

From/Oddi wrth: Katie Partington, Lynda Healy and Hayley Spender

To/I: Inspector

Our Ref./Ein Cyf:

Your Ref./Eich Cyf: MA19.3

Date/Dyddiad: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012



Dyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

## Memorandum / Memorandwm

**RE: Matters Arising from Hearing Session 19 (MA19.3) Alternative Site: AS (N) 21 – Ty Pwdr**

The following is offered in an attempt to explain the Council's views on the matters raised.

### 1 Wye Valley Surveys 2001

Mr Ian Roberts requests a copy of the Management Plan for Greenmeadow Farm produced by Wye Valley Surveys in 2001, this is included in Appendix 1.

The management plan details recommendations for including the Greenmeadow Farm area into the Tir Gofal scheme – an agri-environment scheme that was running at the time. It is not thought that this recommendation was taken forward. Unlike a Local Nature Reserve, SSSI or European site there is no requirement for the management of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The management of a SINC is through the goodwill of the landowner with free advice from the local authority if required, thus the issues of what financial commitment has been made to the sites maintenance is irrelevant.

### 2 SINC Designation

A site is a candidate SINC when it has been surveyed and assessed against the SINC criteria. A candidate SINC becomes a designated SINC when it has been agreed at the SINC expert panel meeting and then subsequently approved internally at the relevant Council Committee meeting.

However in a planning context any site that meets the SINC criteria, whether designated as a SINC or not, is still treated as such and the relevant policies still apply. For example if a consultant submits a report as part of a planning application which shows a development site meets the SINC criteria then it is subject to the SINC policies, in effect the issue of whether a SINC is classed as a candidate or fully designated site is somewhat irrelevant. The benefit of having sites classed as 'fully designated' is that it gives the developer an early indication of biodiversity constraints on site.

In the case of Greenmeadow Farm SINC the site was surveyed in 1998 along with many other sites as part of a wildlife sites project that had been set up in order to facilitate the requirement under Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 Nature Conservation and Planning to provide SINC's.

TAN 5 (1996) states:

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29." *Non-statutory sites of local nature conservation importance (often known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) should be both selected and designated according to clear and strict criteria which ensures the sites are of substantive nature conservation value. Regionally important geological/geomorphologic sites (RIGS) should also be selected and designated according to strict criteria."*



TAN 5 (2009) states:

5.5.2 *"Locally designated sites should be subject to the application of rigorous criteria to ensure their designation is justified on biological or geological grounds. The process of designating and maintaining the sites should be transparent with records and assessments publicly available, unless information about particular species is sensitive..."*

Identification and surveying of sites is an ongoing process and a substantial survey effort has been undertaken to provide baseline ecological data to facilitate the subsequent designation of SINC sites. All SINC designation sheets and boundaries are available on request from the local authority.

Since the implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Local Authorities have a key role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. This is recognised under section 40, which states: *"... Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions to the purpose of conserving biodiversity..."*. This duty in effect provides extra weight to the SINC designation process.

### **SINC Criteria**

The SINC criteria has been developed over a number of years and has been through an extensive consultation and revision process. The criteria comprises of a robust assessment method aimed at demonstrating to Local Authorities, landowners, land managers and others why a particular site has qualified or not.

In 1999 'The Criteria for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in Gwent, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire' was produced, this went on to form the basis of the Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales (2004). which many of the earlier SINC sites within Blaenau Gwent were assessed against.

The South Wales (2004) guidelines were developed through discussion and consultation with a wide audience that included experienced ecologists, county recorders and local naturalists. They set out a common set of guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites in the South Wales region and provided a framework within which individual authorities were free to refine their own detailed criteria for the selection and designation of Wildlife Sites within their administrative boundaries.

Criteria for the Selection of SINCS in the Mid-Valleys Area (2008) represent the refinements of the South Wales Guidelines (2004) for a recognisable biodiversity area - the valleys of central South Wales (the "Mid-Valleys area"). The two documents are designed to be read together with much of the supporting information being left out of the Mid Valleys criteria.

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Greenmeadows Farm SINC would have been originally assessed against the South Wales (2004) guidelines under the qualifying criteria of Mosaic Habitats (H20), which remains the same in the Mid Valleys (2008) criteria.



Mosaic habitats are the most difficult to categorise with the criteria stating:

*"Mosaic sites, comprising of complex mixtures of semi-natural habitats, are one of the key features of the Mid-Valleys area. Generally most mosaic SINC's will support a variety of different habitat types, of which the largest or most species-rich would often qualify on individual habitat criteria. Smaller areas of habitat, and/or areas of less species-rich habitat, will be included in mosaic SINC designations where they form an integral part of the ecological functioning of the SINC, fulfil a linking role between areas of higher value or represent important habitat areas for key species.*

*It is unrealistic to design a criterion for the selection of such sites because of the potential variety of habitats and features that could be involved. The difficulties implicit with mosaic sites mean that expert judgement is likely to be required in individual cases.*

*However, the following will be selected:*

- *Any coherent site, which comprises at least 3 distinct habitat types, where at least 1 habitat is approaching SINC selection status in its own right, providing that improved, species-poor or degraded elements of low or negligible conservation interest do not form a significant proportion (>25%) of the total area.*
- *A 'block designation' of extensive areas of open countryside where semi-natural upland features predominate."*

Appendix 2 provides a copy of the original survey undertaken in 1998, which details how the site was assessed and the qualifying criteria, this is the same information that was used to complete the SINC forms which were taken forward for designation.

#### **SINC Expert Panel Approval**

Greenmeadow Farm SINC was discussed as part of the first tranche of sites put forward for approval at the SINC expert panel meeting that took place on the 15th January 2008. The minutes show that issues relating to the qualifying criteria were discussed and the site was taken forward along with other sites to be approved at the Council Committee meetings.

Appendix 3 contains terms of reference for the SINC Expert Panel along with the minutes from all Expert Panel meetings held on the following dates:

- 22nd January 2010
- 28th January 2009
- 18th March 2008
- 15th Jan 2008
- 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006
- 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005

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### Landowner Consultation

Paragraph 2.4 of the Mid Valleys SINC Criteria states that, "the active involvement of the landowners is desirable, although it cannot be guaranteed that every landowner will be aware of a SINC designation. The principle means of landowner consultation will be through the respective Local Development Plan consultation process".



Although there is no formal requirement for consultation prior to the LDP consultation process, Blaenau Gwent Council wrote to the landowners of each SINC after they were approved at the SINC Expert Panel meetings.

A letter was sent to Mr Watkins on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 detailing the allocation of the site as a SINC. Included with the letter was a copy of the SINC designation form, a leaflet explaining SINC status and an application form for a Biodiversity Grant Scheme that was running at the time.

Appendix 4 contains a copy of the letter sent to Mr Watkins along with a copy of the email instruction detailing the attachments to be included along with it.

### Executive Committee Approval

A report was submitted and approved at the Executive Committee on the 4th November 2009. The report detailed the designation of a number of SINC sites of which Greenmeadow Farm SINC was one.

A second report was submitted to the Executive Committee on the 1st September 2010 detailing a further series of SINC sites, it was resolved that full consultation should take place with members of the relevant scrutiny committee.

Consultation with Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee was undertaken on the 27th October 2010 where all sites were approved.

Appendix 5 contains copies of the reports submitted to the relevant Committees along with a copy of the minutes from the meetings.

All Council minutes can also be found online here:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/councilagendas/CouncilAgendas.asp>

### Local Development Plan Consultation

As clearly demonstrated in the Consultation Report (SD07a, Appendix 1) Mr Idris Watkins was an individual who was included on the Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation database. Throughout the LDP process, all consultees on the database have been kept informed and consulted on each stage of the Plan preparation process.

**Katie Partington**

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Cynghor Dwrddaleddref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

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# APPENDIX 1



# GREEN MEADOW FARM

## Minimum Format Management Plan.

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## 1 POLICY/STRATEGY CONTEXT

### 1.1 The Blaenau Gwent CBC Unitary Development Plan (UDP); June 2000

This contains the Vision Statement:-

To seek to enhance the quality of life of the people of the Blaenau Gwent Area,

and included in the elements of the Land Use Planning Strategy is the statement:-

To protect, diversify and manage landscape and implement biodiversity measures.

These statements are reinforced by Policy G1 v) "to enhance Blaenau Gwent's character and appearance" and Policy G2 v) having regard to "biodiversity". Other more specific policies relate to The Natural Environment (EN1), Historic Buildings (EN3), Derelict and Neglected Land (DL1) and Recreational Uses (R1).

In the context of housing allocations it should be noted that para 2.19 on page 24 states that "the housing supply exceeds the requirement". It would seem reasonable therefore that where housing proposals conflict with the ecological merits, the landscape value of a site, or other identified features of value, then these other factors should be afforded favourable consideration. H4 (D) appears to support this suggestion.

Policy EN1 will protect and manage features of *major importance* for wild flora and fauna. This qualification is very subjective, but is clear that it must be related to the local situation, in that the UDP is a local document and Blaenau Gwent is working towards a local biodiversity action plan, (IBAP). It should also be appreciated that what may be relatively common today, if it is not given the protection it requires, will be rare tomorrow and then be seen as of *major importance*, requiring protection and management. Why not do it today?

Objectives and targets are set out under the strategy and these cover the built environment, the natural environment, including trees and hedgerows, and the landscape quality, including reclamation sites. The principal thrust of wildlife conservation is related to SSSIs, LNRs, and SINC's. The latter have not yet been identified in Blaenau Gwent and the criteria for their selection are presently under review across S. Wales. Currently these are found on p. 80, and this site could be a successful SINC candidate; see below. Community characteristics of sites are also considered important, and criteria are listed that include amenity value, (which may be more important than interests based on strictly ecological/scientific criteria), educational value, and a lack of other natural habitats nearby.

Beyond these are more specific landscape- and wildlife-based policies, which include a recognition of the value species of local importance; EN16. Valued woodlands and open spaces are listed, together with areas for reclamation.

The UDP map shows *Special Landscape Area* covering part, but not all, of the heath habitat of the SW arm of the site, and, curiously, the conifer plantation above. Housing allocations, H2 (42) and (74) cover substantial sections of the centre of this site. These may be inappropriate in that the developments include areas identified in BAPs - WWDs, LPMG and LDAG in 42 and LH and LDAG in 74; below.



Under Community Services there is no mention of a role for outdoor sites in education, but **this could be seen as an omission** given that there is a rapidly expanding role for them, both in an informal sense and to meet the needs identified by recent changes to school syllabuses. See 3.2/3 for further comments.

### **1.2 Landscapes Working for Wales, (LWW): Blaenau Gwent Landscape Improvement Initiative. R.M.L. Ltd for WDA; 1994/5**

This document contains an analysis of the landscape types within Blaenau Gwent with strategies for improvements and site-specific action plans. For the purposes of this management plan it is accepted that proposals may generally need to fit in with this document, but it is felt necessary to qualify this statement in respect of aspects of its methodology, of recent initiatives, and possible errors.

The ecological methodology is entirely document based and therefore inevitably misses some of the generally smaller and the more recently 'discovered' sites within the borough. It also cannot take account of the communities, (or species), identified in the evolving BAPs. As such there are some suggestions that should be considered inappropriate where valuable mire and grassland sites are included within proposed woodland planting schemes, for instance. (Not identifying Cwm Merddog as in the ownership of Gwent Wildlife Trust is possibly indicative of other errors that could be significant; Vol. 2, 4.4.3)

Of the many positive suggestions, however, the initiative does identify a number of habitat/landscape features for retention and management that may be pertinent to this management plan. These include water features, remnant semi-natural woodlands of the side valleys and some historical field systems.

This site appears to come within the designation of "valley sides and farmland for evaluation and rationalisation", which may cover an historical field system. The assistance of a 'Tir Cymen' type scheme is suggested, which has now been superseded by Tir Gofal, and available Wales-wide.

### **1.3 Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)**

Although these may not yet be adopted by the borough, Blaenau Gwent has invested considerably in the development of the 'Biodiversity Guide for Gwent', notably through the efforts of Colin Cheesman and his staff. This includes 13 habitat types, many of which occur in Blaenau Gwent and which the borough will therefore undertake to protect and enhance for the local community and as its contribution to the commitments of UK as a whole. To follow will be the species identified as significant in the local and/or wider geographical context, and it would seem obvious that planning should afford protection to likely candidates for inclusion in the species lists.

The following habitat types are listed in the Guide for Blaenau Gwent:

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Ancient hedgerows?-(AH)      | 2. Fens-(F)                           |
| 3. Lowland heathland-(LH)       | 4. Lowland purple moor-grass-(LPMG)   |
| 5. Mesotrophic lakes-(ML)       | 6. Upland oak wood-(UOWd)             |
| 7. Wet woodlands-(WWds)         | 8. Lowland wood pastures/parks(LWPP)  |
| 9. Lowland meadows-(LM)         | 10 Lowland calcareous grassland-(LCG) |
| 11 Upland calc. grassland-(UCG) | 12 Lowland dry acid grassland-(LDAG)  |



- 13 Upland heathland-(UH)                      14 Blanket bog-(BB)  
 15 Eutrophic standing waters-(ESW) 16 Mesotrophic standing waters-(MSW)

The Biodiversity Survey, below, identifies the following as present:  
 AH, LH, WWds, UOWd, and LDAG.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary

Greenmeadow Farm comprises a wide range of habitats between the 'head dyke' (the upper limit of enclosed land) and the current upper level of housing developments, and including some reclaimed colliery spoil. At present most of the land is extensively grazed, with the summer state suggesting that the current stocking levels are reasonable. There is one block of improved pasture on a valley bench, and substantial blocks of woodland and heath communities cover most of the remaining land; bracken is locally abundant but in some areas it is barely present and the dwarf shrubs appear to be thriving.

The altitudinal range varies from c 250m to nearly 400m, with the moorland above rising to 553m. The underlying geology is that of the Upper Coal Measures of the Carboniferous period, and comprises mostly sandstones and shales. The Ccfn Glas seam outcrops near the upper level of the site, with old mine entrances below and with spreads of spoil mostly around the centre of the west-facing valley. The steep upper slopes have landslip features and surface drainage is restricted to a few seepages creating local mire communities, but there are more substantial flows issuing lower down, probably emanating from old mine workings at present.

Greenmeadow Farm buildings are now reduced to low wall features and rubble, with one more recent building still standing. However access is still available by a partially sunken lane with ancient laid beech hedges and remnants of a stone surfacing to the track in places. These features, and the size of the holding at nearly 50ha, suggests that it may once have been a sizable and prosperous upland farm.

### 2.2 Land ownership

Except for the northern, wooded limb the site is owned by BGCBC, with large parts of the site proposed or confirmed for housing on the UDP Proposals Map, Deposit Version. The northern woodlands, and bracken, are in private ownership.

### 2.3 Past and present management

#### 2.3.1 Past management

As suggested above it would appear that much of the land comprised a large upland pastoral holding. The band of fields below the steading are relatively rich and diverse upland grazings, and areas of severe bracken infestation are quite limited.

At some stage the era of coal mining produced the spoil to cover some of the lower ground, but leaving most of the land above c 300ms pastoral. This spoil has been landscaped recently and is still developing its vegetation. Local sources informed WVS of the use of Areas 35-38 in the BD Survey as landfill, and that are now



revegetated with generally low value plant communities. Additionally the three relatively level fields above the steading have been reseeded to ley grasses in the past two or three years. The woodlands appear to have been used primarily for stock shelter, but abundant beech seedlings indicate that they are clearly capable of natural regeneration.

#### 2.3.2 Present management

The site is subject to relatively low levels of sheep grazing on the evidence of the site visit, with no signs of inputs of agri-chemicals, except on the upper leys, which are used for forage conservation, probably having been cut in late July in 2000.

#### 2.4 Documentary evidence

The only records made available comprises a Biodiversity Survey by Jan Winder carried out in Sept. 1998. However, as owners of the site it must be assumed that BGCBC possess the site deeds and these might include further evidence, both direct and inferred.

Local sources informed WVS of the relatively recent 'demolition' of the old house at Greenmeadow Farm, describing it as a "Welsh Longhouse", of possible historical value.

### 3 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 Wildlife conservation

The BD survey makes the following recommendations:

- i) Maintenance of the heath and oak woodland mosaic notable along the southern limb of the site. (LH, UOWd, LDAG)
- ii) Encouragement of further natural oak regeneration through the old spoil area and in the conifer blocks above the site. (UOWd)
- iii) Fence the main alder stand to reduce the grazing impact. (WWds)
- iv) Control of bracken and Japanese Knotweed.
- v) Exclude stock from the Beech stands to permit natural regeneration to succeed. (Beech wood communities?)
- vi) Lay hedges; care is emphasised since most are clearly long neglected. (AH)
- vii) Encourage the establishment of heather and other shrubs below the steading through fence maintenance and removal of non-native trees. (LH)
- viii) Graze the unimproved pastures below the steading to maintain their interest and diversity. (LDAG)
- ix) *Perhaps* reinstate the ley grass fields as wildflower meadows.
- x) Carry out surveys for bats and lepidoptera.

Wye Valley Surveys agree with all of the above, but alone they do not cover all of the habitats and communities of the site. It is our opinion that the site as a whole includes a very wide range of upland communities characteristic of sloping and well-drained ground; pastures, heath, scrub, woodlands and mires. Many are relatively rich, others are readily improvable by stock control or bracken control, and the location and size



of the holding suggest that there may be a degree of historical interest. In view of all these it is recommended that the current or a new tenant be strongly encouraged to help realise the full wildlife potential of the site through an application to join Tir Gofal, and with it receive funding aid for many of the suggestions above. With the range of habitats on site and the proximity of the moorland above it is suggested that ornithological surveys would also be valuable.

### 3.2/3 Education and Recreation

Criteria for assessing the suitability of sites for class-based education include:

- 1 Accessibility of the site to local schools, on foot and by transport.
- 2 A variety of habitats, preferably not at all rare or fragile and therefore able to accommodate visitor pressure without significant deterioration.
- 3 A safe environment, where accidents are unlikely and where a risk assessment has forewarned staff of possible problems that can be accommodated.
- 4 An 'attachment' to a local community who can help foster the site's interests to maintain or enhance its appearance, its wildlife and its local amenity value.

On this site 1, 2, 3 and 4 are in large measure met. The higher areas in the east of the site however are more of a 'no man's land' that are very open to 'the elements' and would rarely be useable outside summer conditions except by well-clad and dedicated students; being above 1000 feet, group educational visits would not be covered by current guidelines. Also, the landfill site area may not be considered appropriate, given its gas venting systems is still in existence.

In this context comments received should remind planners that whilst policies relating to recreational developments are important, sites for 'informal' recreation, where parents can feel their children can enjoy unstructured play in safety, are also much valued; it might be that some open areas with very limited wildlife value, with no obvious landscape importance, should receive recognition as "public open space" - (R6). It may not however be necessary to segregate such spaces, either on paper or on the ground, and they could be managed for a combination of walking, riding, bird watching, kite-flying, fishing, grazing, etc. Clearly this would be easier to achieve on larger sites where a degree of zoning could be established to reduce possible conflicts.

As usual with such sites close to urban areas it is well used for informal recreation. In this case the signs are that the site is generally well-respected by its visitors, and since the ecological quality of the site is considered to be high, and which will best be served by management geared primarily to stock grazing, then it is felt that other forms of recreation would be better sited elsewhere.

### 3.4 Landscape and historical

Almost the entire site is very visible from many angles and the views from most of it are extensive; these may be considerations in the current allocation for housing over much of it. Conversely, developments on the site would therefore significantly intrude into the present landscape, which it is felt may have historical significance; a largely intact farm, possibly from a much earlier era, but which widely retains much of the ecological interest that developed under the earlier farming regime. It is noted that the proposals do not impinge on the flattest ground of the ley grass fields, which are of least ecological value.



Taking developments right up to the moorland fringe would not only put pressures on these communities, but consideration might be given to the impact of access routes on the heathlands of the site. These are not only important ecologically but large enough to be significant autumnal colour features visible from many aspects.

The use of panoramic display panels might be considered, situated near the old farmstead. These could interpret the visible landscape in terms of underlying geology and relate the woodlands, settlements and field patterns to topography, geology and occurrence of coal seams, for instance.

Referring to LWW, it would seem appropriate to take informed advice on the historic value of the site, if any, prior to "rationalising" the field system and planting trees over any of them.

#### 4 FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

##### 4.1 Natural

Maintenance of heath and woodland along the southern limb.

Positive	Negative
Extensive areas exist with natural regeneration of tree species on-going.	There <i>may</i> be a longer term problem of too many trees for the heather, etc.
The dwarf shrubs are generally vigorous with the heather mostly in its 'pioneering' phase of active growth.	There <i>may</i> be a longer term problem of balancing the proportions of grasses, etc. and shrub species; grazing is the key.
The current lack of grazing appears to be very suitable for the shrub component.	Seedlings from the conifer blocks above could become widely established.
Similar communities exist close-by above the 'head-dyke'.	

Control of Bracken and Japanese Knotweed

Positive	Negative
The bracken is generally at low levels of infestation except around the woodlands to the north of the steading.	Cattle may be the best means of limiting further bracken spread, but few graziers have them at present.
The Jap. Knotweed is currently restricted to a relatively small area; planting trees in this area may be appropriate.	The species is capable of rapid vegetative spread and not easily eradicated by either physical or chemical methods.

Maintenance of diversity in grassland and other communities

Positive	Negative
The current botanical diversity of large grazing tracts is relatively good for upland grazings.	Long-term problems are more strongly linked to man-controlled factors than natural influences.
Suppression of grassland communities by bracken is very restricted at present.	

## 4.2 Human factors.

### Planning status.

Positive	Negative
Only a relatively small proportion of the site is committed to housing development	Interesting grassland communities appear to be committed to development, and the hedges and old lane to the steading.
Tracts of the southern limb remain outside current development proposals.	Large areas of heath and grassland are clearly allocated for future development and they lack any statutory protection.
	The adjacent SLA curiously includes the block of alien conifers above the site, but excludes most of the "lush" heath and regenerating natural woodland.

### Grazing control, etc.

Positive	Negative
At present the site is generally not overgrazed.	It may be difficult to find a sympathetic grazer, ideally with some cattle.
The land is in LA ownership & therefore under their control in the long term.	Costs of fencing to exclude stock from woodlands, or to repair walls, may be high.
Funding for necessary changes <i>could</i> come through Tir Gofal.	The ley grass fields suggest the pressures to 'improve' grasslands are present.
All woodlands appear to be self regenerating, requiring stock exclusion only to move the process on; FE grant aid may be available for this work.	Introduction of grazing in the southern section will affect natural regeneration, (but this might achieve an appropriate woodland/heath balance.)

## 4.3 Environmental relationships

Although there are no identified species of particular note in the documented work on the site, there is clearly a wide range of interesting communities over the site as a whole; their diversity is made clear in the BD report, (1998). It must be assumed that this diversity reflects the suitability of the site's physical conditions combined with an appropriate management regime in the past.

Maintaining this situation, besides avoiding the irretrievable loss of much of the site, would appear to depend on keeping an appropriate grazing regime:

i) to maintain the current range of habitats, **many of which are identified in the BAPs; see 1.3 above.**

ii) to maintain the current species diversity within the communities present

iii) to achieve a balance between the grass, tree and shrub communities and between these types of plant within individual communities; i.e. to maintain or improve the diversity and mosaic of communities over much of the site.

iv) to resist pressure to 'improve' other areas of grassland on the site, particularly the pastures below the steading.

v) to exclude stock from most woodland stands.



