

1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Development Plan

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for its administrative area. The LDP will sets out the Council's vision and objectives for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire, together with the policies and proposals to implement them over a 10 year period to 2021. The plan area excludes that part of the County contained within the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- 1.2 The LDP has a fundamental role in delivering sustainable development. In seeking to achieve this it sets out a framework for the development and use of land and for the protection of the environment. It also guides and facilitates investment decisions as well as the delivery of services and infrastructure. It determines the level of provision and location of new housing, employment and other uses and sets the framework for considering all land use proposals during the plan period.
- 1.3 ~~When adopted,~~ The LDP will constitutes the development plan for the area – superseding the adopted Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006-2011 – and will forms the basis for rational and consistent decisions in the determination of planning applications and appeals. The LDP will therefore provides a measure of certainty about what kinds of development will be permitted and where during the plan period.
- 1.4 ~~Under the current planning system, LDPs are intended to be more relevant, inclusive and engaging to local communities, faster to produce and more responsive to change.~~ The LDP will also provides an integrated approach which informs, takes account of and helps deliver a range of other initiatives, including **the land use elements of the Community Strategy Council's Single Integrated Plan.**
- 1.5 The LDP has been prepared with regard to European legislation, national planning policy and various regional, sub-regional and local plans and strategies (Chapter 2 refers). The Plan's strategy, policies and proposals have been informed by a robust evidence base in the form of various background reports and supporting studies.

The Local Development Plan Process

- 1.6 The preparation of the LDP involves a number of key stages, as set out below;
- Stage 1: Delivery Agreement
 - Stage 2: Review and Development of Evidence Base
 - Stage 3: Pre-Deposit Preparation and Participation
 - Stage 4: Pre-Deposit Public Consultation
 - Stage 5: Deposit LDP

Stage 6: Alternative Sites

Stage 7: Submission to Welsh Government for Examination

Stage 8: Independent Examination

Stage 9: Receipt and Publication of the Inspector's Report

Stage 10: Adoption

Stage 11: Monitoring and Review

In addition to fulfilling each of these stages in the plan preparation process, the Council is also required to assess the environmental and sustainability aspects of the LDP. This has been achieved through the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

- 1.7 The LDP has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement (stage 1). This sets out the Authority's timetable for plan preparation together with the Community Involvement Scheme which indicates how and when individuals / organisations can become involved in the preparation of the LDP. The Delivery Agreement was agreed with the WAG in November 2007, with revisions to the timetable for preparation of the Monmouthshire LDP agreed with the Welsh Government and published on the Council's website in September 2011.
- 1.8 The Council has developed a detailed and robust evidence base (stage 2) which has informed the preparation of the LDP. A number of background papers /reports and studies have been produced which support the strategy, policies and proposals contained in the LDP.
- 1.9 The pre-deposit preparation and participation (stage 3) element of the LDP process involved extensive stakeholder and public participation during 2008 and early 2009. This assisted in the identification and development of the key issues, LDP vision, objectives and strategic options which informed the Preferred Strategy.
- 1.10 The Preferred Strategy (stage 4) was published for public consultation in June 2009 and set out the vision, objectives, strategic options, the preferred strategy and strategic policies to implement the strategy. The responses received in respect of the Preferred Strategy were reported to Council on 28th January 2010 and have, where applicable, been used to inform the preparation of the LDP, including the Deposit Plan.
- 1.11 A number of additional informal consultation stages were undertaken following the publication of the Preferred Strategy which informed the preparation of the Deposit LDP:
- The Preferred Strategy Report of Consultation was issued for informal public comment in February / March 2010.
 - The LDP Proposed Rural Housing Allocations Consultation Draft was issued for informal public consultation in July 2010.

- The Proposed Rural Housing Allocations – Alternative Village Sites and the Strategic Sites Studies (relating to five strategic sites proposed in the Preferred Strategy) were issued for informal public consultation in January 2011.

Further details regarding the above informal consultations can be viewed on the Council's website.

