

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 MARCH 2022

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

#### THE PLACEMAKING CHARTER WALES

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval that Bridgend County Borough Council endorses and becomes a signatory to the Placemaking Charter Wales.

#### 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 Placemaking is a proactive and collaborative process of creating and managing places. Although the Local Planning Authority may be considered as the main proponent, the placemaking agenda goes effectively beyond the Planning and related functions of the Council which has cross-disciplinary connections to multiple service areas across local government and its related partners in order to contribute to the effective creation and management of places. Placemaking is seen as a key process to deliver the duties of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and key corporate priorities/strategies including the Corporate Plan and the carbon reduction aspirations of Bridgend 2030. Furthermore, its multi-disciplinary requirements align well with a one Council approach in carrying out its functions.
- 3.2 National Planning Policy (Future Wales 2040 and Planning Policy Wales 11) places placemaking at the heart of the Planning system. Placemaking principles are already embedded in the current Bridgend Local Development Plan(LDP) through Policy SP2 and are to be enhanced and augmented in the replacement LDP.

- 3.3 By endorsing and becoming a signatory to the Placemaking Charter Wales, the Council will demonstrate its commitment to the placemaking principles and developing and improving its places.
- 3.4 The Development Control Committee supported the Placemaking Charter and endorses the principle of the Council becoming a signatory in 2021.

#### 4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Placemaking Wales Charter, launched in September 2020, has been developed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership. This consists of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests and organisations working within the built and natural environment. The Charter is intended to reflect the collective and individual commitment of these organisations to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.
- 4.2 Current signatories to the Placemaking Wales Charter include the Home Builders Federation, Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation, Institute of Highway Engineers, Housing Associations, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Royal Society of Architects Wales, Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association and national/regional house builders. The Charter is summarised below and attached as an Appendix.
- 4.3 Signatories to the Placemaking Wales Charter agree to promote the following principles in the planning, design and management of new and existing places:

**People and Community** – The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

**Location** – Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

**Movement** – Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

**Mix of Uses** – Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community

and vibrant public realm.

**Public Realm** – Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

**Identity** – The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

4.4 In terms of its function, as a signatory to the Placemaking Charter the Council would pledge to:

- Involve the local community in the development of proposals
- Choose sustainable locations for new development
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport
- Create inclusive, well defined, safe and welcoming streets and public spaces
- Promote a sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant
- Value and respect the positive distinctive qualities and identity of existing places.

4.5 This will require a commitment across a wide range of departments and Council functions, all of which have a role to play in ensuring that new development and supporting infrastructure are informed by placemaking objectives.

4.6 The Welsh Government's 'Future Wales 2040' document provides the National Development Plan and contains a specific policy requiring the public sector to show leadership and apply placemaking principles to support growth and regeneration for the benefit of communities. It states under Policy 2: "The public sector must lead by example and apply placemaking principles to create exemplar developments. In particular, (it) must prioritise design quality, innovation and sustainability."

4.7 The draft replacement Local Development Plan has 4 strategic objectives

- 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

- 4.8 The future strategic sites coming through the replacement Local Development Plan will have to be designed with a priority on placemaking.
- 4.9 Placemaking is now recognised as a function of the Planning and Development Services Group in the Communities Directorate Business Plan 2021/22. Both the Development Control Committee and the Planning Service are best placed to act as the Council's placemaking champions to ensure new development complies with the principles set out in the Charter. There is aspiration to set up a 'Placemaking Unit' within the team drawing from existing expertise as well as taking on additional resource and suitable training in order to provide the necessary placemaking input into new schemes. This would include the Council's own projects as well as any future public sector partner and private sector development.
- 4.10 In practical terms this could involve, amongst other things, the requirement for developers to have a Placemaking expert on board at pre-application stage and developing a suite of up to date Supplementary Planning Guidance documents. This will enable Bridgend to become an exemplar Authority in terms of placemaking.
- 4.11 Becoming a signatory to the Placemaking Charter therefore provides an opportunity for the Council to confirm its commitment to delivering quality places and recognising the key role that this plays in enhancing the health and wellbeing of its communities and residents for the long-term future. This will require a 'one Council' approach and agreement which has already been endorsed in principle by the Development Control Committee.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The statutory Town & Country Planning system requires Local Planning Authorities to determine Planning applications in accordance with the relevant regulations and policy.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 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 Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Socio-Economic Duty.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the

