



## **FULL COUNCIL REPORT**

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|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Date Written      | 31/03/16                    |
| Report Author     | Justin Waite/Judith Jones   |
| Service Area      | Planning and Countryside    |
| Exempt/Non Exempt | Non Exempt                  |
| Committee Date    | 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2016 |

*To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen*

# **MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021) REVIEW REPORT**

## **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Council's approval of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2006 – 2021) Review Report, which recommends that the Planning Division follows the full revision procedure in preparing a replacement Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 A full review of the adopted LDP commenced on 25th May 2015 and culminates with the production of a Review Report which sets out the extent of changes required to the LDP and the revision procedure to be followed in preparing a replacement LDP that will cover a plan period up to 2031 (the end of a 15 year plan period that commences in 2016). The recommended changes have been informed by the findings of preceding AMRs, updates to the evidence base and ongoing surveys.
- 1.4 The review of the adopted LDP has found that whilst many aspects of the LDP are functioning effectively, the Plan's development strategy, which underpins the LDP, is not currently being delivered. It is therefore considered that both the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered in order to establish whether the current Strategy is the most appropriate for delivering growth up to 2031.
- 1.5 In addition, contextual changes and changes to the evidence base also indicate that certain policies and allocations within the LDP need to be revised and the LDP's Vision, Primary Aim and Objectives need to be reconsidered.
- 1.6 The Review Report concludes that the findings of preceding AMRs together with the review of the evidence base and contextual changes indicate that a full revision procedure should be followed in preparing a replacement LDP.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2006 – 2021) Review Report be approved.
- 2.2 The Planning Division commence work on the preparation of a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure.

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The adopted Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the Council's priorities for the development and use of land in the County Borough and its policies to implement them over the fifteen year plan period between 2006 and 2021. The LDP was adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and, in accordance with statutory requirements, has subsequently been monitored on an annual basis with the publication of four Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) to date. Each AMR assesses the extent to which the LDP's strategy, policies and development sites are being delivered.
- 3.2 Up-to-date LDPs are an essential part of a plan-led planning system and in order to ensure that there is a regular and comprehensive assessment of whether plans remain up-to-date the Council is required to undertake a full review of the adopted LDP at intervals not longer than every 4 years from the date of adoption. Accordingly, a full review of the adopted LDP commenced on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and culminates with the production of a Review Report which sets out the extent of changes required to the LDP and the revision procedure to be followed in preparing a replacement plan that will cover a plan period up to 2031 (the end of a 15 year plan period that commences in 2016). The recommended changes have been informed by the findings of preceding AMRs, updates to the evidence base and ongoing surveys.

## **4.0 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW REPORT**

- 4.1 The review of the adopted LDP has found that whilst many aspects of the LDP are functioning effectively, the Plan's development strategy is not currently being delivered.
- 4.2 The LDP is underpinned by an *Enhanced Growth Strategy* which is based on ambitious level of growth for both housing and employment. In terms of housing, the rate of dwelling delivery is not at a level sufficient to meet the needs of the LDP's Strategy and, as a consequence, the Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply (currently 2.8 years), leaving it vulnerable to speculative housing developments. Whilst economic conditions are improving, there remain uncertainties over when dwelling delivery rates will reach the level required to meet the needs of the Strategy and whether that rate can be sustained for a period of time.

- 4.3 In respect of employment, only 10,661 sqm of office (B1) floorspace has been delivered which meets approximately 30% of the Strategy's need and is significantly below the B1 floorspace target of delivering between 28,500 and 30,790 sqm by 2016. In contrast, a sufficient amount of industrial/warehousing (B2/B8) employment floorspace has been delivered (15,601 sqm) which meets the needs of the Strategy and the interim B2/B8 floorspace target of between 7,920 and 9,680 sqm by 2016. The longer term target of delivering at least 56,500 sqm of B2/B8 floorspace by 2021 does, however, remain challenging.
- 4.4 The Review Report therefore concludes that the Development Strategy is not currently being delivered and as such, the level and spatial distribution of growth needs to be reconsidered in order to establish whether the current Strategy is the most appropriate for delivering growth up to 2031.
- 4.5 Other aspects of the Plan also require revision as a result of changes to the evidence base and/or significant contextual changes, including changes in the local context and national policy or legislation. As a consequence, the Review Report recommends that certain policies and allocations within the Plan are revised and the Plan's Vision, Primary Aim and Objectives are reconsidered.
- 4.6 The overall conclusion of the Review Report is that the findings of preceding AMRs together with the review of the evidence base and contextual changes indicate that a full revision procedure should be followed in preparing a replacement LDP.

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 The Review Report is being placed before Council for approval of its contents and to commence work on the preparation of a replacement LDP following the full revision procedure. The latter is broadly the same as the procedure followed in the preparation of the currently adopted LDP, and will involve the preparation of a revised Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan which will be examined by an independent planning inspector.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the replacement LDP will be prepared within a four year period; the details of which will be set out in a revised Delivery Agreement which will be presented to Council for approval before being submitted to the Welsh Government for agreement.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 6.1 The financial implications arising from the preparation of the replacement LDP will be met through the relevant budget of the Planning and Countryside Division agreed for the financial years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. Additional funding will be required in the financial years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 as this would cover the main period of LDP examination which has additional associated costs relating to the appointment of an independent planning inspector and programme officer, and the hiring of an examination venue. The additional estimated budget requirement for the preparation

of the LDP is £120,000, which would need to be apportioned over the financial years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020.

## **7.0 SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT SUMMARY**

7.1 The Single Integrated Plan and Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed and the Review Report has been found to have a number of positive impacts through the identification of opportunities to better align the LDP’s vision, primary aim, objectives and policies with the vision and priority outcomes of the Single Integrated Plan. No negative impacts have been identified.

## **8.1 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council’s website/intranet via the ‘Equality Impact Assessment’ link.

**ELLIS COOPER**  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND TRANSFORMATION

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS BARRY**  
PORTFOLIO MEMBER FOR REGENERATION, PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE

| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>  |                         |                          |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Title of Document(s)</b>   | <b>Document(s) Date</b> | <b>Document Location</b> |
| Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021 – Review Report   | April 2006              | Background Papers Link   |
| Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021 – Annual Monitoring Report for the period 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015 | October 2015            | Background Papers Link   |
| <b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council’s Constitution?</b>  |                         | <b>No</b>                |

***Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.***