81 There are five Historic Parks and Gardens within RCT including Aberdare Park, Ynysangharad Park, Llanharan House, Talygam and Miskin Manor.

D.82 There are 369 listed buildings across RCT, with three being Grade I. Thirty six are Grade II* listed and 330 are Grade II. They are distributed fairly evenly across the County Borough although there are concentrations around the larger towns of Aberdare and Pontypridd as might be expected.

D.83 There are 16 Conservation Areas which are mainly located in the south of RCT. Seven are located at Pontypridd and Treforest.

D.84 The locations of registered heritage features within RCT are shown in **Figure D.8**.

D.85 There are 89 Scheduled Monuments in RCT. There are 54 prehistoric sites, three Roman sites and 17 post-medieval sites. Seven of the sites cross or lie on a border with a neighbouring authority⁷⁴. Notable Scheduled Monuments in RCT include Old Bridge in Pontypridd, Cadair Fawr Hill in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, the Castle ringwork and raised motte in Llanilid, and the Great Western Mine at Hopkinstown.

D.86 RCT also contains numerous non-designated heritage assets which also contribute to the sense of place and value of the County Borough. These are detailed within the Historic Environment Record and outnumber the total number of designated heritage assets in RCT.

Mineral resources

D.87 Large areas of the County Borough are safeguarded for coal, limestone and sandstone. Areas safeguarded for limestone are concentrated in the south of the County Borough, to the south of Llanharry and to the south and east of Pontyclun. Coal safeguarding areas are found throughout the County Borough. These safeguarded areas tend to be concentrated in the north of RCT, to the south of Hirwaun within the Cynon Valley, and within the Rhondda Valley. Additionally, there are smaller pockets of coal safeguarding areas in the south, near Llanharry, Pontyclun and Llantrisant. Planning Policy Wales (2021) states that the safeguarding of

primary coal resources is not a requirement, but may be implemented at the discretion of the local planning authority. The decision about whether to continue the safeguarding of these minerals will be considered as part of the preparation of the LDP. Should the RCT planning authority choose to continue the safeguarding of coal resources, the PPW requires that the LDP include appropriate policies including those relating to pre-extraction policy.

D.88 Land safeguarded for sandstone covers broad areas of the County Borough. It is generally found between valleys and is often adjacent to areas safeguarded for coal.

D.89 There are eight sites in RCT which have potential sand and gravel resources. All eight sites are in the south of the County Borough:

- Llanilid, East of Felindre Road
- Brynsadler, North of Llanharry Road
- Ceulan Farm, Miskin
- South of Tylegarw, Pontyclun
- Llantrisant and Pontyclun Golf Course
- Pant Marsh, Talbot Green
- Rhiwsaeson Road, Cross Inn
- Heol y Creigiau, Rhiwsaeson

D.90 There are three working aggregate quarries in RCT: Craig yr Hseg⁷⁵, Pontypridd; Forest Wood, Pontyclun; and Hendy Quarry, Pontyclun.

Waste

D.91 There are currently six Community Recycling Centres in RCT, as well as 59 recycling banks (SORT Centres) collecting a range of materials including paper, glass, cans and textiles. There has been a strong shift away from land filling waste towards recycling and energy recovery at SORT Centres, as shown in **Table D.5**⁷⁶. In 2018/19, 63% of all waste in RCT was either reused, recycled or composted; up from 42% in 2012/13.

Table D.5 Annual waste collected for reuse/recycling/composting (tonnes) in RCT

Year	Municipal waste (reused/ recycled)	Municipal waste (composted)	Total municipal waste (generated/ collected)
2012/13	38,304	9,859	114,325

⁷⁴ Cadw (2022) Search Cadw records [online] Available at: <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru/search-cadw-records>
⁷⁵ Following an appeal (APP/L6940/A/20/3265358 APP/L6940/A/21/3282880) regarding the western extension of the existing quarry for the extraction of an

additional 10 tonnes of pennant sandstone was recommended for approval in June 2022.
⁷⁶ StatsWales (2019) Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Materials data, 2012-13 onwards.

Year	Municipal waste (reused/ recycled)	Municipal waste (composted)	Total municipal waste (generated/ collected)
2013/14	42,912	12,072	108,347
2014/15	52,022	12,534	110,561
2015/16	55,451	16,208	118,240
2016/17	56,152	16,911	119,157
2017/18	56,371	17,325	119,269
2018/19	58,749	18,399	122,604

D.92 There is one major landfill site in RCT located at Bryn Pica, Aberdare⁷⁷. The landfill gas management system at Bryn Pica was commissioned in 2003 and consists of a series of vertical pipes (wells) installed within the landfill waste. These wells extract landfill gas from the waste diverting it to a gas management compound for processing and safe disposal⁷⁸. The gas mostly consists of Methane (CH₄) which is produced during the breakdown of biodegradable waste. This gas is burned at high temperatures with the resulting energy generated utilised to produce electricity which in turn is fed into the National Grid.

Special Landscape Areas

D.93 Countryside Council for Wales developed 'LANDMAP' to assess the diversity of landscapes. The assessment takes into account and identifies a landscapes most important characteristics and qualities, including geological, ecological, visual, cultural and historical character. From this, some areas have been identified as Special Landscape Areas (SLA). The County Borough contains nine of these SLAs:

- Mynydd y Cymmer
 - West of Porth and south east of Tonypany, the area is designated for its abrupt steep sided hills and unspoilt wild and craggy character.
- Mynydd Troed y Rhiw Slopes
 - A mountain summit in the Bannau Brycheiniog, the area is located in the Glamorgan region. It overlooks Porth and is notable for its hill and ridge-line that form the Rhondda Valleys.
- Llwynceilyn Slopes

- Part of the Rhondda Valley, the area consists of the lower northern and western slopes towards Trehafod and Ynysbir.

- Cwm Clydach
 - Prominent slopes across Pontypridd. The SLA forms the ridge-line and valley sides to the southwest of Ynysboeth and Perthcelyn.
- Cynon Valley Northern Slopes
 - The SLA forms the backdrop to the north of the Abercynon, forming the Cynon Valley northwards towards Cwmbach and areas of unspoilt woodland.
- Cwm Orcl
 - An unspoilt valley with prominent edges that overlook Treorchy. The lower slopes have particularly high Landmap value.
- Rhondda Fawr Northern Cwm & Slopes
 - West of the northern settlement in Rhondda Fawr, the SLA forms the best example of glacial scenery in RCT and is partially considered as having the most important land value in the region.
- Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman
 - Dramatic hillsides, escarpments and crags of the upper Cynon Valley. The top of Hirwaun Common is of the most important land value in the region. It is vulnerable to skyline developments.
- Bannau Brycheiniog at Llwydcoed

D.94 SLAs are designated to protect areas of high landscape quality within RCT. A regionally agreed upon methodology is applied when determining the designation of these landscapes, but the assessments are undertaken at a local level.

D.95 To protect the visual qualities of SLAs, development proposals in SLAs are required to conform to the highest possible design standards.

Social Baseline Information

Equalities

D.96 The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. It presents three main duties: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the

⁷⁷ Welsh Revenue Authority (2020) Welsh Revenue Authority list of landfill site operators.

⁷⁸ Amgen Cymru (2020) Landfill Gas Management System (http://www.amgen-cymru.com/facilities_gas.php).

Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The nine protected characteristics identified through the Act are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

D.97 The potential effects of the Revised LDP in relation to groups covered by the nine 'protected characteristics' will be assessed separately in addition to the ISA, as described in **Chapter 2**. This work will comprise the EqIA which is presented in an appendix to the ISA.

Age

D.98 According to Census 2021⁷⁹, RCT's population, in 2021, was 237,700 with 116,300 males and 121,300 females. The population increased by 1.4% from the 234,400 residents reported in 2011⁸⁰. 62.0% of people in RCT are aged between 16-64, which is similar to the figure for Wales (61.0%).

D.99 Between the censuses in 2011 and 2021, the average (median) age of RCT increased by one year, from 40 to 41 years of age. This area had a slightly higher average (median) age than nearby Merthyr Tydfil (40 years) and a slightly lower average (median) age than Wales as a whole (42 years). The number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by just over 4,000 (an increase of 18.3%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by around 4,800 (10.0% decrease).

Disability

D.100 The 2021 census presented figures on people with disabilities in the UK. The proportion of residents who were

identified as being disabled in RCT decreased from 15.6% in 2011 to 12.0% in 2021⁸¹. This was the second-largest percentage-point fall recorded for local authorities in Wales for this measure.

D.101 Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board offers adult secondary care Learning Disability services in the Cwm Taf area (ABMU). ABMU is now managing a number of small home placements in Cwm Taf for between 75 and 85 adult clients with moderate to severe learning disabilities⁸².

Marriage and civil partnership

D.102 Data from the 2021 Census shows that 42.2% of RCT's population was married whilst 38.8% was single. Of those who were married, 0.2% were in a registered same-sex civil partnership, which is the same for Wales as a whole (0.2%)⁸³.

Race

D.103 In 2021, 96.7% of people in RCT identified their ethnic group "as" "White" (compared to 97.4% in 2011). 1.5% identified their ethnic group "as" "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" (compared to 1.3% in 2011). The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group as "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" decreased from 0.6% in 2011 to 0.4% in 2021.

Table D.6 Population of RCT by Ethnicity (2021)

Ethnicity	Value
White	96.7%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1.5%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.4%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.0%
Other ethnic groups	0.3%

Religion or belief

D.104 In 2021, 56.2% of RCT residents reported having "No religion", making it the most common response in this local authority area (up from 40.8% in 2011). 36.4% of people in RCT described themselves as Christian (down from 50.5%),

⁷⁹ Office for National Statistics (June 2022) First results from Census 2021 in England and Wales

⁸⁰ Office for National Statistics (2023) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

⁸¹ Office for National Statistics (2023) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

⁸² Our Cwm Taf (2017) Cwm Taf Population Assessment [online] Available at: <http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=286&mid=613&fileid=150>

⁸³ ONS (2021) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

while 5.8% did not state their religion (down from 7.4% the decade before). 0.2% of residents describe themselves as Buddhist, 0.2% as Muslim and 0.1% as 'other'⁸⁴.

Sex

D.105 According mid-year population estimates for 2021, RCT's population comprises 116,230 males and 121,267 females⁸⁵.

D.106 No data is available relating to the remaining protected characteristics of pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Population

D.107 There was a population increase of 1.4% between the 2011 census and the 2021 census in RCT (234,400 in 2011 to 237,700 in 2021). As such, RCT's population increased at a similar rate to the overall population of Wales. During the same period, the population of Wales increased by 1.4%, from 3,063,000 to 3,107,000⁸⁶.

Deprivation

D.108 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) ranks small areas (known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)) according to their relative deprivation levels across eight types of deprivation, and these are combined to produce an overall index.

D.109 71% of LSOAs in RCT are ranked as being within the 50% most deprived in Wales⁸⁷. This is the third highest percentage of any Welsh local authority after Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent.

Crime and community safety

D.110 In relation to the community safety domain, WIMD data show that 58% of the LSOAs within RCT are within the 50% most deprived in Wales. This is the seventh highest of the 22 Welsh local authority areas.

D.111 Drug crime in RCT fell by 30.24% between 2013 and 2018. The total number of drug crimes in RCT fell for four consecutive years between 2013 and 2017, falling steadily

from 830 to 487 (a 42.41% decrease), before spiking in 2018 (the latest year for which data is available) when there were 579 drug crimes (a 21.13% increase from 2017 to 2018).

Education

D.112 In relation to the education domain, WIMD data show that 69% of the LSOAs within RCT are within the 50% most deprived in Wales. This is the fourth highest of the 22 Welsh local authority areas.

D.113 Census 2021 reports that almost a quarter of RCT's population have no formal qualifications (24.2%) which is higher than the figure for Wales (19.9%). The percentage of residents in RCT who have Level 4 qualifications or above (26.7%) is lower than the figure for Wales (31.5%)⁸⁸.

Health and wellbeing

D.114 The Census 2021 indicates that 44.5% of RCT's population are in 'very good health', 31.7% are in 'good health', 15.5% are in 'fair health', 6.3% are in 'bad health' and 1.9% are in 'very bad health'. Of RCT's population, 74.2% stated in the Census 2021 that their daily activities are 'not limited' by a long-term illness, while 11.4% are 'limited a little' and 14.5% are 'limited a lot' by an illness⁸⁹. RCT performs slightly worse than the figures recorded for Wales (5.1%) in terms of residents who are in 'bad health'⁹⁰.

D.115 In relation to the health domain, WIMD data show that around 79% of the LSOAs within RCT (around 6% of all those in Wales) are within the 50% most deprived in Wales. This is the third highest percentage of any Welsh local authority after Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent. Furthermore, around 34% of LSOAs in RCT (around 3% of all those in Wales) are within the 20% most deprived in Wales. RCT contains two LSOAs (Penrhiwceiber 1 and Tylorstown 1) that are within the top ten most deprived LSOAs in Wales for the health domain. The County Borough also includes some areas which are notable for their less deprived nature in relation to health. Around 6% of LSOAs in RCT are within the 20% least deprived in Wales, in relation to this measure⁹¹.

D.116 The need for assistance from informal carers, such as family and friends, is greater in Cwm Taf than it is in the

⁸⁴ Office for National Statistics (2023) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

⁸⁵ StatsWales (2022) Population estimates by gender and year [online] Available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Equality/population-estimates-by-gender-year>

⁸⁶ Office for National Statistics (2023) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

⁸⁷ StatsWales (2019) WIMD 2019 – Local Authority Analysis.

⁸⁸ Office for National Statistics (2023) Census 2021 – Build a custom area profile: Rhondda Cynon Taf [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>

⁸⁹ ONS (2021) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

⁹⁰ Welsh Government (2023) Health, disability and provision of unpaid care in Wales (Census 2021) [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/health-disability-and-provision-unpaid-care-wales-census-2021-him#:~:text=In%20Wales%20in%202021%2C%20the%20proportion%20of%20he,in%20very%20good%20health%2C%2034.2%25%20in%20good%20health%29.>

⁹¹ Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 (

rest of Wales due to the higher rates of poor overall fitness, disabilities, and mental health issues. This is also the case regarding the increasing life expectancy and number of elderly people in Cwm Taf⁹².

