



Caerphilly County Borough
2nd Replacement Local Development Plan 2020-2035

EB27: Minerals Evidence Paper

October 2026

Introduction

This paper is one of a series produced as part of the evidence base for the 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan, 2020-2035 (2RLDP). Each topic paper can be read in isolation or together to gain a wider understanding of how the policies and/or allocations in the 2RLDP have been developed to address issues facing Caerphilly County Borough.

This paper sets out the evidence that supports the minerals policies within the 2RLDP.

The 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan (2RLDP) will, once adopted, form the local tier of the development plan, which applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with (material planning considerations notwithstanding). The 2RLDP must be in general conformity with Future Wales, which forms the national tier, and must also have regard to national planning policy, particularly Planning Policy Wales and the accompanying technical advice notes, as well as policy, guidance and complementary strategies relating to national, regional and local levels.

Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTAN) 1: Aggregates; and 2: Coal and the Regional Technical Statement for Aggregates 2nd Review (RTS2) comprise the national and regional policy context with regard to the winning and working of minerals.

Planning Policy Wales, Ed. 12 (PPW)

There is a continuing need for a supply of minerals, due to their importance in a wide range of products and, in particular, the construction and development industry. The role of the local planning authority (LPA) in relation to mineral extraction is to balance this requirement with the protection of the environment and amenity considerations. The key principles are to:

Provide positively for the safeguarding and working of minerals resources to meet society's needs, encouraging the efficient and appropriate use of high quality minerals;

Protect the environmental and cultural characteristics of places, human health and safety and general wellbeing;

Ensure the impacts of mineral extraction and related operations are within acceptable limits;

Achieve a high standard of restoration and aftercare so as to avoid dereliction and realise discernible benefits, including beneficial after uses or opportunities for enhancement of biodiversity and/or the historic environment.

Access to mineral resources should be safeguarded to prevent sterilisation. While safeguarding does not imply an acceptance of mineral working, it does indicate where the location and quality of a particular mineral is known and that the environmental constraints associated with extraction have been considered. Areas to be safeguarded should be identified on LDP proposals maps using the National Aggregates Safeguarding Maps for Wales, and development plan policies should protect potential mineral resources from other types of permanent development which would either sterilise them or hinder extraction. Development plans should also promote the integration and co-ordination of transport and land-use planning for minerals production, including the preference for non-road transport and the provision of adequate storage and processing facilities at wharves and railheads.

Each mineral planning authority (MPA) should ensure that it makes an appropriate contribution to meeting national and regional need for primary minerals, subject to environmental, and other relevant, considerations. Further detail is set out on an individual authority basis in RTS2. The contribution of recycled waste materials and secondary aggregates should be taken into account where these can realistically be used instead of primary minerals. However, these must not be relied upon to justify a failure to assess, and safeguard, the potential supply of land-based resources.

Development plans should set out a broad strategy for mineral working and, as far as practicable, identify areas for future working. This should outline the expectation of the MPA with regard to the manner in which existing sites are operating. Development plans should assess the significance of all types of mineral working in their area, including the need, distribution and production of each type of mineral and of the reserves for which planning permission has been granted.

An examination of landbanks should be undertaken to highlight any shortfalls and to ensure productive capacity is maintained. Development plans should include policies for the maintenance of landbanks for non-energy minerals currently in demand. A minimum ten-year landbank for crushed rock and seven-year landbank for sand and gravel should therefore be maintained for the entirety of the plan period.

Inactive sites with planning permission for future working that are unlikely to be reactivated should be identified and made subject to a suitable strategy and associated policies concerning future proposals. This could involve the use of prohibition orders and restoration/aftercare proposals.

Where necessary, MPAs should provide a clear guide to where non-energy mineral extraction is likely to be acceptable, in the following order of preference:

Specific sites where commercially significant resources exist and where planning applications are likely to be acceptable;

Preferred areas which may have commercial potential;

Areas of search where it is likely that some sites will be appropriate, depending on economic and environmental circumstances;

Other areas, where planning permission should not be granted except where a mineral is needed to make good a proven shortfall in supply, and where such a proposal would be acceptable in environmental and amenity terms.

Development plans should set out the criteria that will be applied to minerals proposals to ensure that they do not have an unacceptably adverse impact in environmental and amenity terms. Specific issues that need to be considered are explicitly set out within national policy.

Buffer zones are used to provide areas of protection around permitted and proposed mineral workings in order to minimise conflict between such development and other land uses, particularly sensitive uses such as housing. These zones should be set out within development plans.

Where appropriate, development plans, informed by green infrastructure assessments, should provide guidance on the preferred after uses and reclamation standards concerning mineral extraction. This will depend on several issues, including the overall strategy of the development plan.

In line with its policy objective of avoiding the continued extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, the Welsh Government does not intend to authorise new Mining Remediation Authority (formerly Coal Authority) mining operation licences or variations to existing ones. The use of coal for energy generation will, therefore, no longer be permitted.

In wholly exceptional circumstances, coal extraction will be considered for non-energy generating, industrial purposes or to ensure the safe winding down of mining operations or site remediation.

