

From: maxine levett [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 February 2026 20:16
To: Morgan, Victoria [REDACTED]
Subject: Subject: Alignment of the RLDP with Future Wales – Growth Area Classification, Rural Policies & Biodiversity Designations

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Dear Victoria,

I hope you are well. I'm writing to raise several concerns regarding the way the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) currently interprets Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, particularly in relation to spatial strategy, rural policy requirements, and biodiversity designations. I would appreciate clarification on the following points.

1. Future Wales – Growth Area Classification

The RLDP appears to assume that the Vale of Glamorgan is a "growth area," but Future Wales does not classify the Vale—especially the western Vale—as part of the Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys National Growth Area.

Key points:

- Future Wales identifies specific National Growth Areas, and the Vale is not within them.
- The document additionally defines countryside communities, covering rural parts of Wales including the western Vale.
- Welsh Government stresses that LDPs must be in general conformity with Future Wales, which makes the spatial designation critical for soundness.

Could you please confirm:

- Where Future Wales designates the Vale (or the western Vale) as a growth area; and
- The evidence used by the RLDP team to justify treating the authority as such.

2. Applicability of Future Wales Policies 4 & 5 to the Western Vale

Given that the western Vale is identified as a rural area, Future Wales Policies 4 and 5 must apply:

- Policy 4: LDPs must *identify rural communities, assess their needs, and set out supportive policies*.
- Policy 5: LDPs must *plan positively to meet the employment needs of rural areas*.

Bullet-point issues:

- The western Vale is clearly categorised as rural, not as a growth-focused settlement zone.
- St Athan may have distinct airport-related status, but this does not reclassify the surrounding rural settlements.
- The RLDP should demonstrate how Policies 4 and 5 are shaping its spatial and economic approach.

Could you outline how the RLDP intends to incorporate Policies 4 and 5 into its strategy?

3. Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure – Key Omissions

The RLDP's Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy appears to overlook several significant local biodiversity assets:

- Aberthaw Biodiversity Area (Council-owned and agreed for retention).
An area with clear potential for designation such as Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- Cadoxton Ponds Nature Reserve, a major ecological asset not reflected in GI mapping.
[\[gov.uk\]](https://gov.uk)
- Other sites already being considered by Scrutiny for LNR status (e.g., Barry Old Harbour, Rhooose Point), demonstrating an active Council interest in expanding nature designations.

These omissions raise questions about:

- Whether the GI Strategy has adequately captured local ecological opportunities;

- Who authored and quality-assured the document, given factual omissions (e.g., mis-counting bathing beaches) and lack of reference to key local sites;
- Whether biodiversity “net gain” claims are being interpreted proportionately, rather than reduced to minimal measures such as bird-boxes.

Welsh Government expects the RLDP to be evidence-led and based on a robust environmental baseline.

Could you confirm:

- Whether Aberthaw, Cadoxton Ponds, and related sites will be added to the GI evidence base;
 - Who prepared and signed off the current GI content;
 - How biodiversity requirements will be strengthened to reflect site-specific ecological value.
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4. Next Steps

I would welcome clarification on the above matters and would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss how the RLDP can better reflect:

- The correct Future Wales spatial classification;
- The requirements of Policies 4 and 5 for rural areas;
- Local biodiversity assets and LNR opportunities;
- A stronger evidence-based approach consistent with Welsh Government expectations.

Thank you for considering these points. I appreciate the significant work undertaken on the RLDP and hope these observations are useful in ensuring the plan is fully aligned with national policy and local opportunities.

Kind regards,

Maxine Levett