Life Expectancy

D.117 Life expectancy at birth for the period 2018-2020 in RCT was 77.0 years for males and 80.5 years for females, which is lower than the national figures of 78.3 years and 82.1 years respectively for Wales⁹³. From the period 2017-2019 there has been a slight decrease in life expectancy for males and females within the County Borough and more widely within Wales.

D.118 Within RCT for the period 2018-2020, there is a gap in healthy life expectancy at birth (comparing the least to most deprived fifth) of 13.2 years for males and 11.6 years for females. The gap at the national level for males is comparable to that reported for RCT (13.3 years) while for females there is a larger gap reported at the national level (16.9 years). Healthy life expectancy for the period 2018-2020 is lower within RCT than the national level for both males (57.1 years, compared to 61.5 years nationally) and females (60.7 years, compared to 62.4 years nationally). Within RCT there has been a general trend of decreasing healthy life expectancy from 2010.

Obesity

D.119 Being overweight or obese carries numerous health risks, including increased likelihood of type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease, stroke and related mental health conditions. It is estimated this health issue places a cost of at least £5.1 billion on the NHS and tens of billions on the wider UK society every year⁹⁴.

D.120 In 2014-2015 28% of adults in RCT were reported to be obese, and 64% overweight or obese⁹⁵. This is higher than the Welsh national averages of 23% and 59% respectively. Additionally, it was found that only 28% of adults achieved their 5-a-day target of fruit and vegetables, compared to 32% across Wales. Furthermore, 39% of adults reported having

undertaken no physical activity or exercise in the previous week. This compares to the Welsh national average of 34%.

Perception of well-being

D.121 Residents of the County Borough reported having lower levels of life satisfaction (7.4 out of 10) than the average for the UK (7.54) in the 2020/21 period. This was an increase for the County Borough from 7.2 in the previous year. Average figures recorded relating to 'feeling the things done in life are worthwhile' increased in the County Borough (7.5 out of 10) while 'happiness' has increased to 7.1 out of 10. These figures are both slightly lower than the averages for the UK (at 7.78 and 7.45 respectively). Average levels of anxiety recorded for the County Borough decreased in this period (from 3.8) and remained higher than the average for the UK (3.31)⁹⁶.

D.122 The most recent data regarding mental health of the County Borough's population⁹⁷ shows that RCT has been performing worse than the Welsh average. In 2018/19 RCT scored 50.3 on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, which is lower than the Welsh average of 51.4. In that period, it also scored lower than Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil at 51.6 and 50.5 respectively.

Communities and housing

D.123 RCT is a diverse area, comprising a mix of urban, semi urban and rural communities. There are a number of Principal Settlements and Key Settlements dispersed throughout the County Borough that are centres for population and commerce, which include Pontypridd, Aberdare, and Llantrisant/Talbot Green (the three Principal Settlements) along with Porth, Tonybandy, Treorchy, Mountain Ash, Ferndale, Hirwaun, Llanharan and Tonyrefail (Key Settlements).

D.124 As of 2021, 13.7% of dwellings in RCT were social rented and a further 17.6% were privately rented⁹⁸. Outright ownership accounted for 38.4% of homes and 30.1% of homes were owned with a mortgage or loan in place or through shared ownership.

⁹² Our Cwm Taf (2017) Cwm Taf Population Assessment [online] Available at: <http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=286&mid=613&fileid=150>

⁹³ Public Health Wales Observatory (2022) Health expectancies in Wales with inequality gap [online]. Available at: https://publichealthwales.shinyapps.io/PHWO_HealthExpectanciesWalesProfile_v2a/

⁹⁴ Obesity Health Alliance (2017) OHA Briefing Paper: Costs of Obesity [online] Available at: <http://obesityhealthalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/OHA-briefing-paper-Costs-of-Obesity-.pdf>

⁹⁵ Data Cymru (2020) Lifestyle (Welsh Health Survey) <http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/healthandsocialcare/generalhealth/tabular?viewId=829&geold=1&subsetId=>

⁹⁶ ONS (2022) Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measureingnationalwellbeing/april2021tomarch2022#personal-well-being-by-local-area>

⁹⁷ Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (2021) Population Needs Assessments: Cwm Taf Morgannwg [online] Available at: <https://ctmuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/our-board/committees/population-health-and-partnerships-committee/primary-community-population-health-partnerships-committee-documents/2022/4-may-2022/612b-rpb-pop-needs-assessment-php-committeepdf/>

⁹⁸ ONS (2021) How life has changed in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Census 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W06000016/>

D.125 According to the Land Registry⁹⁹, house prices increased by 3.5% between September 2022 (£153,000) and September 2023 (£159,000)¹⁰⁰ in RCT. For comparison, house prices in Wales increased to an average of £215,000, which represents a 2.7% increase over the year ended September 2022. Average house prices in RCT are significantly lower than the most expensive local authorities in Wales. These are Cardiff (£268,000), Ceredigion (£258,000), Monmouthshire (£368,000), Pembrokeshire (£239,000) and Vale of Glamorgan (£316,000).

D.126 The most recent Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)¹⁰¹ outlined that the average house price in RCT in 2016/17 was £114,000; ranging from £50,000 in Tylorstown to £210,000 in Pontyclun. The LMHA identified a shortfall of 737.51 affordable units per annum (comprising 467.47 social rented units and 270.04 intermediate units) from 2017/18 to 2021/22 based on the existing backlog of need. It is noted that smaller units (one and two bedrooms) need to be prioritised. Most of the housing shortfall is in South West Taf, Central Taf, Greater Pontypridd and Aberdare.

D.127 The average household size in RCT is 2.25, which is smaller than the Welsh average of 2.26¹⁰².

D.128 RCTCBC adopted Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in May 2018, seeking to address concerns raised by the local community about the impacts of HMOs around the University of South Wales campus in Treforest. The SPG is intended to help identify when it is deemed that the concentration of HMOs in an area has reached a level considered to adversely impact upon the community; and to provide guidance on the standards of HMOs and how they should be developed.

D.129 In RCT houses and bungalows comprise a higher percentage (91.6%) of the overall housing stock than at the national level (87.2%). Flats, maisonettes and apartments comprise a smaller percentage of the overall housing stock for RCT (8.3%) than is the case for the whole of Wales (12.5%).

D.130 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2015-2020¹⁰³ identifies that there is one

Local Authority site in RCT which comprises six pitches. A further four authorised private sites are located within RCT, with 15 pitches between them. The GTAA identifies that there is unmet need for four pitches in the five year plan period.

Welsh language

D.131 At the time of the 2021 Census, 47,500 people (20.2%) in RCT classed themselves as able to speak Welsh. This was 7.9% increase from the 2011 Census, where 27,779 people in RCT classed themselves as able to speak Welsh¹⁰⁴.

D.132 Within the South Wales context, RCT generally performs well in terms of Welsh language use. According to StatsWales, RCT has frequently had the largest proportion of population who can speak Welsh out of the South Wales region, particularly during 2001-2007 and 2011-2018.

D.133 RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out the approach in the County Borough to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0% from 2022 to 2032. As shown in **Table D.7** below, the number of primary and secondary school aged pupils attending Welsh medium primary schools has remained relatively constant in the Borough County between 2018 and 2021.

D.134 There are 16 Welsh Medium Primary Schools in RCT. Each of the Principal Settlements (Aberdare, Llantrisant and Pontypridd) are served by one of these facilities. Welsh Medium Secondary Schools are limited to YG Garth Olwg (in Church Village), YG Llanhari (in Llanharry), YG Rhydywaun (in Penywaun in close proximity to Aberdare) and YG Y Cymer Rhondda (in Porth).

Table D.7 Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners in RCT Attending Schools Split by English and Welsh Medium¹⁰⁵

Category	2018/19	2019 / 2020	2020/21
Total Number of Learners Attending English	Primary: 18,153 (81.0%)	Primary: 18,078 (81.0%)	Primary: 17,894 (81.2%)

⁹⁹ ONS (2023) UK House Price Index: September 2023 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/housepriceindex/september2023>

¹⁰⁰ HM Land Registry (2023) UK House Price Index Wales: September 2023 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-for-september-2023/uk-house-price-index-wales-september-2023>

¹⁰¹ RCT (2018) Local Housing Market Assessment 2017/18-2022/23. Summary Document [online] Available at: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/Housing/RelatedDocuments/LocalHousingMarketAssessmentSummaryReport.pdf>

¹⁰² StatsWales (2023) Average household size (persons) by local authority and year [online] Available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Households/Estimates/averagehouseholdsize-by-localauthority-year>

¹⁰³ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2015) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2015-2020 [online] Available at: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/Housing/RelatedDocuments/GypsyTravellerAccommodationAssessment20152020.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ StatsWales (2023) Annual Population Survey – Ability to speak Welsh by local authority and year [online] Available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonsaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure>

¹⁰⁵ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/SchoolAdmissions/relateddocuments/DraftWelshinEducationStrategicPlan20222032.pdf>

Category	2018/19	2019 / 2020	2020/21
Medium Primary and Secondary Schools	Secondary: 12,685 (80.6%)	Secondary: 12,868 (80.4%)	Secondary: 13,346 (80.7%)
Total Number of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary and Secondary Schools	Primary: 4,296 (19.0%) Secondary: 3,058 (19.4%)	Primary: 4,220 (19.0%) Secondary: 3,141 (19.6%)	Primary: 4,152 (18.8%) Secondary: 3,197 (19.3%)
Total	Primary: 22,422 Secondary: 15,743	Primary: 22,298 Secondary: 16,009	Primary: 22,046 Secondary: 16,543

Economic Baseline Information

Economy and employment

D.135 In 2022, the main employment sector for residents of RCT was 'human health and social work activities' (14,000), followed by 'wholesale and retail trade' and 'repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and manufacturing' (both 11,000)¹⁰⁶.

D.136 RCT received 1.5 million day visitors in 2019 and over 500,000 overnight stays. It is estimated that tourism was worth £179 million to the RCT economy in 2019 and employed more than 2,000 people¹⁰⁷. There is a wide variety of tourist attractions within the County Borough including Taff Trail, Zip World, Rhondda Heritage Park, Nantgarw Pottery, the Royal Mint Experience, Pontypridd Market and Llantrisant Old Town, as well as a small southern area of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

D.137 In 2021, 21.8% of RCT residents worked mainly from home a substantial increase from the 8.3% who worked from home at the time of the census in 2011.

D.138 The average gross weekly earnings for full time workers in RCT in 2022 was £5591.90 This is lower than the Welsh average (£603.50) and UK average (642.20)¹⁰⁸.

D.139 In the period from July 2022 -June 2023, 27.3% of RCT's residents were classed as economically inactive. This

is higher than the Welsh average (23.8%) and UK average (21.4%)¹⁰⁹.

D.140 The Adopted LDP (2006-2021) allocates 51 hectares of new B1, B2 and B8 employment development land on strategic sites. The LDP also allocates 47 hectares of land on a range of small/medium sites to meet local employment need. Less than 5 hectares of allocated employment land has been delivered. The 2019 Employment Land Availability Study found that there are 145 hectares of employment land remaining, including allocations. The overall vacancy rate across RCT is 6.95%.

Town centres

D.141 As experienced on a national level, town centre retail in RCT is facing a multitude of challenges to their future vitality and viability. This includes from the external economic influences of Brexit, the COVID-19 Pandemic, storms and flooding¹¹⁰. Many of RCT's high streets are characterised by falling retail sales, reduced footfall, increased business failures and rising vacancies. The growth of internet shopping and multi-channel retailing also means that many retailers are actively seeking to reduce rather than increase their store portfolios.

D.142 The Porth Town Centre Strategy¹¹¹ states that Porth's key location and its train station is seen as one of the towns greatest assets, and is a key settlement identified within the County Borough's Northern Strategy Area. As with many of RCT's town centres the main economy of Porth is retail, with the centre of Porth home to the shopping district based around Hannah Street, with other businesses mainly located on nearby Pontypridd Road and Porth Street.

D.143 Porth's town centre footfall has dropped year on year from 2011, from a weekly average of 13,210 to 9,274 reported for the year 2018/19. The vacancy rate in 2017 was 11.6%, which was below the Welsh average of 13% but slightly higher than the UK average of 11%. Over recent years, three national banks have closed their branches in the town leaving it without a single bank. Traders firmly believe that this has affected and contributed to the decline in footfall which has had a negative impact on local businesses.

D.144 In addition to this, there are at present a number of prominent, vacant and under-used buildings in the vicinity of the train station and the town centre, specifically Station Street

¹⁰⁶ NOMIS (2021) Labour Market Profile – Rhondda Cynon Taf [online] Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157398/report.aspx#tabempunemp>

¹⁰⁷ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2021) RCT Tourism Strategy

¹⁰⁸ NOMIS (2023) Labour Market Profile – Rhondda Cynon Taf [online]

Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157398/report.aspx#tabempunemp>

¹⁰⁹ NOMIS (2021) Labour Market Profile – Rhondda Cynon Taf [online] Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157398/report.aspx#tabempunemp>

¹¹⁰ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022) Town Centre Regeneration Update

¹¹¹ Rhondda Cynon Taf (2018) Porth Town Centre Strategy [online] Available at:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/RelatedDocuments/FINALWEBPorthTownCentreStrategy2018ENGLISH.pdf>

and Hannah Street. Some of the buildings have seriously dilapidated and become local 'eyesores' and hotspots for anti-social behaviour resulting in the long term blight of the area, which will affect inward investment, businesses and property prices.

Transport infrastructure

D.145 The distinctive geography of RCT means that the County Borough has a linear communications network. Transportation links tend to follow the valleys, with access across the plateau being more difficult. The major roads, particularly the M4, A470 and A4119 provide excellent access to Cardiff and South East Wales. Access to Swansea and West Wales is provided by the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road. Whilst external communications are excellent, internal linkages can be more problematic. In some parts of the County Borough the main through routes follow narrow congested residential streets and town centres, which are unsuitable for heavy traffic.