The safeguarding of primary coal resources is not required, and development plans should not need to indicate areas where coal operations would not be acceptable. Should MPAs wish to safeguard primary coal resources, development plans would need to include appropriate policies.

Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1: Aggregates

The supply, production and distribution of aggregates (crushed rock, sand and gravel) in South Wales is monitored and assessed by the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP). Development plans must clearly indicate how the future supply of aggregates will be obtained, and must be based on the Regional Technical Statement (RTS).

In respect of the landbank, development plans should include an assessment of: the current landbank and state how many years of mineral extraction the landbank will

provide, based on the latest three-year production figures; and the future landbank, to include land specifically allocated for the working of aggregates, as an 'extended landbank'. This will enable a clear picture of permitted reserves and locations of acceptable future aggregates extraction, allowing for sensible forward planning for the extraction of resources as set out in the RTS. Development plans should identify 'dormant' sites where a further approval to recommence working is necessary, and count these as 'dormant reserves' which should be clearly shown in the landbank calculations as a separate category. Landbanks are often extensive and should be assessed to consider those areas where working is unlikely to recommence. Development plans should contain an account of such assessments. Where landbanks provide for over twenty years' worth of extraction, new allocations will not be necessary.

Development plans should incorporate the relevant part of the RTS as prepared by the SWRAWP.

Sensitive land uses (e.g. housing, community facilities) should not be permitted within buffer zones, the principle of which is set out in PPW (above). For hard rock quarries, such zones should be delineated 200m from the outer edge of the area being worked, and 100m for sand and gravel.

SWRAWP Regional Technical Statement 2nd Review (RTS2)

MTAN 1 requires the preparation of RTSs for the two RAWP areas, North Wales and South Wales. Whereas MTAN 1 develops the national policy set out in PPW, RTS2 provides the supporting detail which allows this to be implemented. It was endorsed by the Council in 2021.

The methodology is based on historical sales averages for aggregates combined with an attempt to reflect planned future requirements for housing construction, and to avoid perpetuating historical supply patterns in areas where there is scope to encourage more sustainable patterns of supply. It recognises that LDP housing requirements across Wales are more than double the average levels of house completions over the last ten years, and that a corresponding increase in the planned provision of construction materials associated with housebuilding should therefore be allowed for. However, this is not necessarily a prediction of future demand, since the housing figures set out in LDPs will only materialise if, and where, economic conditions allow.

While housing accounts for only part of overall construction activity, statistics reveal a very high degree of correlation between housing completions and aggregate sales. Other data shows that housing accounts for 30% by value of all new construction. This implies that a doubling of housing construction would necessitate a doubling of that 30% element of aggregate sales. At a national level, therefore, the RTS Steering Group agreed that the provision required for aggregates should be guided by a 30% uplift on historical sales figures.

RTS2 apportionment figures are determined in four stages:

Stage 1 – the 30% uplift is applied to the composite historical sales figure to obtain an overall national guideline figure for future aggregate production;

Stage 2 – the national figure is broken down into two regional guideline figures, based on the historical split of aggregate sales between North and South Wales, which has remained consistent over several years;

Stage 3 – the regional figures are apportioned among the seven sub-regions, which have been created for the specific purpose of facilitating strategic minerals planning and collaborative approaches between MPAs (minerals planning authority/ies), with each representing a distinct market area between which there is relatively little movement of aggregates, except for exports to England. Apportionment at this level is achieved through a combination of qualitative and quantitative judgements, exercised by the RTS Steering Group and reflecting its collective understanding of market requirements along with considerations of existing landbanks, the proximity principle and environmental capacity;

Stage 4 – the apportionments for each MPA area are separated into figures for sand and gravel and crushed rock production, based on historical sales proportions in each MPA. These figures are then multiplied by the number of years required (22 years for sand and gravel, 25 years for crushed rock) to obtain the total provision required, in millions of tonnes. Comparison of these figures with existing landbanks and existing unworked allocations then determines the extent to which any new permissions/allocations for future mineral working are required within each MPA.

This results in the following apportionment:

Stage 1

Ten-year average aggregate sales across Wales (2007-16) are 15.557 mtpa (million tonnes per annum). Increasing this by 30% produces a headline, national figure of 20.224 mtpa.

Stage 2

12.486 mtpa of the total is apportioned to South Wales, based on the average North Wales/South Wales split between 2007-16 (South Wales was responsible for 61.74% of aggregate sales).

Stage 3

For the purposes of sub-regional apportionment, RTS2 places Caerphilly in the Cardiff City sub-region, which also comprises the following local authority areas:

Bridgend;

Cardiff;

Merthyr Tydfil;

Rhondda Cynon Taf;

Vale of Glamorgan; and

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (in its capacity as the MPA).

Sub-regional and MPA preferred annualised apportionments are based on judgements concerning historical sales, rates of housing delivery and resource availability. Two sets of figures were obtained: option A, relating to historical aggregate sales; and option B, relating to housing completions.