The best way of achieving this is to manage the site as a whole and this is the approach required by management under Tir Gofal. It seems therefore that the best way forward would be to find a tenant for the site, (who could be the existing tenant), prepared to take the whole site forward to CCW as a candidate for the scheme. Given the existing diversity of the site, given the good/improving conditions of the upland communities, its value to local people and as a prominent block of attractive landscape, then it would appear to be a suitable candidate for early entry into Tir Gofal.

## 5 ACTION PLAN

### 5.1 Specific actions re Management Objectives

5.1.1 Review tenancy situation and consult informally with CCW on the possibility of inclusion into Tir Gofal.

5.1.2 Seek resolution to current planning proposals, where they are not confirmed. If considered appropriate prepare report in defence of the 'proposed' housing land from development.

5.1.3 Contingency requirements would be

i) to consider application to FE under the Woodland Grant Scheme to exclude stock from various woodland stands within an overall management scheme.

ii) to lay hedges as proposed in BID report.

iii) carry out tree plantings/removals as proposed in BID report.

iv) review status of public footpaths and other access tracks, repair as necessary, and develop local contacts.

v) carry out surveys – bats, lepidoptera, birds.

vi) carry out control measures for bracken and Jap. Knotweed.

vii) prohibit agrochemical inputs to the site's pastures.

It is not considered a priority to convert the ley grass fields to wildflower meadows since they represent a potentially useful source of bulk conservation material which agricultural tenants may find valuable under current conditions. Restricting agrochemical inputs under a new tenancy agreement can be designed to promote diversity development over a period of years, a process favoured in TGI applications.

## 5.2 FIVE YEAR PLAN

2001	COST	2002	COST	2003	COST	2004	COST	2005	COST
Review tenancy situation.	In house.	Establish new tenancy conditions	In house.					Review working of tenancy.	
Consult with CCW; tenant applies for entry to Tir Gofal.	In house. £500	If in TG most operations are grant aided to cover their implementation.	Net cost should be low.						
Consult with FE	In house.	Carry out fencing under WGS or TG - plant/remove trees as per BD report.	To be assessed - ? - 800ms @ £3 per meter = £2400					Review success of stock exclusion.	
		Start hedgelaying under TG or other CCW grant aid.	£0	Hedgelaying	£0	Hedgelaying	£0	Review success of hedgelaying.	
Review PFs - Highways Dept?	In house.	Refurbish system as required.	Highways Dept budget						



Commission surveys:	Repeat surveys using volunteer inputs as expertise is available.	In house co-ordination.	Surveys.	Vols.	Surveys	Vols.	Repeat surveys with professional help if necessary.	£2000
Bats	£400							
Lepidoptera	£600							
Birds	£600							
Controls:			Controls:					
Bracken	£100	£100		£50				
Jap. Knot.	£150	£150		£50			Review success of controls.	
TOTALS	£2450	£2650		£100				£2000

### 5.3 Monitoring programme and further studies

The following monitoring programme would yield useful information whether the site is in or not in Tir Gofal:

- 1) The spread and state of dwarf shrub communities.
  - 2) The regeneration of woodland blocks once under controlled grazing or stock exclusion.
  - 3) The state of the grasslands, perhaps through selection of 'indicator' species.
- Surveys of the following have been suggested:
- 1) Bats.
  - 2) Invertebrates.
  - 3) Birds

### 5.4 Funding sources

5.4.1 In the first instance there should (continue to be) revenue sources from the tenancy of the property as an agricultural holding.

5.4.2 CCW As has been suggested this organisation should be approached, perhaps informally in the first place, with a view to inclusion of the site in Tir Gofal. If accepted then there would be both capital and on-going funding for the management of the land, through the tenant.

If not accepted into Tir Gofal then there should be several projects through the LA countryside budget that would be eligible. Priorities should be BAP habitats; heathland, woodlands and semi-natural grassland management. Visitor access and enjoyment, and possibly hedgerow management, should also be promoted.

5.4.3 FC Woodland regeneration work, and possibly plantings, should qualify for grant aid.

5.4.4 EU The New Funding Programme could provide some funds for this type of site.

## 6 PROJECT REGISTER

### 6.1 Existing projects.

There are none known for the site at present.

### 6.2 New projects.

6.2.1 The priority project would appear to cover the review and adoption of an agricultural tenancy such that CCW can accept an application from such a tenant. To this end it would be advisable to consult with CCW in detail as to the potential entry of the site into the TG.

6.2.2 Other land management projects might best be put on hold until the necessary Council decisions and consultations with CCW have taken place.



### 6.3 Future projects.

6.3.1 The proposed surveys would provide valuable information and funding/expertise should be sought for 2002, if not 2001.

6.3.2 Should entry to TG not be agreed or accepted, then the piecemeal adoption of the management proposals, above, would be a second best alternative.

### 6.3.3 SINC status

Using the criteria on page 80 of the UDP, the site merits consideration under:

- (i) Natural and semi-natural communities cover much of the site.
- (ii) The whole site is extensive and the major habitats are similarly large.
- (iii) The site supports a range of habitats, several of which are BAP-listed.
- (vi) The beech woodlands, particularly, appear to be of some age and hence would not be readily replaceable as mature stand types.
- (vii) The grasslands and heath communities are probably quite typical of their class.
- (viii) The site links woodland blocks and abuts onto open moorland above with Special Landscape Status; developments would break this continuity and degrade the landscape through proximity of new buildings..
- (x) Both the woodlands and the acidic grasslands could be considered to be of some age; further survey work might confirm their value to wildlife.

There may also be BAP species on the site, when these have been formulated.

The development proposals, if permitted, would:

- (i) Fragment the site and its communities.
- (ii) Destroy significant areas of acidic grassland and some heath and wet woodland, all BAP habitats committed by LAs to conservation and enhancement.
- (iii) Take new buildings close to a SLA, and thus diminish its value and status.
- (iv) Destroy features of possible historical interest.
- (v) Seriously diminish the recreational value of the site to the local people.

## 7 ANNUAL REVIEW

The success of the programme may best be assessed on an annual basis by setting targets for each coming year in the light of identified funds and human resources. It is suggested that this be done on a calendar basis through the LA staff, or other persons involved, meeting each autumn, reviewing progress, setting targets and identifying responsible parties for each item.

In the case of a successful bid to join TG then the contractual arrangement will be between the tenant and CCW.

In the alternative situation then the various projects will require a responsible person to be identified to carry each project forward:

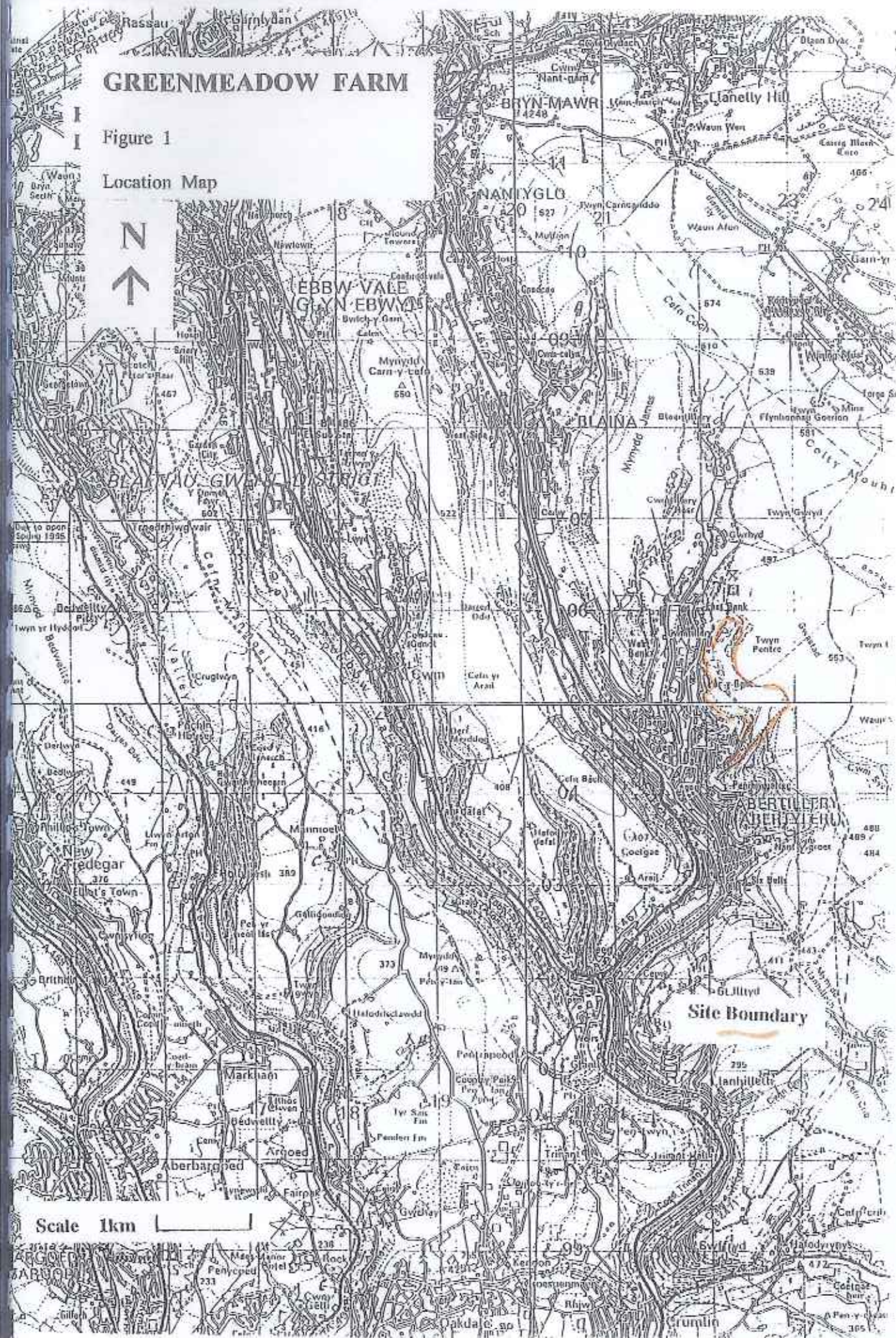
- woodland management, including tree planting and removal.
- grassland and heath management.
- hedge laying.
- bracken and Jap. Knotweed control.
- surveys.
- public footpaths and liaison with local site users.



# GREENMEADOW FARM

Figure 1

Location Map





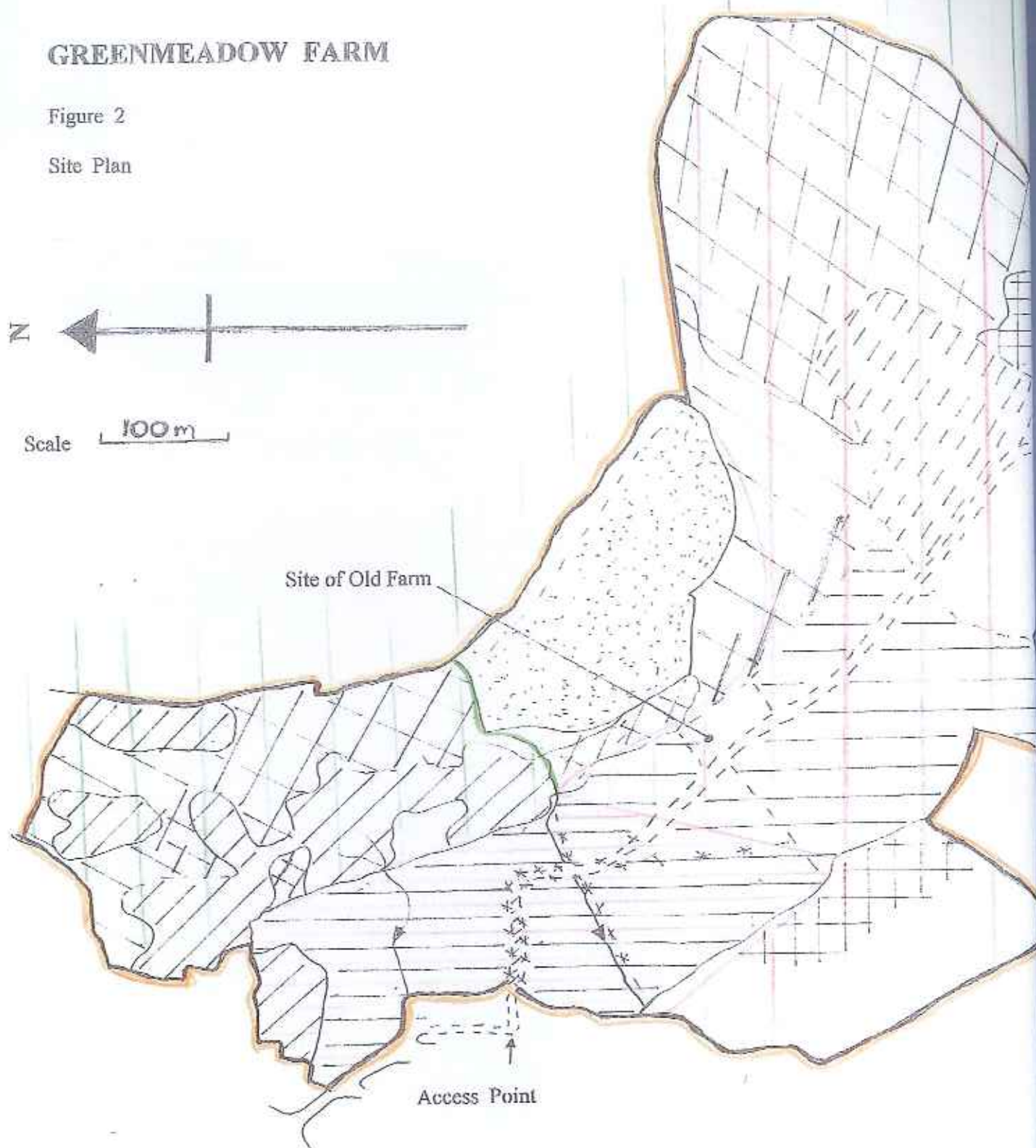
# GREENMEADOW FARM

Figure 2

Site Plan



Scale 100 m





# KEY

## Designations

Housing - H2(42) and H2(74)  
SLA

Tracks, with flag surface &/or old hedge

Streams

Principal U4 grasslands

Main woodland blocks

Old landfill site, (to be woodland?)

Calluna heath

Other heath/grassland,  
and Bracken

Ley grass fields

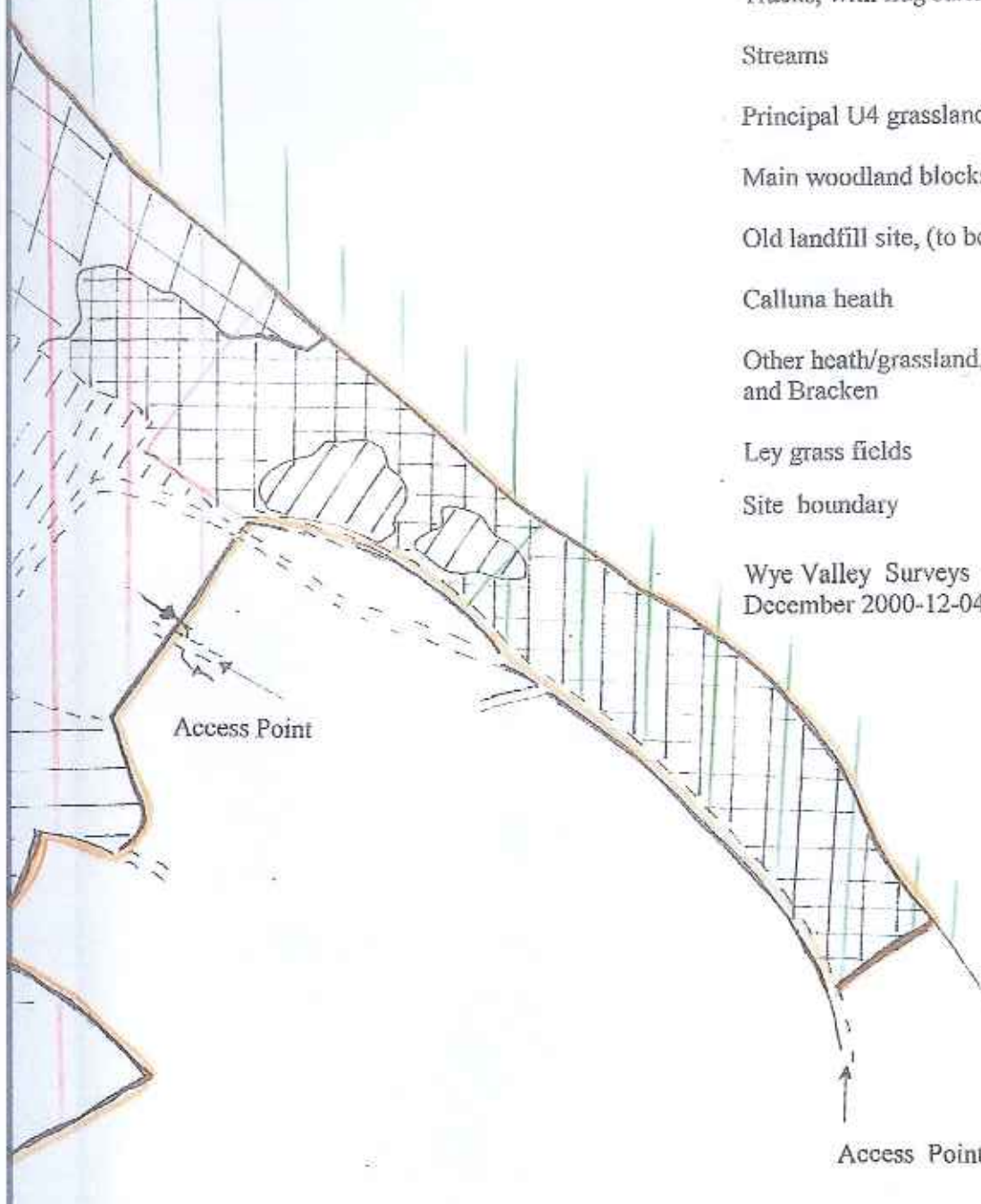
Site boundary

Wye Valley Surveys  
December 2000-12-04

*after Jan Winder  
1998*

Access Point

Access Point



# APPENDIX 2



## **SITE: Greenmeadow Farm**

**SURVEYOR:** Jan Winder

**DATE SURVEYED:** September 1998

Includes all areas

Habitat types include;

U4a *Festuca ovina-Agrostis capillaris-Galium saxatile* grassland typical sub community

U4b *Festuca ovina-Agrostis capillaris-Galium saxatile* grassland, *Holcus lanatus-Trifolium repens* sub community

U4e *Festuca ovina-Agrostis capillaris-Galium saxatile* grassland, *Vaccinium myrtillus-Deschampsia flexuosa*

U20 *Pteridium aquilinum-Galium saxatile* community

MG7 *Lolium perenne* ley

H9 *Calluna vulgaris-Dexchampsia flexuosa* sub-community

H12c *Calluna vulgaris-Vaccinium myrtillus, Galium saxatile* sub-community

M6c *Carex echinata-Sphagnum recurvum/auriculatum* mire, *Juncus effusus* sub-community

M23b *Juncus effusus/acutiflorus-Galium palustre* rush-pasture, *Juncus effusus* sub-community

W7b *Alnus glutinosa-Fraxinus excelsior-Lysimachia nemorum* woodland

W15b *Fagus sylvatica-Deschampsia flexuosa* woodland, *Deschampsia flexuosa* sub-community

W17b *Quercus petraea-Betula pubescens-Dicranum majus* woodland, typical sub-community

W21 *Crataegus monogyna-Hedera helix* scrub

W24 *Rubus fruticosus-Holcus lanatus* scrub

Scrub

Scattered Trees

Spoil

Rock outcrops and quarry

Other grassland

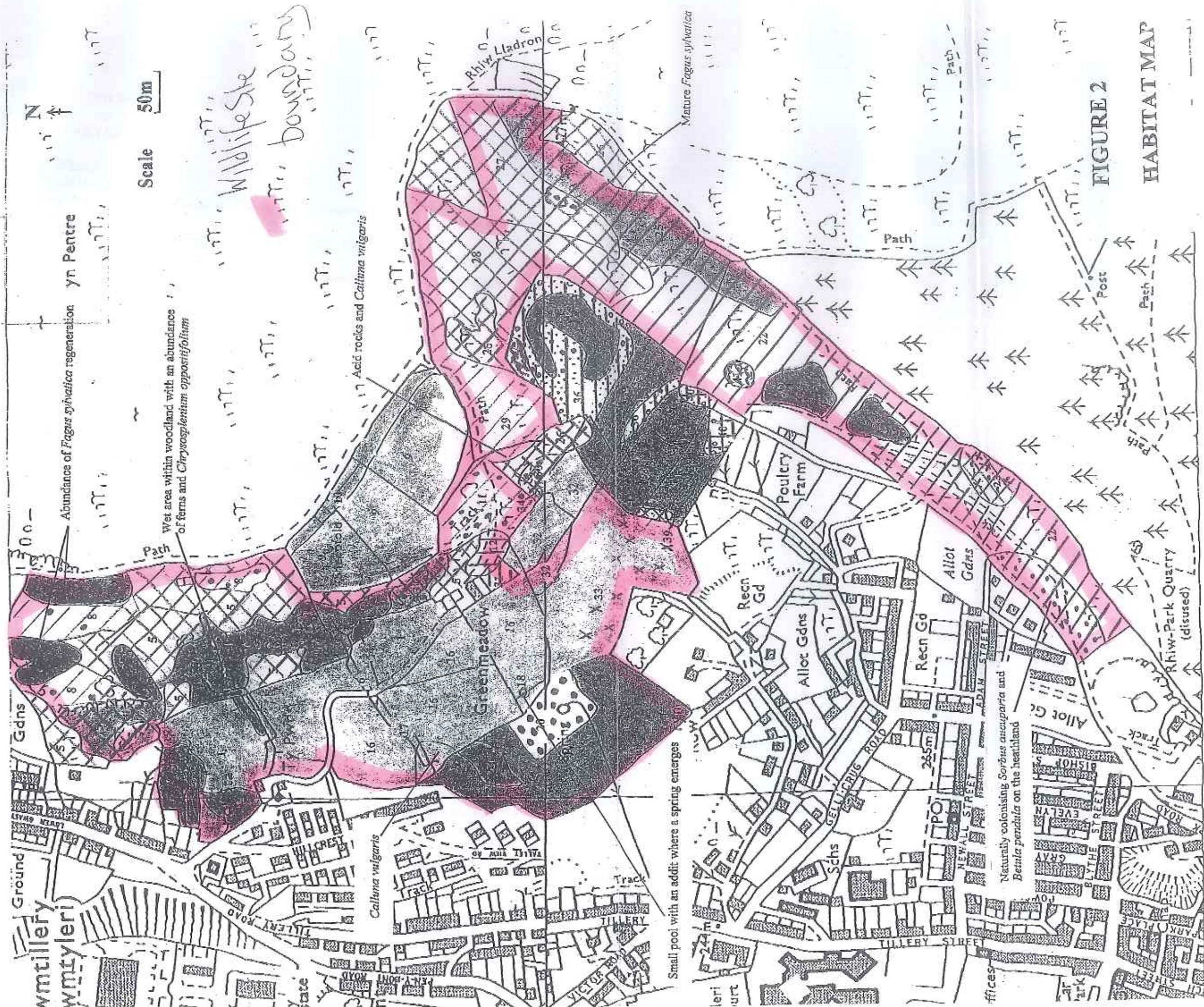
A large area with a relatively diverse mixture of habitats. Areas 1, 8, 11, 15, 27, 29 and 33 are predominantly U4 type acid grasslands which are relatively species rich with *Empetrum nigrum* in places. They all qualify under the Acid Grassland Criteria with >7 species recorded from Table 4 in each of the areas. Amongst these areas are patches of a H12 heathland community, a HAP for Blaenau Gwent, and H9 heath communities, although botanically poor in places they represent an important habitat and qualify under the Heathland Criteria providing at least 10% dwarf shrub heath cover which is unclear in the survey report.

