

Tir i'r De o Heol Merthyr, Princetown

Land South of Merthyr Road, Princetown

Mehefin 2005/June 2005



RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER STRATEGIES

1.1 Supplementary Planning Guidance is a package of documents that supports and gives more detail to the county borough's Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (UDP). Supplementary Planning Guidance can also support and give effect to other strategies including the Caerphilly Community Strategy by providing a positive and detailed land-use planning framework for implementation of those strategies. There are two broad types of Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- **Action Plans** which contain programmes of action for specific locations, developing in more detail the policies of the UDP and the Community Strategy (e.g. Town Centre Action Plans, Conservation Area Enhancement plans, Village Action Plans, Park Development Plans)
- **Design Guides** which set out in detail the standards which development conforming to the policy criteria of the UDP is expected to meet in terms of layout and design (e.g. Development Design Guides and Site Development Briefs)

1.2 The Action Plans and Design Guides are consistent with UDP policies because they are based on them. They give detail to how those policies should be implemented. Supplementary Planning Guidance is therefore a material consideration in planning policy terms.

2 SITE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

2.1 One of the Guiding Principles of the UDP is 'Good Design'. The principle mechanism for achieving this is Policy **DC1** supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance. Site Development Briefs and Site Design Briefs address the design and development of key sites identified in the Plan or which are within the Settlement Boundary but not allocated for any use. As appropriate they identify the

- Constraints to development and ways in which constraints should be overcome;
- Principal design requirements relating to buildings, open spaces, landscaping, ecology and access.

2.2 This is done in ways, which are consistent with the other Guiding Principles of the Unitary Development Plan, 'Sustaining the identity and vitality of settlements' and 'Sustainability'.

3 PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION

3.1 In order to ensure that the interests of local people, public bodies and other interested parties are taken fully into account, public consultation takes place at each stage of production of the Supplementary Planning Guidance. The

consultation process allows representations to be made supporting or objecting to the contents of the document, or to suggest further proposals to be included in it. The consultation process helps to give Supplementary Planning Guidance legitimacy and strength. After a full consultation process, the document will be revised and will then be formally adopted by the county borough council.

- 3.2 The Development Brief and the Report of Public Consultation were reported to Council on the 28th June 2005, where it was resolved that the brief be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Unitary Development Plan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Good design is one of 3 underlying principles of the Unitary Development Plan and should be the aim of all those involved in the development process. The aim of this brief, therefore, is to provide potential developers with clear guidance in relation to the development that would be required by the Council on *'the Land South of Merthyr Road, Princetown'* with a view to encouraging the highest standard of design and layout, provision of public space and protection of nature conservation interests.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is allocated for residential use under [Policy H1 \(30\)](#) of the Council Approved Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2 The central and western area of the site, Princetown Meadow, is also designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) under [Policy C11 \(44\)](#) of the UDP.

3. CHARACTER APPRAISAL

- 3.1 The **'land south of Merthyr Road'** is located at the edge of the settlement of Princetown in the Upper Rhymney Valley. It comprises 5.2 hectares of undulating open land currently used for grazing horses, as illustrated in Photo 1. A hedgerow, characteristically similar to others in the area, forms a part of the northern boundary with Merthyr Road. The rear curtilages of existing properties on Merthyr Road also form the northern boundary to the central area of the site (see Map 1).
- 3.2 The Heads of the Valleys Trunk Road (A465) marks the southern border of the site, below a steep level change (Photo 2).



