



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

EB41: Built Heritage Evidence Paper

October 2026

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

EB41 Historic Environment
Evidence Base Paper

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Document

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 Evidence Base Paper provides an evidence-based assessment of the historic environment within the Caerphilly County Borough Council area to inform the development of the 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan (2RLDP).

As a fundamental component of place-making, the historic environment contributes to cultural identity, economic resilience, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. This document establishes a comprehensive understanding of the historic environment by identifying and assessing both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, historic landscapes and buildings of special local interest. It places these historic assets within the broader legislative and policy framework, summarising the implications of international conventions, national legislation such as the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 and Planning Policy Wales and relevant local strategies.

This background paper has been prepared using a combination of national and local historic environment datasets and evidence available to the Council. Principal sources include Cadw's national historic asset records, the Historic Environment Record maintained by Heneb, the Council's conservation area evidence, Buildings at Risk information, historic mapping and other relevant local studies. Evidence relating to candidate sites, regeneration areas and the emerging 2RLDP has also been considered where relevant.

Unless otherwise stated, quantitative data within this paper reflects the position at 1 September 2026. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have been used, where appropriate, to examine the distribution of historic assets and their relationship with settlements, candidate sites, regeneration areas and other spatial considerations.

The evidence has been used iteratively in preparing the 2RLDP. It has informed the assessment of candidate sites and the spatial strategy, helped to identify historic environment issues and opportunities, and informed the development of locally appropriate policies. It also provides a baseline against which future change in the historic environment can be monitored.

Beyond providing an inventory of historic assets, this paper critically examines the key pressures and challenges facing the historic environment, including development pressures, climate change impacts, neglect and the loss of traditional building materials and skills. Recognising that heritage conservation must be integrated into sustainable development objectives, it explores opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, economic diversification through heritage tourism and the enhancement of historic landscapes as part of green infrastructure strategies. The findings of this paper directly inform

the formulation of 2RLDP policies that seek to protect and enhance the historic environment while accommodating appropriate development. These policies will provide a robust framework for decision-making on planning applications, conservation area designations, and strategic interventions aimed at balancing heritage conservation with economic growth and community needs. By establishing a clear evidence base, this document supports planners, developers, policymakers and stakeholders in ensuring that the historic environment remains a valued and integral component of the Borough's future development.

Definition of the Historic Environment

The historic environment encompasses all aspects of the human-influenced landscape that have historical, cultural, or architectural significance. It includes designated assets, such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and registered historic landscapes, as well as non-designated assets, including buildings of special local interest, areas of archaeological potential and historic townscapes. The historic environment is not limited to individual structures or sites but extends to broader historic character areas, including rural settlements, industrial landscapes and urban centres with distinctive historic identities.

For the purposes of this paper, it is important to distinguish between different components of the historic environment. These include assets and areas subject to statutory designation or registration; historic assets of special local interest identified through a local evidence base; archaeological and historic sites and information recorded within the Historic Environment Record; and the wider historic character of settlements and landscapes. These categories do not all have the same statutory or policy status, but collectively they provide evidence of how places have developed and contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

The historic environment also plays a key role in shaping sense of place and local distinctiveness, reflecting the social, economic and technological history of a region. It includes tangible elements, such as built heritage and archaeological remains, as well as intangible aspects, including traditional place names, folklore and historic land use patterns. As part of a dynamic and evolving landscape, the historic environment requires sensitive management and sustainable development approaches to ensure that heritage assets remain an integral part of contemporary life while preserving their cultural and historical value for future generations.

2. Policy and Legislative Context

International Context (UNESCO World Heritage, European conventions)

International conventions and charters provide an important overarching context for the conservation and management of the historic environment. These include the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Granada and Valletta Conventions and the European Landscape Convention. Collectively, they have helped establish principles relating to integrated conservation, the protection of archaeological heritage, landscape management and community participation.

Their relevance to the 2RLDP is principally through the way in which these principles have been incorporated into Welsh legislation, national planning policy and guidance. The 2RLDP should therefore be consistent with the domestic legislative and policy framework through which these wider international commitments are implemented.

National Legislation & Policy

Planning (Wales) Act 2015

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 sought to reform the planning system in Wales, through strategic planning, infrastructure planning and the overall streamlining of the planning process. The Act considers cross-boundary issues such as housing supply and mandates the production of Strategic Development Plans, which form essentially a regional legislation in conjunction with Local Development Plans (LDPs).

The Planning (Wales) Act does not directly refer to the historic environment but rather outlines overarching legislation from which LPAs must adhere to in all aspects of the planning system, including in the protection of the historic environment.

Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 provides the principal statutory framework for the protection and management of the historic environment in Wales. The Act and its supporting regulations came fully into force on 4 November 2024, consolidating and restating earlier legislation relating principally to scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. The consolidation was intended to make the law clearer and more accessible rather than fundamentally change the established system of historic environment protection.

Of particular relevance to plan-making, the Act provides the statutory framework for scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas; requires the maintenance of the statutory Register of Historic Parks and Gardens; and provides for Historic Environment Records. It also requires planning authorities to prepare proposals from time to time for the preservation and

enhancement of conservation areas and to give special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance when exercising relevant planning functions.

The Act therefore provides an important statutory foundation for the 2RLDP, while the detailed land-use planning response is principally established through Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 24.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA) aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The WBFGA is separated into seven clear 'goals' to which the legislation aims to consolidate, for the future generations of Wales to prosper. The goals are as follows:

- 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

In terms of the historic environment, the WBFGA does not make specific reference to such, however the historic environment falls under all seven of the well-being goals in some form or another, however is more relevant to some more than others.

The historic environment relates directly to the goal of becoming a 'Wales of More Vibrant Culture', as the historic environment of Wales is a cornerstone of the cultural heritage that makes Wales special. For this goal to be achieved, the historic environment must be protected and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

'A Prosperous Wales' also relates to the historic environment, as key historical assets provide great tourism benefits for the Welsh economy. These assets must be protected to ensure they provide such benefits for as long as they can.

Although the WBFGA does not provide direct legislation regarding the historic environment, it is still greatly important in the protection of the historic environment to ensure Wales's environmental and cultural well-being sees consistent, long-term improvements.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales is concerned with managing and maximising Wales's economic, social and cultural growth until 2040. Future Wales does not provide any specific policies regarding the historic environment, however it is rather woven into the plan as a fundamental aspect, to ensure all aspects of Wales's growth seek to protect and enhance the historic environment.

The consideration that Future Wales makes towards the historic environment is outlined in the foreword by the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford:

“Good planning ensures the right development is put in the right place. This helps to create healthy, vibrant places with strong community spirit. It protects the natural environment and the historic environment.” (Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, 2021, Page 4).

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2026–30, published in September 2026, identifies planning reform, housing delivery, town-centre regeneration and the development of a replacement National Development Framework among its strategic priorities. These commitments provide an important contemporary policy context for preparation of the 2RLDP, particularly in relation to the reuse of existing buildings, the regeneration of established settlements and the coordination of development with infrastructure investment.