Option B combines the Cardiff City and Gwent sub-regions to take account of the fact that Gwent has been making a limited contribution to the overall supply pattern. Calculations based on historical aggregate sales alone would perpetuate Gwent's relatively low contribution, at the expense of Cardiff City. However, whilst option B addresses the Gwent shortfall, it does not, on its own, take account of resource availability.

For Caerphilly County Borough, the following calculations apply:

Option A = historical sales regional total (12.486 mtpa) x Caerphilly's share of regional total (4.15%) = 0.518 mtpa;

Option B = sub-regional (Cardiff City plus Gwent) apportionment total obtained from option A (5.737 mtpa) x Caerphilly's share of sub-regional (Cardiff City plus Gwent) housing completions (9.62%) = 0.552 mtpa.

The preferred annualised apportionment is the average between the two options. This results in a preferred annualised apportionment for Caerphilly County Borough of 0.535 mtpa, all of which is crushed rock. The preferred annualised apportionment for the Cardiff City sub-region is the sum of each LPA's preferred annualised apportionment, which is 4.609 mtpa (precise calculations are set out in Appendix 1, chapter 5).

Stage 4

Over 25 years, this amounts to a total apportionment for Caerphilly County Borough of 13.371 mt, compared to existing permitted reserves (as of 2016) of 31.28 mt. Caerphilly County Borough therefore has a surplus of 17.909 mt, and an existing landbank of 58.5 years, greatly in excess of the minimum ten-year requirement.

It is emphasised that RTS2 recommendations are intended to be strategic in nature, and do not provide site-specific information or guidance, which is for individual LDP processes to consider. Specific recommendations are made for each MPA regarding quantity of supply (apportionments) and the nature and size of any allocations which may need to be included in LDPs to ensure that adequate provision is maintained.

MTAN 1 requires the relevant parts of RTS strategy (apportionments and allocation requirements) to be incorporated into individual LDPs. However, apportionment figures are also identified for sub-regional groupings of LPAs. In exceptional circumstances, sub-regional analysis may result in the possibility of alternative

methods of supply being considered within a sub-region. In order to facilitate this, and to ensure that the regional and sub-regional totals recommended by RTS2 are achieved, this Review introduces a requirement for sub-regions to produce and agree Statements of Sub-Regional Collaboration (SSRC), in consultation with industry and other stakeholders, prior to the examination of any LDP within that area.

By default, each SSRC will confirm that each constituent MPA within a sub-region accepts the RTS2 apportionment for their individual area, and that, as a minimum, the RTS2 requirements for that sub-region as a whole will be met.

In exceptional circumstances, a SSRC may identify an alternative pattern of supply which seeks to achieve the RTS2 requirements in a different way. This may arise either: where one or more MPAs within a sub-region are unable to meet their minimum requirements as set out in RTS2; or where an alternative, achievable and more sustainable pattern of supply is identified, through collaboration with the MPAs involved.

The County Borough has three quarries presently in operation: Machen, producing limestone; and Bryn; and Hafod Fach, both of which produce high specification aggregate (HSA) sandstone. In addition, there are two inactive quarries: Blaengwynlais (shared with Cardiff); and Cwmleyshon. As a result, it has a landbank and permitted reserves of sufficient type and quantity to satisfy regulatory requirements with regard to the 2RLDP. No new allocations should therefore be required to meet the County Borough's own RTS2 requirement, although the following factors should be taken into account:

The technical capability of one type of aggregate to interchange for another;

The relative environmental cost of substitution of one type of aggregate by another;

The relative environmental effects of changing patterns of supply; and

Whether adequate production capacity can be maintained to meet the required level of supply.

However, in the event of any MPAs within the sub-region experiencing a shortfall in supply, consideration should be given to whether some of Caerphilly's crushed rock reserves might, subject to the considerations set out above, be needed to compensate. Such an arrangement would need to be set out in a SSRC. Any transfer of apportionment must be based on clear evidence and considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Three 'dormant' quarries lie within the County Borough – Caerllwyn, Cefn Onn and Pontymister (Ochrwyth). Dormant quarries are defined in the Environment Act 1995 as those where no mineral development has taken place between 22 February 1982 and 6 June 1995, and cannot be worked without modern planning conditions being agreed with the MPA. The likelihood of each of these sites being worked within the period of the 2RLDP should be assessed, subject to the completion of an initial review of planning conditions and an Environmental Impact Assessment. Where there is a likelihood of reactivation, and where a site conforms to the definition in PPW of a "specific site" ("where mineral resources of commercial significance exist,

and where any planning applications which come forward for those sites are likely to be acceptable in planning terms”), they may be offset against any requirements that may otherwise be identified for allocations for future working.

Recycled aggregates from construction, demolition and excavation wastes are likely to be available within the County Borough. Use of these is encouraged, and the residual requirements for primary land-won aggregates assume that all of these alternative materials will continue to be utilised.

Resources of aggregates should continue to be safeguarded within the LDP, and all existing and potential new railheads should be identified for safeguarding, in order to provide a full range of sustainable transport options. In Caerphilly County Borough this point relates to Machen Quarry railhead.