Photo 1 – View of site from SE corner



Photo 2 – View of SW of site from opposite side of A465

- 3.3 Princetown is a small settlement consisting of a variety of housing types including terraces, bungalows and detached housing (Photo 3). There is also a public house and a children's day nursery in the village, as shown on Map 1, contributing to the ribbon of development fronting on to Merthyr Road. Princetown exhibits a strong rural village character and it is important that any development on the site respects this.
- 3.4 Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate is located north-east of Clos Bryn Brith, and is occupied by B1, B2 and B8 uses. The edge of the estate abuts Merthyr Road opposite Clos Bryn Brith but, as mature trees screen the area, this has no negative visual impact on the site.
- 3.5 With the exception of the small settlement of Llechryd located to the south-west of Princetown, the surrounding area is made up of open countryside and farmland. On the opposite side of the Heads of the Valley Road is the extensive Bryn Bach Park and there are views of this from the site.
- 3.6 A historic public right of way (Footpath 14) did run through the site, although this is now intersected by the Heads of the Valleys Road, and has consequently been extinguished. A bridge has been constructed to provide access into Bryn Bach Park from the right of way to the east of the site.
- 3.7 A new housing development known as Clos Bryn Brith is located in the north-east corner of the site (section F), as shown on Map 2. Six of the ten plots in this development have been completed providing low-density large detached dwellings, whilst the other four plots are currently under construction. Outline planning permission for three dwellings also exists on section C (Map 2).
- 3.8 The western and central section of the site is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), due to the variety of habitats including unimproved neutral and acid grassland and wet habitats associated with drainage channels and streams that cross the site. The drainage streams and channels form an important natural feature of the site.



Photo 3 – existing housing along Merthyr Road



Photo 4 - area to be retained as SINC (section A)

- 3.9 A local bus route runs along Merthyr Road, with bus stops in close proximity to the site, providing access onto the Heads of the Valley Road. Supermarkets

in nearby Tredegar and Merthyr Tydfil can serve the site, as well as a small store in Rhymney.

- 3.10 Work has been undertaken to widen the A465 to a dual carriageway. The negative impact of construction work and the required improvements to the Rhymney Valley Trunk Sewer, have constrained any earlier development of the land. This work has recently been completed, opening up the development potential of the site.

4. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

4.1 Design Considerations

- 4.1.1 The total size of the site is 5.2 hectares, but given the need to protect certain areas of the SINC and existing planning permissions on the site, this leaves a potential area to be developed of 2.73 hectares. The capacity of the site for development is 68 houses (this figure is for guidance only).
- 4.1.2 This is a high profile site as it forms the entrance to Princetown from the south-west and can be seen from areas such as Bryn Bach Park. Design must be sensitive to the existing character of Princetown, especially as it is likely to double the existing population of the village. It is essential that developers adhere to design principles set out in [DDG1: Building Better Places to Live](#). Developers will also be required to minimise the visual impact of the development by using dark roof tiles in order to reduce intrusion into the view.
- 4.1.3 In order to complement the existing mix of dwelling types in the village, section E (Map 2) must include a mix of housing types both in terms of style and size. As can be seen on Map 1, the existing development on Merthyr Road includes terraced, semi-detached and detached housing. It will be appropriate to include lower housing densities on the sensitive southern edge of the site, which enjoys views over and is visible from Bryn Bach Park.
- 4.1.4 The orientation of dwellings is important to ensure that houses benefit from the positive views out of the site. It would be beneficial for housing to have a southerly orientation where possible in order to exploit the views of Bryn Bach Park. A southern orientation will also maximise solar gain in accordance with [TAN 8](#). This south facing housing should be set back to minimise the effects of noise from the A465 and to allow the views to be exploited without being obscured by landscaping measures. Views towards fields to the north of the site should also be encouraged.
- 4.1.5 It will be appropriate for housing in section B to front onto Merthyr Road to ensure that the new housing provides an active frontage on the road and is integrated with existing development within the area (Map 3).
- 4.1.6 The access road into the site should also be overlooked by housing in order to provide a positive entrance to the site. A dual aspect corner building fronting both Merthyr Road and the entrance to the site will be appropriate. This will

also allow views of the protected area of the SINC to be exploited. These design guidelines are illustrated on Map 3.

- 4.1.7 The SINC covers an area of 3.98 hectares of the total site. Tipping has occurred on the site as part of work to improve existing culverts, and consequently some of the ecological value of the SINC has been destroyed. The areas of the site with the greatest ecological value are sections A and D, providing a total area of 1.38 hectares (see Map 2). These areas are to be protected from development, and detailed discussions with the Council's [ecologist](#) at application stage will be necessary to ensure that any development is sensitive to these areas of the SINC.

