

Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan

Site Design, Masterplanning and Development Brief Supplementary Planning Guidance

February 2023

Summary

This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Introduction, Purpose and Status of SPG

Placemaking and the need for high quality design are the basis for the Council's approach to the development of sites within Torfaen. This SPG has two main purposes. Firstly, it has been produced to support and add detail to the policies within the Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan (December 2013) and secondly, to inform the Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) process. This SPG provides clear guidance on the form and content of Masterplans and Development Briefs and will ensure that a standardised approach is adopted.

It should be used by prospective applicants, agents, architects, members of the public with an interest in an application, elected Members of the Council and other decision-making bodies, but is particularly relevant to developers looking to submit a planning application for major development (10+ dwellings or 1,000 m²+ commercial floor space) on 'windfall' (unallocated) or existing allocated sites; and to landowners / site proposers in the preparation of Development Briefs for a Candidate site for the RLDP.

Having undertaken public consultation and considered the responses received, the Council has adopted the final version of the SPG thereby giving it greater weight as a material consideration in the planning process.

Placemaking Approach

Placemaking is at the heart of town planning alongside the sustainability and well-being goals required by the [Well-Being of Future Generations Act](#) (Wales) 2015. [The Placemaking Wales Charter](#) (2020) formalised the following 6 principles of placemaking in practice which are also reflected in [Future Wales: the National Plan](#) (2021) (Policies 2 and 9) and [Planning Policy Wales 11](#) (2021):

People and Community: The local community are involved in the development of proposals with focus on addressing local needs.
Location: Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected, taking into account reducing the need to travel.
Identity: The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected, including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes.

<p>Movement: Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles.</p>
<p>Mix of Uses: Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport.</p>
<p>Public Realm: Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive, with a distinct identity.</p>

The main policy within the Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan (Dec 2013) is Policy S4 (Place Making / Good Design) which requires that proposals for all new development must have full regard to the context of the local natural and built environment and its special features. Other relevant policies are S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S9, BW1, SAA2, SAA5, SAA7, H2, H3, H5, EET1, EET2, EET3, EET4, EET6, RLT2, RLT4, RLT8, T3, CF3, CF4, CF5, HE2 which can be viewed in full via <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Forward-Planning/Adopted-Torfaen-LDP-Written-Statement.pdf>

Torfaen County Borough benefits from three sustainable settlements with distinct characteristics. Each geographical area identified presents a different design context and response acknowledging the historic legacy of industrial activity, the evolution of settlement form and social structures / networks that resulted. Where development sites fall within such areas, these characteristics must form the focus and context for proposed development schemes.

Urban areas which do not clearly fall within the three sustainable settlements identified will still be subject to this SPG but further contextual work will be required to establish the characteristics of the surrounding area. Development proposals will be assessed for their compliance with a placemaking approach which should be referenced in supporting documentation and evidenced in the proposal itself.

North Torfaen - The town of Blaenavon and its environs designated as Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site are characterised by high density residential terraces supporting the former coal mining industry. The social and physical legacy of the intense industrial activity of the locality should be reflected in any design response to a site.

Pontypool and Surrounding Communities - The linear section of North to Mid Torfaen including the settlements of Abersychan and Pontypool and their surrounding neighbourhoods is strongly connected to the industrial heritage of the locality with an ingrained association of neighbourhood and community that must be addressed in development proposals.

Cwmbran New Town - The New Town of Cwmbran features a comprehensively planned network of seven neighbourhoods around a central employment, civil and retail core. The new town features a high proportion of open space which serves as a green infrastructure and active movement network. At the time of its construction, Cwmbran promoted innovative and forward looking architecture, the rationale of which should be adapted to reflect current innovation in building construction of the highest design and environmental standards.

Development Briefs

Any Development Brief for a proposed site should include the following sections, based upon the placemaking approach, as described below:

1.	Vision Statement	What the development aims to achieve, taking into account the characteristics of place and locality.
2.	Site Location Plan	OS base plan at a scale 1:500 with the site edged in red. Additional plans at alternative scales may illustrate different features as required.
3.	Site Context Analysis	Consideration of place (activity, physical form, meaning); local community engagement to understand physical, social, environmental and cultural context; use of Welsh Government's Guidance document 'Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site' (2016). https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/site-context-analysis-guide.pdf Mapped constraints via the Council's OpusMap system and forthcoming Green Infrastructure Assessment plus on-site observations and surveys; Pre-application discussions with the local Sustainable Drainage Approval Body regarding SuDS; assessment of nearby facilities and potential walking distances.
4.	Development Framework => Summary Concept Masterplan	Conclusions of site analysis and local context study plus key urban design and architectural principles to inform development framework. Placemaking and sustainable development objectives must be central to this. All aspects of a development should be integrated including urban design, landscape, ecology, green and blue infrastructure, movement, highways, utilities, architecture and public art.
5.	Infrastructure Study (Implementation and Delivery Plan)	Brief description of the site, together with an overview of site specific delivery and implementation issues, including site constraints, necessary mitigation / compensation measures and policy / s106 obligations / infrastructure requirements.

The Development Brief itself should be an A4 portrait or A3 landscape document. The main body text should use font type Arial and be size 12 point. Site plans, illustrations and photographs will be useful in explaining the site and aspects of the Brief. The Brief is expected to include constraints, opportunities and a final Concept Masterplan for the site. The size of this document will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the development and any site specific constraints or issues.

Additional Information

The Development Brief will be a living document and must demonstrate compliance with national planning policy, including [Planning Policy Wales 11](#) (2021) (PPW11), Planning Policy Wales: [Building Better Places](#) (July 2020) and [Technical Advice Note 12: Design](#) (2016) (TAN12).

If you are proposing your site for allocation within the RLDP, you will be expected to submit a draft of your Development Brief to the Council for comment. This will allow any necessary discussion or amendments to be made before the commencement of the formal consultation period at the Deposit Plan Stage of the RLDP. Further amendments may be required to the

Brief following the consultation on the wider Deposit Plan. The Council will also liaise with the Design Commission for Wales regarding Development Briefs for the strategic sites. The final version of the Development Brief will be formally adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance when the RLDP is adopted.

Once a draft of the Development Brief is agreed for a candidate site, a 'Concept Master Plan' summary will need to be produced for inclusion within the Deposit RLDP Written Statement. This should include the following sections:

- 1) Vision Statement incorporating description of development
- 2) Summary of Constraints with Diagram / Plan
- 3) Key Development / Placemaking Principles
- 4) Annotated Concept Diagram setting out the key elements of a site (access, physical infrastructure, green / blue infrastructure networks, development areas/uses, landscape, key features, key opportunities and constraints)
- 5) Infrastructure Requirements (within and external to the site)

Please note that if a proposed candidate site is taken forward by the Council, a Welsh language version of the Concept Masterplan will be required to support both the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan public consultation exercises. This requirement is in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Document Scoring Methodology (2017).

If you are submitting a planning application, a draft Development Brief should accompany your submission to inform consideration of the proposal. Amendments may be negotiated during the course of the application. Any consent granted will require compliance with the final agreed version of the Development Brief by way of a planning condition.

If you have any queries regarding the production of your Development Brief, please contact us. For a Candidate Site as part of the RLDP process, please use: LDP@torfaen.gov.uk.

For a planning application submission, please use: planning@torfaen.gov.uk.