



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	13 th June 2017
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Service Area	Planning & Countryside
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non/ Exempt
Committee Date	28 th June 2017

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2016 – 2031) Preferred Strategy

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to commence a 6-week public consultation on the pre-deposit proposals documents for the Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2016 – 2031) comprising:
 - a) The Preferred Strategy.
 - b) The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.
 - c) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report.
- 1.2 Once adopted, the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) will supersede the extant Merthyr Tydfil LDP (2006-2021) and will provide the policy framework for the development of the County Borough up to 2031.
- 1.3 As part of the preparation process for the replacement LDP, the Council is required to publish and consult upon a Preferred Strategy. This report draws Councillors' attention to key elements of the Preferred Strategy.
- 1.4 The Preferred Strategy includes the replacement LDP's vision, objectives and key policies. Importantly, the Preferred Strategy also considers strategic options for the level and distribution of growth in the County Borough to 2031 and concludes that a sustainable level of population growth, predominantly directed to the main town of Merthyr Tydfil, and in particular to the 'Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area', represents the most appropriate strategy for the replacement LDP.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The following pre-deposit proposals documents for the Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2016 – 2031) be approved for a 6-week period of public consultation:
- a) The Preferred Strategy.
 - b) The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.
 - c) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Councillors will recall that following the recommendation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review Report (April 2016), in August 2016 the Council entered into a 'Delivery Agreement' with the Welsh Government for the preparation of a replacement LDP.
- 3.2 Once adopted, the replacement LDP will supersede the extant Merthyr Tydfil LDP (2006-2021) and will provide the policy framework for the development of the County Borough up to 2031.
- 3.3 As part of the preparation process for the replacement LDP, the Council is required to publish and consult upon a Preferred Strategy.
- 3.4 To help identify key issues for the Preferred Strategy, an integrated approach to community involvement has been undertaken, which also informs the 'Cwm Taf Local Wellbeing Plan'.
- 3.5 During January and March 2017, a series of LDP Steering and Working Groups considered the LDP's vision, objectives and options for the level and distribution of growth. The Preferred Strategy reflects the consensus reached at these meetings and is appended for consideration.
- 3.6 The Preferred Strategy proposes preferred growth and spatial options to achieve the LDP objectives. Most significantly, it seeks to address a projected population decline in the County Borough by encouraging a sustainable level of population growth. To facilitate this sustainable level of growth, it is estimated that 2,250 new homes need to be built by 2031. Such a level of growth is considered to show ambition as it addresses the long-term issue of population decline and would see more working aged people retained in the County Borough. It is also considered to be realistic and deliverable because the level of house building is broadly in line with historic build rates.
- 3.7 The Preferred Strategy proposes that housing and employment land allocations will be primarily directed to the main settlement of Merthyr Tydfil and in particular to the 'Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area' which is proposed as a strategic site for a significant mixed-use development. Development will also be directed to other smaller sites within existing urban areas across the County Borough.

- 3.8 A further key element of the Preferred Strategy is to maximise the benefits to be brought by the development of the 'South Wales Metro' and dualling of the A465 by ensuring connectivity between areas where people live and the services, facilities and employment opportunities within the County Borough and the wider Cardiff Capital Region.
- 3.9 The Preferred Strategy also proposes how the Council intends to balance the necessity for growth against the need to sustain the County Borough's cultural and environmental assets and improve the quality of life for residents. In this regard, Councillors' attention is drawn to the Preferred Strategy proposal to identify 5 Special Landscape Areas across the County Borough, Local Nature Reserves in each Ward and to support implementation of the Open Space Strategy (2016).
- 3.10 The Preferred Strategy also contains draft key policies to address the 17 LDP objectives.
- 3.11 Councillors' attention is also drawn to the findings of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report and the Habitats Regulations Appraisal Screening Report which have informed, and should be considered simultaneously with the Preferred Strategy.
- 3.12 Councillors will also be aware that 98 Candidate Sites were suggested to the Council during 2016 to be considered for inclusion in the 'Deposit LDP (2018)' as development allocations or for protection from development. The Candidate Sites Register along with other topic and background papers, whilst not being formal pre-deposit proposals documents, will be published alongside the pre-deposit documentation for comment during the 6-week period of public consultation.
- 3.13 The opportunity to submit further Candidate Sites will also be provided during the consultation period. Apart from the Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area, detailed decisions on which sites will be selected as allocations will be made when agreeing the 'Deposit Plan' in 2018.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Undertaking consultation will help to gather the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders and residents which is important to help ensure the 'Deposit LDP' (the next stage of plan making) is the most appropriate plan for the County Borough.
- 4.2 The consultation period will run for a 6-week period from 14th July 2017 to 25th August 2017. Details of how to comment and where you can view the other supporting documents are set out on page 55 of the Preferred Strategy.
- 4.3 Representations and opinions received during the consultation period will be considered and used to inform the 'Deposit LDP', which is due for publication in 2018.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 The financial implications arising from the preparation of the replacement LDP will be met through the relevant budget of the Planning & Countryside Division agreed for the financial years 2017/18 to 2019/20.

6.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 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.

***CHERYLLEE EVANS
CHIEF OFFICER NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES***

***COUNCILLOR HOWARD BARRETT
CABINET MEMBER FOR
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND
PUBLIC PROTECTION***

Appendix 1. The Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2016 – 2031) Preferred Strategy. June 2017.

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.	June 2017	Background papers link
The Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report.	June 2017	
Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2006 – 2021), adopted 2011.	May 2011	
Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2006 – 2021) Review Report.	April 2016	
Replacement Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Delivery Agreement	August 2016	
Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy	June 2016	
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

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