D.146 Public transport provision in RCT is provided by a combination of bus and rail services. The bus is the dominant mode of public transport in the County Borough. The area is served by more than 80 operational routes, these include regular cross boundary services to adjacent towns and cities. There is also an extensive rail network in RCT with the County Borough being served by 22 stations, although provision is more extensive in the north compared to the southern parts of RCT. Train services operate to Cardiff from Pontypridd, Treherbert and Aberdare and to Cardiff from Bridgend with trains calling at Pontyclun. The forthcoming South Wales Metro will significantly enhance links with Cardiff City. The project includes a new Metro Control Centre in Taff's Well and the relocation of the existing Treforest Estate station.

Traffic flows, travel to work/commuting patterns

D.147 RCTCBCs monitor Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flows in the County Borough. This shows that many of the areas that experience the highest numbers of daily journeys are located in the south and central areas (in the Principal Settlements of Llantrisant and Pontypridd as well as the Key Settlements of Tonypany, Tonyrefail and Porth) of RCT. The A4119 between Llantrisant and Tonyrefail is notable for the higher number of trips recorded. Other routes of note in terms of the higher volumes of traffic recorded, include the A4058 between Pontypridd and Porth, the A473 to the south of Llantrisant and Church Village and the A468 and A4119 out of the County Borough towards Caerphilly and to the south, respectively. In

the north of the RCT, the Principle Settlement of Aberdare and Key Settlements of Treorchy and Mountain Ash also contain some areas where traffic counts are high. **Table D.8** provides a snapshot of areas at which the highest traffic counts in the County Borough have been recorded.

Table D.8 Overview of points of highest recorded traffic flows (AADT) in RCT

Site name	AADT
Mwyndy Cross, A4119, south of Llantrisant	30,136
Broadway, A4058, Pontypridd	24,406
Coedely, A4119, north of Llantrisant*	23,899
A4058, Pontypridd towards Hopk*	23,673
Talbot Green Bypass Roundabout To Rhiwbrwdwal, A473, Llantrisant	23,118
Power Station Hill, A473, Treforest	22,624
Ynys Roundabout to Tesco Roundabout, A4059, Aberdare	22,507
North of Signals, A4058, Porth	21,278
Talbot Green, A473 (Leekes)	21,056
New Road, A4059, Mountain Ash	20,759

**Please note that high volumes of trips were also recorded at other locations in close proximity along these routes, but have been omitted to provide a snapshot of the situation at a County Borough wide level,*

D.148 In 2022, there was a reported 104,600 working residents in RCT, with 76,700 people working in the area. During this period, 63,200 people both lived and worked in RCT. It was also reported that 41,300 people commuted out of the area and 13,500 people commuted into the area¹¹².

D.149 In RCT the percentage of journeys made to work that are under 10km (33.0%) is lower than the figure for Wales (36.3%). The proportion of journeys beginning in the County Borough to work that are between 10km and 30km (25.0%) is higher than the figure for Wales (18.2%)¹¹³.

¹¹² StatsWales (2023) Commuting patterns by Welsh local authority and measure [online] Available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Commuting/commutingpatterns-by-welshlocalauthority-measure>

¹¹³ Office for National Statistics (2023) Census 2021 – Build a custom area profile: Rhondda Cynon Taf [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>

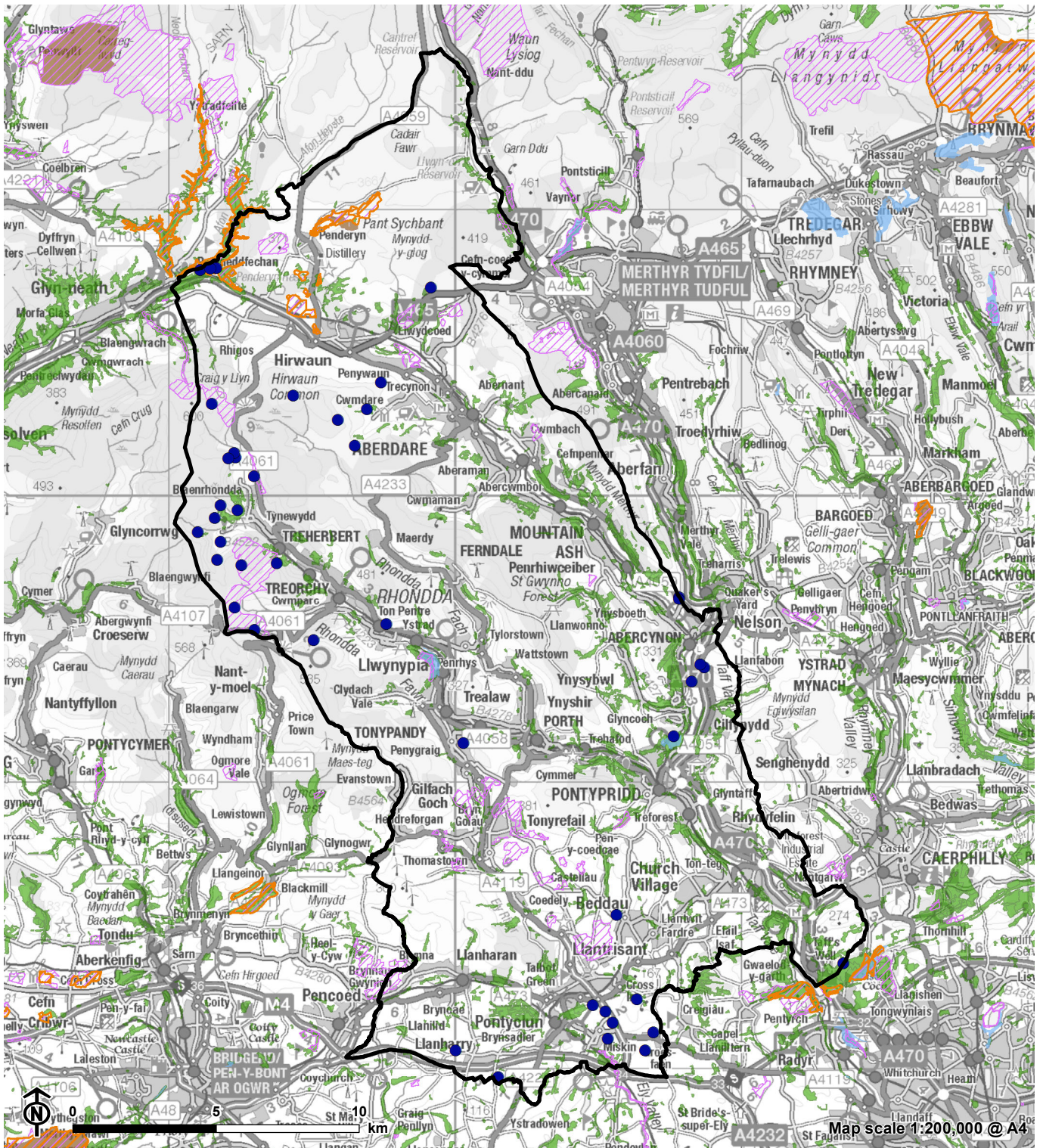
D.150 The industry most likely to use public transport (11.55%) and the least likely to use private vehicle (41.87%) to get to work is the food and drinks industry¹¹⁴. Those employees are also most likely to travel to work by foot or bicycle (24.06%). Workers in retail trade and accommodation also have higher rates of public transport usage to travel to work, roughly 10-11%.

D.151 The Information and Communication industry has the highest rate of workers working from home, approximately 24.06% (not including agriculture as most live on the farm they work on). The industries that depend on private vehicles the most are mining and quarrying (80.49%), public administration (78.72%), and manufacturing (73.75%).

D.152 It should also be noted that the Welsh Government has introduced legislation which lowers the default national speed limit on residential roads from 30mph to 20mph¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2020) Method of travel to work.

¹¹⁵ Welsh Government (2023) Introducing default 20mph speed limits [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/introducing-default-20mph-speed-limits>



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 Source: OS data, RCTCBC, NRW

Figure D.1.1: Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Regionally Important Geological Sites
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve

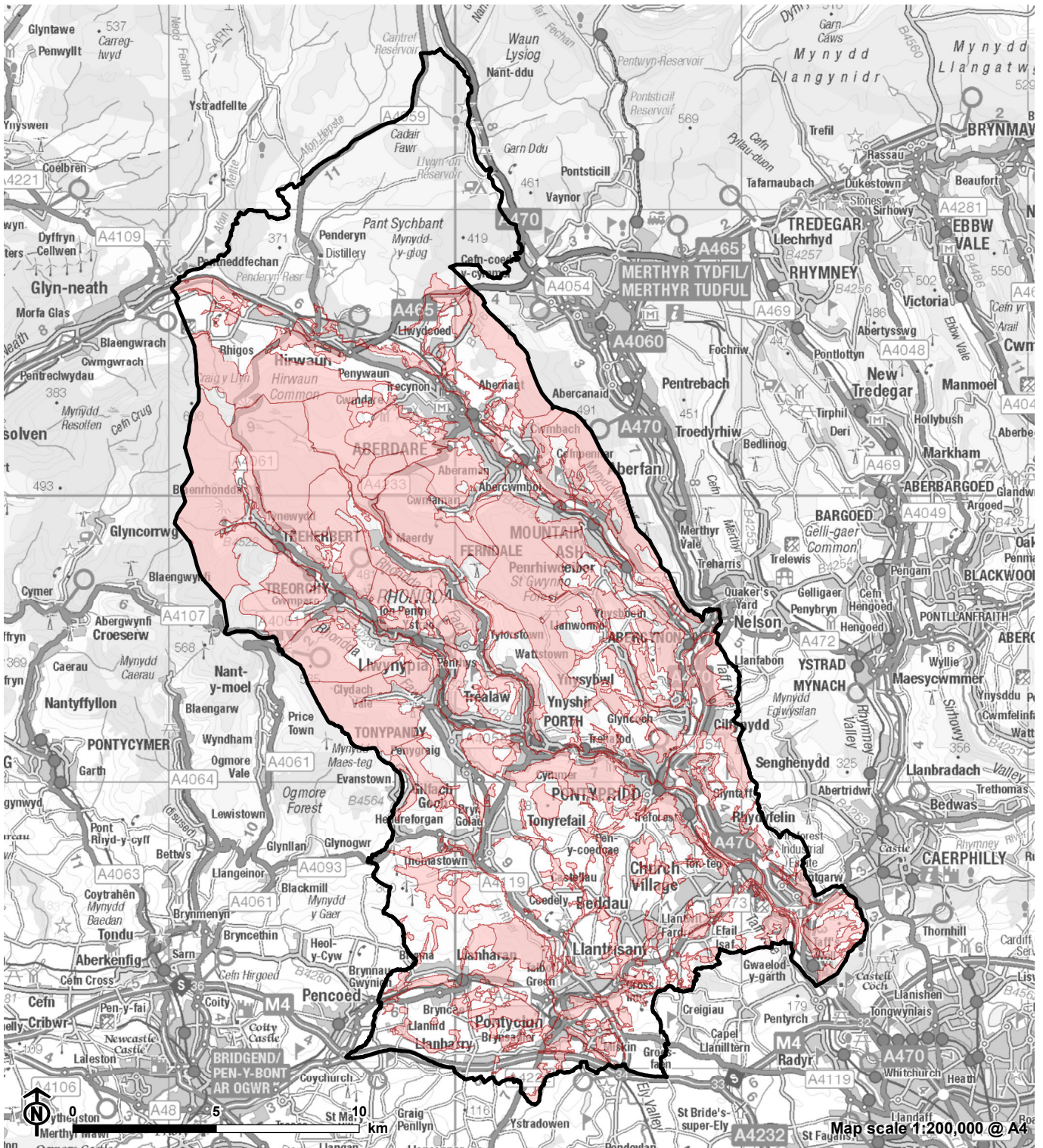


Figure D.1.2: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

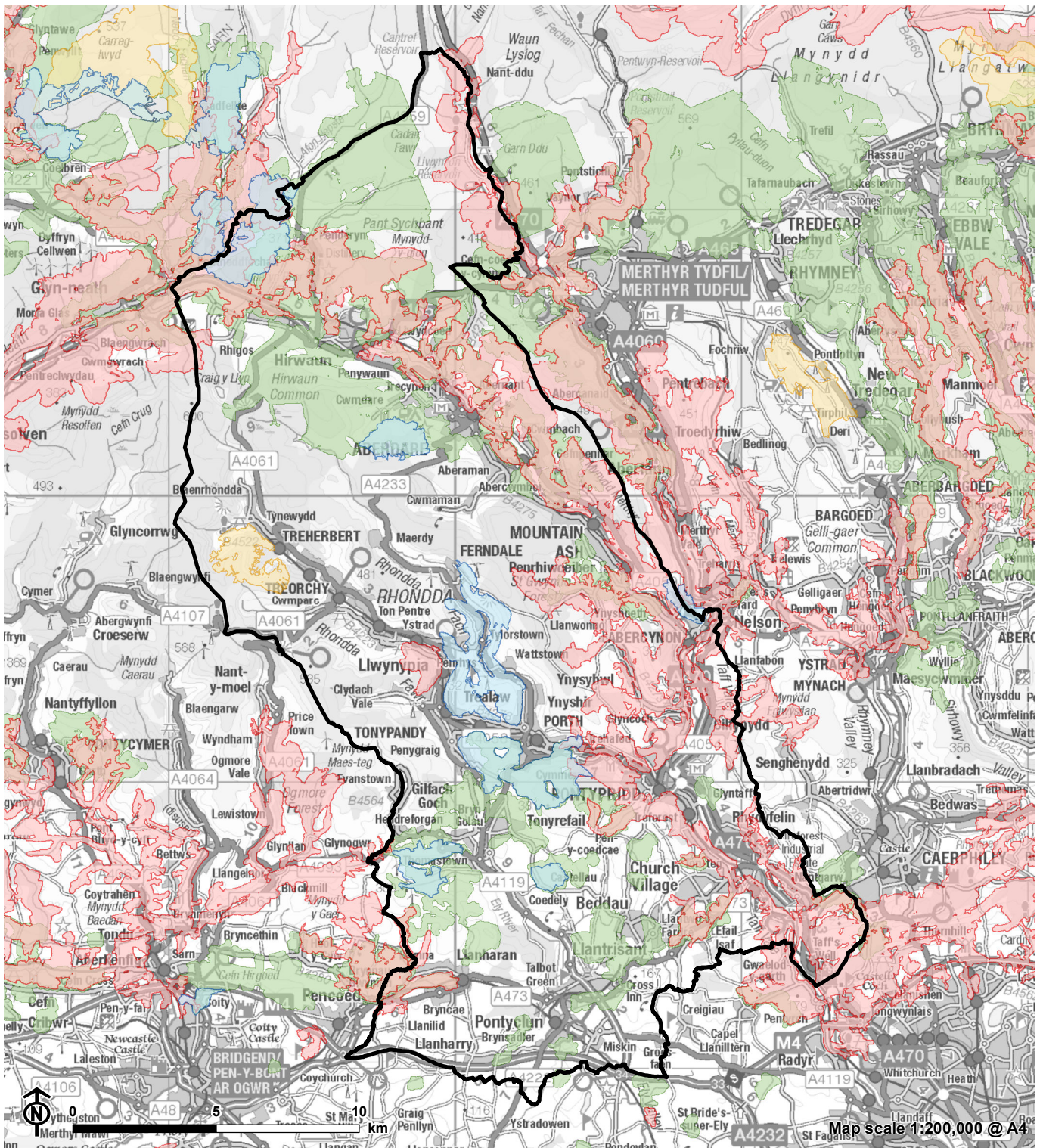


Figure D.1.3: Priority Areas for Conservation

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Lowland Grassland Level 2 Network
- Lowland Heath Level 2 Network
- Upland Heath Level 2 Network
- Woodland Level 2 Network