4.2 Noise

- 4.2.1 The proximity of the site to the A465 and Merthyr Road raises concerns about the effects of noise on the amenity of any development. A noise assessment in accordance with [TAN 11](#) will need to be undertaken and submitted to the local authority before any development takes place.
- 4.2.2 It will be appropriate to provide some noise mitigation measures to reduce the impact of noise on the southern boundary of the site. This should include an acceptable acoustic barrier, bunding and landscaping scheme.
- 4.2.3 Tafarnabach Industrial Estate is unlikely to create any noise problems in the area and any extension to the estate is not expected to adversely affect the amenity of the site.

4.3 Landscaping

- 4.3.1 The length of hedgerow on the southern edge of Merthyr Road will need to be removed in order to provide a vision splay for the access road.
- 4.3.2 As little of the hedgerow should be taken out as possible but, where it is removed, it should be replaced with an acceptable landscaping scheme to demarcate the boundary of the site without obscuring the vision splay.
- 4.3.3 There are no visible boundaries between the site and many of the rear gardens of existing properties located on Merthyr Road. The developer will need to provide an acceptable boundary between these gardens and section D of the site is necessary in order to ensure the protection of this area of the SINC.
- 4.3.4 It will be the responsibility of the developer to ensure the ongoing maintenance of those areas protected as part of the SINC (sections A and D, Map 2). Improvement to the grassland in section A is necessary. This area is deemed most suitable for grazing, and this use should be actively encouraged (Photo 4). The main feature of section D is a watercourse and small pond, as illustrated in Photo 5. This section has been damaged by previous work on the site and therefore enhancement of this area will be required to improve this habitat.

- 4.3.5 A management plan will need to be negotiated with the Authority to ensure the long-term protection and improvement of the two areas that are to be retained.

4.4 Affordable Housing

- 4.4.1 The site has the capacity to accommodate 68 houses (guidance only) with a developable area of 2.73 hectares. [Policy H3](#) of the Council Approved UDP applies, requiring developers to contribute to affordable housing on sites of more than 35 houses.
- 4.4.2 It is considered that in this location the inclusion of social rented accommodation would be inappropriate, as it has not been demonstrated that there is a need for affordable housing in the locality.

4.5 Education Facilities

- 4.5.1 The catchment schools for the site are Upper Rhymney Primary and Rhymney Comprehensive. These schools are currently operating at full capacity and any additional housing will create further pressure on these facilities. It will therefore be necessary for the developer to contribute towards the need for additional classroom facilities in the area. A commuted sum must be negotiated with the Authority and will be dependant upon the proposed number of dwellings on the site.



Photo 5 – area to be retained as SINC (section D)



Photo 6 – Main watercourse running through site

4.6 Vehicular Access and Movement

- 4.6.1 Access to the site should be gained from Merthyr Road. There is an existing gated access on Merthyr Road, opposite the Prince of Wales Inn. The use of this entrance to access the site will, however, be inappropriate, as outline planning permission for a residential development exists on the area adjacent to this entrance (section C of Map 2) and development on this section will result in an inefficient vision splay for the road. However if part of the site comes forward as an integral part of the larger scheme the point of access could be reconsidered.

- 4.6.2 The entrance connecting Clos Bryn Brith to Merthyr Road (Access C on Map 3) has the capacity to accommodate traffic generated by a maximum of 25 dwellings. As 10 dwellings currently occupy the site, there is only potential for traffic from 15 more houses to use this access, which is likely to result in an inefficient use of land. It is therefore most appropriate to access the entire site from a new entrance on Merthyr Road (Access A, Map 3) This will allow the land directly south of Clos Bryn Brith to be used more efficiently and provide a comprehensive development.
- 4.6.3 The most suitable access point is located on the north-west edge of the site (Access A, Map 3). This will involve the removal of a length of hedgerow in order to accommodate a 90-metre vision splay. This will enable the area of the SINC with highest ecological value to be retained whilst not prejudicing the development of section C (Map 2).
- 4.6.4 The access road into the site from Merthyr Road will form the northern boundary for the protected area of SINC in section A (Map 2).
- 4.1.2 The Council will encourage 'Home Zones' principles within the site in order to reduce traffic speeds to improve safety and create a more attractive environment, as supported by advice in [DDG1: Building Better Places to Live](#).