For the historic environment, these priorities reinforce the need to integrate heritage considerations into spatial planning and regeneration from the outset. The conservation and adaptation of existing historic buildings can contribute to housing and economic objectives, while the character and significance of historic settlements should inform the scale, location and form of new development. The emerging national framework should therefore be monitored during 2RLDP preparation to ensure consistency between the local spatial strategy, national policy priorities and the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) provides the national planning policy framework for the planning system in Wales. The Historic Environment falls under Section 6: Distinctive and Natural Places, a section covering the “environmental and cultural components of placemaking” (Planning Policy Wales (PPW), p. 124, 2024).

PPW acknowledges the importance of the Historic Environment and identifies its need for responsible and sustainable protection and enhancement, to ‘preserve our sense of place and identity’ (Planning Policy Wales, (PPW), p. 129, 2024). Aspects such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeological Remains are detailed within this section of PPW, along with seven other key components of the Historic Environment. PPW sets out the foundations for the protection and enhancement of these assets, from which all regional and local policies must align. Providing a national framework for the protection of historical assets protects them from inappropriate development and preserves their status for current and future generations to enjoy. Section 6.15 of PPW excellently summarises the importance of the Historic Environment in Wales:

“The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable and shared resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales. It contributes to economic vitality and culture, civic pride, local distinctiveness and the quality of Welsh life. The historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved.” (Planning Policy Wales (PPW), p. 130, 2024)

In the case of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeological Remains, PPW outlines the notion that there is generally a presumption in favour of the protection and enhancement of such assets. For Listed Buildings, it is outlined that “the aim (of development) should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use” (Planning Policy Wales (PPW)p. 130, 2024). In some cases, the reinstatement of the original use of the building is not viable, in which case it is down to the local authority to recognise the need for flexibility to accommodate new, appropriate uses, whilst maintaining the original character of the building to ensure its sustainable existence, both economically and culturally.

Without the foundation that PPW provides regarding the protection of the Historic Environment, the tangible evidence of Wales’s rich cultural and social history would be at great risk of damage through inappropriate development and unsustainable alterations. A national legislative framework such as PPW directly protects Wales’s natural and built environment to ensure its longevity for future generations to enjoy.

For the 2RLDP, the principal implication is that the historic environment should be treated as an integral component of placemaking and sustainable development rather than solely as a development constraint. The plan should be based on a sound understanding of historic significance and local character, identify opportunities for positive conservation and beneficial reuse, and provide locally distinctive policy where the Caerphilly evidence demonstrates that this is necessary. The 2RLDP should avoid unnecessary repetition of national policy and instead concentrate on matters requiring a locally specific response.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment

Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, updated in March 2026, provides detailed national planning guidance on the consideration of the historic environment in development plan preparation and development management. Section 2 specifically addresses Local Development Plans and establishes the importance of incorporating an understanding of the historic environment into plan preparation.

For the 2RLDP, this reinforces the need for an appropriate local evidence base covering designated and locally important historic assets, archaeology, historic character and landscape. Historic environment considerations should inform the assessment of alternative strategies and development sites as well as the formulation of locally distinctive policies where these are justified by the evidence.

This background paper supports that process by establishing the historic environment baseline for Caerphilly County Borough, identifying pressures and opportunities and demonstrating how those findings should influence the emerging plan and its monitoring framework.

Conservation Principles

Cadw provides six Conservation Principles which help guide the protection of the historic environment in Wales. The six principles are as follows:

- 1) Historic Assets will be managed to sustain their values

- Concerns any changes to historical assets, to ensure they bring benefits which outweigh any loss or harm.
- 2) Understanding the significance of the historic assets is vital
 - Acknowledging the features and values that make historical assets important and significant.
 - 3) The historic environment is a shared resource
 - Recognises that “each generation is therefore responsible for shaping and sustaining the historic environment to enable people to use, enjoy and benefit from it, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same” (CADW, Conservation Principles, 2011, Page 11).
 - 4) Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
 - The historic environment is a shared interest to which everyone should have the capacity to contribute to its protection and enhancement.
 - 5) Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
 - Any changes to the historic environment must be well-informed and appropriate for the type of asset, to ensure its long-term protection. These changes will be informed by law and policy.
 - 6) Documenting and learning from decisions is essential
 - To ensure the consistency of decisions now and in future generations, owners of historical assets should retain any information and documentation used in the assessment of the significance of a historical asset so that future generations can benefit from the knowledge gained.

These six Conservation Principles help to ensure that the historic environment is maintained as a shared and valuable finite resource to ensure best practice in the protection of assets now and in the future.

CADW also outline four ‘heritage values’ which provide further context to understanding the significance of the historic environment in Wales. The four values are as follows:

- **Evidential value:** every historic asset has a unique story to tell. The surviving historic fabric and detail — whether above or below ground — helps us to understand when and how each historic asset was made, how it was used and how it has changed over time. Pictorial and documentary sources may also increase our understanding.
- **Historical value:** historic assets may illuminate particular aspects of the past. They can help us to understand how people lived and worked, and the beliefs and values they cherished. They may be associated with notable people or events. Through evocation and association, historic assets can connect past people, aspects of life and events with the present.
- **Aesthetic value:** we may value historic assets for their visual qualities, whether they result from conscious design and craftsmanship, or from the fortuitous effect of change

over time. Tastes alter and so do historic assets: earlier records and careful analysis of what survives may help in appreciating aesthetic value.

- **Communal value:** historic assets may be cherished by the people and communities who relate to them, and they may play an important part in collective experience or memory. Historic assets can have economic as well as social value with the capacity to provide a valuable source of income or employment.

Local Policy Context (Existing LDP policies, SPG, Conservation Area Management Plans)

The Adopted LDP does not contain a standalone strategic or detailed policy specifically concerned with the historic environment. However, historic environment considerations are embedded within the wider policy framework, most notably through Policy SP6 (Place Making), which requires development proposals to have full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features, and to reinforce attractive qualities of local distinctiveness through high-quality design. More specific historic environment considerations are therefore addressed through a combination of national planning policy and guidance and relevant policies elsewhere within the adopted development plan.

The preparation of the 2RLDP provides an opportunity to establish a clearer, more comprehensive and locally distinctive policy framework for the historic environment. The evidence considered in this paper indicates a particular role for policies addressing the conservation and management of designated historic assets and their settings, historic assets of special local interest, archaeological remains, heritage-led regeneration, enabling development where appropriate, and the sustainable reuse and adaptation of historic buildings. Such policies would complement the wider placemaking framework by ensuring that the historic environment is recognised not only as a matter of conservation, but also as an asset capable of supporting local identity, regeneration, economic activity and the creation of distinctive, sustainable places. Detailed implementation may subsequently be supported through Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Council's wider historic environment work programme.

The Council retains a number of adopted and interim guidance documents that remain relevant to the management of the historic environment. These include the Butetown Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and interim conservation area design and enhancement guidance for Draethen and Nelson, together with topic-based SPG including LDP12 *Shop Fronts and Advertisements*, LDP10 *Buildings in the Countryside*, LDP7 *Householder Developments*, LDP6 *Building Better Places to Live* and LDP4 *Trees and Development*. Collectively, these documents provide useful detailed guidance on design, local character, alterations to buildings, development affecting conservation areas and landscape features, although elements will require review and updating to align with the 2RLDP, current national policy and the Council's emerging historic environment evidence base and work programme.

