

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

29 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

2017 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (AMR) FOR THE BRIDGEND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2006 - 2021

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report to Council the findings of the Bridgend County Borough Local Development Plan 2017 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) (attached as Appendix 1) and to agree that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of LDP Steering Group.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The Bridgend Local Plan (LDP) is one of the high level strategies which must be prepared by the Council. The LDP sets out in land use terms those priorities in the Corporate Plan that relate to the development and use of land provided they are in conformity with national and international policy. The AMR monitors whether the LDP and therefore the Council's land use and regeneration objectives are being successfully implemented.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the adoption of the Bridgend Local Development Plan in September 2013, the Council has a statutory obligation under section 76 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an AMR.
- 3.2 The 2017 AMR is required to be submitted to the Welsh Government prior to the 31 October 2017 and this target was met with it being submitted on 30 October 2017.
- 3.3 The main aim of the AMR is to assess the extent to which the LDP Strategy and Policies are being achieved. Therefore, the AMR has two primary roles; firstly to consider whether the policies identified in the monitoring process are being implemented successfully; and secondly to consider the Plan as a whole against all of the information gathered to determine whether a complete or partial review of the Plan is necessary.

The Requirement for Monitoring

- 3.4 In order to monitor the LDP's performance, it needs to be considered against a set of monitoring aims and indicators. Chapter 7 of the LDP sets out the Monitoring Framework that forms the basis of the AMR and provides information that is required to be included by LDP Regulation 37.
- 3.5 In this context the AMR is required to identify policies that are not being implemented and for each such policy:

- Outline the reasons why the policy is not being implemented;
- Indicate steps that can be taken to enable the policy to be implemented;
- Identify whether a revision to the plan is required;
- Specify the housing land supply from the Housing Land Availability Report for that year, and for the full period since the adoption of the plan; and
- Specify the number of net additional affordable and general market dwellings built in the LPA area for that year, and for the full period since the adoption of the plan.

3.6 The LDP Manual supplements this requirement by setting out additional factors that should be assessed in the AMR:

- Whether the basic strategy remains sound (if not, a full plan review may be needed);
- What impact the policies are having globally, nationally, regionally and locally;
- Whether the policies need changing to reflect changes in national policy;
- Whether policies and related targets in the LDP have been met or progress is being made towards meeting them, including publication of relevant supplementary planning guidance (SPG);
- Where progress has not been made, the reasons for this and what knock on effects it may have;
- What aspects, if any, of the LDP need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended or are not achieving the objectives of the strategy and/or sustainable development objectives; and
- If policies or proposals need changing, the suggested actions that is required to achieve them.

3.7 Monitoring the Plan also accords with the requirements for monitoring the sustainability performance of the plan through the Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/ SA).

4. Current Situation

4.1 The Council has a statutory obligation under section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect the development of its area. In addition, section 76 of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to produce information on these matters in the form of an 'Annual Monitoring Report' for submission to the Welsh Government. This is the third AMR to be prepared since the adoption of the Bridgend LDP and is based on the period from 1st April 2016 to

31st March 2017 and is required to be submitted to Welsh Government by the end of October 2017 (The AMR was submitted to Welsh Government on 30 October 2017).

4.2 There have been many changes since 2013 that will impact on the successful implementation of the LDP; the most notable are the changes in the Welsh Economy and the changes in the regional context. The AMR therefore considers whether the development strategy that underpins the LDP remains valid; and assesses whether or not the Strategy Policies contained in the LDP are being effective in delivering the Development Strategy and meeting the objectives of the plan.

4.3 The LDP Regulations and the LDP Manual specify what the AMR is required to include:

- An Executive Summary;
- A review of changes to national and regional policy and guidance and their implications for the LDP;
- SEA/SA Monitoring based on the SEA/SA Monitoring Framework;
- LDP Monitoring based on the LDP Monitoring Framework;
- Statutory Indicators; and
- Recommendations on the course of action in respect of policies and the LDP as a whole.

Key findings of the Annual Monitoring Process

4.4 An overview of the LDP Monitoring Data for the third AMR period provides an interesting insight into the implementation of the LDP over the past 12 months. The key findings are set out below:

- The 2017 Joint Housing Land Availability Study JHLAS indicates that 406 new homes were completed during the monitoring period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 and that 4978 dwellings have been completed in total, during the LDP period 2006 to 2017;
- The 2017 JHLAS indicates that the Council has a housing land supply, assessed against the housing requirement of the Bridgend LDP of 4.0 years;
- To date 1150 affordable dwellings have been provided;
- During the monitoring period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 1.40 hectares of vacant employment land was developed;
- Within Bridgend Town Centre of the 379 commercial properties surveyed 67 were vacant – representing a vacancy rate of 17.68 %;

- Within Porthcawl Town Centre of the 204 commercial properties surveyed 10 were vacant – representing a vacancy rate of 4.90%;
- Within Maesteg Town Centre of the 167 commercial properties surveyed 10 were vacant – representing a vacancy rate of 5.99%;
- The requirement as to whether the Council will need to identify a Gypsy and Traveller Site is now however determined by the new requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires each local authority in Wales to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to ensure that needs are properly assessed and planned for. In summary, the GTAA covers the period 2016-2031 and estimates the additional pitch provision needed for Gypsies and Travellers in Bridgend. For the first 5 years of the GTAA plan period, there is no requirement for **additional pitches**, and for the remainder of the GTAA plan period, **a further 1 additional pitch is required**. This gives a total need for the whole GTAA plan period of 1 additional pitch; and
- The County Borough is making a significant contribution to national renewable energy targets. The generating capacity within an immediately adjacent the refined SSA (north of Evanstown) is 65 MW which is considerably higher than the estimated capacity within the SSA of 31 MW.