Area 3 is an important wet woodland community and areas 7 and 24 are patches of beech and oak woodland of similar importance. They are all HAP's for Blaenau Gwent and qualify under the Woodland Criteria under 'all semi-natural upland woodlands' should be considered (the site lies at 350m), and 'all semi-natural wet woodlands'.

Amongst the qualifying Wildlife Site area there are areas that do not qualify such as patches of scrub or species poor mire communities of areas 2 and 4, although they are representing M23b communities which is a HAP for Blaenau Gwent. The Wildlife Site boundary includes several of these areas but for the site qualifying against the

Mosaic Habitat Criteria, they do not represent >25% of the total area. They are very important for linking the more valuable areas, and larger patches such as area 16 are very close to Wildlife Site status in their own right. There are several areas that have not been included in the Wildlife Site boundary due to their lack of diversity, however further survey of the surrounding land may indicate the whole area is a small part of a larger Wildlife Site.







# APPENDIX 3



### **Blaenau Gwent SINC expert panel**

The role of the panel is to oversee Blaenau Gwent's SINC system – from the identification and designation of sites to their incorporation into the SINC dataset and subsequent inclusion within the LDP. Members of the panel play an important role in ensuring a consistent approach is applied throughout the SINC system and that this is based on accurate and up to date information.

SINC's or Sites of importance for Nature Conservation are non-statutory sites, which have a substantive value for biodiversity and nature conservation.

All sites are assessed against the criteria set out in the 'Criteria for the selection of SINC in the Mid Valleys Area, 2008' – detailed guidance, which has been developed, from the 'Guidelines for the selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales, 2004'.

All sites that meet these criteria are protected through the planning system – with relevant policies in Planning Policy for Wales (PPW) (2002), Technical Advice Notes 5 (TAN 5) (2009) and Blaenau Gwent's Unitary Development Plan (to be followed by the Local Development Plan in 2011), which require their protection or enhancement.

Policy EN12 states that 'development proposals, which would have a detrimental impact on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), will only be permitted where the need for development outweighs the losses to biodiversity and these losses can be readily mitigated within the county borough area.'

#### The panel's role is to:

- Identify and recommend sites for designation as SINC's.
- Ensure these sites qualify against the 'Criteria for the selection of SINC's in the Mid Valleys area', and that these criteria are applied consistently on all sites.
- Consult Blaenau Gwent biodiversity partnership and other appropriate organisations/individuals on the selection and designation of SINC's.
- Provide information and advice on SINC's and their management to landowners of SINC's, where landowner details are available.
- Respond to ecological objections and comments from landowners and other parties on the designation of SINC's.
- Provide advice to the development of the Mid Valleys SINC Criteria – ensuring these are relevant to Blaenau Gwent County Borough.
- Provide advice and guidance to the Mid Valleys Wildlife sites Steering Group, in the review, designation and management of SINC's.

- Create and manage a comprehensive dataset of all SINC's, including spreadsheet of all SINC details and GIS layer, ensuring all data is accurate and up to date.

#### Role of the Local Planning Authority

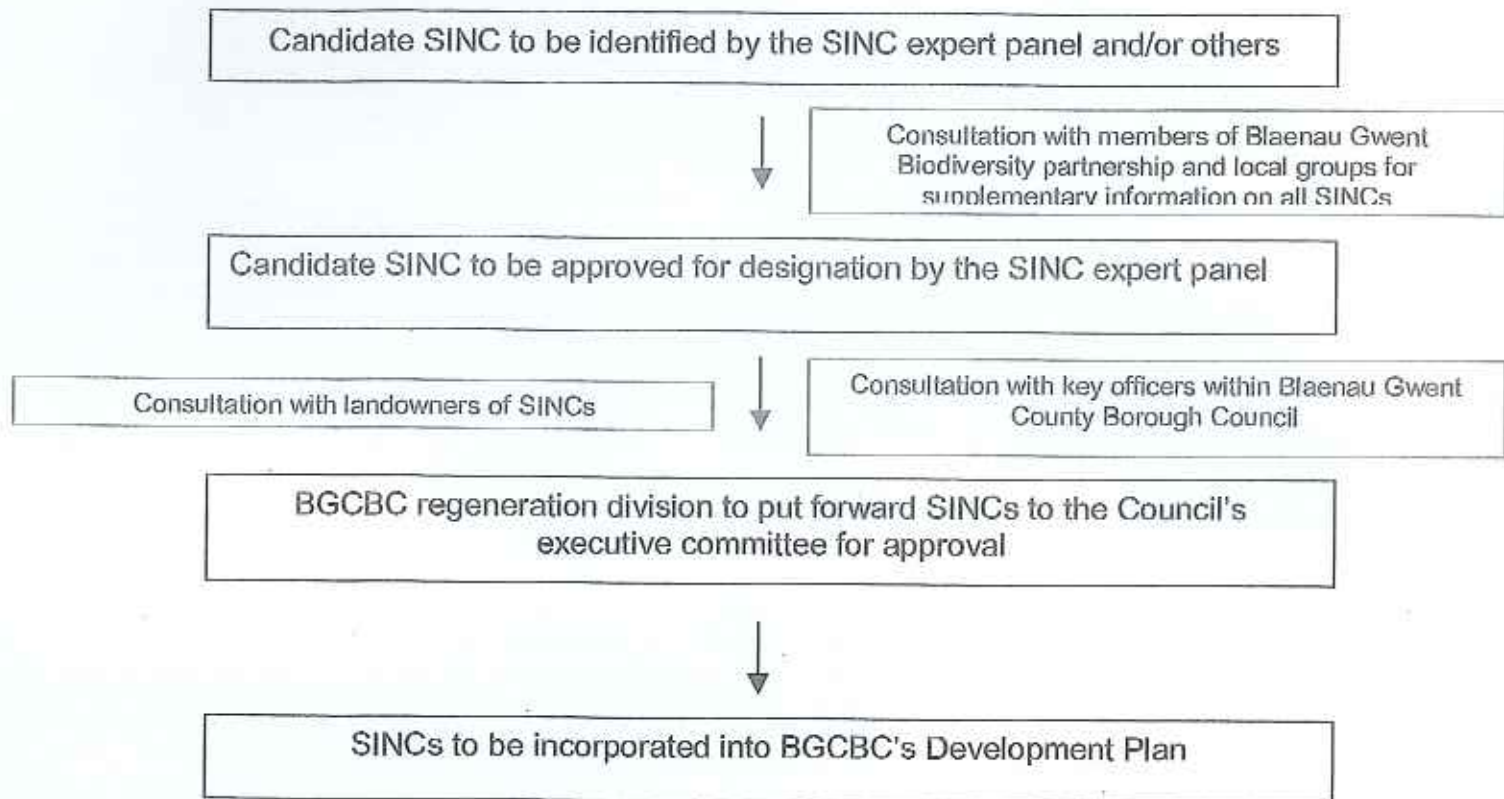
- Approve the designation of sites put forward by the SINC expert panel, to include them in the Local Development Plan
- Incorporate policies within the local development plan, which can be applied to the protection or enhancement of SINC's
- Be responsible for all planning matters relating to individual SINC's within Blaenau Gwent
- Make arrangements for supplying information on SINC's within the administrative area to members of the public, according to statutory duties

*Decisions on the SINC designations are a matter for the local individual local planning authority and any challenge to such as designation through the courts or otherwise has to be made against the local planning authority and not the SINC expert panel*



**Appendix 1: The SINC designation process**

The following simplified flow diagram explains the SINC designation process. Each candidate site once identified will be subject to this process:



**Appendix 2: Current membership of the SINC expert panel**

Claire Pooley (chair and secretary)	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Gemma Bode	Gwent Wildlife Trust
Rebecca Price	Gwent Wildlife Trust
Julian Woodman	Countryside Council for Wales
Rob Bacon	Countryside Council for Wales
Martin Anthony	Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership



**Notes taken from SINC expert panel meeting to discuss 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche sites  
On the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010, business Resource centre, Tredegar**

1.

**Present**

Claire Pooley	CP
Rebecca Davies	RD
Julian Woodman	JW
Rob Bacon	RB
Rebecca Price	RB
Martin Anthony	MA

**2. Background**

CP gave background to meeting –in the last two meetings, the SINC expert panel have approved the designation of 164 sites, which meet the SINC criteria (previously the South Wales Guidelines and now the criteria for the Mid Valleys area). These sites have now been incorporated into the constraints map for the LDP (to be adopted in 2011), following the approval of the SINC designations by the executive committee in November 2009.

The aim of this meeting is to go through the 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche of sites and for the group to approve the designation of these as SINC sites. These sites were identified as potential SINC sites, following initial biodiversity assessments of candidate LDP sites (as part of the LDP consultation process). GWT have carried out surveys on all of these LDP sites over 2008/09 with those assessed in 2008, being included in the second tranche of SINC sites. From the 2009 surveys, 12 out of 27 sites were found to meet the SINC criteria and therefore SINC forms have been produced for each one.

**3. cSINC sites**

**LDP sites**

**Drysiog farm (B10)**

Qualifies as SINC under H6) Acid grassland

Part of the site should be designated as a SINC and as adjacent to the SINC Mynydd manmoel, should be incorporated into the larger SINC.

*CP/RP/RD to check whether site can be incorporated into Mynydd Manmoel SINC*

**Land off park hill crescent, Ebbw Vale (B11)**

Qualifies under H6) acid grassland, H10) Heathland and grass heath communities and H18) Mineral spoil tips and other post industrial land  
Species rich to the west of the site

Part of the site should be designated

Likely to support dingy skipper

**Cwm slopes, Festival park (B18)**

Qualifies under H5) calcareous grasslands, H18) mineral spoil tips and other post industrial land and H1) Woodlands

Notable species present include small scabious

Likely to be good for invertebrates such as grayling

May be information on species from recent SEWBRc searches for larger site  
*CP to check SEWBRc data from recent LDP searches*

**Land at Park view, Beaufort (B23)**

Qualifies under H4) neutral grasslands and H7) marshy grasslands  
Good mosaic of habitats. Should not be included in river SINC but area  
between this site and river should be.  
*RD to incorporate area between this site and the river, into the river SINC*

**Nant y Croft, Rassau (B35)**

Qualifies under H4) neutral grasslands  
Eastern part of LDP site meets criteria and should therefore be designated

**Land to the rear of Glyndwr road, Rassau (B41)**

Qualifies under H4) neutral grassland  
Species rich neutral grassland  
2 sites together qualify as a SINC

**Land east of pant view houses, Coed cae (C2)**

Qualifies under H6) acid grassland and H10) heathland and grass heath  
communities  
Site managed as a unit with varying levels of grazing in the past  
Should remain a separate SINC despite being adjacent to the larger SINC –  
mynydd James.

**Croesyceiliog farm, nantyglo (C4)**

Qualifies under H4) Neutral grassland, H6) Acid grassland, H10) Heathlands  
and grass heath communities and H18) mineral spoil on other post industrial  
land  
Previous surveys were undertaken on this site by GWT, and site therefore  
already designated as SINC  
Information from two surveys needs to be incorporated into one SINC form  
*RD to incorporate all information from 2 SINC forms into one Nantyglo  
meadow*

**Quarry at Glifach wen Farm, Six bells (D9)**

Qualifies under H6) Acid grasslands, H10) Heathlands and grass heath  
communities, H21) Rock exposures and H18) Mineral spoil tips and other post  
industrial land  
Revegetated quarry, with exposed limestone face  
Grazed by a single pony

**Land east of Bournville road (D29)**

Qualifies under H7) Marshy grassland and H12) Bog habitats  
Areas of devils bit scabious recorded  
This species present at adjacent site – Roseheyworth, where small pearl  
bordered are known to be found  
The first field should be a separate SINC. Other fields in the east of the site  
do not qualify as a SINC alone but should be considered as part of  
Roseheworth SINC



*CP/RD/RP to check whether this site could be incorporated into the Roseheyworth SINC*

**Land adjacent to Dukestown cemetery (A41)**

Qualifies under H4) neutral grassland

Managed as a hay meadow

50% neutral grassland with other areas being more acidic

SINC also adjacent to this site and it may be worth joining these 2 sites together

Dingy skipper present at Bryn Serth, so could be found here if birds foot trefoil present

*CP/RP/RD to check whether 2 adjacent SINC's can form 1 SINC*

**Rear of cwm terrace (B2)**

Qualifies under H20) mosaic habitats and common land

Adjacent to beech woodland

Amenable landowners

May be possible to incorporate site into larger SINC – including adjacent woodland although part of this is coniferous plantation

*RP to have a look at the area to the south and determine whether it meets SINC criteria*

**4. Next steps**

- Boundaries to be amended
- All landowners are to be contacted with information on SINC's and survey results
- All sites that are identified as SINC's from now on to go onto waiting list for approval by BGCBC committee and inclusion within LDP constraints map

A separate group is being formed to develop a wildlife sites project across the mid valleys area (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff). This group will include reps from the LA's and other key conservation organisations. They are aiming to review all the SINC's across the area and produce a new dataset – from this it will be possible to identify any gaps and prioritise areas for designation/as well as sites that need to be reviewed. Following on from this the group hope to pursue the development of a wildlife sites project where sites can be managed positively for biodiversity.

Prior to the next wildlife sites meeting, which is expected to be in April, each LA will select 1 or 2 sites

CP suggested Trefil – a large area, which is currently not designated as a SINC

**Actions**

*CP to check survey reports and speak to Jan Winder to find out if reason why this area should not be designated*

*RD to send all a copy of the mid valleys SINC map - done*



**Notes taken from SINC expert panel meeting to discuss 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche sites  
On the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Civic centre, Ebbw Vale**

1.

**Apologies**

Chris Hatch	CH
Jan Winder	JW
Stuart Craxford	SC

**Present**

Claire Pooley	CP
Rebecca Davies	RD
Luke Phillips	LP
Julian Woodman	JW
Gemma Bode	GB
Rebecca Price	RB
Martin Anthony	MA

**2. Background**

CP gave background to meeting – in the previous meeting, the group had agreed that 64 sites should be designated as SINC. A draft report was produced by DB and circulated within the council for consultation – this took longer than expected and therefore all sites (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche) will be put together and included in one report for committee. The aim is to get these sites designated by April so that they are included in the LDP although further sites identified can be added to the ecological constraints map at a later date.

The aim of this meeting is to go through the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of sites, which includes grasslands, LDP, watercourses, Local nature reserve and pond sites, and to agree on the designation of these as SINC.

**3. 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche cSINC**

**Watercourses**

RP/BD looked at 5 main watercourses in BG and covered with a blanket designation according to the mid valleys SINC criteria. This states that a fixed boundary of 7m should be used except when adjacent areas are developed or degraded. Also possible to designate watercourses using the presence of species including otters, dipper and migrating fish.

• **Ebbw**

Whole stretch of river covered with designation; River qualifies against criteria for watercourses and also for presence of otters, dippers and migratory fish species.

Small areas not designated - where longer areas are culverted i.e. area through the works, Ebbw Vale. EA have confirmed that areas above the culvert are not used by migrating fish species. The group suggested that the ends of the culverts were still covered by designation, as these parts may still be used to a certain extent by different species. LP added that nest boxes

had been put up in the culvert and were used by dippers. Therefore it was decided to designate 20m up from end of culverts

Part of the river runs through Caerphilly – this has been raised with them and they aim to designate it.

➤ *Action*

*LP to check records of nesting birds, as evidence for designation*

- Ebbw Fach

Same reasons for designation.

No issues

- Sirhowy

Same reasons for designation

RP enquired whether GOS had any data for this area

LP confirmed that dipper using the river, also common sandpiper and curlew using.

Some areas now have double designations where they meet different criteria for designation i.e. river runs through shon sheffreys reservoir, this reservoir is designated as SINC for grassland habitat on banks and is now also designated as part of watercourse SINC

➤ *Action*

*RP to get records from LP*

- Afon Tyleri

Small River that runs through number of reservoirs

No fish data available but concentrated otter records

- Clydach

RP has discussed with BBNP regarding part of river, which runs along boundary of BGCBC and BBNP, the ownership is unclear and therefore it was decided that this part of the river should be designated by BG.

### **LDP sites**

CP informed the group that a number of sites had been identified through preliminary assessments carried out by DB on sites, which have been put forward for development in LDP. Further surveys have been carried out by GWT to assess these against SINC criteria. So far 6 sites assessed and 4 of these have met criteria.

- Rhyd y blew

Only basic vegetation survey carried out and requires further info to give notification some weight. Need to pull together species records – bird data from GOS.

➤ *Action*



*LP to pass on records to RP*

- Tirpentwys

Again further info required to give weight to designation

➤ *Action*

*LP to pass on data*

*CP also to forward pond survey info from CH*

Other LDP sites

- Wetland centre

No issues

- Blaen Y Cwm School

No issues

### **Local Nature Reserves**

- Parc Bryn Bach

GB commented that JW had carried out a survey on the site and identified MG5 communities, which don't appear to be recorded on current SINC forms. Would be worth adding this as gives extra weight to designation

➤ *Action*

*CP to check*

Also RP added that SW SINC criteria had been used rather than Mid valleys criteria. This was done due to BG not adopting these criteria at the time however better to use same criteria – differences in postindustrial habitat.

- Cwmtillery Lakes

Again assessed using SW criteria

JW asked whether any species records from BC/GOS

None from BC

LP added that there were records of kingfishers, dippers and coot using stream between the 2 lakes

MA reported that all records should be verified by county recorders

➤ *Action*

*CP to check management plans for raw data*

### **Grasslands**

- Arail North

Issues with boundary

It was agreed that 3 fields should be designated one SINC

- Cefn Bach

Issues again with boundary

As SINC boundary does not meet any physical boundary on the ground Adjacent to coal spoil which may potentially meet criteria and therefore whole area could be designated. Need to include in further surveys.

- Edge of Mulfran

LP added that Long eared owl have been using the site for lat 5 years

- Nantyglo meadow

RP commented that really good example of hay meadow in BG

JW added that where lots of sites designated were adjacent to each other and should consider designating as one whole SINC – added that this was a common issues in many LA's and JW added that he would be raising this with Nigel AL (WT)

RP highlighted land adjacent to Noble Square – an area that may be threatened by industrial estate

➤ *Action*

*CP to check LDP allocations*

MA commented that useful species in the designation of SINC's are the dingy skipper and grayling – these species like trefoil and are now being found in more sites including spoil sites across the western valleys

#### **Ponds**

Discussions over the boundary of pond SINC's – pond groups have been identified with 10m buffers, as suggested by mid valleys criteria. Noted that semi natural habitat between ponds should be included in designation as provide important links to ponds for many species.

➤ *Action*

*CP to contact CH and arrange meeting with BD to look at each pond group and see if possible to designated whole areas.*

#### **4. Next steps**

Next steps are to obtain landowner and Rights of Way information, contact landowners and produce report, which can be taken to committee

This needs to be completed by April



**SINC Expert Panel Meeting  
18 March 2008**

**1. Present/Apologies**

Deb Beeson (DB) BGCBC, Colin Cheesman (CC) BGCBC, Gemma Bode (GB) GWT, Martin Anthony (MA) Butterfly Cons, Rebecca Davies (RD) SEWBReC, Jan Winder (JW)

**Apologies**

Julian Woodman JW (CCW), Mike Launder ML (CCW), Rebecca Price RP (GWT), Nicola Hawkeswood (NH)

**2. Minutes from Last Meeting**

It was reported that it is Hawkeswood Ecology not Hawkeswood Consultancy Ltd as stated in mins.

GB can't remember outcome of *Nittella flexus* status. If naturally scarce should go into description. RD to check description

**Shon Sheffrey**

Decided to include whole of lake. CC reported that it is down as cSINC in Mesotrophic Lake Report done by Hawkeswood Ecology

Jan Winder wants copy of Ward boundary map.

**3. Feedback from Landowner Letters**

DB gave update on SINC landownership feedback. Most of the feedback had been positive but Mr. Davies (Cwmcelyn West Woodland) and Mrs. Pitt (Troedrhiwgwair Grassland) unhappy that permission has not been granted to survey their land. GWT said that they were sure that permission had been obtained by land-owners who may have forgotten they'd been contacted. Also, as a result of consultation, a new member of Bird Sub Group of BG Biodiversity Partnership had been recruited – Mr. Ken Humphries!

**Action:**

- **RD agreed to remove woodland being used as a play-area which had been requested by Mr. Davies.**

**4. Next Step with First Tranche**

**Action**

- **SEWBReC to finalise sheets and produce map of all cSINC's for next meeting. Also needed for Committee report.**
- **RD to run search for Section 42 species and incorporate information onto sheets. List needs updating**
- **DB to produce committee report and get all 64 through committee**

## **5. Second Tranche**

Group discussed a number of sites that may qualify as cSINC's that have been put forward by Jane Corey.

SEWBRc to receive grassland SINC's from GWT and put onto GIS  
DB stated that Eric Hawkeswood would be commissioned to do lake notification sheets – there weren't many as most already covered

Jan Winder has been commissioned to complete SINC notification sheets for 42 individual ponds based upon pond data. This information will then be passed onto SEWBRc to digitise the maps. 10m buffer agreed.

Also, a number of pond groups have been identified which need assessment this year. A total of 9 groups have been identified. Colin and Jan have met and gone through this list to see if any are already covered by other site designations.

**Number of sites that may qualify as cSINC's has been put forward by Jane Corey which were discussed:**

### **Festival Park**

CC doesn't think that woodland has been picked up in survey. Regenerating oak woodland has been picked up on slope. Look at woodland survey.

### **Beechwood South of Cwm**

Already forms part of cSINC - east of Penrhiwngwini

### **Cwmbig**

Agreed possible survey area

Mixed conifer woodland. Doesn't form part of SINC. Possibly PAWS site. Need desk study carried out by Jan Winder of where conifers have been planted on ancient woodland site. Possibly Forestry Commission site. DB to ask Vaughan

### **Hillside above Abertillery to Blaina Rd**

Possibly area to look at this year in grassland survey

### **Long stretch of woodland**

Possibly covered by existing SINC's – Coed Argoed and Coed Cae Coch Aberbeeg

Similar Stretch either side of road between Llanhilleth/Swffryd

Possibly covered by Craig Swffryd.

**Action: DB to request boundary maps from Jane Corey**

**A number of sites had also been put forward by Jeremy Richards, included:**

1. Hafod Rd above old Blackrock Rd - in BG
2. Aneurin Crescent, Brynmawr – old Landfill site



3. Blackrock Quarry – old landfill – in Monmouthshire  
**Action: DB to have meeting with Jeremy and ask for boundary maps.**

#### **Rhyd y Blew**

Potential allocation in UDP. Need to treat like any other site and do survey.

