

SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENT APPRAISAL
MEETING: ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE
DATE: 24 September 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Economy and Development Select Committee of the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal which has been prepared to inform the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), attached at **Appendix 1**, and to seek Committee's feedback/comments on the paper. .

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To feedback/comment on the RLDP Sustainable Settlement Appraisal as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES

Background – Monmouthshire RLDP

- 3.1 The Council is in the process of preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the County (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park). The RLDP will cover the period 2018-2033 and will be the statutory land use plan to support delivery of the Council's vision for the future of the County and its communities. The RLDP will set out land use development proposals for the County and will identify where and how much new development will take place over the Replacement Plan period. It will also identify areas to be protected from development and contain policies against which future planning applications will be assessed.
- 3.2 The strategic direction of the RLDP will address the identified issues and deliver the vision and objectives, which will assist in addressing the demographic and affordability challenges facing the County and will seek to deliver the Council's core purpose to build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.
- 3.3 The RLDP must be underpinned by robust evidence to ensure that the Plan is effective and deliverable and contributes to placemaking, as defined in national policy set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Such evidence should be relevant, proportionate and focussed. LDP Regulation 15 states that the Preferred Strategy must pass the 'gateway test' set out in PPW incorporating the placemaking approach and site search sequence, providing a clearly expressed spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, based on the role and function of places, the sustainable transport hierarchy, need and supply factors and sustainable development.

Purpose of the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal

- 3.4 The Purpose of the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal, as set out in the Development Plans Manual (Edition 3 March 2020), is to inform decisions regarding where development should be spatially located to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns regarding the movement of people and support local

services and facilities. The assessment should not be confined to the geographical boundaries of the LPA administrative boundary, but take account of the relationship settlements have with neighbouring areas. Examples of the range of topics to be considered as part of the settlement assessment is highlighted in diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1: Topics to be considered as part of a settlement assessment



Source: Development Plans Manual Edition 3 (March 2020)

- 3.5 The Manual requires that the LPA formulate a methodology for assessing the role and function of settlements which is clearly set out in the evidence base. It should be transparent regarding how settlements are being assessed, the key assessment components and how this has been applied in a consistent manner across the area. This assessment should form the basis for the settlement hierarchy, identifying the most sustainable settlements for growth.
- 3.6 The outputs from the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal will be supplemented by further analysis to take account of the qualitative considerations, which also contribute to placemaking, before the final spatial distribution of growth and the settlement hierarchy is finalised for the Deposit RLDP. As part of this, consideration will be given to Council aspirations and the local need for development, for example in terms of the need for local housing, affordable housing or employment provision. This will be balanced against the physical/environmental and infrastructure constraints of individual settlements and their ability to accommodate additional development given the sensitivity of landscapes, the countryside character of rural settlements, and agricultural land quality. In this respect, planning judgements will need to be made as to which settlements fall within particular categories within the RLDP's sustainable settlement hierarchy

Sustainable Settlement Appraisal Methodology

- 3.7 The methodology used for the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal is based on the proposed approach set out in the draft South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) Pathfinder Group Sustainable Settlement Appraisal Paper (SSAP). The SSAP seeks to set out a common methodology for sustainable settlement appraisals to be used across the South East Wales region.
- 3.8 In order to effectively assess the role and function of each individual settlement an audit of existing services and facilities was undertaken within each settlement during the autumn of 2018. This audit was based on three principles, with each settlement assessed against a scoring system and ranked according to its overall score. This ranking provides an initial quantitative sustainability assessment, which is limited to the measurable factors identified. This enables the identification of broad groupings of settlements with similar roles and functions. The three principles and the scoring system used are set out below.
- Principle 1 – focuses on sustainable transport and accessibility on the basis that its provision reduces the need to travel by car and enables access to a wider range of amenities by sustainable transport modes. Settlements that are well-connected via multi-modal forms of transport help increase the propensity for use of sustainable transport options for local residents to access a range of facilities including employment, health care, education and retail.

Table 1: Scoring System for Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Active Travel	
Presence of Active Travel Routes within the Settlement¹	
Several Routes	10 points
One Route	5 points
No Routes	0 points
Walking distance to a higher order settlement via active travel route²	
1.5 miles	1 point
Cycling distance to a higher order settlement via active travel route³	
3.0 miles	1 point
Bus Services	
Bus stop	1 point
'Turn up and go' provision, frequency of approximately every 10 minutes	10 points
Medium frequency of service between 11 -30 minutes.	5 points
Low frequency of service between 31-60 minutes.	3 points
Daily frequency- less than hourly (at least one morning and one late afternoon service to a main centre).	2 points
Grass Routes Service	1 point
No Service	0 points
Rail Services⁴	
Train station in Settlement	10 points
Less than 5 miles	5 points
Between 5 miles to 10 miles	1 point
Greater than 10 miles	0 points

¹ These are based on the current Integrated Network Maps produced by the Council and agreed by the Welsh Government as referred to in para 2.2.21 of this paper.