development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

- 7.1 The planning function including the LDP has full regard to the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA) and to the well-being goals. The promotion and recognition of well-being was interwoven into the early conversations held regarding Plan preparation with a range of stakeholders via the Public Service Board (PSB). The theme of well-being and the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is considered through the LDP Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process and reflected in the use of the local well-being goals in framing the strategic objectives and the strategic policies.
- 7.2 National planning policy incorporates the provisions of the WFGA and is material in the determination of planning applications. Furthermore, the placemaking principles described above are fully in line with legislative criteria and the potential impact and effects are summarised in relation to the five ways of working below:

**Long-term:** The implementation of placemaking principles will provide long term environmental, social and economic benefits to communities resulting in higher standards and quality within the built environment associated with improved public realm and a greater sense of place thus promoting greater social inclusion and supporting the Council's aims of a delivering a successful sustainable economy.

**Prevention:** Placemaking requires development to have good access to active travel and public transport networks helping to reduce congestion and improve air quality resulting in a positive impact on communities.

**Integration:** The provision of good quality and accessibly open space along with the promotion of active travel through the use of placekmaking principles can provide health benefits associated with increased physical activity; environmental benefits associated with reductions in noise and air pollution; reduction in congestion and other associated economic benefits, promoting greater social inclusion. Connecting communities and providing infrastructure that facilitates low-cost modes of public transportation, ensuring equity of opportunity for those without access to a car or who wish to use more sustainable modes. Furthermore, the promotion of good quality environments supports the work of other public bodies such as the local health board to encourage healthier lifestyles.

**Collaboration:** The commitment to placemaking principles will require collaboration with external stakeholders, residents and internally with various sections of the council including local town/community in considering wellbeing objectives as part of any future development schemes.

**Involvement:** Section 5 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 states: 'A public body must take account of... the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population'. This approach has been evidenced by the extensive engagement undertaken through the LDP process.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 The cost of the administering the statutory Town and Country Planning System is met from current budgets. Higher quality development may lead to higher overall cost although this may have a greater impact on the development industry. There may also be a requirement to provide suitable training to Officers and Members as well as the need for additional resource to provide the necessary placemaking guidance to developers although this cost could be offset by pre-application fees and the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs).
- 8.2 Compliance with the placemaking agenda and being a signatory to the Charter requires that the Council must ensure its own proposed schemes are of a high quality. This inevitably requires an appropriate level of investment and financial commitment, however if placemaking is addressed in a comprehensive manner at a suitably early stage of the development process following the principles set out in the Charter, it will not necessitate any increase in costs being incurred by the Council on its development projects. More importantly, good placemaking is far more than specifying expensive materials or reducing the scale or scope of development. In many instances, adhering to the principles of the Charter may be suitably addressed using pragmatic solutions in a careful and creative way.

## **9. Recommendation(s)**

- 9.1 That Council approves that Bridgend County Borough Council endorses and becomes a signatory to the Placemaking Charter Wales.

Janine Nightingale

**Corporate Directorate – Communities**

**Date: 9 March 2022**

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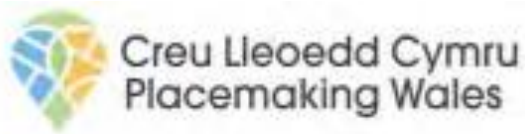
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**Background documents:** None

## Appendix – Placemaking Charter Wales



Appendix A

### Placemaking Wales Charter

The Placemaking Wales Charter has been developed in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership which is made up of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests. The Charter reflects the collective and individual commitment of these organisations to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.

In signing the Placemaking Wales Charter I/my organisation agree to support placemaking in all relevant areas of my/our work and promote the following principles in the planning, design and management of new and existing places:

#### People and community

The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

#### Location

Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

#### Movement

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#### Mix of uses

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#### Public realm

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