4.5 Chapter 5 of the AMR provides a detailed analysis of the success of the plan to date against the monitoring indicators and factors in terms of delivering sustainable development.

Conclusions

- 4.6 The evidence collected as part of the AMR process indicates that the overall LDP strategy has been successful delivering many significant benefits for our communities. Most of the housing sites and associated infrastructure allocated in the LDP have been delivered with the exceptions of a few challenging brownfield sites that have stalled due to a combination of viability issues and in some cases land ownership issues. However, a number of key housing provision policy targets are not being met which indicates that these policies are not functioning as intended. The recently published 2017 JHLAS shows that the County Borough has housing land supply, assessed against the housing requirement of the Bridgend LDP of **4.0 years**. It is imperative that the Local Planning Authority progresses with the statutory review of the LDP which will address the shortfall in the housing land supply and facilitate the identification/allocation of additional housing land. The replacement LDP will assist in seeking to avoid ‘planning by appeal’ and ad hoc development coming forward outside the development plan system and not in accordance with the Plan’s strategy.
- 4.7 It is important to acknowledge that whilst the level of growth in some areas is slower than anticipated, evidence collected through the monitoring process clearly suggests that good progress is being made in the delivery of the majority of LDP targets, which must be seen as a positive. However, further investment into the local economy is required and specific consideration will be given to the opportunities to stimulate the delivery of new employment land and mixed-use regeneration sites by taking a pro-active approach with landowners and developers especially where development sites are in the Councils ownership and

bring forward new schemes, masterplans and development briefs to facilitate development. The Council believes that the development which has taken place in the County Borough of Bridgend since the adoption of the LDP, together with the projected future investment from the public and private sector will ensure that the LDP continues to be a success for our communities.

Next Steps

Preparation of LDP Review Report

- 4.8 The Plan will continue to be monitored on an annual basis through the preparation of successive AMRs.
- 4.9 For information purposes the regulations governing the production of LDPs allow for a 'selective review' of part (or parts) of an LDP. Such a provision would allow for a partial review of the LDP to cover issues associated with the housing land supply and site selection. The Council, however, is required by the regulations to commence a full review of the LDP every four years. This would mean that a full review to meet statutory requirements would have to commence in early 2018. Therefore, it is necessary and a statutory requirement for a review to be commenced to consider all aspects of the LDP at this stage in order to fully assess the nature and scale of revisions that might be required. A full review will also assist in meeting the 2021 deadline for having an adopted revised LDP in place to avoid the local policy vacuum that would be created if the current LDP is allowed to expire.
- 4.10 The next stage of Plan review requires the preparation of a 'Review Report' that will be reported to Development Control Committee and Full Council. The Review Report will set out clearly what has been considered, which key stakeholders have been engaged and, where changes are required, what needs to change and why.

Formation of an LDP Steering Group

- 4.11 It is imperative that there is political input into the production of the replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan. As such it is recommended that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of 'LDP Steering Group' to oversee the review of the Local Development Plan through from start to completion. The Steering Group's main role will be to act as a 'critical friend' providing advice and scrutinise on key aspects and stages of the LDP as it develops. The LDP Steering Group will report directly to Council in respect of decision making in the plan preparation process.
- 4.12 The Development Planning Manager (Susan Jones) or Development Planning Team Leader (Richard Matthams) will normally attend meetings of the Steering Group to report on progress, provide updates on key evidence base studies, discuss strategy and options, and answer any questions raised by Members.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 Following the adoption of the Bridgend LDP, the Council has a statutory obligation under section 76 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to identify whether the policies identified in the monitoring process

are being implemented successfully; and to consider the plan as a whole against all of the information gathered to determine whether a complete or partial review of the plan is necessary.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no direct implications associated with this report. However, any future review of the policies and proposals contained with the Bridgend County Borough Local Development Plan will require an equalities impact assessment to be carried out.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Officer time and cost associated with the data collection and analysis of the monitoring indicators and preparation of the AMR will be met from the Development Planning budget and carried out by existing staff.
- 7.2 The cost of the LDP Review will be met from the Development Planning budget and carried out by existing staff with expertise advice procured from consultants as required. An overview of the financial implications will be set out in the 'LDP Review Report' covering report and a future Delivery Agreement associated with any Replacement Plan will be presented to the Development Control Committee / LDP Steering Group and Full Council.

8. Recommendations

- 9.1 That Council note the content of the AMR Report.
- 9.2 That Council agrees that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of LDP Steering Group to assist in the production and replacement of the Bridgend Local Development Plan.

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29 November 2017

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Background documents

None.