

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2019

National Development Framework Consultation

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Development Control Committee of the publication of the draft National Development Framework (NDF) by the Welsh Government and its likely impact on the County Borough. Consultation on the draft closes on 1 November 2019 and can be accessed at: <https://gov.wales/draft-national-development-framework>

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:
- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.

3. Background

- 3.1 The National Development Framework (NDF) is a spatial plan for addressing key national priorities in Wales through the planning system from 2020 to 2040. It covers the big issues important to Wales' success, including housing, energy, economy, transport and the environment. It identifies where nationally significant developments should take place, where key growth areas are, what infrastructure and services are needed and how Wales can contribute to the fight against climate change.
- 3.2 The draft NDF sets out development policies for Wales as a whole and for three national growth areas: Wrexham and Deeside (North Wales), Swansea Bay & Llanelli (Mid & South West Wales) and Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys (South East Wales). This regional approach aligns with other Welsh Government strategies and allows a consistent approach to policy implementation across Wales, including the delivery of Strategic Delivery Plans (SDPs) for each of the regions identified. The draft NDF identifies 11 outcomes which are a vision for change over the next 20 years and form the basis for its policies and proposals.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The outcomes, policies and proposals contained within the NDF aim to deliver the following:
- growth, including new housing and economic development, to be focused on towns and cities with good public transport and active travel networks;
 - urban centres and public transport hubs as focal points for higher density development;
 - large public services facilities in town and city centres accessible by walking,

- cycling and public transport;
- sustainable rural communities and the appropriate growth of rural towns and villages;
- the delivery of more affordable homes;
- the introduction of Mobile Action Zones to help increase mobile coverage in areas of poor or no signal;
- ultra-low emission vehicles and the roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Wales;
- the establishment of a national forest;
- large scale (10 Mega Watts and over) on-shore wind and solar energy development and identified Priority Areas for this;
- Priority Areas for District Heat Networks and identified towns across Wales where such schemes should be suitable;
- safeguarding of important ecological networks and the need to maintain and enhance green infrastructure as part of new development proposals.

As part of the South East Wales region, Bridgend is specifically identified in the NDF as a centre of regional growth. This is based on its strategically important location as part of the South Wales Metro system and the opportunity that this provides to improve rail, bus, cycling and walking infrastructure across the region to provide a focus for investment, regeneration and associated development. The NDF recognises the potential for regeneration and sustainable inclusive economic growth to help deliver the ambitions of the Our Valleys, Our Future project.

The NDF also identifies Bridgend as a Priority Area for District Heating Networks, with an expectation on planning authorities to identify opportunities for integrating into new and existing development. The NDF proposes a policy for mixed use development proposals of 100 or more dwellings to prepare an Energy Masterplan to establish how such a network can be incorporated and if feasible, implemented.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the NDF will be published by Welsh Ministers in Autumn 2020. When it is, it will represent the top tier of the Development Plan hierarchy in Wales, with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) at regional level and the Local Development Plan (LDP) at local authority level operating below it.
- 5.2 The LDP will need to be in general conformity with the NDF however, there are no identified impacts on the ongoing review of the LDP. The Council has published its draft Preferred Strategy in accordance with the emerging policies of the NDF. At its' core, the Preferred Strategy promotes growth to be focused on existing settlements in accordance with a settlement hierarchy which highlights the importance of public transport connectivity. Policies within the LDP will emphasise the need for the provision of Active Travel infrastructure to be incorporated into development proposals. The Preferred Strategy also emphasises the opportunities presented by the projects and activities identified in the Bridgend Smart Energy Plan to promote decarbonisation. Specifically, the LDP will incorporate policies to ensure proposed developments demonstrate how the proposal will facilitate a connection to a District Heating Network or robustly justify why the connection is not technically and/or economically viable and suggest an alternative approach.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no direct implications associated with this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The NDF will be prepared in accordance with the 7 Wellbeing goals and the 5 ways of working as identified in the Act.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There is no cost implication for the authority relating to the preparation of the NDF as it is a Welsh Government function. The cost of the ongoing LDP Review will be met from the Development Planning budget and carried out by development planning staff with expert advice and evidence procured from consultants and through collaboration with neighbouring authorities as required.

9. Recommendation

9.1 There is no formal recommendation as this report is intended as a briefing note. A members training session on the National Development Framework will be held on Thursday 5 December 2019.

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