

Meeting of:	TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM
Date of Meeting:	29 August 2023
Report Title:	PLANNING UPDATE – 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	JONATHAN PARSONS – GROUP MANAGER PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The report outlines the Council’s position regarding the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods as put forward through the strategic development sites outlined in the Replacement Local Development Plan.</p> <p>20 Minute neighbourhoods are designed to allow people to have access to facilities such as schools, shops, recreation space and health facilities within a 20 minute walk or cycle ride from their homes.</p> <p>The concept is a well established urban planning principle and is widely seen as a key component to good placemaking</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing on the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, which has been incorporated into the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

2. Background

- 2.1 The 20-minute neighbourhood is an established principle of urban design and planning that is becoming popular across the world. Developed in different ways in cities like Melbourne, Portland and Paris, the principle is intended to enable residents to access retail, leisure, education, primary healthcare and employment close to their place of residence and within the local neighbourhood i.e. within a 20-minute walk/cycle. It also means having access to greenspace nearby and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and wellbeing. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it. The 20-minute neighbourhood is all about ‘living locally’—giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle ride from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.

- 2.2 In the context of Bridgend, a 20-minute neighbourhood is one that enables access services within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood.
- 2.3 High Quality, Sustainable Places are the result of good planning and design which fully embraces placemaking. Adopting a placemaking approach has multiple benefits which not only helps improve quality of life, but also helps to tackle climate change, reduce carbon footprint and improve biodiversity and ecological resilience for the future. The legal obligations on Local Authorities under the Environment and Well-Being of Future Generations Acts must be recognised within the Council's approach.
- 2.4 This concept is enshrined in national planning policy – Future Wales 2040 (The National Plan) and Planning Policy Wales 11 (2021) and as such will be cascaded into regional and local development planning framework.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The nature and form of a neighbourhood can have a direct impact on physical and mental health. This can be enabled by creating well-designed walkable neighbourhoods that are connected through a mix of land-uses, housing types and access to quality public transport. The spatial land use planning framework for Bridgend is set on the Local Development Plan (LDP), which is a statutory, high-level strategy which must be prepared and sets out in land-use terms the priorities and objectives of the Council.
- 3.2 The RLDP is at advanced stage following extensive consultation and an examination in public. One of its principal aims is to make neighbourhoods across the Borough more liveable. In Bridgend, whilst many established areas have some built form features for a 20-minute neighbourhood, they are not always walkable and may not offer affordable housing options. Therefore, the 20-minute neighbourhood principle has been considered and embedded into the RLDP from the outset of plan preparation.
- 3.3 As part of the preparation of the RLDP a report (Background Paper 19) was prepared to assess the practical delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle against the strategic and housing allocations proposed within the RLDP. A copy of this report is attached as **Appendix A**. The report considered the national policy context as well as outlining what a 20 minute neighbourhood could look like and its benefits. The report also highlights the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in people spending more time at home and within their local neighbourhoods. As a consequence of the crisis, it has been further highlighted that the importance of the provision of high-quality local environments and well located, secure and affordable homes make in making a positive benefit to people's health and well-being. The location, quality, size and features of homes influenced how residents managed through the lockdown periods.
- 3.4 The quality, flexibility and adaptability of the local built environment also has a huge impact on how healthcare, education, food, and medical supplies have been

provided. During the crisis, the importance of local services and infrastructure has also become more apparent, with people spending more time in their local neighbourhoods. The continuation of people working from home and more locally is expected to be a long-term trend. As such it is vital to ensure that the RLDP will enable new homes and neighbourhoods to be delivered and that these are quality places to live, with easy access to services and appropriate infrastructure and greenspace and key to this will be the development of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

- 3.5 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 a commitment to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities. Bridgend County Borough Council, as a signatory to the Charter, pledges 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.
- 3.6 The commitment to the placemaking charter aligns with the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood and is incorporated within the RLDP to ensure that Bridgend is adopting a coordinated approach to placemaking and well-connected neighbourhoods.
- 3.7 Further work contained within the Health Impact Assessment as part of the RLDP preparation has also highlighted that the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in ensuring that opportunities to maximise health and well-being benefits within potential development are important. The Green Infrastructure Assessment also provides the opportunity to incorporate the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in to the RLDP process. In applying a green infrastructure approach to identify and enhance the natural assets present within the County Borough, the Council can ensure that proposed development is centered around proximity to green infrastructure and that natural green spaces can be easily accessed within 20-minutes via sustainable modes of travel.
- 3.8 What Should a 20-Minute Neighbourhood Look Like? The core of a 20-minute neighbourhood is its pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. This equates to 800 metres (approximately half a mile) in distance or 20-minutes in time (based on average walking times of healthy adult and taking into account waiting at junctions and meandering routes). These neighbourhoods should be well connected to public transport, jobs, and services in the region provide local employment opportunities, local shopping, health and school facilities, public parks/ green spaces and sport and recreation facilities. In so doing they must be safe, accessible, and well-connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport and offer high-quality public realm and open spaces.

3.9 The benefits of 20-minute neighbourhoods encompass health, social, economic, and environmental benefits, as well as the positive impact of access to local amenities and services as described above.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report, however, the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods aims to reduce dependency on carbon intensive transport options.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The report is for noting and current procedures are carried out within existing budget headings.

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 That the Town and Community Council Forum notes the report

Background documents

None

Appendix A : Bridgend RLDP Background Paper 19 – The 20 Minute Neighbourhood