



Local Development Plan 2021 > 2036

Cardiff Council - May 2021

Cardiff Replacement LDP Candidate Site Methodology Paper

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



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Delivery Agreement (DA) for the Replacement Local Development Plan for Cardiff was approved by Council on the 18th March, 2021 and subsequently agreed by Welsh Government on the 30th March 2021. The DA sets out the Timetable and methods of Community Involvement for the preparation of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the period 2021-2036, with the preparation of the RLDP officially beginning in May 2021. The RLDP will re-consider all aspects of the current LDP, including all preparatory stages such as the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan. All the current policies and site-specific allocations will be reconsidered.
- 1.2 One of the key stages in the preparation of the RLDP, which is set out very early in the DA Timetable, is the submission and then consideration of Candidate Sites for site specific allocations, for a range of development types.
- 1.3 This document sets out the Council's methodology for the consideration of Candidate Sites. It firstly gives a general background to the Candidate Site process in relation to the LDP and what stages of preparation it is associated with. It then outlines what is required with regards to the submission of these sites for the Cardiff RLDP (including necessary supporting evidence) before setting out the details of the multiple stages of their assessment.
- 1.4 The Candidate Site Methodology has been prepared to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, national planning policy, as contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), and national guidance in the Development Plans Manual (Edition 3), as appropriate. This will ensure that the identification of suitable sites for allocation is founded on a robust, transparent and credible assessment of the land submitted.

2. THE LDP CANDIDATE SITE PROCESS

- 2.1 The official 'Call for Candidate Sites' is the first formal stage in the preparatory stages of the RLDP following the agreement and publication of the DA. This process allows all parties to submit any potential sites to be considered for inclusion in the Plan. These will then be assessed, and a determination made as to whether each site is suitable, or not.
- 2.2 Candidate Sites play a considerable role in the formulation and ultimate success of the RLDP, as some of them will become the allocations that are fundamental to meeting the needs that are identified in the Plan. These include housing, employment retail and other needs, as set out below in the list of Candidate Site land uses.
- 2.3 **The key principle of the Candidate Site process**, is to gather suitable evidence from site promoters to robustly demonstrate the sustainability, deliverability and financial viability of sites for inclusion in the plan. The Development Plan Manual suggests that the process should enable the following questions to be answered:
 - Is the site in a sustainable location and can it be freed from all constraints?

- Is the site capable of being delivered (can the site be developed through the plan period, or otherwise significantly progressed)?
- Is the development of the site financially viable?

What Candidate Sites can be submitted for?

2.4 Candidate Sites can be proposed for a variety of land uses some of which are set out below, however this list is not exhaustive:

- Housing
- Employment
- Retail
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites
- Community Facilities
- Leisure/Recreation
- Tourism
- Renewable Energy
- Green Infrastructure
- Biodiversity
- Waste
- Minerals
- Health/Education/Social Care
- Transport Infrastructure

What land can be included in the Candidate Sites Process?

2.5 There are no restrictions on what land can be submitted into the process. It may include that which is currently contrary to the existing LDP or otherwise not designated for development at present. It will also be necessary to fully re-assess all existing allocations or assess them for an appropriate change of their current allocated use. However, it should be clearly noted that only limited areas of land will be suitable for allocation, and this methodology should indicate to any prospective promoter of land whether their land would pass the necessarily stringent assessments.

2.6 Candidate sites can include undeveloped land, or preferably land that is currently, or has previously been developed. Conversions of buildings may also be included in the process. The threshold of size of sites is set out below.