4.7 Pedestrian Access

- 4.7.1 There must be safe pedestrian links from the east to the west of the site in order to ensure that the site is well integrated and accessible. The existing footpath on Merthyr Road is considered to be a substandard width. The developer will be required to contribute towards improvements to the footway to prepare this site for extra pedestrian activity.
- 4.7.2 The Heads of the Valleys cycleway is proposed south of the site, linking to both the Tafarnaubach bridge and the Merthyr Road bridge. It will also be appropriate to encourage cycle access through the site to link to cycle routes in the area.
- 4.7.3 Pedestrian access should be provided from three points on the site, as illustrated on Map 3. It is important to include a pedestrian and cycle link through Clos Bryn Brith (Access C) to ensure that the existing development is not isolated from the wider site.
- 4.7.4 Another pedestrian entrance will be necessary adjacent to the main vehicular access to the site (Access A). It will also be appropriate for the gated entrance to the site, opposite the Prince of Wales Inn (Access B) to provide pedestrian access and ensure the utilisation of the strip of land between section C and number 21 Merthyr Road, provided this site is not included as part of a wider scheme.
- 4.7.5 The recently constructed bridge link to Bryn Bach Park east of the site is an important pedestrian route (Map 3) Due to the steep topography between the

site and the Heads of the Valleys Road, this bridge cannot be reached from south-east corner of section E, but pedestrian access is available from a lane east of Clos Bryn Brith.

4.8 Public Open Space

4.8.1 There are two children's playgrounds located within the catchment area of the site in Butetown and Bryn Bach Park in Blaenau Gwent. There is also open space suitable for recreational activities within the catchment area in Rhymney and in Bryn Bach Park, the latter of which can be accessed easily by the pedestrian footbridge to the east of the site.

4.8.2 Open space will be provided on site by the retention of sections A and D (Map 2).

5 UTILITIES

5.1 Land Drainage

5.1.1 Development is constrained by several culverts and a system of small watercourses running through the site, as shown in Map 1 and Photo 6. Liaison with the Authority's land drainage officers and the Environment Agency will be necessary at planning application stage to ensure that development does not affect the flow of these watercourses.

5.1.2 A structural survey will need to be undertaken of existing culverts to determine their condition. Any remedial action to improve their condition to a level approved by the Council must occur before any development takes place.

5.1.3 It is advised by the Environment Agency that surface water discharges should be restricted to 12 litres/second/hectare by the installation of onsite storage facilities.

5.1.4 The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) and permeable surfaces will be advocated on the site in order to promote sustainability and protect the existing watercourses.

5.2 Foul Water

5.2.1 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have indicated that foul water can be connected to their existing sewage system, which crosses the site.

5.2.2 There is an alternative foul water system on the site as part of the Clos Bryn Brith development and, provided permission is gained from the developer, this sewerage system could be used.

5.2.3 No development must occur within a 3-metre safety zone of any sewers on the site. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water can be contacted for more information.

5.3 Water Supply

5.3.1 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has advised that it is able to serve the site.

5.4 Electricity

5.5.1 There are no anticipated problems with electricity supply on the site. Electricity cables are located on the northern boundary of the site along Merthyr Road.

5.5.2 Western Power Distribution can provide further information on capital cost for connections.

5.5 Gas

5.4.1 Transco have advised that they will be able to serve the site. Existing gas mains are located along Merthyr Road.

5.6 Telecom

5.6.1 British Telecom has underground apparatus on Merthyr Road, and will be able to supply the site.

6 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

6.1 The developer will be required to enter into a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure:

- The contribution of an appropriate commuted sum for the provision of additional classroom facilities in the catchment area.
- A long-term management and maintenance plan together with a commuted sum to guarantee the protection and improvement of the areas of the SINC to be retained.
- A contribution towards the cost of widening substandard footpaths on Merthyr Road.

7 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 7.1 Further information can be obtained from Caerphilly County Borough Council Planning Department.

**The Planning Division
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Pontllanfraith
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NP12 2YW**

01495 235052

E-Mail:- planning@caerphilly.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – CONTACT ADDRESSES

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Dwr Cymru - Welsh Water,
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Victoria Road,
Swansea,
SA4 3AB.