Historic Environment Strategy

The Council's most recent Historic Environment Strategy remains a relevant source of evidence and provides an established framework for understanding the significance,

management and potential of the County Borough's historic environment. However, it is now out of date and does not fully reflect changes in legislation, national planning policy, the condition of the historic environment or the Council's current strategic priorities. A new Historic Environment Strategy will therefore be prepared to provide an updated and coordinated framework for the conservation, management and positive use of the historic environment. The Strategy will complement the 2RLDP by identifying priorities for action, addressing issues such as heritage at risk, conservation area management, locally significant historic assets and heritage-led regeneration, and establishing a programme for delivery, monitoring and partnership working. The 2RLDP will provide the statutory planning policy framework, while the Historic Environment Strategy will provide a broader mechanism for implementation and proactive management.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended)

The principal statutory framework for town and country planning in Wales currently remains the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, together with associated planning legislation and subordinate legislation. The Act provides much of the legal framework for development management, including the definition and control of development, determination of planning applications and planning enforcement.

Planning (Wales) Act 2026

The Planning (Wales) Act 2026 and the Planning (Consequential Provisions) (Wales) Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 27 April 2026. The principal Act consolidates the main legislation relating to town and country planning in Wales into a single bilingual statute and modernises its structure and drafting. Consolidation is principally intended to improve the accessibility and clarity of planning law rather than to introduce substantive changes in planning policy.

A limited number of provisions came into force on 28 April 2026, with the remaining provisions being brought into force by order. The relevant legislative provisions in force at each stage of 2RLDP preparation and implementation will therefore need to be taken into account.

Relationship to the LDP

This background paper forms part of the evidence base supporting the 2RLDP. Its purpose is not simply to identify historic assets, but to establish how the historic environment should influence the location, form and management of future development within the County Borough.

The evidence has a number of direct applications to plan preparation. At a strategic level, it assists in identifying areas where historic character, archaeological potential or the significance and setting of historic assets should influence the spatial strategy. At site level, it provides evidence to support candidate-site assessment and to identify where more detailed heritage assessment may be required. It also identifies opportunities where development and regeneration could secure the conservation, repair or beneficial reuse of historic buildings and places.

The findings also inform the historic environment policy framework within the 2RLDP. The relationship between the evidence identified in this paper and the resulting policies is set out in Section 7. Appropriate indicators should subsequently be included within the 2RLDP monitoring framework so that changes in the condition and management of the historic environment can be assessed during the plan period.

3. Overview of the Historic Environment in Caerphilly County Borough

Designated Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are structures that are legally protected for their special architectural or historic interest. In Caerphilly County Borough, listed buildings are a vital part of the built heritage, representing a diverse range of architectural styles and periods, including those of national, regional, and local significance. These buildings contribute significantly to the character and identity of the area, providing a tangible link to the past. The protection of listed buildings ensures that their special qualities are preserved for future generations while allowing for appropriate alterations and adaptations that respect their historic value. The Cadw listing system classifies buildings into three categories: Grade I (buildings of exceptional interest), Grade II* (buildings of particular importance), and Grade II (buildings of special interest).

As at 1 September 2026, there are 376 listed buildings within Caerphilly County Borough, comprising 2 Grade I, 31 Grade II* and 343 Grade II buildings. Their distribution is not uniform and reflects the historical development of the County Borough, including medieval settlement, rural estates and farmsteads, industrialisation and the growth of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century settlements.

The condition of the listed building stock is also an important consideration. At 1 September 2026, 75 listed buildings were identified as being at risk and 42 as vulnerable. Particular concentrations or asset types include extractive and industrial buildings. This provides an important baseline for policies relating to conservation, beneficial reuse and heritage-led regeneration.

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are archaeological sites or structures that have been deemed to be of national importance. In Caerphilly County Borough, scheduled monuments encompass a wide range of sites, from prehistoric burial chambers and Roman settlements to medieval castles and industrial heritage sites. These monuments are legally protected and cannot be altered, demolished or excavated without consent from the Welsh Government. The purpose of scheduling is to ensure the conservation of sites that are integral to understanding the area's historical development. Through careful management and protection, scheduled monuments offer significant educational and cultural value, contributing to the community's understanding of the past.

Conservation Areas

The County Borough contains 16 conservation areas. In addition to their designation, the quality and currency of the supporting character appraisal and management evidence is important because this evidence assists in understanding significance, identifying pressures and managing change.

The table below summarises the date of designation, date of the current appraisal, existence of a management plan and proposed priority for review for each conservation area. The analysis demonstrates that a significant proportion of the evidence base is now dated. This is an identified management and evidence issue rather than a weakness in the designations themselves. Where appraisal evidence is dated, it should be supplemented by current site assessment, mapping and other evidence when informing the 2RLDP and development management.

The progressive review of conservation area appraisals and management plans should therefore form part of the Council's wider historic environment work programme.

Conservation Area	Date of Designation	Appraisal	Management Plan
Bute Town	20 October 1972	October 2015	October 2015
Cwmcarn Memorial Park	16 June 1999	Nil	Nil
Draethen	30 March 1973	Nil	December 2000
Garden Suburbs	23 February 1993	Nil	Nil
Gelligaer	05 March 1980	Nil	Nil
Gelligroes	23 February 1993	Nil	Nil
Gellihaf	09 June 1975	Nil	December 1994
Groeswen	20 October 1972	Nil	Undated
Llanbradach	17 November 1992	Nil	Nil
Maesycwmmer/ Hengoed	16 November 1993	Nil	Nil
Nelson	31 August 1973	September 2003	September 2003
Newbridge	11 March 2008	Nil	Nil
Oakdale	15 March 2011	Nil	Nil
Rhymney Town	12 September 1975	Nil	Nil
Ruperra Castle And Park	29 September 1998	Nil	Nil
Tredomen	16 November 1993	Nil	Nil

Historic Parks and Gardens

Historic Parks and Gardens are sites that have been recognised for their historical and artistic importance. These sites include both public and private gardens, as well as large country estates, reflecting the design and landscaping styles of different historical periods. In Caerphilly County Borough, historic parks and gardens represent important cultural assets, often associated with the history of the local aristocracy or wealthy landowners. The protection of these landscapes ensures that their significance is considered in determining planning

applications. Additionally, these areas often provide valuable green space for the community and contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of the environment.

Registered Historic Landscapes

The Register of Historic Landscapes in Wales is a non-statutory advisory register identifying landscapes of outstanding or special historic interest. Its purpose is to provide information to assist strategic decision-making and the management of change rather than to establish a separate statutory consent regime. Historic landscape characterisation provides additional evidence about the processes that have shaped these landscapes and the characteristics that survive today.

