



**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**  
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

# **Minerals Background Paper**

## Papur Cefndirol Mwynau

**Deposit Local Development Plan**  
Cynllun Adeneuo Datblygu Lleol

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## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### NATIONAL

#### Minerals Planning Policy Wales (2001)

2.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's overarching policy on minerals is set out in Mineral Planning Policy Wales (2000). It provides guidance on how local authorities should meet the objective of providing a sustainable pattern of mineral extraction. It sets out 5 key principles on how this can be achieved:

- i. Provide mineral resources to meet society's needs and to safeguard resources from sterilisation;
- ii. Protect areas of importance of natural or built heritage;
- iii. Limit the environmental impact of mineral extraction;
- iv. Achieve high standard restoration and beneficial after-use; and
- v. Encourage efficient and appropriate use of minerals and the re-use and recycling of suitable materials.

2.2 In order to achieve these principles. Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, as Minerals Planning Authority, will need to ensure the following requirements are met:-

#### 1. Meeting Society's Needs and Safeguarding Resources

2.3 Appropriate supply must be identified to meet local, regional and UK needs for minerals. In the case of Blaenau Gwent, the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party identifies the need for aggregates. Where the location and quality is known, and environmental constraints considered, mineral deposits and resources and access to them need to be safeguarded for future society's need. These areas of land need to be identified on proposals maps with appropriate policies.

#### Non-energy Minerals

2.4 Policies and proposals maps should clearly identify where mineral extraction should, or is most likely, to take place. There are four possible classes of this:

Specific site allocation where the principle of development is accepted;

Preferred areas of known resource;

Broad areas of search;

Other areas where permission would not normally be allowed, apart from when major shortfalls exist.

#### Energy Minerals

2.5 Due to the uncertainty within the energy and power industry and the minerals role within it, it is difficult to plan to meet this need. However, the guidance states that as much information as possible should be considered in the Plan to give an indication as to where extraction will and will not be acceptable.



- 2.13 Welsh Assembly Government policy encourages freight carried by rail in preference to road. It also advises that the capacity and impact of movement of minerals needs to be carefully considered.

#### **4. Restoration and after-use**

- 2.14 Suitable restoration should be identified before planning permission is permitted, which should subsequently begin within 6 months of cessation of work. After-uses should be identified in advance of permissions and may include agriculture, forestry/woodland, public open space, recreation or other development. There is also an opportunity to create nature conservation sites. Conditions need to be set when planning permissions are granted, and financial issues secured with regard to guaranteeing the agreed restoration.

#### **5. Efficient use of Minerals and Re-use and Recycling of suitable Materials**

- 2.15





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between now and 2050 and outlines the actions we must all take if we are to reach the Assembly's ambition of becoming a high recycling nation by 2050 and a zero waste, one planet nation by 2050. The Strategy is relevant to minerals planning because it stresses the importance of using resources more efficiently through waste prevention and high re-use and recycling rates, promoting the re-use of Construction and Demolition Waste and the use of secondary aggregates in preference to primary aggregates, in order to protect primary resources. The Strategy will be implemented through the development of Sector plans, which will describe the role of the sector, the Assembly and others in delivering the outcomes, targets and policies in Towards Zero Waste. These will be developed on a priority basis with 'Construction and Demolition'

- 2.32 Carboniferous sandstone resources occupy much of the MPA area, more than half of which has environmentally low capacity. Both limestone and sandstone resources require more detailed investigation.
- 2.33 Some secondary aggregate sources may be available for limited substitution (colliery shale), but the sources are not significant and the quality is poor compared with quarried rock.
- 2.34 Construction and Demolition (CD) & Extraction Waste (EW) is available in the area and a new site has recently commenced recycling.
- 2.35 Although the MPA is not on the coast, the greater part of the area is within 30km of the marine wharves in Newport.
- 2.36 On the basis of existing or per capita-based requirements, additional reserves of about 3Mt would need to be provided for. In terms of its existing share, Blaenau Gwent could not continue to meet even this and therefore could not additionally absorb some of the BBNP, if called to do so from existing permitted reserves.
- 2.37 In order to ensure that an appropriate planning framework exists for mineral and aggregates operations in Blaenau Gwent, the LDP will need to consider the recommendations contained in the RTS.
- 2.38 The strategic nature of the RTS means that it does not put forward specific sites but points to a general provision to meet anticipated shortfall. This process has been the subject of strategic analysis by way of an environmental capacity assessment based on implementing the methodology for assessing the Environmental Capacity for Primary Aggregates (IMAECA) system. The IMAECA system is not intended to be used for, or indeed be suitable for, the detailed identification of potential resource allocations or in the determining of planning applications.