Minerals Provision

Cardiff City Sub-Region

Within the Cardiff City sub-region, crushed rock resources fall into two, clearly distinguished groups:

Carboniferous HSA sandstone resources within the coalfield area (including Bryn and Hafod Fach quarries), which are highly sought after as sources of premium, skid-resistant road surfacing aggregates; and

Carboniferous limestone resources to the north and south of the coalfield (including Machen Quarry), focused primarily on the supply of general purpose aggregates.

While land-based sand and gravel resources have been identified, many are sterilised by existing, urban development and none are currently worked. Instead, South East Wales as a whole is entirely dependent on marine-dredged material from the Bristol Channel. This has generally been the case for decades and is compounded by a lack of detailed knowledge of such resources, not least due to there being virtually no history of extraction.

Caerphilly County Borough

Permitted reserves are those resources which have the benefit of planning permission for the winning and working of minerals, considered to be suitable for production. MTAN 1 defines a landbank as the stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals at active and inactive sites. It is usually calculated on the basis of recent rates of production, and is expressed both in millions of tonnes and in terms of the numbers of years' supply which it represents.

As stated above, a total apportionment (crushed rock) is recommended for Caerphilly County Borough of 13.371 mt, compared to existing permitted reserves (as of 2016) of 31.28 mt. Upon completion and endorsement of RTS2, Caerphilly County Borough therefore had a surplus of 17.909 mt, and a landbank of 58.5 years. There is no production of sand and gravel within the County Borough, and therefore Caerphilly's apportionment is comprised wholly of crushed rock production.

The most recently published SWRAWP Annual Report (2023, at the time of writing) considered the County Borough to have a landbank of 40 years, which remains greatly in excess of the minimum ten-year requirement. The same publication does not provide an individual permitted reserves figure for the County Borough, although gives a combined one of 102.28 mt for Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The draft Annual Report for 2024 indicates a reduction in the landbank to 17.9 years and a crushed rock reserve figure of 95.72 mt for the combined authority areas listed above. Recent crushed rock sales have been compared to the annualised apportionment set out in RTS2, in order to assess any potential danger of under-provision going forward. However, the annualised apportionment has not been exceeded by recent crushed rock sales, which implies that the RTS2 recommendations in respect of the County Borough remain sound.

As a consequence of the County Borough's surplus permitted crushed rock reserves and the lack of sand and gravel production, no further allocations for future working are required to be identified within the 2RLDP. However, consideration should be given as to whether any of the following factors give rise to other requirements for resource allocations:

The technical capability of one type of aggregate to interchange for another;

The relative environmental cost of substitution of one type of aggregate by another;

The relative environmental effects of changing patterns of supply; and

Whether adequate production capacity can be maintained to meet the required level of supply.

Consideration should also be given to whether some of Caerphilly's crushed rock reserves might be needed to compensate for a shortfall elsewhere within the sub-region. Such an arrangement would need to be set out in a SSRC. Any transfer of apportionment must be based on clear evidence and considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

An up-to-date position regarding existing active and inactive quarries within the County Borough is set out below (planning histories are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide a chronological indication of operations):

Active Quarries

Bryn Quarry, Gelligaer

24/0525/FULL - Enable extension to existing quarry operations including drainage, landscape bunds with associated works and erect sports pitch and circular walkway footpaths; pending;

24/0931/NCC - Vary condition 1 of Planning Consent 22/0175/NCC (Vary condition 02 of planning consent 19/0276/NCC (Vary Condition 6 (Hours of operation) of planning consent 12/0570/FULL (Extend existing quarry operations including new drainage system and settlement ponds, landscape bunds and associated works) to extend the hours of operation for utility providers) to extend the period of extraction and restoration works at the site for a further two years (in each case) so that extraction of minerals shall now cease by 31 December 2026 and restoration shall be completed by 31 December 2034); granted 2026;

20/0702/FULL - Enable the retention of, and proposed extension to, quarry operations including new drainage systems and settlement ponds, landscape bunds and associated works and a site restoration scheme; refused 2021, appeal in progress;

12/0570/FULL - Extend existing quarry operations including new drainage system and settlement ponds, landscape bunds and associated works; granted 2013;

08/0055/FULL - Continue quarrying operations; granted 2009;

P/01/0104 - Extend quarry south eastwards; granted 2001;

P/00/0951 - Continue quarrying operations; granted 2000;

P/96/0344 - Extend and amend existing consent for all small quarry operations; granted 1996;

5/5/93/0661 - Extend quarry; granted 1994;

5/5/92/0698 - Winning and extraction of minerals (sandstone); granted 1993

Bryn Quarry is located 200m from Gelliargwellt Farm, Gelligaer, the site of which is subject to the Mynydd Eglwysilan Special Landscape Area (SLA) as delineated by the adopted LDP. Planning permission was granted in 1993 for the extraction of sandstone for the purposes of aiding construction of the Lower Rhymney Valley Relief Road. A permission for extension was granted in 1994 and subsequent extensions have followed. The tipping of inert material has taken place in the vicinity of the farm and the quarry, which is also the location of a waste transfer station and an anaerobic digestion facility.