² As defined in the adopted LDP Strategic Policy S1 – The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision

³ As defined in the adopted LDP Strategic Policy S1 – The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision

⁴ This is a measurement from the centre point of the settlement to the nearest railway station via the road network

Road Services	
Proximity to a strategic highway network⁵	
Less than 5 miles	5 points
Between 5 miles to 10 miles	1 point
Greater than 10 miles	0 points

- Principle 2 – considers the ability of a settlement to provide for the daily needs of residents by assessing the availability of services and facilities by quantity and variety, including digital connectivity.

Table 2: Scoring System for Availability of Facilities and Services

Service/Facility	Score	
Presence of Retail Centre within or near Settlement		
Town Centre ⁶	20 points	
Local Centre ⁷	10 points	
Neighbourhood Centre ⁸	5 points	
Proximity to a Town or Local centre⁹		
Less than 5 miles	2 points	
Between 5 miles to 10 miles	1 point	
Greater than 10 miles	0 points	
Regular Needs		
Convenience Store	more than 3 of each service/facility = 3 points 2 to 3 of each service/facility = 2 points 1 of each service/facility = 1 point	
Other non-food Shop		
Post Office		
Bank		
Petrol Filling Station		
Community Facilities		
Public Hall (including village hall & church hall)		
Library		
Place of Worship		
Publicly Accessible Open Space		
Sports Ground (pitch available)		
Child's Play Area		
Youth Club (including scout & guide groups)		
Medical Facilities		
Hospital		
GP Surgery		
Pharmacy		
Dentist		
Education Facilities		
Nursery School/Playgroup/Toddler Group		
Primary School		
Secondary School/Further Education College		
Cafes, Bars, Pubs, Restaurants & Takeaways		
Public House		
Tea/coffee Shop/café/restaurant/takeaway		
Broadband Connection¹⁰		

⁵ This is a measurement from the centre point of the settlement to the nearest strategic highway network as identified in LDP Policy MV9 – The Road Hierarchy via the local road network.

⁶ As defined in the adopted LDP Policy S6 – Retail Hierarchy

⁷ As defined in the adopted LDP Policy S6 – Retail Hierarchy

⁸ As defined in the adopted LDP Policy S6 – Retail Hierarchy

⁹ This is a measurement from the centre point of the settlement to the nearest retail centre via the local road network.

Service/Facility	Score
Broadband Connectivity	5 points
High median download speed of >30 Mb/s	2 points
Moderate median download speed of between 24-30 Mb/s	1 point
Low median download speed of <24 Mb/s	0 points
No Broadband Connectivity	0 points

- Principle 3 – relates to the location of employment opportunities in or around a settlement. This gives an indication of the economic sustainability of an area, including the ability/potential to reduce the need to travel to work.

Table 3: Scoring System for Employment Opportunities

Employment Opportunity	
Protected Employment Site within settlement ¹¹	20 points
Identified Business/Industrial Sites or Mixed-Use Sites within settlement ¹²	20 points
Other Employment Opportunity (B1/B2 use) within settlement	10 point
Proximity to Protected/Identified Employment Site if not within the settlement¹³	
Less than 5 miles	10 points
Between 5 miles to 10 miles	5 points
Greater than 10 miles	0 points

- 3.9 PPW10 (para 4.1.8) confirms the Welsh Government’s commitment to reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. To reflect this commitment to sustainable transport and accessibility, the criteria for Principle 1 – Sustainable Transport and Accessibility represents 40% of the overall score with the remaining criteria under Principles 2 and 3 having an overall score of 30% each. Thus the maximum score that can be achieved for a settlement against the 3 principles is 100%.
- 3.10 The Development Plans Manual recommends (diagram 1) that the size of a settlement be taken into account in the settlement assessment. In order to do this as part of this appraisal once the three principles have been scored and weighted for each settlement, additional points have been given to settlements based on their population size.

Table 4: Scoring System for Population Size

Population Size	Score
>10000	50 Points
5000 - 9999	30 Points
1500 - 4999	20 Points
500 - 1499	10 Points
250 - 499	5 Points
100 - 249	1 Points
<100	0 Points

- 3.11 There is also the potential to consider clusters of smaller settlements outside of the larger settlements which, due to their population size and close geographical and

¹⁰ Average fixed-line broadband speed by postcode and by output area, 2017 data released by Ofcom. Accessed 30.05.19 <https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/broadband-speed#>

¹¹ As defined in the adopted LDP Strategic Policy SAE2 – Protected Employment Sites.

