BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

20 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Planning Update
Local Development Plan, National Planning Policy & Placemaking

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Local Development Plan, the publication of new national planning policy and an overview of the principles of placemaking in the planning process.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

3. Background

3.1 The Local Development Plan (LDP) is a statutory, high level strategy which must be prepared and sets out in land-use terms the priorities and objectives of the Council. The current Bridgend LDP is due to expire and the preparation of a replacement plan is underway. The plan is at a critical stage and the Council published the Replacement LDP Deposit Draft for public consultation in June 2021 for a period of 8 weeks in accordance with the Delivery Agreement approved by Council and Welsh Government. All Town and Community Councils were notified of the consultation arrangements. .

3.2 In February 2021, the Welsh Government published Future Wales, The National Plan 2040 (FW2040) along with an updated Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11). FW2040 is a national development plan for the purposes of determining planning applications and PPW 11 is the relevant national planning policy. The LDP must be in conformity with FW2040.

3.3 FW2040 together with PPW11 provides the national policy background and places great emphasis on the principle of ‘placemaking’. Placemaking relates to the way places are planned, designed, developed and managed and has the potential to positively shape where and how people will live, work, socialise, move about and engage.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The Local Development Plan

4.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Bridgend County Borough Council to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP), setting out its objectives for the development and use of land in Bridgend County Borough over the plan period to 2033, and its policies to implement them. The Deposit Draft builds upon the Preferred Strategy (the blueprint of the proposed plan), which has previously been consulted on in 2019. The purpose of the Deposit Draft consultation is to seek the views of all of our communities on the next stage of the LDP process. Amendments to the Deposit Draft can be made after the public consultation and prior to being reported to Council to seek approval to submit the plan for independent examination in public (EIP).

4.3 Once finalised and adopted, the Replacement LDP will replace the existing LDP (2006-2021) as the statutory Development Plan for the County Borough. The Replacement LDP will be required to:

- deliver sustainable & transit-orientated development;
- maximise well-being and create sustainable places through placemaking;
- build upon, and add value to Future Wales and national planning policies and guidance produced by the Welsh Government;
- reflect local aspirations for the County Borough, based on a vision agreed by the Council and other stakeholders;
- express in land-use terms the objectives of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Bridgend Public Service Board's Well-being Plan.
- provide a basis for rational and consistent development management decisions;
- guide growth and change, whilst protecting local diversity, character, and sensitive environments;
- ensure the social and economic resilience of settlements and their ability to adapt to change over the long term; and
- show why, how and where change will occur over the plan period.

4.4 The Deposit Draft consists of a Written Statement and Proposals Map. The Written Statement outlines local planning policies, land use allocations and associated justification based on the supporting evidence. The Proposals Map illustrates the land use allocations, settlement boundaries and planning designations proposed in the Plan.

4.5 <u>LDP Vision, Strategic Objectives and Specific Objectives</u>

4.6 The LDP Vision is set out in the Deposit Draft and will be delivered through 4 Strategic Objectives, underpinned by 35 Specific Objectives. These seek to reflect national policy and legislation and address the issues facing the County Borough. The four Strategic Objectives are as follows:

- ***To Create High Quality Sustainable Places (Placemaking)***
- ***To Create Active, Healthy, Cohesive and Social Communities***
- ***To Create Productive and Enterprising Places***

- ***To Protect and Enhance Distinctive and Natural Places***

In turn, the 35 Specific Objectives have been devised to create the right conditions to address the various social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being outcomes.

4.7 Growth and Spatial Strategy

4.8 Development will be directed towards locations conducive to sustainable placemaking that facilitate a balance of environmentally friendly, economically vibrant, and socially inclusive characteristics, aiming to benefit current inhabitants and future generations alike. Sustainable placemaking is therefore an overarching concept that underpins the Replacement LDP, specifically seeking to create places that:

- Meet the needs of all members of the community;
- Promote balanced economic growth that provides access to employment opportunities;
- Provide for active travel and integrated Green Infrastructure networks;
- Provide appropriate infrastructure and services;
- Provide a range of high quality private and affordable housing; and
- Are resilient and adaptable to change and support the Councils vision to make Bridgend a decarbonised, digitally connected smart County Borough.

4.9 Correspondingly, and in order to achieve the Vision and Objectives of the LDP, the Council will follow a Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy. This will provide the framework to help realise the regeneration priorities of the Council, whilst also apportioning sustainable growth towards existing settlements that demonstrate strong employment, service and transportation functions. This approach seeks to balance housing, economic development, connectivity, social needs and environmental protection and enhancement to allow the County Borough to prosper, whilst contributing to the success of the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay Region. This approach has directly informed and resulted in the formulation of Strategic Policy 1 (SP1), which outlines how the LDP will make provision to deliver the Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy for 2018-2033.