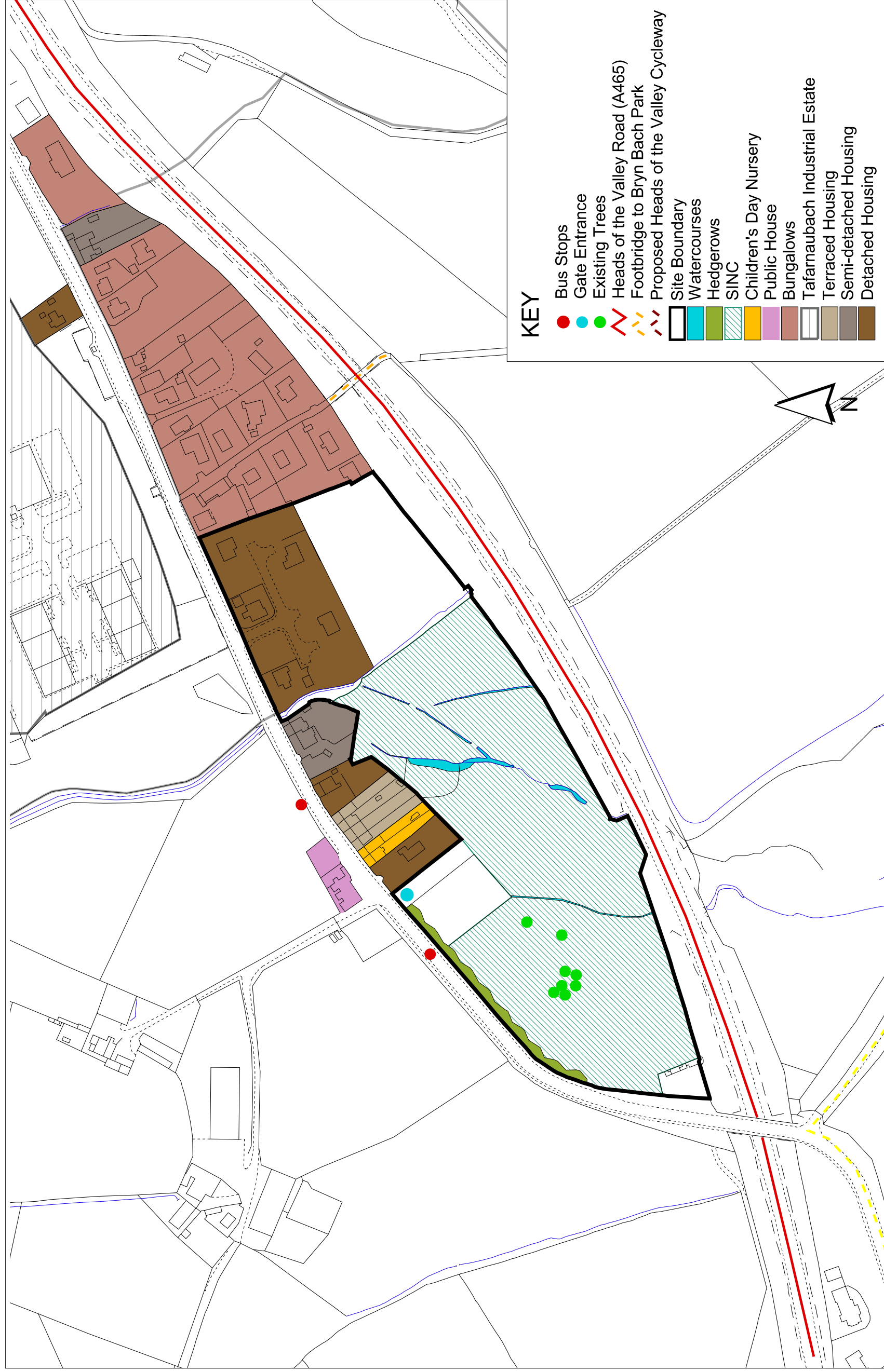
Environment Agency,
Rivers House,
St Mellons Business Park,
Cardiff,
CF3 0LT.