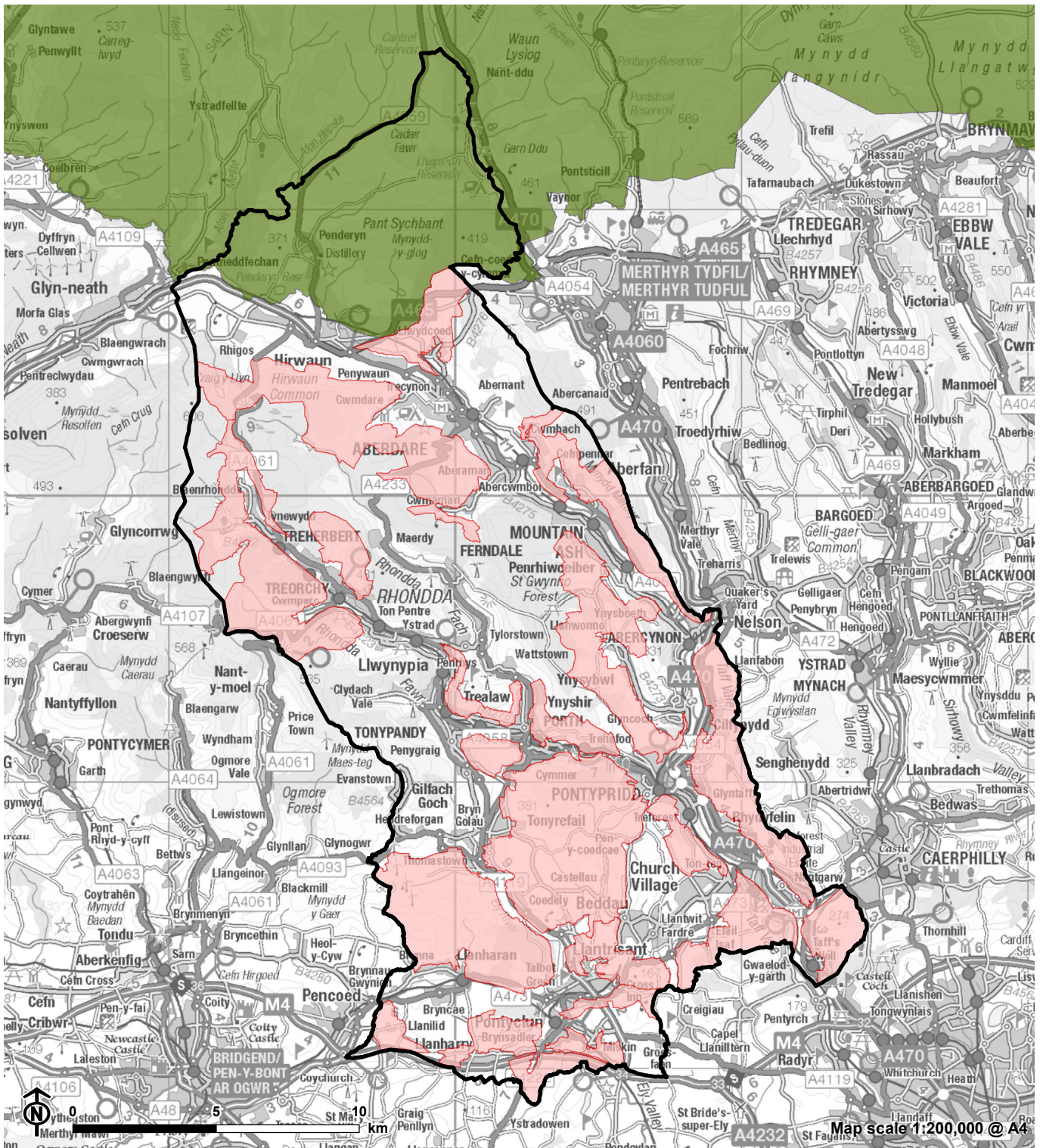
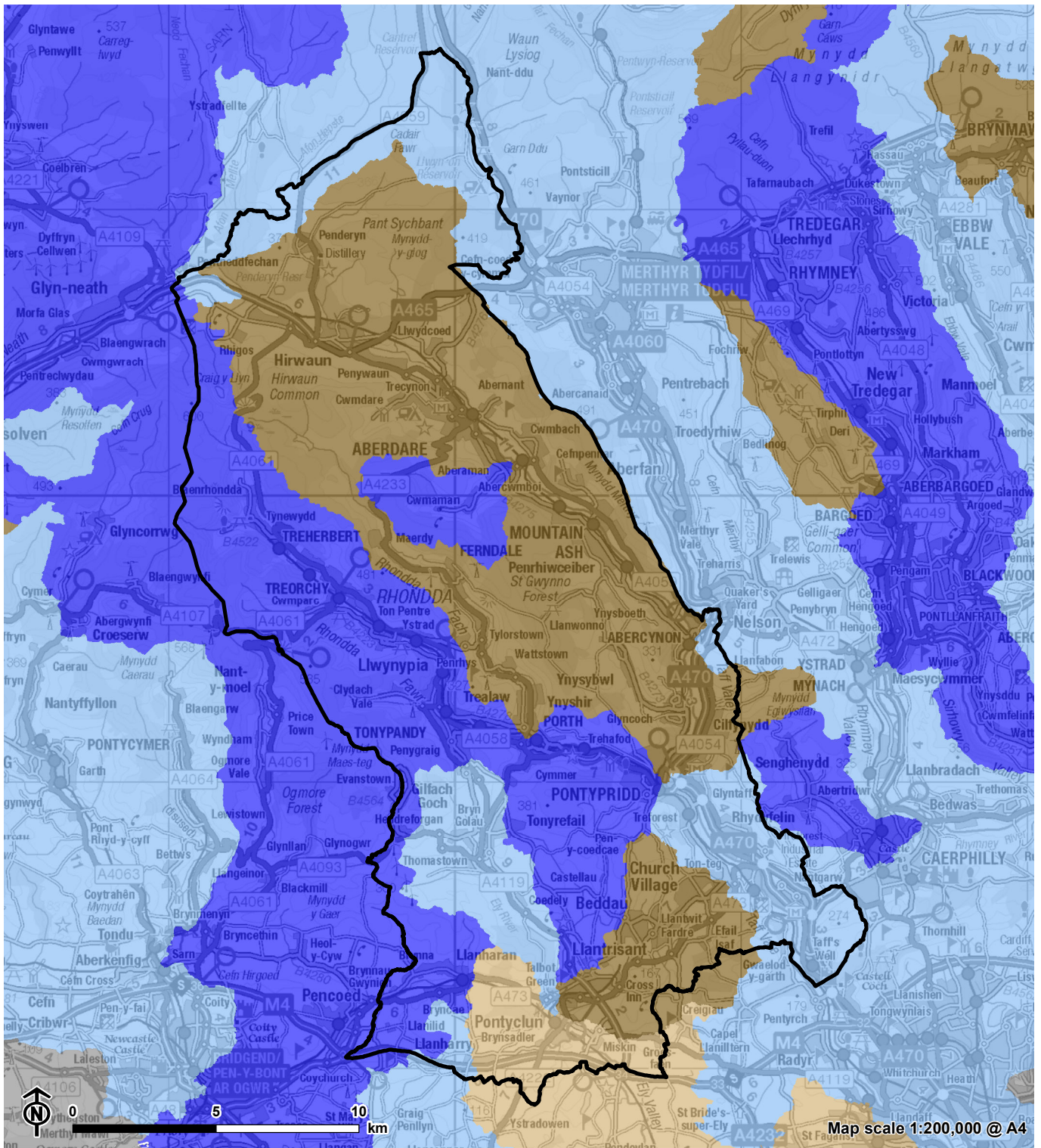


Figure D.2: Designated Landscapes and Special Landscape Areas

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Special Landscape Area
- National Park

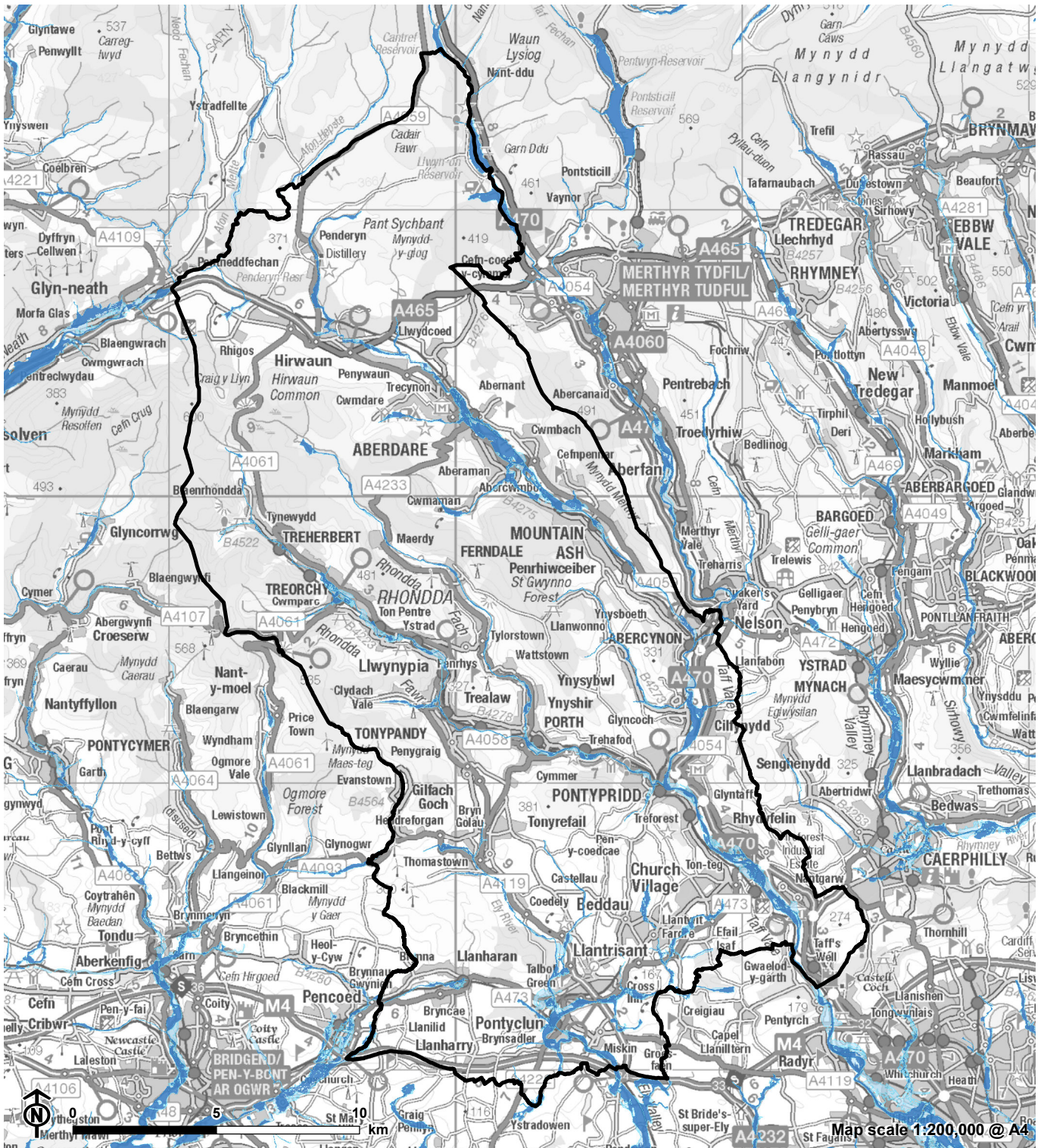


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Source: OS

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Figure D.3: Water Framework Directive water quality status

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Water quality status**
- Good
- Moderate
- Bad
- Poor
- N/A