**Action: It was agreed that this site would be surveyed as part of tranche 2 to see if it qualified**

**GWT to contact Steve Spode – say SINC Expert Panel made a decision and for permission to survey.**

**MA to do moth trapping**

#### **Bryn Serth cSINC**

There was discussion about Bryn Serth. Allocation in UDP – already has planning permission. CC believes that WAG will starve Newbridge of development grants until it can develop Rhyd y Blew. Renewal coming up in 2011 – could object if failed to renew.

#### **River SINC Update**

GB gave update. Using EA data for brown trout and salmon. Start adding otter, crayfish, water vole, bullhead. Kingfisher, dipper data will also be used to fill in gaps.

**Agreed to focus on main river as opposed to tributaries with appropriate buffer. SINC notification sheets to be produced by GWT on 4 rivers in BG by Dec 2008.**

#### **Lake SINC Update**

CC spoke to Nicola – identified a number of lakes which needed record cards producing – Cwmcelyn Pond, Cwmtillery Lakes (included), Garmlydan (done), Machine Pond (done), Shon Sheffrey (done), Waun y Pound (done), Carno Reservoir (done).

**Action: BGCBC to commission Eric Hawkeswood to produce SINC form for Cwmcelyn Pond**

#### **Ponds SINC Update**

5 pond groups identified – reduced from 9

Include Beaufort Hills – 2 groups outside cLNR/cSINC designation, Howell Jukes land, Mr. Lloyds Farm, Long Feeder pond group (4 ponds)

Boundary – agreed to stick to 10m buffer in guidelines

**Action: JW to survey pond groups and assess**

#### **Grassland**

CC to speak to Rebecca Davies about amalgamating some of the grassland sites

**Action: CC to identify grassland areas, which need surveying for this year as part of grasslands survey. Include colliery spoil tip sites.**

**CC to work out monitoring scheme for SINC**

**RD to produce list and boundary map for second tranche**

**6. Next Stages**

**Action:**

***CCW will write to Chief Exec at Council about meeting urging council to approve all 64 Sites.***

**7. AOB**

None

**Date of next meeting**

***Early December 2008 to approve second tranche and ensure all sites are identified on constraints map.***



**BGCBC SINC Panel Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008**  
**Ebbw Vale Learning Centre**

**Present:**

Martin Anthony (MA)	Local Recorder/Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership
Jan Winder (JW)	Birches Consultancy
Colin Cheesman (CC)	BGCBC
Deborah Beeson (DB)	BGCBC
Eric Hawkeswood (EH)	Hawkeswood Consultancy
Rebecca Price (RP)	GWT
Rebecca Davies (RD)	SEWBRcC
Julian Woodman (JWdn)	CCW
Gemma Bodé (GB)	GWT
Mike Launder (ML)	CCW

**Apologies:**

Adrian Wood (AW)	Wye Valley Surveys
Nikki Hawkeswood (NH)	Hawkeswood Consultancy

Dcb introduced the background as to how we have got to where we are today with the list of candidate SINC's.

**Mosaic Sites**

- M1: Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodland

CCW Phase II'd it around 1991 – get copy for SINC pack from CCW. MA asked to confirm which guidelines we were working with, DB confirmed the *Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales* not the new Valleys specific criteria

- M2 Bournville Slip

JW mentioned that *Wahlenbergia hederacea* was present on the site. MA asked for all these sheets to be put on a CD so we can have a look at in more detail, GB just underlined these sheets were summary sheets of much more detailed survey information

- M3 Bryn Bach School

Tree planting on Area A now since JW surveyed site, DB mentioned they were keen to get a BAGS scheme for this site to remove some of the trees. Further discussion on Area A led to decision that the site be included but DB and CC to ensure BAGS scheme to remove some of the trees, sawwort and devils bit scabious though still known to present within the grassland sward.

- M4 Bryn Farm

JWdn raised why it was separated from M1 site? CC mentioned culturally the 2 sites have always been separate and DB mentioned the 2 sites will make one LNR. All boundaries are physical boundaries. JW mentioned the pond complex to the south of the site would also qualify. It was agreed to keep the 2 sites separate.

- M5 Bryn Serth

Area 4 allocated for industrial development rest of the site has been given over as an LNR, a lot of local opposition to development. Rodney Morris a local naturalist has been campaigning about this site.

- M6 Cefn Bach

Part allocated for development where football pitch is and low density housing recommended.

- M7 Coalbrookvale

Two dates for survey. Listed as Jan Winders site but Jan thinks it was Adrian Woods. Southern part of site lost due to WDA reclamation scheme about 5 years ago.



- M8 Garden City

JWdn noted the description doesn't mention the bog habitats. Small section of site allocated for housing north of road. Boundary needs moving, EH recommended boundary kept to show degree of loss of SINC's in BG. CC discussed need to have a system whereby BG can keep track of loss of SINC's. RD to change the boundary but ensure BG are given the amount of loss for these sites – habitat type and area that have been developed on and therefore lost.

- M9 Garnlydan

Little Ringed Plover and Curlew to add to this site information. East of boundary is Monmouthshire, MA says wonderful for butterflies. JW has surveyed some ponds to the south but they are included in this boundary but one of them to the south of the boundary is not. Recommended by all to include pond in new boundary instead of making a separate SINC.

- M10 Green Meadow Farm

Query over how sites qualify and use of mosaic habitat qualification and individual habitat types. GB had assessed surveys against WS Guidelines and she explained that some of the surveyors had species lists for each habitat type and area whereas some just had one species list for the whole site. Large chunk of site is allocated for development.

- M11 Mulfran, Mynydd Coity, Mynydd James & Gwastad.

JWdn asked about Torfaen side and RD mentioned they are in the process of designating the other side. Silurian moth present on this site – only site in Britain.

- M12 Mynydd Bedwellte

- M13 Mynydd Carn y Cefn

- M14 Mynydd Manmoel

No Comments made

- M15 Parc Nanty Waun

DB mentioned they are looking at designating this site as an LNR, also a Friends group exists for this site. JWdn has Phase II'd this site as Beaufort Hills. Heavily used by the public in very urban surroundings. CC mentioned that the description has been included was from the Consultancy and needs editing.

- M16 Roseheyworth

MA mentioned small pearl bordered fritillary present on southern section next to housing now on Sec 42 list. DB mentioned it should be called Roseheyworth Community Woodlands

- M17 Six Bells Collicry

Pressure on site to get it developed with school and housing. WDA trashed site to get it redeveloped about 4 years ago. DB asked JW if the boundary should include the rest of the river and also whether the woodland out on a limb should be included. JW said the river has been canalised and the woodland is more like tree planting. To the west is further river and woodland although no survey has been carried out but CC also mentioned about rivers and streams being included in the whole SINC network. BG have to get all SINC's sorted by April 09 due to LDP timescale. Site has also been surveyed by Just Mammals and otters are known to have moved through the site. So CC recommended river be included with SINC boundary. DB mentioned they are looking to get site designated as an LNR as its used by local people.

- M18 St James Reservoir



This was also surveyed by Nikki Hawkeswood as well. JWn asked about bird species for this site, EH remembered coal tit, wood warbler and chiff chaff, poor for water birds though as its quite enclosed.

- M19 Swfydd Fach

GB explained a bit more about the site and how she got access as JW had been turned down in the past.

- M20 Waun y Pound

Amended boundary from previous meeting discussion. Also boundary omits an important pond. Spoil heaps not included in this boundary. Description needs to be rewritten to omit the bits not now included in the industrial site area.

### Ponds

- P1 Sertex Ponds

Amend description of site because it was written by consultants. JWdn recommends change macro-algae to charophyte in description. *Nitella flexus* is this Nationally scarce? Needs checking.

- P2 Ducky and small Ducky

Not effected by development but road widening, GWT been written to from local residents – check PA with Sorrel.

### Grassland Sites

- G1 Bedwellty Pits Field

JW asked if open water is included as she has surveyed the ponds present which do qualify so they need to be included in this site. RP discussed that we have surveyed sites to Phase 11/2 and then the sites have been translated to NVC on the maps which doesn't always work very well.

- G2 Blaentillery Farm North

MA mention Blaentillery Farm has records of Silurian moth but is unsure if this site includes it. Two sites north and south here with one of Adrian Woods woodlands in between. MA has map with Silurian moth plots that needs checking with these sites. Chunk of under qualifying habitat between two sites. JWdn says could call the sites one thing but not include the fields in-between. Conclude to leave them as separate sites if its more work to combine them

- G3 Blaentillery Farm South

JW mentioned the pond in top corner of site which qualifies on its own.

- G4 Chapel House Field

No Comments

### -----Lunch Break-----

- G5 Fairview Field

No comments made

- G6 Garn ddu Meadow

CC wondered if this was the area where CC and JW walked the bypass route so there should be additional records from this walk over survey for this site.

- G7 Highlands Grassland

No Comments made

- G8 Hirgan Fields Grassland

100 Southern marsh orchids – refer back to original survey for field reference and also Hirgan meadow refer back to original sketch map. This whole site is allocated for employment and the dualling heads of the valleys goes through it. CC has argued to take it out of employment so atleast some is left, the site will be split into two with the road.

RP noted relevant field numbers for references in description on DB's version of summary sheet.

- G9 Industrial Estate Grasslands

This site lies adjacent to the Sirhowy Woodlands site but is to be kept separate.

- G10 Lower Farm Field

No Comments made

- G11 Lower Trodrhiwgwair Grassland

CC asked if normally we excluded peoples properties? From planning point of view bit of a nightmare due to conservatory applications etc. will be within a SINC. DB/RD to remove house/gardens from SINC boundaries.

- G12 Milgatw Farm Grassland

No comments

- G13 Nine Arches Grassland

Part of the site has been allocated for transport. MG5/M23 is down as a tipping area for overburden.

- G14 North Pen-y-lan Grassland

- G15 Pine Tree House Grassland

No Comments

- G16 Sheepfold Grasslands

Another housing allocation for the whole site. Also has a pond in where the landowner has applied for a fishing pond. JW did not get permission to survey this one and did not know it was owned by BGCBC. Pond did qualify as a SINC.

- G17 Shon Sheffreys Reservoir banks

JWdn mentioned this was another PII site. Does the lake qualify? One of NH lakes that she has surveyed. JWdn mentioned boundary also doesn't include dammed banks and it should be included in the SINC boundary RP agreed this is an error on the map.

- G18 South Pen-y-lan Grassland

No comments

- G19 The Fountain Inn Meadows

RP discussed that access was denied but viewed from public footpath

- G20 Tredegar Leisure Centre Grasslands

- G21 Tredegar Patch Grassland

- G22 Trefil Village Grassland

- G23 Upper Troedrhiwgwair Grasslands

No Comments to these sites

CC mentioned about the old quarry at Trefil and why that is included perhaps should be included in the next Tranch of sites. AW has surveyed this site before for BGCBC and also he ha surveyed it more recently for the quarry companies.

## Woodlands

- W1 Coed Argodd

This site was surveyed by John Wohlgemuth in 1997 and this is why on the NVC map on the data sheet the northern section is blank. CC explained AW had carried out a condition survey only for all of the woodlands in 2005. RD needs to translate the map from Johns survey.

- W2 Coed Trostre

No comments made

- W3 Coed y Gilfach



JWdn discussed all Beech Woodlands are natural up here and should go through anyway. CC added that adding SINC status to woodlands adds further protection from just Ancient Woodland protection

- W4 Coedcae Coch
- W5 Craig Swyffryd

No comments made

- W6 Cwm Big North

Error on in mapping on this site no key for darker shaded area RD to check.

- W7 Cwm Celyn East
- W8 Cwm Celyn West

No comments made

- W9 Darren Due

JWdn noted error in name it should be Darren Ddu. Difficult shading on map hard to see habitat due to backing map.

- W10 East of Gwastad Farm

JW noted that Gwastad SINC is above this site. CC discussed decision made to keep woodland and mosaic SINC's separate.

- W11 East of Penrhiwgwngi
- W12 Garn Cam Isaf
- W13 Llanerch Padarn West

No comments

- W14 Llanerch Padarn East

This site is borderline and AW was unsure if it was SINC quality. JW wondered if it was included in the Mynydd James block but CC said it was not. GB suggested AW should make a recommendation but CC mentioned the decision really needed to be a panel decision. The decision was made to include it as it is an upland woodland that should be considered for selection in the WS Guidelines.

- W15 North of Hendre

No comments

- W16 Sirhowy Hill Woodlands & Cardiff Pond

DB mentioned this was another site to be designated as an LNR.

- W17 Swffryd Wood

JWdn noted typo in name should be Swffryd Wood

- W18 South of Troedrhiwgwair
- W19 West of Blaentillery Farm

No comments

JWdn asked if there was a map with all the sites on? JW is wondering if we have missed out a woodland south west of "West of Blaentillery Farm" Could be included in Mynydd James SINC anyway?

DB asked if the panel still want discs with notification sheets on? Only MA to receive them to add any records to that he might have.

-----Break-----

### **Next Stages**

Landowners need to be informed and land that hasn't been registered is difficult to know who owns. All sites have been through estates and also land registry to see who landowners are. GB asked what the percentage was of the 64 sites that we don't know who owns them are? Mainly woodland sites and DB is going to draft a letter and send out to possible owners. There will be a form of consultation to the landowners.

DB will need to prepare a committee report. Does a new SPG need drafting or can it be tied into current biodiversity SPG? BGCBC planners are trying to put together a constraints map to help inform their work and can be updated quickly when new sites are adopted.

2nd Tranch will most likely be mostly ponds, JW mentioned there would be about 40 single ponds and 8 pond groups, this doesn't include the lakes. Mesotrophic lakes survey – DB/CC needs to be updated as to what issues are with NH. DB mentioned standard 10m buffer but JW needs to resurvey pond groups.

EA are very keen to designate river sites. DB would prefer if EA take a lead on designating watercourses. Methyr have already designated a river. DB to have a meeting with EA to progress.

All SINC's must be designated by 2009 to be included in the LDP process

#### **SINC information to Consultants**

RD explained what they have been doing so far which is just sending out a copy of the front sheet. DB discussed internal requests for information was agreed she just needs to have a copy without the landowner details on.

DB asked about any further grassland from GWT from 2007 survey RP said there were 15 more. JWdm asked if RP could provide a MIF file which would have all the SINC's on for CCW after this first Tranch.

#### **Timetable**

March/April 2008 decision made for further surveys in BG and also species SINC's meeting to be arranged

November 2008 Draft list to be considered for January Panel meeting

January 2009 Another Panel meeting

April 2009 deadline for all SINC's

JWdm discussed rare plant register and rare plant register from VC35 so for plants. Regarding other species some records can be pulled out of SEWBReC but GOS records still aren't all with the record centre or Trevor Evans botanical records.

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 DONM. Sites for future survey to be recommended**

#### **AOB**

Monitoring – Aerial photos CCW have them 2006. SSSI is 6 months after notification. Recommended come up with degree of threat for each habitat relating to how often they need monitoring e.g. grasslands are high priority.

CC expressed his thanks to DB and RD for all their hard work and GWT also, for creating such a robust SINC System for Blaenau Gwent



**File Note of Meeting of SINC Expert Panel**  
**15 Jan 2008**

**Summary of action Points**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tranche**

- RD to send MA copy of SINC on disc immediately after the meeting to add invertebrate data. Rest of the Panel agreed that they didn't want to comment further.
- RD to undertake all amendments to sheets and return to DB on disc before 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. DB to draft landownership letter and send out. Sites with no registered landowners seek legal advice – possibly put notice on land – panel didn't think there was a legal obligation to consult landowners but need them on board to encourage positive protection and management of their land.
- DB to ensure Admin reduce repetition – some sites have the same landowners. Don't want multiple letters.
- After final SINC sheets have been produced, RD to supply miff file to MA and mapinfo file to everyone else.
- DB agreed to set up files for all sites including all information – ROW, land ownership, habitat phase II, GWT info, detailed surveys etc.
- CCW (JW) to forward habitat phase II for all sites to DB for file.
- Agreed once sites have gone to Committee CC/DB to put them onto Council's internal system which Leisure, Planning, Policy etc. can access.
- RP to revise Hirgan Fields and return to RD asap.
- CCW (ML) to provide letter of support to chief Exec for designation of sites following meeting.
- DB to include SINC in current SPG but make sure its flexible so the list can be added to/amended.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tranche and Next Stages**

- Mesotrophic Lakes survey. BGCBC still waiting for maps. CC to contact Nicola if these sites are to be included. DB to ask Nicola for quote for producing lake SINC notification sheets. Would need to send disc of SINC from RD to Nicola to prevent repetition.
- DB/CC to organise meeting with EA to discuss river SINC. EA to provide sites or budgets to pay consultants. Agreed to include whole rivers as SINC. Need to agree where to draw line, i.e. tributaries. Also, buffers? CCW not keen on buffers as more difficult to defend than boundary.

- Species SINC's – RD to undertake Section 42 species search to identify species sites. In guidelines, 1 species would qualify site as SINC.
- RD to contact Trevor re SEWBREC assisting with putting species records onto the system.
- Grassland SINC's – GWT have produced another 15 forms – concentration of sites in Ebbw Vale area from grassland survey.
- DB/CC to ensure all SINC's are in system and designated by April 2009 to link into LDP process. SINC's to be shown on constraints map which can be updated.
- Ponds – DB to contact JW to do work after April 2008. 40 single ponds and 8 pond groups identified – agreed to have a 250metre buffer around ponds in case of great crested newt. This area won't be surveyed due to cost.
- SINC Expert Panel to identify any further sites requiring survey work this summer. All to bring list of potential sites to next meeting to discuss.

#### ***Consultants Requests/Internal Consultants***

- Agreed that SEWBReC would provide boundaries with statement to contact them for further info if summary sheets are required. This would prevent consultants coming back to DB and being handed back to SEWBReC!
- RD to remove any sensitive data – land ownership

#### ***Internal***

- DB to provide sheets to Planning to pass onto developers providing land ownership details removed.

#### ***AOB***

GB to type up detailed mins and send to RD asap.

#### ***Date of Next Meeting***

18<sup>th</sup> March 10am – DB to book room for half a day. Discuss:

Section 42 species – list to be provided by SEWBReC, other sites requiring surveying this year (i.e. post industrial habitats, spoil tips – all to bring list), species survey sites, resurveys (agree timescales) i.e. woodlands once every 5 yrs.



**BLAENAU GWENT SINC EXPERT PANEL MEETING****ON Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006 AT Gwent Wildlife Trust Offices, Dingestow****Present**

Colin Cheesman (CC) BGCBC

Deborah Beeson (DB) BGCBC

Gemma Bode (GB) GWT

Rebecca Price (RP) GWT

Liz Lawrie (LL) CCW

Adrian Wood (AW) Local Naturalist

Jan Winder (JWin) Local Naturalist

**Item 1. Apologies**

Nicola Hawkeswood (NH) Local Naturalist

Martin Anthony (MA) Butterfly Conservation

Item 2	Matters Arising	Action
	Agreed as accurate. Nothing arising.	
Item 3	Terms of Reference	
	AW raised concern about wording in the last paragraph – doesn't give much strength to SINC's being protected. Delete ' <i>...approval of a SINC by the Panel is not an automatic barrier to development...</i> ' GB suggested a flow diagram showing the process of SINC's designation and UDP policy on SINC's to be included although this may be subject to revision with the new LDP. DB to revise and send around for comment.	DB
Item 4	Boundary Issues	
	<p>CC gave a progress report. A boundary sub group had been set up and had met on 2 occasions. This consisted of CC, GB, JW and AW. The group had gone through all the candidate SINC's identified so far, looked at all boundaries and had adjusted boundaries to take account of adjacent habitat and physical boundaries such as fence lines.</p> <p>CC had met with SEWBREC yesterday and they were digitising the revised boundaries. SEWBREC needed guidance from the Panel on what to do with the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Some of the smaller SINC's sat within larger SINC's - do we combine them?</li><li>2. Some SINC's sat next to each other, i.e. the 4 large upland SINC's have lots of smaller SINC's next to them – do we combine them?</li></ol> <p>Group felt that it was more an administration issue than an ecological issue. It was agreed that where smaller SINC's sat within larger SINC's we would combine them and where SINC's sat next to each other we would wouldn't. CC to inform SEWBREC.</p> <p>CC stated that Green Meadow Farm and Part of Bryn Serth had development potential. These sites will be reassessed as part of the LDP process.</p> <p>CC stated that a lot of adjacent habitats to sites haven't been surveyed. Therefore, a lot of additional survey work is required. It was agreed that we would look at these sites next year in conjunction with the CCW Grant</p>	CC

	programme.	
Item 5	<p><b>Resurvey of adjacent sites</b></p> <p>It was agreed that from CC's table of SINC's there was a need to produce a list of sites that needed further survey work. Need to split into grassland and non grassland. Should be between 20-25 sites in total.</p>	CC
Item 6	<p><b>Standardised SINC Notification Card</b></p> <p>It was agreed that it was pointless to have a species list on the back of the card due to the size and complexity of some of the sites. GB explained that the card was a quick reference to bring information forward to the panel for recommendation for designation in line with the SINC guidelines. Wasn't designed as a survey recording card.</p> <p>GB/DB has revised the card to take on board comments from the group and is in electronic format. GB would forward to Torfaen, other local authority areas and Adrian to ensure that these standard forms are used and a consistent approach is taken throughout Gwent.</p> <p>At present, most of the information is contained on the old survey cards, which needs updating onto the new forms. It was agreed that GB would update sheets for the sites she had surveyed and had knowledge of. DB/CC to return surveys to GWT.</p> <p>After the forms had been updated by GWT, CC to update landowner info and return to SEWBREC for incorporating boundary maps.</p> <p>GB questioned who would produce sheets for the woodlands and ponds as she hadn't been involved with these sites?</p> <p><b>Ponds.</b></p> <p>It was agreed that once the pond data was back from SEWBREC, CC will extract the candidate sites and send to GB</p> <p><b>Woodlands</b></p> <p>AW stated that the woodland survey didn't include detailed species lists as he wasn't asked to do this.</p> <p>It was agreed that CC would send a list of woodlands to Adrian to fill out the sheets. This would be based upon the old 70s woodland data and Adrian's survey and would cover about 16 woodlands.</p>	<p>GB</p> <p>DB/CC/GB</p> <p>CC/DB</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
Item 7	<p><b>First Tranche of Sites</b></p> <p>GB will write summary sheets for 18 sites to be taken forward for designation. This involves 1 of Adrian's sites – Roseheyworth Woodlands. Adrian will write summary sheets for 15 woodland sites so a total of 33 sites to be taken forward.</p> <p>This leaves 6 lakes and 6 ponds:</p> <p>CC will do lakes or contract out to Nicola Hawkeswood</p>	<p>GB/AW</p> <p>CC</p>
Item 8	<p><b>Second Tranche</b></p> <p><b>Ponds</b></p> <p>CC to ensure that ponds information is included on the sheet as part of</p>	CC/JW



	<p>Jan Winders contract on ponds. Pond Audit will be finalised in September 2007 The ponds will be put forward in two lots.</p> <p><b>Woodland</b> Sirhowy Hill Woodland and Garden City will be put forward in the second tranche because the sites haven't been properly assessed. CC will provide updated surveys for GB to check boundary.</p> <p>Extra sites will also come forward from the GWT 2006 grassland surveys.</p> <p>AW suggested including grassland, heath and mire at Trefil along the western side and Troedygwair woodland in Tredegar. Adrian to agree with Colin.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>GB/RP</p> <p>AW</p>
<b>AOB</b>	none	
<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 10am at Dingestow	

**Notes from Meeting held at BGCBC Offices on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2006 to Agree Priorities for Action in SINC Designation**

**Present**

Rebecca Price (RP) GWT

Gemma Bode (GB) GWT

Deborah Beeson (DB) BGCBC

Colin Cheesman (CC) BGCBC

**Action Points**

- All agreed that we could progress with 24 sites for SINC designation in first tranche as the information was already available. The SINC Expert Panel has already agreed that they were happy with these sites at the previous meeting.
- All agreed that the rest of the sites on the list had boundary issues. Boundaries needed to be revised in line with physical boundaries on the ground (i.e. fence lines etc.) not just NVC boundaries. Also, some sites required checking the adjacent land-use.
- CC to revise list updating landownership details for each site and which site boundaries needed revising and adjacent land-use rechecking. Also, which consultant (Jan or Adrian) would be approached to carry out work.
- DB to organise meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb with Jan, Adrian, Gemma, Deb and Col to look at aerial photographs – check adjacent landuse, define boundaries and agree further survey work required. Note: BGCBC can't use CCW habitat phase 1 data as its incompatible with our system.
- Revised site boundaries to be sent to SEWBRcC after meeting for redigitising.
- GWT to send out letters to landowners informing them of SINC status when Colin has agreed landownership details.
- Landownership details that Colin doesn't know, DB to photocopy information and send to Jeremy in Environmental Health to request details.
- GB to revise SINC Notification Card in line with what had been agreed at meeting and send to SEWBRcC.
- GWT/BGCBC to organise event for landowners in BG at beginning of Oct 2006 entitled '*Land Management for Wildlife*' to promote BAGS scheme and traditional skills such as hedgerow laying/restoration which landowners have said there is a need for. GB to agree agenda with DB.
- GWT/BGCBC to organise event for schools in BG at beginning of April 2006 to promote the BAGS scheme and grassland restoration/creation. RP to liaise with MS.



