



Cardiff Council - January 2025

Background Technical Paper Number 8

## Deposit Plan

### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land



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# **Cardiff Replacement Local Development Plan Deposit Plan 2021 to 2036**

## **Background Technical Paper Number 8**

### **Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land**

**January 2025**

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## **2. Purpose of this Document**

This Technical Background Paper forms part of a series of supporting papers for the Cardiff Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Deposit Plan.

The purpose of this paper is to set out how the location and quality of the BMV agricultural land has been taken into account in the preparation of the RLDP. It explains how the need to minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV) has been considered in particular the best and most versatile agricultural land, how the topic has been considered, giving consideration to the location and quality of agricultural land in Cardiff. It demonstrates how the preparation of the Plan and the site selection process has sought to minimise the loss of the Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land.

## **3. National Planning Guidance**

### **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)**

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12) sets out the approach to planning for sustainability and a key element of this is protecting finite resources such as agricultural land.

PPW sets out that agricultural land of grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification System (ALC) is the best and most versatile and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future.

Para 3.59 sets out that ‘When considering the search sequence and in ‘In development plan policies and development management decisions considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance. Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation which outweighs the agricultural considerations. If land in grades 1, 2 or 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between sites of different grades, development should be directed to land of the lowest grade’.

### **Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6**

TAN 6 states that “when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, planning authorities should consider the quality of agricultural land and other agricultural factors and seek to minimise any adverse effects on the environment” (WG, 2010, para. 6.2). The TAN also references the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map in terms of use in strategic planning and a new Predictive ALC Map for Wales (Version 2) was released in December 2019.

## **4. Data Sources**

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of agricultural land to enable informed choices to be made about the future use of land within the planning system. In the absence of a national survey program in Wales the Welsh Government has published a Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for Wales (Version 2 published in 2019) which uses the best available information to predict the Grade of land on national basis providing detailed soil series data and an updated ALC survey. It has been designed to assist informed long term decisions over the use of land in the planning system and to target survey work to the most appropriate locations.

## **5. Agricultural Land in Cardiff**

Cardiff County covers some 143 square kilometres, and is the largest urban area in Wales. The County is predominately urban with more than half of the authority area urban with the remaining area formed by countryside and the strategic river corridors which embrace a diverse pattern of landscapes and a wide range of resources

Figure 1 illustrates the location and distribution of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the which can be found to the west, north and north east of the County.

## **6. Consideration of Agricultural Land in the Preparation of the Plan**

Throughout the preparation of the RLDP careful consideration has been given to the Plan's potential impact on BMV agricultural land most notably in the preparation of the RLDP Strategy in particular the level of growth and the spatial strategy to deliver the growth including the assessment of Candidate Site Submissions

### **Assessment of Candidate Sites**

The impact on agricultural land was one of the assessment criteria for the Candidate Site Assessment with site proposers asked to indicate the impact of their proposal on agricultural land. This information together with additional information on agricultural land classification has informed the Candidate Site Assessment process.

### **The Replacement LDP Sustainable Growth Strategy as Set out in the Deposit Plan**

In order to deliver the preferred level of growth eight alternative Spatial Options were considered and consulted on. The Preferred Spatial Option was considered to be a Sustainable Growth Strategy which is a hybrid option that builds on the approach set out in the brownfield strategic options. For information on the Growth and Spatial Options please see the Cardiff Replacement LDP Deposit Plan which is available on the Virtual Table in the Virtual consultation Room.

In terms of the provision of new homes there is a substantial landbank of new homes already committed on a range and choice of brownfield and greenfield sites across the city which provide for a range and choice of housing types and locations across the city. Such sites will be major regeneration and renewal areas, located within or adjacent to district or local centres

or on transport nodes within the urban areas. These sites in combination with the substantial existing landbank of sites on greenfield sites around the edge of the city.

The Sustainable Growth Strategy is therefore a brownfield strategy which in addition to commitments seeks to meet the majority of housing land required during the plan period to 2036 through a range of brownfield sites within the existing settlement boundary including the residual greenfield allocations from the adopted LDP Strategic sites, the non-strategic housing allocations and Housing Led Regeneration Areas proposed in the Deposit Plan. Given this it is considered that no new greenfield releases are necessary, and further housing growth during the plan period will be through a range of brownfield sites within the existing settlement boundary.

## **7. Conclusions**

Whilst the Spatial Strategy includes greenfield sites in the landbank and residual greenfield allocations from the adopted LDP which do impact on agricultural land it is considered that the principle of development is well established and the benefits associated with completing the adopted LDP strategic sites and needs to be taken into account. The RLDP Strategy does not however propose any new greenfield releases and therefore does not involve the loss of additional BMV agricultural land.

8. Appendix 1

Figure 1 Location and Distribution of Grades 1, 2, 3a Agricultural Land in Cardiff