## 3.0 GEOLOGY OF THE BOROUGH

- 3.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council lies on the north eastern edge of the South Wales coalfield. The Coal Measures underlie the majority of the County Borough. The area has a legacy of deep coal mining and open cast coal mining.
- 3.2 The coal bearing rocks are overlain in the south of the County Borough by Pennant Sandstone, predominantly the Hughes and Grovesend Beds. The properties of the Pennant Sandstone in Blaenau Gwent make it suitable for use as High Specification Aggregate (HSA) as well as general aggregate and building stone. HSA is used where a high degree of skid resistance is required like motorways and airport runways. The availability of such materials is limited to a relatively few locations in England and Wales and is therefore a nationally important resource.
- 3.3 There is an outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone on the edge of the coalfield in the north of the County Borough. The Limestone is versatile being used not only in construction but also for cement production (Refer to map attached at Appendix 1).



older sites. The secondary resource runs to the north and south of the primary resource, the southern area is again heavily constrained by urban areas.

- 4.7 Areas where coal working will not be acceptable are identified on the Proposals maps. In accordance with national guidance the LDP identifies a 500m buffer around settlements and exclude national designations of environment, historic and cultural importance - thus excluding the SSSI at Cwm Merdog Woodlands and Cwm Clydach, Ancient Monuments and Historic Landscapes.

**5.0 CURRENT SUPPLY OF**

## 6.0 MINERAL REQUIREMENTS AND ALLOCATIONS

### AGGREGATES







## **7.0 RESULTS OF PREVIOUS CONSULTATION**

### **DRAFT PREFERRED STRATEGY**

**7.1** The Draft Preferred Strategy included a strategic policy to guide the development of minerals in Blaenau Gwent:-

**SP18** The Council will contribute to the regional demand for a continuous supply of

### **Response**

- 7.9 It is accepted that the LDP needs to be in accordance with the Regional Technical Statement. Reference to meeting the need identified is now included in the policy.

### **Issue - Promotion of Secondary and Recycled Aggregates**

- 7.10 One objector requested that the use of secondary/recycled aggregates should be promoted.

### **Response**

- 7.11 It is agreed that the Plan should promote the use of secondary/recycled aggregates. The policy has been amended to include such a reference.

### **Issue - Lack of Evidence Base**

- 7.12 One objector commented on the lack of an evidence base.

### **Response**

- 7.13 It is accepted that this document was not made available when the Council consulted on the Preferred Strategy. However, this document together with the Safeguarding Study now provides the evidence base requested.

### **Issues - Consistency across boundaries with neighbouring authorities**

- 7.14 One comment requested consistency between authorities.

### **Response**

- 7.15 Blaenau Gwent has worked with other former Gwent authorities in identifying safeguarding areas. It has also been mindful of Caerphilly and Brecon Beacons NP policies.

### **Issue - Protection of Biodiversity and Landscape**

- 7.16 It was noted that the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report recommendation relating to protection of biodiversity and landscape and the importance of aftercare needed to be taken into consideration.

### **Response**

- 7.17 The policy has been amended to take into account these concerns.

### **Issue - Clarification of considerations which affect Safeguarding**

- 7.18 Relevant environmental, planning and transportation consideration, which affect safeguarding are not clarified.

### **Response**

- 7.19 The former Gwent authorities jointly commissioned work to identify safeguarding areas. This document provides the methodology of how the safeguarding area was identified and is available as supporting evidence.

## 8.0 DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Although no objection was made to the lack of an objective on Minerals, it is considered appropriate to include one.

