

# Communities in former Mid Glamorgan

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*Table M1. Allocation of dwelling units to the communities in former Mid Glamorgan*

		Hirwaun and Rhigos	Vaynor and Rhymney	Mid Glamorgan total
H1 Sites	Commenced or built (a)			
	Permitted but not started (b)			
	Without consent (c)	25	15	40
Unallocated sites	Commenced or built (d)	2	3	5
	Permitted but not started (e)	6	4	10
Community guidance figure (calculated from Structure Plan total)		32	18	50
Less those commenced or built 1991-98 (a+d above)		2	3	5
Required 1998-2006		30	15	45
Plus contingency 20%		6	3	9
Total required 1998-2006		36	18	54
Less those committed: extant consents plus H1 without consent (b+c+e above)		31	19	50
Land and locations required		5	none	5*

*\* this total includes only those communities with positive allocations remaining*

# 1 Hirwaun and Rhigos Communities

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## Hirwaun

- 1.1 Hirwaun Community is in the south of the National Park, forming a triangle between the rivers Hepste/Mellte and Taf, with the A465T Heads of the Valleys road along the southern edge. Most of the community is inside the Park, but the main town of Hirwaun is outside.
- 1.2 The area is one of contrasts, from the bare common grazing land of the Manor Penderyn and Mynydd-y-glog to the coniferous forests in Cwm Taf, and from the farming valley of Cwm Cadlan to the Hirwaun Industrial Estate. There is a long history of mining and quarrying the limestones and siliceous Millstone Grit, with one remaining active limestone quarry. There are several groups of Bronze Age cairns, and an Iron Age hillfort at Craig-y-ddinas.
- 1.3 The only village in the National Park is Penderyn, which makes a southern gateway to the Park on the A4059. It has developed in two main clusters, mostly to the west of the main road. The oldest part is believed to be around the church and pub on the slopes of Tor-y-foel. Below this is Upper Penderyn, with some former local authority housing, a newer estate of bungalows, the sheep market and a pub. The former mineral railway to the quarry opposite has been reopened as a recreational path, known as the ARCway.
- 1.4 There is sporadic development southwards along the main road. The primary school is here.
- 1.5 There is a shop and another pub in the larger southern cluster of Lower Penderyn. Development here is more modern, and the houses are more tightly packed than in the older estates. The old quarry site at Yr Eithin has potential for management as a community open space and nature reserve.
- 1.6 The other settlement is Cross Bychan, a scatter of houses on both sides of the Heads of the Valleys road east of Hirwaun. There is a pub but no other community facilities.

## Rhigos

- 1.7 Only a few hectares of this community lie within the Park, between the Heads of the Valleys road and the Afon Sychryd. There is no development in the area.

## PROPOSALS

- 1.8 The deposit version of this Local Plan, published in June 1995, listed those issues identified by previous consultation that the Local Plan needed to tackle. These issues are set out in italics under the relevant headings below.

### Housing

- 1.9 The population of Hirwaun Community within the Park at the time of the 1991 census was 917, in 339 households. This is 36% of the population of the Park in Mid Glamorgan. The Mid Glamorgan Structure Plan allocates 50 new dwellings to the National Park for the period 1991-2006. These have been divided between the two communities in proportion to their populations. The number allocated to Hirwaun is therefore 32.
- 1.10 Table M1 covers the period from 1 July 1991 to 7 July 1998. It shows allocations made, permissions granted and dwellings built during the period, including those completed from a prior commitment.
- 1.11 The poor sewerage system in the Penderyn area has been highlighted, and the Environment Agency will be consulted on all applications that may have a significant effect on the system.
- 1.12 The village maps indicate white areas where development will be considered. These are based on the comments made at the public meeting and on survey work.

#### *Hirwaun 1*

#### **Within the white areas of Penderyn applications for housing will be considered against policies H1, H2, H3, H6 and H14.**

- 1.13 Some residents were opposed to the allocation of housing land suggested in the draft local plan. This land marked the route of a by-pass for Penderyn that has been put forward by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
- 1.14 After re-surveying the village, 2 new sites have been found for housing. These are:
  - west of Chapel Road in Upper Penderyn.
  - part of the field linking Woodland Park and Llwyn Onn Close.
- 1.15 Areas shaded light green are, for the purposes of this Local Plan, considered to be countryside.

*Hirwaun 2*

**Within the shaded light green areas new housing development will be considered against policies H5, H8, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14 and H15.**

**Traffic**

- 1.16 Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council has extended the speed limit to the village boundaries to help manage the speed of traffic and increase safety.
- 1.17 Any proposals by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council for traffic calming in the village that will reduce traffic speed and increase safety will be supported (see policy document chapter 9 para. 9.28).
- 1.18 Prior to local government reorganisation, Mid Glamorgan County Council had requested that the line of the proposed Penderyn bypass be safeguarded. This implies a reasonable expectation that the bypass will be built during the Plan period (policy document chapter 9 para. 9.20).