The sandstone quarried at the site is high specification aggregate (HSA) with a polished stone value (PSV) of +68, which is in demand for new roadbuilding and road maintenance schemes across the UK. Separate applications for the extension of quarrying operations seek to extend the period of extraction until 2026 (24/0931/NCC), 2044 (24/0525/FULL) and 2046 (20/0702/FULL), with restoration to be completed by the end of 2034, 2050 and 2053 respectively.

Hafod Fach Quarry, Abercarn

21/1218/NCC - Vary condition 3 (operating hours) of planning consent 2/06233 (Erection of Bitumen Coating Plant and relocation of existing portakabin accommodation); refused 2022;

P/98/1073 - Extend Hafod Quarry and restore to nature conservation and woodland; granted 2000;

16/0016/NCC - Vary condition 01 of planning consent 2/06678 (Quarrying of Grit stone. 8.5 hectares) to extend the consent end date/expiry date to 31st December 2027; refused 2019, allowed on appeal 2019;

16/0017/NCC - Vary condition 01 of planning consent 2/07947/T (Storage of overburden from adjacent Quarry) to extend the consent end date/expiry date to 31st December 2027; refused 2018, allowed on appeal 2019;

PE/14/0182 - Postpone first periodic review;

2/06678 - Quarrying of gritstone. 8.5 hectares; granted 1986

2/06233 - Erection of bitumen coating plant and relocation of existing Portakabin accommodation; granted 1985;

2/04022 - Erection of machinery and storage of crushed stone on land adjoining existing quarry workings; granted 1981

Hafod Fach Quarry is located to the north east of Abercarn, the site of which is subject to the Abercarn Visually Important Local Landscape (VILL) designation as delineated by the adopted LDP. The site is a gritstone quarry which has been in operation for several decades, although the predominant, current planning permission for the quarry is P/98/1073 which has an expiry date of 31 December 2027 for completion of mineral extraction and final restoration. As well as the mineral extraction areas, the site contains crushing and screening plant, offices, laboratories, a weighbridge and a bitumen coating facility.

It should be noted that the quarry contains a supply of +68 PSV HSA sandstone aggregate, although this is presently sterilised due to poorer quality material located above it and the high cost associated with the need to remove a significant quantity of overburden. However, the operator has conducted technical assessments to confirm the geological status of the surrounding land with respect to potential future operations.

Machen Quarry

24/0895/FULL - Amend the location of the existing road planings recycling operation at the quarry and also allow for the recycling of construction and demolition (C&D) waste as well as road planings for the production of recycled aggregates; granted 2025;

21/0386/ROMPSP - Postponement of periodic review; permitted 2021

14/0582/FULL - Relocate existing inert recycling operation to new location within the confines of Machen Quarry; granted 2014;

P/05/1100 - Extend existing quarry, continuation of quarry workings, related processing of minerals and production of concrete; granted 2006;

5/5/89/0989 - Quarrying of limestone including extension to working area; revision of working, screening and restoration proposals and ancillary operations; granted 1990;

5/5/83/0610 - Drilling of six core holes to prove reserves; granted 1983;

5/5/83/0287 - Installation of 30 ton cement silo on wet mix plant; granted 1983;

5/5/80/0559 - Extension of quarry for the extraction of limestone and revision of landscape conditions for existing quarry area; granted 1980

Machen Quarry is located to the east of Machen and approximately 7km from Caerphilly, the site of which is subject to the North Caerphilly Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation as delineated by the adopted LDP. Limestone extraction has been ongoing for some years with the most recent extension having been granted in 2006; the site also includes a series of haul roads and associated operations, which include a coated roadstone and concrete processing plant and rail loading infrastructure. In accordance with the substantive permission, extraction is due to cease by the end of 2042. A periodic review (review of minerals permissions [ROMP]) due in 2021 has been postponed until 2031.

Inactive Quarries

Blaengwynlais Quarry

P/97/0981 - Undertake initial review of planning conditions under the Environment Act 1995 for resumption of quarrying; granted 2014

Blaengwynlais Quarry is a presently inactive limestone quarry located on the northern edge of Cardiff with access from Rhiwbina Hill, surrounded by agricultural land and woodland and straddling the Caerphilly-Cardiff boundary. The site lies approximately 12km north west of Cardiff town centre and 3km south west of Caerphilly town centre. Access to the site is via narrow country lanes with steep gradients either south to the A470 through residential areas in Rhiwbina or to the A469 2.5km to the north. That part of the buffer zone located within Caerphilly County Borough is subject to SLA (South Caerphilly) and Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC – Blaengwynlais Meadows) designations.

Quarrying commenced on a small scale at the beginning of the twentieth century to supply construction material for local needs, although became intermittent after 1970. The first permission was granted in 1948 with further permissions in 1961. A tree planting scheme for land on the eastern boundary of the quarry was approved in 1978. The quarry was last worked in 1996, with most of the remaining unworked reserves being within Caerphilly County Borough. New conditions attached to an extant, valid permission were granted in 2014, which introduced an expiry date of 21 February 2042.