### **Objective 15**

By 2021, 3 million tonnes of mineral resources will have been made available and resources of local, regional and national importance safeguarded.

Following consideration of the above comments, Strategic Policy 12 has been amended to read:

### **Strategic Policy**

#### **SP12 Securing an Adequate Supply of Minerals**

**Blaenau Gwent will contribute to local, regional and national aggregate supplies by:**

- a. Maintaining a 10-year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves in line with national guidance and addressing the 3Mt apportionment set by the Regional Technical Statement;**
- b. Safeguarding existing mineral reserves and potential resources from development that would preclude their future extraction or encouraging the pre-working of mineral resources, where appropriate;**
- c. Ensuring that future mineral working accords with national guidance in terms of protecting areas of importance of natural and built heritage and limiting the environmental impact of mineral extraction;**
- d. Ensuring that high standards of restoration and aftercare measures are incorporated at sites;**
- e. Ensuring that impacts upon residential areas from mineral operations are limited to an acceptable proven safe limit through residential amenity buffer zones; and**
- f. Promoting the efficient use of minerals and use of alternatives to naturally occurring minerals including the re-use of secondary aggregates.**

An adequate and steady supply of minerals is essential to the national, regional and local economy. Minerals provide the essential raw materials for construction, roads, energy and our household and commercial needs. However, the extraction of mineral resources can have major impacts upon the environment and landscape.



- e. The effects on surface water, groundwater resources and water supplies are acceptable;**

The above policy sets out criteria against which all mineral applications will be assessed including the reworking of mineral tips for their mineral contents and complements policy SP12. It does not preclude other policies being taken into account where relevant, and where criteria are not relevant for those not to be taken into account. More detailed guidance on the implementation of this policy can be found in MTAN 1 and 2.

In considering proposals for the winning and working of minerals it will be important to ensure that sensitive areas in terms of landscape, nature conservation, historic environment and local amenity are protected and that adequate restoration is carried out when operations have ceased. In order for planning permission to be granted it must be demonstrated that mineral extraction will not cause demonstrable harm and that any negative impacts can be addressed by planning conditions or

agreements. Account must also be taken of the extent to which impacts can be mitigated and any positive environmental or economic benefits which may arise.

In accordance with national planning policy a Health Impact Assessment will be required, where appropriate. This is likely to form part of any Environmental Statement submitted with the proposal.

Restoration proposals should be phased to commence as early as possible. The authority will, where appropriate, encourage progressive restoration at the earliest opportunity. After-uses may include agriculture, forestry/woodland, public open space, recreation or other development. They should favour the creation of landscapes which are characteristic of the area and priority habitats identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

safeguarding areas have been identified are contained in the Mineral Background Paper.

## **Allocations**

### **M1 Safeguarding of Minerals**

**The following mineral resources are identified on the Proposals Maps:**

- 1. The Limestone Resource**
- 2. The Sandstone Resource**
- 3. The Primary and Secondary Coal Resource**

The identification of safeguarding areas for the above minerals does not carry any presumption that planning permission would be granted for their extraction. The purpose of safeguarding is to ensure that known resources are not needlessly sterilised by permanent development (Policy DM20).

The limestone resource is confined to the northern extremity of the County Borough north of Trefil whereas, the sandstone resource is generally located in the mid and southern parts of the Borough.

The Proposals Map identifies the primary and secondary coal resource areas (as identified by the British Geological Survey) as one safeguarding area, as they benefit from the same safeguarding considerations. The primary resource includes the thicker closely-spaced coals, with the secondary resource area having thinner, more widely spaced coals. These areas are generally located in the north of the County Borough and along the valley floors.