3. CALL FOR CANDIDATE SITES AND THEIR SUBMISSION

3.1 There is no set time for the Call for Candidate Sites, although Welsh Government recommend a minimum of 6 weeks. **The Call for Candidate Sites for the Cardiff Replacement Local Development Plan, as stated in the Delivery Agreement is a 12 week period from 28th May to 20th August 2021.**

Candidate Site Submission Form

- 3.2 The Council has produced a standard Candidate Site Submission Form which should form the basis of any formal Candidate Site submission into the RLDP preparation process. The form asks for a range of detailed information about the site and is included as an appendix to this paper. **Failure to submit a suitably completed form would result in the Candidate Site not being registered.**
- 3.3 It is expected that the form is completed as fully and as accurately as is possible, or otherwise the Council would request further information, or make judgements on the required information. Indeed, all submissions will have a necessary level of checking of accuracy undertaken against the breadth of comprehensive data we hold and can access.
- 3.4 The Council would encourage all parties to submit Candidate Sites and additional reports and information via email/ online, although paper forms can be arranged as necessary, and submissions will be accepted by post. A guidance note has been prepared for the Submission Form and the questions therein. The Planning Policy Team will also be happy to answer any queries you may have on the process.

Further site submission information

- 3.5 To ensure that the plan preparation process is effective, the Council requires that as much evidence as possible is provided at the Call for Candidate Site submission stage, alongside the above Submission Form. This would include any relevant studies, reports, and other information to evidence that the site is in a sustainable location, free from constraints, is deliverable and viable.
- 3.6 It is considered that the information that is required to be submitted alongside the Candidate Site should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed, and sufficient to enable the Council to assess it (being referred to as 'frontloading'). This should be gauged from the content and questions in the Submission Form and the Stages of Assessment.

Constraint's plan, signposting and Sustainability Appraisal Assessment Criteria

- 3.7 To further support all promoters the Council has prepared a **constraints plan** to help identify constraints on your sites. The constraints plan does not necessarily contain every constraint or designation. Where these are better displayed elsewhere (such as information prepared and held by other bodies that may change throughout the plan preparation process e.g., flood risk) the Council has provided signposting in the Submission Form Guidance Note for where you can find this information.
- 3.8 To ensure transparency for assessing candidate sites the **Sustainability Appraisal Assessment Criteria and Methodology** will also be published alongside the call for sites.

When can Candidate Sites be submitted

3.9 The Call for Candidate Sites is the most appropriate time to formally submit a site and all the necessary background evidence for potential inclusion in the RLDP. Representations to the Preferred Strategy may then form the submission of further sites to be considered in the Candidate Site process. All new Candidate Site submissions and site-specific representations made after the Preferred Strategy consultation period would be considered in direct accordance with paragraphs 3.72 to 3.78 of the Development Plans Manual Edition 3 <https://gov.wales/development-plans-manual-edition-3-march-2020> unless there is an official further Call for Candidate sites at that time.

Site Categorisation and Thresholds

3.10 In order to establish a practical approach to Candidate Sites, the Development Plan Manual advises that a site size threshold is established. This would subsequently set a scale for appropriate allocations to be included in the RLDP.

3.11 For residential Candidate Sites specifically, the minimum site threshold is either 10 dwellings, or a minimum site size of 0.5 hectares. There is no defined upper limit.

3.12 Smaller sites are welcomed into the process and will be recorded in the Candidate Sites Register, however these will be considered in different ways. If such smaller sites are on the outside edge of existing settlement boundaries, they will be considered further as appropriate amendments to the Settlement Boundary. Smaller sites within the existing urban Settlement Boundaries may be considered further with regards to their suitability for development; and therefore, to give some indication of the number of residential units they may accommodate as 'windfall' sites. Such smaller sites can also allow for the development of 'Self Build' residential properties to come forward. It may also be the case that a collection of smaller sites in an area, or the conversion of several buildings in an area. E.g., town centres, could be amalgamated to give an indication of the potential scale of housing coming forward there.

3.13 Due to the breadth and type of other potential Candidate Sites there are no minimum site thresholds for all other land use Candidate Site submissions. However, discretion is held by the Council as to whether allocation is appropriate, or otherwise the principle of the proposed development would be acceptable without allocation, considering future RLDP policy and National planning policy.

Notification to landowners and publicity

3.14 The Council's website and the RLDP pages, will be kept up to date with all the relevant Candidate Site process, guidance, and opportunities for involvement, including submission forms and contacts for the Planning Policy Team.

