

Report of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development & Regeneration

Council - 24 September 2015

SWANSEA LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) PROPOSED HOUSING AND STRATEGIC SITE ALLOCATIONS

Purpose: To endorse the housing and strategic sites recommended for inclusion in the Deposit LDP and the next stages of the LDP process

Policy Framework: None. This is a non-statutory process

Reason for Decision: To guide the preparation of the Deposit LDP

Consultation: Legal, Finance, Access to Services

Recommendation(s): It is recommended: -

i) That the findings of Planning Committee in relation to proposed LDP housing and strategic site allocations are accepted, and that the recommended sites are incorporated within the Deposit LDP to be reported to Members for approval in due course.

ii) That a revised LDP Delivery Agreement is prepared and agreed with the Welsh Government to confirm the timetable for delivery of the Deposit LDP and subsequent stages leading up to adoption of the Plan

iii) That the Planning Authority seek to address the current housing land supply shortfall through continued negotiations with site promoters for the preparation and submission of appropriate planning applications for residential development, either on sites within settlement boundaries or on recommended Deposit LDP strategic sites

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 At Council on 2 December 2014 it was agreed that the Draft LDP Proposals Map should be published for public consultation and that the responses received would be considered in the preparation of the Deposit LDP. During the course of the subsequent consultation a variety of representations were submitted, including petitions of objection for certain sites.
- 1.2 At Council on 31st March 2015 it was agreed that the opportunity to present valid petitions to proposed LDP allocations should be afforded to all petitioners, and that site promoters should also be afforded the right to reply. The task of hearing petitions and other representations was directed to Planning Committee to make a recommendation to Council for final decision. As part of this process, to ensure the soundness of the Deposit LDP it was resolved that Planning Committee should also consider the remaining non-petition sites, and recommend to Council which of these should be included in the Deposit LDP.

2.0 Hearing of Petitions

- 2.1 A series of Special Planning Committee Meetings were held to hear the views of petitioners, site promoters and local ward members. All Members were invited to submit representations and/or attend Planning Committee to make their views known. In total 14 petitioners and 11 site promoters have been heard and local ward members have made representations, either in writing or at Committee, in relation to 36 of the proposed sites.
- 2.2 In response to representations received Planning Committee visited 33 sites. Where requested, local ward members were met on site and petitioners and site promoters were in attendance on most occasions.
- 2.3 Details of all formal representations have been added to the Candidate Site Assessment forms and, together with the supplementary information/ documents referred to, have been published on the Council's website: <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/LDPPA>. The representations received from petitioners and site promoters are set out in full in Appendix 1.

3.0 Sites approved by Planning Committee

- 3.1 Having considered the detailed assessments undertaken by officers for each site, and all representations made during the LDP public consultation exercises including the petition hearings process, Planning Committee has recommended 84 sites for inclusion in the Deposit LDP. A total of 9 sites were rejected for a variety of reasons, which in the view of the Committee rendered these unsuitable for allocation. A schedule of the Planning Committee's recommendations on each site is attached as Appendix 2, which includes indicative development capacities.
- 3.2 The total number of homes recommended by Planning Committee is 12285 units. When added to existing commitments (i.e. the 4956 units on sites granted planning permission or built out since the 2010 LDP base date), the

total number of homes that could be delivered through the LDP amounts to 17241 units. This meets the housing land supply requirement of 17,100 units that was previously endorsed by Council as the number to be delivered over the plan period (2010-2025). The total number of units on recommended sites provides a relatively small cushion of around 140 units, which allows for variations in site capacity and delivery.

- 3.3 Table 1 below illustrates the proposed number of new homes by Housing Policy Zone:

Table 1: Total number of homes to be delivered by Commitments and Proposed Allocations (2010-2025)

Housing Policy Zone	Commitments	Recommended Allocations	Total
Central	822	1670	2492
East	1808	1495	3303
North	354	3705	4095
Greater North West	1383	4310	5693
West	502	860	1362
Gower AONB/Fringe	87	245	332
Total	4956	12285	17241