- 1.12 The Council is required under regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 to produce a Deposit LDP (stage 5) for public inspection. The Deposit Plan was agreed by Council on 1 July 2011 and issued for consultation for the period 7 October 2011 to 18 October 2011. The Alternative Sites consultation took place from 16 December 2011 to 3 February 2012 (**stage 6**). This enabled the general public and interested parties to comment on those site representations which sought to add, alter or delete a site during the Deposit LDP consultation.
- 1.13 **Following consultation on the Deposit and Alternative Sites the Council prepared a Consultation Report setting out the Council's responses to the representations that were received. At its meeting on 22 November 2012, the Council endorsed this report and resolved to submit the LDP and all associated documents to the Welsh Government. The LDP was subsequently submitted to the Welsh Government on 10 December 2012 (stage 7).**
- 1.14 **The LDP Examination was held over a four week period in May/June 2013 and over a further four days at the beginning of October 2013 (stage 8).**
- 1.15 **Inspector's Report (stage 9) ...to be updated with relevant dates**
- 1.16 **Adoption (stage 10) ...to be updated with relevant dates**
- 1.17 **The Council will prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in order to review the plan's progress and assess the effectiveness of its policies and proposals. The AMR will report information covering the preceding financial year and will be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31 October each year. The Council is required to carry out a review of the whole plan every four years (stage 11).**

Structure of the LDP

- 1.4318 The structure and format of the LDP is as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Sets out background information with regard to the LDP, including the plan making process and key stages of LDP preparation, and outlines the roles of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in the LDP process.

Chapter 2 – Policy Framework: Outlines how the LDP relates to and has taken account of the national, regional and local policy context and identifies regional collaboration/ linkages with neighbouring local authorities.

Chapter 3 – Overview /Profile: Provides a broad introduction to the plan area, outlining the key economic, environmental and social characteristics of Monmouthshire **and sets out the County’s main spatial issues.**

Chapter 4 – Key Issues, Vision and Objectives: Sets out the key LDP issues (~~including spatial issues~~), vision and objectives which have emerged from the Pre-Deposit plan making process. These set the context for the LDP strategy.

Chapter 5 – Strategic Policies: Details the LDP spatial strategy and strategic policies, which have been developed to implement the plan’s key objectives. The strategic policies are supported by more detailed policies set out in chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 6 – Development Management Policies: Sets out the detailed development management policies, grouped by the plan’s themes, against which all development proposals in the County will be assessed and provides the basis for the rational and consistent consideration of planning applications and appeals. These policies provide further interpretation, guidance and means of implementation for the strategic policies and include a reasoned justification.

Chapter 7 – Site Allocation Policies: Contains site allocation policies in relation to strategic/ urban and rural housing, tourism, waste and employment sites. These policies are linked to site allocations on the accompanying Proposals Map.

Chapter 8 – Monitoring: Sets out the monitoring framework which identifies the key indicators, targets and triggers for further ~~action~~ **investigation** in relation to ~~each~~ **the strategic policy policies** and ~~will~~ **forms** the basis for assessing the effectiveness of ~~strategic~~ **these** policies. It also indicates the linkages between the plan’s themes, objectives and ~~strategic~~ policies. This ~~will~~ **provides** a basis for the annual monitoring report (AMR).

Proposals Map: This illustrates the geographical location and extent of the site-specific development and protection policies that are designated in the LDP.

Constraints Map: This shows the geographical location and extent of constraints to development that are created by legislation outside of the development plan process, for example flood plains and sites of special scientific interest. Although this does not form part of the LDP regard will be given to the Constraints Map in the consideration of development proposals. The Constraints Map includes designations made by statutory bodies other than the Council and will be updated as necessary.

Supporting Documents

1.4419 The LDP is accompanied by a range of supporting documents which include:

- Background Papers / Studies

A number of background papers have been prepared which set out detailed information and justification for the policies and proposals contained in the LDP ~~and include the justification papers for the level of housing provision and its spatial distribution and pen profiles of settlements.~~ The LDP has also been informed by numerous studies covering a range of topic areas. **These key**

documents are referenced in the relevant sections of the LDP and can be viewed on the Council's website.

- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
The LDP will be accompanied by SPG on the following topic areas which will be used to expand upon the policies and proposals contained in the plan:
 - Affordable Housing
 - Planning Obligations
 - Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Landscape Character Assessment
 - Design Guides / Development Briefs
 - Conservation Area Appraisals
 - Retail – Primary Shopping Frontages
 - Conversion of Rural Buildings
 - Shop Fronts

While SPG is not part of the LDP itself, it will be the subject of appropriate public consultation. The appropriateness of existing SPG will be reviewed and, where applicable, may be taken forward to accompany the LDP – this includes SPG relating to the replacement and extension of rural dwellings and the local biodiversity action plan (LBAP).

Sustainability Appraisal /Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.4520 The LDP is **has been** subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and SEA Regulations¹. These are tools to ensure that policies in the LDP reflect sustainable development principles and take into account the significant effects of the plan on the environment. The Council has adopted an integrated approach to appraisal and assessment in which economic and social issues are considered alongside environmental issues. This process has provided a means of identifying the sustainability issues, challenges and opportunities facing Monmouthshire and has informed the preparation of the LDP. **This has been an iterative process throughout the preparation of the plan and is reflected in the plan's policies and proposals.**

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.4621 The Council is **has** also ~~required to~~ undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the LDP². The HRA ~~must~~ determines the likely significant effects of the plan, either individually or in combination with the effects of other plans and projects, on European sites of nature conservation importance and if applicable, scopes what needs 'appropriate assessment' (AA) and how it will be undertaken. European sites of nature conservation importance are defined as Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance), Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

¹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004

² Under Part IVA of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007

Tests of Soundness

- ~~1.17~~ An integral element of the current development plan system is for the appointed independent Inspector to consider the plan's 'soundness' during the Examination of the LDP. The assessment of soundness will be determined against the ten tests of soundness set out in Local Development Plan Wales (WAG, 2005) which relate to the process by which the LDP has been prepared, its consistency and effectiveness.
- ~~1.18~~ The LDP must satisfy these tests in order to be found 'sound'. A self-assessment of the soundness of the LDP has been undertaken, which considers the LDP to be sound. This can be viewed on the Council's website.

Using this Document

- ~~1.19~~22 The LDP provides an overarching and comprehensive land use planning framework for the County, setting out the vision, objectives and strategy for Monmouthshire, along with the strategic and detailed policies and proposals to implement these. It provides for the development and use of land and for the protection of the environment and facilitates investment decisions and the delivery of services and infrastructure.
- ~~1.20~~23 The LDP should be read as a whole given that many of the Plan's objectives and policies are cross-cutting and interrelated. Decisions on development proposals must have regard to the relevant policies in the LDP and the requirements of national planning policy.
- ~~1.21~~24 The LDP does not generally repeat national planning policies as set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Technical Advice Notes (TANs) and Minerals Planning Policy Wales (MPPW). National planning policies, along with the LDP, represent a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications and regard should be had to them in consideration of development proposals. Where appropriate, this document explains where and how national planning policies apply.

Welsh Language

- ~~1.22~~25 The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric of Wales. There are, however, significant variations in its use across the Country. Monmouthshire has a relatively low proportion of population that speak, read and write Welsh (~~6.8% in 2004~~ **7.2% in 2011**) compared with other local authorities in Wales, and the Welsh average (~~16.3% in 2004~~ **14.6% in 2011**). Subsequently, it is not considered necessary for the LDP to contain a specific LDP policy to address the Welsh language. The Council will, however, seek to ensure the protection and enhancement of Monmouthshire's cultural heritage which will be promoted through the LDP. National planning policy provides advice regarding the consideration of the Welsh language in development and will be taken into account in the determination of planning applications, where appropriate.