Acceptance of sites and reference number

3.15 Once a Candidate Site has been submitted and is received by the Council to an acceptable level of completion, these are referred to as 'duly made,' notification will be given to the promoter of the site that this is the case (or not) and a unique representor number allotted. This reference can be used when contacting the team about the site. Once again, to reduce the use of paper site promoters are encouraged to provide an email address for correspondence during the process. However, where this is not possible the Council will notify you via letter.

Register of Candidate Sites

3.16 Following the Call for Candidate Sites, the Council will publish a Candidate Sites Register (CSR). The register will include all sites submitted and accepted as duly made to be considered in the Candidate Site assessment process.

3.17 **It should be noted that the submission of Candidate Sites, nor its acceptance as being duly made, does not imply a commitment to its suitability for inclusion within the plan.**

4. STAGES OF SITE ASSESSMENT

4.1 It is essential that the land allocated for development in the RLDP meets the objectives and requirements of the Plan and is suitable for and capable of being developed. The Council will undertake a comprehensive four stage site assessment process. It will be ensured that this process is clear, objective, and transparent, with a trail of a sites' progress through it.

4.2 The Stages of Site Assessment contain criteria that allows the Council to filter out those sites that are suitable for development and those that are not at each specific stage. These include physical and locational characteristics and broader principles such as National Policy, inclusive of the Well-being of Future Generations Goals and the Planning Policy Wales Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes.

4.3 The statutory process of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) will be incorporated into the site assessment and identification process, which will align with the overall SA/SEA undertaking for the whole RLDP preparation process. This, however, as is the intention of the Council, will be undertaken as a broader Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), including wider areas of assessment e.g., Health Impact Assessment, Welsh language, and Equality Impact Assessment etc.

5. Stage 1 of the Candidate Site Assessment

5.1 Stage 1 involves an Initial Site Filtering process which will be a desk-based assessment of all sites. Sites: -

- below the threshold.
- containing fundamental constraints that cannot be mitigated e.g., sites in the open countryside.
- for residential uses in a C2 flood risk zone.
- raising deliverability issues,
- not able to be brought forward within the plan period and/or.
- where there is no evidence that the site is financially viable

Any sites that fail this initial assessment will be filtered out and will not be pursued any further. Those sites that satisfy this initial assessment will be taken forward to Stage 2.

The site assessment criteria are illustrated below.

Location and accessibility – Are there services and facilities within 400m of the site.
Site character and context - Whether the site is Brownfield/ green field land, whether topographical characteristics of the site may present an obstacle to development, relationship with recognised settlements, whether development would have an impact on important views/vistas, and whether there would be potential adverse impact from adjoining land uses. Potential contamination and existing use.
Accessibility and highway capacity - considering the suitability of vehicular access to the site, location of the site regarding public transport routes, and accessibility by foot or cycle to a range of community facilities.
Landscape and environmental impact - Whether the site is subject to or impacts on European, National or Local designations such as but not limited to; Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Sites of Special Scientific Interest(SSSI); Ramsar sites, Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); National Nature Reserves (NNRs); local, non-statutory designations such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC); Landscape features/value such as greenwedges and strategic landscape areas, historic assets; greenfield/brownfield site; agricultural land classification system (ALC) and air quality.
Flood risk - Is the site within a flood zone.
Mineral safeguarding areas/buffer zones - if the site is in a mineral safeguarding zone, what impact there would be on safeguarding areas and buffer zones.
Infrastructure capacity – Does the site benefit from existing infrastructure such as Water, drainage, sewerage, electric, gas and telecommunications connections and capacity.
Deliverability and Suitability - Does the site look broadly like it could realistically be developed and be genuinely suitable for development?

Overall Conclusions of the Initial Candidate Site Assessment
1) The site remains in the process. 2) Further information is required. 3) Remove the site from the process.
For consideration not assessment - Planning history and legal agreements – Current permission, any history of refusal, pre-application considerations, covenants.

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Current permission, any history of refusal, pre-application considerations, covenants.