Caerphilly County Borough contains the Gelligaer registered historic landscape, which should be taken into account when considering strategic development and other proposals capable of affecting its historic character and integrity.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Buildings of Special Local Interest

Buildings of Special Local Interest are structures that, while not formally listed, have particular architectural, historic, or cultural significance at a local level. These buildings contribute to the distinctive character and heritage of Caerphilly County Borough and provide valuable insights into the area's development over time. They often reflect local building traditions, regional architectural styles or social and economic histories that may not be represented by nationally designated assets. Although not subject to the same level of protection as listed buildings, these structures should be recognised and preserved through appropriate planning controls and policies, as they make an important contribution to the local townscape and community identity. Identifying and maintaining these buildings can enhance the understanding of the local heritage and prevent the loss of valuable historic fabric.

Areas of archaeological potential

Areas of archaeological potential are locations where there is a high likelihood of finding remains of historical or archaeological significance. These areas may not yet be fully excavated or studied, but they have been identified based on their location, historical context, and previous discoveries. In Caerphilly County Borough, areas of archaeological potential could include locations near known historical sites, along ancient trade routes, or within regions that have been inhabited for centuries. These areas are important for future archaeological research and may provide significant insights into the region's past. While not subject to formal designation, these areas should be carefully managed, with planning policies that ensure any development or ground disturbance is assessed for potential archaeological impacts, and that any findings are appropriately recorded and protected.

- Senghenydd Dyke

Industrial heritage sites

Industrial heritage sites in Caerphilly County Borough are locations that reflect the region's industrial history. These sites, while not formally designated, hold significant value in understanding the area's historical development and the role of industry in shaping local communities and economies. The conservation of industrial heritage sites helps to preserve the physical remnants of industries that were once central to the area's growth, such as coal mining or ironworks. Although these sites may not be listed or within conservation areas, they often form integral parts of the historical landscape and contribute to local identity. Preserving industrial heritage sites can provide educational opportunities, support heritage tourism and contribute to the regeneration of post-industrial areas by fostering adaptive reuse or creating spaces for public engagement and interpretation.

- Former colliery sites
- Crumlin Arm Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal
- Dowlais Free Water System
- Lead Mining Sites

Traditional Buildings (pre-1919)

A substantial part of the County Borough's traditional building stock predates 1919 and contributes to the historic character and local distinctiveness of its towns, villages and rural areas. Typical characteristics include traditional forms of construction, local stone, lime-based materials, slate roofing and characteristic patterns of openings, boundaries and settlement form.

Age alone does not mean that every pre-1919 building should be regarded as a discrete non-designated historic asset. Buildings or places proposed for recognition as historic assets of special local interest should be identified through an evidence-based assessment process using defined selection criteria. The wider traditional building stock nevertheless makes an important collective contribution to townscape, historic character and sense of place.

The 2RLDP should therefore distinguish between identified historic assets of special local interest and the wider historic character of the built environment, with appropriate policy and design guidance applying to each.

Historic Settlement Pattern

The following account is not intended to provide a comprehensive history of the County Borough. Its purpose is to identify the principal processes that have shaped the present settlement pattern and to explain how those processes remain legible within the modern landscape. It draws on evidence including the Historic Environment Record, historic mapping, designated asset records and conservation area and characterisation work.

The historic settlement pattern of Caerphilly County Borough reflects its long history of human activity, shaped by early medieval development, industrial expansion and evolving transport networks. The Borough's towns and villages exhibit distinct historic characteristics influenced by their origins and growth over time.

These patterns have direct relevance to plan-making. Historic settlement form can influence appropriate development density, scale and layout; historic routes and archaeological potential may affect development capacity; and characteristic building materials, roofscapes, spaces and views contribute to local distinctiveness. Understanding how settlements have evolved therefore provides an important basis for assessing future growth and achieving context-sensitive placemaking.

Evolution of Settlements

The earliest settlements in Caerphilly County Borough were largely rural and agricultural, with small farming communities established in the valleys and along river courses.

Roman Origins of Gelligaer

Gelligaer's history dates back to the Roman period, when it was established as a military fort on the edge of the Roman-controlled territory in Wales. Built around the late 1st century AD, the Gelligaer Roman Fort was strategically located on a high ridge overlooking key trade and military routes through the South Wales Valleys. It formed part of the Roman defensive network in the region, likely serving as a base for auxiliary troops tasked with controlling local Silures tribes and ensuring stability in the frontier zone.

The fort was constructed using earthwork defences and timber structures, later rebuilt in stone. Excavations have revealed barrack blocks, granaries, and administrative buildings, providing insight into the daily life of Roman soldiers stationed at the site. The presence of a Roman road network, including a route linking Gelligaer to the larger legionary fortress at Caerleon (Isca Augusta), further emphasises its military significance.

Although occupation of the Roman fort ceased during the Roman period, the fort and associated archaeological remains remain an important component of Gelligaer's historic development and evidential value. Surviving routes, boundaries and other landscape relationships that may relate to Roman activity should be identified through the Historic Environment Record, historic mapping and archaeological evidence rather than assumed solely from present-day form.

Norman Origins of Caerphilly

Caerphilly's origins lie in the Norman conquest of South Wales during the late 11th and 12th centuries. Following the Norman invasion of England in 1066, the Normans expanded into Wales, seeking to establish control over the native Welsh princes. In 1271, Gilbert de Clare, a powerful Marcher Lord, began the construction of Caerphilly Castle, one of the most significant medieval fortifications in Britain.

The castle was built as part of De Clare's campaign to secure his control over Glamorgan, particularly against the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (Llywelyn the Last). Its design was highly advanced for its time, featuring massive concentric walls, extensive water defences and an artificial lake, making it one of the largest and most formidable castles in Europe. The

defensive system, including gatehouses, drawbridges and high curtain walls, reflected the military innovations of the period, making Caerphilly Castle one of the earliest examples of a fully concentric castle in Britain.

Caerphilly grew as a planned Norman settlement alongside the castle, with the medieval town developing around a market centre and key administrative buildings. The Normans introduced new agricultural systems, feudal landownership and religious institutions, shaping the social and economic structure of the area. Over time, Caerphilly became a key stronghold in the Marcher Lordship system, playing a pivotal role in the Anglo-Welsh conflicts of the late medieval period.

Despite periods of conflict and partial ruin, Caerphilly Castle remains an important heritage site and the town retains much of its medieval street pattern. The castle's impact on the local landscape, combined with ongoing conservation efforts, ensures that its Norman legacy continues to define the town's historic character and attract visitors from around the world.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution triggered a fundamental shift in the settlement pattern of the wider Borough. The discovery of rich coal and iron reserves led to rapid urbanisation, with the growth of mining towns such as Ystrad Mynach, Bargoed and Rhymney, which expanded rapidly around collieries and ironworks. These settlements developed in a linear fashion along the valleys, following the rivers, railways and tramroads that connected industrial sites to export markets. Housing for workers was built in terraced rows, often near collieries or along transport routes, creating a distinct industrial townscape.

By the 20th century, industrial decline led to economic and social challenges, prompting regeneration efforts and the diversification of settlements. Many former mining villages, such as Newbridge and Abertridwr, have retained their historic character while adapting to new residential and commercial uses. The post-industrial period also saw the growth of commuter settlements, with improved transport links encouraging people to live in Caerphilly County Borough while working in Cardiff or Newport.