Western Power Distribution,
NRSWA Section,
Lamby Way,
Rumney,
Cardiff,
CF3 2EO

TRANSCO,
Lambourne House,
Cardiff Business Park,
Cardiff,
CF14 5GL.

Map 1 - Site Appraisal

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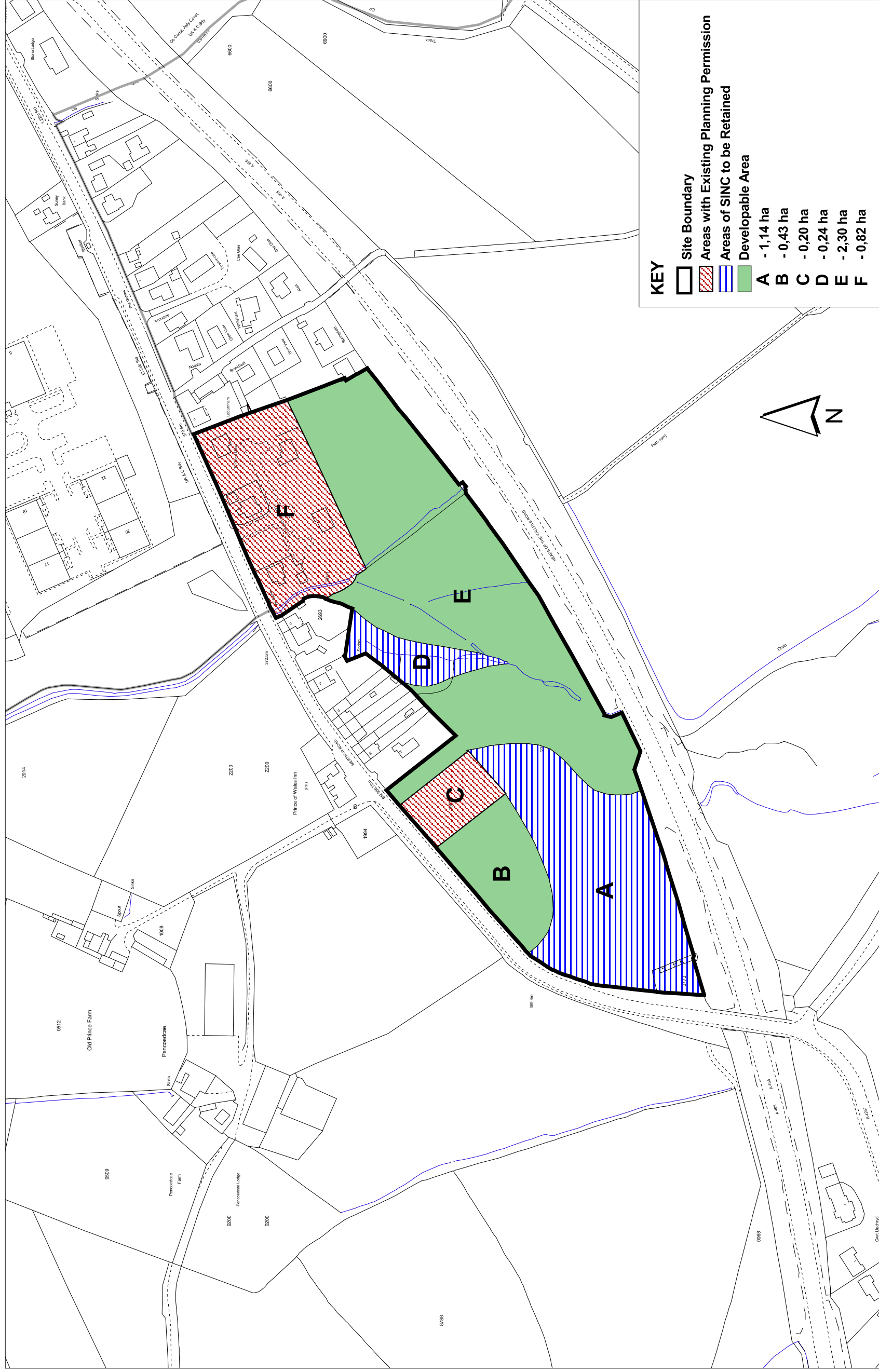