4.10 Strategic Allocations

4.11 In order to enable the implementation of the Growth and Spatial Strategy, Strategic Policy 2 (SP2) defines a suite of Strategic Allocations where growth will be focused. SP2 therefore builds upon SP1 by directing growth to Regeneration Sites and Sustainable Urban Extensions within the identified Regeneration Growth Areas and Sustainable Growth Areas. The location and scale of these sites present opportunities for significant new development to take place over the plan period to help meet the LDP Vision and Objectives and ensure implementation of the Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy. The combined development of these sites will result in the provision of comprehensive residential, employment and commercial development whilst providing new transportation, affordable housing, community, education and recreation facilities to serve the respective sites and existing communities.

4.12 Strategic and Development Management Policies

4.13 A suite of Strategic Policies were identified in the Preferred Strategy. These have been modified to take account of representations received and extended to provide a more comprehensive Strategic Policy Framework, which form the basis to implement and deliver the Vision and Strategic Objectives. The updated suite of 18 Strategic Policies is now supported by 56 accompanying Development Management Policies, which address a range of detailed thematic issues.

4.14 Supporting Documents

4.15 The Deposit Draft is supported by a Candidate Site Assessment, which has identified the sites that are suitable for allocation within the Replacement LDP. All candidate sites have been subject to a sequential four-stage assessment. This has considered the potential of each site to support the Preferred Strategy before scrutinising detailed site assessments (in terms of deliverability, sustainability and suitability) and consulting with appropriate specific consultation bodies. The fourth stage of this assessment has sought additional information from site promoters, where appropriate, to support sites for inclusion and subsequent allocation in the Deposit Plan.

4.15 There are a large number of supporting technical documents that have been produced to inform the Replacement LDP. These ensure that the Deposit Draft has complied with all statutory requirements and that the policies and proposals it contains are based on substantial evidence. This evidence base will form part of the consultation and should be read alongside the Deposit Draft.

4.16 Steps Following Consultation

4.18 Public consultation on the Deposit Draft will give all members of our communities and key stakeholders the opportunity to provide their opinion. The consultation ran for 8 weeks during the summer and has now closed. A high number of responses were received and officers are currently reviewing all representations submitted and will consider whether changes need to be made to the Deposit Plan. The supporting evidence base will also be reviewed to determine if any updates are required. The Council will then need to prepare a new Delivery Agreement with Welsh Government to set out an appropriate timescale towards formal adoption of the replacement LDP.

4.19 **National Planning Policy: Future Wales 2040 & Planning Policy Wales 11**

4.20 Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (FW2040) is the Welsh national development plan, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. Formerly known as the National Development Framework, it is a development plan with a national strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. FW2040 outlines where we should be investing in infrastructure and development for the greater good of Wales and its people.

4.21 FW2040 is linked to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It demands that development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It is a framework which will be

built on by Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) at a regional level and Local Development Plans (LDPs) at local authority level - these must be in conformity with FW2040 . Development Control Decisions must consider FW2040 as a development plan.

4.22 FW2040, identifies 4 regions in Wales: North, Mid, South West and South East. As part of the South East Wales region, Bridgend is specifically identified in 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.

4.23 FW2040 also identifies Bridgend as a Priority Area for District Heating Networks, with an expectation on local planning authorities to identify opportunities for integrating into new and existing development.

4.24 Other key policy areas include:

- Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership
- Supporting Rural Communities and the rural economy
- Town Centre First approach
- Delivering Affordable Homes
- Flooding
- Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure
- National and International Connectivity
- Supporting Digital Communications
- Planning in Mobile Action Zones
- National Forest
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance

4.25 Planning Policy Wales (PPW 11) is published alongside FW2040 and reflects the change in the development planning hierarchy introduced by the national plan.

4.26 **Placemaking**

4.27 FW2040 places great emphasis on strategic placemaking principles to ensure that the growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places. PPW11 is also updated to reflect more emphasis on the placemaking agenda and to take into account potential changes to the land use planning system as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. These places support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure

4.28 Placemaking is about ensuring that each new development contributes positively to creating or enhancing environments within which people, communities, businesses and nature can thrive. It puts people at the heart of the design and development process to create places that are vibrant, have a clear identity and where people can develop a sense of belonging.

4.29 A holistic approach is needed that takes into consideration whole places rather than individual land uses or each development in isolation. Masterplanning is an important aspect. Placemaking has grown in importance as the links with health and wellbeing have been more explicitly explored and understood.

4.30 The Placemaking Charter Wales was launched in September 2020 by Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government. The Charter outlines placemaking principles that cover the range of considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places. These include: people and community, movement, public realm, location, mix of uses and identity.

4.31 It is open for individual organizations and groups to sign up to the Placemaking Charter Wales. The Development Control Committee has endorsed the charter and

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The statutory town and country planning system is governed by the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Planning Wales Act 2015 and various regulations.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

6.2 As part of the wider statutory planning process the effective management of land and its change seeks to help to eliminate inequality and disadvantage in people's lives. This has been reflected in the recently published Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11), which aligns the planning system with other key Welsh Government strategies including the Welling of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Socio- Economic Duty.

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

7.1 Any changes to policy or procedure 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 The report is for noting and current procedures are carried out within existing budget headings.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Town and Community Council Forum notes the report.

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Background documents:

Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Form 6th September 2021