

Candidate Sites Frequently Asked Questions

I've received a letter which says 'Become a Placemaker', what does this mean?

We would like developers and residents to become a 'Placemaker' and suggest how they can make Neath Port Talbot (NPT) better for now and future generations.

If you think there is a missing piece of the jigsaw (a parcel of land for example that you own) that you think should be developed for housing, retail, open space, employment etc. please submit the site as a Candidate Site for consideration in the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

Who can promote a site?

Anyone can promote a site for development – landowners, developers or members of the public.

If you do not own the site, but think that it should be developed for a certain use, we would encourage you to contact to the landowner and encourage them to submit the site as a Candidate Site for consideration.

You will need to have the landowners' permission to promote the site in order to demonstrate deliverability.

What do we mean by 'deliverable'?

Site promoters will need to demonstrate that the site is capable of being delivered.

In order to assess the site for deliverability, consideration will be given to the following. Whether:

- The site is being presented in its entirety;
- The site is in more than one ownership and whether all of the landowners are promoting the site for the type and scale of development envisaged?
- The site is being promoted by the current landowner(s)/ on their behalf. Or whether the site promoter/their client has an option agreement or equivalent to purchase the site from the landowner(s);

- There are any constraints to development such as ransom strips or covenants that are not in the process of being resolved/ removed;
- The site will be brought forward for development within the Plan period;
- Viability information has been provided to accompany the Candidate Site submission); and
- If the site is in public ownership, it has been identified in a published disposal strategy and/or through Council resolution if the land is to be retained/ sold by the Council.

What is the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)?

The Council has a statutory requirement to produce a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough. The Council's existing LDP sets out the scale and location of development in the county borough over the period of 2011-2026.

The Council's RLDP will replace the existing LDP. The RLDP will help shape NPT for the next 15 years (2021-2036) ensuring the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefitting communities and the economy and setting out which areas need to be protected.

What is a Candidate Site?

A Candidate Site is a site submitted to the Council by an interested party (e.g. developer or landowner) for potential inclusion as an allocation in the RLDP.

The site promoter has put forward the site for it to be considered and assessed as to whether it is appropriate to be developed for the suggested use in principle, subject to detail.

The site promoter wants the site to be developed at some point during the Plan period.

What is a Candidate Site not?

A Candidate Site is not a planning application. A planning application will still be required to assess the details of the planning proposal even if the proposer is successful in having the piece of land allocated in the RLDP.

What is the Call for Candidate Sites?

The Call for Candidate Sites is the first step in the preparation of the RLDP.

As part of the Call for Candidate Sites, the Council will invite site promoters to submit Candidate Sites for consideration.

The Call for Candidate Sites is an important first step in the Council's evidence gathering process to inform future drafting of the RLDP.

Site promoters will be required to provide suitable evidence to robustly demonstrate the sustainability, deliverability and financial viability of sites.

When can Candidate Sites be submitted?

Candidate Sites should be submitted to the Council during the Call for Candidate Sites. This will take place noon 1st March – noon 31st May 2022.

What happens if sites are submitted after this deadline?

Sites which are promoted after this deadline will not be accepted.

Sites can be submitted at the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan stages, however, this will likely cost more as sites will need to submit more detailed information. Sites will also need to align with the Preferred Strategy rather than help to influence the Preferred Strategy.

What uses can Candidate Sites be submitted for?

Sites can be submitted for a variety of uses including, but not limited to:

- Housing;
- Employment;
- Community facilities;
- Tourism;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Waste;
- Education;
- Social care;
- Gypsy and travellers pitch provision;
- Retail;
- Recreation;
- Renewable Energy;
- Biodiversity;
- Transport Infrastructure;
- Minerals; and
- Protection

Who can I submit a Candidate Site?

Anyone can put forward a piece of land to be considered for inclusion in the RLDP.

Site promoters should however have the landowner's permission as they will need to demonstrate that the proposal is deliverable.

Will existing site allocations automatically be rolled forward?

No.

Sites currently allocated for development in the existing LDP which have not been developed will need to be re-promoted and more evidence will be required to demonstrate that the site will be developed over the Plan period.

Can existing planning permissions be submitted as a Candidate Site?

Yes. Existing planning applications can be submitted as Candidate Sites.

Will all Candidate Sites be developed?

No.

Not all sites promoted will be allocated for development in the final RLDP. The Council will assess the sites submitted taking into consideration identified needs and sustainability considerations, and potentially allocate a number of sites for development.

Sites which are then allocated will only come forward for development if a planning permission is granted and a developer wants to implement the decision.