- CC to inform RP of GWT survey priorities for 2006 in Blaenau Gwent.
- RP to copy survey information and send to DB as Colin will need information to update SINC list.
- All agreed agenda items for next SINC Expert Panel meeting (date TBC) would include progressing tranche 1 sites, tranche 2 sites and boundary issues.

**BLAENAU GWENT SINC EXPERT PANEL MEETING**  
**ON 28<sup>TH</sup> September 2005 AT Gwent Wildlife Trust Offices, Dingestow**

**Present**

Colin Cheesman (CC) BGCBC  
 Deborah Beeson (DB) BGCBC  
 Gemma Bode (GB) GWT  
 Rebecca Price (RP) GWT  
 Julian Woodman (JW) CCW  
 Adrian Wood (AW) Local Naturalist  
 Martin Anthoney (MA) Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership  
 Jan Winder (JWin) Local Naturalist

**Item 2. Apologies**

Nicola Hawkeswood (NH) Local Naturalist

Item 3	Terms of Reference	Action
	DB stated that the Torfaen Wildlife Sites Steering Group, which we could use as a baseline, had produced terms of reference and a briefing paper. DB to circulate to other members in the group for comments and adopt at next meeting	DB
Item 4	Boundary Issues/discrepancies	
	<p>Concern was raised that many of the existing pSINC boundaries are not based on physical boundaries (i.e. fence lines etc.). Need to overlay with aerial photographs and look at the adjacent habitats. CC to produce a brief of what is required and progress with JWin (ponds, grasslands) and AW (for woodlands).</p> <p>GB stated that in the case of ponds, a 10m wide buffer zone needs to be included around the pond in accordance with the guidelines.</p> <p>It was noted that the pSINC Brynmawr North is SSSI, thereby it was agreed that there was no point in double designating. CC to remove from list.</p> <p>When boundaries have been agreed, all boundaries to be circulated to recorders to request supplementary information.</p>	CC/JWIN/AW
Item 5	First Tranche of Proposed SINC's – finalise grassland sites	
	<p>GB went through the list of pSINC's and reasons for selecting them.</p> <p>Bryn Farm, Brynmawr. CC to send GB survey.</p> <p>Carn-y-cefin. AW carried out the botanical survey. AW to send copies of the report to CC and GB.</p> <p>Waun y Pound Ponds. CC suggested taking the industrial estate boundary out of this site as most is allocated as employment allocation and suggested making site bigger to include Bryn Serth. Also, ponds at threat from being dewatered. CC to send copy of survey to GB and GB to revise boundary.</p> <p>Six Bells Colliery Site. Needs rechecking. CC to progress with JWin and AW.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>AW</p> <p>CC/GB</p> <p>CC/JWIN</p>



	<p>Also, Cefn Bach needs revisiting as it is allocated as housing and includes a recreational pitch. CC to progress with JWin.</p> <p>Roseheyworth Community Woodlands – include Roseheyworth Walk on other side of road. CC to send GB survey and GB to revise boundaries</p> <p>RP has surveyed grasslands this year so some sites will be able to be put forward from this work that could be incorporated in the first tranche. Also, more survey work planned for 2006. RP to bring pSINC to next SINC meeting for designation.</p>	<p>CC/JWIN</p> <p>CC/GB</p> <p>RP</p>
Item 6	<p><b>Future tranches and SINC recording/notification card</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the first tranche of SINC sites would be grassland sites as they have the most up to date survey information available and GB has devised a SINC recording card for grasslands. The larger upland sites comprising mosaics of different habitats are more complex and will need separate species lists and possibly more surveying.</p> <p>Agreed we need to revise the recording card to include a species list that is based on all habitats present in Blaenau Gwent (i.e. ponds, woodlands, grassland, heathland and mire) that includes indicator species based on the SINC guidelines. We also need the form to include space for a sketch map showing ownership details (particularly useful for big upland sites). DB to ask SEWBREC to produce revised recording card and bring to next meeting for discussion. GB to send Adam Rowe electronic version of grassland SINC recording card.</p> <p>JW to look at what information he has available and forward to DB</p> <p>AW has some additional areas that could be put forward as pSINC sites. AW to bring to next meeting.</p>	<p>GB/DB</p> <p>JW</p> <p>AW</p>
Item 7	<p><b>Process Plan/Timetable</b></p> <p>All agreed to commit to quarterly meetings. This may reduce following the designation of sites to include an annual SINC review meeting.</p> <p>Meetings to be held at GWT offices as majority of SINC members are local.</p> <p>Look at trying to designate at least 20 pSINC sites next year.</p> <p>Also, group to also focus on LNR designations as well as SINC designations.</p>	
Item 8	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>None</p>	
Item 9	<b>Date of Next Meeting – TBC but before end of Feb</b>	DB

# APPENDIX 4



## **Deborah Beeson - Environment**

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**From:** Deborah Beeson - Environment  
**Sent:** 29 January 2008 14:18  
**To:** Jeanette John - Environment  
**Subject:** RE: Landownership Letter for SINC's

Hi Jeanette

Here is the landownership letter as discussed:

This letter needs to be sent out with the following:

1 x B.A.G.S application pack per landowner - on desk in admin office already to go  
1 x A4 leaflet explaining SINC's - on Colin's powerstick at the moment but I will get it printed off and you will need to get these colour photocopied.  
1 x copy of SINC sheet or sheets

As discussed, you will need to ensure that we cut out any repetition, therefore, if the same landowner owns a number of SINC's, you will need to just send out one letter, pack, SINC leaflet and copy of relevant SINC sheet (s). Also, need to put on database whether the land is unregistered so we know which sites haven't had letters

many thanks for all your help with this

***Deborah Beeson***  
***Ecologist***

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council  
Environment Directorate  
Regeneration Division  
Business Resource Centre  
Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate  
Tredegar  
Gwent  
NP22 3AA

Tel. 01495 355702  
Fax. 01495 355735



landownership  
letter 17 Jan 20...

355702

355735      deborah.beeson@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Ms D Beeson

**Ms Idris Watkins**  
**35 Gladstone Street**  
**Abertillery**

2 February 2008

Dear Ms Watkins

**RE: LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE IDENTIFICATION**

I am writing to you concerning Local Wildlife Sites, which are selected by Local Authorities to try and protect the area's irreplaceable wealth of wildlife habitats such as grassland, heathland, wetland, and ancient woodland.

I am pleased to inform you that part of your land has been **identified as a Local Wildlife Site** or Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). This means that your land and the management that you have carried out makes it one of the best places for wildlife in Blaenau Gwent and a cause to celebrate and be proud. There are no legal obligations directly associated with Local Wildlife Sites and they do not place any compulsory restrictions.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is currently working in partnership with a wide range of other organisations such as Gwent Wildlife Trust and Countryside Council to give some protection to these wonderful areas and hopefully prevent them from being damaged by any future planning proposals so that future generations can continue to enjoy them.

Recently, a group of wildlife experts met to decide which sites were special enough to be included as a Local Wildlife Site. All sites were assessed against scientific criteria and your land met the criteria. For your information, I enclose the Wildlife Site Notification Sheet detailing the boundary and the importance of your site for wildlife. Please note: your contact details section of this sheet will be kept confidential at all times. I am also enclosing an introductory leaflet on wildlife sites for your information.

Obviously, we would be very pleased if you could continue to manage your land sympathetically for wildlife because so many valuable habitats and species are in rapid decline. Species rich grassland for instance is now quite rare in Blaenau Gwent, having declined dramatically over the last 50 years.

Identification of a site as a local wildlife site also makes it more eligible for grant aid to assist with management. Owners and managers of local wildlife sites can obtain **free advice** and support from the Council about management. The Council runs a **Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme (B.A.G.S.)** whereby small grants can be obtained to help management of the site for wildlife.



# APPENDIX 5

EXECU0911A1N9373

7.01

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b><u>THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE</u></b>
<b>REPORT SUBJECT:</b>	<b><u>THE DESIGNATION OF THE FIRST TRANCHE OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)</u></b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b><u>C. POOLEY</u> <u>- REGENERATION DIVISION</u></b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT</b>	<b><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR</u> <u>ENVIRONMENT</u></b>

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**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to propose and seek approval for the designation of the first tranche of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within the County Borough. These sites would be part of the Local Development Plan Constraints Map.

**2. BACKGROUND****What are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)?**

SINCs comprise one category of nature conservation designation that are recognised throughout the UK under a wide range of differing titles, and which are collectively known as '*local wildlife sites*'.

SINCs are a non statutory wildlife site designation covering a wide range of semi natural habitats of substantive value within a Regional, County or District context and protecting and enhancing these sites is an essential part of sustaining the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent.

They are found on both public and private land and vary in size and shape, from small ponds to much larger areas of habitat such as ancient woodland, upland, and species rich grassland.

**Identification of SINCs**

Selection of these sites is a matter for local authorities and local wildlife



organisations. Selection takes into consideration the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context, making them some of our most valuable urban and rural wildlife areas. Guidelines on the identification of SINC's in South Wales are set out in published scientific criteria '*Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales*' and '*Mid valleys Criteria for the selection of SINC's*' (Gwent Wildlife Trust, 2004 and 2008).

Over the past two years, the Council in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust and the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) have worked on a major partnership project to identify a first tranche of 128 candidate SINC's within the County Borough from ecological survey data (See **Appendix 1** for the list of candidate sites and **Appendix 2** for a map of all sites).

These SINC's have since been assessed against scientific criteria and approved by a Panel of Experts which includes the Countryside Council for Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, SEWBRc, the Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership, the Council's Ecologist and other bodies. All sites therefore listed within this report meet the agreed criteria.

SINC notification forms have been produced for each site which includes a full location map, main habitats present, description of site, landownership information, how the site meets the criteria and habitat map (**see Appendix 3 for example**). Landowners have also been notified where possible and the overall response to the proposed designation has been very supportive with many landowners keen to receive management advice.

The identification and review of SINC's is an ongoing process with sites being identified as and when ecological survey data becomes available. Further tranches of sites will therefore be brought to Committee as and when the ecological data becomes available and sites are approved for designation by the SINC Expert Panel.

Some of the key reasons for identifying SINC's are to:

- *draw the attention of the owner (s) to the importance of the site and provide information to help manage the site*
- *provide guidance to land managers and policy makers so that they are taken into account when considering planning applications*
- *record and monitor Blaenau Gwent's biodiversity resource*

### **The Importance of SINC's**

SINC's constitute an important ecological resource providing both an important haven for local wildlife and recreational green spaces for the local community to enjoy.

A summary of some of the key benefits of SINC's is highlighted below:



- *they provide important refuges for the County Borough's wildlife creating a web of sites vital for movement and genetic exchange.*
- *their functions serve to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and underpin the statutory wildlife site network.*
- *the identification of SINC's is an important step in achieving the aims of the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.*
- *they help maintain air, soil and water quality reducing the effects of pollution and flooding*
- *they represent local character and distinctiveness*
- *they symbolise the best of our countryside and green spaces contributing significantly to a countryside resilient to the pressures of modern living and climate change*
- *wildlife sites and attractive green spaces attract inward investment and tourism into the area.*
- *they make a direct contribution to our quality of life and the well being of local communities providing opportunities for improved health, education and learning, community action and recreation*
- *having a SINC can be a positive advantage when applying for grant funding (i.e. agri-environment schemes etc.)*

### **Legal Obligations**

Since the implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act in 2006, Local Authorities now have a key role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. This is recognised under Section 40, which states:

*'...Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity...'*

SINC status is a non statutory designation (no protection in law) but they are afforded protection from development under policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and forthcoming Local Development Plan (LDP).

Policy EN12 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation is particularly relevant. This states that *'...Development proposals which would have a negative impact on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) will only be permitted where the need for development outweighs the losses to biodiversity and these losses can readily be mitigated within the Borough Council area...'*

In general, these policies aim to resist development that would adversely affect sites of ecological or geological importance. However, where sites have already been allocated for development within the UDP and where damage is



unavoidable, the approach usually taken is to seek minimisation of harm and restoration or replacement as appropriate through the use of planning conditions or agreements attached to any planning permission granted.

The framework for the identification and designation of local wildlife sites is also set out in various UK Government and Welsh Assembly policy documents, including Planning Policy Wales (2002), Wales Environment Strategy, and Technical Advice Note (Wales) 5: *'Nature Conservation and Planning'*.

Ordinary land management and agricultural operations are not affected. Similarly, it does not give the right of access to the site other than on existing rights of way.

### **3. PROPOSAL/PRESENT POSITION**

The proposal is for the Committee to approve designation of all SINC's identified in Appendix 1 and shown on the boundary map in Appendix 2.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None associated with the report.

### **5. STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

None associated with the report.

### **6. CONSULTATION**

The following officers have been consulted in respect of the proposals and recommendations set out in this report.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<b>CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER/ MONITORING OFFICER</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES / S.151</b>	<b><u>OTHER</u></b>
	Chief Legal Officer. Estates.		Environment - DMT

### **7. CONCLUSION**

Identifying and approving SINC's is vital in providing important refuges for

declining wildlife and creating a robust local wildlife site system within the County Borough enabling wildlife to move between areas and adapt more readily to the effects of climate change. SINC's are the most important places for wildlife outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). They are also well recognised for the direct contribution they make to our quality of life and the well being of local communities, with many sites providing valuable benefits for life-long learning, better health and a stronger economy.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Authority will;

- Grant approval for the designation of the identified SINC's
- That the boundaries of these sites will be clearly identified on the Constraints Map of the Local Development Plan and in Supplementary Planning Guidance on Biodiversity currently being prepared
- Continue to work in partnership with conservation bodies to identify and assess further SINC's and provide expert ecological advice on the management of SINC's to landowners and land managers to protect and enhance the value of these sites.

## **9. REASON**

This proposal forms an important part of the Council's biodiversity work programme and is part of the Council's statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.



[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Appendix 3](#)

# BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CANDIDATE SINCS PROJECT (64 sites)

Site Name	Grid Reference	Size (ha)	Qualifying criteria for SINCS qualification	Is site allocated for development (i.e., Housing (H), transport (T), education (E), employment (E), environment (EN), leisure recreation tourism (L) etc) in the UDP?
<b>ADSOAC / UPLAND SITES (20 SITES)</b>				
K1 Breake Hill Road & Woodard	SO79120	82.24	Wooded heath (H2)	Yes - general sector Housing - 2, 14
K2 Burtville Slip	SO25007	23.22	H20, Natural Heath	EN 3
K3 Bryn Bach School	SO73015	0.27	Purple Wood grass and Rush Pasture	no
K4 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN & general mixed recreation zone
K5 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K6 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K7 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K8 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K9 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K10 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K11 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K12 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K13 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K14 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K15 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K16 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K17 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K18 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K19 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K20 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K21 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K22 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K23 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K24 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K25 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K26 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K27 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K28 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K29 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K30 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K31 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K32 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K33 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K34 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K35 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K36 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K37 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K38 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K39 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K40 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K41 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K42 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K43 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K44 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K45 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K46 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K47 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K48 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K49 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K50 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K51 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K52 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K53 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K54 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K55 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K56 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K57 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K58 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K59 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K60 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K61 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K62 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K63 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K64 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K65 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K66 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K67 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K68 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K69 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K70 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K71 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K72 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K73 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K74 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K75 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K76 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K77 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K78 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
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K83 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K84 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K85 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K86 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K87 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K88 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K89 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K90 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K91 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K92 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K93 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K94 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K95 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K96 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K97 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K98 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K99 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN
K100 Bryn Fawr	SO75915	19.37	H20, Moat - all trees	EN



POWELL SITES  
(23 SITES)

(2)

21	St-Helena 29-0	SC 57113	0.16	Post-ombellifer	Part of the site have been destroyed for housing (c. 1950) and low vegetation EN25 (14)
22	The Duck and Son Duck	SC150073	0.37	Scrub Oak water (H15), Swamp (c. 180), Water course (c. 15), Mossy habitat (H20)	Yes - xerophytic H2 (1)

GRASSLAND SITES  
(23 SITES)

G1	Barkley Pits Field	SC 54062	0.68	(H5) Acid grassland	0
G2	Barclay Farm Field	SC222054	1.04	(H2), Mossy - (H5) Acid grasslands (H12), Mossy (H1)	0 - EN
G3	Barclay Farm Field	SC222057	1.01	(H5) Acid grasslands (H12), Mossy (H1)	0 - EN
G4	Chapel House Field	SC 50048	4.12	(H5) Acid grasslands (H1), Neutral grasslands	EN
G5	Farview Field	SC130113	0.72	(H7) Neutral grassland	NO
G6	Gardens Wood	SC132115	0.5	(H7) Neutral grassland	EN
G7	Hillside Grassland	SC150068	3.31	(H5) Acid grasslands	EN
G8	Hyson Field Grassland	SC141113	21.67	(H5) Acid grasslands, (H1) Neutral grasslands (H12) Heather, Grassland	Yes - Euphorbia (E2) and
G9	Inchard House Grasslands	SC147094	3.72	Neutral grass	Sample 12 (1)
G10	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN23
G11	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G12	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G13	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G14	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G15	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G16	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G17	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G18	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G19	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G20	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G21	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G22	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN
G23	Lower Farm Field	SC152057	2.63	(H4) Neutral grassland	EN

WOODLAND SITES  
(18 SITES)

W1	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W2	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W3	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W4	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W5	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W6	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W7	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W8	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)
W9	Coastal Wood	SC100021	10.54	(H1) Woodland, Beech forest (H1) Oak (H1) Oak	EN24 (13)

W16	Edge of Oakleaf Park	SO221061	3.54	-1) Woodlands (20% upland woad, Eucalyptus, wet woodland - and woad, -d; acid grassland H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;14
W17	Edge of Park woad	SO182038	2.51	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, -d; acid grassland H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;17
W18	Gann Car-lar	SO182039	3.03	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, locally wet woodlands, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W19	Lanelet Field woad	SO212065	3.96	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W20	Lanelet Field woad	SO212065	2.12	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W21	North of Hards	SO222072	3.01	-1) Woodlands (heath and drier woodlands, -d; acid grasslands, -d; 2) Bag heath, H7, mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W22	Edge of Hards	SO182038	3.48	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W23	Edge of Hards	SO182038	3.83	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W24	Edge of Hards	SO182038	3.82	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19
W25	Edge of Hards	SO222072	3.74	-1) Woodlands (upland woad, heath, dandelion, H7) mainly grasses and herbs (w23 type mix).	E124;19



# BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CANDIDATE SINC'S PROJECT (60 sites + 4 pond groups)

(60 sites + 4 pond groups)				
Site Name	Grid Reference	Size (ha)	Qualifying criteria for SINC qualification	Is site allocated for development (i.e., Housing (H), transport (T), education (C), employment (E), environment (EN), leisure recreation tourism (R) etc) in the UOP?
<b>MOSAIC SITES (1 SITE)</b>				
Parc Bryn Bach	SO12/006	111	Neutral grasslands, calcareous grasslands, acid grasslands, marshy grasslands, post-industrial land, mosaic habitats	
<b>POND SITES (30 individual ponds plus 4 pond groups)</b>				
Arall Pond	SO21180322	0.15	Standing open water	
Blawafon Road Pond (063)	SO20281113	0.15	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Blawafon Road Pond (064)	SO20231130	0.07	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Blawafon Pond	SO21180311	0.1	Standing open water	
Brynmawr Pond	SO183107	0.07	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes, swamp	
Brynmawr Pond	SO18651240	0.2	Standing open water, swamp	
Bwlch-y-Gam Pond (1709045)	SO17860942	0.12	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes, mosaic habitats	
Cefn Pylau-duon Pond	SO18031106	0.11	Standing open water	
Cefn Pylau-duon Pond	SO18331105	0.11	Standing open water, swamp	
Coelgae Pond	SO21030346	0.2	Standing open water	
Craig y Ddi Pond	SO19650305	0.23	Standing open water	
Cwm Farm Pond	SO220996	0.06	Standing open water	
Cwmillery Lakes	SO220065	0.86a	Neutral grassland, acid grassland, fens, reedbank & swamps, post industrial land	
Cwmillery Reservoir	SO220070	5.55	Standing open water, swamp	
Festival Lake	SO177064	1.79	Standing open water, swamp	
Garden City Pond	SO18960770	0.41	Standing open water & Swamps	
Golf Course Pond	SO18141033	0.16	Standing open water	
Heath Falls	SO17320442	0.06	Standing open water, swamp	
Llysoed Pond	SO18051187	0.1	Standing open water, swamp	
Llyn Pond, Dymally Terrace	SO18150125		Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Nant Trell Pond	SO11571341	0.08	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Pen-y-Waun Pond	SO20371504	0.09	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Pen-y-Waun Pond	SO17921048	0.15	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes, swamp	
Pond Group 1 (1712/164)	SO18001220	0.14	Standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mineral spoil tips & other post-industrial land, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 1 (1712/165)	SO17951206	0.91	Standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mineral spoil tips & other post industrial land, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 1 (1812/166)	SO18051217	0.13	Standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mineral spoil tips & other post-industrial land, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 1 (1812/167)	SO18031202		Standing open water	
Pond Group 2 (1812/178)	SO18301280	0.15	Standing open water & mosaics	
Pond Group 2 (1812/179)	SO18251277	0.15	Standing open water & mosaics	
Pond Group 2 (1812/180)	SO18121122	0.26	Standing open water & mosaics	
Pond Group 3 (1903/085 to 089 & 091)	SO159035	1	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 3 (1903/090)	SO20080363	0.05	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 3 (1903/091)	SO20040340	0.3	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 3 (1903/092)	SO20110357	0.25	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 3 (1903/093)	SO20020341	0.15	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 3 (1903/094)	SO15900330	0.12	Standing open water, hedgerows, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 4 (1703/040)	SO1715051		no	
Pond Group 4 (1703/041)	SO1715051		no	
Pond Group 4 (1703/042)	SO1715051		no	
Pond Group 5 (1703/030)	SO17150309	0.27	no	
Pond Group 5 (1703/030 & 031)	SO170908	0.38	Marshy grasslands, standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 5 (1703/032)	SO17880805	0.13	Marshy grasslands, standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mosaic habitats	
Pond Group 5 (1703/033)	SO178085	1.87	Marshy grasslands, standing open water, bog habitats & flushes, watercourses, mosaic habitats	
Pylau-duon pond	SO09831181	0.07	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Rassau Pond	SO15901241	0.1	Standing open water, swamp	
Scotch Prior's Pond	SO15620809	0.29	Standing open water	
Strydyd Gwal Pond	SO22310940	0.06	Standing open water	
Tarren y Trwyn Pond	SO18070742	0.48	Standing open water, swamp	