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Source: OS, NRW

Figure D.4.1: Flood Risk

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2

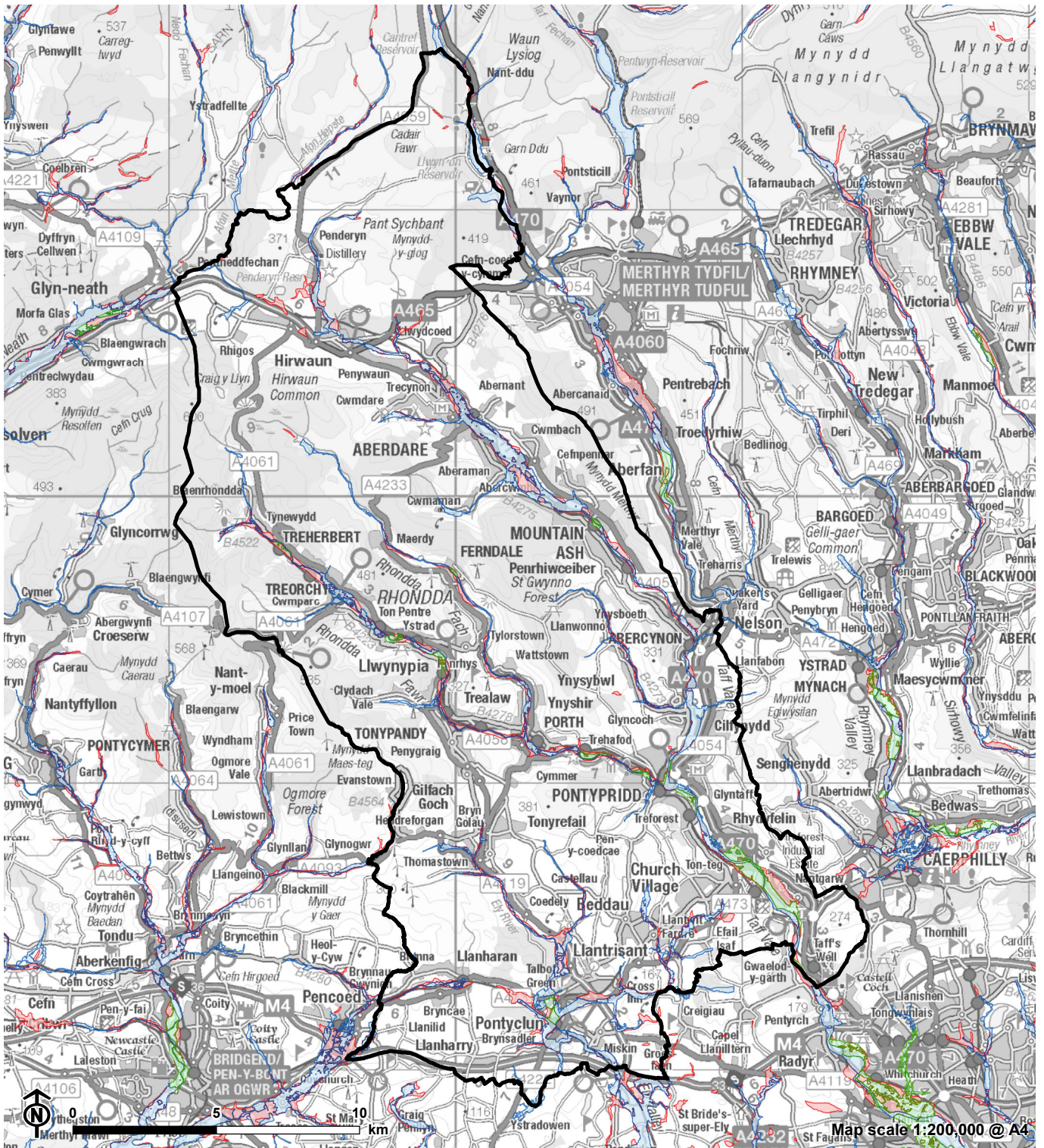
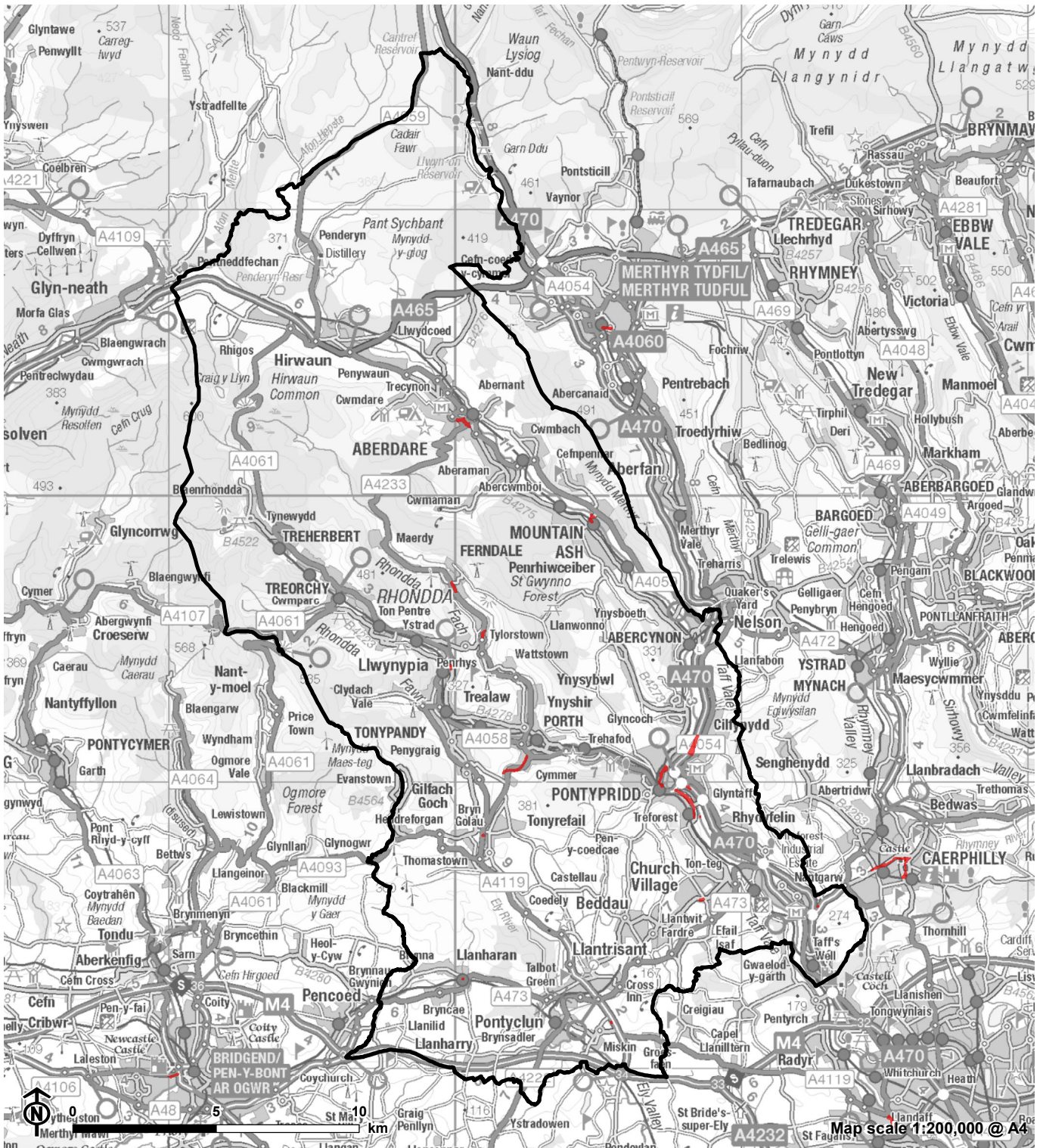


Figure D.4.2: Flood Risk

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Zone C1
- Zone C2
- Zone B



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Source: OS, DEFRA

Figure D.5: Air Quality Management Areas

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Air Quality Management Area

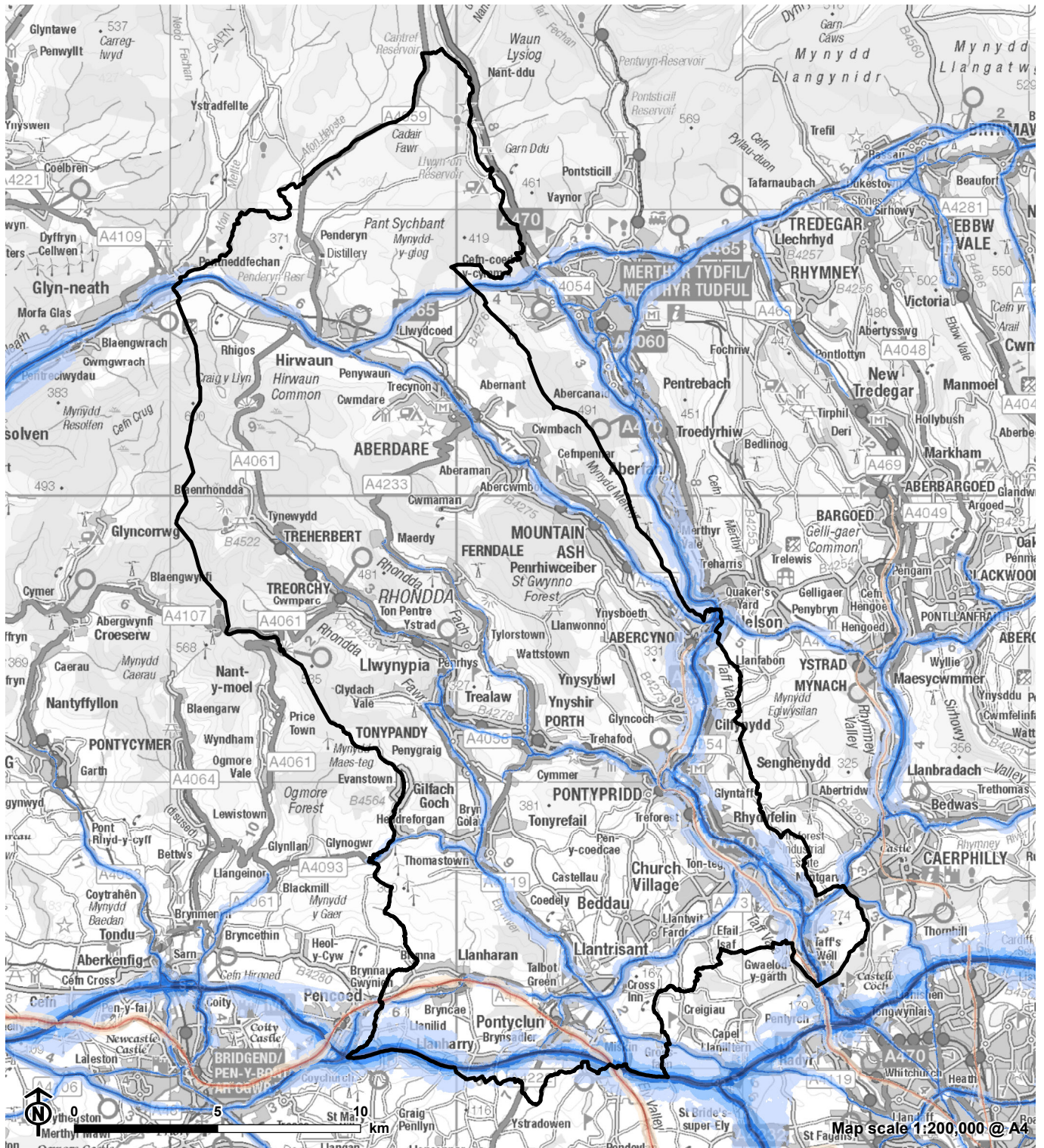
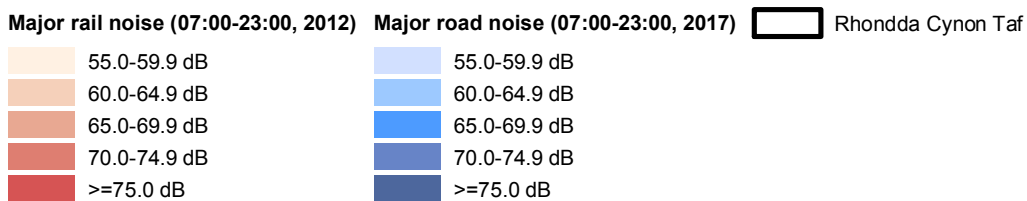


Figure D.6.1: Noise levels (Daytime)