What information is there available to help be submit a Candidate Site?

Ahead of the Call for Candidate Sites, the Council has put the following documents on its website (www.npt.gov.uk/cs):

- Candidate Sites Assessment Methodology and Guidance Notes
- Viability Guidance Notes
- Interactive constraints map

I do not have access to the internet, are these documents available in paper form?

Yes.

The documents are available to view at the following deposit venues:

- Neath Civic Centre, Neath, SA11 3QZ
- Port Talbot Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ
- The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath, SA11 2GG

The documents can also be viewed on publicly available computers in the libraries – please check the following website for information on libraries opening hours and procedures due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The documents are also available to purchase from the Council's Planning Policy team. If you would like to purchase a copy, please:

- Email: ldp@npt.gov.uk
- Phone: 01639 686 821

What is the Candidate Sites Assessment Methodology and Guidance Notes?

The Candidate Sites Assessment Methodology and Guidance Notes is available on the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk/cs.

The document sets out the methodology the Council will use to assess sites and provides background information for the submission of Candidate Sites.

The document also includes a copy of the Candidate Sites Submission Form which all site promoters are required to submit and provides guidance on how to complete each section of the Candidate Sites Submission Form.

What is the Viability Guidance Notes?

The Viability Guidance Notes is available on the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk/cs.

The document provides:

- Background information and evidence to aid the submission of viability appraisals and accompanying high-level viability statements;

- Information on how to obtain a copy of the regional Development Viability Model (DVM); and
- Fees required for copies of the regional DVM.

What is the interactive constraints map?

The interactive constraints map is available on the Council's website: <https://maps.npt.gov.uk/rldp/>.

It provides information on the following fundamental constraints:

- Ramsar (Wetlands of International Importance)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National Nature Reserve (NNR);
- Class 1 Agricultural Land Classification (ALC);
- Scheduled Monument (SM);
- Historic Park and Gardens;
- Common land; and
- Flooding.

It also includes information on the current LDP policies. These have been included for background reference and they will be removed as the RLDP progresses.

What information do I need to submit?

Site promoters will need to submit the following:

- Candidate Sites Submission Form (available on our website www.npt.gov.uk/cs); and
- OS Map of the site.

Residential and employment-led sites (sites predominantly promoting residential or employment development) will also need to submit the following viability information:

- Development Viability Model; and
- High-level viability statement

What happens if my Candidate Site submission is incomplete?

Site promoters will have a responsibility to ensure that the information they submitted is comprehensively and accurately completed as sites which are not will likely be filtered out.

The Council has produced these FAQs, guidance notes, easy read diagram and videos to help site promoters submit sites.

Will the information I submit remain confidential?

No, whilst the Council may or may not choose to make all information submitted available (depending on the nature of the information/ its relevance etc.).

All information submitted will be subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) and/ or Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests.

What is the Development Viability Model?

The Development Viability Model (DVM) is a regional viability appraisal tool. It is essentially a site-specific spreadsheet to detail anticipated costs and profit.

To obtain a copy of the DVM the site promoter will need to contact the Planning Policy Team on the following details:

- Email: ldp@npt.gov.uk
- Phone: 01639 686 821

The Council will charge £50 for an initial site-specific copy of the DVM (each site is required to submit a separate site-specific DVM).

The Council will issue the site promoter with:

- A copy of the DVM; and
- Instructions on how to use the DVM.

Will Viability Information Submitted Remain Confidential?

No.

Following discussions with the Council's Legal Team and the development industry, in accordance with national planning guidance (Development Plans Manual, Edition 3, 2020, Paragraph 5.95), the Council will apply an 'open book' approach to viability

information submitted to ensure transparency of evidence. This means that the Council may/ will make available information submitted where it has been used to inform policies or requirements or as part of the evidence to inform the Plan.

Viability information submitted during the Call for Candidate Sites will not be made publicly available and instead will be used to inform assumptions as part of the high level viability work. The information may however need to be made publicly available should the Council receive a request via the EIR or FOI Acts. Should the Council receive such a request, the Council will discuss the request with the site promoter.

How much does it cost to submit a Candidate Site?

Whilst it does not cost anything to promote a Candidate Site as part of the Call for Candidate Sites, residential and employment-led sites will need to purchase a copy of the Development Viability Model (See 'What is the Development Viability Model' for information on costings).

As sites progress through the process, site promoters will need to provide more detailed information and supporting evidence and may wish to engage the services of a planning consultant.

Why do I need to provide all of the information on the Candidate Sites Submission Form?

