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PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Date Written	11 February 2015
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Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
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To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 Supplementary Planning Guidance on Nature and Development

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

To seek Committee's approval of a new draft Supplementary Planning Guidance note (SPG), and to subject the draft guidance note to a 6 week period of public consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Councillors will recall that the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted by Full Council on 25th May 2011. The LDP represents an up-to-date statement of planning policy, which is being used to guide development in the County Borough up to 2021.
- 1.2 As part of the LDP process, it was recognised that certain policy areas would benefit from further guidance to aid clarification on how specific LDP policies will be put into practice
- 1.3 This reflects Welsh Government guidance as set out in Local Development Plans Wales (2005) which highlights the value of supplementary planning guidance in

setting out more detailed thematic advice on the way in which the policies of a local development plan will be applied.

- 1.4 Four supplementary planning guidance notes have been produced to date; one covering Affordable Housing, one covering Planning Obligations, one covering Shopfront Design and one covering Sustainable Design. This reflects the fact that paragraph 1.3.8 of the LDP states:

“..... the Council has considered the scope for SPG and a formal SPG programme has been developed; consultation with the general public will take place before any SPG is finalised.”

2. SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The SPG that is being placed before Committee today provides clear direction on how ecology and biodiversity should be assessed within the planning process.
- 2.2 In broad terms, this means encouraging the conservation and enhancement of the local ecology and biodiversity through the development process, addressing statutory duties and social responsibilities. ‘The natural environment underpins our economy, providing an enormous range of products and services worth many billions of pounds to local, regional and national economies. In addition, a well planned and managed natural environment is key in shaping the character and quality of places in which people live and work.’ (Planning for a Healthy Environment, July 2012).
- 2.3 The principles of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and sustainable development are embedded in a variety of national planning policy documents, most significantly, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, 2014). These principles have also informed the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan, particularly Policy BW5 (Natural heritage); Policy BW7 (Sustainable design and place making) and Policy AS6 (Local nature conservation designations).
- 2.4 The Nature and Development SPG will be a material consideration to be used by the Town Planning Division to assess whether planning applications comply with the provisions of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.
- 2.5 The draft SPG is to be accessed via the Background Papers.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The draft SPG is being presented to Committee in order to obtain its approval to commence a 6 week period of public consultation. Comments received as part of the consultation process will be taken into account before a final version of the document is presented to Committee for approval.

4. RECOMMENDATION that

- 4.1 Committee approves the draft 'Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 5 – Nature and Development' for public consultation purposes.

ELLIS COOPER
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5: Nature and Development	Draft – 12/02/15	Planning Room – Unit 5