Historic Townscape Character

The townscape character of settlements in Caerphilly County Borough reflects their historical development, with a mix of medieval, industrial and modern influences. The castle itself remains the dominant landmark, influencing the town's identity and tourism economy.

In the industrial towns, Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing defines much of the urban landscape, typically built in long rows with narrow frontages and uniform rooflines. Many industrial settlements also feature nonconformist chapels, miners' institutes, and public houses, which were important social and cultural centres during the coal-mining era. The Rhymney Valley, for example, is characterised by its steep valley sides and tightly packed terraced streets, built to accommodate a rapidly expanding workforce during the 19th century.

Architectural details such as local Pennant sandstone, slate roofs, and red-brick facades are common in historic buildings, reflecting the materials available during different periods of construction. In some areas, planned industrial villages, such as those developed by mining

companies, display a more structured layout with communal spaces and public buildings at their core. Important examples include Butetown, Pontywaun Garden Suburb and Oakdale, each of which illustrates aspects of planned settlement and the social and economic development of the County Borough.

Despite industrial decline, many settlements have retained their historic character, with conservation areas designated to protect key heritage assets. Today, the challenge lies in balancing heritage conservation with sustainable development, ensuring that Caerphilly County Borough's historic settlements continue to evolve while preserving their unique identity.

Key Themes in the Local Historic Environment

Caerphilly County Borough has a rich and diverse historic environment shaped by its industrial heritage and agricultural landscapes. These themes have played a significant role in the area's development, influencing its built environment, economy and cultural identity.

Industrial Heritage

The industrial revolution had a profound impact on the Borough, with coal mining, ironworks and canal infrastructure forming the backbone of economic growth from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Coal mining was the dominant industry, with numerous collieries providing employment and shaping the landscape with spoil heaps, mining settlements and railway connections. The Senghenydd Colliery Disaster of 1913, Britain's worst mining disaster, remains a key part of the area's industrial legacy, commemorated through memorials and historical interpretation.

Ironworks also played a vital role, particularly in the Rhymney Valley, where iron production fuelled industrial expansion. The town of Rhymney became a centre of iron production in the 19th century, with the industry closely linked to the South Wales coalfields. Supporting this industrial activity, an extensive transport network developed, including the Crumlin Arm of the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal, which facilitated the movement of coal and iron to Newport for export. Although much of this infrastructure has disappeared, remnants of the canal, tramroads and early railway systems still exist, offering valuable insight into the Borough's industrial past.

Many former industrial sites have been repurposed for new uses, such as Parc Penallta, a country park created on a reclaimed colliery site. Industrial heritage continues to shape the identity of Caerphilly County Borough, with initiatives to preserve historic structures, promote heritage tourism, and integrate industrial history into local planning and regeneration projects.

Agricultural Landscapes

Beyond its industrial legacy, Caerphilly County Borough retains an important agricultural character. The historic agricultural landscape is characterised by a mix of small farms, traditional field patterns and upland grazing areas, many of which date back centuries. The area was traditionally dominated by livestock farming, with sheep farming in the uplands and dairy and mixed farming in the valleys. These farming traditions have influenced local place names,

historic farmsteads, and the network of lanes, hedgerows and dry-stone walls that define the rural landscape.

Despite industrial expansion, agriculture has remained a key part of the local economy and continues to contribute to the Borough's natural and cultural heritage. Traditional farming methods, such as hedgerow management and pasture rotation, have helped preserve biodiversity, while historic farm buildings reflect the architectural styles and materials typical of South Wales. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in rural diversification, with some farms engaging in agritourism, local food production and environmental stewardship schemes.

The interaction between agriculture and industry has shaped Caerphilly's landscape character, with former industrial sites often integrated into rural surroundings. As the Borough moves forward, maintaining the balance between heritage conservation, sustainable development and economic growth remains a key consideration in planning policy.

4. Pressures and Threats to the Historic Environment

The historic environment of Caerphilly County Borough faces a range of pressures and threats that impact the preservation of its built heritage and cultural landscapes. These challenges arise from modern development, environmental changes and competing policy priorities, requiring careful management to balance heritage conservation with economic and environmental goals.

The pressures identified below do not affect all historic assets or places equally. Where possible, the analysis therefore considers the available local evidence, the types of asset or places affected, whether the issue appears to be increasing or stable, and the resulting implications for the 2RLDP. Where quantitative local evidence is not currently available, the issue is identified as a potential pressure requiring monitoring rather than being presented as an established local trend.

Development and urban expansion

The demand for new housing, commercial developments and infrastructure places pressure on historic sites and landscapes. Expansion into greenfield areas risks disrupting archaeological remains, historic landscapes and rural character, while redevelopment in existing urban centres may lead to the loss of historic buildings and townscapes. In some cases, insensitive new development fails to respect the scale, materials, or architectural style of historic areas, undermining their character and setting. Planning policies and conservation areas play a key role in mitigating these threats but development pressures remain a significant challenge.

Climate change

The effects of climate change, including increased rainfall, rising temperatures and extreme weather events, pose serious risks to historic buildings and landscapes. Flooding and water

damage threaten structures built with traditional materials, particularly in low-lying or riverside locations. Increased moisture levels accelerate the deterioration of stone, timber and mortar, leading to structural instability. Warmer temperatures and changing humidity levels can also promote biological growth, such as algae and mould, further damaging historic fabric. Additionally, land instability may impact archaeological sites and historic landscapes, requiring adaptive strategies to enhance resilience.

Conflicts between heritage conservation and renewable energy development

The drive to increase renewable energy capacity, including wind farms, solar panels and hydroelectric schemes, sometimes conflicts with heritage conservation objectives. Large-scale wind turbines can impact the setting of historic landscapes and listed buildings, particularly in rural areas where the character of the historic environment is defined by open views and natural topography. Similarly, the installation of solar farms on historic farmland may alter the traditional field pattern and affect buried archaeology. Finding solutions that integrate renewable energy without compromising historic assets remains a key challenge.

Conflicts between heritage conservation and retrofit

The need to improve energy efficiency in historic buildings can lead to conflicts between sustainability measures and conservation principles. Upgrading insulation, installing double glazing and retrofitting modern heating systems can have negative impacts on traditional materials and architectural character. For example, inappropriate insulation can trap moisture, leading to damp and decay in historic structures. Similarly, replacing traditional windows with modern alternatives may alter the appearance of historic buildings and diminish their authenticity. Conservation-led approaches encourage sympathetic retrofitting solutions, such as secondary glazing, breathable insulation and sensitive heating upgrades, to balance energy efficiency with heritage protection.

The decarbonisation of the existing building stock presents opportunities to improve energy performance and reduce operational emissions, but inappropriate interventions can adversely affect traditional construction, historic fabric and architectural character. Buildings constructed using traditional permeable materials may respond differently to moisture, ventilation and thermal interventions than modern construction, requiring a whole-building approach to assessment and specification.

Developments elsewhere in the United Kingdom demonstrate the growing importance of specialist knowledge and practical training in this field. Historic Environment Scotland's support for a national Retrofit Centre for Traditional Buildings provides an example of coordinated research, technical guidance and skills development intended to improve energy performance while respecting traditional construction. Although this initiative does not establish policy requirements in Wales, it provides a relevant comparator for addressing the technical and skills challenges associated with the repair and adaptation of historic buildings.