Cwmleyshon Quarry, Draethen

25/0743/ROMPSP – Postponement of periodic review; pending

PE/14/0183 - Postpone first periodic review of conditions; permitted 2014

P/98/0823 - Determine updated planning conditions to be attached to the planning permissions at the quarry; granted 2000

Cwmleyshon Quarry is a presently inactive limestone quarry located within 1km of Draethen and approximately 5km from Caerphilly, the site of which is subject to SLA (South Caerphilly), VILL (Rudry) and SINC (Coed Cefn-Pwll-Du and Coed y Squire & Coedcae) designations as delineated by the adopted LDP. Quarrying operations last took place in 1985, although new conditions attached to an extant, valid planning permission were granted in 2000. An application for postponement of a ROMP review was permitted in 2014, with a further application for postponement being submitted in 2025.

Dormant Quarries

Caerllwyn Quarry, Mynyddislwyn

P/98/0331 - Obtain certificate of lawfulness for an existing use/operation; granted 2004;

P/97/0731 - Use land for composting; refused 1997, appeal dismissed 1998;

2/10958 - Alteration to existing ground levels to reclaim part of Caerllwyn Quarry for agricultural usage and restore to original state; granted 1993

Caerllwyn Quarry is a dormant quarry situated on the western side of Mynyddislwyn, approximately 0.5km from Wyllye. The site is at least partly in agricultural use; vehicular access is via narrow, rural lanes and is therefore constrained. Planning permission for stone extraction was granted in 1948, with operations being small in scale in order to meet local demand. Temporary permission was granted for inert landfill in 1970, with stone being last removed in the early nineties for safety purposes, according to the site owner.

Planning permission for composting at the site was previously refused, partly on the basis of highway impact, with this decision being upheld on appeal. Poor access is a major constraint which would not be overcome by the application of full, modern conditions. Even if this were possible, there appears no likelihood of future extraction due to the restoration of the site for agricultural use.

Cefn Onn Quarry, Caerphilly

No recent planning history

Cefn Onn Quarry is a dormant limestone quarry located approximately 1.5km from Caerphilly close to the boundary with Cardiff, and is subject to SLA (South Caerphilly) and SINC (Wernddu Woodlands, Cefn Onn Ridge) designations as delineated by the adopted LDP. The site currently consists of woodland or

agricultural uses, and is accessed via narrow, steep minor roads and a partly-surfaced farm track. Quarrying has not taken place since 1960.

The owner of the site has consistently stated an ambition to work the site again, and unworked reserves amount to approximately 5.2 mt. However, the supply of dolomite for use in steel manufacture (part of the quarry's original purpose) is no longer a viable use and, in view of the site's location and the constraints that exist in terms of access and environmental and visual impact, it is not considered that full, modern conditions would result in a satisfactory operation.

Pontymister Quarry

No recent planning history

Pontymister Quarry is a dormant limestone quarry situated on the north-facing slope of Mynydd Machen, approximately 0.6km from Pontymister. It is subject to SLA (North Caerphilly) and SINC designations (Coed y Mochyn) as delineated by the adopted LDP. Access is poor, being undertaken via minor roads, and the area is used extensively for leisure purposes with walking and horseriding taking place on the Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk, close to the site boundary. The most recent permission granted for dolomite extraction was granted in 1954.

The site is adjacent to the operational Machen Quarry, located on the south-facing slope of Mynydd Machen, and is in the same ownership. While the owner has not provided a formal indication of its intentions, there has been no indication that operations are likely to recommence. In view of the site's location and the constraints that exist in terms of access and environmental and visual impact, it is not considered that full, modern conditions would result in a satisfactory operation.

Other Sites

Darren Felin Farm Gravel Pit, Argoed

No recent planning history (check SPA/25/0017 for applicant/agent)

The site in question is a former gravel pit situated to the south of an existing farm between the settlements of Oakdale and Argoed, with planning permission being granted in 1960 for the extraction of alluvial gravel.

On the understanding that the site constituted a dormant site under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995, a buffer zone was delineated on the adopted LDP proposals map, in compliance with national policy. However, while the Council holds little information in relation to the site, it is believed that the permission granted in 1960 had not been implemented by 1979 and that, upon the publication of MPG 14 in 1995, should have been considered lapsed.

Little is known about the extent and quality of the mineral reserve, and the site has not been included in previous research studies, implying that it holds little value. There are difficulties in terms of access, visual impact and environmental impact and it is unlikely that new conditions could overcome these. In any event, it is not

considered that a valid permission for mineral working remains extant, and that the site, therefore, should no longer be considered a dormant site for the purposes of legislation and national policy.

Planning Policy Implications

Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration (SSRC)

Although not a SSRC as such, a position statement has been prepared by the constituent MPAs of the Cardiff-City sub-region, which stated that each MPA accepted its RTS2 apportionment with the exception of Rhondda Cynon Taf who wished to undertake further work in relation to meeting theirs, depending on the outcome of appeal decisions that were pending at the time regarding applications for extension to Craig-yr-Hesg Quarry. These appeals have since been allowed, and RCT's apportionment figure will therefore be met through its replacement LDP. Of the remaining MPAs, only Cardiff has a requirement for additional allocations – a situation which it is taking into account through preparation of its replacement plan.