### **M2 Mineral Buffer Zones**

**Within a Mineral Buffer Zone:**

- a. Any proposed development that would prejudice the extraction of the mineral or operation of the site will be refused; and**
- b. No new mineral extraction will be permitted.**

**The following Mineral Buffer Zones are identified on the Proposals Maps:**

- 1. The Limestone quarry at Trefil, Tredegar (200 metre buffer)**
- 2. Six Bells and Vivian Tips, Six Bells (500 metre buffer)**













# APPENDICES

# MINERALS BACKGROUND PAPER





Date : 18/01/2010	Minerals Background Paper	Regeneration Division
Scale : 1:85000	Blaenau Gwent Aggregates	

**KEY**

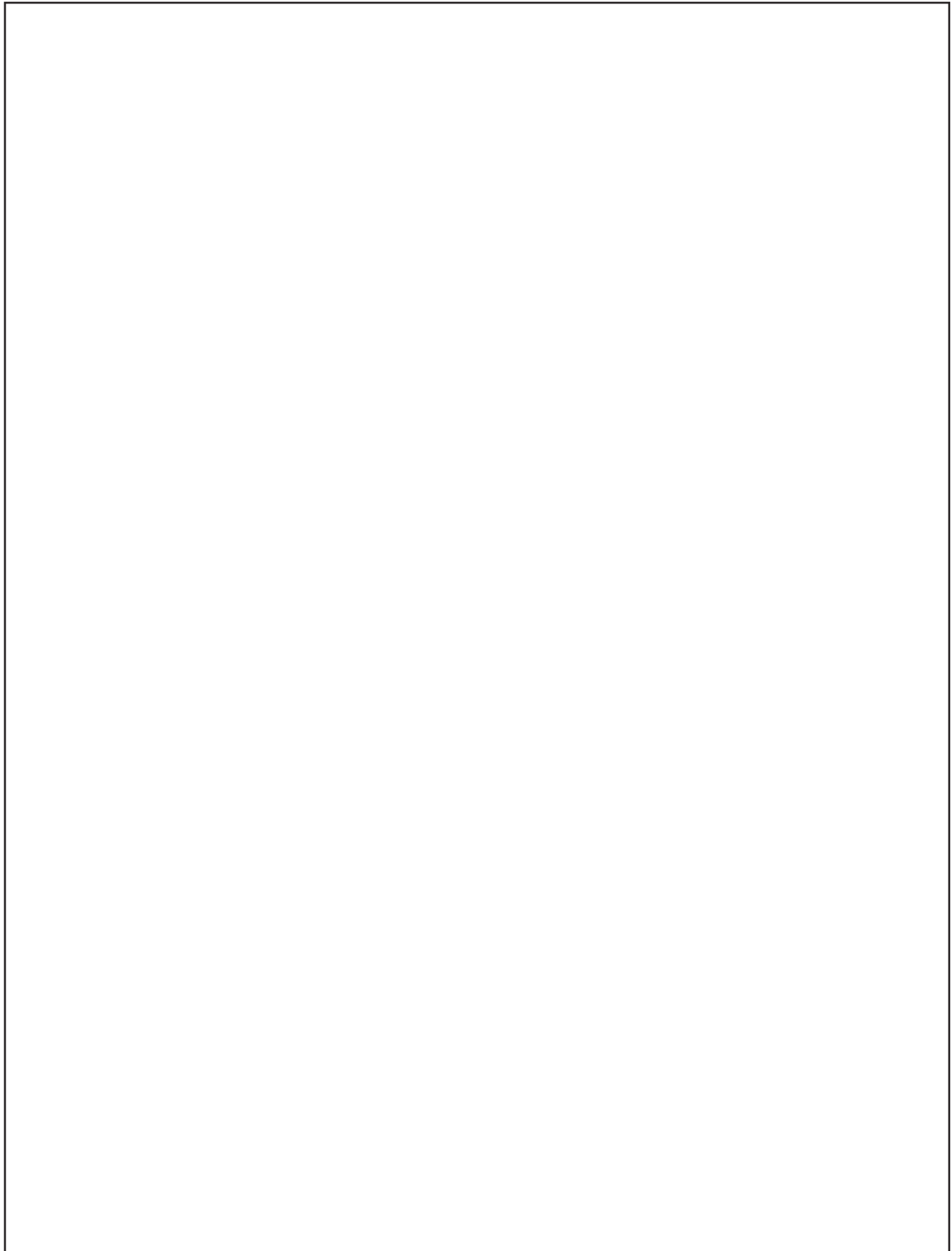
-  Blaenau Gwent CBC Boundary
-  Settlement Boundary
-  Carboniferous Limestone
-  Penant Sandstone