5.2 This part of the process will allow judgements to be made on the sites against a series of objectives/questions divided into the above areas and the level of impact the proposed development will have on each of these. The impact will be categorised as

- Positive
- Further information required.
- Negative

5.3 The impact will be categorised against the above subject areas as.

- The site appears to accord.
- Further consideration/information is required.
- The site does not appear to meet the aims.

5.4 Some of the constraints that this Initial Assessment would identify and which would determine the filtering out of the site from further assessment stages for the proposal would include sites that fall below the threshold for allocation and sites that contain fundamental constraints that cannot be mitigated, for example, vulnerable development that is proposed in inappropriate flood risk zones.

5.5 Any site that fails this initial assessment will be filtered out and will not be pursued any further. Those sites that satisfy this initial assessment will be taken forward to Stage 2.

6. Stage 2 of the Candidate Site Assessment

6.1 An updated Candidate Site Register will be published alongside the Preferred Strategy at its consultation stage. This register will contain basic information about each site and the results of the stage 1 – Initial Assessment process. An indication will also be given as to whether the site accords with the Preferred Strategy.

6.2 Stage 2 of the Candidate Site process will commence after consultation on Preferred Strategy in October/November 2022 and will take account of any representations received. This will involve:

- a request for further information, where the information was not provided, for those sites submitted during the Stage 1 Call for Candidate Sites that are compatible with the Preferred Strategy. Any sites submitted as part of Stage 1 which are not progressed through Stage 2 will not be assessed and will not be considered for inclusion in the revised LDP.

- An invitation to submit new Candidate Sites which are compatible with the Preferred Strategy and comment on the submitted Candidate Sites, including their role in helping to deliver the Strategy.

6.3 Stage 2 involves a more detailed analysis of sites that have passed through Stage 1 and an assessment of the sites against with the Scoping of the RLDP Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) framework, to ensure that the sites contribute towards achieving the overall objectives of the plan. The ISA process will determine if the site has positive, neutral, or negative impacts in the context of its environment, in relation to the objectives of the ISA. The ISA assesses all ‘reasonable’ options for a submitted site’s inclusion within the Revised LDP.

6.4 If sites are determined to be contrary to the ISA, and to the objectives of the Plan and its Preferred Strategy, sites will be removed from the assessment process at this stage.

6.5 Following the close of Stage 2, the Candidate Site Register will be updated with any new sites submitted during Stage 2 and published for information purposes on the Council’s website and made available for inspection at the Council Offices.

7. Stage 3 of the Candidate Site Assessment

7.1 Stage 3 involves a **more detailed assessment** of candidate sites **at an officer level** using a ‘traffic light’ coding system, including consultation with internal Council Departments, such Highways, Education, Regulatory Services, Estates, Drainage. A RLDP Site Appraisal Subgroup will be established as part of the Candidate Sites assessment process. They will firstly input their views at the Initial Assessment stage. The Sub-Group will consist of representatives from various Council departments, including Highways, Development Management, Education, Corporate Estates and Flood Risk Management sections. Expertise from additional departments of the Council will also be consulted, as necessary. These officers will bring their expertise to the assessment process, including necessary consideration of individual sites.

7.2 The Planning Policy Team, along with any necessary member of the above Site Appraisal Subgroup, may need to access the site to assess its features, as necessary.

Detailed Assessment at Officer Level – it is proposed that a ‘traffic light’ coding system is used to identify which sites are more desirable and which sites are less so. The ‘traffic light’ coding system is as follows:

	Impact
Proposed site is expected to have significant positive impacts	
Proposed site is expected to have some positive impacts	
Proposed site is expected to have a neutral impact	
Proposed site is expected to have some negative impacts	
Proposed site is expected to have significant negative impacts	
The impact of the proposed site cannot be predicted at this stage	

The criteria to be assessed are:

- **Land** – Planning Policy Wales emphasises the importance of re-using brownfield sites. Therefore, **previously developed land** will rank higher than greenfield sites. The proximity to existing settlements will also be a consideration.
- **Availability, Infrastructure and Deliverability** – The Council will need to have a reasonable degree of confidence that the site will be delivered and there are no legal obstacles to delivery; that there are no **site utility constraints, physical constraints** and the site provides scope for **renewable energy solutions and infrastructure deliverability**.
- **Accessibility and Transportation Context** - The importance of reducing the need to travel and new developments having access to a range of key services is set out in national policy. The transportation context and the **potential for sustainable transport** will be assessed.
- **Environmental** – Potential impact on **Biodiversity/geology, landscape, the historic, cultural and built environment, natural resources and contaminated land** will need careful consideration, including impact on the following designations: -
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Ramsar Site
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Sites of Important Nature Conservation (SINC)
 - Loss of protected woodland/trees and hedgerows will need to be avoided as much as possible, and schemes which have an impact on air quality will need to demonstrate appropriate mitigation.
- **Physical** – The existence of physical constraints, such as **flood risk** and topographical constraints will be a factor, along with agricultural land and mineral safeguarding areas. Careful consideration will be given to **existing flood risk and the potential to manage flood risk**.
- **Neighbourhood, Community and Placemaking** – certain development schemes may bring about additional improvements for the **local neighbourhood**, improve **community facilities, local connectivity** and provide **sustainability and design benefits**.
- **Economic and Other Benefits** – Certain development schemes may bring about additional benefits to a locality, for example, provision of employment opportunities in an area of high unemployment.
- **Sustainability Factors** – does the proposal improve **air quality** and **health and well-being**.

7.3 This approach is intended to filter out any non-deliverable or inappropriate sites so that statutory consultees are only commenting on sites that have a reasonable chance of being allocated in the LDP and being delivered. During this stage, the candidate sites will need to be assessed against the Council's SA/SEA framework as set out in the Council's Sustainability Scoping Report. Candidate sites will need to be assessed against these objectives in terms of whether they contribute positively or negatively.

- 7.4 **Deliverability of Viable Sites** - This stage 3 assessment will also determine if there is a necessary level of certainty associated with the site to allocate it for development in the Deposit RLDP. Success in this stage is primarily reliant on the assessment of the viability of a development scheme for the proposed use. It is expected that the promoter of the site should have, prior to this stage, submitted such viability evidence to enable the assessment to take place.
- 7.5 It should be made clear that until policy revision has taken place, (which will not happen prior to Deposit Stage), financial implications of a development scheme associated with Planning Obligations, will be those in the current, adopted LDP policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 7.6 Furthermore, all development proposals should have the Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) incorporated as appropriate.
- 7.7 It is also necessary at this stage to further ensure the deliverability of sites in association with other, non-financial reasons e.g., ecology or access. Such site constraints may have been initially identified on a Candidate Site. Consideration of any further duly made representations or submissions of necessary and appropriate evidence to seek to overcome these constraints will also take place at this stage. The RLDP Site Appraisal Subgroup will be further utilised at this stage.
- 7.8 Following the conclusion of Stage 3, a clear indication of which sites are more suitable for development will emerge. Those sites which have received poor assessments and 'show stopping' constraints will be eliminated from the process.

8. Stage 4 of the Candidate Site Assessment

- 8.1. Stage 4 will involve the assessed sites going out to **consultation with external statutory agencies**, the infrastructure providers, such as Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water and the National Grid, Natural Resources Wales, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, Wales and West Utilities, and Western Power Distribution.
- 8.2. New development can often place additional pressure on existing infrastructure, such as water supply, drainage, sewerage, power, and communications. In addition, community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and recreation space. Consequently, the Council will need to consult the infrastructure providers on those sites that have successfully come through Stage 3.
- 8.3 The Council will encourage the infrastructure providers to assess the sites and identify any potential issues and what mitigation measures are likely to be necessary to overcome these issues.
- 8.4 It is likely that the Council will have to contact the developer or land agent to understand whether the mitigation measures are acceptable, achievable and do not impact on the

overall viability of the site. If obstacles are proving insurmountable at this stage, then the site should be removed.

9. Deposit Local Development Plan

- 9.1 Following the conclusion of the Candidate Site Assessment, the Council should have a list of viable, deliverable, sustainable sites for potential inclusion in the Deposit Local Development Plan.