*Hirwaun 3*

**The line of the Penderyn bypass is identified on the proposals map and will be protected by the NPA from development that would preclude its construction.**

**Employment**

- 1.19 There is easy access to larger centres of employment at Hirwaun and Aberdare outside the National Park. Part of the Hirwaun Industrial Estate falls within the National Park, where there are 4.2ha of land available for industrial use.

*Hirwaun 4*

**Land is identified for industrial use at Hirwaun industrial estate on the proposals map for the purposes of policy EM2.**

- 1.20 Within the villages, residents wishing to start up small businesses from home or in converted buildings will be supported in line with policies EM5, EM6, EM7 and EM8.

**Community**

- 1.21 The National Park Authority will support initiatives to provide electricity in Cwm Cadlan. Individual wind turbines supplying a property may be appropriate.

*Hirwaun 5*

**The NPA will support schemes consisting of a single wind turbine and other small energy generation schemes to serve one or a small**

**group of properties in Cwm Cadlan for the purposes of policy PU4.**

- 1.22 Within Penderyn, the equipment in the play areas has been updated and safety surfacing provided. Further community facilities will be supported under policy C2.
- 1.23 No site for the livestock market has been identified. If an alternative site for the market was found the existing site would be allocated for re-development, preferably housing.

**Conservation of buildings and settlements**

- 1.24 All new buildings should be in keeping with the existing character of the area and follow criteria set out in the National Park publication '*Building design. A guide for developers*'.
- 1.25 There is one listed building in the community, the house at Bodwigiad, near Penderyn.

*Hirwaun 6*

**The listed building in Hirwaun Community will be protected in line with policies CB1-4.**

- 1.26 The NPA may wish to designate a Conservation Area in Penderyn. There will be full public consultation to discuss the proposals and the most appropriate boundary (see policy document chapter 4 para. 4.11).
- 1.27 Areas of important open space are shown on the village maps. These are to protect particularly prominent areas of land and areas treasured by local residents. Sites include Yr Eithyn, the fields to the rear of Pen y Banc and the village green.

*Hirwaun 7*

**Areas of important open space shown on the village maps are protected for the purposes of policy CB10.**

**Conservation of landscape, wildlife and archaeology**

- 1.28 The context map indicates where Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located. Cwm Cadlan Grasslands SSSI was designated for its extensive wet grassland habitats of very high nature conservation value, including several rare plant species. Penmoelallt Forest Nature Reserve SSSI is a mixed woodland on limestone, including the rare Ley's whitebeam.
- 1.29 Part of the Blaenau Nedd and Mellte SSSI also falls within Hirwaun Community. The gorges, waterfalls and underground river courses are of

considerable geological and geomorphology interest. The woodlands on the gorge sides are of national importance for nature conservation.

*Hirwaun 8*

**The SSSIs in Hirwaun Community are identified on the proposals map for the purposes of policy CL4.**

- 1.30 There are seven Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the community. Most are prehistoric burial sites, located mainly in the eastern part of the community. They are: Penmaillard round cairns, Onllwyn round cairns, Pant Sychbant round cairns and earthworks, Nant Maden round cairn, Cader Fawr round cairn and Cefn Sychbant round cairns. The monument at Craig y Ddinas in the south-west of the community is an Iron Age hillfort.

*Hirwaun 9*

**The Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Hirwaun Community are identified on the proposals map for the purposes of policy CL8.**

*Hirwaun 10*

**The church and sheep pound in Penderyn are identified as being a site for evaluation for archaeological purposes in line with policy CL10.**

## Tourism and recreation

- 1.31 There are currently an estimated 15,000 visitors to Penderyn each year, most probably on their way to visit the waterfalls in the Hepste and Mellte valleys. There is no provision for tourists in the village, and this causes some degree of nuisance to the local community. The NPA is working with the local community to alleviate the situation.
- 1.32 The popularity and ecological fragility of the Mellte, Hepste and Sychryd valleys have led to their being designated 'pressure' and 'vulnerable areas' (see policies document chapter 11 para. 11.7). Tourism development should not be encouraged which would cause harm to these areas. Otherwise, small scale tourism enterprises, such as refreshment facilities, will be supported in line with policy T1.

## Minerals

- 1.33 Two inactive silica quarries still have planning permission, at Caerhowell and Cefn Cadlan. The latter was a registered Interim Development Order permission, which would require the NPA's approval of a scheme of conditions before it could restart. The limestone quarry at Llwyn On, Penderyn is an important local employer.

*Hirwaun 11*

**Future working at Penderyn, Cefn Cadlan and Caerhowell Quarries will be subject to policies M2-M3 and M8.**

- 1.34 A buffer zone has been drawn around the active Penderyn Quarry. Within this, development will only be permitted where it would not be adversely affected by the quarry working.