Although no further allocations for future working are required to be identified within Caerphilly County Borough, RTS2 requires consideration to be given as to whether any of the following factors give rise to other requirements for resource allocations:

The technical capability of one type of aggregate to interchange for another;

The relative environmental cost of substitution of one type of aggregate by another;

The relative environmental effects of changing patterns of supply; and

Whether adequate production capacity can be maintained to meet the required level of supply.

However, as the majority of the production/reserves in each of the sub-region's MPA areas is limestone, none of the factors set out above suggest that there should be additional resources released.

Strategic Policy Context

By way of setting out an overarching context for the sustainable management of aggregate resources, the following policy is proposed:

The Council will contribute to the demand for a continuous supply of minerals by:

- A Safeguarding known resources of sand and gravel; and crushed rock;**

- B Maintaining a minimum 10-year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves throughout the plan period;**
- C Encouraging the efficient and appropriate use of high-quality minerals, safeguarding minerals infrastructure and maximising the potential for the use of secondary and recycled aggregates as an alternative to primary land won resources.**

Safeguarding

As required by national policy, the following resources are proposed for safeguarding within the 2RLDP, as delineated by the Aggregate Safeguarding Map of South East Wales (published 2012):

Category 1 Safeguarding Areas:

Sand and gravel;

High specification aggregate – sandstone;

High specification aggregate – carboniferous limestone.

Category 2 Safeguarding Areas:

Sand and gravel;

Sandstone;

Limestone.

Category 1 relates to resources of national importance, whereas category 2 are those serving regional and local markets. Primary coal reserves are no longer proposed for safeguarding.

The following policy is proposed for inclusion within the 2RLDP, which seeks to protect potential mineral resources from other types of permanent development which would either sterilise them or hinder extraction:

Development in Safeguarding Areas

Development proposals which may impact on minerals safeguarding areas will be considered against the following requirements, as applicable:

- A Proposals for permanent uses within identified safeguarding areas will not be approved unless:**
 - i It can be demonstrated that the mineral is no longer of any value or potential value; or**
 - ii The mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place; or**
 - iii There is an overriding need for the development; or**

- iv The proposal comprises infill development within a built-up area, householder development, or an extension to an existing building;

All existing and potential new railheads should be identified for safeguarding, in order to provide a full range of sustainable transport options. To this end, the railhead at Machen Quarry is proposed for safeguarding for its existing use.

Landbank

In general, a landbank is a stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals within a specified area, expressed both in millions of tonnes and in terms of number of years' supply which this represents. The latter is usually calculated on the basis of recent rates of production.

MTAN 1 defines the landbank as “the sum of all permitted reserves at active and inactive sites at a given time and for a given area” and is required to be based on “the latest three-year production figures” (with production being represented by sales). However, for the purposes of adopting a more practical approach, the current landbank has been taken to exclude dormant sites (which technically fall within the definition of ‘inactive’ ones). In addition, RTS2 has used ten-year average sales figures in place of three-year ones, as a recognition of the adverse economic conditions which prevailed during at least part of the study period for that work.

According to 2016 data (that used for RTS2), Caerphilly County Borough had existing permitted crushed rock reserves of 31.28 mt – a surplus of 17.909 mt when compared to the RTS2 apportionment – and a landbank of 58.5 years across its three active (Machen, Bryn and Hafod Fach) and two inactive (Blaengwynlais and Cwmleyshon) quarries.

With regard to those sites that constitute the landbank, there remains evidence of continued interest. Bryn Quarry remains the subject of recent permissions and pending appeals in relation to the extension of quarrying operations; and limestone extraction at Machen Quarry is permitted to continue until 2042 (with the most recent ROMP review postponed until 2031). Whilst extraction at Hafod Fach is presently due to cease in 2027, the operator is undertaking feasibility work to assess opportunities to optimise the current operation, and has conducted technical assessments to confirm the geological status of the surrounding land for potential future expansion.

Of the inactive sites, a postponement of a ROMP review in relation to Cwmleyshon Quarry was granted in 2014 with an application for further postponement having been submitted in 2025. Whilst Machen serves as the operator's main local production site, Cwmleyshon is held in reserve and is maintained in a condition whereby stone extraction can resume at any time, should market conditions require. Extraction at Blaengwynlais Quarry is permissible under current conditions until 2042. The operator regards it as an important part of its strategic portfolio, and potential, future operations are under continual review.

Due to data confidentiality reasons, the County Borough has been combined with adjoining authorities for the collation and publication of data relating to crushed rock sales. However, recent years' crushed rock sales figures for are set out below:

Crushed Rock Sales (mt)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly	0.59	0.86	0.78	0.62	0.77	-	-	-
Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf	-	-	-	-	-	1.37	2.23	2.0

Table 1: Crushed rock sales, million tonnes

The 2024 Annual Report indicates a reduction in the landbank to 17.9 years and a crushed rock reserve figure of 95.72 mt for the combined authority areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Recent crushed rock sales have been compared to the annualised apportionment set out in RTS2, in order to assess any potential danger of under-provision going forward. However, the annualised apportionment has not been exceeded by recent crushed rock sales, which implies that the RTS2 recommendations in respect of the County Borough remain sound.