Date : 18/01/2010	Minerals Background Paper	Regeneration Division
Scale : 1:85000	Blaenau Gwent Coal	

**KEY**

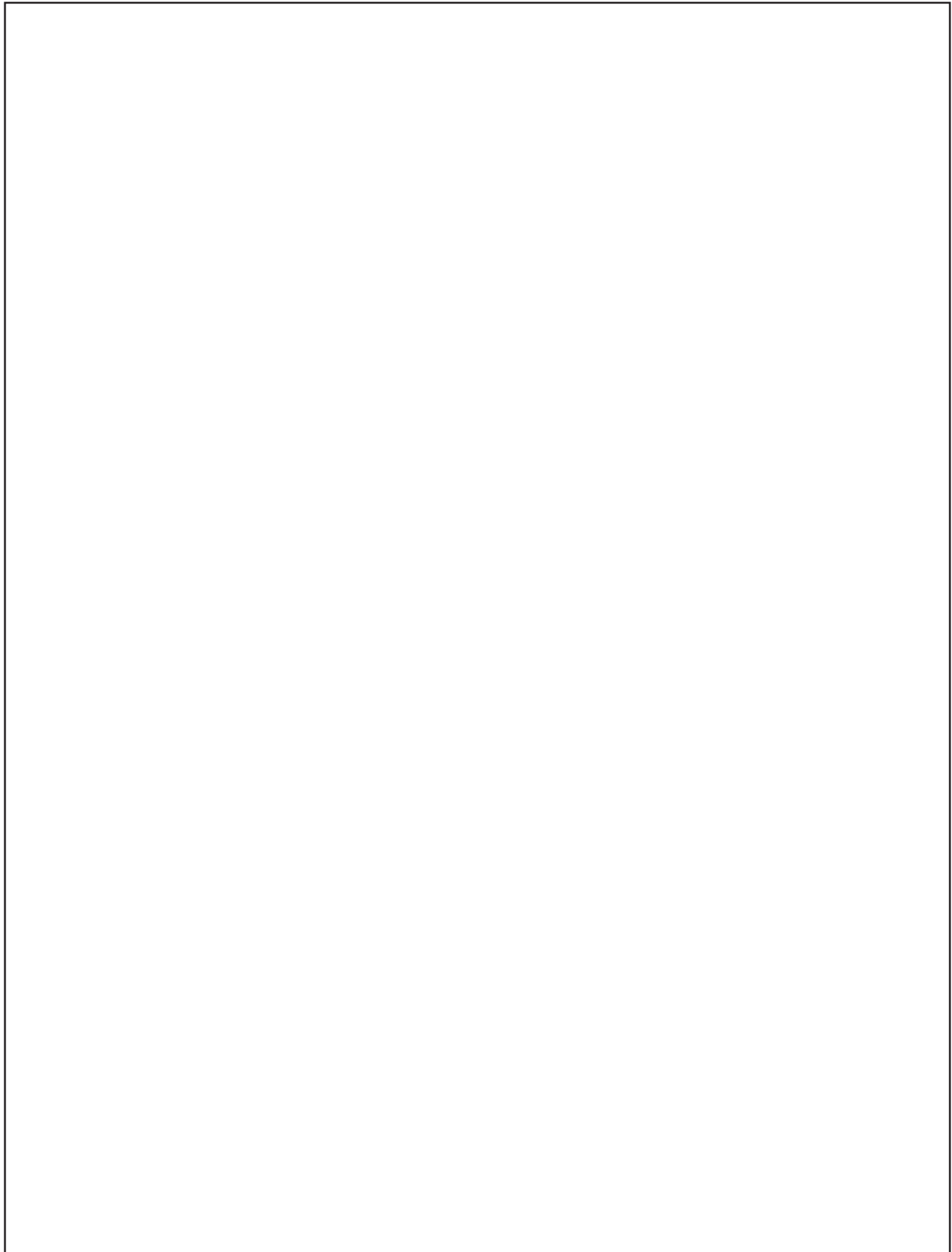
-  Blaenau Gwent CBC Boundary
-  Settlement Boundary
-  Primary Coal Resource
-  Secondary Coal Resource