Trefil Ddu Pond 1	SO11161318	0.05	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Trefil Ddu Pond 2	SO10861300	0.11	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Trefil Ddu Pond 3	SO10841278	0.12	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Trefil Ddu Pond 4	SO10651274	0.07	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Trefil Las Pond	SO12861325	0.12	Standing open water, bog habitats and flushes	
Trefil Las Pond	SO17711263	0.52	Standing open water, swamp	
Troestre Pond	SO183089	0.08	Standing open water, swamp	
Ty Llwyn Pond	SO17000868	0.21	Standing open water & Swamps	
Ty Llwyn Pond, Llynallt Fawr	SO15451182		Standing open water, swamp	
GRASSLAND SITES (20 SITES)				
Adjacent to Noble Square	SO197116	1.08	Neutral grassland, & Mineral Spoil Tips & Other Post Industrial Land	
Aral Fain Slopes North	SO216031	7.41	Acid grassland	
Aral Fain Slopes South	SO212026	6.13	Acid grassland, and other features (ant hills)	
Bwlch-y-Gam North	SO178097	3.16	Acid grassland	
Bwlch-y-Gam South	SO179093	0.94	Acid grassland	
Castell-corn grassland	SO177095	2.66	Acid grassland	
Cefn Bach Heath & Acid Grassland	SO204044	41.45	Acid grasslands, heathlands & grass heath communities	
Castell Road species-rich meadow	SO176085	0.23	Acid grassland	
Edge of the Mulfins	SO200107	3.38	Acid grasslands, heathlands & Grass Heath communities, Bog habitats & flushes, Mineral Spoil Tips & Other Post Industrial Land	
Embankment Grassland	SO197107	2.34	Neutral Grasslands & Mineral Spoil Tips & Other Post Industrial Land	
Gorse-bank Field	SO170067	0.62	Acid grassland	
Half-y-dafal acid grassland	SO199047	10.04	Acid grassland	
Hillside with acidic flushes	SO177085	3.16	Acid grassland	
Meadowbank Field	SO177073	0.09	Neutral grassland	
Nantyllo Acid Grassland	SO196105	2.37	Acid Grasslands, heathlands & Grass Heath Communities, Post Industrial Grasslands	
Nantyllo Meadow	SO197104	1.53	Neutral Grassland	
Old Alluements	SO176086	0.69	Acid grassland, marshy grassland	
Slopes west of Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn (part 1)	SO181083	15.01	Acid grassland, marshy grassland	
Slopes west of Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn (part 2)	SO181079	4.22	Acid grassland	
Wan Lwyd Species-rich grassland	SO179070	1.4	Acid grasslands, post-industrial land	
LDP SITES (4 SITES)				
Adjacent to Blaen-y-cwm School	SO192114	1.4	Neutral Grasslands	Candidate LDP site
Land Surrounding Wetland Centre	SO173053	3.13	Mosaic Habitats & Common Land	Candidate LDP site
Tirpenrhys Cist	SO233015	21.18	Birds	Candidate LDP site
Rhyd-y-Blaer	SO154113	26.31	Birds	Candidate LDP site
WATERCOURSES (5 RIVERS)				
Elbow River				
River Ebbw Fach				
River Sirhowy				
River Tylei				
River Clydach				



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Item No. 12

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>THE MAYOR &amp; MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL OFFICER</b>

**PRESENT:****Leader of the Council**

Councillor D. Hillman, O. St. J. (Chair)

**Deputy Leader of the Council/****Executive Member – Housing**

Councillor J. Mason

**Executive Member – Leisure & Culture**

Councillor J. Owen

**Executive Member – Social Services**

Councillor J. T. Rogers

**Executive Member – Environment**

Councillor K. E. Barnes

**Executive Member – Regeneration & Highways**

Councillor D. Wilcox

**Executive Member – Education**

Councillor S. Bard, G.D.D.M., P.G.C.E., M.A.

**Executive Member – Governance**

Councillor D. Hughes, M.M.S. (Dip.) M.B.E.

**Executive Member – Resources**

Councillor J. Taylor

**WITH:**

Chief Executive

Chief Legal Officer

Corporate Director Resources

Corporate Director Community Services

Corporate Director Environment

Corporate Director Business Development

Chief People &amp; Performance Officer

**DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

<b><u>M</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p><b><u>E93/(E77)</u></b>  <b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>Councillor J. Taylor declared an interest in the following item:-</p> <p>Item No. 9.02 – Grants to Organisations</p>	Democratic Renewal Officer
	<b><u>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</u></b>	
	<p><b><u>E94/(E79)</u></b>  <b><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<b><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></b>	
	<p><b><u>E95/(E80)</u></b>  <b><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW) Annual General Meeting Thursday &amp; Friday 12<sup>th</sup> &amp; 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009 The Towers Hotel, Neath Port Talbot</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED that 1 Member be authorised to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh NHS Confederation Welsh Annual Conference and Exhibition 2009</li> </ul>	Democratic Renewal Officer



The NHS in Wales  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009  
City Hall, Cardiff

RESOLVED that 1 Member be authorised to attend.

### ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

#### E96/(-) EXTRACT OF MINUTES – HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

Consideration was given to the extract of minutes from Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Member Regeneration and Highways explained that the Executive member for Housing had raised this issue with him and advised that letters would be sent to the Chief Executive of the WLGA and to Assembly Member Trish Law, highlighting the concerns raised at Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and recommending action be taken to abolish the rating of vacant industrial properties.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that:

- The extract of minutes be noted; and
- Support be given to letters being sent, on behalf of the Executive, to the Chief Executive of the WLGA and to Assembly Member, Trish Law recommending that action be taken to abolish the rating of vacant industrial properties.

#### E97/(E53)

#### : AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Environment.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the correction to the July report and the updated list of Officers be approved as detailed below:

- Appointment of Officers as Inspectors under section 51 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to exercise the

powers of an Inspector specified in sections 53-56 and Schedule 2 of the Act – with the exception of section 13 relating to Licensing and registration activities:

David James Thompson  
Sharon Joy Sullivan  
Carl Lyndon Bartlett  
Andrew Long  
Steven John Jackson

David Robert Cook  
Jeremy Richards  
Mark Stuart Cochran  
Christopher John Sage

**E98/(E97)**

**AUTHORISATION OF OFFICER**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Environment.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that Victoria Jordan be authorised / appointed to exercise the powers detailed in the report under the legislation therein.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The named officers need to be appointed / authorised in order to carry out their duties under the legislation specified.

**GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

**E99/(-)**

**APPLICATION TO ACQUIRE ACCESS TO POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT LAND AT CWM BACH, NEWCHURCH ROAD, EBBW VALE**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Business Development.

The Executive Member Governance advised that there was a request from the Council's Chief regeneration Officer that the report be withdrawn in order that the proposal could be further reviewed.

He further advised that it would be necessary for the applicant to provide far greater detail as to how the land in his ownership would be developed for residential use.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be WITHDRAWN.



E100/(-)

**GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL SERVICE BOARD**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Business Development.

The Executive Member Governance outlined the content of the report and highlighted concerns that had been raised previously in relation to accountability and the decision making process. He then referred to section 17 of the governance arrangements and commented that the details should satisfy members concerns.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that:

- The governance arrangements, as agreed in principle by the LSB and detailed in appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- The report be submitted to Council for approval

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To ensure the Council fulfils its obligations with regard to the development of the LSB and the Community Strategy within Blaenau Gwent.

E101/(-)

**SALE OF FORMER CELTIC HUT, WOODLAND TERRACE, CWMTILLERY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Business Development.

The Executive Member Governance confirmed that the Celtic Hut was in Cwmtillery and not Aberbeeg as stated in the report. He also confirmed that should the report be approved, all those who had previously shown an interest in the property would be contacted.

In response to a query the Chief Legal Officer advised that an Overage Clause would ensure that if a developer gains from an increase in value of the property the Authority will also receive a % of the increase in value.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and that the Celtic Hut, Cwmtillery be offered for sale on the open market and that the property be sold with

an appropriate Restrictive Covenant and mechanism (Overage Clause) to protect any future uplift in value which the purchaser may secure at the site.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To consider the sale of the former Celtic Hut, Cwmtillery.

#### **HOUSING MATTERS**

**E102/(-)**

#### **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2009-13**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Environment.

The Executive Member Housing outlined the content of the report and suggested that the recommendation be amended to read "that the report be accepted and, subject to consideration by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2009-2013 be approved".

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and, subject to consideration by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2009-2013 be approved.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To update and replace the previous Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and to enable the Authority to continue to make financial assistance for housing repairs and adaptations available to those in need.

#### **SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS**

**E103/(-)**

#### **CSSIW SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Community Services.



The Executive Member Social Services referred to the Review of Children's Safeguarding Arrangements which was appended to the report and highlighted the conclusions contained therein.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the two CSSIW inspection reports on Safeguarding Arrangements in Blaenau Gwent, appended to the report, be noted.

## **REGENERATION AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

**E104/(-)**

### **THE DESIGNATION OF THE FIRST TRANCH OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Environment.

The Executive Member Regeneration and Highways outlined the content of the report and highlighted the fact that the development of areas that are designated as SINCs could be permitted where the need to develop outweighed the biodiversity issues.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that:

- Approval be granted for the designation of SINCs as detailed in appendix 1 to the report;
- The boundaries of the sites be clearly identified on the Constraints Map of the Local development Plan and in Supplementary Planning Guidance on Biodiversity currently being prepared; and
- Work in partnership with conservation bodies to identify and assess further SINCs and provide expert ecological advice on the management of SINCs to landowners and land managers to protect and enhance the value of the sites, be continued.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The proposal forms an important part of the Council's biodiversity work programme and is part of the Council's

statutory duty under the natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

## **LEISURE AND CULTURE MATTERS**

### **E105/(-) BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE BEAUFORT THEATRE AND BALLROOM 2010-2013**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Community Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that the principles detailed within the report be approved and endorsed as a business plan to be adopted by Blaenau Gwent and utilised as the Beaufort Theatre and Ballroom's plan for the Arts Council of Wales Investment Review.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Business Plan would assist Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Arts Development Service in identifying and meeting local, regional and national priorities outlined in key documents within the Local Authority and from sources such as the Welsh Assembly Government and the Arts Council for Wales. It will support the Arts Development Service in identifying priorities for action and assist in making informed decisions as to the best use of the arts in Blaenau Gwent.

### **E106/(E91) GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS**

Councillor J. Taylor declared an interest in the item and took no part in the discussions.

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Community Services.

Members were advised of the following additional grants, which had been submitted since the preparation of the report.



**ABERTILLERY****Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor M. Bartlett**

1. Llanhilleth Miners Institute £100  
(Llanhilleth Veterans Function)

**Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor D. Hughes**

1. Llanhilleth Miners Institute (Llanhilleth Veterans Function) £200

**Six Bells Ward – Councillor W.C. Watkins**

1. Six Bells Workingmens Club – £100  
Christmas Party

**Six Bells Ward – Councillor D. Hancock**

1. Six Bells Workingmens Club – Christmas £100  
Party

**NANTYGLO AND BLAINA****Nantyglo Ward – Councillor J. Mason**

1. Abertillery Mini & Junior RFC £50

**Nantyglo Ward – Councillor M. Dally**

1. Abertillery Mini & Junior RFC £25

**Nantyglo Ward – Councillor S. Ford**

1. Riverside Flats Residents Association £100

**Blaina Ward – Councillor D. Hillman**

1. Riverside Flats Residents Association £50

**EBBW VALE****Cwm Ward – Councillor K. Barnes**

1. Cwm Poppy Appeal £20

**Badminton Ward – Councillor B. Scully**

<p>1. Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir (Poppy £100 Appeal)</p> <p><u>Ebbw Vale North Ward – Councillor D. Wilcox &amp; J. Rogers</u></p> <p>1. Ebbw Vale Christmas Lights £400</p> <p><u>BRYNMAWR</u></p> <p><u>Brynmawr</u></p> <p>1. Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £20</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p><b><u>RESOURCES MATTERS</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>E107/(-)</u></b>  <b><u>IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the content therein be noted and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of the IFRS Conversion Timeline be supported; and</li> <li>• Consideration be given to the provision of the required support and resources, particularly within the Estates Division, to allow for the successful implementation of IFRS during the period of transition and up to the statutory deadline of 31 March 2001</li> </ul> <p><b><u>REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION</u></b></p> <p>To advise on matters affecting the Authority as a consequence of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards.</p>	
<p><b><u>E108/(E92)</u></b>  <b><u>INFORMATION PACK</u></b></p> <p>The content of the information pack was noted.</p>	





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5.01

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b><u>THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE</u></b>
<b>REPORT SUBJECT:</b>	<b><u>THE DESIGNATION OF THE SECOND TRANCHE OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)</u></b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b><u>C. POOLEY</u> <u>– REGENERATION DIVISION</u></b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT</b>	<b><u>DIRECTOR</u> <u>ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION</u></b>

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**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to propose and seek approval for the designation of the second tranche of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) within Blaenau Gwent prior to the inclusion of these SINCS within the Local Development Plan

In November 2009, the designation of the first tranche of SINCS was approved.

**2. BACKGROUND****What are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS)?**

SINCS comprise one category of nature conservation designation that are recognised throughout the UK under a wide range of differing titles, and which are collectively known as '*local wildlife sites*'.

SINCS are a non statutory wildlife site designation covering a wide range of semi natural habitats of substantive value within a Regional, County or District context and protecting and enhancing these sites is an essential part of sustaining the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent.

They are found on both public and private land and vary in size and shape, from small ponds to much larger areas of habitat such as ancient woodland, upland, and species rich grassland.

**Identification of SINCS**

Selection of these sites is a matter for local authorities and local wildlife organisations. Selection takes into consideration the most important,



distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context, making them some of our most valuable urban and rural wildlife areas. Guidelines on the identification of SINC's in South Wales are set out in published scientific criteria '*Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales*' and '*Mid valleys Criteria for the selection of SINC's*' (Gwent Wildlife Trust, 2004 and 2008).

Over the past three years, the Council in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust and the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) have worked on a major partnership project to identify SINC's across the borough. In November 2009 the Council committee approved the designation of 128 sites, which had been identified through ecological surveys as SINC's. More recently a second tranche of 11 candidate SINC's has been identified through ecological surveys (See **Appendix 1** for the list of all sites).

All SINC's are assessed against scientific criteria (the guidelines for the selection of wildlife site in south Wales and the mid valleys criteria for the selection of SINC's) and approved by a Panel of Experts, which includes the Countryside Council for Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, SEWBRc, the Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership, the Council's Ecologist and other bodies. All sites therefore listed within this report meet the agreed criteria.

SINC notification forms have been produced for each site which includes a full location map, main habitats present, description of site, landownership information, how the site meets the criteria and habitat map (**see Appendix 2 for example – Drysiog farm**). Landowners have also been notified where possible and the overall response to the proposed designation has been very supportive with many landowners keen to receive management advice.

The identification and review of SINC's is an ongoing process with sites being identified as and when ecological survey data becomes available. Further tranches of sites will therefore be brought to Committee as and when the ecological data becomes available and sites are approved for designation by the SINC Expert Panel.

Some of the key reasons for identifying SINC's are to:

- *draw the attention of the owner (s) to the importance of the site and provide information to help manage the site*
- *provide guidance to land managers and policy makers so that they are taken into account when considering planning applications*
- *record and monitor Blaenau Gwent's biodiversity resource*

### **The Importance of SINC's**

SINC's constitute an important ecological resource providing both an important haven for local wildlife and recreational green spaces for the local community to enjoy.



In a Borough with a lack of statutory wildlife site protection (for instance, there are only 2 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) although there are many sites of SSSI quality which are not designated and instead selected as SINC), there is a need for greater recognition and increased action for SINC in order to conserve the County's biodiversity resource.

A summary of some of the key benefits of SINC is highlighted below:

- *they provide important refuges for the County Borough's wildlife creating a web of sites vital for movement and genetic exchange.*
- *their functions serve to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and underpin the statutory wildlife site network.*
- *the identification of SINC is an important step in achieving the aims of the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans as well as those set out in the Environment strategy*
- *they help maintain air, soil and water quality reducing the effects of pollution and flooding*
- *they represent local character and distinctiveness*
- *wildlife sites and attractive green spaces attract inward investment and tourism into the area.*
- *They contribute to the green network*
- *they make a direct contribution to our quality of life and the well being of local communities providing opportunities for improved health, education and learning, community action and recreation*
- *having a SINC can be a positive advantage when applying for grant funding (i.e. agri-environment schemes etc.)*
- *SINC identification and designation aids the planning process, as sites which are important for nature conservation and therefore are material planning considerations are identified early on in the process - planning proposals can be designed to avoid impacts on these sites and the important wildlife they support and where there is not possible mitigate and/or compensate for any impacts that may occur.*

*The designation of these SINC and their protection ensures that a green network is maintained across the borough. This provides many services, some of which are listed above, benefiting our local community as well as the species and habitats that are found within them. Today the protection of these resources is vitally important, as it will ensure a resilient countryside that can stand up many of the issues facing our society such as a growing population and changing climate.*

*BGCBC are now working in a partnership with the neighbouring Local Authorities of Caerphilly, Rhonda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen to develop a landscape scale projects, which aims to protect and enhance SINC across the 'Mid Valleys' area. Blaenau Gwent's contribution to this will help to*



*achieve local, regional and national targets in biodiversity and other areas.*

### **Legal Obligations**

Since the implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill in 2006, Local Authorities now have a key role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. This is recognised under Section 40, which states:

*'...Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity...'*

SINC status is a non statutory designation (no protection in law) but they are afforded protection from development under policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

Policy EN13 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation is particularly relevant. This states that *'...Development proposals which would have a negative impact on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) will only be permitted where the need for development outweighs the losses to biodiversity and these losses can readily be mitigated within the Borough Council area...'*

In general, these policies aim to resist development that would adversely affect sites of ecological or geological importance. However, where sites have already been allocated for development within the UDP and where damage is unavoidable, the approach usually taken is to seek minimisation of harm as appropriate through the use of planning conditions or agreements attached to any planning permission granted.

The framework for the identification and designation of local wildlife sites is also set out in various UK Government and Welsh Assembly policy documents, including Planning Policy Wales (2002), Wales Environment Strategy, and Technical Advice Note (Wales) 5: *'Nature Conservation and Planning'*.

Ordinary land management and agricultural operations are not affected. Similarly, it does not give the right of access to the site other than on existing rights of way.

### **3. PROPOSAL/PRESENT POSITION**

The proposal is for the Committee to approve designation of all SINCs identified in Appendix 1 – tranche 2.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.



## **5. STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

The following officers have been consulted in respect of the proposals and recommendations set out in this report.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<b>CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER/ MONITORING OFFICER</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES / S.151</b>	<b><u>OTHER</u></b>
	Chief Legal Officer		Environment DMT

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Identifying and approving SINC's is vital in providing important refuges for declining wildlife and creating a robust local wildlife site system within the County Borough enabling wildlife to move between areas and adapt more readily to the effects of climate change. SINC's are the most important places for wildlife outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and in a county with few SSSIs and many sites of SSSI quality not designated, these sites represent some of the best sites for biodiversity. They are also well recognised for the direct contribution they make to our quality of life and the well being of local communities, with many sites providing valuable benefits for life-long learning, better health and a stronger economy.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Authority will;

- Grant approval for the designation of the identified SINC's
- That the boundaries of these sites will be clearly identified on the proposals map of the Local Development Plan
- Continue to work in partnership with conservation bodies to identify and assess further SINC's and provide expert ecological advice on the



management of SINC's to landowners and land managers to protect and enhance the value of these sites.

## **9. REASON**

This proposal forms an important part of the Council's biodiversity work programme and is part of the Council's statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill (2006) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

**G. P. Jones**

**Chief Regeneration Officer**

**EX1009. CP**

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)



COUNC1010A1N10405

Item No. 14

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>THE MAYOR &amp; MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2010</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL OFFICER</b>

**PRESENT:****Leader of the Council**

Councillor D. Hillman, O.St.J.

**Deputy Leader of the Council/****Executive Member – Neighbourhood Services & Housing**

Councillor J. Mason

**Executive Member – Leisure Services**

Councillor J. Owen

**Executive Member – Environmental Services**

Councillor K. Barnes

**Executive Member – Regeneration**

Councillor D. Wilcox

**Executive Member – Education**

Councillor S. Bard, G.D.B.M., P.G.C.E., M.A.

**Executive Member – Resources**

Councillor J. Taylor

**Executive Member – Corporate Governance & Service Transformation**

Councillor D. Hughes, M.B.E., M.M.S. (Dip.)

**Executive Member – Crime and Disorder & Safer Communities**

Councillor J. J. Hopkins, Dip.Ed. Dip.Sc. O.St. J

**WITH:**

Chief Executive

Chief Legal Officer

Director of Resources

Director of Environment &amp; Regeneration

Director of Education and Leisure Services

Interim Director Social Services

Education Consultant

Chief People and Performance Officer

Press and Communications Officer

**DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

SUBJECT

ACTION



<b><u>ITEM</u></b>		
<b><u>E54/(-)</u></b> <b><u>WELCOME</u></b>		
	The Executive welcomed the newly appointed Director of Education and Leisure Services. The Executive Member Education commented that he was looking forward to embracing both current and future challenges whilst working alongside the new Director.	
<b><u>E55/(E51)</u></b> <b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>		
	Apologies for absence were received from:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Executive Member Social Services</li> </ul> <p>The Executive Member Corporate Governance &amp; Service Transformation advised that his apologies had not been recorded for the Executive held on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010.</p>	
<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b>		
<b><u>E56/(E52)</u></b> <b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST &amp; DISPENSATIONS</u></b>		
.01.	The following declaration of interest was reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants to Organisations – Councillor J. Mason</li> <li>▪ Grants to Organisations – Councillor J. Taylor</li> </ul>	
<b><u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u></b>		
<b><u>E57/(E31)</u></b> <b><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></b>		
.01.	Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> July, 2010.	