Site promoters need to provide all of the information on the Candidate Sites Submission Form to help the Council assess whether the site is:

- In a **sustainable** location (can be freed from all constraints, near to existing services etc.);
- Capable of being **delivered**; and
- Is **viable**.

What happens following the Call for Candidate Sites?

The Candidate Sites Assessment Methodology and Guidance Notes outlines the following step-by-step approach and timeframes:

Figure 1 Candidate Sites Process

Step 1: Call for Candidate Sites	March - May 2022
Step 2: Preparation of Candidate Sites Register	March - June 2022
Step 3: Publication of Candidate Sites Register	June 2022
Step 4: Informal Community Feedback on Candidate Sites Register	June - August 2022
Step 5: Stage 1 Initial Candidate Sites Assessment	July 2022
Step 6: Stage 2 Detailed Candidate Sites Assessment Additional Information Request	August 2022
Step 7: Stage 2 Detailed Candidate Sites Assessment	September - October 2022
Step 8: Preferred Strategy Consultation	March - April 2023
Step 9: Post Preferred Strategy Consultation Review of Information Submitted	May - June 2023
Step 10: Deposit Plan Consultation	March - April 2024
Step 11: Post Deposit Plan Consultation	May - August 2024

Following the Call for Candidate Sites, the Council will undertake an initial filter of sites. Sites will be filtered according to:

- Their size;
- Whether they are within any of the fundamental constraints identified above;
and
- Their deliverability.

The Council will then write to site promoters of successfully filtered sites and ask them to provide additional information.

What is the 'Candidate Sites Register'?

The Candidate Sites Register is a list of all sites submitted to the Council during the Call for Candidate Sites.

If a site is included on the Candidate Sites Register, does that mean it is suitable for development?

No.

The inclusion of a site on the Candidate Sites Register does not imply a commitment to its suitability for inclusion within the RLDP.

What is 'Informal Community Feedback on the CSR'?

Following the publication of the Candidate Sites Register, the Council will undertake a nine week period of informal community feedback on the Candidate Sites Register.

During this period, the general public, Council Members and stakeholders (such as Welsh Water), will be able to provide comments about the sites on the Candidate Sites Register. The Council will also hold informal drop-in sessions for ward Members to discuss sites within their wards.

Comments received will not be responded to. They will be used to inform the Stage 2 Detailed Candidate Sites Assessment work.

Who have you engaged in the Call for Candidate Sites process?

As part of the preparation of the Call for Candidate Sites, we have written to and engaged a number of people including:

- Town and Community Councils;
- Elected Council Members;
- Landowners of existing undeveloped site allocations;
- Landowners of sites with unimplemented planning permissions;
- Landowners of sites previously promoted;
- Landowners of vacant property;
- Council Officers;
- Local Area Coordinators;
- General consultees (those on our database); and
- Site promoters/ developers interested in development in the County Borough.

I have a vacant property, why have you written to me?

As part of the preparation for the Call for Candidate Sites, we have written to all landowners of vacant properties in order to try to understand why properties are vacant.

We appreciate that some properties will be vacant for home renovations; whilst properties are being sold; and due to family commitments and circumstances.

We are interested in the properties that have been vacant for 10+ years and the reasons they are vacant and what landowner's intentions are for those properties. It should be stressed that we are not interested in buying those properties, only to understand what the landowner's intentions are.

We are interested in this as bringing back into use long term vacant properties may be an important component of our housing supply over the future plan period (every house we understand that will be brought back into use maybe one new house that we do not need to plan for).

Will this be my only opportunity to get involved?

No.

Following the Call for Candidate Sites, the Council will undertake an informal period of community consultation on those sites submitted.

As part of this, members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on the list of sites. These comments will be treated informally but will be used to inform our detailed assessment of the Candidate Sites submitted.

Who do I contact if I have queries about the RLDP or Call for Candidate Sites?

Please contact the Planning Policy team at Neath Port Talbot Council on the following contact details:

- Email: ldp@npt.gov.uk
- Phone: 01639 686 821

How can I be kept informed about the RLDP?

If you would like to be kept informed about the RLDP, you can be added to our consultation database so that we will keep you informed of developments on the RLDP.

If you want to be added to our database you will need to tell us in writing and provide us with your contact details, name and address and if applicable email address. It would also be helpful if you could tell us your language preference (i.e. whether you want correspondence in English or Welsh).

Please write to:

- Post: Mr Ceri Morris, Head of Planning and Public Protection, Neath Port Talbot Council, The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath. SA11 2GG.
- Email: ldp@npt.gov.uk