*Hirwaun 12*

**Development within the buffer zone identified on the proposals map around Penderyn Quarry will be subject to policy M9.**

## 2 Vaynor and Rhymney Communities

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### Vaynor

- 2.1 Vaynor Community lies on the southern boundary of the National Park between the valleys of the Taf Fawr and Taf Fechan, south of the Brecon Beacons and north of the industrial centre of Merthyr Tydfil. Most of its area is within the National Park and is mainly common grazing land. Each valley contains a reservoir surrounded by tracts of forestry. Wales' main north-south road, the A470T, runs through Cwm Taf Fawr, under the limestone cliffs of Daren Fawr.
- 2.2 The community's conservation interest is centred mainly on the limestone outcrops in the south. Its historical remains include cairns and hut groups on the moorland, a mediaeval motte, limekilns and a disused railway viaduct.
- 2.3 Most of the population of Vaynor Community lives outside the Park, in the town of Cefn-coed-y-cymmer and its satellite Trefechan. The settlements in the Park are Pontsticill, Vaynor and Llwyn-on. Pontsticill is the largest of these. It lies in the Taf Fechan valley on the minor road to Talybont, below Pontsticill Reservoir. The village has a variety of housing, from older terraced properties to more modern estates. There is a village hall and two pubs.
- 2.4 Vaynor is a scattered hamlet 1.5km south-west of Pontsticill. Merthyr Tydfil ironmaster Robert Crawshay built the new church, which is now a minor tourist attraction. There are two pubs, both overlooking the gorge of the Taf Fechan which forms the National Park boundary. This is a popular recreation area locally, while the Pontsarn Viaduct is used by outdoor pursuits groups.
- 2.5 Llwyn-on, adjacent to Llwynon Reservoir in Cwm Taf Fawr, contains a string of former Water Board houses and a chapel on the A470T. The village hall has had permission for conversion into housing.
- 2.6 The Park boundary was drawn to exclude Vaynor Quarry, although this has since expanded into the Park. It is a source of employment in the community. Both reservoirs provide for fishing and informal recreation. The Brecon Mountain Railway, a seasonal tourist attraction, runs from Pant to a terminus north of Pontsticill. The other main recreation facility is a golf course, which straddles the Park boundary.

### Rhymney

- 2.7 Boundary changes have brought a hectare or so of Rhymney Community into the National Park. There are no houses or buildings in the area, which is on common land, and is designated as countryside.

### PROPOSALS

- 2.8 The deposit version of this Local Plan, published in June 1995, listed those issues identified by previous consultation that the Local Plan needed to tackle. These issues are set out under the relevant headings below.

### Housing

- *Allow for gradual, small-scale growth and change within the community.*
  - *A range of housing that is affordable, rented and will provide for all sectors of the local population is required.*
- 2.9 Vaynor's population within the Park at the 1991 census was 511, in 204 households. The Mid Glamorgan Structure Plan allocates 50 new dwellings to the National Park for the period 1991-2006. These have been divided between the two communities in proportion to their populations. The number allocated to Vaynor is therefore 18.
  - 2.10 Table M1 covers the period from 1 July 1991 to 7 July 1998. It shows allocations made, permissions granted and dwellings built during the period, including those completed from a prior commitment.
  - 2.11 The village map of Pontsticill indicates a central white area within which applications for housing development will be considered. Future development should be concentrated on land owned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, south-west of Pen-y-garn. The Council could decide to sell this site to a housing association for low cost housing for development should be phased and carefully designed to make a positive contribution to the community. This supports the views of local residents. Conversions and infill plots may also be acceptable within the white area.

#### Vaynor 1

**Applications for housing will be considered in the white areas of Pontsticill against policies H1, H2, H3 and H15.**

- 2.12 The villages of Vaynor and Llwyn-on are identified as minor settlements that have limited potential for growth. They are included under policy H4 as suitable to absorb some development during the Plan period.

#### Vaynor 2

**Vaynor and Llwyn-on are identified as minor settlements in support of policies H4 and H4.**

- 2.13 Areas shaded light green are considered to be countryside for the purposes of this Local Plan.

#### Vaynor 3

**Within the shaded light green areas applications for housing will be considered against policies H5, H8, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14 and H15.**

### Traffic

- *The impact of traffic on the environment and local residents needs reducing.*
- 2.14 Speeding traffic is a hazard. In particular there is concern over the problems caused by heavy lorries and tourist traffic during peak periods. The NPA will support Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in proposals which will reduce traffic speeds and increase road safety in the Vaynor community (see chapter 9 para. 9.28).
- 2.15 There is also a lack of parking in the centre of Pontsticill especially Bryn Terrace. If suitable proposals can be negotiated with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the relevant landowner, car parking in Pontsticill will be supported under policy R10.