Date : 09/03/2011	<b>Minerals Background Paper</b>	
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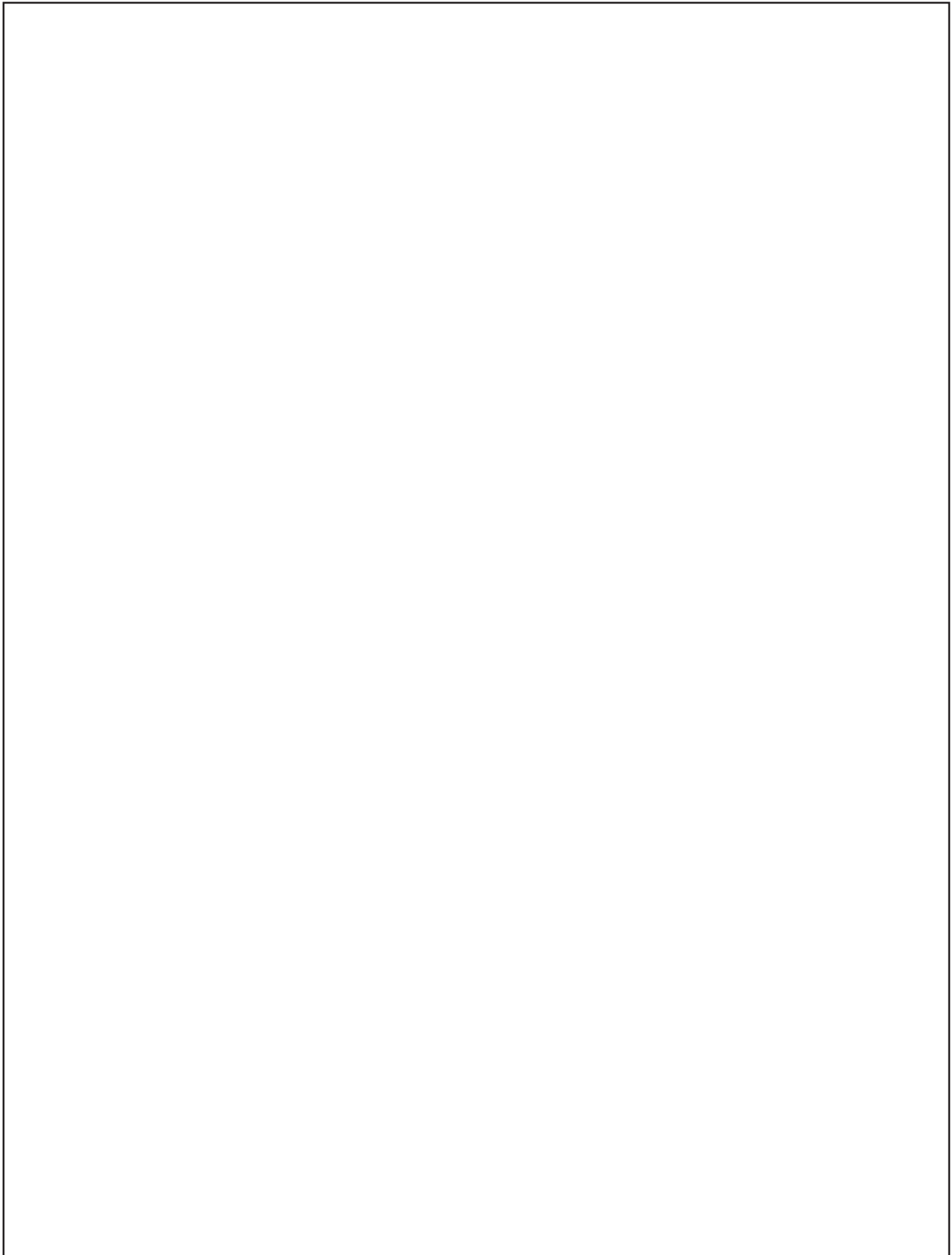