The 2RLDP should support proportionate and sensitive energy-efficiency improvements, recognising that interventions should be informed by an understanding of building significance, construction and performance. Detailed technical requirements and guidance on suitable retrofit measures would be more appropriately addressed through national guidance, Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Council's wider Historic Environment Strategy.

Loss of traditional building materials and skills

The decline in traditional craft skills and locally sourced materials poses a significant threat to the historic environment. Many historic buildings rely on lime mortar, hand-crafted stone and traditional timber, but these materials and techniques are becoming increasingly rare due to modern construction practices and a lack of skilled craftworkers. The use of inappropriate modern materials, such as cement-based mortars and synthetic paints, can accelerate the deterioration of historic structures, leading to long-term conservation issues. Investment in heritage skills training and local material supply chains is essential to ensure that repairs and restorations are carried out using authentic and compatible methods.

Poor maintenance and vacancy of historic buildings

Neglect and poor maintenance are major threats to listed buildings, historic landmarks and industrial heritage sites. Lack of investment, economic decline and changing land use patterns can lead to historic buildings becoming vacant or derelict, increasing the risk of structural deterioration, vandalism and their eventual loss. Many former industrial buildings and rural farmsteads are particularly vulnerable, as they often struggle to find new uses that align with conservation priorities. Encouraging adaptive reuse and enforcing maintenance responsibilities are key strategies for protecting at-risk heritage assets.

Condition and Buildings at Risk

The condition of the historic building stock provides an important indicator of the health of the historic environment. As at 1 September 2026, the Council's evidence identifies 75 listed buildings as being at risk and 42 as vulnerable. Of these, 47 are vacant or underused.

The principal recurring issues are vacancy, lack of maintenance, difficult-to-adapt uses, and viability etc.

This evidence supports an 2RLDP approach which promotes the sustainable reuse of historic buildings, integrates heritage conservation with regeneration and encourages early intervention before condition deteriorates to a point where viable reuse becomes more difficult.

The Wellbeing of Wales 2026 report provides a national benchmark against which the condition of the County Borough's historic assets may be considered. Drawing upon Cadw's programme of condition monitoring, the report identifies that 76% of listed buildings in Wales are in a stable or improving condition, compared with 74% in 2015. Approximately 9% of listed buildings are classified as being at risk. While these figures suggest a modest improvement in

the condition of the national listed building stock, they demonstrate that a significant proportion of designated historic buildings continue to require active conservation and management.

The national evidence identifies a more concerning position for scheduled monuments. The proportion of scheduled monuments recorded as stable or improving declined from 66% in 2016–17 to 58% in 2023–24 and has subsequently remained at that level. Approximately 15% are considered to be at risk, with principal threats including weathering, vegetation encroachment and erosion. These findings demonstrate the importance of considering archaeological conservation and land-management pressures alongside the condition and use of historic buildings.

Within Caerphilly County Borough, 75 listed buildings were recorded as being at risk at 1 September 2026, with a further 42 buildings identified as vulnerable. This reinforces the need for policies which facilitate appropriate repair and beneficial reuse, supported by proactive monitoring and targeted intervention. However, differences in the scope, definitions and assessment methodologies used for national and local condition monitoring mean that the respective at-risk percentages should not be treated as directly comparable without further reconciliation.

The 2RLDP should therefore be supported by a monitoring framework that records changes in listed building condition, identifies buildings entering or leaving at-risk categories and, where appropriate, incorporates condition data for scheduled monuments. Such monitoring would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the pressures affecting the County Borough's designated historic environment and assist in prioritising conservation and regeneration interventions.

Indicator	Wales	Caerphilly
Listed buildings	Just over 30,000	376
Listed buildings stable/improving	76%	Data required
Listed buildings at risk	9%	75
Listed buildings vulnerable	Not specified in cited national figures	42
Scheduled monuments stable/improving	58%	N/A
Scheduled monuments at risk	Approximately 15%	N/A

5. Opportunities for the Historic Environment in the LDP

Integration of heritage conservation into sustainable development

Heritage conservation can be a key component of sustainable development, ensuring that historic buildings and landscapes are preserved while adapting to modern needs. Sustainable approaches include the reuse of historic buildings, sensitive retrofitting for energy efficiency and the use of traditional materials with low carbon footprints. The LDP can encourage heritage-sensitive development, ensuring that new construction respects historic settings and uses locally sourced materials. Policies promoting adaptive reuse and sustainable maintenance will help reduce the environmental impact of demolition and new construction while retaining the Borough's unique character.

Research published by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport in September 2026, *The Role of DCMS Infrastructure in Economic Growth*, provides a wider analytical framework for understanding the contribution of cultural and heritage assets to local economic performance. The research recognises that historic buildings and cultural facilities can function as infrastructure by accommodating economic, social and community activities over extended periods. Their contribution may extend beyond their immediate use through supporting employment, local supply chains, skills, visitor activity, civic participation and the attractiveness of places for investment.

This understanding is particularly relevant to Caerphilly County Borough, where the historic environment includes former industrial buildings, historic town centres, community facilities and established settlements experiencing varying degrees of economic restructuring. The retention, adaptation and productive use of these assets can form part of a wider approach to regeneration, particularly where heritage investment is coordinated with housing, transport, public-realm improvements and economic development.

The DCMS research nevertheless identifies important limitations in attributing economic growth directly to the presence of heritage and cultural infrastructure. Observed associations do not necessarily demonstrate causation, and economic outcomes are influenced by the wider characteristics of individual places and their supporting infrastructure. For the 2RLDP, the principal implication is therefore to recognise the potential contribution of existing heritage assets to sustainable development while assessing specific opportunities through locally relevant evidence, including significance, condition, accessibility, viability and development capacity.

Regeneration of historic town centres

Historic town centres, such as Caerphilly, Bargoed and Blackwood, offer significant opportunities for heritage-led regeneration. By restoring historic buildings, improving public spaces and repurposing underused heritage assets, town centres can become more attractive for residents, businesses and visitors. Regeneration initiatives can encourage the revitalisation

of high streets, support independent businesses and enhance the public realm. Investment in historic town centres can also attract funding from heritage organisations, grants and private sector partnerships, ensuring that conservation projects contribute to wider economic growth.

The opportunity for heritage-led regeneration is particularly strong where concentrations of historic buildings coincide with vacancy, underuse, Buildings at Risk and wider regeneration investment. The Council's evidence should therefore be used to identify those town centres where the historic building stock can make the greatest contribution to regeneration objectives.

The 2RLDP can enable this through supportive policies for appropriate reuse, mixed-use development, high-quality public realm and heritage-led regeneration. Grant funding and other financial interventions are important delivery mechanisms but sit outside the development plan itself.