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Map 2 - Site Constraints

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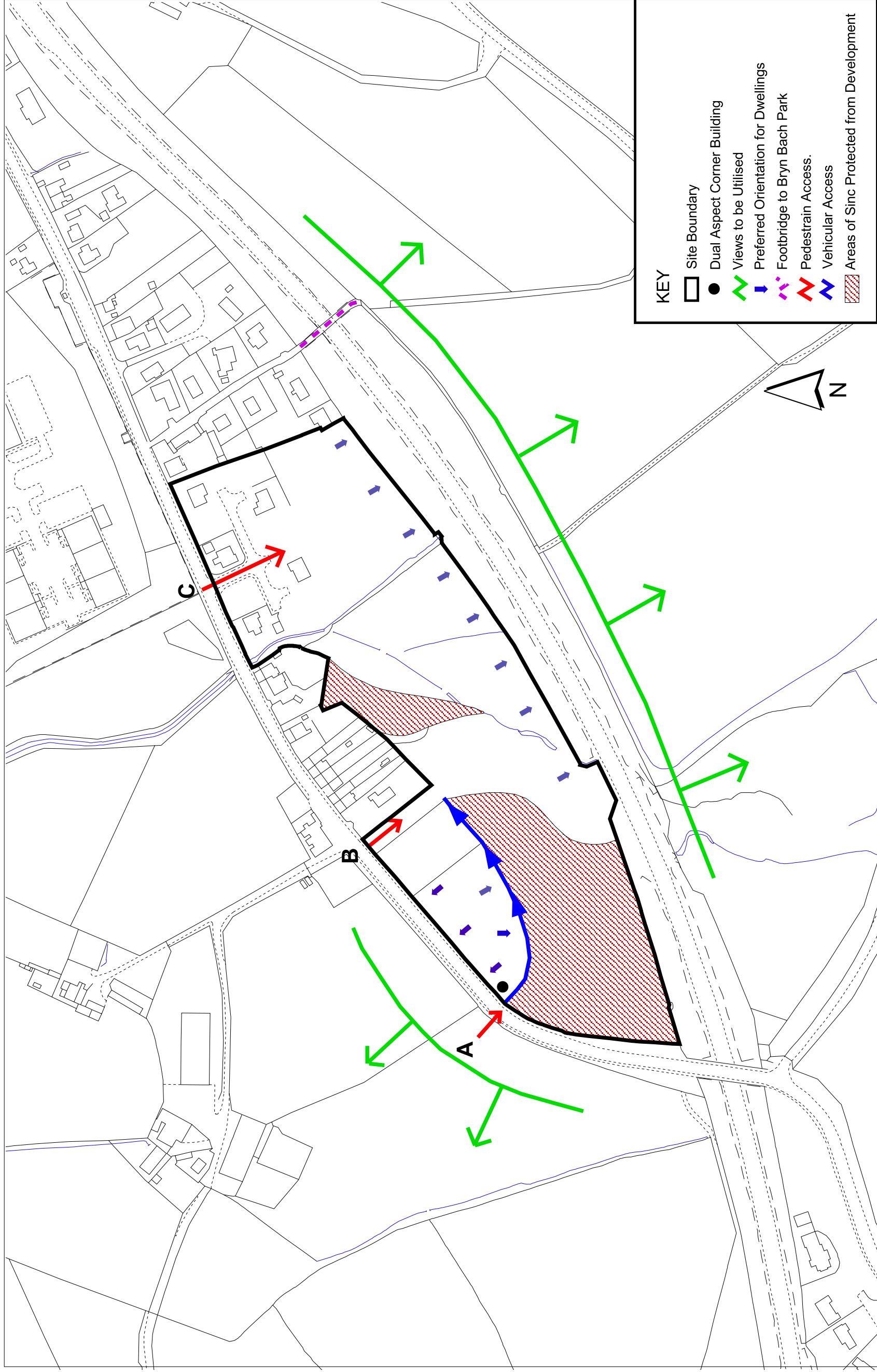


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Map 3 - Development Guidelines

1:2500



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