



Ein cyf : Our ref : QA1282787

Leader and Chief Executive of the Council

B December 2017

Dear Colleague,

Invitation to Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 included the legislation necessary to produce Strategic Development Plans (SDPs). SDPs allow larger than local issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure which cut across a number of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) boundaries to be considered in an integrated and comprehensive way.

The role of the planning system in delivering excellent outcomes for Wales at national, regional and local levels has never been more prominent. Our new National Strategy: Prosperity for All acknowledges the key role the planning system must play by recognising planning decisions as a critical lever to deliver the central goal of prosperity for all. It notes planning decisions affect every area of a person's life. They determine where homes are built, where services are provided, the quality of the local environment, the promotion of sustainable economic growth and access to open space. The right planning system is critical in delivering the objectives of the strategy – this includes ensuring better LDPs and SDPs are produced in the future.

SDPs have the potential to reduce complexity and repetition currently contained in LDPs and make more effective use of resources. The ability to pool resources, reduce preparation costs, undertake more joint technical work, utilise existing skills and expertise and rationalise issues crossing administrative boundaries should not be lost. SDPs are also necessary to provide a robust framework for the delivery of the land use implications of existing and emerging City Deal and Growth Deal proposals.

My vision for the development plan system is to achieve the most expedient way of maintaining LDP coverage through the production of Joint LDPs, while encouraging and facilitating a strategic approach through SDPs to deal with issues of regional importance. This is not about setting up parallel or competing plans, rather a streamlined suite of plans that complement and integrate as one.

To date, no proposals have been forthcoming. I consider preparing SDPs on a consistent basis for each of the three regions of South East, Mid and West and North Wales will ensure the most efficient use of resources, maintain an effective decision making framework and deliver high quality planning outcomes. **I am therefore inviting proposals for SDPs, based on the 3 regional footprints, to come forward.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ynni, Cynllunio a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy planning and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf : Our ref : QA1282787

Cllr Huw David and Mr Darren Mepham
Leader and Chief Executive of
Bridgend County Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

13 December 2017

Dear Huw and Darren

Invitation to prepare a Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) South East Wales - West

It is almost 14 years since the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to prepare, monitor and keep review Local Development Plans. Progress has been made with 20 adopted LDPs in place.

The latest round of LDP Annual Monitoring Reports, submitted in October, has demonstrated mixed success for plans adopted between 2010 and 2015. This is particularly evident for critical planning outcomes, including supporting the delivery of housing in sustainable locations. With this in mind, it is right to pause and reflect on the correct path to take to maintain effective LDP coverage ahead of adoption of a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the region. It is also necessary to provide a robust framework for the delivery of the land use implications of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal proposals.

The role of the planning system in delivering excellent outcomes for Wales at national, regional and local levels has never been more prominent. Our newly adopted National Strategy: Prosperity for All acknowledges the key role the planning system must play by recognising planning decisions as a critical lever to deliver the central goal of prosperity for all. It notes planning decisions affect every area of a person's life. They determine where homes are built, where services are provided, the quality of the local environment, the promotion of sustainable economic growth and access to open space. The right planning system is critical in delivering the objectives of the strategy – this includes ensuring better LDPs are produced in the future.

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Our vision for LDPs is not just to have full plan coverage, but achieve this in the most effective and efficient way, whilst also making a real difference for people and places. This does not mean replicating the procedures of the past, such as preparing plans on an individual basis. Often this has led to lengthy timescales for preparing plans, numerous delays in the process, a lack of effective consideration for issues transcending administrative boundaries and a difficulty in demonstrating the benefits of the system. The average time taken to prepare a first generation LDP was almost 6½ years which is totally unacceptable and cannot be replicated in the future. Evidence for the Planning (Wales) Bill demonstrated the cost of preparing a LDP to be between £1.4 and £2.2 million. Since then local government expenditure on planning services declined by 53% between 2009/10 and 2016/17 as a result of the UK Government austerity programme imposed on Wales with many of these reductions borne by your LDP teams. I do not believe many authorities currently have the capacity, capability or resilience necessary to progress LDPs on an individual authority basis.

For the reasons identified above we must approach the future with a new outlook, embracing the benefits from undertaking Joint LDPs. Maximising efficiency savings, both staffing and financial; delivering better outcomes on a more consistent basis; reaping the financial benefits through economies of scale and avoiding the pitfalls of duplication and repetition are all there to be seized. For the South East Wales - West area there are significant opportunities and challenges which are best addressed through the preparation of Joint Local Development Plans. These include maximising the take up of brownfield land to strengthen communities, minimising green field site releases and ensuring comprehensive planning of development opportunities on local authority boundaries. Realising the benefits provided by new infrastructure, such as the Metro, taking advantage of increased connectivity, accessibility and resilience of public transport corridors by identifying and implementing an area wide sustainable settlement strategy will be important considerations.

This approach aligns with emerging Local Government Reform proposals and stated intention of local government to work more collaboratively in the future. For the compelling reasons set out in this letter. I invite you to give serious consideration to improving the effectiveness of the planning system by preparing a Joint Local Development Plan. I am seeking positive responses to this invitation by the **28 February 2018**. Until such time I will not agree any plan progressing individually.

Yours sincerely,



Lesley Griffiths AG/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs

Leader and Chief Executive Caerphilly County Council
Leader and Chief Executive Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council