Heritage-led tourism and economic benefits

The historic environment is a key driver for tourism and local economic growth. Caerphilly County Borough's rich industrial heritage, Norman castles and Roman sites provide opportunities for expanding heritage tourism. The LDP can support tourism initiatives that highlight the Borough's unique history. Events such as Caerphilly Big Cheese Festival, which celebrates the town's medieval heritage, demonstrate how cultural heritage can boost the local economy. Encouraging investment in visitor infrastructure, sustainable transport links and digital heritage experiences will enhance the appeal of the Borough's historic sites, increasing visitor numbers and supporting local businesses.

Research commissioned by Cadw and undertaken by AMION, published in October 2026, provides updated national evidence of the economic and social contribution of the historic environment in Wales. The study estimates that the historic environment contributes more than £738 million annually to the Welsh economy, supports nearly 18,000 jobs and attracts over 13 million annual visits to historic sites and accredited museums. In addition to these economic contributions, the research identifies more than £107 million in annual social value associated with heritage engagement, volunteering, education and community participation. The research also identifies more than 902,000 hours of volunteer activity annually, demonstrating the contribution of the historic environment to civic participation and community wellbeing.

These findings establish that the historic environment is not simply a resource requiring protection but an existing economic, social and cultural asset capable of supporting sustainable development. Historic buildings, landscapes and places provide opportunities for employment, tourism, skills development, community activity and investment. Their conservation and continued use can therefore contribute to several 2RLDP objectives, including economic development, town-centre regeneration, sustainable tourism, placemaking and the revitalisation of existing settlements.

Although the national research provides a strong strategic justification for heritage-led development, its findings should not be assumed to represent the economic contribution of

the historic environment within Caerphilly County Borough. The local scale and distribution of benefits will depend on the character, condition, accessibility and use of individual assets and places. The economic and social valuation methods also measure different categories of benefit and should not be combined into a single monetary total. Accordingly, national estimates should be supplemented by locally specific evidence of heritage-related employment, visitor activity, investment, vacancy and opportunities for adaptive reuse.

Indicator	Wales — 2026 research
Annual economic contribution	More than £738 million
Employment supported	Nearly 18,000 jobs
Annual heritage visits	More than 13 million
Annual social value	More than £107 million
Annual volunteering	More than 902,000 hours
Estimated wellbeing value from volunteering	£9.8 million

Source: AMION research commissioned by Cadw, published 9 October 2026. National estimates, not Caerphilly-specific statistics.

Reuse of historic buildings for housing and community use

Many historic buildings, particularly former industrial sites, religious and civic buildings, offer potential for adaptive reuse, providing much-needed housing and community facilities. The LDP can support policies that encourage the conversion of historic buildings into housing, co-working spaces or cultural hubs, ensuring they remain in active use. Historic buildings often offer high-quality craftsmanship, durable materials and distinctive architectural features, making them ideal for characterful residential and mixed-use developments. Sensitive conversion projects can help address housing needs while preserving the heritage and identity of the Borough's built environment.

Green infrastructure and heritage landscapes

The historic environment is closely linked to green infrastructure, with historic landscapes, parks and former industrial sites providing valuable opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and recreation. The LDP can promote the conservation and restoration of historic landscapes, such as former mining sites, canals and parklands, integrating them into wider green networks. Initiatives such as heritage greenways, rewilding projects and sustainable land management can enhance biodiversity while improving public access to historic walking routes, Roman roads and medieval trackways. By linking heritage sites with green infrastructure strategies, the LDP can support both conservation and environmental sustainability, ensuring that historic landscapes continue to provide ecological and recreational benefits.

6. Evidence Base and Data Sources

Cadw's historic asset records

Cadw possess a comprehensive record of all registered historic assets in Wales. These include:

- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- World Heritage Sites
- Registered Historic Landscapes
- Protected Wrecks

Historic environment datasets record different types of asset and area and should not necessarily be combined into a single overall total. Listed buildings and scheduled monuments are individual assets, while conservation areas and registered historic landscapes are extensive areas and may overlap with individual designated assets. The table therefore presents each category separately and provides a transparent baseline as at 1 September 2026.

Historic environment category	Number	Base date	Source
Listed buildings	376	1 Sept 2026	Cadw
Scheduled monuments	48	1 Sept 2026	Cadw
Registered historic parks and gardens	5	1 Sept 2026	Cadw
Registered historic landscapes	1	1 Sept 2026	Cadw
Conservation areas	16	1 Sept 2026	CCBC
Buildings/historic assets of special local interest	0	1 Sept 2026	CCBC
Buildings at Risk	75	1 Sept 2026	Cadw

Historic Environment Records (HER) held by the HENEB

The Historic Environment Record (HER) is a fundamental source of evidence for understanding the historic environment of the County Borough. Under the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023, the Welsh Ministers are required to maintain a publicly accessible HER for each local authority area. Heneb: the Trust for Welsh Archaeology maintains the records on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, with Archwilio providing public online access.

The HER contains considerably more than records of formally designated historic assets. It includes archaeological sites and investigations, sites of local historic or architectural interest, information about historic character and historic landscapes and other evidence relevant to understanding how places have developed.

For the 2RLDP, the HER provides an important evidence source for strategic planning, Sustainability Appraisal, candidate-site assessment and the identification of archaeological and historic environment constraints and opportunities. It should be considered alongside Cadw's designated asset data, Council records, historic mapping and other relevant studies. The HER will also continue to inform development management as individual proposals come forward during the plan period.

Conservation area appraisals

Conservation area appraisals “provide a detailed picture of what makes an area special and can be used to identify opportunities and priorities for action” (Cadw, Managing Conservation Areas). Conservation areas (CA's) form a key part of the historic environment in Wales and require consistent attention to ensure their existence is sustainable and beneficial to the local authority in which they are located. Conservation area appraisals are a fundamental factor in the positive management of such areas. Appraisals can identify certain issues located within CA's and how these issues can be negated or prevented. The appraisals can form part of an evidence base for the management of CA's, supported by local policy frameworks.

There is an onus on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to effectively manage their conservation area designations. Conservation areas comprise multiple stakeholders and as such, the LPA must inform local property owners, residents and businesses about any policies and why a certain area has been designated. CADW provide a comprehensive document: Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, which informs LPAs of how to manage their conservation areas to ensure they receive necessary attention for the protection and enhancement of their special qualities.

The status of the evidence for each of the County Borough's 16 conservation areas is summarised below. This provides a transparent assessment of where existing appraisal evidence remains suitable and where review should be prioritised. The programme should be reviewed periodically and should take account of development pressure, condition, evidence of incremental change and opportunities for regeneration.

Conservation Area	Designation date	Management plan	Evidence status	Review priority
Bute Town	20 October 1972	Yes	Limited	High
Cwmcarn Memorial Park	16 June 1999	No	Dated	Medium
Draethen	30 March 1973	Yes	Dated	Medium
Garden Suburbs	23 February 1993	No	Dated	Medium
Gelligaer	05 March 1980	No	Dated	High
Gelligroes	23 February 1993	No	Dated	Low
Gellihaaf	09 June 1975	Yes	Dated	Low
Groeswen	20 October 1972	Yes	Dated	Low

Conservation Area	Designation date	Management plan	Evidence status	Review priority
Llanbradach	17 November 1992	No	Dated	Low
Maesycwmmmer/Hengoed	16 November 1993	No	Dated	Medium
Nelson	31 August 1973	Yes	Dated	Medium
Newbridge	11 March 2008	No	Dated	Low
Oakdale	15 March 2011	No	Dated	High
Rhymney Town	12 September 1975	No	Dated	High
Ruperra Castle And Park	29 September 1998	No	Dated	Low
Tredomen	16 November 1993	No	Dated	Low

National Research, Statistical Evidence and Economic Valuation.

