

ES9.2



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Local Development Plan

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE AREAS PAPER

Examination 2012

**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Torfaen County Borough Council
Submission**

Examination Statement Reference No:	ES9.2
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**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION**

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS PAPER

Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are invited to clarify the difference in the methodologies used to assess special landscape areas and whether this has any implications for land designation across Blaenau Gwent, most notably with regard to Tir Pentwys which straddles the two local authority areas. They are invited to prepare a short joint statement on this matter.

In March 2007, consultants 'TACP' were appointed by a consortium of south east Wales local authorities, including Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen County Borough Councils, to develop criteria for the designation of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). The Inspector's attention is directed to Blaenau Gwent's evidence base **SD111: Development of Criteria for Special Landscape Area Designation for South East Wales Local Authorities.**

In May 2008, Blaenau Gwent Council appointed Bronwen Thomas Landscape Architect to carry out a review of the SLAs in Blaenau Gwent. The consultant used the criteria from the regional study (**SD111**) but also applied local criteria as there were issues (**SD110**, pages 9 -10) with the Landmap data for Blaenau Gwent. The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) Guidance Note 1 which is attached at Appendix 1 allows for local criteria to be used in defining proposed SLAs. The Inspector's attention is directed to **SD110** Proposals for Designation of Special Landscape Areas in Blaenau Gwent which contains a full explanation of how SLAs have been designated in Blaenau Gwent.

To designate Special Landscape Areas in Torfaen, the Council have used the criteria from the regional study.

Therefore Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen used the agreed methodology i.e. LANDMAP to determine SLA coverage in the respective areas. However, Blaenau Gwent supplemented this with additional local criteria. This is considered acceptable as it is in accordance with CCW Guidance Note 1.

These differences result in a conflict of SLA designations for Tir Pentwys and Mynydd Llanhilleth area, Mynydd Farteg Fawr and Cefn Crib. Within the Blaenau Gwent Local Authority boundary these areas are designated as SLAs whereas in Torfaen Local Authority boundary the land is not designated. This is due to the local criteria that Blaenau Gwent has applied.

Torfaen County Borough Council concur with Blaenau Gwent Council that the introduction of local criteria is allowed under the SLA designation methodology. Whilst this has resulted in nearly all the countryside in Blaenau Gwent being designated as SLA and not in Torfaen this is not a significant issue in relation to looking at applications within each area but gives different criteria to assess applications against policy.

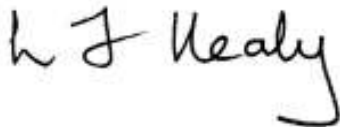
Where proposed developments have cross boundary implications (such as Tir Pentwys) the differences in designation can be recognised and acknowledged.

The lack of SLA designation does not preclude the impact on the landscape being considered as a material consideration.

In summary Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Councils' both agree that these differences are not significant issues. With regard to the development of Tir Pentwys for mineral extraction, Torfaen will consider the impact of the development of the site on the landscape through the appropriate planning application channels.

It is also worth noting that the designation of the SLA does not preclude development but reinstates that any development within this designation should respect the landscape qualities of the area.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of H J Healy in black ink.

Blaenau Gwent Development Plans Manager

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Robert Murray in black ink.

Torfaen Principal Planner – Forward Planning