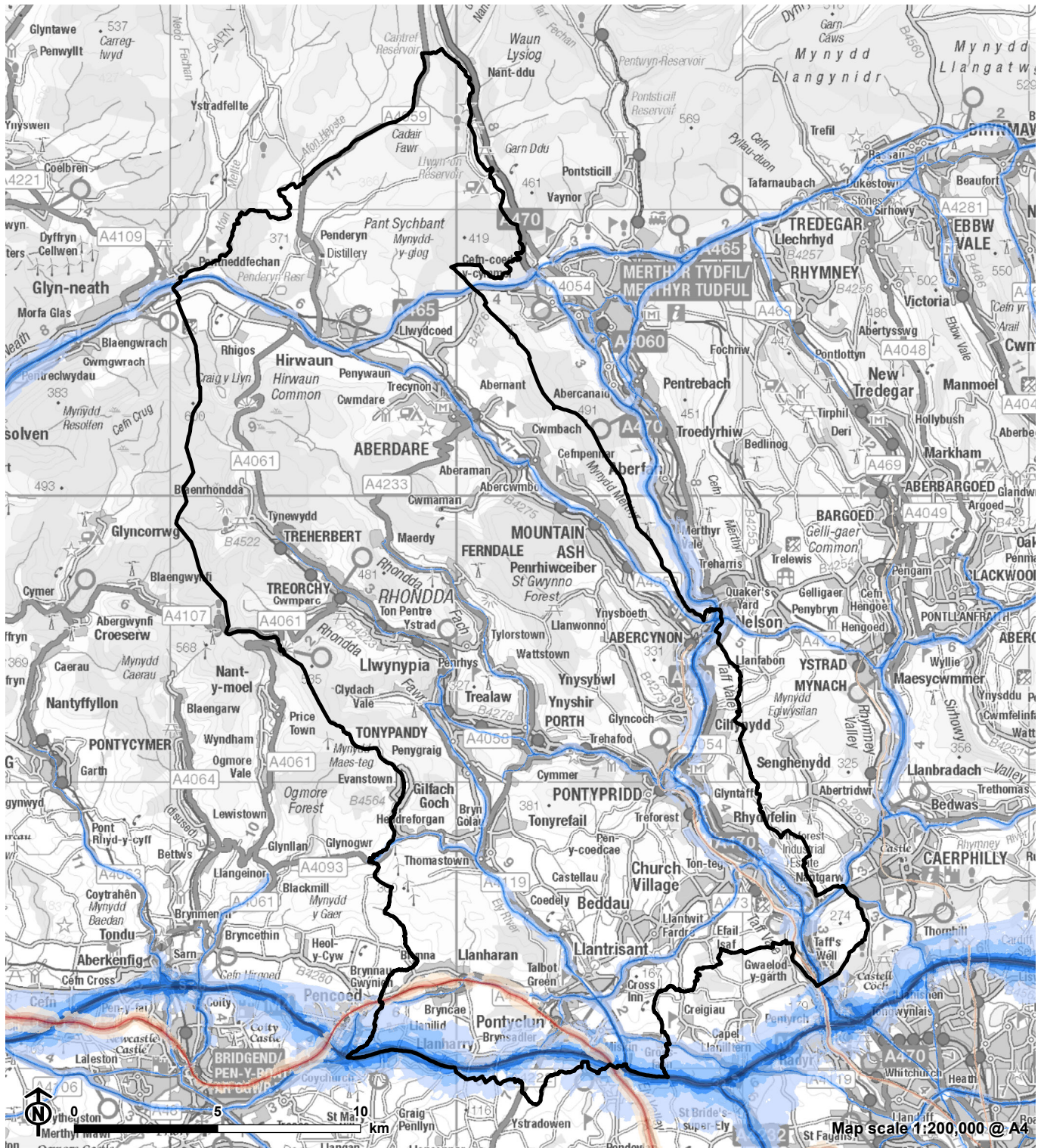
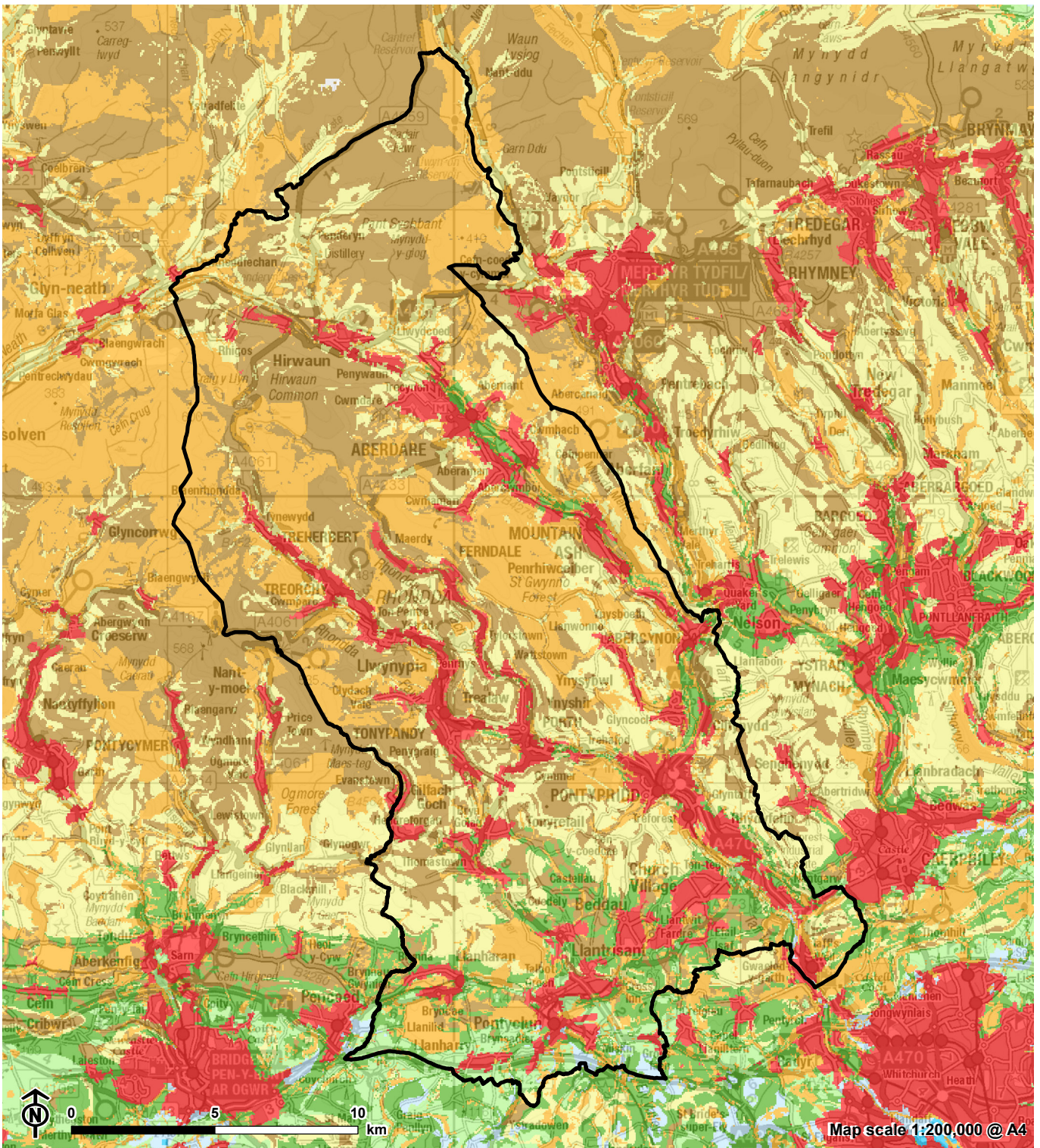


Figure D.6.2: Noise levels (Nighttime)

Major rail noise (23:00-07:00, 2012)	Major road noise (23:00-07:00, 2017)	Rhondda Cynon Taf
50.0-54.9 dB	50.0-54.9 dB	
55.0-59.9 dB	55.0-59.9 dB	
60.0-64.9 dB	60.0-64.9 dB	
65.0-69.9 dB	65.0-69.9 dB	
>=70.0 dB	>=70.0 dB	



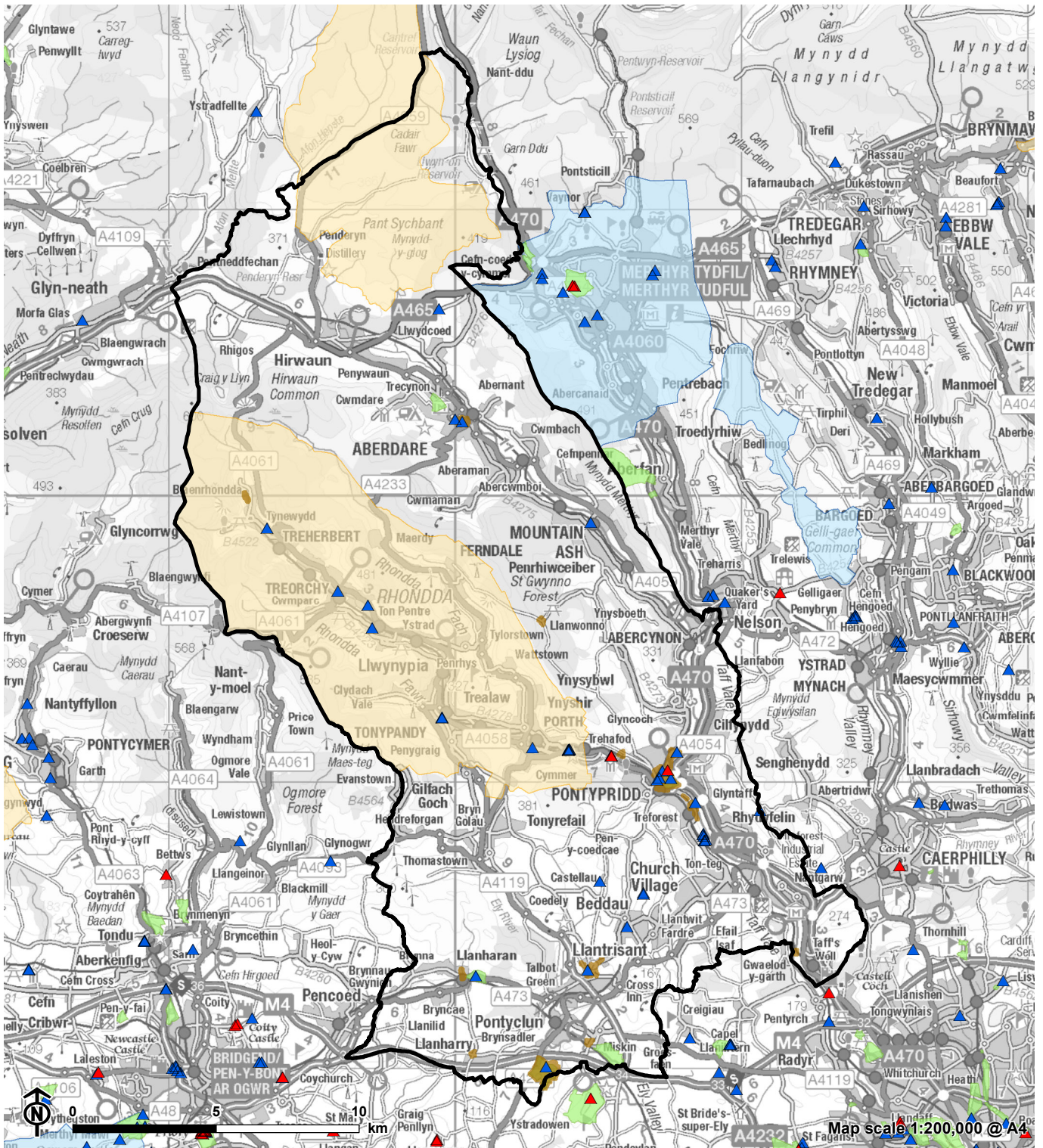
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Source: OS, NRW

Figure D.7: Agricultural Land Quality

Agricultural Land Classification (Predictive)

	Grade 1 (Highest quality)		Grade 4	Rhondda Cynon Taf
	Grade 2		Grade 5 (Lowest quality)	
	Grade 3A		Non Agricultural	
	Grade 3B		Urban	



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Source: OS, RCTCBC, Cadw

Figure D.8: Designated Heritage Features

- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Listed Building (Grade)**
- ▲ I
- ▲ II*
- Conservation Area
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Registered Historic Landscape - Outstanding
- Registered Historic Landscape - Special

Appendix E
Candidate Site Assessment
Criteria

Table E.1: Assessment criteria for the Revised LDP Candidate Sites

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
<p>1 Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk</p>	<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>Contribute to a carbon-neutral community?</p> <p>Reduce flood risk to people, property and maintain integrity of floodplain?</p> <p>Promote the use of SuDS and other flood resilient design?</p> <p>Consider the likely impacts of climate change on all types of infrastructure?</p> <p>Encourage the development of renewables, including micro-generation?</p> <p>Encourage high standards of energy efficiency in all new developments?</p> <p>Promote design which will help to mitigate the effects of climate change (for example through appropriate building orientation)?</p> <p>Steer development away from the floodplain where possible, and prevent increased flood risk elsewhere?</p> <p>Promote design which will support green infrastructure?</p> <p>Help to conserve important carbon stores/sinks in the County Borough to minimise the release of soil carbons (including from undisturbed soils, semi-natural vegetation and peat bogs)?</p>	<p>Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites</p> <p>The location of development will not affect the achievement of some parts of this objective – effects on greenhouse gas emissions from built development and the generation and use of renewables, for example, will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design, which are not known at this stage. The extent to which the location of sites would facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport in place of cars is considered under SA objective 4 above.</p> <p>Where Candidate Sites are located in areas of high flood risk, it could increase the risk of flooding in those areas (particularly if the sites are not previously developed) and would increase the number of people and assets at risk from flooding. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are entirely or mainly (i.e. >50%) on greenfield land that is within flood zones 3 or on brownfield land within flood zones 3 are likely to have a significant negative (--) effect. - Sites that are either entirely or mainly on greenfield outside of flood zones 3 are likely to have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that are on brownfield land outside of flood zones 3 are likely to have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Open space sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The allocation of open spaces through the LDP would support the protection of areas at which the safe infiltration of surface water might be achieved. All sites of this type are expected to have a minor positive (+) effect.
<p>2 Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs</p>	<p>Deliver good quality housing?</p> <p>Promote a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures?</p> <p>Promote housing that meets the requirements of those with particular needs including older people and people with disabilities?</p>	<p>Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites</p> <p>All site options that would deliver housing will have a positive effect on this objective due to the nature of the development proposed. Larger sites will provide opportunities for the development of a greater number of homes and may also offer particular opportunities for incorporating affordable housing and a range of housing types. Housing delivered in the Rhondda Valley would be particularly beneficial due to low levels of</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
	<p>Help meet affordable housing needs to allow local people to remain within their communities?</p> <p>Protect and enhance the existing housing stock including the characteristic terraces?</p>	<p>delivery in that area historically. The remaining decision aiding questions would be influenced by policies in the Revised LDP rather than housing site locations. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that would deliver 100¹¹⁶ or more homes, or that are in the Rhondda Valley, would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites outside of the Rhondda Valley that would deliver fewer than 100 homes would have a minor positive (+) effect. <p>Employment, retail, tourism and open space sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that would not deliver housing would have a negligible (0) effect.
<p>3 Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all</p>	<p>Encourage provision of community facilities in accessible locations?</p> <p>Promote access to education for all?</p> <p>Consider the needs of specific groups including those with protected characteristics?</p> <p>Plan places with opportunities for active citizenship to promote community engagement?</p> <p>Accommodate meeting places for different cultures?</p> <p>Promote mixed development?</p> <p>Provide equality of access for all?</p> <p>Help to promote design solutions that will help protect communities from crime and reduce the fear of crime?</p>	<p>All site types</p> <p>Several of the issues addressed by this objective would not be influenced by the location of development and would instead be influenced by policies in the Revised LDP. However, sites that are located at the larger settlements within RCT will generally have better access to a wider range of existing services and facilities, including educational facilities, compared to sites located at smaller settlements. Any new services and facilities that may be provided as a result of the new development would also be accessible to a higher number of existing nearby residents. New open space sites close to the main centres of population would have the most benefits in terms of the number of people easily able to access them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are located at one of the Principal Settlements would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are located at one of the Key Settlements would have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are located away from the Principal Settlements and the Key Settlements would have a minor negative (-) effect but are recognised to boost the local economy and education offering.
<p>4 Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles</p>	<p>Promote provision of and access to healthcare facilities?</p>	<p>Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites</p>

¹¹⁶ Note that the threshold used to identify larger sites for the purposes of the ISA may change once the range of site options is known.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
<p>that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.</p>	<p>Prevent unacceptable impacts on amenity (such as noise and light pollution)?</p> <p>Provide spaces such as allotments and community gardens which will promote healthy eating?</p> <p>Protect existing open spaces?</p> <p>Promote provision of facilities for physical recreational activities and play (including for walking and cycling)?</p> <p>Promote the importance of protecting natural play spaces?</p> <p>Improve public access to natural greenspace and/or the countryside?</p> <p>Make provision for personal private outdoor space within new developments?</p> <p>Protect and improve people's mental health?</p> <p>Help to improve overall health levels and reduce health inequalities in RCT?</p> <p>Promote the importance of protecting natural play spaces?</p> <p><i>Please note that the extent to which site options will promote the use of active modes of transport is addressed under SA objective 5 below.</i></p>	<p>Public health will be influenced in part by the proximity of sites to open spaces, walking and cycle paths, easy access to which can encourage participation in active outdoor recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>and</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>or</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are more than 800m from an area of open space <u>and</u> more than 400m from a walking or cycle path will have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that contain an existing area of open space (including allotments) or a walking or cycle path which could therefore be lost as a result of new development could have a significant negative (--?) effect, although this is uncertain depending on whether the development of the site would in fact result in the loss of that facility. <p>Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites that are within close proximity of existing healthcare facilities (i.e. GP surgeries) will ensure that residents have good access to healthcare services. If a number of sites are allocated within close proximity of one another, this could lead to existing healthcare facilities becoming overloaded. If at any point information becomes available regarding the capacity of existing healthcare facilities, this will be taken into account in the ISA. It is also recognised that new development could stimulate the provision of new healthcare facilities, but this cannot be assumed at this stage.</p> <p>Therefore, the following effects are applicable, which could result in mixed effects overall¹¹⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites that are within 400m of a health care provider would have a significant positive (++) effect.