Recent national research provides additional evidence of the condition, economic contribution and wider social value of the historic environment. Principal sources include the Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Wales 2026 report, drawing upon Cadw's condition monitoring of listed buildings and scheduled monuments; the 2026 AMION research commissioned by Cadw examining the economic and social contribution of the historic environment in Wales; and the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport's September 2026 research into the role of cultural and heritage infrastructure in local economic growth. Collectively, these studies provide a broader national context against which the County Borough's historic environment can be assessed. However, national findings are not substitutes for locally specific evidence of asset condition, significance, development capacity and economic circumstances. Where methodological differences exist, they should be identified before national and local data are compared.

7. Recommendations for LDP Policies

The 2RLDP should incorporate strong policies to protect, enhance and manage the historic environment while ensuring it contributes to sustainable development and economic regeneration. The following policy recommendations address key areas of heritage conservation, adaptive reuse and regeneration in Caerphilly County Borough.

The policy recommendations below are derived from the evidence and issues identified in the preceding sections. The table below provides an audit trail between the evidence, the planning issue arising from it and the proposed 2RLDP response. This is intended to demonstrate that locally distinctive policy is evidence-led and to provide a basis for subsequent monitoring.

Evidence/finding	Planning implication	2RLDP response	Policy	Possible monitoring indicator
Buildings at Risk/vacancy	Continued deterioration and loss of viable uses	Support repair and beneficial reuse	HE2 – Heritage-led Regeneration and Reuse; HE6 – Enabling Development	Number/proportion of buildings at risk
Ageing conservation-area evidence	Management evidence requires updating	Support positive management and appraisal review	HE1 – The Historic Environment; HE4 – Protection and Enhancement of Designated Historic Assets	Number of appraisals reviewed
Local historic assets not nationally designated	Potential incremental loss	Local-list framework	HE5 – Buildings of Special Local Interest	Local list adopted/updated
Archaeological potential	Development may affect archaeological remains	Proportionate assessment and mitigation	HE7 – Non-Designated Archaeological Remains; HE4 for designated assets	Relevant applications assessed
Industrial heritage regeneration opportunities	Heritage can support regeneration	Heritage-led regeneration policy	HE2 – Heritage-led Regeneration and Reuse HE3 – Heritage-led Regeneration Opportunities;	At-risk assets brought back into use

Protection and enhancement of designated and non-designated heritage assets

Policies should provide an appropriate framework for safeguarding the significance of designated historic assets and for recognising the contribution made by historic assets of special local interest and wider historic character. Development proposals should be supported by proportionate heritage information where this is necessary to understand the significance of the affected historic environment and the likely effects of the proposal. The scope and level of detail required should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and the scale and nature of the potential effect.

The 2RLDP should also support the identification and appropriate management of historic assets of special local interest through an evidence-based local-list process. Funding, grants and other financial incentives may complement these policies as delivery mechanisms but should be distinguished from the land-use policy requirements of the 2RLDP.

Policies for conservation-led regeneration

The LDP should also prioritise heritage-led regeneration, particularly for former colliery sites like Penallta, Crumlin and Llanbradach, which provide opportunities to integrate historic structures, mining landscapes and interpretation features into redevelopment plans. These sites should be repurposed for mixed-use regeneration, incorporating commercial, leisure and residential developments, ensuring that the new uses complement the historic character of the area. Developing visitor and heritage trails linking these colliery sites to the wider industrial heritage network would enhance tourism and education. Furthermore, new development on or near these sites should be designed with sensitive design principles, respecting the industrial heritage through the use of appropriate materials and public realm enhancements.

Encouraging appropriate, adaptive reuse of historic buildings

Encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings should also be a key policy. The LDP should support the retention and repurposing of historic buildings for modern uses, such as housing, co-working spaces, cultural hubs and community facilities. Flexible planning policies should be introduced to enable the adaptation of historic buildings while ensuring that any changes respect their fabric and architectural significance. Design guidance for adaptive reuse should also be developed, ensuring that modern interventions like energy efficiency improvements and accessibility adaptations are carried out sensitively.

Managing change in the historic environment

Managing change in the historic environment requires a Historic Environment Strategy that guides planning decisions and ensures that growth and regeneration do not compromise the character and integrity of historic areas. Policies should be introduced to protect views and setting, preserving key sightlines and landscape relationships between historic buildings and their surroundings. New developments within or near historic areas should adhere to high-quality design standards, ensuring that the materials, scale, and form are sympathetic to the existing historic environment. Public engagement and education in heritage conservation should also be promoted, encouraging local communities to actively participate in decision-making and heritage stewardship initiatives. Implementation of the 2RLDP's historic environment objectives would be supported by a complementary Historic Environment Strategy. The Strategy would not establish additional development plan policy, but would provide a framework for delivery, prioritisation and monitoring beyond matters that can appropriately be addressed through the land-use planning system.

It could establish priorities for conservation area review, Buildings at Risk intervention, local listing, heritage-led regeneration, partnership working, external funding and community engagement. This would allow the 2RLDP to concentrate on land-use policy while providing a mechanism through which wider historic environment objectives can be coordinated and delivered.

8. Conclusion

The evidence demonstrates that Caerphilly County Borough has a diverse historic environment reflecting its rural, medieval and industrial development. It includes designated and non-designated historic assets, together with an extensive archaeological resource, historic settlements, traditional building stock and historic landscapes which collectively make an important contribution to local identity and sense of place.

The principal issues identified by this paper include the condition and vacancy of parts of the historic building stock, the need to maintain an up-to-date conservation area evidence base, pressures associated with development and climate change and the need to manage energy-efficiency and adaptation measures in a way that responds appropriately to historic significance. At the same time, the historic environment offers significant opportunities for sustainable reuse, town-centre regeneration, placemaking and the regeneration of former industrial sites.

The 2RLDP should respond by providing a clear and proportionate framework for the conservation and management of historic assets, recognising locally important heritage, supporting appropriate adaptive reuse and heritage-led regeneration and ensuring that archaeological and historic environment considerations inform the location and design of development from an early stage. The monitoring framework and wider Historic Environment Strategy should be used to assess progress and respond to changing conditions during the plan period.

Recent national evidence reinforces the importance of recognising the historic environment as an existing economic, social and cultural resource. Its contribution to employment, wellbeing, tourism, local distinctiveness and regeneration demonstrates that its conservation and productive use can directly support the wider objectives of the 2RLDP. However, the scale and nature of these contributions within Caerphilly County Borough must be established through locally specific evidence. The 2RLDP should therefore integrate historic environment considerations into its spatial strategy, site allocations, regeneration objectives and monitoring framework, supported by the Council's emerging Historic Environment Strategy and associated evidence programmes.