	<p>The Executive Member Education sought clarification in relation to the item 'Works' Arts/Cultural Centre. In response it was agreed that the paragraph in question be reworded to read "The Executive accepted the reports recommendation to endorse the Consultants Brief, which would enable progress to be made on the Arts Centre/Cultural Centre planned for the 'Works' site".</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
.02	<p><b><u>E58/(-)</u></b> <b><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the special meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
.	<p><b><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></b></p>	
.01	<p><b><u>E59/(E33)</u></b> <b><u>CONFERENCES AND COURSES</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLGA – Round Table Discussions Independent Commission for Social Care in Wales Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2010 Local Government Data Unit, Cardiff, CF10 4SD</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED that retrospective approval be granted for one Member to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WAG – Care &amp; Repair Cymru Annual Conference Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> &amp; Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2010 Venue Cymru, Llandudno</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for one Member to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLGA / Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales / Cynnal Cymru - AGM Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2010 Millennium Stadium, Cardiff</li> </ul>	



	<p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for two Members to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WLGA – Finance, Efficiency and Innovation Seminar Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2010 Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for two Members to attend.</p>	
.02	<p><b>E60/(E7)</b> <b><u>SURPLUS ASSET MONITORING REPORT –</u></b> <b><u>1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2010 TO 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Estates Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Surplus Asset Monitoring Report be noted.</p> <p><b>Reason for Recommendation:</b> To accept the Surplus Asset Monitoring Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010.</p>	
.	<p><b><u>REGENERATION MATTERS</u></b></p>	
.01.	<p><b>E61/(-)</b> <b><u>THE DESIGNATION OF THE SECOND TRANCHE OF SITES</u></b> <b><u>OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Regeneration Officer.</p> <p>The Executive Member Regeneration commented that he would like to make amendments to the recommendations contained within the report. Following brief discussion it was agreed that the report be deferred in order to allow appropriate consultation</p>	

to take place with the relevant scrutiny committee.

**RESOLVED**, subject to the foregoing, that the report be **DEFERRED**

**Reason for Recommendation:** The proposal forms an important part of the Council's biodiversity work programme and is part of the Council's statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill (2006) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

**.02. E62/(-)  
WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT – WORK BASED  
LEARNING (WBL) CONTRACT 2011/2014**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Regeneration Officer.

**RESOLVED** that the report be accepted and that the Training Centre enters into a strategic partnership with ACT training provider from Cardiff in order to secure a Blaenau Gwent training contract from the Welsh Assembly Government.

**.03. E63/(-)  
MONWEL SIGNS & SERVICES  
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROJECT, EBBW VALE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Regeneration Officer.

The Executive Member Regeneration advised that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) were moving away from the provision of supported employment. He commented that a range of options had been explored in order to attempt to improve the situation and that a suggested way forward was to develop the facility at Monwel into a social enterprise arrangement that would work towards financial self sufficiency. However, he noted that financial support from the Authority would still be required on a temporary basis.

The Executive Member Regeneration suggested that recommendation (b) contained within the report be amended to read "that appropriate scrutiny committee use any means necessary to monitor and review the situation".



	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The content of the report be noted subject to a further report being submitted; and</li> <li>▪ that appropriate scrutiny committee use any means necessary to monitor and review the situation.</li> </ul>	
.04	<p><b>E64/(-)</b>  <b><u>EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – A STRATEGIC WOODLAND PLAN FOR THE HEADS OF THE VALLEYS</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the extract of minutes from the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.</p> <p>The Executive Member Regeneration outlined the content of the extract of minutes and highlighted that fact that Item No. 5.05 (Hheads of the Valleys Woodland Plan) on the agenda provided further detail on the subject.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that thanks and appreciation be extended to the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Woodland Plan for the Heads of the Valleys be supported as a strategic document;</li> <li>▪ Priority Woodlands be developed when opportunities arose; and</li> <li>▪ The Authority commit to membership to the delivery in partnership.</li> </ul>	
.05	<p><b>E65/(-)</b>  <b><u>HEADS OF THE VALLEYS WOODLAND PLAN</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Regeneration Officer.</p> <p>The Executive Member Regeneration outlined the content of the report and suggested that recommendation (a) be amended to read: "The strategy for the HOV Woodland Plan be noted and its use as a means of securing future funding for Blaenau Gwent in partnership with other relevant bodies be endorsed".</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The strategy for the HOV Woodland Plan be noted and its use as a means of securing future funding for Blaenau Gwent in partnership with other relevant bodies be</li> </ul>	

endorsed; and

- The Chief Regeneration Officer supports the Woodland Plan through the preparation of a work programme for the delivery of projects identified within the strategy relevant to Blaenau Gwent.

**Reason for Recommendation:** The Woodland Strategy contains a number of projects that will deliver significant benefits for the Communities of Blaenau Gwent. Endorsing the Strategy will enable officers to secure essential future funding required for the successful delivery of the key projects identified.

**.06 E66/(E64)  
EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND  
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – UNITS OCCUPIED BY  
NON-BUSINESS ACTIVITY**

Consideration was given to the extract of minutes from the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

RESOLVED that thanks and appreciation be extended to the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee and noted that further reports were currently awaited in order for alternative arrangements to be considered.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND HOUSING MATTERS**

**.01. E67/(-)  
HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEMES IN BLAENAU  
GWENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Public Protection Officer.

The Executive Member Neighbourhood Services and Housing outlined the content of the report. The Executive Member Education commented on the positive nature of the report but noted that the Welsh Assembly Government may introduce cuts to grants of this nature in future.

The Executive Member Leisure Services queried the tight



timescales for the project. In response the Corporate Director Environment and Regeneration advised that there was sum of money that had to be used prior to the 31<sup>st</sup> March but that the project was on target. He also advised that based on the information available to him, he felt it was unlikely that this type of grant was unlikely to be cut by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the training opportunities that would be provided for local unemployed people. He also referred to the fact that the Welsh Assembly Government would be monitoring the implementation of the scheme and noted that the authority was on target with the project.

It was further commented that the project deserved further press coverage to highlight the good nature of the work and the benefits to local people.

The Executive Member Regeneration queried whether there was appropriate staffing capacity to manage the project. In response the Corporate Director Environment and Regeneration advised that the staffing capacity was currently in place but that capacity issues would need to be monitored accordingly in order to avoid a situation where lack of staffing capacity could prevent the authority from achieving grant funding in the future.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and approval be granted for the schemes outlined within the report to be delivered in partnership with the Mark Group.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To improve the energy efficiency and reduce fuel costs in some of our poorest communities and most energy and most energy inefficient housing at no capital cost to the Authority.

## LEISURE SERVICES MATTERS

### **.01 E68/(E44) GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Director of Education and Leisure Services.

Members were advised of the following additional grants, which

had been submitted since the preparation of the report.

### **ABERTILLERY**

#### **Abertillery Ward – Councillor N. Daniels**

1.	Abertillery Men's Bowls	£100
2.	Abertillery Excelsiors FC	£100
3.	Abertillery Colts FC	£100
4.	Old Tylerians RFC	£100
5.	Abertillery Twinning Association	£100
6.	Hll Help Inside	£50
7.	Bishop Street Allotments	£50

#### **Six Bells Ward – Councilor W.C. Watkins**

1.	Six Bells Over 50's Club	£100
2.	Promo Cymru	£50

#### **Six Bells Ward – Councillor D. Hancock**

1.	Six Bells Over 50's Club	£100
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#### **Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor D. Hughes**

1.	School Photographic Competition with Soffryd Primary School and St Illtyd School	£75
2.	St. Illtyd Scout Group	£75

### **NANTYGLO & BLAINA**

#### **Nantyglo Ward – Councillor J. Mason**

1.	1 <sup>st</sup> Blaina Scout Group	£50
2.	Abertillery Mini & Junior RFC	£50
3.	St. Anne's Church Youth Club	£50
4.	Coed y Garn Primary School	£50
5.	Nantyglo Bowls Club	£100
6.	Nantyglo Rugby Club	£100
7.	English Wesleyan Youth Club	£50
8.	Nantyglo OAP Association	£50
9.	Limestone Road Tenants & Residents Association	£50
10.	Hooks & Pins	£50
11.	Friends of Parc Nant y Waun	£50
12.	Falcons Martial Arts	£50
13.	Storm Kickboxing Academy	£50
14.	Blaenau Gwent International Youth Twining	£50
15.	Nantyglo Dance Club	£50
16.	Nantyglo & Blaina Squadron Air Training Corp	£50



Blaina Ward – Councillor D. Hillman

- |    |                |      |
|----|----------------|------|
| 1. | Promo Cymru    | £50  |
| 2. | The Mimics     | £100 |
| 3. | Riverside Fund | £50  |

BRYNMAWRBrynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hopkins, L. Elias & K. Brown

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Brynmawr Athletic FC                                   | £100 |
| 2. | Brynmawr Town FC                                       | £100 |
| 3. | Brynmawr British Legion – Remembrance Day Poppy Wreath | £18  |

EBBW VALEEbbw Vale North Ward – Councillor J. Rogers & D. Wilcox

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Gwent Valleys Sports Club for the Disabled | £200 |
| 2. | Promo Cymru                                | £200 |

Beaufort Ward – Councillor G. Hughes

- |    |              |      |
|----|--------------|------|
| 1. | Beaufort RFC | £100 |
|----|--------------|------|

Beaufort Ward – Councillor G. Thomas

- |    |                     |     |
|----|---------------------|-----|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Deaf Club | £40 |
| 2. | Promo Cymru         | £50 |

Rassau Ward – Councillor W.J. Williams

- |    |              |      |
|----|--------------|------|
| 1. | Beaufort RFC | £100 |
|----|--------------|------|

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

.01. E69/(-)  
EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010

Consideration was given to the extract of minutes from the

Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

The Leader of the Council advised that there was an amendment to page 5 of the extract of minutes. He advised that it should read "A Member concurred with the previous comments regarding the Authority restructuring and suggested investigating the costs of demolishing the Civic Centre and building a new fit for purpose Civic Centre on the Nantyglo site when it became vacant. The Member expressed concern that the Chief Executive was not present to present his views on this issue".

The Executive Member Resources referred to recommendation (a) contained within the extract of minutes. He extended his thanks to the scrutiny committee for their observations and suggested that Executive refer the matter to the Budget Working Group with a view to then feeding back to the Finance, Improvement and Performance Scrutiny Committee prior to any decisions being made by Executive.

Both the Executive Member Corporate Governance & Service Transformation and the Executive Member Resources commented that, in relation to recommendation (b) contained within the extract of minutes, a number of Task and Finish Groups and Officers reports were awaited and when all had been received the Executive would ensure that appropriate scrutiny take place prior to any decision being taken by the Executive.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that:

- Thanks be extended to the scrutiny committee for their observations in relation to the premises budget levels and the matter be referred to the Budget Working Group with a view to then feeding back to the Finance, Improvement and Performance Scrutiny Committee prior to any decisions being made by Executive; and
- A number of Task and Finish Groups and Officers reports were awaited in relation to the condition of the 4 key administrative buildings and when all had been received the Executive would ensure that appropriate scrutiny take place prior to any decision being taken by the Executive.



.	<b><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></b>	
.01.	<b><u>E70/(E47)</u></b> <b><u>ANY AREAS FOR MEMBERS' TRAINING / BRIEFINGS</u></b>  The Executive Member Regeneration commented that the training session in relation to Systems Thinking would be beneficial to both officers and elected members and suggested that the sessions be extended accordingly.  The Leader of the Council advised that he had already spoken with the Chief Executive to arrange for this training to be extended to Executive Members.	

RH1010A1N11328

Item No. 8

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b><u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE REGENERATION AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b>
<b>REPORT SUBJECT:</b>	<b><u>THE DESIGNATION OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)</u></b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b><u>CLAIR POOLEY – REGENERATION DIVISION</u></b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT</b>	<b><u>DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT &amp; REGENERATION</u></b>

---

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of and seek comments regarding the designation of the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within Blaenau Gwent prior to the inclusion of these SINCs within the Local Development Plan.

In November 2009, the designation of the first tranche of SINCs was approved and in July 2010, a further report was taken to the Executive Committee to seek approval of the designation of a second tranche of SINCs.

Following the presentation of this report to the Executive Committee in July 2010, it was resolved that full consultation should take place with the Members of the scrutiny committee.

Full details of the SINC proposals have been sent to all Councillors for information and comment.



## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **What are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)?**

SINCs comprise one category of nature conservation designation that are recognised throughout the UK under a wide range of differing titles, and which are collectively known as '*local wildlife sites*'.

SINCs are a non-statutory wildlife site designation covering a wide range of semi natural habitats of substantive value within a Regional, County or District context and protecting and enhancing these sites is an essential part of sustaining the biodiversity resource of Blaenau Gwent.

They are found on both public and private land and vary in size and shape, from small ponds to much larger areas of habitat such as ancient woodland, upland, and species rich grassland.

### **Identification of SINCs**

Selection of these sites is a matter for local authorities and local wildlife organisations. Selection takes into consideration the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context, making them some of our most valuable urban and rural wildlife areas. Guidelines on the identification of SINCs in South Wales are set out in published scientific criteria '*Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales*' and '*Mid valleys Criteria for the selection of SINCs*' (Gwent Wildlife Trust, 2004 and 2008).

Over the past three years, the Council in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust and the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) have worked on a major partnership project to identify SINCs across the borough. In November 2009 the Council committee approved the designation of 128 sites, which had been identified through ecological surveys as SINCs. More recently a second tranche of 11 candidate SINCs has been identified through ecological surveys (See **Appendix 1** for the list of all sites – attached, together with other appendices – to be circulated in meeting).

All SINCs are assessed against scientific criteria (the guidelines for the selection of wildlife site in south Wales and the mid valleys criteria for the selection of SINCs) and approved by a Panel of Experts, which includes the Countryside Council for Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, SEWBReC, the Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership, the Council's Ecologist and other bodies. All sites therefore listed within this report meet the agreed criteria.



SINC notification forms have been produced for each site which includes a full location map, main habitats present, description of site, landownership information, how the site meets the criteria and habitat map (**see Appendix 2 for example – Drysiog farm**). Landowners have also been notified where possible and the overall response to the proposed designation has been very supportive with many landowners keen to receive management advice.

The identification and review of SINC is an ongoing process with sites being identified as and when ecological survey data becomes available. Further tranches of sites will therefore be brought to Committee as and when the ecological data becomes available and sites are approved for designation by the SINC Expert Panel.

Some of the key reasons for identifying SINC are to:

- *Draw the attention of the owner (s) to the importance of the site and provide information to help manage the site*
- *Provide guidance to land managers and policy makers so that they are taken into account when considering planning applications*
- *Record and monitor Blaenau Gwent's biodiversity resource*

### **The Importance of SINC**

SINC constitute an important ecological resource providing both an important haven for local wildlife and recreational green spaces for the local community to enjoy.

In a Borough with a lack of statutory wildlife site protection (for instance, there are only 2 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) although there are many sites of SSSI quality which are not designated and instead selected as SINC), there is a need for greater recognition and increased action for SINC in order to conserve the County's biodiversity resource.

A summary of some of the key benefits of SINC is highlighted below:

- They provide important refuges for the County Borough's wildlife creating a web of sites vital for movement and genetic exchange.
- Their functions serve to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and underpin the statutory wildlife site network.
- The identification of SINC is an important step in achieving the aims of the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans as well as those set out in the Environment strategy
- They help maintain air, soil and water quality reducing the effects of pollution and flooding
- They represent local character and distinctiveness
- Wildlife sites and attractive green spaces attract inward investment and tourism into the area.
- They contribute to the green network



- They make a direct contribution to our quality of life and the well being of local communities providing opportunities for improved health, education and learning, community action and recreation
- Having a SINC can be a positive advantage when applying for grant funding (i.e. agri-environment schemes etc.)
- *SINC identification and designation aids the planning process, as sites which are important for nature conservation and therefore are material planning considerations are identified early on in the process - planning proposals can be designed to avoid impacts on these sites and the important wildlife they support and where there is not possible mitigate and/or compensate for any impacts that may occur.*

The designation of these SINCs and their protection ensures that a green network is maintained across the borough. This provides many services, some of which are listed above, benefiting our local community as well as the species and habitats that are found within them. Today the protection of these resources is vitally important, as it will ensure a resilient countryside that can stand up many of the issues facing our society such as a growing population and changing climate.

BGCBC are now working in a partnership with the neighbouring Local Authorities of Caerphilly, Rhonda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen to develop a landscape scale projects, which aims to protect and enhance SINCs across the 'Mid Valleys' area. Blaenau Gwent's contribution to this will help to achieve local, regional and national targets in biodiversity and other areas.

### **Legal Obligations**

Since the implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill in 2006, Local Authorities now have a key role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. This is recognised under Section 40, which states:

*'...Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity...'*



SINC status is a non-statutory designation (no protection in law) but they are afforded protection from development under policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

Policy EN13 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation is particularly relevant. This states that *'...Development proposals which would have a negative impact on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)s and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) will only be permitted where the need for development outweighs the losses to biodiversity and these losses can readily be mitigated within the Borough Council area...'*

In general, these policies aim to resist development that would adversely affect sites of ecological or geological importance. However, where sites have already been allocated for development within the UDP and where damage is unavoidable, the approach usually taken is to seek minimisation of harm as appropriate through the use of planning conditions or agreements attached to any planning permission granted.

The framework for the identification and designation of local wildlife sites is also set out in various UK Government and Welsh Assembly policy documents, including Planning Policy Wales (2002), Wales Environment Strategy, and Technical Advice Note (Wales) 5: *'Nature Conservation and Planning'*.

Ordinary land management and agricultural operations are not affected. Similarly, it does not give the right of access to the site other than on existing rights of way.

### **3. PROPOSAL/PRESENT POSITION**

The proposal is to inform Committee members of the designation of all SINC)s identified in Appendix 1 – tranche 2

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None associated with the report.

### **5. STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

None associated with the report.

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## **6. CONSULTATION**

The following officers have been consulted in respect of the proposals and recommendations set out in this report.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<b>CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER/ MONITORING OFFICER</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES / S.151</b>	<b><u>OTHER</u></b>
	Chief Legal Officer		Environment Department

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Identifying and approving SINC's is vital in providing important refuges for declining wildlife and creating a robust local wildlife site system within Blaenau Gwent enabling wildlife to move between areas and adapt more readily to the effects of climate change. SINC's are the most important places for wildlife outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and in a county with few SSSIs and many sites of SSSI quality not designated, these sites represent some of the best sites for biodiversity. They are also well recognised for the direct contribution they make to our quality of life and the well being of local communities, with many sites providing valuable benefits for life-long learning, better health and a stronger economy.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Members of the Scrutiny Committee consider the above report and refer comments back to the executive as appropriate

-

**G. P. Jones**  
**Chief Regeneration Officer**  
**RSC1010. CP**

Appendix 1



# BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL SINCS PROJECT (64 sites)

## Appendix 1

	Site Name	Grid Reference	Size (ha)	Qualifying criteria for SINCS qualification	Is site allocated for development (i.e. Housing (H), transport (T), education (C), employment (E), environment (EN), leisure recreation tourism (R) etc) in the UDP?
	<b>MOSAIC / UPLAND SITES (20 SITES)</b>				
M1	Beaumont Hill Ponds & Woodland	SO175140	62.24	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	Yes - small section Housing H2 (10)
M2	Boulevard Slip	SO205071	23.22	H20) Mosaic Habitats	EN15
M3	Bryn Bach School	SO130105	0.57	Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pasture	no
M4	Bryn Farm	SO183125	19.37	(H20) Mosaic Habitats	EN & outside mineral exclusion zone
M5	Bryn Gorth	SO149109	37.17	Acid Grasslands (H6), Marshy Grasslands (H7), Heathlands and Grass-Heath Communities (H9), Mosaic Habitats (H20)	Northern parts have been designated as E2(8) and E2 (7). Rest of site is designated as H203 and H20(15).
M6	Cefn Bach	SO175091	8.61	(H6) Acid Grasslands	Yes - housing H2 (11)
M7	Coalbrookdale	SO195093	12.82	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	No
M8	Garden City	SO188076	43.34	H6) Acid grasslands, H10) Heathlands and Grass-Heath Communities, H20) Mosaic habitats, H12) Bog habitats and flushes	Yes - very small section for housing H2(17)
M9	Gemlyn	SO175130	51.66	Mosaic Habitats (H20), Acid Grassland (H6), Standing Open Water (H16), Bog Habitats and Flushes (H12), Fens, Reed Beds and other swamps (H11), Heathlands and Grass-Heath Communities	EN
M10	Green Meadow Farm	SO222050	42.26	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	Yes - housing H2(10) and H2(15)
M11	Mulhans, Myrddol Cely, Myrddol James, & Gwasted	SO230070	963.96	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	EN
M12	Myrddol Redwalle	SO145050	416.61	Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pasture, Dwarf Shrub Heath	EN
M13	Myrddol Cam y Cefn	SO190070	441.5	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	EN
M14	Myrddol Menmuel	SO164070	215.53	Mosaic Habitats (H20)	EN
M15	Pon Nant y Waun	SO180115	22	Neutral Grassland (H4), Acidic Grassland (H6), Marshy Grassland (H7), Fens, Reedbeds and Other Swamp (H11), Standing Open Water (H16), Mosaic Habitats (H20)	Yes - leisure, recreation, tourism R5(E)
M16	Roseleyworth Community Woodlands	SO207080	18.75	(H20) Mosaic Habitats	Partly EN24(16) and rest is EN
M17	Six Bells	SO218027	5.45	Woodlands (H1), Mosaic Habitats (H20), Scrub Communities (H3), Acid Grasslands (H6)	Yes - a small section is designated as C3 (B) Education
M18	St James' Reservoir	SO155079	1.71	Standing Open Water (H16), Woodland (H1), Mosaic Habitats (H20), Acid Grassland (H6)	no
M19	Swydd Fach	ST225008	14.43	(H4) Neutral Grasslands	EN
M20	Waun y Pound	SO155107	11.51	Mosaic Habitats (H20), Neutral Grassland (H4), Acid Grassland (H6)	Yes - small part is F2(15) & F2(7). Rest is EN25(15)

**POND SITES  
(2 SITES)**

(2)

P1	Semtex Pond	SO182112	8.15	Post-industrial land	Parts of the site have been designated for housing H2 (28) and land allocation EN26 (14)
P2	The Duck and Small Duck	SO1950/3	0.37	Standing Open water (H15), Swamp (H10), Watercourses (H14), Mosaic habitats (H20)	Yes - housing H2(4)

**GRASSLAND SITES  
(23 SITES)**

G1	Bedwellly Pits Field	SO154062	0.68	(H5) Acid grassland	no
G2	Blairlilly Farm North	SO222084	10.54	(H20) Mosaic Habitats, (H8) Acid grasslands, (H12) Azidoic flush	no - EN
G3	Blairlilly Farm South	SO224081	4.01	(H5) Acid grasslands, (H12) Acid flush	no - EN
G4	Chapel House Field	SO160048	4.12	(H5) Acid grasslands, (H1) Neutral grasslands	EN
G5	Fairview Field	SO130113	0.72	(H7) Marshy grassland	NO
G6	Gam-odu Meadow	SO132115	0.9	(H7) Marshy grassland	EN
G7	Highlands Grassland	SO150008	3.31	(H5) Acid Grasslands	EN
G8	Higan Fields Grassland	SO141113	23.36	(H8) Acid grasslands, (H4) Neutral grasslands, (H10) Heathlands, Grass-Heath communities	Yes - Employment E2(1) and Transport T2 (A)
G9	Industrial Estate Grasslands	SO147084	3.72	(H1) Neutral grassland	EN23
G10	Lower Farm Field	SO154057	0.05	(H4) Neutral Grasslands	EN
G11	Lower Troedithygrallt Grassland	SO155087	7.02	(H5) Acid Grasslands	EN
G12	Milgwy Farm Grassland	SO134119	10.72	(H8) Acid grassland, (H20) Mosaic habitats	EN
G13	Nine Arches Grassland	SO134100	5.54	(H4) Neutral Grasslands	Yes - part is Transport T2(A)
G14	North Pen-y-Lan Grassland	SO119131	0.48	(H5) Calcareous grasslands	no
G15	Penn Tins House Grassland	SO118128	0.69	(H5) Acid Grasslands	EN
G16	Sheepfold Grasslands	SO140078	12.38	(H5) Acid Grasslands	Yes - Housing H2(19)
G17	Shon-Shothys' Reservoir Banks	SO127117	13.01	(H4) Neutral Grasslands, (H7) Marshy grassland	EN
G18	South Pen-y-Lan Grassland	SO119130	0.45	(H5) Calcareous grasslands	no
G19	The Fountain Inn Meadows	SO157055	4.31	(H4) Neutral Grasslands	EN
G20	Tredogor Leisure Centre Grasslands	SO145076	0.65	(H5) Acid Grasslands	no
G21	Tredogor Patch Grassland	SO135096	3.32	(H5) Acid Grasslands	EN
G22	Trefil Village Grassland	SO120131	0.03	(H5) Calcareous grasslands	EN
G23	Upper Troedithygrallt Grasslands	SO164066	3.38	(H5) Acid Grasslands	EN