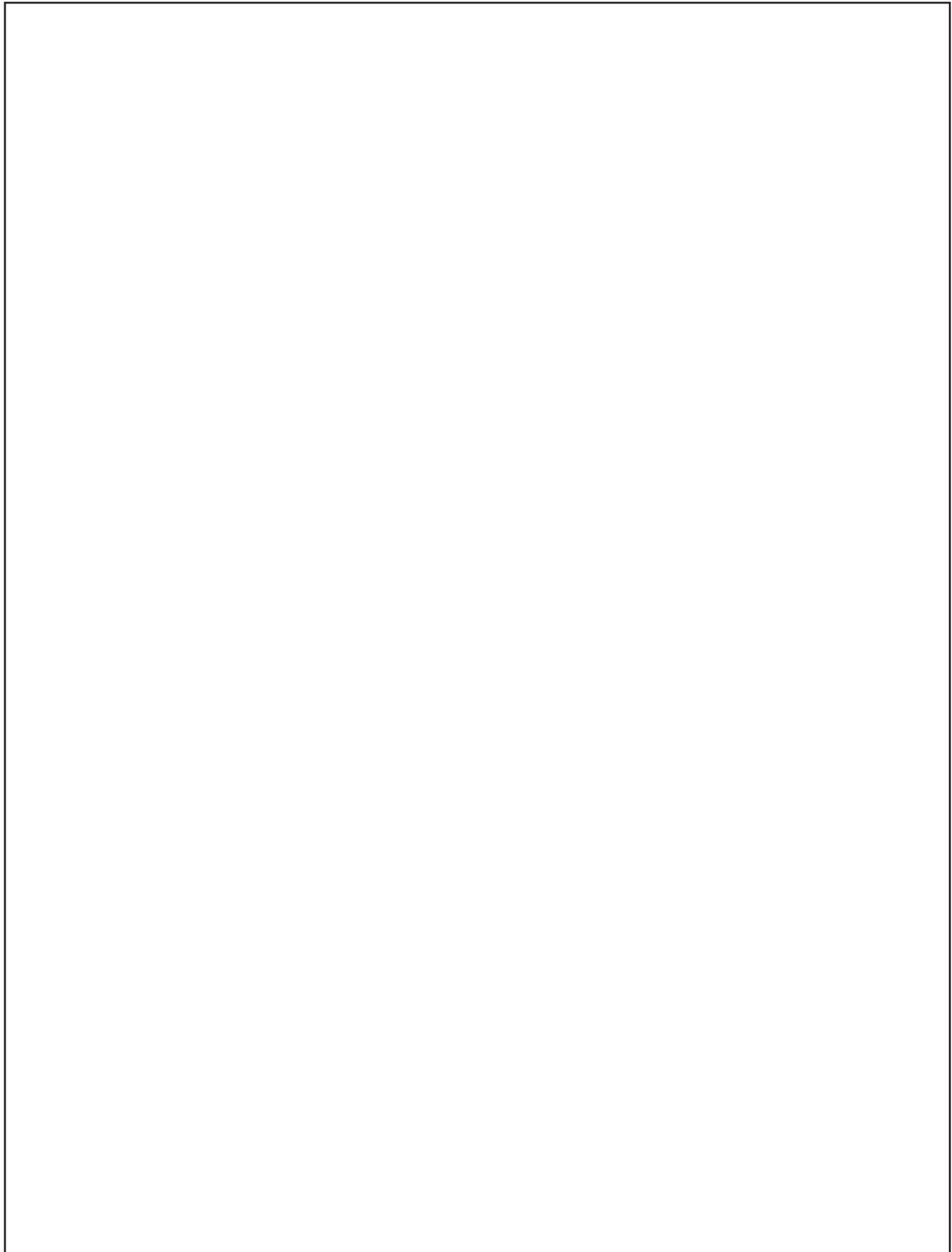
Date : 09/03/2011	<b>Minerals Background Paper</b>	
Scale : 1:10000	<b>Six Bells and Vivian Tips Arrael Farm, Six Bells</b>	Regeneration Division



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<b>Minerals Background Paper</b>	

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