4.0 The Deposit LDP

- 4.1 The Deposit LDP housing and strategic site allocation boundaries have been drafted in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Committee. The recommended site boundaries are illustrated on a set of maps published on the Council web pages at www.swansea.gov.uk/ldp, and are also shown in Appendix 3 of this report.
- 4.2 The recommended Deposit allocations are consistent with the sustainable settlement strategy that is at the heart of the LDP, as set out in the Preferred Strategy previously approved by Council. Central to this strategy are a number of large Strategic Sites that vary in size and character, but which collectively provide for almost 60% of the proposed housing figures. The balance of new housing requirements will be met by non-strategic sites at sustainable locations across the County, as illustrated on the maps.
- 4.3 The recommended allocations have been appraised having regard to a Strategic Transport Assessment undertaken by consultants Arup. The transport assessment has considered the in-combination impact of the LDP proposals and the potential sustainability of strategic sites in travel terms. The work undertaken by Arup involved developing a bespoke 'macroscopic' transport model to test the impact of the proposals upon the transport network, and any mitigation measures such as new infrastructure considered necessary to ensure no unacceptable impact will arise from the proposals.

- 4.4 Subject to the recommended Deposit LDP housing and strategic sites being agreed by Council, a Deposit LDP Proposals Map will be produced. As well as the recommended sites, the Proposals Map will also feature allocations for employment land, retail centres, Green Wedges, and other relevant designations. The Deposit LDP written statement will also be finalised as the compendium document to the Proposals Map. The written statement will comprise strategic and detailed planning policies relating to both site specifics and topic areas. Members will be asked to endorse both the LDP Deposit Proposals Map and Written Statement in due course for the purpose of a comprehensive public consultation for a minimum 6 week period.

5.0 Further Planning Implications

- 5.1 The Council as local planning authority has a statutory requirement to maintain a minimum 5 year housing land supply, however current supply stands at less than 3 years. It was reported to Members on 2nd December 2014 that the supply of available housing land is continually diminishing as the 2016 end date of the current Unitary Development Plan approaches. The need to address the housing land shortfall is therefore increasingly acute, particularly as it is anticipated the Council will be faced with determining 'hostile' planning applications in advance of the adoption of the LDP on Greenfield sites that conflict with UDP policies and that may be subject to particular sensitivities. Even if the Council refuses planning permission for such proposals, prospective developers may anticipate applications will be allowed on appeal as a result of the weight that may be given to the lack of housing land supply by a Planning Inspector.
- 5.2 Measures therefore need to be taken with immediate effect to try to increase the available housing land supply. At Council on 2 December 2014 it was agreed that Officers should negotiate the preparation and submission, as appropriate, of planning applications for residential development on Strategic Sites in advance of the adoption of the LDP. It is proposed that this process of negotiation and discussion with developers continues as a matter of priority to ensure that appropriate proposals come forward as initial early phases of development at large sites. This approach will serve to address the housing land supply shortage and ensure that large sites are able to be 'built out' during the plan period. It will also enable supporting community facilities and/or infrastructure to be delivered at an early stage on such sites, through the imposition of appropriate planning obligations on any such early application.
- 5.3 By focussing on strategic sites, as well as sites currently within settlement boundaries, the planning authority will be well placed to resist other applications that may be submitted in due course on Greenfield sites not currently allocated in the adopted Unitary Development Plan, since such applications can then be said to be at variance with the Council's strategy for meeting its land supply shortage. Without such a strategy in place the Council will be in an increasingly vulnerable position to prevent unsatisfactory and unpopular applications gaining planning permission.

5.4 Subject to the recommended sites being approved for inclusion in the Deposit LDP, a revised Delivery Agreement (DA) will be prepared and submitted to the Welsh Government for approval. The DA will make clear the revised timetable for publication of the Deposit LDP, having regard to the delay to the process that arose as a result of the petitions hearing process, as well as the timescales for subsequent stages of LDP preparation.

6.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

6.1 The process followed by Planning Committee has taken account of relevant equality considerations and provided a forum to enable petitioners to exercise their speaking rights ensuring that concerns have been heard and responded to appropriately.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from preparation of the LDP, its adoption could result in additional expenditure at a future time. At this time there is no budget or additional funding set aside for this expenditure so if this is seen as a priority then it will have to be located from within current resources.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The Council is statutorily obliged to prepare an LDP. Meeting future housing needs is an essential element required to satisfy the test of soundness of the LDP.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Representations received from petitioners and site promoters

Appendix 2: Schedule of recommendations of Planning Committee on sites proposed for inclusion in the LDP

Appendix 3: Maps showing recommended Deposit LDP Housing and Strategic Site Allocations