¹¹⁷ In all cases, if the two parts of a score are the same type of effect, e.g. positive and negative, then a best or worst case scenario will be recorded, i.e. a score comprising '+' and '++' would be recorded as '++', while a score comprising '-' and '--' would be recorded as '--'. Furthermore, a site scoring '0' for one of the sub-criteria and '++' for another sub-criteria would be recorded as having a '++' effect. Mixed effects will only be recorded where a score comprises both positive and negative effects e.g. '+/-' or '++/--'.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites that are within 400-800m of a health care provider would have a minor positive (+) effect. - Residential sites and residential-led mixed use sites that are not within 800m of a health care provider would have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that would not incorporate residential development would have a negligible (0) effect on this part of the objective. <p>In addition, which could lead to mixed effects overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that would expose residents to noise levels of L_{night} >=55.0 dB, or L_{aeq,16} >= 60.0 dB would have a significant negative (--) effect. - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that would expose residents to noise levels of L_{night} 50.0-54.9 dB, or L_{aeq,16} 55.0-59.9 dB would have a minor negative (-) effect. <p>Employment and retail sites</p> <p>As discussed earlier in this section of the criteria, public health will be influenced in part by the proximity of sites to features which can encourage participation in active outdoor recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>and</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>or</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are more than 800m from an area of open space <u>and</u> more than 400m from a walking or cycle path will have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that contain an existing area of open space (including allotments) or a walking or cycle path which could therefore be lost as a result of new development could have a significant negative (--?) effect, although this is uncertain depending on whether the development of the site would in fact result in the loss of that facility.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<p>Employment sites would have a negligible (0) effect in relation to noise pollution. Noise levels experienced by workers at employment and retail sites will be heavily influenced the type of work carried to be out on the premises, whether hearing protection is worn by employees, and the design of the building (e.g. offices are more likely than dwellings to be air conditioned and acoustically insulated).</p> <p>Tourism sites</p> <p>As discussed earlier in this section of the criteria, public health will be influenced in part by the proximity of sites to features which can encourage participation in active outdoor recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>and</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 800m of an area of open space <u>or</u> within 400m of a walking or cycle path (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are more than 800m from an area of open space <u>and</u> more than 400m from a walking or cycle path will have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that contain an existing area of open space (including allotments) or a walking or cycle path which could therefore be lost as a result of new development could have a significant negative (--?) effect, although this is uncertain depending on whether the development of the site would in fact result in the loss of that facility. <p>In addition, which could lead to mixed effects overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism sites that would expose residents to noise levels of $L_{night} \geq 55.0$ dB, or $L_{aeq,16} \geq 60.0$ dB would have a significant negative (--) effect. - Tourism sites that would expose residents to noise levels of $L_{night} 50.0-54.9$ dB, or $L_{aeq,16} 55.0-59.9$ dB would have a minor negative (-) effect. <p>Open space sites</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<p>Sites that are proposed primarily for the delivery of new open space or recreation facilities will have a significant positive (++) effect given the potential for residents and visitors to the area to make use of these types of spaces for active recreation.</p> <p>In addition, which could lead to mixed effects overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open space sites that would expose residents to noise levels of $L_{night} \geq 55.0$ dB, or $L_{aeq,16} \geq 60.0$ dB would have a significant negative (--) effect. - Residential residential-led mixed use, open space and tourism sites that would expose residents to noise levels of $L_{night} 50.0-54.9$ dB, or $L_{aeq,16} 55.0-59.9$ dB would have a minor negative (-) effect.
<p>5 Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport</p>	<p>Provide for alternatives to the private car and improve public transport links?</p> <p>Improve the rail network?</p> <p>Provide for safe and attractive walking and cycling routes?</p> <p>Reduce the need to travel in new developments?</p> <p>Ensure connectivity to high speed broadband?</p> <p>Reduce the need for out commuting for work?</p> <p>Promote the provision of supporting infrastructure for and the use of electric vehicles?</p>	<p>Residential</p> <p>Sites that are located at the larger settlements within RCT will generally require shorter journeys to access jobs, services and facilities compared to sites located at smaller settlements. This will increase the likelihood of journeys being undertaken on foot or by bicycle rather than by car.</p> <p>Sites that are located at one of the Principal Settlements (Aberdare, Pontypridd and Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant) or at a Key Settlement would have a minor positive (+) effect.</p> <p>In addition, which may lead to mixed effects overall, residential sites that are located close to key employment sites will help to reduce levels of out-commuting. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential sites that are within 1km of a key employment site will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Residential sites that are within 2km of a key employment site will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Residential sites that are not within 1km of a key employment site will have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Furthermore, convenient access to public transport links will reduce levels of car use and encourage modal shift. New development may stimulate the provision of new links such as bus routes; however this cannot be assumed. In addition, information is not available in relation to the frequency of bus services and it is recognised that some bus stops, particularly in rural areas, may offer only limited services.</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station (including a South Wales Metro Station) and 400m of a bus stop will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are not within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop will have a minor negative (-) effect. <p>Residential-led mixed use sites</p> <p>As discussed earlier in this section of the criteria, sites that are located at the larger settlements within RCT will generally require shorter journeys to access jobs, services and facilities compared to sites located at smaller settlements. This will increase the likelihood of journeys being undertaken on foot or by bicycle rather than by car.</p> <p>Sites that are located at one of the Principal Settlements (Aberdare, Pontypridd and Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant) or at a Key Settlement would have a minor positive (+) effect.</p> <p>Residential-led mixed use sites that are located close to key employment sites will help to reduce levels of out-commuting. Therefore, the following effects are applicable which could result mixed effects overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that are within 1km of a key employment site will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that are within 2km of a key employment site will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Residential-led mixed use sites that are not within 1km of a key employment site will have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Furthermore, convenient access to public transport links will reduce levels of car use and encourage modal shift. New development may stimulate the provision of new links such as bus routes; however this cannot be assumed. In addition, information is not available in relation to the frequency of bus services and it is recognised that some bus stops, particularly in rural areas, may offer only limited services.</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station (including a South Wales Metro Station) and 400m of a bus stop will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect. - Sites that are not within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop will have a minor negative (-) effect. <p>In addition, which could lead to mixed effects overall, mixed use sites that incorporate both residential and employment could help to reduce levels of out-commuting. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixed use sites that incorporate residential and employment development could have a significant positive (++) effect. <p>Employment, retail, tourism and open space sites</p> <p>As discussed earlier in this section of the criteria, sites that are located at the larger settlements within RCT will generally require shorter journeys to access jobs, services and facilities compared to sites located at smaller settlements. Furthermore, delivering new developments and areas of open space at these settlements will mean a higher number of residents will benefit from easy access to them. This will increase the likelihood of journeys being undertaken on foot or by bicycle rather than by car.</p> <p>Sites that are located at one of the Principal Settlements (Aberdare, Pontypridd and Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant) or at a Key Settlement would have a minor positive (+) effect.</p> <p>Furthermore, convenient access to public transport links will reduce levels of car use and encourage modal shift. New development may stimulate the provision of new links such as bus routes; however this cannot be assumed. In addition, information is not available in relation to the frequency of bus services and it is recognised that some bus stops, particularly in rural areas, may offer only limited services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station (including a South Wales Metro Station) and 400m of a bus stop will have a significant positive (++) effect. - Sites that are within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop (but not both) will have a minor positive (+) effect.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are not within 400m of a railway station or a bus stop will have a minor negative (-) effect.
<p>6 Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment</p>	<p>Protect and enhance areas and buildings of historical or cultural importance?</p> <p>Protect and enhance archaeology?</p> <p>Protect and enhance industrial heritage?</p> <p>Promote sustainable access to cultural sites?</p> <p>Ensure high standards of design in all new development?</p> <p>Protect and enhance local character and distinctiveness, while recognising the role of innovation?</p>	<p>All site types</p> <p>The ISA draws on historic environment work that will be undertaken by RCTCBC as part of the Candidate Site Assessment process. This assessment has been used as follows to assign potential effects to each of the site options considered. The effects are uncertain until detailed proposals for sites are known. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that have been assessed by the Council as being protected by, containing or impacting on any cultural designations (conservation areas, listed buildings, historic landscape, etc.) where development would have an undermining impact on the designation, could have an uncertain significant negative (--?) effect. - Sites that have been assessed by the Council as being protected by, containing or impacting on any cultural designations (conservation areas, listed buildings, historic landscape, etc.) where a study is needed to determine the extent of the effect, could have a significant negative (--?) effect. - Sites that have been assessed by the Council as having no potential to impact upon a historical asset or designation, will have an uncertain minor negative the extent of the (0?) effect.
<p>7 Promote the use of the Welsh language</p>	<p>Promote the use of the Welsh language amongst different groups of people, including in the workplace and in education?</p> <p>Promote the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities?</p> <p>Promote the status of the Welsh language?</p>	<p>All site types</p> <p>While new housing in areas of high Welsh language use could be seen to increase the population in those areas and encourage the use of the Welsh language, it is also possible that people moving into those areas to access the new housing could 'dilute' Welsh language use in those areas and have the opposite effect. Furthermore, it is not expected that other site types (such as employment and tourism) would have implications for the levels of Welsh spoken in RCT, particularly given that users of many of these sites will only be at these locations temporarily. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the spatial location of Candidate Sites will directly affect this objective and so all site options will have a negligible (0) effect.</p>
<p>8 Protect and enhance the quality</p>	<p>Promote the improvement of the landscape where it has been degraded as a legacy of previous industrial use?</p>	<p>All site types</p> <p>Development within close proximity of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park could have a significant negative effect on this objective due to the sensitivity of that landscape; however this is uncertain until</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
and character of the landscape	<p>Protect and enhance designated areas, including the National Park as well as its setting within the plan area and Special Landscape Areas?</p> <p>Protect and enhance historic landscapes?</p> <p>Protect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness?</p> <p>Protect and enhance tranquillity and dark skies?</p> <p>Enhance, protect, or manage the benefits of the valleys' industrial heritage?</p>	<p>detailed proposals for sites are known. While development is unlikely at areas of open space allocated through the LDP, there is potential for the identification of sites as formal areas of open space to affect their character, for example by changing the level of uses at these locations. Adopting a precautionary approach, the ISA identifies the potential for adverse impacts on local character and landscape setting. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 1km of the National Park could have a significant negative (--?) effect. <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within a Special Landscape Area could have a significant negative effect (--?). <p><i>For sites outside of these areas, any landscape sensitivity assessment work that may be undertaken as part of the LDP Revision process will be drawn upon, and criteria will be set out here to show how such evidence has been used to inform the ISA.</i></p>
9 Protect and enhance biodiversity	<p>Improve the diversity of habitats and species and maintain and enhance populations of species?</p> <p>Enhance the extent of habitats and populations of protected and priority species by seeking the creation, restoration and appropriate management of green networks and linkages?</p> <p>Improve and protect the condition of ecosystems and support the long term management of habitats?</p> <p>Enhance connectivity by maximising opportunities for the creation of functional habitat and ecological networks?</p> <p>Achieve adaptability to change, in particular the effects of climate change?</p> <p>Limit the potential for disruption of natural processes or connectivity?</p> <p>Support the restoration of natural processes which could mitigate or remove other impacts?</p>	<p>All site types</p> <p>Development sites that are within close proximity of an international, national or local designated conservation site have the potential to affect the biodiversity or geodiversity of those sites/features, e.g. through habitat damage/loss, fragmentation, disturbance to species, air pollution, increased recreation pressure etc. Conversely, there may be opportunities to promote habitat connectivity if new developments include green infrastructure. Therefore, while proximity to designated sites provides an indication of the potential for an adverse effect, uncertainty exists, as appropriate mitigation may avoid adverse effects and may even result in beneficial effects. While the allocation of sites for open space is unlikely to result in substantial development, there is potential for this type of use to result in increased recreational pressures on the site itself and in the surrounding area. It is recognised that new open space could help to reduce recreational pressures on surrounding biodiversity assets by provide alternative greenspace. However, without more detailed site specific ecological assessment and understanding how the new open space would be used a precautionary approach will be taken and no positive effects are recorded. In addition, the potential impacts on biodiversity present on each site, or undesignated habitats and species adjacent to the potential development sites, cannot be determined at this strategic level of assessment. This would be determined once more specific proposals are developed and submitted as part of a planning application.</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
	Enhance and protect connections between people and nature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within 250m of one or more internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites may have a significant negative (--?) effect. - Sites that are between 250m and 1km of one or more internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites, or that are within 250m of a locally designated site may have a minor negative (-?) effect. - Sites that are more than 1km from any internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites and that are over 250m from a locally designated site could have a negligible (0?) effect.
10 Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources	<p>Reduce and/or avoid pollution to water environment?</p> <p>Support efficient use of water, including greywater recycling in new developments?</p> <p>Protect quality and quantity of groundwater sources?</p> <p>Prevent new development that will cause drainage problems (including in relation to the proliferation of soil sealing)?</p> <p>Protect the quality and quantity of surface water?</p> <p>Help to ensure adequate levels of sewerage infrastructure and capacity to treat wastewater at sewage treatment works?</p>	<p>Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites</p> <p>Levels of water consumption within new development will be determined by its design and onsite practices and therefore influenced by policies in the Revised LDP, rather than the location of the site. However, the location of development could affect groundwater quality during construction depending on its proximity to Source Protection Zones. The extent to which water quality is affected would depend on construction techniques and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) within the design, therefore effects are uncertain at this stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development within a Source Protection Zone could result in significant negative (--?) effects on water quality although this is uncertain at this stage of assessment. - Development outside of a Source Protection Zone would have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Open space sites</p> <p>The allocation of open space sites is unlikely to result in development that might otherwise have potential to adversely affect groundwater resources. There is potential for the infiltration of surface water to be supported through the identification and protection of open spaces in RCT and therefore a minor positive (+) effect is recorded for all sites of this type.</p>
11 Protect and enhance air quality	Avoid increasing air pollution and achieve improvements in air quality?	Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
	<p>Reduce emissions, particularly in and around AQMAs?</p> <p>Promote policy and development that enables and supports communities in adopting lifestyles and actions that can protect or enhance local air quality?</p>	<p>Development within or close to one of the 16 AQMAs within RCT could contribute to increased traffic in those areas, compounding air quality issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are within an AQMA would have a significant negative (--) effect. - Sites that are not within an AQMA but that would contribute to increased traffic in those areas (i.e. where there are direct road links) are likely to have a minor negative (-) effect. - Sites that are not within or directly connected to an AQMA are likely to have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Open space sites</p> <p>It is not expected that identification and protection of open spaces in RCT would result in substantial increases in traffic to the areas in question. Many open spaces will not incorporate dedicated parking and travellers to site will often make use of active modes to access them given their intended purpose in supporting active recreation. Therefore, a negligible effect (0) is recorded for all sites of this type.</p>
<p>12 Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals</p>	<p>Encourage the re-use of previously developed land and buildings as a priority, where appropriate?</p> <p>Prevent and control pollution to land?</p> <p>Promote the remediation of land contamination?</p> <p>Safeguard mineral resources?</p> <p>Reuse and recycle aggregates on site?</p> <p>Promote higher densities of development (where considered appropriate) to support more efficient use of land resources?</p>	<p>Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites</p> <p>Development on brownfield land represents more efficient use of land in comparison to the development of greenfield sites. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites that are on brownfield land would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites that are on greenfield land classed as high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 or 3a) would have a significant negative (--) effect. - Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites that are on greenfield land which is not classed as high quality agricultural land (Grades 3b, 4, 5 and urban land) would have a minor negative (-) effect. - In addition, residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites that are within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (regardless of the site's classification as greenfield or brownfield) could have a minor negative effect although this is uncertain (-?) as it may be possible to extract mineral