¹² As defined in the adopted LDP Strategic Policy SAE1 – Identified Industrial and Business Sites.

¹³ The distance is measured from a central address point within a settlement to the centre of the nearest employment site via the road network.

functional links with the larger settlements, recognises their sustainable location in terms of proximity to transport connections, employment and amenities. At the same time, it is recognised that these settlements are smaller in scale and any proposed development should reflect this. PPW 10 (para 3.36) states that “*Local service centres, or clusters of smaller settlements where a sustainable functional linkage can be demonstrated, should be designated by local authorities as the preferred locations for most new development including housing and employment provision.*”

3.12 Whilst no Welsh Government guidance is available on how such clusters should be identified, by considering how other Local Planning Authorities have addressed the identification of clusters, the following criteria are considered appropriate to identify settlements within the county with the potential to form a cluster:

- Identified as a settlement in Strategic Policy S1 of the adopted Local Development Plan;
- The main settlement within the cluster should be a Tier 1 settlement¹⁴ based on the three principles and settlement size;
- The cluster should contain Settlements from Tiers 1 to 4.
- Smaller settlements within the cluster should achieve a score of 25% or above based on the three principles and settlement size;
- Smaller settlements within the cluster should have a functional link with a Tier 1 settlement via a bus route into or adjacent to the settlement;
- Smaller settlements within the cluster should have a functional link with a Tier 1 settlement via an active travel route option, either walking or cycling; and
- Smaller settlements within the cluster should have a functional link with a Tier 1 settlement with regard to its proximity via the road network.

3.13 Where settlements meet the above criteria and have the ability to form a cluster, these settlements may be considered as locations for new development, despite their position within the settlement hierarchy. Any such development will need to be acceptable in planning terms, however, and balanced against the physical/environmental and infrastructure constraints of individual settlements and the sensitivity of landscapes, the countryside character of rural settlements and existing residential amenity.

Key Findings

3.14 The appraisal confirms the dominant role of the County towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow, Caldicot and Monmouth. All four towns score highly against the three principles reinforcing their function as service centres for their rural hinterlands. Monmouth, due to its lack of a railway station within the town or nearby achieves a lower score against principle 1 than the other three towns. However, it achieves a comparably high score against the other two principles. Over half of the population of the County live within one of these settlements, benefiting from their accessibility and the range of services and facilities that they offer. The relative self-containment of these settlements compared to other settlements within the County justifies their classification as Primary Settlements that can be maintained and strengthened through future sustainable development that would seek to enhance these settlements.

3.15 In addition to the County towns, there are two other settlements, Magor Undy and Usk, which also perform well, justifying their position as Secondary Settlements. These two

¹⁴ A Tier 1 settlement are those settlements which have achieved a high score against the 3 principles and with regard to their population size. For the purposes of this study this is those settlements which have scored above 70%.

settlements account for a further 9% of the County's population¹⁵. Whilst not having the full range of facilities offered by the Primary Settlements, they provide services that benefit both their residents and the surrounding rural hinterlands, with Magor Undy in particular benefiting from its location in the M4 corridor, proximity to sustainable transport modes and to Newport.

- 3.16 Outside of these two settlements there is a distinct group of other Secondary Settlements who between them account for 8% of Monmouthshire's population¹⁶. Of these Llanfoist and Rogiet are the higher scoring settlements, with Caerwent, Raglan and Penperlleni also performing well in terms of the appraisal. It is anticipated that whilst these Secondary Settlements do not offer the full range of services and facilities that can be found in the Primary Settlements they would be capable of supporting some additional sustainable growth. The scale of future planned development should reflect their individual role, function and size, acknowledging that these settlements currently provide local services/facilities to meet the needs of their immediate vicinities.
- 3.17 The cluster analysis recognises that some of the lower tier settlements in the appraisal have a geographical and functional relationship with a Tier 1 settlement in the matrix and so, whilst achieving lower scores, may be capable of supporting some additional future development. The settlements along the M4 corridor in particular exhibit strong geographical and functional relationships with both each other and with the larger settlements in the vicinity. This Severnside cluster not only contains the Tier 1 Primary Settlement of Caldicot it also contains the three Tier 2 Secondary Settlements of Magor Undy, Rogiet and Caerwent. It is considered that after the Primary Settlements of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth, the Severnside cluster with its good transport links, employment opportunities and range of services offers a sustainable location for future growth.
- 3.18 The cluster analysis also recognises the strong functional as well as geographic links between Abergavenny and Llanfoist. Llanfoist has a similar relationship to Abergavenny as Wyesham has to the settlement of Monmouth, it is therefore considered appropriate to cluster Llanfoist with Abergavenny.
- 3.19 Outside of the Primary, Secondary and Severnside settlements there are other settlements in the matrix that will also provide supplementary opportunities for sustainable development; again the scale of development should reflect their individual roles, functions and size. It is recognised, as set out in national planning policy (PPW10), that appropriate levels of development could help maintain the viability of these settlements by providing increased custom for local businesses and also enable small scale employment opportunities to help sustain their populations and attract a more balanced demography.
- 3.20 The proposed settlement hierarchy for the RLDP is given below, this will be subject to further refinement as the Plan progresses.