**WOODLAND SITES  
(19 SITES)**

W1	Coed Argoed	SO201021	10.94	H1) Woodland (Beech stand & Upland oak wood)	EN24 (19)
W2	Coed Cae Tyll	SO202048	0.44	H1) Woodlands (Oak woodland), H12) Bug habitats and flushes / H7) Marshy grassland, H5) Acid grassland/heathland, H20) Mosaic habitats	EN24(3)
W3	Coed y Gllach	SO231035	9.57	H1) Woodlands (Beech wood)	EN24(20)
W4	Coedcae Coch	SO216023	7.19	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak wood, Beech stands), H15) Watercourses (exposed with bryophytes & ferns)	EN24 (18)
W5	Craig Sellydd	ST222998	6.8	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak wood & Beech stands)	EN24(21)
W6	Owm Big North	SO196040	5.40	H1) Woodlands (Beech stands & Upland oak woods)	EN24(17)
W7	Owm Celyn East	SO210045	1.09	H1) Woodlands (Beech wood & small stand of upland oak wood)	EN24(5)
W8	Owm Celyn West	SO210091	5.92	H1) Woodlands (Lowland beech wood, wet woodland), H5) Acid grassland, H10) Heathlands & dry heath communities (dry bilberry heath), H7) Marshy grassland/ H12) Bug habitats & flushes (acidic flushes)	EN24(4)
W9	Darren Idud	SO156048	7.57	H1) Woodlands (Upland woodlands, mostly oak), H10) Heathlands and grass heath communities, H5) Acid grassland	EN24(2)
W10	East of Gwaed Farm	SO221061	6.54	H1) Woodlands (Oak upland wood, Beech stand, wet woodland - small trees), H5) Acid grassland, H7) Marshy grassland (M23-type mires)	EN24(14)
W11	East of Penrhyngrallt	SO186038	2.58	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak wood, Beech stands)	EN 24 (7)
W12	Gam Cam Isaf	SO152063	8.05	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak woods, locally wet woodlands, beech stand), H5) Acid grassland, H7) Marshy grassland (M23 mire)	EN24(8)



W13	Llanerch Padarn West	SO215000	6.99	H1) Woodlands (Upland – semi-natural oak and beech), H10) Heathland & Grass Heath Communities	EN24(13)
W14	Llanerch Padarn East	SO217067	2.12	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak wood), H6) Acid grassland	EN24(12)
W15	North of Henllys	SO222076	9.01	H1) Woodlands (Broom and other woodland/lands), H6) Acid grasslands, H12) Bog habitats & flushes (H/ Marshy grassland (mires))	EN24(10)
W16	Sihenny Hill Woodlands & Cardiff Pond	SO152101	81.48	H6) Acid grasslands, H10) Heathlands and Grass Heath Communities, H7) Marshy grassland, H4) Neutral grassland, H20) Mosaic Habitats	EN23
W17	Selwydd Wood	ST223990	6.89	H1) Woodlands (Upland oak wood), H21) Rock exposures	EN24(21)
W18	South of Treorchy weir	SO165063	9.82	H1) Woodlands (Wet woodland, Semi-natural upland mixed ash, Upland oak), H/ Marshy grassland (M23 Mires)	EN24(1)
W19	West of Bleanllys Farm	SO220003	3.74	H1) Woodlands (Wet woodland), H/ Marshy grassland/ H12) Bog habitats & flushes (mires), H21) Rock exposures (rocky outcrops showing current bedding)	EN24(8)
X	West of Bleanllys Farm	SO112034	na	Not a priority site – designated as a Wet Bog C16C Wetland Habitat Code: Wetland Area 2 Wetland	W19

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Item No. 25

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>THE MAYOR &amp; MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REGENERATION &amp; HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2010</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE / SCRUTINY SUPPORT OFFICER</b>

**PRESENT :** COUNCILLOR G. COLLIER (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Meredith  
D.L. Elias  
S. Ford  
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)  
D. Rocke  
D. Rowberry  
B.J. Scully  
W.C. Watkins  
D.H. Wilkshire

**Executive Member – Neighbourhood Services  
and Housing**

Councillor J.E. Mason

**Executive Member – Regeneration**

Councillor D. Wilcox

**WITH :** Chief Technical Officer  
Head of Employability & Vocational Learning  
Head of Economic Policy  
Principal Expenditure Officer  
Biodiversity Action Plan Officer  
Democratic Services Manager  
Scrutiny Officer



AND : **Capita Symonds Representative**  
Mr. David McCallum

(Apologies for absence were received from:-  
Councillors M.J. Bartlett, N.J. Daniels, D. Hancock,  
D.J. Owens and W.C. Watkins)

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<b><u>SC353/(SC338)</u></b> <b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>  Apologies for absence were received and noted accordingly.	
No. 2	<b><u>SC354/(SC339)</u></b> <b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND</u></b> <b><u>DISPENSATION</u></b>  No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.	
No. 3	<b><u>SC355/(SC217)</u></b> <b><u>REGENERATION &amp; HOUSING</u></b> <b><u>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b>  Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010, whereupon:-  RESOLVED to recommend that the minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.	

No. 4	<p><b><u>SC356/(SC345)</u></b> <b><u>ACTION SHEET</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Action Sheet of the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, whereupon:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Monwel Signs and Services Employment Project, Ebbw Vale</b> - the Chair requested that the Task and Finish Group approved at the previous meeting be re-established as a Steering Group in order to be able to invite wider participation; it was agreed accordingly.</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>
	<p><b><u>SC357(-)</u></b> <b><u>EBBW VALLEY RAILWAY – FUTURE PHASES</u></b></p> <p>The Chair extended a welcome to Capita Symonds Representative – Mr. David McCallum, who was in attendance to make a presentation, with the aid of visual slides.</p> <p>The Representative thereupon provided a brief background, explaining that the Study had been commissioned by SEWTA to consider future development of the Ebbw Valley route, not including the Newport service and the extension to Ebbw Vale town, which the Welsh Assembly Government were already considering under its GRIP Feasibility Process.</p> <p>Members welcomed the Abertillery Station and Spur to include travel from the Abertillery area, however it was recognised that it would prove beneficial if the railway could be linked to the development at the former Corus site.</p>



**No. 5**

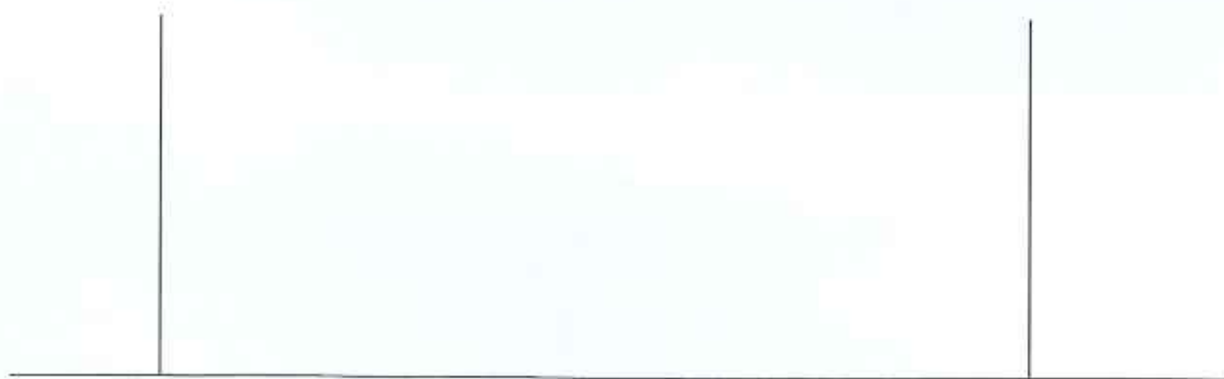
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The following issues were thereupon raised and the Representative / Chief Technical Officer responded accordingly:-

- **Cost Benefit Analysis** - a Member suggested that a cost benefit analysis be undertaken to consider issues such as: would more passengers use the service if a link was provided to The Works, how many had used the service to visit the Six Bells Guardian during the National Eisteddfod period, how many trips originated in Cardiff rather than Ebbw Vale, etc., in order to emphasise the economic benefit of improving the service. Also, he highlighted the need for the Authority to be proactive in seeking potential partnerships in respect of acquiring land in order to extend the railway station network and suggested that radical innovation needed to be considered in such a project in order to attain external funding.

The Chief Technical Officer said that, at the Feasibility Group Stage, a cost benefit analysis had been undertaken to assess social regeneration and economic impact to be considered within the appraisal. He confirmed that discussions were ongoing in respect of future land use and low cost building, however the Authority were not in ownership of land available to introduce a station at Abertillery and funding was not available at present; negotiations were ongoing however to provide a link to Abertillery in the future.





- **Newport West Central** - a Member referred to the curvature of land and enquired as to the railway complying with the Railway Health and Safety Legislation, as he had been informed of a similar situation why a station had not been viable to be placed in the Aberbeeg area. The Capita Symonds Representative confirmed that the curvature of line standard was a radius of 1,000m; however this could be lowered following various risk assessments being undertaken. He explained that, as curvature increased, the distance between rail and platform also increased; Newport West Central had a radius of 300m and the proposal would double that amount to 600m. The introduction of a station at Aberbeeg would have been problematic as there had only been a radius of 180m.

In response to a question in respect of the impact on time to undertake the journey, following the introduction of the two stops, the Representative confirmed that the additional time to undertake the journey would be three minutes, with no impact for passengers travelling north from that point. A Member suggested that to ease pressure on the service, passengers could change trains at Cardiff or Newport, however the Representative explained that this would add a further twenty minutes in respect of journey time.

He confirmed that current rail usage was as follows; 80% travelling from the Valleys to Cardiff, 3% travelling from the Valleys to other destinations such as South Wales / Bristol / London, 10% within the Valleys between stations on the line, 7% travelling from Cardiff into the Valleys area.



- **Feeder Bus Service** - the Local Authority had been unable to maintain the feeder bus service. The Executive Member – Regeneration explained that the Authority had initially negotiated a two-year funding package. There were a number of issues in respect of the feeder bus service and the Authority had been aware that often a fare was not even taken from passengers. The Authority had approached the Welsh Assembly Government for additional funding when the initial period had come to an end; unfortunately the bus companies were unable to co-operate.

The Executive Member added that the objective of the Strategy was to ensure residents would not have to travel for more than fifteen minutes to access the rail link and to progress as a Council in ensuring Ebbw Vale Parkway was operating actively as a service as Newport. He also informed the Committee that the Authority had successfully negotiated the provision of a lift to access Platform '0' at the Cardiff terminal.

- **Land Train** - a Member suggested that a land train could be considered for future development to provide a link to areas such as the Heads of the Valleys road. He said that there were a number of opportunities to improve the service and have a positive impact on the carbon footprint.

- **Transport Conference** - a Member strongly emphasised the need to progress with some urgency and enquired as to positive movement in respect of the railway infrastructure and the extension of service to Abertillery. He referred to the delays experienced in respect of the Heads of the Valleys road and said that definitive timescales were needed in respect of the railway infrastructure. The Representative agreed that timescales were fundamental in respect of the Project; however, it was the remit of the Welsh Assembly Government whether to fund schemes.

The Member suggested, therefore, that serious consideration needed to be given as to how to influence the Welsh Assembly Government. He recommended that the Local Authority invite representatives of SEWTA and appropriate Minister to attend a Conference in Blaenau Gwent in respect of transport.

The Chief Technical Officer highlighted that an All Wales Transport Conference was to be held in City Hall, Cardiff, with all key partners and agencies. This was a full-day Seminar whereby key issues could be raised with the Minister and he assured Members that the Ebbw Valley Route would be debated at this event. However, Members suggested that this issue could become marginalised in such a forum and emphasised the need for a Transport Conference to be convened within Blaenau Gwent.

A Member pointed out that Network Rail operated on a fifteen-year rolling programme, working on five-year control periods, and the Abertillery Station and Spur was not included in this document.



	<p>The Chair enquired as to the capacity of carriages for passengers utilising the station south of Aberbeeg, the Representative said the capacity for all stations would be four carriages, 23m in length, with a four-car train on Saturdays.</p> <p>A lengthy debate ensued in respect of both the technical and political aspects of promoting the railway network, whereupon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive that the Leadership pursue the opportunity for a Rail / Transport Conference to be promoted within Blaenau Gwent and to invite key partners, such as SEWTA and the appropriate WAG Minister, in order to actively pursue funding to progress the railway network.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader fully supported the views of the Scrutiny Committee in respect of the need to secure the transport links, a view shared by all Members of the Council. There was a need to work in partnership to secure this as soon as possible and the Leadership would, therefore, investigate the opportunities of holding a Rail / Transport Conference in Blaenau Gwent.</p>	<p><b>Executive / Scrutiny Support Officer</b></p>
	<p><b>SC358/(-)</b> <b>TRAINING CENTRE ACTIVITY – PROGRESS REPORT</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration; the Head of Employability and Vocational Learning spoke to the report and the following points were raised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Learner Outcome Report (LOR)</b> - the Welsh Assembly grading for 2009/2010 would be available from 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2010; however, the Authority was able to track the grading via an integrated database system, which was currently graded 'excellent' in respect of performance.</li> </ul>	

**No. 6**

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- **Development of Consortia** - it was noted that the Consortia had praised the Authority for the good work undertaken within Blaenau Gwent and who subsequently had been sought as a partner.
- **School Projects during 2010 / 11** - the schools' programme, which was looking at the prevention of NEETS, was operating successfully with 65% of those who would have withdrawn from education / training entering the programme.
- **Framework Attainment** - the Head of Employability and Vocational Learning commended the staff on achieving 100% of learners gaining full frameworks under the Modern Apprenticeship programme.
- **Environmental Standard** – it was noted that the Training Centre had been successful in retaining the 'Green Dragon' environmental standard, which was annually accredited at Level 2, and was now working towards Level 3 standard.

Members expressed their appreciation to the Head of Employability and Vocational Learning as an Officer totally committed to the work being undertaken, with enthusiasm and vibrancy, and praised the Training Centre as a flagship for Blaenau Gwent.

Furthermore, Members commended the Officer on the excellent report, which was based on outcomes in respect of both the Training Centre and the VITCC Centre. It was emphasised that the Officer and his Team should be extremely proud of the success achieved, particularly in respect of the prevention of NEETS.

	<p>The Officer pointed out, however, due to the level of employment in the area, some individuals completing the programme returned to the NEETS agenda and the Authority were liaising with other partners in the Consortia, such as Tai Calon, to integrate those people who met the criteria for social inclusion. A Member suggested that the Authority could also utilise established companies, such as contractors based on The Works site.</p> <p>The Executive Member - Regeneration commended the Head of Employability and Vocational Learning and Contracts and Vocational Development Manager and said the Under Secretary of State for Wales had praised the Training Centre during a visit, who said he would be suggesting to the Department of Works and Pensions to send officials to Blaenau Gwent in order to emulate the work of the Head of Employability and Vocational Learning and his Team. This indicated the high regard held in respect of the Training Centre and commended the Member who had initially led the initiative to introduce the Training Centre, against a strong opposing Government.</p> <p>RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and that the current position, and future opportunities available to the Training Centre and VITCC Centre, be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><b>SC359/(-)</b>  <b><u>CONVERGENCE FUNDING FOR BLAENAU GWENT</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration; the Head of Economic Policy spoke to the report and responded to questions raised in respect of the following:-</p>	



- **European Convergence Funding** - due to changes in respect of the approach to allocating funding, a high proportion of funding had been allocated to WAG Projects. The Local Authority had received funding for such projects as Town Centre Schemes / Business Park Schemes, with individual approval to Local Authorities.

A Member referred to a recent Seminar in respect of Climate Warming, whereby the Strategist had highlighted the risk by 2030/2035 to funding in respect of the M4 Corridor and he emphasised the need to protect those works already undertaken in Blaenau Gwent. The Officer said that hopefully this would not be an issue and WAG Programme-wide Projects would still prove beneficial to local areas, as the Programme was only for projects in the Convergence area, i.e. West Wales and the Valleys.

A Member expressed his high regard for the Officer and supported his continued efforts to press for funding to undertake projects within Blaenau Gwent. He recognised the level of employment, poor health and low wages experienced within the community but stated that Members should remain optimistic, as more funding had been acquired than previous years to undertake projects such as The Learning Campus and Town Centre Regeneration and he was confident the County Borough could prosper with continued impetus.

Another Member expressed concern however in respect of the impact on funding due to delays on projects, such as the Heads of the Valleys road, and Officers needed to ensure that schemes moved forward.

The Chair thereupon expressed the appreciation of the Scrutiny Committee for the Officer's endeavours to secure funding.





No. 8	<p data-bbox="320 206 1171 315"><b>SC360/(-)</b> <b><u>THE DESIGNATION OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINCS)</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="320 356 1171 510">Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration; the Biodiversity Action Plan Officer spoke to the report and responded to questions raised in respect of the following:-</p> <ul data-bbox="320 546 1171 999" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="320 546 1171 999">▪ <b>Percentage of land designated as SINC</b> - in response to a question regarding the availability of land for planning development, the Officer said that areas designated as SINC totalled 30%, mostly covering mountain ranges and lower valleys, which were not viable for development but had rich resources of biodiversity. There was no Legislation to designate these as statutory sites; however, development would only be permitted on considering issues in respect of mitigation and compensation, as there was a need to protect biodiversity at a local level.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="320 1039 1171 1115">The Democratic Services Manager left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p data-bbox="320 1155 1171 1375">A Member enquired whether this process would have a cost impact on developers; the Officer said that the undertaking of a Biodiversity Study was a prerequisite for development; however, she was not aware of development being refused in respect of biodiversity issues.</p> <p data-bbox="320 1415 1171 1682">The Executive Member - Regeneration said that was the reason the report had been submitted to all Members for consideration, prior to submission to Committee, and said that the designation of SINC sites could prove helpful in future development in ensuring developers were aware of relevant biodiversity pertinent to an area.</p>
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Councillor H. McCarthy left the meeting at this juncture.

The Chair thereupon thanked the Officer for bringing this information to the attention of Members.

A Member welcomed the information contained within the report, however he expressed concern in respect of banking of land, as this could place a burden on smaller developers, e.g. in the case of Brynserth, where concerns had been raised in protecting Lapwings, and this issue should be identified. The Officer appreciated that costs were incurred in gaining a better understanding of the ecology, however this was a material consideration in respect of Planning Policy and Legislation and developers would be able to request that information. Also an Environmental Study was only required on sites where there was an identified habitat or presence of value on a national basis. SINC sites included information on what resources and wildlife were present and, in respect of planning development, this could help alleviate unnecessary costs.

A Member referred to the designation of land at Brynserth as a SINC; the Officer said that the whole site had been designated however this had been included within the Local Development Plan as a candidate site for development and, in accordance with Policy applying to SINCS, any proposed development would have to mitigate for the impact it would have on the habitat.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and that the comments of Members of the Scrutiny Committee be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration.

**Executive /  
Scrutiny  
Support  
Officer**



No. 9

**SC361/(SC348)**  
**FIRST FOUR MONTHS EXPENDITURE AGAINST**  
**REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Resources; the Principal Expenditure Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.

The Principal Expenditure Officer noted that staff within the Resources Directorate continued to work closely with budget holders and recommended that budget holders should endeavour to remain within cash limited budgets. Budget holders were thereupon advised to develop actions plans to address issues within their portfolio budget.

The Principal Expenditure Officer commented that it was hoped that the overspend situation against some budgets would be brought into line by year-end and, where this was not possible, some overspends would be offset by underspends elsewhere within the portfolios.

- **Regeneration Portfolio (Adverse Variance)** - the adverse variance related to expenditure in respect of supported employment to Monwel Signs and Services and a projected variance on the LAMS Project, which would be brought into balance by year-end. A Steering Group had been established in respect of Monwel Signs however it was anticipated that this particular variance could not be addressed before the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and

- The Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee remind all budget holders to continue to comply with the Council's policy of cash limited budgets;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where significant adverse variances were currently being reported, the appropriate budget holders develop action plans to address these overspends over the remainder of the 2010/2011 financial year.</li> </ul>	
No. 10	<p><b>SC362/(SC349)</b>  <b>2010/11 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – EXPENDITURE AGAINST APPROVAL TO 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2010</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Resources; the Principal Expenditure Officer spoke to the report and responded to questions raised in respect of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Total of Unfunded and Overspent Schemes</b> - initial indication had been received that funding would be made available for The Works scheme, however the Authority were awaiting the official approval of the Welsh Assembly Government.</li> </ul> <p>In response to a request, the Principal Expenditure Officer would undertake to acquire further detail of expenditure in respect of the following: 325021 Basement Refurbishment (ETL3) and 324513 Learning Works - Education Internal Fees.</p> <p>The Executive Member - Neighbourhood Services and Housing left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the principle of maintaining capital expenditure levels within approved levels of funding be supported.</p> <p>- - - - - -</p>	Principal Expenditure Officer



No. 11	<p><b>SC363/(-)</b>  <b><u>EXTRACT OF MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL FINANCE, IMPROVEMENT &amp; PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2009/2010</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the extract of Minutes of the Special Finance, Improvement &amp; Performance Scrutiny Committee held 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, which was accepted accordingly.</p> <p>The response to the request detailed in the extract of Minutes had been addressed in the report agendaed Item 7 "European Convergence Funding for Blaenau Gwent".</p>	
No. 12	<p><b>SC364/(SC350)</b>  <b><u>WALES AUDIT OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS / EXTERNAL REGULATORS</u></b></p> <p>There were no items for consideration for this cycle.</p>	
No. 13	<p><b>SC365/(SC351)</b>  <b><u>ANY AREAS FOR MEMBERS' TRAINING / BRIEFINGS</u></b></p> <p>The following area was raised for consideration in respect of Members' Training / Briefings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Housing Allocations 'Common Housing Register'</b> - a presentation to be made to the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Members to inform how to utilise the Common Housing Register.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted accordingly.</p>	<p><b>Member Development Coordinator</b></p>
No. 14	<p><b>SC366/(SC352)</b>  <b><u>SUGGESTED AREA FOR REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>There were no suggested areas for review.</p> <p>The Chair thereupon thanked Members and Officers for attending and declared the meeting closed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CLP</b></p>	