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<p>resources before development takes place and there is potential for the mineral resource to already be sterilised.</p> <p>Open space sites</p> <p>The allocation of open space sites is unlikely to result in development that might otherwise result in the loss of greenfield land. The identification of this land is likely to result in the protection of greenfield land and agricultural soils. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open space sites on greenfield land that is classed as high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 or 3a) would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Open space sites on greenfield land which is not classed as high quality agricultural land (Grades 3b, 4, 5 and urban land) would have a minor positive (+) effect.
<p>13 Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management</p>	<p>Reduce waste generation?</p> <p>Avoid, reduce, re-use, recycle and recover before disposal to landfill?</p> <p>Further improve on good recycling performance including provision of facilities (domestic and commercial)?</p> <p>Support development of alternatives to landfill, including composting facilities and energy from waste?</p> <p>Promote self-sufficiency in terms of waste management where appropriate?</p>	<p>Residential, residential-led mixed use, employment, retail and tourism sites</p> <p>The effects of development on waste generation and the sustainable management of waste will depend on the practices used onsite, rather than the location of the development. However, development on brownfield land may offer opportunities to re-use onsite buildings and materials. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that are on brownfield land could have a minor positive (+?) effect. - Sites that are on greenfield land could have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Open space sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The allocation of open space sites is unlikely to promote the re-use of onsite material and therefore a negligible (0) effect is recorded for all sites of this type.
<p>14 Provide for a sustainable economy</p>	<p>Encourage economic growth, especially in areas of high unemployment and economic inactivity?</p> <p>Encourage appropriate inward and indigenous investment?</p>	<p>Employment sites, retail and mixed use sites containing employment uses</p> <p>Candidate Sites that would be used for employment-related development will all have positive effects on the economy as they will provide high quality new sites for businesses to locate and may encourage inward investment. Larger sites will provide particular opportunities for economic growth. Therefore:</p>

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
	<p>Support the rural economy?</p> <p>Promote sustainable tourism?</p> <p>Ensure the allocation of land to accommodate the economic needs of the population?</p> <p>Maintain an appropriate land bank of employment sites?</p> <p>Promote the vitality and viability of town centres?</p> <p>Support the achievement of a greener lower carbon economy which can benefit all members of the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment and retail sites that are 5ha or larger in size would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Employment and retail sites that are smaller than 5ha would have a minor positive (+) effect. - Mixed use sites containing employment or retail uses will support economic growth in RCT; however, this will depend upon the portion of the site that would support these types of uses. Therefore, an uncertain minor positive (+?) effect is recorded for all sites of this type. <p>Tourism</p> <p>Tourism sites could support economic growth in RCT. However, any more substantial contribution to the growth and diversification of the local economy will depend on the specific nature of the tourism uses that would be incorporated which is not known at this stage. Therefore, an uncertain minor positive (+?) effect is recorded for all sites of this type.</p> <p>Residential and open space sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that would not deliver employment-related development would have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Residential and residential-led mixed use sites</p> <p>Residential and residential-led mixed use sites could have a negative effect on the achievement of this objective if they would result in the loss of existing employment uses. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that are in employment use currently would have a significant negative (--) effect on this objective.
<p>15 Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities</p>	<p>Maximise employment opportunities within the County Borough?</p> <p>Provide opportunities for a range of skills levels?</p> <p>Provide jobs in accessible locations?</p> <p>Accommodate training facilities to help develop a flexible skills base?</p>	<p>Employment sites, retail and mixed use sites containing employment or retail uses</p> <p>Candidate Sites that would be used for employment-related development will all have positive effects on this objective, due to the nature of the development proposed. Larger sites will provide higher numbers of jobs, as well as the associated opportunities for work-based learning and skills development. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment and retail sites that are 5ha or larger in size would have a significant positive (++) effect. - Employment and retail sites that are smaller than 5ha would have a minor positive (+) effect.

ISA objective	Decision aiding questions Will the Candidate Site...?	Assessment criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixed use sites containing employment or retail uses will support access to employment in RCT; however, this will depend upon the portion of the site that would support these types of uses. Therefore, an uncertain minor positive (+?) effect is recorded for all sites of this type. <p>Tourism</p> <p>Tourism sites could support employment provision in RCT. However, any more substantial and consistent contribution to the employment offer (e.g. employment opportunities which are not seasonal in nature) will depend on the specific nature of the tourism uses that would be incorporated which is not known at this stage. Therefore, an uncertain minor positive (+?) effect is recorded for all sites of this type.</p> <p>Residential and open space sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that would not deliver more substantial employment development would have a negligible (0) effect. <p>Residential and residential-led mixed use sites</p> <p>Residential and residential-led mixed use sites could have a negative effect on the achievement of this objective if they would result in the loss of existing employment uses. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential and residential-led mixed use sites that are in employment use currently would have a significant negative (--) effect on this objective.

Appendix F

Equalities Impact Assessment

F.1 The Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy consultation document has been reviewed to consider the likely impacts of its contents on each of the nine protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010. For each protected characteristic, consideration has been given to whether each part of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy is compatible or incompatible with the three main duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

F.2 Where relevant, the justification text makes reference to relevant sub-groups within the protected characteristics and groups which might be most influenced by the part of the Revised LDP: Preferred Strategy considered. For example, the protected characteristic 'age' includes people over 65, as well as infants and young children.

F.3 A colour coded scoring system has been used to show the effects that the consultation document is likely to have on each protected characteristic, as shown below.

Table F.1: Key to colour coding in the EqIA

Score	Likely effect
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative

Table F.2: Equalities Impact Assessment of the Preferred Strategy

Component of the Preferred Strategy consultation document	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Vision	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<p>To support the delivery of the Revised LDP and its Vision, 18 objectives have been identified in the Preferred Strategy consultation document. The assessment of the Vision considers the text of the Vision itself as well as the 18 objectives included.</p> <p>The Vision sets out that by 2037 RCT will be an area of sustainable, cohesive communities who are healthy, well connected and who have equal access to high quality homes, jobs, services and facilities. Objective 3 supports the overarching aim of moving towards more cohesive communities, promoting integrated communities and opportunities for living, working and socialising for all. It is expected that this approach should help to promote social integration across RCT. Benefits are likely to be felt by much of the community at new developments with particular support for the protected characteristics in terms of ensuring good access to services and facilities to meet their needs and opportunities for employment. This objective is also likely to support integration between different groups in RCT. Positive effects are identified across all protected characteristics. Ensuring good access to community facilities is also expected to have particular positive effects for the pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief groups given the potential increased need for these groups to access medical facilities, meeting halls and places of worship. Objective 2 seeks to ensure good access to housing to meet the needs of all communities, with particular reference to the provision of affordable homes, appropriately managed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and housing for older people. Given the importance of affordable homes and HMOs for younger people who might otherwise not be able to access suitable accommodation and the emphasis in the objective to provide homes for older people, particular positive effects are expected in relation to age. The promotion of public and active travel is supported through Objective 5, which is likely to benefit air quality in the plan area. Furthermore, improvement of air quality in RCT is directly addressed through Objective 11. Given the susceptibility of certain groups to air pollution particular positive effects are identified in relation to age (including those over 65, infants and young children), disability (including those with long term health problems) and pregnancy and maternity. Support for the long-term resilience of town centres in RCT set out through Objective 16 is expected to help provide space for interactions between groups that might otherwise not come into contact thereby promoting increased tolerance and social integration. This will be of particular benefit for groups that might otherwise be likely to experience increased levels of harassment and/intolerance in their daily lives. Therefore, particular positive effects are identified in relation to gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation.</p>									
Preferred Strategy including Proposed Key Sites	+/-	+/-	+	0	+/-	+	+	0	+
<p>The Preferred Strategy focuses growth in accordance with the identified Revised LDP Settlement Hierarchy. This prioritises the Principle Settlements and Key Settlements for new development, which is likely to support access to services and facilities in those areas and promoting opportunities to walk and cycle day to day. This approach is likely to help ensure good access to community facilities with positive effects for the pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief groups given the potential increased need for these groups to access medical facilities, meeting halls and places of worship. By providing new development in areas which are well related to services and facilities and through the delivery of Potential Key Sites that are of scale to provide new services and facilities and instil a degree of self-containment, the Preferred Strategy has the potential to limit any increase in travel by private vehicle over the plan period with benefits for air quality. Given the susceptibility of certain groups to air pollution positive effects are identified in relation to age (including those over 65, infants and young children), disability (including those with long term health problems) and pregnancy and maternity. However, given that some the larger settlements in RCT contain AQMAs there is potential for these more susceptible groups to be subject higher levels of air pollution as new development occurs at locations that are in close proximity. These more susceptible groups may be required to travel through areas of poor air quality where their accommodation is close to or within an AQMA. The focus of development towards the larger settlements aligns with the National Policy of seeking a Town Centre First approach which is likely to help ensure the long term resilience of town centres in RCT. This will be of importance for providing space for interactions between groups that might otherwise not come into contact thereby promoting increased tolerance and social integration. Benefits are expected for groups that might otherwise be likely to experience increased levels of harassment and/or intolerance in their daily lives. Therefore, positive effects are identified in relation to gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation.</p>									

Appendix F
Equalities Impact Assessment

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
 January 2024

Component of the Preferred Strategy consultation document	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Strategic Policies	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<p>Policy SP2 Placemaking and Sustainable Communities supports the overarching aim of moving towards communities that are inclusive, cohesive, safe, supported and valued. The policy is expected to help support integration between different groups in the plan area. Positive effects are therefore identified across all protected characteristics. The policy also requires that developments should be designed to be accessible for all users and that an appropriate and diverse mix of housing types and sizes should be delivered in the plan area to cater for the needs of all that can made adaptable to changing needs over time. It is expected that this approach will have particular benefits in relation to people with mobility issues as well as older people given the emphasis on making developments accessible and adaptable to changing needs. The delivery of an appropriate mix of houses is expected to include affordable housing which will have particular benefits for younger people given that they might otherwise have difficult accessing the housing ladder. Positive effects are therefore expected in relation to age and disability. Policies SP 7: Employment Land and the Economy and SP8: Settlement Centres are both expected to help promote the resilience of the town centres in RCT. Through Policy SP7 this benefit reflects the policy approach for B1 office proposals to be sought in more appropriately located settlement centres and for Non-B class uses to be located in the settlement centres. Where this is not possible a sequential search approach for sites will be required, in line with the Town Centres First principle. Policy SP8 explicitly states that development within settlement centres should enhance the vibrancy, vitality and viability of these locations. Both policies are expected to support increased footfall as well as the service and retail offer at centres. Ensuring viable centres in the plan area will help to limit increases in air pollution in the plan area given the good access to these areas by sustainable modes for many residents. Given the susceptibility of certain groups to air pollution, positive effects are identified for both policies in relation to age (including those over 65, infants and young children), disability (including those with long term health problems) and pregnancy and maternity. Ensuring the viability of centre locations will also be of importance for providing space for interactions between groups that might otherwise not come into contact with each other thereby promoting increased tolerance and social integration. Particular benefits are expected for groups that might otherwise be likely to experience increased levels of harassment and/or intolerance in their daily lives. Therefore, positive effects are identified for both policies in relation to gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation.</p>									