Inactive Sites Outside the Landbank

There are three 'dormant' sites within the County Borough that each possess an extant planning permission but for which full, modern conditions would be required in order to resume operations: Caerllwyn; Cefn Onn; and Pontymister Quarries. These sites contribute to a total of 5.21 mt in permitted crushed rock reserves across the combined Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf areas, although they do not form part of the landbank and cannot do so unless and until such conditions are put in place. However, due to constraints that exist in relation to

each of the sites in terms of access and environmental impact and, in some cases, the utilisation of land for alternative uses, it is not considered that the implementation of such conditions would result in satisfactory quarrying operations.

Inactive sites with planning permission for future working that are unlikely to be reactivated should be identified and made subject to a suitable strategy and associated policies concerning future proposals. This could involve the use of prohibition orders and restoration/aftercare proposals.

Whilst it is not considered that the imposition of prohibition orders is necessarily required in order to prevent the resumption of future mineral extraction or bring forward proposals for aftercare or site restoration, given that those sites which are not presently utilised for alternative uses have, over many years, become naturally reintegrated into their immediate environs, the following policy is proposed for inclusion within the 2RLDP. Whilst, in some cases, the future intentions (or, indeed, the identity) of those who may have an interest in such sites are unclear, this will act as a basis for the formulation of suitable proposals, where required:

Inactive Sites

Measures to prevent further mineral working and, where appropriate, to secure restoration and landscaping works, will be considered at the following sites:

Caerllwyn Quarry;

Cefn Onn Quarry;

Pontymister Quarry

Buffer Zones

Buffer zones are used to provide areas of protection around permitted and proposed mineral workings in order to minimise conflict between such development and other land uses, particularly sensitive uses such as housing. These zones should be set out within development plans. For hard rock quarries, such zones should be delineated 200m from the outer edge of the area.

The 2RLDP will continue the approach of the adopted LDP in delineating buffer zones around each of the County Borough's active and inactive quarries (including 'dormant' sites), within which sensitive uses will not be permitted. The demarcation of each zone will be dependent on the extent of current or likely future workings (taking into account extant planning permission and operators' intentions) and will adhere to the 200m requirement set out in MTAN 1.

The adopted LDP incorporated a 500m buffer zone in relation to the former Ffos-y-Fran opencast site which lay immediately over the local authority boundary in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Coal extraction at that site ceased at the end of 2023 and restoration proposals are currently subject to consideration by Merthyr

Tydfil County Borough Council. It is not considered necessary, therefore, for the 2RLDP to retain this buffer zone.

Criteria-Based Policy

Development plans should set out the criteria that will be applied to minerals proposals to ensure that they do not have an unacceptably adverse impact in environmental and amenity terms. Although minerals extraction is not anticipated at any sites not set out within this background paper, the following policy is proposed for inclusion within the 2RLDP:

Sustainable Development of Mineral Resources

The extraction of mineral resources will be permitted where such proposals satisfy the following criteria:

- B It can be demonstrated that extraction is required to meet national, regional or local need, and that such a need cannot be met from secondary or recycled materials or existing reserves;**
- C The proposed end use is appropriate and represents an efficient and sustainable utilisation of the resource;**
- D The proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to residential amenity, particularly with regard to access, traffic generation, noise, vibration, dust, air quality and odour;**
- E The proposal would not result in significant adverse impacts in terms of the following:**
 - i public health;**
 - ii the landscape, natural heritage, and the cultural and historic environments;**
 - iii the quality and quantity of controlled waters, and the existing water and sewerage infrastructure;**
 - iv agricultural interests;**
 - v subsidence and ground instability**
- E Opportunities for the re-use and/or recycling of mineral waste would be maximised;**
- F Extracted minerals would be transported by rail, wherever feasible; and**
- G Appropriate restoration and aftercare proposals have been submitted, including post-closure site management.**

Coal

In line with its policy objective of avoiding the continued extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, the Welsh Government does not intend to authorise new Mining Remediation Authority (formerly Coal Authority) mining operation licences or variations to existing ones. The use of coal for energy generation will, therefore, no longer be permitted.

In wholly exception circumstances, coal extraction will be considered for non-energy generating, industrial purposes or to ensure the safe winding down of mining operations or site remediation. Should such proposals come forward, it is considered appropriate for these to be dealt with via the application of national policy.

Since it is no longer required, it is not proposed that primary coal resources continue to be safeguarded.

The adopted LDP safeguards a minerals and waste handling site, incorporating a railhead and other infrastructure, at Cwmbargoed Disposal Point which serves the adjacent Ffos-y-Fran opencast site in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. A planning application is currently pending seeking a variation of condition so as to extend the permitted period of operation by five years (from the end of 2024), in order to service the restoration of the opencast site. It is proposed that any extension of the operational timescale of Cwmbargoed Disposal Point can be dealt with via this means rather than retention of the safeguarding policy, given that the 2RLDP plan period is likely to extend beyond the cessation of this particular use.