

TECHNICAL APPENDIX 13.2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES RELATING TO ECOLOGY

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A13.2.1 PLANNING POLICY WALES

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government (the Assembly Government). It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Procedural advice is given in National Assembly for Wales / Welsh Office circulars. PPW, the TANs and circulars together comprise national planning policy which should be taken into account by local planning authorities in Wales in the preparation of unitary development plans (UDPs). They may be material to decisions on individual planning applications and will be taken into account by the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) and Planning Inspectors in the determination of called-in planning applications and appeals.

The document states that Planning policies and proposals should contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment, so as to improve the quality of life, and protect local and global ecosystems. In particular, planning should seek to ensure that development does not produce irreversible harmful effects on the natural environment. The conservation and enhancement of statutorily designated areas and of the countryside and undeveloped coast; the conservation of biodiversity, habitats, and landscapes; the conservation of the best and most versatile agricultural land; and enhancement of the urban environment all need to be promoted.

The Assembly Government's objectives for the conservation and improvement of the natural heritage are to:

- promote the conservation of landscape and biodiversity, in particular the conservation of native wildlife and habitats;
- ensure that action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for the natural environment;
- ensure that statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed; and to
- safeguard protected species.

A13.2.2 THE WALES SPATIAL PLAN

The Wales Spatial Plan (2004) sets out the issues and opportunities across different sectors and areas and provides a framework for the implementation of any future EU Structural Funds, following on from the current (2000-06) programmes after 2006/7.

With respect to ecology, the objectives of the Wales Spatial Plan include to:

- Manage the environment comprehensively with respect to its distinctive characteristics, so that it contributes to sustainable development, including maintaining soil carbon, reducing contamination, managing diffuse pollution sources to water, protecting landscapes and enhancing habitats

A13.2.3 RHONDDA CYNON TAFF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021)

PREFERRED STRATEGY

The overall aim of the Rhondda Cynon Taff LDP is derived from the vision for Rhondda Cynon Taff outlined in 'A Better Life': Our Community Plan (2004 –2014). The LDP will seek to ensure that: *“Rhondda Cynon Taff will be a community where everyone who lives, works in or visits the area will enjoy the benefits of a better quality of life, achieving their potential, whilst helping to develop and protect the area for future generations.”*

The Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Development Plan (2006-2021) Preferred Strategy states that 'Rhondda Cynon Taff has 4 sites of special areas of nature conservation and 11 designated sites of special scientific interest.'

With respect to ecology and nature conservation the objectives of the Rhondda Cynon Taff LDP are to *‘Protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and native species’*

The Rhondda Cynon Taff LDP has the following specific policies relating to nature conservation or biodiversity.

SP 11 - Protection of the Natural Environment

Rhondda Cynon Taff’s distinctive rural character will be preserved and enhanced by the protection and improvement of the natural environment, countryside and landscape from inappropriate development. Development proposals will not be permitted if it would cause unacceptable harm to the following:-

- a) the character and quality of local landscapes and the wider countryside;*
- b) ecology and wildlife of acknowledged importance;*
- c) the quality of natural resources including water, air and soil;*
- d) natural drainage of surface water;*

Where the benefits of development outweigh the conservation interest, mitigation measures required to offset adverse effects will be secured by planning condition and/or obligation.

A13.2.4 IMPLICATIONS ON NATURE CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPLICATION SITE IN RELATION TO LOCAL POLICY

In that local policy is guided by county and regional policy which in turn is guided by national policy, only implications relating to local policy are detailed here. Table A13.2.1 summarise the key implications on nature conservation and ecology of the proposed development in relation to the Rhondda Cynon Taff LDP.

Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Development Plan	Implications
Policy: SP11 - Protection of the Natural Environment	<p>There will be some loss of habitat being utilised by UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plan species such as skylark, song thrush, small heath, small pearl-bordered fritillary and wood white butterflies. No mitigation is proposed for the impact of the proposed development on these species. However, mitigation and operational controls will minimise adverse implications to the planning policy from this habitat loss.</p> <p>No other adverse implications are anticipated if the following appropriate mitigation is instigated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of buffer/landscaping zones between the development plot and the surrounding habitats to the north and west. Inclusion of target habitats within these landscape zones: wet grassland, open water, reedbeds, woodland and scrub. • Mitigation plans for reptile species (slow worm) to be developed and implemented. • Controls with respect to noise and lighting to be implemented to minimise disturbance to bats foraging along the landscape areas. • Management of landscape areas for wildlife. • Monitoring of use of site by target species post-development.

Table A13.2.1: Implications of Development of the Application Site in Relation to Local Planning Policy