### Employment

- *Existing jobs should be maintained and alternative forms of local employment encouraged.*
- 2.16 Some residents are employed by Vaynor Quarry but many commute to their place of work. Small-scale activities that are appropriate to the area and offer local employment will be encouraged. Harnessing the tourism potential of the area could be one way forward, perhaps associated with the mountain railway.
- 2.17 Within the villages of Vaynor Community, individuals wishing to start up small businesses from home, or in buildings suitable for conversion will find support in policies EM5, EM6, EM7 and EM8.

### Community

- *The range of community facilities needs expanding.*
- 2.18 Expansion of the range of community facilities is the responsibility of other agencies and individuals. However, the NPA will support proposals for community facilities in line with policy C2.
- 2.19 A second play area and recreation field is required in Pontsticill. Support for a recreation area in Pontsticill will be found in policies C2 and T16, after consultation with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the landowner.
- 2.20 A village shop/post office is also needed. Proposals to provide a retail or postal service, whether it be in a new shop or through the joint use of an existing building, will be supported in line with policies C2 and C3.

### Conservation of buildings and settlements

- *The character of the buildings should be maintained and good design incorporated in future development, where possible using local materials.*
- 2.21 All new building should reflect the existing character of the area and follow guidance set out in the National Park publication 'Building design. A guide for developers'.
- 2.22 Areas of important open space are shown on the map of Pontsticill. In line with residents' views, these will have the effect of limiting further building in certain valued areas.

#### Vaynor 4

**Land in Pontsticill is indicated on the proposals map as important open space for the purposes of policy CB10.**

### Conservation of landscape, wildlife and archaeology

- 2.23 The context map indicates Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments that are located within the Vaynor community.
- 2.24 There are three SSSIs. Daren Fach SSSI consists of open scrub on limestone cliffs and screes, with woodland on the gentler slopes. The primary interest lies in a concentration of the rare Ley's whitebeam on the southern end of the Daren Fach crags.
- 2.25 Nant Glais Caves SSSI covers the limestone gorge of the Nant Glais and two adjacent cave systems. The caves are important for their spectacular

passage morphology and unusually large populations of white trout.

- 2.26 The south-eastern corner of the large Brecon Beacons SSSI also falls within Vaynor Community, on the northern side of Cwm Lysiog.

*Vaynor 5*

**The SSSIs in Vaynor Community will be protected for the purposes of policy CL4.**

- 2.27 Cae Burdydd Castle is a scheduled motte adjacent to the old church in Vaynor. It has been found to contain a large number of burials, with fragments of iron weapons. The area around it is likely to contain important archaeological features.

*Vaynor 6*

**The Scheduled Ancient Monument is shown on the proposals map. It will be safeguarded against development for the purposes of policy CL8.**

*Vaynor 7*

**Proposals affecting land in the vicinity of the motte and the possible area of its bailey, as identified on the proposals map, will require evaluation in line with policy CL10.**

## Tourism and recreation

- *Visitors that do not damage the environment and will be of benefit to the local community should be encouraged.*
  - *Access, via footpaths and cycleways, within the community needs improving.*
- 2.28 Tourists are attracted to the area for various reasons, including walking along the Taff Trail and visiting the Brecon Mountain Railway. Future tourist development should support the local economy and use local employees, products and services where possible.
- 2.29 The Nant Glais valley has been designated a 'vulnerable area' because of its fragile habitats (see policies document chapter 11 para. 11.7). Tourism development should not be encouraged where it would cause harm to this area. Otherwise, small-scale tourist enterprises and recreational activities that promote the enjoyment of the Park's special qualities and are in line with policy T1 will be supported.

## Minerals

- 2.30 There are two limestone quarries within the community. Vaynor Quarry is working; it straddles the National Park boundary, and the NPA deals with that part which falls within the Park. Danydarren Quarry has an Interim Development Order permission but is at present

inactive. It cannot restart before a scheme of conditions is agreed with the NPA.

*Vaynor 8*

**The future working of Vaynor and Danydarren Quarries as identified on the proposals maps will be subject to Policies M2-M3 and M8.**

- 2.31 A buffer zone has been drawn around Danydarren Quarry, and the NPA and the former Mid Glamorgan County Council have drawn one around Vaynor Quarry. Within these zones, development will only be permitted where it would not be adversely affected by the quarry working. In addition, Merthyr Tydfil's policy for the zone around Vaynor Quarry includes a presumption against mineral extraction.

*Vaynor 9*

**Development within the buffer zones identified on the proposals map around Danydarren Quarry and Vaynor Quarry will be subject to policy M9. Development within the zone around Vaynor Quarry will also be subject to policies 21 and 22 in Mid Glamorgan's (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough's) Minerals Local Plan for Limestone Quarrying.**