Primary Settlements

Abergavenny (including Llanfoist)

Chepstow

Monmouth (including Wyesham)

Severnside

Caldicot

Caerwent

Portskewett

Rogiet

¹⁵ 2017 Mid Year Population Estimates

¹⁶ 2017 Mid Year Population Estimates

Crick
Magor Undy

Sudbrook

Secondary Settlements

Penperlleni
Raglan
Usk

Main Rural Settlements

Devauden
Dingestow
Grosmont
Little Mill
Llandogo
Llanellen
Llangybi
Llanishen

Mathern
Penallt
Pwllmeyric
Shirenewton Mynydd Bach
St Arvans
Trellech
Werngifford Pandy

Minor Rural Settlements

Bettws Newydd
Broadstone/Catbrook
Brynygwenin
Coed y Paen
Cross Ash
Cuckoo's Row
Great Oak
Gwehelog
Llanarth
Llanddewi Rhydderch
Llandegveth
Llandenny
Llangwm

Llanover
Llansoy
Llantilio Crossenny
Llantrisant
Llanvair Kilgeddin
Llanvair Discoed
Llanvapley
Mitchel Troy
Penpergwm
The Bryn
The Narth
Tintern
Tredunnock

Next Steps

- 3.21 The assessment evidences a hierarchy that can be used to identify which settlements are most sustainable and are best placed to deliver future growth. This will be used to inform the Preferred Strategy of the RLDP. By weighting the assessment criteria towards sustainable transport and accessibility it recognises the importance placed on these topics by Welsh Government. PPW at paragraph 4.1.1 states that *'the planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport'*.
- 3.22 Whilst providing the Council with an initial quantitative ranking of the sustainability of the County's settlements, however, it is important to note that the use of scoring and ranking methods does not fully consider certain socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors, which are important in understanding the overall role, function and sustainability of a settlement. Furthermore, the limitations of this methodology mean that certain assumptions and generalisations are used, for example regarding travel to work patterns and the actual use of sustainable transport modes.
- 3.23 A strategic assessment such as this one is not intended to be a comprehensive planning assessment of individual settlements or potential development sites within them. Further analysis will be needed to take account of qualitative considerations and

wider planning assessments, including Council aspirations, the potential future role of each settlement, affordable housing need and capacity to accommodate development. It is likely that some of these may not strictly reflect the indicative groupings provided in the appraisal but will enable a better understanding of the initial rankings and provide a basis for defining a final sustainable settlement hierarchy for the Deposit RLDP.

4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out the requirement for all LDPs to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). All stages of the RLDP will be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Assessment (including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Well-being of Future Generations (WBFG), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA)), whose findings will be used to inform the development of the Replacement LDP strategy, policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the Plan will be promoting sustainable development. The initial settlement hierarchy arising from the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal will guide new development towards those settlements that are most sustainable and have capacity to deliver growth. It will inform the spatial strategy of the RLDP Preferred Strategy. The Initial ISAR will be published alongside the Preferred Strategy.
- 4.2 A Future Generations Evaluation (including equalities and sustainability impact assessment) is attached to this report at **Appendix 2**.

Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

- 4.3 There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising directly from this report.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The requirement to prepare a Settlement Appraisal as part of the RLDP evidence base is set out in the Development Plans Manual. A regional methodology has been prepared on which this Sustainable Settlement Appraisal has been based. Officers consider that the resulting settlement hierarchy which is evidenced by the appraisal is both realistic and appropriate for Monmouthshire. The hierarchy establishes where the most sustainable locations for potential future development could be accommodated to meet the Council's core purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Officer time and costs associated with the data collection and analysis and preparation of the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal. These costs will be met from the Planning Policy budget and be carried out by existing staff.

7. CONSULTEES

- Member Workshop (June 2019)

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Local Development Plans Manual, Welsh Government, Edition 3, 2020.
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10), Welsh Government, December 2018.
- South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) Pathfinder Group Sustainable Settlement Appraisal Paper (SSAP) 2018

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